

Ricky Johnson, Jr. touches Lives one day at a time

A Testament to Faith

I knew **Ricky Johnson** for a long time. I grew up with him playing ball as a kid on the ball-fields of Ep. 'Rabbit' was a good ballplayer and a kind soul. I've known **Ricky Johnson, Jr.** about as long. Although I didn't play ball with Rick, there was the common interaction small town folks have with one another. I knew of the good side of Ricky, Jr, too. As well as the bad.

What I am today is proud to call him friend. A brother. A man who I look up to. I have asked him many times to be a contributing writer on kpkronicle.com We talk daily. And, have for months since the death of his son, Landon. His passage through the dark and difficult times has inspired thousands, if not nearing the tens of thousand in outreach with his testimony of the struggle. It is real. It is raw and it happens with each and every one us.

Ricky makes my life brighter each time we talk. I know it will yours, too.

****EdNote:** This is an introductory interview with Rick. In the future, he will contribute his thoughts as he seems fit. They will be the best thing you read all day, I assure.

*****Below** are the questions and answers of **#7Q's** on the **#TheKron**

#1 - Ricky, what has led you to be so open and honest on Facebook. The transparency and raw emotions you write about seem to touch people in a special way.?

"The reason I am so open is because I am real and my past is real. Life can be ugly and there is no use sugar coating the truth. Life is not a fairy tale. Bad things can easily happen to good people. I am raw with my words because I feel that is usually the best way to get through to someone who is lost. My words are gritty because the pain I experienced by my own hand and that of life was torment. There is no way around it."

#2 - When did you serve your country and where.? Why ?

"I served in the United States Marine Corps from 99-03. The reason I decided to serve is because I needed some structure and guidance. I felt like the Marine Corps offered what I was looking for. I didn't realize until later how selfless of a decision it was. I was willing to die for freedoms then the same as I am today. I love our country.

#3 What are you doing now; in terms of competitive weight lifting?

My wife and I workout often. That is our sanity and passion. We enjoy seeing one another achieve goals and we enjoy pushing one another to get better. Julie and I compete on a power lifting team here in Lake Ozark named the Midwest Warriors. We enjoy the team environment, positive atmosphere and the camaraderie. After my son passed I needed something to channel what I was going through and I found that with the weight room and God.

#4 What are your ambitions for the future?

My ambitions for the future are rather simple. I strive to be better today than I was yesterday. My passion is fitness and helping people in general. If I could somehow intertwine those two things, that would be a dream for me.

#5 How bad was your past?

My past was pretty sketchy. A lot of substance abuse. Meth, pills, and alcohol. I have three DWI's and two drug charges. I have two felonies. My substance abuse led to a lot of bad decisions. I stole, lied, and basically everything else that comes with it. I have been incarcerated in jail and prison. Completed felony probation and paid out over \$12,000 to the state in court costs and fines. I wronged a lot of people and I am thankful for those who have forgiven me.

#6 What would you tell people that needed help; how they can reach out; where they can find

help?

I get asked this often. I know it is cliché' but admitting to yourself you have a problem is the first step. Ask yourself are you willing to do what it takes to get out of the life you are leading. The mistake I see 99% of the people who relapse make, is they will go back to the same environment and expect a different result. Sobriety is not easy, it takes work like anything that is gonna be successful. As far as where to go, I would contact my doctor or a mental health facility. I am not a professional and I am speaking from my personal experience. My treatments were court mandated.

#7 I know you - a little - know your heart and soul more - but, I also know you are not political. However, for the #Krons sake, the question must be asked. Who are you for in 2016

I do not vote and I am not political but if I voted it would be for Donald Trump. To me, he is the lesser of the two evils. I am a believer in whatever will be, will be.

Final Follow up ~ Rick, you lost your son to suicide; a dear friend of yours, lost her Life last night. Is there anything you wanna say; relate to those who are in pain and in need of comfort in this

trying time?

When tragedies like suicide come about, there really are no words I can give to someone that will ease what the families are feeling. If we knew the answers then we could maybe prevent it. I struggle with my son's decision every day. The only thing that comforts me is that I know he is no longer suffering and I no longer have to worry.