



I Shouldn't Know This Much About Drugs

By Chelsea Gregory

DRUGS—chemical substances (such as ecstasy, pills, etc.) that affect the central nervous system and cause changes in behavior and often addiction—have influenced my life. Some people have the advantage of never encountering drugs and their horrible outcomes; however, my experience is altogether different. Most of my friends and acquaintances are lucky enough to have never come in contact with drugs, such as pot, methamphetamine, and heroin. There is the occasional, small number of individuals I know who are in the same boat as I. Drugs have been in my life a great deal, involving my family, friends, and relationships.

Every single drug imagined (marijuana, PCP, stimulants, narcotics, meth, heroin, alcohol, etc.) has been abused in my family—with the exception of my grandparents. My aunts, uncles, cousins, parents, siblings, and in-laws were all users at one point in my life. The most dramatic, habitual users were my parents, uncles and aunt. My mother, whom I have never met due to drug abuse and many assaults, is still in prison to this day. My father has done every drug imaginable, but his choice was crystal meth. He officially renounced his using when I was in the seventh grade. Believe me when

I say, as a seventeen-year-old, I should not know this much about drugs. The real turning point in my dad's life was when he had a stroke some years back. He nearly died, but lived in an intense coma for two weeks and when he revived, his entire left side was dead. He regained use of his left limbs but had to do rigorous exercises, including re-learning how to walk, talk, and eat. The situation seems horrible to imagine, even more so shocking and atrocious in reality, but was all dealt with love, support, and rehab. He has been sober for years now and has never looked back.

Separate from my immediate family, my aunt was a heavy heroin addict for years. Now that her veins are shot and health declining, she is prescribed methadone—the synthetic pill form of heroin. She has been taking heroin for about six years now. My uncles were all alcoholics at one point. One still drinks to this day, but the other two quit because of liver failure.

Some of my friends are addicts—more grave than others. One friend in particular has lived a rough life, where she finds her happiness in pills, alcohol, and sex—anything to numb reality. After making countless mistakes, repetitively blacking out, and going to jail for breaking and entering, theft to the first degree, and probation viola-

tions she has FINALLY cleaned up her act and is living sober and happy.

My other friend's mother was an alcoholic and pill abuser (typically morphine and oxycotton). After countless physical fights and verbal attacks between them, my friend left her house. She stayed with me, days and nights, until her mother returned to her senses and cut her dosages, forgoing treatment.

My current boyfriend used to be a meth addict, years ago. He abused many drugs, but his pick was meth. The stories he's divulged to me: stealing tires and tarps off of cars and trucks, pawning his treasured items (laptops, etc.), and getting infections for missing veins when shooting up—all for CRYSTAL METH. After a near death experience he is living sober, content and enjoying what life has to offer.

Even though I have never walked in their shoes as an abuser, I have been an observer. I have watched families and friends be torn apart and lives lost due to over-dosage. I have lived with drugged-out family members and lost friends. Not all aftermaths turn out happy, like the people listed previously. My father recovered and got a second chance at life through his determination to recover. My friend went through jail; and my boyfriend because of sheer unhappiness with life and his fear of losing it. From firsthand experience I can say I, Chelsea Justine Gregory, have learned my lesson to stay away from ALL drugs and to live a stress and worry-free life. I hope to one day educate my community and all communities on drug use and preventions. My only wish is to use my life stories to influence others on not using and maybe, just maybe, save a life or two. 🙏

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Chelsea Gregory is a recent high school graduate from Sunny Valley, OR. 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.