



Girls
and
Boys
Town™

FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

THOUGHTS FROM GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN

The Original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home

A Lesson From My Children

(NAPSA)—One of the great advantages of working with young people is you can learn as much from them as you can possibly teach.

Recently, John, a Girls and Boys Town alumnus, shared one of these valuable life lessons with me.



Father Peter

John had some great struggles to overcome. He comes from an alcoholic family, and had severe alcohol addiction problems. Before he came to Girls

and Boys Town, alcohol was destroying him. He was failing in school and was lonely and hopeless. He thought of killing himself.

It was his arrival at Girls and Boys Town that began John's road to recovery, and his "life lesson" came from what he thought was an unlikely source—another youth.

John said he really didn't want to be sober. However, he listened to one of his new friends, who told him, "You must be sober for three months before you want to be sober."

John said he found the statement strange, but he knew he needed to change his life. With daily encouragement from his friends, he forced himself to go to sobriety meetings.

After three months, he woke up surprised the months passed so quickly. He thought seriously about his accomplishment, and decided he wanted to be sober, now. The lesson from his friend was clear: "If you wait until you want to get better, you never will."

Although John's sobriety still wasn't easy, his determination made it less difficult. Now, he is

enjoying many years of sobriety.

The lesson John learned is important no matter what problems you face—lying, cheating, stealing, drugs, alcohol or anything else. You begin by forcing yourself not to lie, cheat, steal or do drugs. After a few months, the desire to overcome your problems will grow in your heart.

I can't begin to overemphasize this bit of wisdom. If you think you have a bad habit, don't wait until there is a big desire in your heart to start breaking it. Begin right away.

If you have a friend trying to break a bad habit, encourage and support him or her. John could not accomplish what he did without someone helping him. No one can do it alone.

John also shared another bit of wisdom, "After the desire for sobriety came into my life, my motive was to be sober for others." This is good advice for my kids here at Girls and Boys Town who feel so down and out because of the way life has treated them. They don't have a big desire to get better, but we tell them: "Start getting better for at least three months and then the desire will come to you."

It is good advice for all of us.

Girls and Boys Town, the original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, is a leader in the direct treatment and care of abused, abandoned and neglected girls and boys. Through 18 sites across the country, the organization directly cares for more than 37,000 girls and boys annually. Girls and Boys Town also assists 1.5 million children and parents through its National Hotline (1-800-448-3000), outreach and training programs and community partnerships.

