

Tell me why you decided to write My Dirty Little Secrets after 20 years?

I started writing this book two or three times in the nine years since I retired, but I never got too far into it; the timing wasn't right. There was some kind of conflict each time I tried, either with a publisher or time demands or something. Something was always telling me it wasn't time for it to come out yet. I've been working with Sharon (my co-author) for the past 18 months, and the book developed naturally. The time is right now, and I don't think it's a coincidence. The book will be released on the 20th anniversary of my 1989 draft to the Packers. A lot of people think my failure at Green Bay was due to steroids, so it's time to give my fellow players and the NFL a better understanding of what happened and why I failed so miserably in Green Bay.

What do you hope will be accomplished by exposing you and your family's past?

My biggest motivation is helping people in the midst of addiction, any addiction—eating, alcohol, drugs or whatever. I hope they can relate by reading the book, and realize there's a different way. This is the path I lived, it's what happened and where I am today. I hope my story provides motivation: If he can do it, why can't I? I'm extending my hand. Other people did it for me, and that's how it works. Additionally, sports-minded people will want to know what happened to me.

Talk about your Draft Day in 1989. What was that like?

Draft day was surreal. My brother John was there with me; being drafted into the NFL was the goal of our lifetime. I still remember it vividly; that was the beginning of my downfall, but I still remember it. We were at Lambeau Field, talking with each other about how all the work we'd done paid off. It was really gratifying!

However, I didn't want to go to Green Bay. I did all of the hard work to get to the top and then I went to a team that I didn't have a liking for, in a state where I didn't have a desire to live. Also, early 1989 was the beginning of my downfall. I was drinking and drugging. My frame of mind was off and clearly influenced heavily by chemicals. Looking at it now, it didn't matter where I got drafted, I should have been grateful. My state of mind was paralyzed, though, and I was filled with fear because I knew my addiction would interfere with playing football. And I couldn't stop.

Grit and Determination are themes in your life story. How do you compare that to your parents' experience?

My parents' escape from Communist rule was a matter of life or death for them. They wanted a better life for themselves and their future family. They risked their lives; they could have been shot crossing the border illegally. For me football wasn't life or death; it was a dream. When I felt sorry for myself or was whiny about having to train and workout so much, I'd think about my parents and what

they did to get me where I was, all the opportunities they provided me, and I found no comparison. Thinking like that made it easier for me to get through the tough times.

However, when it came to addiction and recovery, that comparison is much more like what they went through. That was a matter of survival, life or death, and it still is.

How do you express that in your life today?

My determination never goes away. There was a time in my addiction where I loathed a lot. I was sloth-like. I was full of self-pity and unmotivated, all due to chemicals and the frame of mind that goes along with addiction. That's the opposite of my nature, and I despised myself. Then when sobriety happened, the switch came on. My grit and determination were always there, just not practiced. They came back to life again, and got me back into the NFL. Sobriety is a day to day experience. Now I know I have to keep things simple and just do today's job today; I don't get caught up in next week. I can plan and structure, but can't let the future interfere with my work today. I have the same determination and drive and persistence and perseverance today, whether I'm working on the computer, or doing a photo shoot, or a video production. The ethic is the same: Do the job until it gets done. I don't wear a watch, because it doesn't matter. If the client needs it done, you do it, even if it takes all night.

You say you don't regret your past, including the seven years of addiction to drugs. Tell me more about that.

I don't regret my addiction experience because I learned so much from it. I learned about humility, and my spiritual life got turned on. It was the adversity that created some great things in my life, and I can't regret the good things. I lived my life on the front page of the newspaper. Some of my neighbors probably have a lot of experiences just like mine; the only difference is that they don't see their faces on television and in the newspapers. Putting football aside, I'm just like them.

You give a lot of credit to AA. Talk about how that has anchored you for the past 13 years.

There are some great people in AA and they helped me get through the first part of my recovery. The AA steps work. I'll be in recovery all my life. AA sustains me to this day. I always knew that when times got tough, I could go to an AA meeting or call a friend and get help. It never leaves me.

How can this book help me if I am a drug addict and can't stop?

I would hope that something I say in the book, perhaps just a line, would connect with you and a light would turn on for you. Putting the football part aside, I hope

people say, “If he can do it, I can too.” I hope alcoholics and drug addicts that read my story take some of the determination I talk about and make changes in their own lives.

What’s your favorite team? Do you miss playing football? What experience stands out in your years of playing?

The Colts are my favorite team. And yes, I miss playing football. I miss the camaraderie on the field and in the locker room. I miss weight lifting with the guys and strength training. I still do those things, but I miss doing it with them.

There are two experiences that stand out in my mind, that are really memorable. One was the Reggie White experience that I talk about in the book, when I yelled “Goddammit!” and Reggie looked me in the eye and said, “Son, God had nothing to do with it.” That was one of the most memorable scoldings I’ve ever received! The second experience was standing on the sidelines before the first game after my comeback. I was listening to the national anthem and thinking about not being able to get off the couch just 18 months previously. That’s when I realized I was there only by the Grace Of God!

How have your goals changed? What are they today?

I still want to be the best in what I do, but I know now that doesn’t always happen. Not because I didn’t try, but because sometimes all the parts necessary for success aren’t always there. Now, I can better accept not measuring up to my own standards, because I know when I fail, it’s not from lack of effort; talent, maybe, but not effort. But I still try to be the best!