

**Help is confidential  
and free of charge**

If after reading Toni's story you would like help, or if you would like more information about breakfree Ministries please call:

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Breakfree Ministries is a christian organisation working alongside local churches for the benefit of the people in Tenerife

REAL LIFE  
PROFILE



# TONI'S STORY

I now have hope,  
a future, and a  
reason for living!

## 2 Corinthians 5v17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come .

I'm 1 of 6 children. My mom and dad split up when I was 2 and my dad's never been in my life. I come from a really rough area where nobody works and crime is rife. My mom tried her best but bringing up 6 children on her own was hard. My step dad left when I was 13 which devastated me. Once again I felt abandoned. My family are really dysfunctional with many problems!

I met my first serious boyfriend when I was 14. I was with him for 8 years. We got into the rave scene when I was 16, where I started taking acid & ecstasy on a regular basis. I carried on going to the clubs and raves for 6 years, regularly taking drugs. The relationship with my boyfriend became abusive and he beat me up for 3 years, but I stayed with him, because I loved him and didn't want to be abandoned again.

Eventually we split up and I came on holiday to Tenerife. I really liked it, and looked at it as a chance to escape. At this stage my family were a lot worse, my sister was a heroin addict, also depression, prison, and mental illness runs right through my family.

So I came to live here 6 weeks later. That was in November 1999. It was good at first, but really I went from the frying pan into the fire. Before long I was drinking every night and taking cocaine. This went on for 7 years, and after 3 more broken relationships, and feelings of despair I started to think about where my life was going, and what was I doing here, what was my life all about? I remember saying regularly "Is this it? Is this as good as it gets? I felt like my life was going nowhere fast, and was spiralling out of control.

A friend of mine died in April 2007, it really knocked me. I just

couldn't get my head around it. I had never really believed in God before, I had never gone to church. I believed there was something, but didn't care or know what it was.

While working in a bar, some people used to come round on a Thursday night who are Christians. I got on with them and just thought they were nice people. After my friend died I went up to the Living Room where they work, which is a Christian drop in centre, just to have a chat. There was a girl there who I got on with and she invited me to church. I thought about it and really struggled, but in the end I went. I gave my life to Jesus that day!

That was the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007. Since then my life has changed dramatically. God is really working in an amazing way in my life. I now work at the Living Room full-time and I am being trained and work as part of Breakfree Ministries. Which is a ministry who deal with people suffering with addiction. I have been to Tanzania twice with Grassroots to work with the orphans there. And I help with the fundraising of the children.

God has really broken my heart for people who are suffering with addiction and for the lost. Before I was quite a self centred person, but now I just want to help other people who are like I once was, to help them know Jesus for themselves. He has softened me. He has given me a hope and a future and a reason for living. He's given me peace and joy that I never felt, or thought possible for me.

My sister is now a Christian also and is free from a 12 year heroin addiction. God has his hand all over my family and I am starting to see real answers to prayer. My insecurities and abandonment issues have gone. One thing I am 100% certain of is that God loves me and has a plan for my life.

**Hebrews 13 v 5 is says "Never will I leave you, Never will I forsake you". I know he keeps his promises!**

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REAL LIFE  
PROFILE



# JOHN'S STORY

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## 2 Corinthians 5v17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come .

I was born in Blackpool in 1965 I was the youngest of 3, and my father was an alcoholic. There was a lot of violence in the home, and I grew up believing this was normal. In my early teens my parents divorced and I ended up living with my mother who tried to make my life normal.

I began to drink at the age of 12 or 13 after the divorce and made my mums life hell. I stole from the house on many occasions leading to going into childrens homes and secure units.

My brother was selling drugs and I began smoking pot as well as drinking. I also had an interest in motorbikes and started mixing with some crazy people. My life was dominated by drink, drugs, violence and bikes.

I ended up in prison on many occasions, a chronic alcoholic and a cocaine user. There wasn't much I hadn't tried or used. My last prison sentence was 6 years and 9 months for drugs and violence.

I came to Tenerife and started selling timeshares which I did for 13 years on and off, a well paid job which fuelled my drug and alcohol use. As my addictions got worse I lost interest in working and ended up living on the street sleeping rough.

I tried to stop drinking on a few of occasions but ended up having seizures. At one point I fractured my skull, cheekbone and eye socket whilst having a fit. I ruptured my kidney and the poison went through my body. I was in a coma for a couple of weeks and needed rehabilitation in a centre. After all that I returned to drinking again even worse than before. Nothing seemed to be working and I was without hope.

I started to go to the living room Christian centre with a view to going into a rehab. I went to rehab 3 times the longest I stayed was 7 weeks.

After leaving rehab I started drinking again and injecting methadone, the one thing I did after leaving rehab was to keep in touch with the living room.

I seemed to keep bumping into Christians wherever I went saying that Jesus loves me and they were praying for me. About this time the camp I was staying in got burned down and the only thing that survived was the bible. I also had a vision where I was shown all the bad things I had done in my life and the good things. I asked what I should do and was told to go and see lee from the living room. That night I gave my life to the lord and asked his forgiveness. I had been to church a couple of times before but had always been drunk, lee told me to come to church again and this time I made the effort to go sober and cut the drink out altogether. Unfortunately I had a seizure outside the door of the church I was taken to hospital, but after 3 days I took the tubes out and went back onto the streets, however something had happened to break the cycle. I stayed on the street for 2 or 3 weeks but didn't drink. I was invited to stay at the halfway house in Granadilla where my life really began to change.

My body doesn't crave alcohol anymore I am totally free of it. I have a new family now with lots of Christian friends. I work part time in the living room where I once went for help. I am also a voluntary worker in Breakfree Ministries, helping others with addictions and those out on the streets.

I know Jesus is real he is the only one who could have saved me from totally destroying my life. I know he loves me because he was the one who came to find me. I know he will never leave me and I thank him every day for saving me.

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REAL LIFE  
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# SCOTT'S STORY

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## 2 Corinthians 5v17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come .

I was born in Kilmarnock, a town on the west coast of Scotland. I grew up in a rough council estate where unemployment was high. There was no religion in my family but my parents did a great job bringing us up considering the lack of money. I left school at 16 and started working straight away. I saved up money and did the normal things you do at that age - buy clothes, a car and passed my driving test. At this time the rave scene had just started so I became part of that, driving around from clubs to parties, working all week just for the weekend. I started taking speed and ecstasy. To me this was just normal, it's what everyone did. By this time I'd started on a new job working away from home on the railway. I was making good money but because I was with all my mates and had money to spend, I went off the rails! Excuse the pun. I started drinking and experimenting on harder drugs.

Taking heroin was just a step up for me, something new to try. I didn't know the dangers of addiction at the time, but I was soon going to find out the hard way. I ended up losing my job and losing my driving licence. Soon I was selling all my belongings just to get money. When I had nothing left to sell, I started stealing and robbing. If I wasn't doing this I was selling heroin just to keep my habit going. I was constantly in trouble with the police and in and out of prison. That was to be my lifestyle for the next 7 years.

I stopped taking heroin a few times but I could never break free from it. When I was offered the chance to move to Tenerife I thought that this was the way out of the circle I was in. I knew it would be hard, going "cold turkey" but anything was better than the way I was living. After a month I was off the heroin and straight on the drink, everybody drinks, I didn't think anything of it. I was working as PR and I was drinking heavily every night. Before long I realised I was totally reliant on alcohol, without it I just couldn't function. I would be weak and shaking until I got alcohol in my system. I ended up going from job to job, never able to hold one down. I had no money to pay my rent and as a result, ended up living on the streets. I could see history repeating itself, like changing seats on the Titanic. I had just stopped one addiction for another and the results were always going to be the same. I was in desperate need of help.

I'd been to the Living Room a few times and I used to talk to Lee and Jodie when they came down to "Veronicas". My sister is a Christian, so I had a lot of respect for them and the work they were doing. When I realised I needed help I turned to the Living Room because I knew they could point me in the right direction.

Lee got me into a Christian rehab and even though there were language barriers, I was made to feel welcome and well looked after. When I first went into rehab my main goal was to get my health back and sort my life out, but after being there a while I started reading my bible and books about other people that had been battling addiction all their lives and were suddenly free and now living a completely different lifestyle. These peoples' testimonies in these books got me thinking and I soon realised I needed Christ in my life. I needed to break free from all my old ways and renew my mind. So, I gave it a try. I asked Christ into my life. After this I felt stronger, the battles in my mind became easier and for once I felt focused.

During my time in rehab Lee and Toni from the Living Room were supporting me and encouraging me and we decided I was ready to move on. However, to continue my walk with Christ I would need strong foundations to enable me to grow and I would need to be in a Christian environment. So I moved into the Half-way House which is run by Silencio Church and staffed by Breakfree Ministries.

Since moving into the house and attending Silencio Church, my life has totally changed. I now feel part of something, I now believe in something. I was baptised on 14th December 2008 and I do feel like a new creation. All my old ways have gone. I'm free of addiction, I've got my life back on track and I'm now working full time on doing construction. I've also become part of the Breakfree Ministries team helping people break their addictions. This is just the start. I'm still growing but I'm going to stay on this path. I now know that God has a plan for me and I want to gain as much knowledge and understanding as I can so that I'm prepared for whatever that plan may be.

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# MICHAEL'S STORY

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## 2 Corinthians 5v17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come .

Hello, my name is Michael and I would like to share my story with you. I was born in Blackpool in 1963. I brought up in a happy middle class family with no problems. My parents were not really religious as such, though my mum used to mention a guy called Jesus now and again. I myself didn't care either way.

I started a plastering apprenticeship at 15. This has been my full time career. I married young at 17 and had 2 children. Soon after, the marriage dissolved and my wife went off the rails so I chose to raise the children up alone, along with the help of my parents. To support the family I had to work long hours away from home for more money. As the kids grew up I could have more freedom and socialising and drinking became more of a routine. Ten years ago people started to notice that maybe I had a problem which I didn't take much notice of. Eventually my work began to suffer and I didn't have a lot of money. This led me to drink cheap cider at 9% proof.

One day I had a seizure and consequently the doctor told me that I was alcohol dependent, meaning that if I didn't get alcohol or alcohol substitute medication, I would continue to have seizures and they could be fatal.

Then an opportunity came along for me to come to Tenerife and I thought that with a new start, a new place, I would be able to sort myself out, but it turned out worse for work. I soon found myself with no-where to live and on the streets. I still had a big drink problem. I was drinking at least 9 litres of 12% proof wine at 45 cents per litre a day and anything else that came along in between just to function and keep seizures at bay.

I checked phone boxes for loose change and hotel bins for food and books to sell and I begged. Almost all my dignity was gone. It was so bad one day that when I took my socks off I found maggots crawling between my toes.

Whilst on the street I met a guy called Bernie. We ended up sleeping back to back for safety at night. One day I got up and went on ahead to the bar and he said he would catch up later. An hour later someone told me that they had seen him being taken in an ambulance, throwing up blood. I found out two weeks later that he had died that day.

Three weeks later I had a bad seizure which left me partially paralyzed in both legs and right arm. I had to learn to walk with a frame but eventually with the aid of a walking stick I left the hospital after 6 weeks. How my stay was paid for I still do not know. I had no paperwork or passport. While I was in hospital I had two CAT scans and to the doctors' amazement, considering the amount of alcohol I had been drinking, I had no scar on my liver, my kidneys were fine and I had no blood disorders. Even my recovery from paralysis was fast. Medication had got me off alcohol physically but not mentally. I still had nowhere to go so I went back onto the streets and began drinking again.

At the time I had lost touch with my family. I had a horrible thought that when I died no-one would be able to identify my body. Some-one told me to go to the Living Room to sort out how to get a passport. There I met Lee who offered me a place in a rehab. I said "yes".

It was a Spanish Christian rehab called Amigos de Lourdes. There was no English speaking folks and I couldn't speak Spanish. It was basic and hands on. It had 21 dogs, 6 cats, 10 chickens and a pig called Faustino who I looked after. Faustino and I shared our food (maltesers and milkshakes!).

After a month in the centre I asked Jesus into my life and be my saviour. Every two weeks I got inspiration from Lee's visits. I was feeling better mentally and physically and then got the bad news that my sister had died suddenly. This was the first time that I found great comfort in Jesus to get through this. After 7 months I left rehab and moved into the Halfway House which had only just started. It's a stable platform to move onward and upward, spiritually and financially.

So in 13 months I have gone from being an alcoholic dependent and homeless with no dignity or purpose, to living a life with purpose with Jesus.

I am working and have food, a room, a key to my own door, I no longer need alcohol. I'm healed of it and now am a member of Silencio Church. A close friend, who has known me for many years, saw how Jesus has changed my life and saved me. The change of Jesus in my life was so great that he himself has become a Christian and been baptised.

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