

RRP 129 — Sonny M. / On the Other Side of the River: Grief, Recovery, and Finding a Way Forward

Presenters: Julie P. Lewis and Peter B. Dowell

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Sonny M. grew up around recovery. His parents met in NA, and for years he knew the rooms without believing they would ever be his. After his father returned to drinking, Sonny found himself caught between two homes, trying to fit in, and using alcohol and drugs to quiet what he could not name.

At 22, Sonny shares the grief that changed his life, his first attempt at recovery at 19, the six-month relapse that followed, and the community that helped him come back. He talks honestly about building Devero, staying connected to the program while life gets busy, and why recovery has to remain the first job.

Key points

- **[00:13:00]** Sonny's parents met in NA, and recovery was part of his life from the beginning.
- **[00:18:00]** His father returned to drinking after 25 years, changing the family dynamic.
- **[00:21:00]** Sonny describes his first drink at 14 and the need to fit in that followed him.
- **[00:37:00]** An angry day, a decision not to go to the river, and the loss of Reagan and Zach in a car accident.
- **[00:49:00]** Sonny arrives at his first meeting, Plinky's, embarrassed but welcomed.
- **[00:51:00]** He realizes the meeting is across the river from the last place he saw Reagan and Zach.
- **[01:00:00]** Six months sober at 19, a relapse, and coming back ready to work the steps.
- **[01:06:00]** Young Guns, service, coffee, and the recovery community Sonny helped build.
- **[01:13:00]** Starting Devero while trying to keep recovery ahead of ambition.
- **[01:34:00]** Sonny's advice to anyone who feels stuck: give recovery a real chance.
- **[01:38:00]** Finding a personal "why," becoming the man he wants to be, and helping others avoid the same path.

Websites discussed

- [Plinky's, Portland Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Portland Area Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- [Alateen](#)
- [Another Chance](#)
- [Real Recovery Podcast](#)

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“Don’t quit before you kick off.”

— *Sonny M.*

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