



Those Living Drug Free Live in Reality

By Savannah Hoekstra

MANY teenagers struggle with the mixed messages they currently get from society which minimize the potential physical side effects and the physiological dangers of marijuana. This reality altering substance is promoted in the media, approved on the internet, and legal in my state. My school has an epidemic amount of students who are trying drugs—and marijuana tops the list. Teens need to live in reality and choose to be present.

A recent experience happened to two teenagers that live in my neighborhood. I know both boys well. However, this night they didn't make good decisions. Here is what happened:

I was with my brother, Daylan, when our friend Matt called us crying from a local hamburger restaurant while another friend, Luke, was having a reaction to some laced hash oil they smoked.

Luke—shaking, eyes rolled back, foam in mouth, time dragging...

Matt—"Daylan answer your phone. Please! I don't know what to do. Answer your phone. This was not supposed to happen. Daylan, please answer your phone. Pick up! Pick up!"

Cashier—"What's going on? Hey, what's wrong with him? I am calling 911. Does he have epilepsy?"

Matt—"I don't know. I am trying to call someone that knows him. Daylan answer your phone! Daylan, hey, thank God you answered. I am at Zips, and Luke is passed out shaking all over the floor. What should I do? The cashier called 911. They are sending an ambulance."

Daylan—"Matt? What? Talk slower. What's happening? Did you guys go to Sarah's party?"

Matt—"Yes we did, and we smoked hash

oil. We were hungry and walked to Zips. Now something is wrong with Luke. I don't want to get into trouble, so I kind of said I didn't know what is wrong with him. I don't want my parents to find out we were at a party doing drugs."

Daylan—"What? You're kidding! Man up. Luke needs help. You need to be honest with the paramedics. Tell them exactly what is going on and what you have been doing. It is important that they know so they can treat him."

Matt—"I don't want my parents to find out. I don't want to talk to Luke's mom."

Daylan—"Dude really? I'll call his mom. Where are they taking him?" "Hello, Mrs. Peterson, this is Daylan. Luke is at Zips and passed out. Zips called 911 and an ambulance is there. You need to know he was smoking hash oil this afternoon. They are taking him to Valley Hospital."

Daylan and I went to see Luke in the hospital the next day. He is in a coma, and he doesn't look good. There are tubes everywhere with multiple IVs and machines beeping. The atmosphere is sterile and cold. Luke's mom sits by his side crying.

Why do some people choose to use drugs and some people don't? We have been told not to; they are bad for you. But, have we really? Don't do drugs, but legalize marijuana. My friends do internet searches about marijuana and come up with all kinds of statistics about how pot is not bad for you. It is organic. Google says: "No one has died from using marijuana". Advertisers ignore examples of bad reactions like Luke's, saying he must have gotten some laced product. How is it possible to minimize this type of reaction? Getting laced product is always a risk. My peers that are smoking pot and abusing drugs have lost

their ability to think clearly. They cannot logically process facts. They choose to deny that their marijuana and hash use might have bad consequences. My peers not doing drugs do not have this skewed perception. My conclusion is the drugs themselves create an altered mentality, separation from reality, and denial. The drug lies to its user and alters their belief system.

Matt was more worried about getting in trouble than handling a critical life threatening situation. He didn't want his parents to find out he had been smoking hash. Matt is normally a good friend and cares about Luke, but his mind was altered and reality changed. At least he called my brother. Daylan, not under the influence of drugs, was calm. He processed the information he received, helped communicate with the emergency responders, and called Luke's mom to let her know where they were taking Luke. He was honest, direct, and precise in recounting what was happening and what Luke had smoked. Daylan's responses were logical and he was able to help his friend. Why? Because his reality was not altered by drugs. Daylan was living in the present moment. My friends who choose to use marijuana lag behind emotionally. They are failing to handle life situations appropriately and respond like Matt when dealing with a crisis—they freeze. They are unable to make the appropriate decisions or act quickly. They are emotionally stagnant and incapable of dealing with reality. Some have digressed and appear to have the emotional maturity we had in middle school. Many are not doing as well academically. I have watched several of my close friends go from being an honor roll student to barely passing, and they all claim that marijuana is safe.

Society's support of marijuana and the lies the drug tells a person's mind make it difficult for those using to quit. I am encouraging my friends to deal with their problems emotionally without using substances. I want them to realize it is better for them, their future, and society if they can develop appropriate emotional maturity. Choose to be drug free, deal with reality, and live in the present. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Savannah Hoekstra is a high school senior from Washington. *Alert Magazine* congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.