

Jessica Murray

Being Successful Essay 2023

I am currently an MBA student at Northern Kentucky University and began my college career in 2006 when I graduated high school. Popularity among my peers, athletic accomplishments, and academic accolades had always come naturally to me. From all external accounts, I appeared to be confident and successful even though I was suffering from what I later realized was the disease of addiction. It took me several attempts to gain awareness, courage, and humility to finally address this aspect of my personality.

I am a firm believer that no one would choose to be an addict if that kind of forethought or power of choice existed. I never understood that while I had the choice whether or not to use drugs, I lacked the ability to control the effect it had on my mind, body, and soul. What felt as though it was the solution to my emotional deficiencies, quickly became my biggest problem and sharply affected my ability to be a responsible person. It has been undoubtedly the most difficult thing I have ever experienced or attempted to overcome. I experienced unthinkable degradation and lived in an animalistic state until I received the gift of pure desperation. After using drugs for more than a decade, I made a decision to seek help and completed a treatment program in December 2015 and I have been clean from all mind and mood-altering substances since then. I will be celebrating 8 years of clean time in August 2023. I have continued to participate in a Twelve Step Program with a sponsor, and it has afforded me the ability to become a responsible and productive member of society, and so much more than I ever fathomed was possible. I regularly volunteer my time at correctional facilities, treatment centers, and on service committees to give back what has been so helpful to me in my recovery. In 2019, I founded a Women's Recovery Support Group, called the Broad Base and we continue to meet once a month to share recovery experience and study literature. I have been able to maintain my current job since September of 2020, and received a promotion within 9 months after being hired. I continuously try to find new ways to live life to the fullest, because I recognize that even having one is an absolute miracle.

In 2019, I gave birth to my daughter. In the last few years I have learned, as a single mother, the value and importance of being able to support myself and provide our needs and desires. Education is an important aspect of establishing a worthwhile career and lifestyle. When I first started college, I was so easily swayed and had no real direction of my own or clue of what I wanted or how to even get it. Not to mention, my drug usage kept me enslaved and unable to consistently apply myself to my studies. I can say that is no longer true; I do have direction and purpose in life. In June 2021, I earned my BS in Business with a 3.9 GPA from Bellevue University. I take great pride in this accomplishment, and presently have a 3.4 GPA in my MBA program. Successfully balancing a life of parenting, full-time employment, full-time education, and commitment to serve in the community are nothing short of impressive, in my opinion.

These experiences have taught me much about life on life's terms. I have a better grasp on what is in the realm of my control and what is not. I have learned to change what I can and have faith that the rest will work out appropriately. The most important thing I have learned is my own strength and capacity to overcome obstacles. I have created a lot of my own chaos not realizing or believing that I deserved better for myself. Self-discovery is never a waste of time, however, I do not wish to spend any more time causing myself unnecessary pain or depriving myself of the very best that I have to offer. In

the past, I have underestimated the power of perspective. Today, I understand that my perspective can make all the difference in the world. I could look at my past as a source of shame, guilt, and remorse. On the contrary, I choose to view it as one of my greatest assets, and the evidence is clear in my achievements to date. It has given me a deeper appreciation for the life I have now, as well as an ability to empathize and help people with similar struggles. Addiction is one of the most destructive forces in our society and being able to say I have overcome it is what I consider to be true success. I understand that I must choose daily to be in recovery and face life without the use of drugs. It is a choice that I make gladly, willingly, and with support from friends and family.

In addition to my major, I plan to specialize in Leadership, and I am looking at possible opportunities within my organization to apply that knowledge. I strive to be a well-rounded individual and have acquired other certifications and awards to reflect that attitude that include:

- Notary Public
- First Aid & CPR
- Adult Peer Support Specialist
- International Commerce Specialist
- Gail & Scott Robertson Scholarship – Bellevue University
- Douglas Ball Memorial Scholarship – Specialized Carriers & Rigging Foundation

It has been said amongst recovering addicts, “Lost dreams awaken, and new possibilities arise.” Getting clean and choosing recovery was the best decision I have ever made and has given me a life worth living. So many opportunities have been presented to me, and my greatest gratitude is just in having the willingness and ability to reach my full potential. Continuing my education is just part of the life that I have always wanted, and being a strong woman and mother with an education would greatly help to make my lost dream a reality.

I am eternally grateful for this opportunity to be considered for the Being Successful Scholarship.