

Mary J. Blige Relies on God to Help Her Overcome Alcoholism

Mary J. Blige recently opened up to a magazine, saying that the tragic death of Whitney Houston last year helped her face her demon of alcoholism.

In an interview with *Los Angeles Confidential*, Blige, who calls herself a born-again Christian, discussed her decade-long battle with alcohol addiction, explaining that she started to focus on her relationship with God instead of alcohol.

The 42-year-old entertainer admitted that her alcoholism got worse when she tried to cut back and only drink socially.

"I chose to learn how to drink socially and it didn't work," she said. "The test comes when you have to decide whether you're drinking to be social or drinking to cover up something again. To cover up depression, to cover up guilt. Shame. Abandonment. ... Once I realized, 'There you go again,' I had to stop.

"Whitney Houston's death is another reason I stopped," she continued. "I really do think I'm done. I looked at how that woman could not perform anymore."

The "No More Drama" singer said she chose to kick the habit by relying on God over a formal rehabilitation program.

"I didn't want to go to rehab," she confessed. "I believe that anything man himself can do for me, God can do for me in a greater way. I decided to pray and to seek God on my own. I just stayed in the Word. And it worked."

Blige has openly talked about her tumultuous past over the

years, which included cocaine and alcohol addiction that began when she was just 16. She has said that her dependency masked incidents of her childhood, insecurities about her appearance, and emotional pain from an abusive relationship.

The actress and multi-Grammy-Award-winning musician revealed in a 2001 episode of VH1's *Behind the Music* that she experienced sexual molestation as a child, beginning at the age of 5.

"That thing followed me all my life. The shame of thinking my molestation was my fault. It led me to believe that I wasn't worth anything," she said during the documentary. "I really didn't care about myself. I was borderline suicidal ... I was like the walking dead; just smoking and drinking and hanging."

The R&B songstress founded the Mary J. Blige Center for Women in Yonkers, N.Y., in 2006 to help encourage women who have been victims of domestic violence.

In the *LA Confidential* interview, Blige discussed her opinions on God, even when she was at her lowest.

"I loved God, but I didn't love myself," she explained. "I believe in God so much that I would not let the enemy win my soul.

"God loves me no matter what," she added. "He loves me high. Sober. Gay. Straight. I can't let the world tell me anything different. That's how I survived, knowing He loved me no matter what. Because if I don't believe that God loves me when I do wrong, I'm dead."

Blige recently starred in *Betty & Coretta*, a film for which she was also an executive producer, alongside Angela Bassett. The Lifetime movie—featuring Blige as Betty Shabazz, the wife of slain human rights activist Malcom X, and Bassett as Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Jr.'s widow—kicked off the network's Black History Month celebration on Feb. 2.

The original film chronicles the friendship the two women formed and shares the story of their experiences as single mothers after the assassination of their husbands.

“Women never get a chance when they are behind powerful men,” Blige said in an interview with *The View*. “They never get a chance to tell their stories and what they’re dealing with. I wanted people to see what Betty and Coretta had to deal with, and how everyone’s not so perfect.”