

## Jan Brown Explains What Recovery Looks Like

Credit: Produced by Victoria Youcha and Brian King

Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=1934>

**Jan Brown:** When I was working at this treatment center where I was I began to get frustrated because people would, they would be there and they would spend money and they would do quite well and then they would leave and then they would relapse. And I didn't get that because that wasn't my experience as well. And I've certainly watched it happen through the years. And what I finally started discovering is that there's a difference between being sober and actually living in recovery. And when I first got clean I decided, you know, well what is my prize. I needed something to be willing to continue to do this for. And so, I decided that recover for me meant getting back what I had loved and lost. And so, that was going to be my goal. And that, that not drinking and not doing drugs was simply a part of that and it was important, and so, and certainly a critical ingredient. However, it's not enough to really sustain to sustain life and to make people happy. And, I can remember, you know when I wasn't, when I wasn't working and I had had my second injury how much of a challenge it was for me to connect really to either community be it the brain injury community or the addiction recovery community. You know, I would go, go to meetings and I would be in fellowship with other friends in kind of the primary addiction recovery community. And I was watching them get back things that they loved and lost. But, I had no job. I had no ability to drive. So, I just started thinking, okay this isn't so great. And then, I would go to my to my brain injury community friends and they would, they would tell me that it was okay to just, you know, to just have your brain injury. And they would help me make excuses for not trying to really recover. And so, it became a, it became a big challenge. And, it allowed me to use it as kind of a crutch or as an excuse. And so, it was several years ago when I was able to say I needed to be really in recovery for both of these things. And I was at a meeting one day, a brain injury community meeting of some sort and this gentleman, he introduced himself as a person recovering from a brain injury, and I thought, well, you know, that's kind of interesting. And then he talked about how it was just kind of like an episode, that this was just an experience that he had had in his life and that it no longer had to shape and be who he was. And I was like, I wanted that. I said, I want to be like that. I want this to be an event that happened. And certainly, I have challenges as a result of that, but I can put it in a different perspective. And so when I think of my addiction, I think that kind of the beginning, that spiritual sobriety, is getting sober. And when I think of, you know, being in brain injury recovery that the event and my survival of the two experiences and then the rest of my life is really about living in recovery.