

THE LIFELINE

January 2021 - Hope, Help & Healing for Everyone Affected by Addiction.

MY SON WOULDN'T LET ME VISIT MY GRANDCHILD

My life was saved by a baby.

I was an addict for as long as I can remember.

Drugs, booze, sex. I was addicted to all of them.

For years, my family suffered. My kids grew up with a mom who wasn't there for them, who sometimes wasn't there at all. My husband, Bob, put up with my crap for over 40 years.

When Bob died, I lost it. I went on a terrible binge that lasted weeks. I overdosed twice. By then, my kids were adults, living on their own.

The next year flew by. So much of it was blacked out, I don't really know how I survived. And I can't imagine living much longer if not for the baby.

I remember the phone call. How awkward it was.

I was lucid. A rare moment of sobriety. My cell rang and I took the call. It was my son Keith. He seemed nervous.

"Mom, Gemma just had a baby."

"A baby???" I was shocked. Overwhelmed. "Wait, Gemma was pregnant???" How did I miss that? "I'm a grandmother???" When did I last see my kids?

"Yeah Mom. Congratulations."

"Was it a boy or a girl?" Oh my G-d, I haven't seen Keith and Gemma in ages. "Is it healthy?" How could he not have told his own mother that his wife was pregnant? "Is Gemma ok?"

"It's a girl. We're doing fine. But Mom..."

He gulped. That's when I knew it was going to be bad news. Since he was a kid, Keith was a bad liar. Whenever he gets nervous, he audibly gulps. It's cute on a kid. Terrifying when it's an adult and you know he's about to tell you tell you something that will turn your life upside-down. "Yeah?"

"You - uh - you can't see the baby. I mean, I'll send you pictures and everything but you can't come visit."

What???? "Why, is she sick or something?"

"She's fine, Mom. It's just... We don't think it's safe for you to be around the baby. Not when you're - uh - sick."

I don't remember the rest of the call. I vaguely remember opening a bottle of tequila while on the phone. To say I took it hard is an understatement.

I got trashed. I was angry. Bitter. Devastated.

Sometime later - I have no idea how long after, probably a week or so if I'm honest - I had a moment of sobriety. It was a very painful moment. Like a deep, stabbing painful moment.

Realization struck.

I am going to die if I continue like this. And I will die without ever seeing my granddaughter.



I called Keith in a panic (I later found out that I had regularly been calling him either crying or screaming, or a combination of both). He gave me Chabad Lifeline's number. And I called. Got an appointment that very afternoon.

When I was younger, I went to rehab. I had been in hospitals, so I had a good idea what to expect from an addiction crisis centre.

Boy was I wrong.

It just didn't feel... clinical. From the start, there was a genuine warmth. I felt like I was coming home.

It took a lot of hard work, but I eventually stabilized. Until one day, Keith and Gemma brought my grandkid to my apartment.

Slowly, I earned Keith's trust and was able to reunite with my family. I also made up with my daughter Rachel, and other family members that I had pushed away years earlier. That has only been possible thanks to patience, a commitment to making amends, and the guidance I received from Chabad Lifeline which saved my life.

In early April, I got a random call from Rabbi Bresinger. He was checking in on everyone and wanted to know how I was doing.

My answer? "Rabbi, you're calling at the perfect time. I'm at Keith's house, watching my granddaughter. Gemma gave birth last night to a new baby boy."

I'm writing this because my happiness has now become overwhelming. I feel intense gratitude to Chabad Lifeline who have supported me and helped me reach sobriety (almost four years!).

My life was changed from the moment I walked through the front door at Chabad Lifeline and had a hot coffee handed to me by the lovely receptionist. Not only am I alive today because of that, but I have also been able to be there for my family in their time of need.

Oh, and my grandson? They named him Bobby.

Please note that names and some identifying information have been changed to protect the anonymity of those who experienced the above story. If you or someone you know needs help for an addiction, please contact us online or by calling 514-738-7700.

info@ChabadLifeline.com. 514-738-7700. www.ChabadLifeline.com



DESTIGMASTIZING ADDICTION ON INSTAGRAM

"Teamwork is dream work," said Marina Barr, who has been creating incredible content for our Instagram together with friends Shira Aflalo, Vanessa Aronovici, Ilana Mamane, Aviva Smith, and Anabelle Tapiero.

The videos have led to an increased following and an uptick in clients reaching out for help. Follow us at [instagram.com/ChabadLifeline](https://www.instagram.com/ChabadLifeline)

NEW VIDEO: HELPING CHILDREN DURING COVID

To highlight the importance of reaching kids in homes with active addiction, particularly during the current coronavirus crisis, we recently created a new two minute video. Watch it at <https://youtu.be/h2bE9absGvo>.



CHABAD LIFELINE

OUTPATIENT ADDICTION SERVICES

At a time when social distancing is encouraged, it is important to stay connected. Addiction is the disease of the disconnect, and although our staff continues to work full time via Zoom, teleconferencing, we are here for anyone affected by addiction during this stressful period. Visit www.ChabadLifeline.com for more information.

A NEW LOOK FOR OUR ONLINE COVID SCHEDULE

Being that our services have all gone online, we created a new infographic detailing our complete weekly schedule with information on how to access each program. You can find it online under our Programs & Services menu tab.

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