

## **Where would I be without Courage and JONAH?**

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My name is David DeJiacomo and I have struggled with same sex attraction since Junior High School. However, I did not start having sex with men until my mid 30's which was the time I first entered College. There I met a professor who identified as gay. Before long, we were sexually involved. Our first date was at a bathhouse and it went downhill from there. Having been brought into the gay subculture, my initial thought was to begin looking for a lifelong partner within the gay world; however, it never happened. Most of the gay identified people I knew were very promiscuous and did not seek to settle down with one person for a lifetime.

My gay friends supplied me with more than an accurate supply of porn. Soon I was sailing into a sea of porn addiction (and masturbation) which in turn fueled greater depression, social isolation, and decreased productivity.

My days were often spent at the bathhouses where I would slither from one cubicle to another, like a snake, hoping someone would give me some kind of affection. I was always hoping to meet that one special someone. But it never happened. The weekend began and ended with visits to gay bars and gay strip clubs. Those locations gave me unlimited access to sex but no access to true relationships.

There was never any love in my relationships. For many years, I entered into several different domestic partnerships. Several of them were laced with abuse. If we had been in a civil union or some sort of legally recognized relationship, I suspect I would have had to pay something akin to alimony in order to leave. I am happy that there were no legal ties involved so I was not blocked in my ability to go onto the next one.

One of the more memorable events during this time frame were the trips to a male only nudist colony at Camp Gaya, Kansas: the nights were laced with plenty of both sex and dope. To my dismay, I discovered that the majority of the men were supposedly in some form of "committed" relationship. If there was a reality show based on what I experienced in Kansas, it would be called "Gay Cougars on the Prowl." One of the men with whom I traveled to Kansas privately told me how "nice" it was of these men to go to the Kansas campsite, have unsafe sex, and in turn give their wife or same-sex partner a sexually transmitted disease.

Several years ago, I made a decision to leave this life behind. After making that decision, I spoke to one of the priests I knew in the Catholic Church. He advised me to seek spiritual help from Courage, an apostolate of the Catholic Church. He also advised me to contact JONAH, a Jewish

based ministry that helps people of all faiths without proselytizing their own faith, in order to receive an appropriate referral to a counselor who had "been there and done that."

Thank the Lord, I did so and with the assistance of my JONAH referral counselor and the spiritual assistance from Courage, I am now able to experience a much happier life. I had weekly telephone sessions with my JONAH referral counselor for about 4 years and at the same time through Courage I received continuous guidance and encouragement how to deepen my prayer life through meditation and my interior communion with God. These processes complemented each other and immensely helped me to grow into the man I am today.

I am so grateful for the psychological advice provided to me through this JONAH affiliated counselor and the spiritual assistance I received through Courage, as well as the Oblates of Mary and the priest at Holy Ghost Church. Because of the work I did, spiritually and psychologically, through my Catholic resources and through JONAH's referral, I am now safely out of the culture of death and have stepped into the culture of life. What a blessing! What a joy! I am so proud of myself now. With the help provided by both JONAH and Courage, I am now both a whole and holy man. My heart, my soul, and my mind can now work together and move in a consistent direction.

I am not telling you my story to hurt anyone choosing to stay in that lifestyle nor to "convert" anyone. I am simply explaining my story and what has been true for me. It has been set forth because I want people to know that I found the so-called gay lifestyle to not be a bed of roses nor did I find it to be for me a happy existence. I am now 62 years old and in looking back at my life, I recognize how much better my life would have been had I chosen earlier in my life to change my sexual orientation. Unfortunately, for so many years, I was totally unaware of the existence of programs where I could find resources. I am bothered by the constant political campaign of gay activists to deny people in the gay community accurate knowledge about the possibilities of change of sexual orientation. Parenthetically, I am also angry at the numerous lawyers who have petitioned courts and legislatures in order to seek "gay marriage" when the reality is that monogamy rarely exists in the gay world. It has little or nothing to do with the reality of gay relationships which are, by nature and inclination, promiscuous.