

AA Conference, LA

How the trip to Los Angeles affected my recovery:

"Before I went on the trip to LA, I was on the fence about the NA and AA program, whether or not I wanted to be sober, and what I thought about sobriety. This trip has changed all of that for me. As soon as we got to the hotel, people started to come up to greet us, talk to us, and make sure we felt welcome at the convention. This was a big surprise for me, because I have never been anywhere where people were so kind and welcoming. Throughout the weekend, I have learned new things about myself. I tried to take in a meeting every day, a choice that I made, not that staff made for me. This surprised me at first, because there were other things going on that I could have done, instead of going to a meeting. I chose to go to the meetings because they were inspiring, and for once, I genuinely cared about what the speakers had to say.

Another thing that happened on the trip was I realized how much I am able to accept myself now. I had a little incident on the dance floor while I was dancing with one girl, and I surprised myself with how I reacted. I was also able to go up and just talk to anybody I wanted to, something that a lack of confidence had previously prevented me from doing.

Lastly, this trip has showed me just how much fun you can have in recovery. I think this trip was more fun than I have had in the past few years. Just being in the atmosphere where everybody was achieving a common goal, everybody was happy, and most importantly, everybody was kind to one another, has been a major factor in helping me decide what I want to do when I leave the ranch. I feel that the saying "My worst day clean is still better than my best day using" applies in this situation. Even when I wasn't doing anything on the trip, I was still having more fun than when I was using.

In conclusion, this trip has completely changed my mind about what I want to do when I leave the ranch. If for nothing else, I want to stay sober just so I can keep going into those rooms, meeting new people, and helping others along with their recovery. Of course, I want to stay sober for myself. I think that this trip has shown me all the great things that AA/NA has to offer, what a clean life would be like, and what I can have if I want to take it. And I want it all."

-In Balance Ranch Academy Student