

Topic: My late teenage years as a pothead and the negative connotations my parents applied to me.

Abstract: Although I consider myself to be a witty constructive individual, my family has seen me as less of a person because I, like many other constructive Americans, smoke weed. They both came from a traditional Mexican household, where they were taught that drugs were never an acceptable aspect of life. I do agree with my parents that Marijuana has impacted my life, but not in the negative aspect that they believe it has. Personally I don't think that marijuana is ruining my life as my parents do; it helps me focus, enhances life, and promotes creativity.

Keywords: Alienation, Marijuana, Separation, Mexican conventional wisdom, and Family Values.

Marijuana has enlightened my life. Thanks to the miraculous properties that this wonderful herb possesses, my life has been enriched with countless memories, humorous cognitive processes, innumerable new friends, a deeper complex understanding of music, and the most essential factor of life: happiness. Don't get me wrong, living life in a clear state of mind is great as it is; I wouldn't want to be high every second of my life, but it's rare for me to pass on an opportunity to light up and exchange some laughs with friends. Although it has been scientifically proven that when moderately consumed, marijuana poses no obvious threats to physical health; people will often associate negative stereotypes to my personality because of the harmless habit that I practice.

As a young kid, I was thought to stay away from any mind altering substances, much like any other parents would teach their children. At the same time, I saw my father fueling his alcoholism and finding himself in legal troubles because of it. I was always confused about being told to stay away from drugs while my father would drink, but nevertheless I remained away from anything like that for years. Around the age of eleven, I began to witness some of my peers

experimenting with alcohol and marijuana. Although I wouldn't experiment with marijuana until I was fifteen, my mother began accusing me of smoking when I was twelve. Being wrongfully accused of this strongly irritated me; unfortunately there was nothing I could do about it.

One day when I was thirteen, my mother was positive I was under the influence. So much that she decided to take me to a clinic and give me a drug exam. My results came back negative, but she actually believed I had discovered a method of cheating the exam. For years she continued to accuse me of drug consumption. I grew so fed up with her constant ramblings that in a rebellious response I said screw it and decided to actually get high, finally giving my mother something to rant about. I always saw this as an example of self fulfilling prophecy; with my mom constantly applying a false connotation to me until it became true. To this day I have never regretted that decision.

Aside from my mom's constant rants about marijuana, I was relatively ignorant about the plant. The stories I had heard varied significantly. I had people telling me their stories about falling asleep, eating a lot, listening to music, or even coming to school. The countless propaganda commercials only further desensitized my perception about it. All I was able to understand about marijuana was that you would: ruin your life, run over children on bicycles, miss important events, steal from your grandparents, or neglect children on babysitting duty. I had no idea what to expect when I took that first puff; what I heard was one thing and what the media said differentiated entirely. The main reason I would say for my exclusion from marijuana was that I didn't know what the outcome would be. The countless propaganda advertisements didn't help me make a decision either.

Since the mid-fifties, the government has led a strong campaign aimed at instructing individuals that marijuana and other associated drugs will ruin your life. If they truly believe

that, that's fine with me. What bothers me about this is that at the same time they spread their ignorance, they continuously allow fast food chains to poison America with their poorly regulated standards, they permit countless alcohol and tobacco conglomerates corporations to taint our health, and the EPA allows the same companies to fill our water systems with their waste, inevitably poisoning our water supply. There are millions of products widely available on the market that are more detrimental to one's health, but no restrictions have been applied to them. Instead the government writes off loans to companies whose products take lives. It wasn't until later in my life that I realized this, but until then I allowed the media to create my judgment on drugs.

The first time I got high I didn't perceive much of it. I guess I hadn't received the full effect because I remember my friends just staring blankly and laughing at the television while they watched the classic stoner film, *Half Baked*. I remember my mind shifting focus here and there but it was nothing too spectacular or mind altering as others had described it to be. For months following that event I continued making countless attempts at getting high although I found out later that I wasn't inhaling properly. Later that summer I attended a concert; this would be my first time feeling the full psychoactive effects of the cannabis sativa that all my social contemporaries were boasting about.

I spent the day wandering around the festival with my friend. It was as if my brain had reached these wondrous new heights of consciousness. My surroundings had been adjusted to please my humorous being. The festival was filled with bands who I thought were rubbish, but listening to them in that state of mind had me seeing them in a clearer light. It seemed like the sound of the music was being treated through some filter to make it sound better. I was able to listen to all the different frequencies of the sound. My first "authentic" experience was

marvelous, it was as if everything had been added a spacey psychedelic element to it. From then on, I knew there would be an unbreakable element in my life that I would cherish for years to come.

Two months later, I returned to school as a junior; fully embracing my new profound love for marijuana. What I found surprising is that coincidentally my grades began to display a dramatic improvement. For my first two years at high school, I averaged about a .5 academic grade point; for the last two years it was somewhere around 2.5. I always just attributed it to my ability to focus better when I was attending classes stoned. For most of the year I remained a casual weekend smoker, but as soon as I found employment I was able to indulge in the fine richness of marijuana much more often. Although my life had improved at this point (i.e. better grades, a job), my mom's harassment over my habit only aggrandized, now that she actually had something to complain about. She was finding my all my pipes and leftover baggies. At this point she was constantly threatening to kick me out of the house. When looked at under a scope this seems like the conventional approach (son is doing drugs, mother threatens to kick him out) but the difference is that my drug of choice was not affecting my life in a negative manner at all. My mom actually believed that I was on a downward spiral; that I would end up like some of our family members with previous drug habits— either dead or in prison.

My habit was obviously placing a strain on me and my mother's relationship. My dad, who had experimented with the drug previously, stayed out of the whole situation for the most part. He never shed too much light on the topic; he would just tell me that he didn't want me to messing up. The reason I believe he never disciplined me too much when it came to drugs is because he knew that I knew that he has had his share of them and didn't want to seem hypocritical. Secretly I always suspected that he was fine about mu habits but has never able to

completely open due to my mom's constraints. I never truly believed my mother's behavior towards this was justifiable. She would always attempt to relate my life to that of family member who was incarcerated due to alcohol and drug related charges. This always infuriated me as there was no basis to link a connection between these two different stories.

Both my parents were raised in a dominant Mexican household in the shanty town outskirts of Durango and Tijuana. Where they grew up there wasn't any conventional drug use. If anything, alcohol was the only drug widely consumed; which is why I think both my parents have a tolerance for alcohol, but when I desire to smoke weed under a controlled environment, it's throwing my life away. I've made several attempts at communicating to my parents about the issue but they quickly shrug my comments away. They allow their presumed notions of marijuana to perceive their judgment. The Mexican model for good health was beans, rice, and milk; alcohol was fine. The consumption of drugs is much more popular in America than it is in Mexico when they grew up, so obviously there is a giant cultural influence when it comes to my mom's perceptions. Her family hadn't been exposed to marijuana prior to their arrival here so they couldn't relate it to any sense of authenticity. Their judgments are based on the continued belief from their native land that drugs marijuana is just a initial step in drug addiction.

If marijuana is just as detrimental to a person's health as alcohol, there is no justification to why my mother continues to condemn an adult for their habits when she also indulges in her own form of escape. I do understand her main concern is to keep me safe and healthy but I know that my immediate health is not at risk from my habits. If she would take a second to collect the information and data, she would finally realize that I'll be fine, if not she will only further encapsulate her mind in a vast endless sea of ignorance.