



PEER PERSPECTIVE
AUGUST 2019

Freedom and Recovery

Freedom is a concept I felt as though I lost when I was diagnosed with mental illness. Freedom from stigma, doing things independently, having my dream job, being financially stable and independent, having my voice heard and input with my treatment were all things I felt as though I had or would lose with this “label”. I started to realize, after a long and emotional process through the stages of grief, that my freedoms were not taken from me. I just needed to be pro active in healing my brain.

Now I know I will be living with medications my entire life but healing the brain to get to the state of recovery that was most comfortable for me became priority. It was tough because I had old habits that were not healthy. As I started to taste what recovery felt like, little by little, my old habits became set backs to my recovery instead of ways to cope that were unhealthy. I realized my brain was hurt and it needed to heal without habits that were hurting my brain even more.

As I advanced toward making the right choices, I could then gain some independence of working for financial stability, I gained friends that could trust me instead of me being a bad influence in their lives. I could trust myself that I would make the right and sound decisions when doing things independently, and I was able to monitor my own body to know what medications were needed and when. I realized my “Dream Job” was negotiable as in I could enjoy many different occupations. I was able to achieve goals now that I was more dependable.

All of this came back to me after the grieving process, slowly. If I kept plugging away at “Healing the Brain” I went forward with independence gaining freedom and that is recovery to me.

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We are the evidence; We hold the hope.