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I was in a bad car accident in 1987. Subdural hematoma had me paralyzed on my right side for one month. I regained back about 60% use of my right side. I walk with a limp and really can't use my right arm and hand. I met and married my wife in 1990 and had two children in the next two years.

In 1998 when I was 35, I woke up and couldn't put any weight on my right leg without excruciating pain. I had to crawl just to use the bathroom. I went to the doctors and they couldn't figure out what was wrong. They put me in a wheelchair, gave me a handicap placard for the car, and a unlimited supply of oxycodone. I saw numerous doctors for three months and I couldn't work. I finally went to Philadelphia and they told me it was a really bad case of sciatica. They also said I needed my left hip replaced and I had a cracked vertebrae in my lower back. I had epidural shots in my back and after a week, the pain was tolerable with the oxycodone. I had the hip replacement surgery and still was taking the oxycodone. Yes, I was addicted and the sciatica never fully went away. After having a epidural, I would get relief for 12 hours if I was lucky, then the pain was back.

In 2003, my right side was slowly becoming more and more paralyzed again and I had really sharp pain in my ring finger on my right hand. Oxycodone was barely touching the pain. I went to the doctor in Philadelphia again. They told me I had a herniated disc in my neck and that was causing compression on my spinal cord. 5 days later I was having a cervical spinal fusion. I had a plate screwed into my neck. I still had unlimited oxycodone. I wanted to keep my tolerance low so I kept the dosage the same, three to four 5/325 mgs of oxycodone a day. If the pain was really bad, I would take a few more.

In 2006, I was basically a zombie because of taking oxycodone for 18 years straight. That year I also developed diabetic neuropathy in my legs. The feeling of a 1000 needles pricking my shin every 20 seconds is enough drive me crazy. My days consisted of going to work, coming home, sitting in a chair all night every night. Trying to sleep at night, but couldn't because of the pain. I went to the doctor and he put me on Gabapentin (2400 mgs a day) and Ambien. They both didn't work as well as they should, but gave me a little relief. I was getting really mean and grouchy because of the medicines, but I had to have them. I had to see my doctor every 3 months, but I could call his office every 30 days and request refills of the oxycodone and Gabapentin. I would go to his office and pick up the prescriptions without having to see the doctor and therefore I only had to pay the co-pay 4 times a year.

In 2016, NJ passed the Opioid laws and my doctor could not prescribe oxycodone any more. I freaked out. I didn't know what to do. I called around to a few Pain Management doctors, but they would only give epidural shots, no pain medicines. I finally found a doctor who would prescribe oxycodone. I began seeing him once a month. The co-pay was \$60 and with the prescriptions and urine tests, it wound up costing me \$100 per month. I was already living from paycheck to paycheck and now I couldn't pay all my bills. The doctor also wanted to do epidural shots to my back. When I went to have an epidural shot in a particular month, it would be a co-pay for every time I went into his office and I had to go in 3 times in one month. I had about 4 of these epidural shots per year. I had to declare bankruptcy just so I had a place to live and a car to get to work. Yes, I was a zombie and a addict for being on oxycodone for 18 years straight.

In the fall of 2018, I saw the documentary, "A Leaf of Faith". People that had chronic pain were taking powder to relieve their pain WITHOUT side effects! From that day on I began researching kratom non-stop. I learned so much about the plant from southeast Asia I feel I could give lectures on kratom. A few weeks later, I placed an order and had it delivered. I learned how to pinpoint my dosage (everyone is different) and that night I was pain free! With Oxycodone and Gabapentin, I still had pain, but it was tolerable and getting worse everyday. I knew that if I stayed on the pain medication, I would have to increase the dosage just so I could gain minimal relief. That first night I began to wean myself off Oxycodone and Gabapentin. It took two weeks. I was not taking any chemical pain medicines! Also, I didn't have to be confined to my chair after work. I could walk around the block, do some chores, go out to dinner, pretty do what I wanted to do. I was finally free from Oxycodone that was like a monkey on my

back for the last 20 years! I feel better, I look better, the meanness and grouchiness is gone. I can actually talk with my family instead of constantly yelling at them. If I was still on Oxycodone, I would probably be totally alone because I knew my family was really fed up with my crazy mean attitude. Kratom has saved me from being alone and saved my life. I owe it all to this natural little leaf!