

RRP 121 — Devlin F / Burying Bradley: Dropping the Shovel on Addiction, One Day at a Time

Presenters: Julie P. Lewis and Peter B. Dowell

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Devlin F.'s addiction began at six years old when his father gave him a sip of beer while he was choking. What followed was decades of trauma, meth use, street survival in San Francisco's Tenderloin, and a quarter-million-dollar inheritance that nearly killed him. After years of IV drug use and a moment in August 2023 when he saw only two choices — “find a new way to live or jump off a bridge” — Devlin walked into Another Chance. Today he works there as a certified recovery mentor, sponsors others, and has done something remarkable: he gave his addiction a name and buried it. Julie opens up about why she was genuinely scared of him during his active addiction — and why watching his transformation has been one of the greatest gifts of her own recovery.

Key Points

- 00:04** Fred Meyer Community Rewards and Bottle Drop — two easy ways to support the podcast without spending extra
- 00:08** Julie refused Devlin a hug during active addiction — she was genuinely scared he wouldn't survive
- 00:12** First sip of beer at age six from his alcoholic father; first drink and marijuana at 14 after witnessing domestic violence between his parents
- 00:15** Childhood trauma: sexual abuse at age 4 by a family member, massive stroke at age 10
- 00:27** First hit of meth at 24 — instantly hooked after burning out from 150-hour workweeks as a caregiver
- 00:29** Life on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin — 11-day benders and a system built around the drug
- 00:33** Father died from alcoholism on January 5, 2015 — Devlin didn't make it in time to say goodbye

- 00:35** A quarter-million-dollar inheritance fueled four years in Mill City and even deeper addiction
- 00:37** IV drug use — “the final frontier” — and suicidal despair in August 2023
- 00:38** Entered treatment September 23, 2023; Jessica Anderson gave him “the first taste of compassion in a long time”
- 00:42** Extended Family meeting — Colette told him “You're gonna be back here tomorrow” — and he came back
- 00:59** April 28, 2024 — sober date begins. “I had another relapse in me. I didn't have another recovery in me.”
- 01:05** Fourth step at a creek with his sponsor — five to six hours — “the weight of the world came off my shoulders”
- 01:12** Started sponsoring at steps six and seven — his first sponsee now has seven months sober in Arizona
- 01:33** Named his disease “Bradley” and buried him: “I dropped the shovel. He's still buried.”

Websites Discussed

Fred Meyer Community Rewards: fredmeyer.com/community-rewards

Another Chance treatment center: anotherchancerehab.com

Sober Housing Oregon: facebook.com/soberhousingoregon

Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA): crystalmeth.org

East County Alano Club: pdxaa.org/venue/east-county-alano-club

Real Recovery Podcast: realrecoverypodcast.com

Listen: mdcr1.com/121

Blog: mdcr1.com/121b

“I got the inspiration to name my disease. The name of my disease is Bradley, which is my first name. Devlin is my middle name. Bradley was the person that loved sticking a needle into his arm. That was the only thing that he wanted to do. Devlin buried Bradley.”

— Devlin F.

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