



## Audio Transcript

# Corky's Story

I survived and, you know, I feel lucky that I survived really.

Well I had what I would call a normal childhood. My mum and stepdad who brought me up, they brought me up nicely.

I didn't think we were rich or I didn't think we were poor.

I just thought we were average.

Yeah they are nice people, good people. They're honest people.

From an early age I wanted to achieve and therefore I worked hard at school etc when I was younger to try and I suppose attain some success.

I went to university. I started up a business and yeah, it was successful.

I had a partner, we had 2 children and then we separated and I said to my ex-partner you know, take the house.

I didn't want my children to suffer because they had already lost their dad, lost the life they had, they're now losing their school friends because they're moving school etc.

Because I'm used to doing things for myself, it's hard for me to then reach out to somebody for help  
It's pride.

Due to the difficulty of the separation I didn't feel able to concentrate at work and then yeah I mean things kind of went from bad to worse really.

Because I had no fixed address I had no bank account, I had no cash, I had no home. I had no nothing. Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing.

And that was the beginning of the end of my life.

I was homeless for five years.

The first few nights I was sleeping on a bus and I didn't actually accept the fact that I was homeless because I was just like "Oh, it's like a, I'm just here but I'll be back somewhere else next week."

After two or three weeks I realised I'm actually homeless. I'm actually homeless.

I remember the despair. I remember the tears really.

I never thought that would happen to me.

Life just became a battle of survival.

Every day was just about surviving.

My kind of idea was to wear a suit to kind of camouflage myself so I didn't look homeless. It meant that I wasn't an obvious target.

People drop change into a homeless guy's bowl and everybody therefore know how much money that man has.

You're vulnerable yeah, I've been robbed a few times.

Round the back of Leicester Square, these 2 guys they just came jumped me and took my money.

It left me feeling petrified and scared because I had witnessed what can happen. So then you withdraw yourself from other people.

If you've been in a situation that has made you feel alone and isolated, then you know how I felt.

I was a failure, again. Yet again.

I started going to centres who kind of specialise in working with client groups who are homeless. So even though I was going there for food and clean clothes and showers, I was also I'm sure, going there for some kind of connection.

They started to say to me: "Oh, well there are ways you could do this. You can kind of – there's a road back, if you like."

It's hard to claw your way back through the, through the rubble of life back to kind of like normality.

It's a slog, it's tough.

In modern society, the bigger your bank balance the bigger your value.

I was worthless to society.

Everybody has a bank account. Like everybody has a bank account. Children can have a bank account.

Organisations like Crisis and Connections and the Holy Cross were instrumental in me kind of getting back into normal life. They helped me with temporary accommodation.

When I open the door now I know I'm home. I feel safe, I guess, yeah safe.

And now I have a son and beautiful daughters.

I get to see my mum, I get to see friends now and I've started to do voluntary work at homelessness centres.

I'm really happy. I'm very, very happy.

It's like somebody has really given me a real lifeline and you know, I feel blessed. I do.

The disparity between the different stages of my life you know will always, will always stay with me in different ways.

What I would like to teach my son is that human being are intrinsically valuable whether they have money or no money.