



JASMINE KRISTA'S SUCCESS STORY

Jasmine was placed in foster care as a baby and was adopted at the age of four. Life in her new family was filled with contradictions. There were camping trips, fun family gatherings, and great memories, while at the same time behind closed doors her adopted father struggled with addiction to alcohol and prescription medications. There were angry drunken nights filled with verbal and sometimes physical abuse as well as ongoing sexual abuse. At the age of ten, she moved with her family to Lake County and made a friend who encouraged her to talk to a school counselor about the sexual abuse which had been going on for years. She expected that speaking up would lead to protection, love and acceptance, but her mother did not believe her and Jasmine felt like she was breaking up the family. She decided to sacrifice herself to keep herself and her brother from going into foster care, so she told the authorities that she lied about the abuse. Throughout her teen years she struggled with self-image, anxiety, depression, self-harm and self-destructive behaviors. She then started down a road to self-healing by reading self-help books and developing a deeper understanding of her own behaviors, mindsets, habits and beliefs. She learned about the importance of mental, physical and spiritual health and how they were linked. The more she learned, the more she applied and felt strengthened. Even so, when she spoke up about the abuse at age 20, she was disowned by her family and told she was lying, and the following three years included self-destructive behavior, a toxic relationship, and homelessness. Eventually, she became pregnant and slept on a friend's couch for the first seven months of her pregnancy. Near the end of her pregnancy, she was offered a room at The NEST, a home for pregnant and parenting teens and young adults who are experiencing homelessness run by Redwood Community Services. It was there that she found a type of safety and comfort that she had never felt before and survival mode stopped at the door. She spent an entire year dedicated to bettering herself and creating a brighter future for her and her son. Today, Jasmine has exited The NEST, has her own home, has built her support system, and recently finished Dental Assistant School.

In Jasmine's Own Words:

What would you tell others in Lake County about what is most important to your success? How would you encourage them? I would tell them that the most important thing is YOU. I used to listen to "success stories" and think that it would never be me. I would look at those people as if they were more special or luckier. YOU are worth it! Nothing beautiful in life will ever come easy. Prioritize yourself by dropping the fear of saying the words, "I need help." Do the thing that you most fear, speak out, take that terrifying leap of faith. Demand to be heard! You may have been dealt some terrible cards in life, but you can take the hurt and struggle and turn it into strength! Keep pushing, keep going and don't give up on yourself. YOU are beautiful and you are worthy of amazing love. Prioritizing yourself, doing the thing you fear most, and taking that leap of faith are the first steps to success.

What kept you from giving up when things were hard? I knew in my heart that I was meant for something more. I didn't just wake up one day and decide to change. There was a lot of falling down, failing, messing up, poor decisions, pain and feeling lost. But every time, I forced myself to get back up and try again. I reached out for help and guidance. I openly shared my story which helped with my healing, and I found an amazing program (The NEST) where I was able to accept the help I needed. I worked hard every day for a year on my healing, my mindsets, habits, beliefs, cognitive distortions, etc. with the help of others.

What are you most looking forward to as you move forward on this new path in life and what makes you feel most equipped to keep moving in a positive direction? I want to be a positive role model for my son and to put an end to negative cycles in my life once and for all. This is just the beginning of many ventures coming my way. I now know that I am intelligent, capable, beautiful and worthy of the talents that I have. I know that I can achieve absolutely anything I set my mind to. I can't turn back time, but I can live my life differently and on my terms from here on out. Whoever is reading this story, I want you to know that you are special. You are incredible. You are worthy of love. You are worthy of success, and I hope and pray that you reach out and face your fears and keep pushing forward. You are beautiful and strong. This is your sign.