



A LOVE

*That Transcends
Boundaries*

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Mark had just become a father to an adorable boy when he was brought in to the Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC).

This wasn't the first time Mark had served time in DRC. In his adolescent years, Mark was heavily involved in drugs, though he stayed clean for more than five years after being incarcerated.

Unfortunately, circumstances changed when he fell in love with his wife. They struggled to gain approval from their parents for their relationship.

In spite of this, they Got married. Things went downhill from that point, as they struggled with getting their finances and relationship with their respective in-laws on the right track. This series of events began to take a toll on Mark and paved a way for his relapse. The immense pressure he felt, and his seeming inability to make everyone happy led Mark to feel like a failure, and he succumbed to alcohol and drugs to escape from all his problems. Being on drugs let him become the 'victim', so that people around him would stop making demands of him.

Mark's wife, Callie is 12 years his junior, but they see their marriage and love for each other as one that transcends differences in age. Having had to battle post-natal depression while holding on to a part-time job means life hasn't been easy for Callie, but she chose to stay by Mark's side in spite of the circumstances. She took charge of her situation, seeing a counsellor who helped her through her post-natal depression and finding a job so she could provide for her family. She chose love and their marriage, despite the challenges she faced.

During his time in the DRC and the sessions he had with me, Mark only had one goal – to be free of his addiction to drugs, and the desire to use it as a form of escape and victimize himself. As his case manager, I addressed the challenges that led to his relapse through two types of interventions:

1. Couples counseling addressed conflict management methods, and how to deal with expectations from demanding inlaws who don't like the client's spouse or his/her family
2. Psychoeducation provides coaching for individual stress management, delayed gratification and emergency strategies for when the temptation to take drugs strikes

After six months, Callie was the first to notice the positive changes she saw in Mark. This led to her willingness to come forward to work together on issues with Mark. Since his return home, she has witnessed Mark making an effort to stay clear from drugs and working hard every day despite a meager salary. She realized Mark was serious about staying clean and was genuinely struggling to deal with her mother's expectations and the conflict between the two families. Callie came onboard, expressing willingness to mediate the situation between both families. This decision changed the dynamics of the marriage, making it teamwork so that Mark would not have to bear the burden alone.

The family now has two incomes and tackles in-law issues together. They also came up with a division of labor when it comes to household chores and learned to manage their own conflicts with humor.

With all this improvements in his life, Mark realized he no longer needed alcohol or drugs. He is now living a life with a renewed sense of purpose. He has the marriage he had envisioned, and a job that not only lets him spend more time with his wife and his sons, but also provide for the family.