

LIONEL PUT NICOLE IN REHAB... THEN CHECKED HIMSELF IN

Devoted dad Lionel Richie tells how he helped Nicole beat heroin addiction

songs Hello and Penny Lover, explained: "Nicole reached a very low point, but she turned her life around by facing her problems.

"She went to rehab truly wanting to get sober. She didn't do it just because she was under pressure. I am so incredibly proud of Nicole. She's been straight for nearly three years.

"I knew she'd stay off drugs for good when she finally decided to get rid of all the people in her life that were unhealthy for her."

In a recent TV interview, Nicole admitted she was out of control.

She said she smoked marijuana at 13 and drank - which was normal

among the rich circle of friends she grew up with.

She said: "I started getting into cocaine at 14 or 15, and went to heroin at about 19. I just consider myself really lucky that I got through everything. I could not have done it alone. I have my parents and feel lucky."

Since cleaning up her act, Nicole's been a regular on magazine covers and has found love with DJ Adam Goldstein. But she still faces speculation over her weight which is said to have dropped to 98lbs. She denied in an interview with Katie Couric on the Today show that she has an eating disorder.

She plans to marry Adam, co-owner of the L.A. nightclub LAX, next summer. Lionel said: "Nicole is not telling me anything about the date. She knows I can't keep a secret."

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Why Lionel loves The National Enquirer

Lionel Richie has revealed what our army of readers already knew - the all new National Enquirer is number one for news and showbiz exclusives. Lionel says: "I never miss an issue of The National Enquirer. It's always interesting and right on the button. I read Variety, Billboard, and The Enquirer - that's all the news I need to know. All The National Enquirer stories about me have been 100 percent accurate."



ENDLESS LOVE: Lionel, top left, and daughter Nicole