

RRP 134 — Walter B. / From the Trap House to Kona, Part 1: 3 Rose Bowls, Then the Cheering Stopped

Presenters: Julie L and Peter D

Episode length: 1:07:06

Release date: Friday, October 2, 2026

Walter B. grew up in Northeast Portland running before he could walk. Sports carried him from the Albina Roadrunners to Benson High School and the University of Washington, where he went to three Rose Bowls. In Part 1 of this two-part conversation, Walter tells Julie and Peter what happened when the cheering stopped: the drinking and weed that followed him from high school, getting cut by the New York Giants, years of homelessness, and a trap house in Northeast Portland. Then his best friend Matt came for him. Walter shares how he found his footing in AA, went to treatment at DePaul, and got to see his father one last time, sober.

Key Points

- **[00:09:16]** Walter was 40, in a trap house with no food or water, when someone told him the 12 steps don't work.
- **[00:11:00]** Growing up in Northeast Portland, running track at four or five, and Phil Knight showing up at meets with a bag full of track shoes.
- **[00:13:01]** Acting out at school, and a household where what happened at home stayed at home.
- **[00:15:00]** Benson High, a two-liter California Cooler at 13, and weed before his freshman year.
- **[00:24:17]** When the cheering stopped: Western Washington, then the University of Washington.
- **[00:25:33]** Meeting Kurt Cobain at a party, three Rose Bowls, and a share of a national championship.
- **[00:29:00]** The loneliness behind the fame, and late-night walks to the viaduct to sit with homeless people.
- **[00:32:16]** A contract with the New York Giants, a positive test, getting cut, and choosing to party.
- **[00:37:00]** Homeless from 1994 to 2008 while tiptoeing around the neighborhood where his family lived, and crack in 1998.
- **[00:44:35]** Two daughters, the loneliness, and the darkest point of his use.
- **[00:45:23]** In the trap house, Walter hears himself say the 12 steps do work.
- **[00:46:21]** He calls his best friend, Matt, who asks if he's willing to do something different.
- **[00:47:52]** Matt pulls up, Walter grabs his bag, and never looks back.
- **[00:49:32]** Calling his mom and dad, AA meetings every day, and treatment at DePaul.
- **[00:51:01]** An emergency pass to see his father, and the words "I got my baby back."
- **[00:52:48]** Julie shares the last days with her mom, and Peter talks about caring for his dad.

- **[00:56:45]** A daughter who just got married, a youngest child starting college, and the repairs he began making with his family.
- **[00:59:24]** Caring for his mom, becoming a counselor at DePaul, and learning his father may have done the best he could.
- **[01:03:44]** Breaking the cycle, and a man who says he is still under construction.

Websites Discussed

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Central City Concern
- Hooper Detoxification Stabilization Center
- DePaul Treatment Centers
- Portland Rescue Mission
- Transcending Hope Institute
- Real Recovery Podcast

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*"I got to make it right with my father before he passed."
Walter B.*

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