

## What's the low-down on Pot??



I believe, in this biz, people look at issues and want to see black and white. Certainly, life would be so much easier if it really was black and white or right and wrong or good and bad etc... but life isn't. And neither is drug use... including pot.

I imagine that many of you have seen the puppet advertisement on tv accompanied by the song, "Drugs, Drugs, Drugs...some are good, some are bad. Drugs, Drugs, Drugs...ask your Mom or ask your Dad". Well, there you go. That means we can't just assume that all drugs are bad, right? On the other hand, the producers of that public service announcement were probably not considering that "pot" might be good. Nevertheless, that's something I want to consider.

There is much debate going on politically about the medical uses of marijuana. Attached to that is also discussion about the usefulness of current drug policy and law enforcement. It still centers around this good/bad argument - that marijuana is either all good or all bad. I've read several papers recently and that just doesn't seem to be the case.

Let's start with the "good"... Marijuana is very effective in relieving symptoms of nausea and vomiting in patients with AIDS or undergoing chemotherapy treatment for cancer . At the same time, it increases appetite which can be very beneficial for people who are battling disease! Also, it can reduce brain swelling in patients that have just experienced a stroke and help to reverse the effects of such. Basically, there are some really good things about marijuana that can help people who are sick, not the least of which is that after they smoke it they feel happy in spite of their disease. Lastly, noone has ever died from an overdose of pot.

Okay, so what's bad? Well, the younger you are when you start to use it for recreational reasons, the more likely you are to go on to use other drugs. Often, teens who use pot also use alcohol or other drugs which contributes to poor decision making and risky behaviour (like impaired driving... unsafe sex...) . Of course, most people who use pot smoke it so you have all the respiratory problems that could be caused by that (like chronic bronchitis, more chest colds etc). And then there's always the addiction. The earlier you start the more likely you are to get addicted - same goes for tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Addiction can interfere with learning, working, family and friend relationships, self-esteem, physical health.... your entire life!!

So that's the health and safety stuff. But there's also other complications from using pot, especially for adolescents. Teens may have their educational achievement limited by being constantly stoned... either because they can't concentrate or remember things... or because they get caught being stoned at school and are suspended!!

There's so much more I could say about this but I don't want to write a book. I do want to know what YOU THINK though. Please answer the following questions:

Have you ever smoked pot? IF so, when did you start and why?

Do you still smoke it? If so, how often?

Do you want to quit? IF so, why?

Your responses are completely confidential.

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Thanks,

Lisa.