

JulesRules #2

Former Marine opens up

Talks of the path that led to his salvation

*As noted: *Ricky Johnson, Jr.* is a self made man. A person who has lived the Life of struggle and has emerged on the other side. He opens up to tell anyone and everyone that there is a way out. Follow your heart and a strong belief in **God** has helped him persevere.

***#7Q's on #theKron

#1 - There are times, I'm sure, when Like everyone else you feel down...how do you rally yourself?

How do I rally myself? I always keep in mind, no matter what I am going through I have been through worse. My life has revolved around adapting and over coming. I have had to pick myself up several times and it has become part of who I am. I am not a self pity guy and I refuse to develop a "poor me" mentality. It helps that I have a wife who encourages people for a living and I have a strong faith in God. No matter what happens, I tell myself things will be okay.

#2 - What about the people who say negative things on a post of yours; how do you respond to those things?

Negativity is to be expected. When you are doing bad, some will love it. When you are doing well, some will try to tear you down. If I agreed with what everyone said or did, I would not be being true to myself. My response to the negativity is rather simple. If a person can not handle the truth of what I experienced, we can agree to disagree and part ways. I appreciate friends, relationships, and responses. However I will never beg a person to like me or accept me. I prefer to get along with everyone.

#3 What do you do to stay sober and clean?

What do I do to stay clean and sober? I have had to adjust and reconfigure much of my life. My greatest lessons were learned through pain and struggle. I never forget where I was at and I will do whatever I have to not to return to it. It was a living hell. For me, there is no having the occasional drink or taking a pill just because I am having a bad day. The company I choose to keep, if they are new to my life, I make sure they know who I am and where I stand with substance abuse. I was told in a meeting one time that relapse is part of recovery. It is not for me. Telling me I can relapse and it will be okay is like giving me an excuse to go back one more time. I surround myself with people who I trust will have my best interest. I keep a small circle.

#What about your dog? What's his worth?

My dog's worth? Ah man, my dog is like a little person. It was Julie's idea for us to get him because I spent so much time alone. He is actually the first pet I have ever had where I had to raise and take care of by myself. I enjoy him.

#5 How; when and why did you become hopeless....

I became hopeless several times. I have been to food pantries to eat. I lived in a rescue mission. I spent close to three years homeless, bouncing from couch to couch. I was so lost in an addiction I did not see any light. I couldn't keep money or food because I was too busy feeding an addiction. I was away from my son and away from my family. I gave the state control of my life and when you do that, it is hard to come out of. I wanted to lead a different life but I really didn't know how. I had no dignity or self respect left and when that goes away, hopelessness sets in.

#6 Who do you Look up to?

Who do I look up to? My dad, Darrell Jones, no question. I put that man through a living hell and he never turned his back to me and he should have many times. I won't put his business out here but he has been through much more than me in his life. I have never heard him complain once. If I can be half of what he is, I would be somebody.

#7 Isn't staying positive...even when the chips are down, paramount to standing back up?

Yes staying positive was key for me to get back up. The Marine Corps incorporated with events in my life proved to me that I could push myself past what I thought was possible. I believe if your mind leads then your body will follow. If you look for negative, usually that is what you will find and you will eventually find yourself in a rut. Don't get me wrong, there were several days that I didn't know if I was gonna make it but I kept telling myself I would be okay. By the grace of God and the support of others, I am here.

Final Follow up - If you had one person - not a family member - to thank them for something small or large; who would that be and why?

I don't want to complicate this but I thank God every day. God has a way of giving and taking while keeping us humble. I don't push my beliefs on others but I know what works for me. I have never questioned God's plan in my life and I have never blamed him or anyone else for my own misfortunes. I believe God let me experience what I have in preparation for

something greater. Through major losses, I have learned to appreciate small blessing while hoping to bless others.

Ricky Johnson, Jr. is living the dream in Lake Ozark, Mo., with his beautiful wife, Julie, and their wonderful mutt, Mick. It's easy to reach him on Facebook and he welcomes the opportunity to share his testimony.

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