

Name: **Z.K.**
City, State: **Las Vegas, NV**
Age: **N/A**
Occupation: **Registered Nurse**

Her Story: **How would your parents react if you asked them to move in with you to take care of your children, then asked them to pay rent? Find out what happened when this gambling addict did just that!**



ZK'S FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT OF HER STORY

Gambling started when I was married for the first time in 1989. I never smoked, used drugs or alcohol, but I liked to play slot machines. When I found out about my husband's infidelity, gambling was my way of dealing with the stress and frustrations of being in a troubled relationship. I would be crying in the inside but once I won some money, I'd feel euphoric, so I'd play longer and forget about my problems. That went on for more years, enduring the problems I was having. I had my parents living with us, taking care of my young children, who were only 1 and 2 years old, so I didn't think I had any problem that warranted my immediate attention. I lived as if it was normal to have marriage problems. The idea of going into marriage counseling was never discussed. Even though my nursing job paid well, I had to get another part-time nursing position at another hospital to pay for my gambling. Money was never enough. I even let my parents pay rent to me, even though they were babysitting my kids. That's how inconsiderate and greedy I was, just because of my gambling.

In 1998, I filed for divorce. My gambling didn't stop. It got to a point where it started to control me and everything that I did. It dictated what food I should buy, clothes to wear, what bills to pay, or when to pay them. I pawned my wedding ring and every jewelry I had. I was getting late in paying my mortgage every month, until I finally decided to sell the house. The \$6000 from the sale went straight to the casino. I even had to trade my van for a small car, just to get a \$1000 back. Of course, that too, went to my gambling.

If I didn't find another man to marry me, I would have been on the streets begging. My self-esteem was so low, I felt I deserved any man, as long as he had money, because that's what's important to me at that time, plus, that would be good for my children, to have a father figure. So I got remarried in

2001. My mother liked this man for me, that he's a good catch. My own mother nor my new husband didn't know the extent of my gambling. Again, I was dishonest with myself and to the other people around me.

In 2003, my parents went back to the old country to retire, confident that they'd leave me well taken care of by my new husband. Again, my gambling resumed. After working 12 hours at night, I'd go straight to the casino, knowing someone will be at home to take care of the kids. I didn't do anything more than clean the house a little bit, help with my son's homework, take them to their appointments, work. I took all the chances I could have to be able to gamble. After taking the kids to school, when my husband was sleeping or when he's at work, when the kids were sleeping. As long as I had the money, I couldn't wait to get out of the house so I could gamble.

In June of 2003, my husband suggested that I should go to GA after we had a fight over my gambling. I actually told him he and the kids can go, they could just leave me alone, because I didn't deserve them. They're not even his own children, but I was ready, in my sick mind, to let go of them because I could take care of myself (in my own mind). Anyway, I went to a Gamblers Anonymous meeting. I've been to one before, in 1998, but never went back to my second meeting. This time, I abstained for 5 months, went to GA meetings, and then I started to take piano lessons. My life got better. In Dec. 2003, my kids and I went on a 3-week vacation, came back with \$100 in leftover pocket money.

That started me back to the gambling arena. I thought I could control it, but the fact was it got worse. My judgment and decision-making was getting impaired day after day. I hit another car as I was daydreaming of gambling, my daughter's pet died due to my poor decision to let it stay outside in the patio while the temperatures were in the 100s. I was miserable, once more. It was getting too much, this insanity brought about by my dishonesty.

I made the decision to go back to GA in May of 2005. This time, it's for me, I wanted the program. Today, and the past year and a half, I haven't gambled. Life turned around, thanks to GA, God, my sponsor, and my friends in the program. I'll keep going to Gamblers Anonymous and work on my character defects for the rest of my life.

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