

RRP 123 — Show Notes

Jen L / When the Light Found Her, Part 2: Nothing Wasted, Not Even the Hard Parts

Release Date: July 17, 2026 | **Episode:** 123 | **Presenters:** Julie P. Lewis and Peter B. Dowell |
Runtime: 1:07:00

(Timecodes approximate — pending final Descript edit)

"I found a sister. I didn't grow up with a sister, but I have a sister now. And every time I refer to you, it's, 'You're my sister. You're my spiritual sister,' and that is everything to me." — Jen L.

Key Points

00:01 — Jen spent six months in IOP without once telling her family she had stopped drinking. Recovery was her private project first.

00:02 — Her dad was dying of cancer. At 18 months sober, he waved a glass of whiskey in her face. She didn't take it. She also never told him she'd stopped.

00:05 — At age 12, Jen discovered that her grandmother Lois in Reno was biological. She found the branch of the family where the disease ran — and finally had a name for it.

00:07 — In her first five years of sobriety, Jen walked through what she calls a suicidal depression. She kept showing up anyway.

00:14 — Dr. Angela, a Cherokee elder and professor at Reed College, gave eagle feathers at every AA birthday she attended. Jen and Julie both carry one.

00:35 — Recovery League Softball: Jen joined five teams and averaged 12 games a week. The obsession for more doesn't disappear in sobriety. It just finds new rooms.

00:39 — Jen met Mickey through softball. She walked into a friend's house and found a gun and a badge on the kitchen table. Mickey was a parole officer. Jen didn't run.

00:45 — When Peter was going through cancer, the fellowship showed up. What the tools of the program carry people through that no amount of willpower can.

00:47 — Tammy's third step gift: "If it adds to you spiritually, it's God's will for you. If it takes from you in any way, it's not God's will." Jen still uses it.

00:48 — Jen's higher power: driving into the woods alone. What she finds when she breathes in the wind on her face.

01:01 — Jen and Julie have been riding this train together for 29 years. "I found a sister." What it means to call someone your spiritual sister — and what Jen says at the end about nothing going to waste. Not the grief, not the hard years, not even the parts she'd trade if she could.

Websites Discussed

- The Grotto — National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother, Portland
 - Recovery League Softball
 - Real Recovery Podcast
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