

R + E Podcast Season 4, Episode 12: Rob's Story

Craig Robertson: Welcome to season four of the Robertson and Easterling podcast. This is Craig Robertson.

Matt Easterling: And I'm Matt Easterling. We want to thank everyone who has listened to our podcast so far. If you haven't already subscribed, please do so on iTunes, Spotify, or your favorite podcast player. Craig and I are having lots of fun producing this show, and we hope that you're enjoying it as much as we are. It's really hard to believe we are already on season four.

Craig Robertson: That's right, Matt. We've really enjoyed sharing the life stories of some great people, and we have even more in store for you for season four. As you know by now, we are board certified family law specialists with one of the most successful boutique law firms in Mississippi. As creative problem solvers, we take a holistic approach to the individual needs of our clients.

Matt Easterling: Joining us again this season are licensed professional counselors, Eva and Roane Hunter from LifeWorks Counseling. We're excited to continue our partnership with Eva and Roane. They provide a unique perspective as we help hurting people with the healing process.

Craig Robertson: We're also excited to introduce two new sponsors for season four Kristi Tidwell and Kelly Engelmann. Kristi is a certified financial planner and the founder of New Path Planning. Kristi's own walk through divorce, coupled with 20 years of experience make her a perfect advocate for others on a similar path. And Kelly is the founder of Enhanced Wellness Living: Mississippi's leading functional medicine clinic. Her team's food first approach to healing, along with a variety of lifestyle and regenerative treatment options, sets you on a journey to take control of your health and live life well.

Matt Easterling: So now that we've told you what to expect this season sit back, relax, and take a deep breath. Everything's gonna be ok. You found us, and what you're about to hear is going to help.

Eva Hunter: Hey, this is Eva Hunter from LifeWorks Counseling. At Life Works, our counselors seek to integrate healthy faith based principles with sound clinical skills. Whether you're struggling in a relationship or have feelings that hinder your ability to be all you are created to be. One of our trained counselors can help. We seek to partner with you as our client to find the freedom to live the life God intended for you. We offer our experience, strength, and hope to promote healthy relationships built on intimacy and trust. Life works counseling the science and soul of connection.

Kristi Tidwell: Divorce is the largest financial transaction in most people's lives. Unfortunately, the decisions surrounding divorce are having to be made when emotions are highest. Making choices about assets can feel intimidating, especially when you're not in the best frame of mind. Make sure you know how what you do today will affect your financial future. My name is Kristi Tidwell and I'm with New Path Planning. I'll use my 20 years of financial planning experience to

help educate and advise you during every stage of the divorce process. Visit New Path Planning for more information.

Craig Robertson: So one of the things that we love to do on podcast is to just share life stories. And Roane we are often -me and my family law practice and you and your counseling practice- we are meeting with people at a transition point in the story.

Roane Hunter: Absolutely, I often say that one of the things, that really what we actually do, is we're just kind of collecting stories along the way. Right, and then certainly outside of our counseling practice -the ministry that I love and you're a part of is just our men's coaching weekend- AKA Deer Camp community, that has developed here. These men's coaching weekends that we do six times a year and at those weekends we're just really working with story. And so it's so cool to have Rob here with us and looking forward to hearing your story, Rob.

Craig Robertson: Yeah, so we have Rob Lohman here with us today, and Rob has a fantastic story. Rob, thanks for being with us today.

Rob Lohman: I'm excited to spend some time with you guys and just like you said, tell stories and just God's amazing grace through it all. -and just the direction we go. And it's definitely been a roller coaster, a loopy loop ride, but we're here today still standing, so that's a good thing.

Craig Robertson: So Rob, tell us your story.

Rob Lohman: Yeah well, you know my journey involves, I'll give people some connection points. So if you're listening, maybe you can identify these things. Divorce, substance abuse, suicide addiction, incarceration, hope, restoration, transformation, and just a new trajectory in life. Assuming people could probably connect with one or five of those different points.

Roane Hunter: Wait wait Rob, I think you're telling my story. Are you telling your story? Wait a minute-

Rob Lohman: I dunno whose story it is, but it's somebody's story out there, so I love it. I love it. Yeah. -So you don't mind if I tell your story, do you?

Roane Hunter: No no, go right ahead.

Rob Lohman: Okay so for me, I grew up in, I'm a Midwest boy, so I grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Although I live in Denver, Colorado right now.

I love it out here, totally God's country, just beautiful scenery. So I love it, it's kinda like life a little bit, you know. The scenery always changes and your going to land where you're gonna land. And my journey was I grew up in a Christian home good parents. We were kinda, we didn't really dive a lot into our faith and who we were.

It was just kind of, we did church. -and went to church. Did the, you know, Sunday school did all those kind of aspects. But one thing that was always around, which I did know as a kid is why I think it's important for people to share some of their family history with kids. To kind of know from where they have come and trying to break those generational sins along the way in those generational patterns.

But I have alcoholics and addicts on both sides of my family, mom's side and dad's side. No clue about that growing up. All I saw was the allure of alcohol, and the kinda the fun people were having. I never saw collateral damage. I never saw jail. I never saw death, abuse, any of those kind of things. But it was, a lot of those stories were kind of out there.

-But in our family, that was just kind of something that was happening on both sides. So I kind of got the double whammy. And the cool thing is that my mom's parents, my mom's dad G- Pops he died sober many many years- I think he was 10 years sober when he died. My Aunt Carol, who's an amazing woman she was like my second mother. She died with I think 35, 40 years of sobriety, and just sobriety and recovery and addiction are all around me. But growing up it was a allure of alcohol and it was like that looks like fun, I wanna have some. And when you're kind of the goofy off wired kid that wears braces and glasses and- alcohol at age 14, really put me on a a trajectory of addictions for the next 15 years. And it was up and down and sideways. So my first drunk, I remember when I was 14 years old, and it really just had me at, as I go opening those three cans at a Christian youth event. Hey, you know that was a good place to have my first drunk.

Guy brought some beer and said, "Hey Lohman, you wanna go through the bushes here?" I have a six pack beer and two girls. I'm like, "Let's do it." It was really in that moment, I just kind of fell in love with the effect of alcohol, and it was a powerful journey from there on. And may I ask any questions along the way too? Cause it was kinda like, I'm sure a lot of your listeners, they start young, right?

Roane Hunter: Oh yeah.

Rob Lohman: You hear about addictions and life change starting from, you know, younger formative years and the more and more I'm into the addiction field now. -cause I'm an interventionist and recovery coach, podcaster myself. So many people's stories start from, well when I was five, when I was eight, when I was 10. Well, what the heck's happening? We were kids with non-ill intentioned parents. But it's just, they're doing the best they can and we just kind of drift away or drift towards or something like that too. And if you wanna gimme a counseling session to this Roane...(laughs)

Roane Hunter: I'm just with you. I got you by two years on that first drunk. I was 12, so I get it.

Craig Robertson: You talked about your first major experience with alcohol at 14. What happened then?

Rob Lohman: You know, it was funny. It's actually ironic, so I just started wearing contacts again in my life right now about a week ago. So when this happened, I didn't think about this cause I wasn't expecting to tell that part about the contact piece.

But that night my mom looks at me when I get in the car after this party. -And she looks at the back. She said, "What is wrong with your eyes? They are so red." And my first thought was, "Oh mom, it's these stupid contacts, I just started wearing" and she goes, "Oh, we need to get those out." And it was like, Bam!

Got away with it. Right? Contacts. So then, contacts bugged me for a while after that too. But it was that moment I got away with, I lied. I lied, and I didn't have a remorse for doing it. It was just like I had to cover it up and it was bam -there I was. And then from there it was continual lie story. I mean, I was a big swimmer. I loved swimming. I was on the swim team in high school, and I was your senior class president. I had teachers in the kind of palm on my hand in a way, so I just kinda got away with stuff. And then I remember senior year, I had a couple wreck car incidences and issues and minors in possession, but I just never had any consequences.

Meantime, here's this Christian lifestyle. -and we're going on like the Young Life ski trip or a church ski trip, and I along with another guy would bring the flask on the ski trip, right? So that was kind of always this,"can I get away with it" type thing. And after you kind of get away and get away with it for a while, I just kind of convinced myself I could get away with it.

But I remember one of my big decisions in high school senior year, I was just thinking I had to make a decision cause I was a really good swimmer, and I was a really good drinker. -and a lot of us would drink before we went to swim practice. You're not supposed to go swimming after like 30 minutes after you eat. Well, you're supposed to go swimming 30 minutes after you drink, I guess was a formula we came up with and I had to make the decision keep swimming or keep drinking. I never went to the Olympics, so I kept drinking, and I think I made it to the Olympics in drinking. They should have one of those out there -and you know, graduated high school, went to college, become a doctor wanted to be just like my grandfather bapaw, who never drank alcohol in his whole life. He delivered like half of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Just a great man. So alcoholism was not his thing. But I always wanna be like bapaw but then again, alcohol and potential in the same situation. Alcohol won every time. -and I graduated college for the first time in our family history under four years or four years I guess, and graduated by the skin of my teeth. And again, I got in trouble a lot in college, but I always got away with it. I struggled with my faith from having sex with multiple partners through college,

-Drinking, gambling had become a huge thing of mine from 15 to 29. and it was funny, I just ran into a friend of mine at a conference I was just at in Florida, who I went to high school with, and I was like, "Holy cow," I haven't seen you since high school. And we talked about, man, when I started drinking from 14 to 29. But I've been free from gambling for three and a half years, so it's 15 to 47 or 46 and a half was when gambling was part of my life. And man, your pleasure center completely jacked up in my life. So no wonder, I kind went various ways in my life.

Craig Robertson: Roane, talk a little bit about that because Rob's talking about gambling as an addiction, and when we think of addiction. We think of a substance. We think of alcohol. We think of drug, but one can be as addicted to a behavior as they are to a drug?

Roane Hunter: Oh yeah, It's any of what we call process addictions that everybody, when you say addiction, it's drugs and alcohol. Which certainly those alter the chemical composition of your brain and your body. And then these process addictions, it just has to do, as Rob said, "with man, it's the dopamine, it's the adrenaline, it's the rush, and it alters the brain and we begin to crave it." And it absolutely can become a compulsion. Oftentimes I call it a distress reduction behavior kinda separating a little bit from drugs and alcohol. Because that's what all of these things really are doing. We're trying to reduce the distress, the anxiety that we feel, and it works very effectively. Sex, drugs, rock and roll.

And so, we can kinda like. It sounds like you Rob, you were an equal opportunity addict. You know, and I tell people, I became a specialist cause I came to Jesus when I was 20 years old. And I mean, by all rights should have been an alcoholic. And so I became a specialist and went underground in what I term classic sexual addiction. And that became my absolute drug of choice until I got into recovery and began to do my work around that. But yeah, these things, man, they hook us.

Rob Lohman: Yeah, they do. And and that's the thing about, I don't think people understand, cause I never knew what a process addiction was until I got into the recovery field and professional field. But the unique thing is substances, we can take them out. You know, I can't get drunk if I don't drink.

Roane Hunter: That's right, you can put it back on the shelf.

Rob Lohman: Yeah, and I can't get high if I don't like shoot up. Right so, I gotta put something in my body. But when you talk about gambling addiction, I had a very unhealthy relationship with money, which you'll hear a little bit later in my story. And then food addiction, we still have to eat or we're gonna die. And sex, porn addiction, infidelity like we still have to have relationships with people. And so those three things also in my understanding is they stem from the same part of the brain. The pleasure center.

Roane Hunter: Oh yeah...

Rob Lohman: And what we still have to do those things- We have to eat, use money, and have relationships. I personally feel like it can be a much harder battle than substance abuse, but no matter what, the battle sucks either way.

Roane Hunter: Yeah no doubt. And I totally agree with you as you said. I mean, those things are just intrinsic to us as humans, right? I mean, I can't stop eating. Well I guess I can, but I'm gonna die, right? I can take the alcohol, I can put the whiskey back up on the shelf. Um I'm not gonna die from that. But these man, sex and certainly the money, gambling, cause that's in the money category. I mean, we're using money all day long in some form or fashion. And then certainly food and man, those to me are always- especially the sex and money in the, or well I

guess all three, but sex and food in the Christian world those are the two that are kind of the easiest to hide i guess in a way. I always say you can't be a crackhead and be a pastor. They're gonna figure that out pretty quick, right? But yeah it's like man, especially with the kind of the sex thing and eating. I mean the obese pastor pushing everybody outta the way to be the first one at the buffet. Nobody talks about that- and then the porn and sex thing, man, you can hide that for some period of time, but it's always coming out. It always gets discovered. What man covers God uncovers.

Craig Robertson: Rob you say the climax of your drinking career happened on June 7th, 2001. What happened on that day?

Rob Lohman: Yep so just take all crazy drunk stories, bring them all up to fast speed here, and gambling and self-loathing. And over time, I started really hating who I was becoming, or I had become. I guess let's say that. So suicide ideation had been kicking up quite a bit. I was living in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I had had a good alcoholic marriage. You know, I drank and function. She drank and didn't- and over time, I wanted more than what our marriage was giving us. So, it was a very short lived marriage, got divorced, and then I just kind of was like free Willy again.

It was like, just go for it. And so it was again, suicide ideation, self-loathing, believing all the lies of the enemy. You suck, you failed in those things. But when you actually see yourself die in a vision and you're driving down the road and you see your car veer off the side of the road and hit something and blow up. And your like "Wow" that is not normal to see that.

But you can't tell anybody cause what's gonna happen? You're gonna lock me up and send me to a psych ward and say this guy's crazy. Well I guarantee if we all took a video camera and projected our thoughts on the wall, and we walked around society. Nobody would talk to anybody, or it would just all be normalized in a weird way.

But this time it was really getting bad, and I started really hating who I was. And I was hanging out in a bar in Fort Wayne in Indiana, and you know, music, girls, I drank and drove eight nights a week. That's just what we did. We just went out. I was, I guess, successful real estate guy too in Fort Wayne and just busy doing life. But this night, it was different cause all of a sudden the music, everything got completely dead silent. And I audibly hear the words, "you're done". And then everything got loud again. And I looked at my buddy, Sean O'Brien and I was looking around the bar. I said, "Sean, I think I'm finally done drinking. I'm going home." and he goes, "Okay, we'll see you at the bar tomorrow night." Laughed at me a little bit like yeah whatever. And I had never said that before in my entire life. Like, I'm finished drinking, like never. So, I drove home that night, and it was kinda like two people driving in my car. The guy that feel like his whole life just changed, and the guy who was really drunk and you know myself, myself, and myself were driving home. -and next thing I knew I had walked up 12 stairs to my one bedroom apartment in Fort Wayne. And I had a workout bench in my living room cause that's what bachelors do, right? You gotta workout bench, you gotta look good. The next thing I knew, I had put 350 pounds on the barbell and laid down on my workout bench, picked up that barbell, and just dropped it across my chest. And that was gonna be my out, no plan just on autopilot, just

going through the motions, right? And the next thing I know, and again, I could not lift that much weight.

And now when I look at it, God carries the weight of the world, and he was carrying the weight for me, right then cause I had unhinged my elbows. And the next thing I know, I'm just like in time suspense, if you will. And my dog comes over and nudges my leg with his head and starts looking at me with that puppy dog face tilting his head like Dad, what are you doing?

And my first eye was -Holy cow, who's gonna feed you tomorrow? And then I started thinking about my mom and my brother and just the good stuff. And I'm like, What am I doing? You know, and God's just like -Okay, you done? All right, and then God and I put that barbell back on the rack, and I can hear it hit the rack as I told the story every single time.

And I completely changed that night...It was the first time I slept in peace in I don't know 15 to 20 years and woke up the next morning just feeling like a totally different guy. Next thing I knew, I meant to call my Aunt Carol, who'd been sober 24 years at the time. But I accidentally called my parents. Parents never quit praying for your loved ones because that was my mom's answered prayer of a very long time.

I would reach out for help not knowing how bad I was. I was suicidal and that stuff. It was just, I wasn't operating at full capacity. And my aunt took me to an AA meeting that day in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the back of a bar. And I met a bunch of people that were happy to be alive. I saw God on the wall. I'm like, Okay God I'm back and I don't wanna die today.

I didn't go through detox or withdrawal. Anything like I'd never ever touched booze in my entire life. It was just gone and has not returned not even through the chaos of recovery in prison and stuff. We can get into in a minute if you want, but it was. The freedom to not use substances anymore had completely been given to me.

Kelly Englemann: Hi, I'm Kelly Englemann a family nurse practitioner and functional medicine provider. I founded Enhanced Wellness Living Mississippi's leading functional wellness clinic with the understanding that one's healthcare plans must be congruent with their beliefs and values. At Enhanced Wellness Living, treatment is focused on you, as a whole, rather than just looking at your symptoms or what particular disease state you have.

My team and I partner with you to understand the root cause of your symptoms, and educate you on creating a lifestyle of wellness, energy, vitality, and longevity. Combining my food first approach to healing with inspiration, education, integrity, empathy, and balance. We empower you to take ownership of your health for your life.

Enhanced Wellness Living is proud to offer a variety of lifestyle and regenerative treatment options including: sexual wellness programs. Take control of your health. Live life well with Enhanced Wellness Living.

Stephanie: We hope you're enjoying this episode of season four of the Robertson and Easterling podcast. I'm Stephanie, the voice on the other end of the phone, when you call. If you

think you need to speak to one of our attorneys, you can request a consultation from our website or simply call the office. Getting legal help is not only the best way to take control of your future. It will give you the clarity needed to feel better you owe it to yourself, and more importantly, to your children to take initiative. Be brave. And now please sit back and enjoy the second half of our show.

Craig Robertson: We're here with Rob Lohman who's been telling his story, and he talked about having his first drink when he was 14 years old. -and the whirlwind of things that happened failed marriage and culminating on June 7th, 2001, when a suicide attempt was interrupted by his dog, Jake. And it's a light came on in that moment, and things were changed he was taken to his first AA meeting and things started to be different. So Rob, talk about life from that point.

Rob Lohman: Yeah. And different It was... I was a different man. I mean, it's the faith I had as a kid just kinda came back and interestingly enough, one of my favorite songs before that happened was by Pirates of the Mississippi.

Roane Hunter: Ahhh..

Rob Lohman: Called "Feed Jake." I don't know if you know that song, but it's like "Feed Jake. He's been a good dog. If I die before I wake feed Jake." And I was like, Man, I used to play song all the time in early recovery. Just grateful that I was alive and he was just an awesome dog. And so I really believe God revealed himself to me through my dog, Jake.

So yeah I mean, recovery was great. I was "Mr. Recovery" just got involved in recovery meetings and chair meetings. -did service work, got plugged back into church and just was thinking, "Okay, God. In recovery literature, you say, I can do anything as long as my spiritual conditioning is good."

Anything I said? Okay, so I was living in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I ended up moving to Charlotte, North Carolina. I went out there to get into real estate again that didn't work out, but I said, "Hey, you know what?" I just went to an AA meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina while I was visiting and stood up and said, "My name's Rob. Alcoholic.

I'm thinking about moving here." And I was getting business cards left and right, left and right, and said, Hey man, if you need a job, need place to live, come here. And I'm thinking, I'm going to Charlotte, North Carolina, cause there's community. So, I moved to Charlotte. And you know, again I just wanna say this real quick.

Now today in my life, I don't identify myself as an alcoholic cause I've been freed through my identity in Christ. But then in the time and the culture, I was with my people that were helping me get better. And so I'm so grateful for AA what it did for me and my sponsors and everything in the program, what it taught me; it was monumental for me. A guy that needed it because when you start drinking at 14; you stop maturing. So I'm a 14 year old 29 year old, very immature, and so just did the recovery journey and did a bunch of other cool stuff. I ended up going to Rome, Italy to run a marathon and honor my grandpa with team diabetes. So a guy that

used to steal money, people gave money too to go do, my gambling wasn't a big deal at this. And then I ended up becoming a college career counselor and ended up writing my first book. Ended up doing my first documentary and just doing some really cool stuff to inspire people to be better at who they currently are. -and I wasn't as outspoken about my faith then it was in me and it was through me, and people knew I was a believer.

And then I'll say, and then I got and then I got married. It's a joke, but my life began to change in 2006, when I did get married. Cause again, I was very emotionally immature still. And I was single, when I found sobriety, found my freedom. Now, I am in this marriage that we used to be told a lot my girlfriends that I feel like were just roommates even though I wasn't living with people, but it was like where's the depth?

I'm like, What do you mean? I didn't understand the whole intimacy connection thing.

Roane Hunter: Oh yeah.

Rob Lohman: I was just a nice, fun guy that loved people, but I was very not deep in my relationships with females. And that played out. -And so I ended getting married to my wife. Our son was born the next year in 2007. He's a little mini me, very healing to my own journey of having like a little mini me as a kid, and just seeing me that him. We act the same as just crazy. And he's 14 now, and I started drinking at 14. -and I have my own fears. I've projected on him a little bit. And then one day he says, "Dad, I'm not you."

Roane Hunter: Mmmm

Rob Lohman: I was like, dang, you're right. Okay, cool. All right. So that was a good moment. My son's very wise. He had to be because as the story continues. My daughter was born in 2010, and so she just had her 12th birthday. She's amazing. And in 2012, I had a major mental breakdown. So, no substances- No marijuana, no acid, no mushrooms, no alcohol, but there was still gambling and dopamine issues. -and being just regulated all the time with caffeine and sugar and poor diet, but working out too. But I had started dealing with suicide ideation again in 2011. So, I was going to lose my insurance agency. So now, I failed cause I lost a business.

I had failed because my wife had kind of reminded me along the way. I wasn't doing a great job of providing, so now I failed as a father. I mean a husband. And I just felt like I was failing my kids as a father, cause I was just all over the place. So the perfect storm for a mental breakdown 2011, November happens, lose my agency. My wife quits her job December 2011. 2012 and here I am in the evening of I watched this movie with my family. *Seven days in Utopia*. Have you guys seen it before?

Roane Hunter: Oh yeah.

Rob Lohman: Okay, let me ask this, Roane. What is your takeaway from that movie? What was it about?

Roane Hunter: Just kind of finding yourself and any movie with Robert Duvall is a great movie.

Rob Lohman: And it's a story of redemption, right?

Roane Hunter: Yeah.

Rob Lohman: He lost his way. His dad berated him, kind of told me as a piece of junk and stuff, and he just beat him down. -and then his car breaks down to this little city, and he finds himself again. -and it's a beautiful end of the story. But when you're a guy that deals with self-loathing and hating yourself and things, which part of the movie did I identify with was yhe guy that didn't measure up.

Roane Hunter: Oh, yeah.

Rob Lohman: And I'm pretty sure a lot of your listeners can identify with the "I don't measure up aspect" of it. And so because I had created these false narratives in my own head that I don't measure up to my wife, or I haven't measured up as a businessman, and that's the message that resonated with me. So my family goes to bed that night, and I'm sitting on the couch working on a side job.

Cause I had lost my agency a few months before, and just working on trying to find a job. I relate this night to a man's brains like a waffle; you can pour a syrup in it and then when it fills up; it goes to the next little square, right? And so what I feel happened is my waffle turned into a pancake, and everything melted together that night. And in a mental blackout of a house that was very disorganized, which now I know clutter really bothers me.

Roane Hunter: Mm-hmm.

Rob Lohman: I didn't know that then. Then with some OCD stuff going on. Everything just collapsed. And then the mental blackout, I ended up grabbing a box of matches, and let some boxes on fire on my covered patio. Similar mental blackout to 2001, when I found sobriety and tried to kill myself with a barbell, right?

Roane Hunter: Yeah.

Rob Lohman: No plan, I was just like driven by the subconscious, right? And so that night I ended up lighting some boxes on fire in my covered patio, and fire did what fire does and spread. And so I had to run upstairs and rip my family outta their bed. My daughter was two, my son was four. And like "get up, the house is on fire". And run outside and get my neighbors up cause it was a townhouse. And we went outside you guys, and it was literally like 40 foot flames cause the gas meter had melted and exploded and just burned everything inside of our townhouse. And there's another moment of clarity in my life, like how in the heck did I get here?

Roane Hunter: Hmm.

Rob Lohman: And that began a serious road of healing, discovery, healing with my wife and myself, and really figuring out like, okay how did I get to this point? And I don't ever want to go back there again.

Roane Hunter: I think I've shared part of my story with you before and, when we've talked about our books. You know part of my story is I went through a major clinical depression. Treatment resistant, drugs didn't touch it, and it was over nine months starting with anxiety. It was all job related. This was, I'd been in recovery probably I don't know 15 years at that point, but it was job related. It's kinda the perfect storm. Boys were going to college transitioning in that role. Company gets bought out. Things are changing at work. We are Celebrate Recovery ministry leaders. I'm already in graduate school doing my master in counseling work, and man I hit the wall. It was not sex addiction related. None of that. It was just stress, pressure, and living in Atlanta, that'll do it to you. Yeah, I had a suicide attempt after nine months of no relief. I took a brand new prescription of Xanax and drank a half a fifth of Kahlua. Obviously, I am a suicide survivor. I always say me and Jonah, right? He just had them throw him overboard. So man, I certainly identify with that. And so appreciate you sharing that part of your story because I had so much shame around that. God's done a healing work around that, and now I can joke about it and talk about it, but boy that was hard. That's a hard one.

Craig Robertson: You shared about the night that you lit the match and flames engulfed your home and the panic and chaos associated with that moment. Take us forward from there. What happened after that?

Rob Lohman: Community, that happened after that. I mean, I ran back to my Christian community. I ran back to Pastor Don McReavy, and I remember Foothills Bible Church had given us some checks to help us. We just lost everything. No one knew what happened, right, until way down the road. But I just could never cash those checks, because I knew what I did. And we went and sat down with Don McReavy once I kind of came clean to my wife what had happened. Because I lied about it for a couple weeks, I didn't know what was gonna happen to me. I wanted to protect my family. I sure as heck wasn't gonna tell the truth cause I didn't really even understand what had just happened.

And then I got clarity, and then came clean to my wife. But Pastor Don McReavy still one of my mentors today, he walked me through Neil Anderson's work, *Victory over the Darkness* every week. He's like getting into my office every week. We're gonna go through this, and I'm like Oh my gosh. Yeah, I love this. *Who I am in Christ*, I need to dive into that, and then Chad Brigman over at Red Rocks Church brought me in once a month. I went back and just talked to me and counseled me and went back to AA sought therapist and psychiatrist cause I was under investigation. So I had to go see some psychiatrists had failed lie detector test, which I thought I could beat.

I remember going into this thing, and it was to my attorney cause he wanted to see if I was lying. And I go into this thing and he goes, I remember going into it. I said, God, just get me through this one. And, and we can make it through this experience. And my attorney said, "Is your name even Rob?" It was so bad.

You know, I totally confessed to authorities what I had done because I had to walk in truth. Now I realized I had to walk in truth, no matter what the consequences were, that God would take

care of us. And so I did, and I confessed to what had happened. And it wasn't until six months later that they arrested me.

And I fell through the cracks. Something happened, and we tried to turn ourselves in, but they wouldn't let us come through the door with my attorney and say, "Hey, here's the story of what happened." So for six months, we just kind of were living life. And then I got arrested big arrest day with 19 felonies and 13 misdemeanors on that day.

But I knew God was in control. I just believed that. And so, even though I had a huge bond of a hundred thousand dollars, my attorney's like, We'll shoot for 50% of it. I don't know. I don't think that's gonna work. The judge reduced it to 25 grand. I got out that day. Eight months later, I got went to court looking at two years of work release to 56 years in prison for that incident. For that match.

Roane Hunter: Wow.

Rob Lohman: Right? And I was like, Okay God, my wife had peace with this cause we just didn't know. And I ended up getting sentenced on two charges to 13 years in prison. Back in 2013. This is 2022, and I'm talking to you guys. So obviously God had a different plan.

Roane Hunter: You're not in prison. We see you on the...

Rob Lohman: Yeah I've been freed. So it was literally 10 and a half months later, I walked out of the minimum security prison here in Delta, Colorado back home. But the thing was, I was gone. My poor wife had to be home and figure out if she was gonna stay with me. Right. And she had her own peace. She went through that saying that's not the guy I married. That's the guy that got lost. So she stayed with me through all this, but while I was gone, I had to figure out like, is the Bible real? Is my relationship with Jesus real? Like I've been a Christian my whole life, but look at my life. Holy cow. My life is, sorry to say it, it kind of sucked. You know? And I'm like, This is what it's about. So I had to learn full surrender and I read 42 books when I was away, while my wife's trying to figure out how do I get groceries? What job am I gonna do? Who's my support? And fortunately the Christian community we had surrounded her and I met a lot of great guys in prison, and I secured who I was in Christ.

And I walked out of there a guy that shouldn't have gotten out, cause they don't let arsonists into halfway houses. God told me as I was reading Mark Patterson's book, *The Circle Maker*. That I would get out in the first round to everyone's dismayed. I was friends with all the officers there, and my case manager like, "Dude, you're not getting outta here on arson charge".

And I got out because my Christian community wrote letters to the halfway house and said, "Hey, we got this guy". And so grateful for family. Grateful for friends. Lost some friends; they came back later. But through all of that, I now have a lot more empathy for others and a lot more compassion. And just know that people that commit crimes and do things. They didn't come out of the womb knowing that they were gonna be sentenced to an arson charge 40 something years later. But I also believe God allows certain things to happen, I've just come to that conclusion for this is. It could have been stopped, but it happened, and I had the opportunity to

step into why. Why did it happen for me, not to me? And I've made the most out of it. And again, come out of it with helping guys all over the country with addiction issues and incarceration struggles, and just being a vessel to say Hey, man...

Roane Hunter: Yeah.

Rob Lohman: Whatever's written on paper is not. The end of the story.

Roane Hunter: Amen. Yeah dude, I always say, nobody walks into a classroom of fifth graders and says, Okay boys, raise your hands. Who wants to grow and be an alcoholic? Who wants to grow and be a drug addict? You know, it's like, I do. I do. I mean, no, it doesn't work that way.

But life happens, but boy, certainly God is good. Even in the chaos, he is with us, and he tells us that. But boy, we have to come to that place of where we really know it. As you say, that's our identity. That's who we are.

Craig Robertson: Rob here in the in the last few minutes that we have, talk about life after that. You said that you had an early release from prison, and that you had turned yourself in and had admitted completely to what had happened. -and there was mercy through that, and you made connection and community through that process. Talk about life today.

Rob Lohman: Yeah, I mean life today is great. My wife and I have worked through a lot cause one thing they don't offer in prison is marriage counseling. -And I still was mad about a lot of things when I came out. So I harbored resentment, I had to work through. And now, my kids are 14 and 12, and they're healthy as heck.

They're playing sports like crazy. We have a great relationship. My son knows the whole story. My daughter not so much yet cause she's just not emotionally ready to hear the story. I just get to do a lot of advocacy work. I do some advocacy work at the state capital here in Colorado for incarcerated people and restitution, and my wife and I get to do some cool stuff together. -and just, I have great community of friends and family and we're healthy. I don't have any complaints today, and I get to speak a lot of places and just share my story and hope and just encourage people that there's more to what's going on right now in the bigger picture.

Roane Hunter: Mm-hmm.

Rob Lohman: I enter people's homes as an interventionist and get to walk through them with addiction stuff.

Craig Robertson: Rob, let me stop you there. Talk about inter being an interventionist. So we've got just a couple of minutes left, but I do want to touch on that a little bit. Talk about the work that you do working in intervention.

Rob Lohman: Yeah, families call me cause there's a struggle in a big sadness in the home, and they don't know how to address it. Sometimes it's a major crisis. Sometimes it's just, my son started smoking pot, and he seems to be doing some things he shouldn't. What do we do? So I

really the phone calls come in or I meet people in the grocery store like, Hey Rob, can I talk to you for a minute?

I'm like yes because my ministry is called Lifted from the Rut Ministry, and that's why I get to do is help lift people outta the ruts. -And so I always seek God's wisdom through all that, but we need help. Let's figure out a real true good solid plan to get the help. Who's gonna be a part of that process? Where are we gonna recommend they go get the help, and then we're gonna offer that help to someone. -And I always say, I'm in the business of helping bring the bottom up to your loved one not letting them crash and hit the bottom. Because then they can look back in the point in time where it say, my family did the best they could on this day of this point in my life.

-And I chose to refuse help and continue to stay on the elevator and go down and crash, or I chose to get help and my life became better. It's kinda like two directions you can go, but if you can offer people a choice, they can look back on that and say, Wow, you really did try to help me. And I just didn't want the help.

Craig Robertson: Bringing the rock bottom to the family.

Rob Lohman: Yeah, I was like to, I say, bring the bottom up to your loved one instead of let them crash and hit the bottom.

Roane Hunter: Love it. That's good.

Craig Robertson: Rob. Thanks man for, um, connecting with us, Tell our listeners how they can learn more about you and the work that you do.

Rob Lohman: Well, here's what I say. If you're hearing this and you're like, Holy cow, I need to talk to you right now, and I mean this sincerely. This is my cell phone number. If you call me and I'll available, I will answer it. If not, leave a message and I'll call you back as quickly as I can. So I'm letting people know that if it's an emergency, call 911, but my number is (970) 331-4469. -And if you just wanna look into more about what I do and check out a bunch of podcasts and videos, and how I can come speak at your church or whatever, you can just go to liftedfromtherut.com.

Craig Robertson: Man. Rob, thanks for connecting with us.

Rob Lohman: Yep. Y'all are awesome. Thank you, and God bless everything you're doing.

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