

Why NOT to take Drugs!

Dear Young Person,

I will start my letter with a true story of my own...

...I'm running, running as fast as I can, but they follow me. They are EVERYWHERE I go. I can't escape from them. No matter how far or how fast I run, they catch me. No matter how hard I try, I can't hide from them – they won't leave me alone. I scream, I shout, I cry and I beg them to stop torturing me. I don't know what to do. Is this a NIGHTMARE? I'm worthless, I amount to nothing, I'm a burden to others! I'm not fun to be around because I bring down those in my company! I'm ugly, I'm a bad person, and I can only bring hurt to the world!

So what's the point! I've DAMAGED myself; I don't want to damage others as well! Everyone hates me. They saw my down fall, but couldn't do anything to help me. I was out of control! I didn't know what was happening to me. Some people pretend to care, but only because it is their job to. No one understands! What's the point in anything!

“GO AWAY! ... LEAVE ME ALONE! ... JUST FOR A MINUTE? Please?”

I just want to be able to think thoughts of my own in my own head! I want to be normal. TO BE FREE! The voices will not stop! Who are they? What do they want with me?

“AHHHH!”

“You're a PATHETIC, WORTHLESS, STUPID girl! You are ruining the lives of those you love! DIE! You should just die!”

I panic! To Die? I'm scared, but I'm worthless [picks up razor]. What should I do?

“Spill your blood and pay your price!”

“I cant take this anymore. LEAVE ME!”

“Blood. BLOOD, BLOOD! I'll kill you anyway!”

999! [I phone for an ambulance] *“Help me, I’m going to die!”* Next thing I’m rushed to hospital in an ambulance. AGAIN!

This is a true story, an experience of mine in fact! Did it sound scary? Seemed real at the time, but is a horrific memory of mine now. I know what you’re all thinking, what was I on? The answer is nothing; I was completely sober when that happened to me. Doctors tell me it was all in my head. There not imaginary but an illness. An illness of the mind just as you can have a physical illness. Drugs have caused my mental state to deteriorate or in simpler terms, drugs have ‘wrecked my head’.

There are three main types of drugs:

- Stimulants - makes everything such as thoughts, speech and actions seem as if they are going faster than which they are.
- Depressants - makes everything such as thoughts, speech and actions seem as if they are going slower than which they are.
- Hallucinogenic - alters the way in which we see, hear and feel things.



Some of the drugs I have taken are alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, methadone, cocaine, speed, ecstasy, solvents, petrol, magic mushrooms, other powders (e.g. magic, energy) and legal highs. However, the first drug I ever took was alcohol. I would have had the occasional drink but that was as far as it went. After a while I started smoking as I thought it would relieve my stress. Alcohol and tobacco are not commonly known

for being a drug and are thought of as not being much of a risk. Alcohol and tobacco lead me into thinking drugs are not so bad and led me to take my next drug.



The next drug I encountered was cannabis. I would have referred to it as ‘smoke’. At the time I thought it was harmless as it originates from a plant and I thought of it as pure, but I would have smoked a lot of dope (black/dark brown lump, which is resin from the plant). The dope form is usually mixed with various other chemicals

even heroine. Grass (bud from the cannabis plant) can be mixed with small crystals of heroin and sprayed with other poisonous chemicals. Cannabis is acknowledged by many as not addictive but in reality there are millions of people who are addicted and are usually referred to as 'stoners' or 'pot heads'. Very quickly I became dependant on the drug. I smoked it everyday. Cannabis can be



smoked in the form of a joint or bong and various other forms of bong; it can also be eaten or vaporized. The 'buzz' from cannabis is referred to as being 'stoned' or 'high'. Cannabis is a depressant; it gave me the affect of making everything go slower than what it should and made me feel calm, relaxed, happy and gave me a lot of confidence, but really I became out of touch with reality. I started to become very paranoid and anxious and found it hard to do what is seen as simple tasks in everyday life such as walking through the town and going into shops unless I was under the influence. There arrived times when I couldn't leave the house whether I was stoned or sober. Cannabis effected my everyday life; it affected the way I ate, the way I slept and they way I did things in my life. Withdrawal from cannabis caused me to lose my appetite, become insomniac, have cold sweats and gave me shakes. I wouldn't be able to think straight and would be extremely irritable. This caused me to do anything to get the drug. I would steal or use up strap (i.e. a tab for drugs) and take part in other criminal actions. This caused me to gain extreme debt and got me in trouble with the law.

In my 'stoney' days I became close friends with a lot of other stoners and drug dealers and so I became obsessed with drugs and drug culture. I would get stoned all week and get drunk on the weekend and go on various benders that could last for weeks. Quickly I was introduced to other drugs which I would refer to as 'wiped out' drugs. The first wipe out drug I encountered was methadone (more commonly known as meth). Meth was made to mimic cocaine and is very similar to the effects of cocaine. Meth is usually drank or sniffed by the means of keys or lines. Meth is a



stimulant and makes everything seem as if it is going faster than what it should. This makes it very attractive as it is thought to give you that extra 'buzz' when having a drink. Meth often makes you feel hyper active, warmth and happiness, and is usually referred to as having a 'love buzz'. It is very addictive; not long after taking it you would be craving more. Withdrawal from meth can be a very uncanny

experience and is usually referred to as a 'comedown'. It is rumoured that the cure for a comedown is smoking cannabis, but in reality this can leave you even more confused. You are left feeling very nauseous, experience hot and cold flashes, cold sweats, insomnia and can be left feeling very head wrecked.

As meth is very addictive I would have craved it a lot. This led me to take other stimulant drugs which are similar to meth. I went on to take ecstasy, cocaine, speed, other various powders and even petrol and solvents. These drugs all have a similar effect, some stronger than others and so on. I was obsessed with drugs, I loved drugs, and drugs were my life. I would have taken any drug I could get my hands on. The next drug I caught grip of was magic mushrooms (commonly known as 'shrooms'). Shrooms are a hallucinogenic. It causes you to go on 'trips',



where your senses would become mixed up. You could be able to hear colours or even see sounds. A trip can vary from being a good trip or a bad trip and the danger is you don't know whether you will embark on a good or bad trip until you have taken the drug. Trips can last up to hours and can leave you very vulnerable as you wouldn't be aware of your surroundings, it would be as if you were in your own world.

When people take drugs they usually are just thinking of the short-term effects rather than the long-term. Drugs caused my family to fall apart, caused me to drop out of education, caused me to get into crime and left me with mental health issues. They brought out a side in me which I am very ashamed of to this day. I have had severe physical and verbal fights with my family and friends which left me homeless for a very long time. I was addicted and would do anything for drugs; this caused me to commit serious crimes such as car theft and assault. I put my education at risk and I am still left with confusion to this day as the past couple of years of my life are left as a shameful drunken blur.

I've done a lot of bad things I wouldn't have done if I had never taken drugs. I now suffer from mental health issues. I can still hear the voices, even now! Do you know what it feels like to not be able to control the thoughts in your own mind? I am often confused. It's hard for me to differentiate a dream from real life! I don't even know what's going on most of the time. I wish I had never touched drugs! Would you want to risk living in fear? Always be paranoid? Your greatest understanding in the world is held within your own mind; I don't understand my mind! Ill never be right, be normal. I will always be head wrecked! I'm always shaky. I often take panic attacks and isolate myself. I haven't slept in five days –

I'm insomniac. I find it hard to do what seems to be a simple task for others such as shopping and going to school. These are the true long-term affects of drug abuse, but only a few. This is only my experience and there are thousands more! Is a buzz for 24 hours worth a lifetime of distress and misery? Do you still want to take drugs?

If you are having trouble with drugs now as I have had, there is still hope for you. I use to think I had dug myself into a hole that was impossible to climb out of, but I have proved myself wrong today. I am clean 3 months and I am still fighting everyday. I didn't do it on my own; don't be afraid to seek help from your family and friends or helpful services that are out there. I wouldn't have been able to do it without the help of my family, friends and from the help of my psychiatrist and other self help organisations. I was hospitalised for a month in a mental health unit and this really helped me to stay clean and gave me legal medications to help me sleep and give me a better understanding of life. Don't be afraid to seek help from wherever you can get it. Get as much help as you need and you won't regret it. I haven't felt as great or been able to think so clearly in a very long time. Good luck.

With hope for the future,

Girl aged 17