

## **HB0283**

Hello, my name is Rosa and I would like to share my story on how kratom saved my life.

I was diagnosed at age 11 with Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis. My curves were pretty severe, and the doctors insisted that I needed a spinal fusion to correct the curvatures. My family was convinced, and I had Harrington rods implanted.

Years later, I started developing severe back pain. I would get extreme muscle cramps in my back, and I was beginning to develop a hunch. The doctors kept blowing me off, and my pain kept increasing. By age 26 I had a full hunch. My left leg pain was so severe that I needed a cane to walk. I was also addicted to opiates. It took a while, but I finally found a doctor willing to help me. The x-rays revealed that not only had my scoliosis curves returned, but I had kyphosis as well. I found out that Harrington rods were no longer utilized because of their high failure rate, and I would need correctional surgery.

My second spinal fusion was at age 27. They removed the old rods and implanted new ones. My spine was straightened out, and I was 6 inches taller after the operation. I still had a great deal of pain, and by this time my opiate addiction was very extreme.

After my 3rd spinal fusion, I was spiraling out of control. I was severely depressed, and I began experimenting with stronger opiates to numb me. I would wake up in severe withdrawal every morning, and immediately need something to make me feel better. It wasn't about treating the pain anymore, it was avoiding withdrawal. I even tried heroin. The cycle became so intense and it dragged me down. I needed a 4th spinal correction operation, and after that I decided I wanted to get off opiates completely.

I had a close friend introduce me to kratom, not only to help the withdrawal, but to manage my pain as well. I went through the withdrawal, which was difficult, but kratom helped me through it. Since then I have been off opiates entirely for over a year. I use kratom to help my pain. I still have severe back pain issues, but kratom makes it bearable. It has benefitted me so greatly. To whomever reads this, I ask that we please keep kratom legal. I know it has helped many people like myself overcome addiction or manage pain without nasty opiates. I cannot imagine my life without this wonderful healing plant.

Thank you

Rosa