

[PDF] UnSweetined

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Description:

About the Author Jodie Sweetin is best known for her role as Stephanie Tanner on ABC's long-running, hugely popular sitcom *Full House*, which still airs in syndication. She has shared her story on *Good Morning America*, *IdeaThe Big with Donnie Deutsch*, *Access Hollywood*, *Entertainment Tonight*, and *Chelsea Lately*, and hosted *Pants-Off Dance-Off* on Fuse. She lives in California with her daughter, Zoie.

**Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. I»è chapter one
SPEECH IMPEDIMENT**

fuck it.

I was tired of trying. Tired of controlling myself. Tired of caring.

It was a Sunday night and my options were to sit home and get some rest for the big day I had on Monday or to go out, party, and not worry about anything. So when a friend called and asked me if I wanted to head to Hermosa Beach, I didn't hesitate.

Before I knew it I was smoking meth and doing my hair, preparing for a big night. I drove off solo with my to-go cup filled with alcohol. I never went anywhere without my to-go cup.

It was a typical night of partying. I met some people at a bar in Hermosa Beach that played house music on Sundays from 2:00 p.m. until around 2:00 a.m. I was friendly with the bar's owner so there was always a table waiting for me, and half-priced bottles for being such a good customer.

From the second I walked in, it was on. Some friend gave me a hug and put Ecstasy right in my mouth. That's how the night started. Simple as that.

Coke. No problem. We were doing it right at the table. Meth wasn't as socially acceptable so I did that at home, alone, or with a couple friends who were also using. But the coke, the Ecstasy -- the party -- went until closing. It almost always did.

Then it was back to my place in Westchester, a Los Angeles neighborhood around the corner from LAX. It was always back to my place. Somehow the group had grown to about fifteen or twenty people. I was playing the role of after-party host. Looking back, I think I liked the control. I was always the driver, the host; it was always my show. With people waiting to party, I went into the kitchen and returned with a bottle of Jack Daniel's in one hand, a bottle of champagne under my arm, and a big plate of coke in the other hand for all of my guests. The crowd went wild. Standing ovation. Just how I liked it.

As usual the party continued into the near-daylight hours. There was still a plate of coke on the living-room table and a handful of friends -- and I use that term loosely -- were making themselves at home.

The only problem? In seven hours I would be standing in front of a roomful of college students at Marquette University telling them how great it felt to overcome a drug addiction and how important it was to stay off drugs. I had a flight to catch and needed to be at the airport by 5:30 a.m., and at a quarter to five, I was still nose-deep in a pile of cocaine with a roomful of strangers listening to house music. And I hadn't even packed!

I was pretty good at pulling off this kind of thing. All my life I had given everyone exactly what they wanted. If *Full House* producers needed someone to look cute while eating Oat Boats, I smiled in my cereal. If my friends needed a house to party in, I opened my doors, supplied drugs, and broke up lines of cocaine with a credit card. And if America decided I was supposed to be a role model, I hopped on a plane, turned on my best Stephanie-Tanner-all-grown-up face-and gave a speech.

So at 5:00 a.m. I threw some clothes in a bag, probably forgetting socks or toothpaste or something important, and attempted to make a clean escape. But the night of partying really left me frazzled. I came into the living room with my packed bag in hand and started shaking. I couldn't speak. I couldn't think. I had been up for two days straight, partying without a care in the world, and now I was starting to lose it.

On the car ride I realized I was wearing a T-shirt that said "Things you shouldn't take to the airport" with pictures of drugs, guns, and a toothpaste tube larger than three ounces. I was one for three; I was carrying a bag of cocaine because I knew I couldn't get through the next twenty-four hours without it -- and praying the stupid shirt didn't give me away to the airport security guard. That sort of paranoia comes along with drug use. *The guard searching my bag will not see the*

humor in my T-shirt and will look extra hard through my bags. Oh my God! What am I going to do?

He did search pretty hard, but not because of the shirt. I took a deep breath and attempted to remain cool as the guard rummaged through my belongings. My friend who drove me to the airport told me I probably shouldn't talk to anybody because at that point I couldn't put together a complete sentence. The security guy took out my cosmetic case and asked me about every item. It took every ounce of energy I had to get out the words "lip gloss" and "mascara" without looking like a complete wreck. But I was dying inside. I thought this was it. I was going to get busted. How could I not? The guard then pulled out the compact where I kept my coke. My heart was beating through my chest. I thought for sure I was going to be arrested. And then it happened...

"OK, ma'am, have a nice flight."

I was safe.

I sat down at the gate and nearly broke down. What am I doing? What the hell is wrong with me? How did I become this person?

If I had had that gun my shirt warned against, I probably would have blown my brains out. I was miserable...and exhausted.

When I got to my hotel near Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I slept for a few hours but when I woke up I was still dead tired. I was a mess. Luckily I had the coke to pick me back up. I did a few key bumps and headed to the lecture hall, where a sold-out crowd waited to hear me speak. I thought for sure that one of the professors would take one look at me and kick me out. But none did. They wanted to hear about the trials and tribulations of Jodie Sweetin, or at least the Jodie Sweetin I had created by appearing on *Good Morning America* and talking to *People* magazine.

I stood up at the podium, looked around the room, and put on my best TV smile. I was so disappointed in myself. I was living a complete lie. But unfortunately, guilt doesn't make you stop. I talked about growing up on television and about how great my life was now that I was sober, and then midspeech I started to cry. The crowd probably thought that the memories of hitting rock bottom were too much for me to handle. Or maybe they thought the tears were just a way for an actor to send a message that drugs are bad. I don't know what they thought.

I know what they didn't think. They didn't think I was coming down from a two-day bender of coke, meth, and Ecstasy and they didn't think that I was lying to them with every sentence that came out of my mouth. That much I do know. The little bit of coke that I had done before the speech wasn't enough to make me forget how bad I felt for doing what I was doing. The guilt was eating away at me. I was struggling to keep it together, but no one realized that. I finished. They applauded. Standing ovation. Just how I liked it. And it was over.

I was just so tired. Tired of lying. Tired of pretending to be someone that I wasn't. I took a deep breath and walked out of the lecture hall. I went back to my hotel room and buried my face in my hands. I couldn't keep doing this. It had to end.

But not today. I wiped away the tears and finished the baggie of coke.

Fuck it. I'll quit tomorrow.

It had been a year since I went on *Good Morning America* and told the world that I was a recovered drug addict. And back then I really was recovering -- or trying to, anyway. I had been sober for a few

months, but I knew in the back of my mind it wasn't over. I wasn't ready.

But the story was a good one and it landed me the speaking jobs I needed to keep my career going and the drug money rolling in. Drugs and alcohol don't come cheap -- especially when you are also buying for a group of friends who mooch off your residual checks. I didn't put up with eight seasons of Kimmy Gibbler so *they* could get high!

With the new income and a new house in Los Angeles it was all too easy to get right back into drugs.

It started one day, just a few months after my *GMA* spot, when I got a random phone call from a friend who I used with and who occasionally sold me drugs. I invited her to my place. I was in an apartment at the time. I knew it was a really bad idea to invite her over but I wanted to test myself, I guess. We hung out, played cards. I told her I hadn't done meth in a while. One thing led to another and just like that, I was back.

After trying to stay sober and then relapsing a number of times, battling the decision to remain sober for a couple of months, I began to give up on myself. Then, when I moved into the house, I stopped putting in the effort altogether. "You can do this again," I told myself about using. I wasn't in a relationship and I didn't have a good group of friends around me. I was frustrated and tired of trying. I had it in my head that I just wasn't done.

I was always up for any party, especially if it involved Las Vegas, but my newfound careless attitude often got in my way. I regularly lost cell phones, wallets, and other valuables. One weekend, everyone decided to head out to Vegas, but before I could leave, I had to get cash from the bank since I had misplaced my ATM card. I took out ten thousand dollars in cash to bring with me to bankroll the alcohol and drugs for everyone, as usual, and a little shopping for me.

In Sin City I spent two thousand dollars on makeup and an outfit for the evening and was ready to have fun. The night brought us to various clubs and then to a blowout back at the hotel. Random people made their way in and out of my party until the sun came up. The next morning I noticed that the remaining eight thousand dollars was gone. Maybe I lost it, or maybe it was stolen. I didn't care.

Whether in Vegas or in Hollywood, people would call and ask if I had plans, and even when I had had no intention of going out, I would say, "yeah sure" and it would be off to a night on the town. Outside of the speeches, I didn't have any responsibilities so I often blew off my family...

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