

Drugs Lead to Death and Prison – Real Experience Story #1

Hello,

I was asked by Teens Rise Above to share my story about my past and where I am today as a result of it.

The best way I can begin, is to tell you where my drug and alcohol use started. During my sophomore year of high school I started to use alcohol on the weekends and experiment with marijuana. For me, alcohol seemed to be the most acceptable amongst teens and marijuana was something not many kids did. So when I first decided to try marijuana I was really nervous. I didn't know how it would affect me and so I was hesitate to try it.

The first time I got high I was really confused but seemed to like how it made me feel. Since my first use, I had only smoked before concerts because I was playing football at the time and didn't want it to hinder my performance.

It wasn't until my senior year that my marijuana use got out of control. I was done with football and didn't have clear direction as to what my goals were. I wasn't sure about what college I wanted to attend and I felt kind of empty inside. I filled that void with smoking weed and hanging around the wrong people. After graduating, I was smoking every day and spending almost all of my paychecks on marijuana. I felt guilty about my use and that nobody but me and the close group of people I smoked with knew how bad my addiction was. I was living a double life.

I was at a low point in my life and was dealing with depression. I felt like I needed to smoke in order to get by with my life. The friends I had, to me were only friends because we all smoked weed together. It wasn't where I wanted to be, but I couldn't find a way out.

I planned on going to Technical College after summer and starting from there. When school started, I was smoking so much, I would even go to school high. My life would change as a result of my use during my fall semester of school on my birthday.

I was sitting at an apartment the night before my birthday discussing a drug called magic mushrooms. The guys said it was really fun and that I should try it. I was hesitant to go beyond anything but weed because I knew I would be crossing over to harder drugs. But because I felt I had something to prove to these guys, I decided to try them on my birthday (the next day).

On October 18th, 2003 I ingested the mushrooms with one other guy sitting at an apartment. The effects of the drug were not what I expected and I began to panic and hallucinate. I was hearing voices in my head and felt like I was trapped in this secret world. If I ever doubted a spirit world where angels and demons were, I know had I dismissed those doubts.

Something very evil and wrong was going on. I didn't feel in control. I felt I needed to find a way to come down and find some place safe.

I decided to go to my car to grab some weed to smoke and I remember thinking how claustrophobic I felt in that apartment. I wanted to get home to where I felt safe and decided to drive home.

It was the biggest mistake I had ever made! On my way home, due to the effects of the drug, I was in no condition to drive and still felt tormented by these demons in my mind telling me I was going to die while on the mushrooms. The first thing that happened was I rear ended a van. I got out and was confronted by the people in the van, but because I feared going to jail, I jumped back into my car and drove off.

While driving down the same road, I approached a hill with a man jogging on the side. My vision was off because of the hallucinations and as I drove up the hill, thinking I passed the jogger, I heard loud crash and something hit my windshield. I slowed down to see what it was, and it was the man who was jogging, on my car! I panicked and drove into the ditch and ended up crashing into a gate about a 100 feet or so away from where the man had fell off my car.

From there my memory fades in and out as I heard sirens and EMT's asking me questions. I woke up in the hospital where I was handcuffed to a stretcher. A detective was asking me questions about what I was under the influence of. I told him I took mushrooms. He told me I had struck a pedestrian and was being charged with OWI Homicide because the man had died. I felt like I had woken up from a bad dream and couldn't believe this was actually happening to me!

The result of the accident was a 4.5 year prison sentence with 4 years of probation. I remember feeling this extreme guilt and shame for all I had done to the victim's family and my own family. My drug use had caused so much harm and anguish. I knew I needed forgiveness and to change my life around.

During my incarceration, I found that forgiveness, peace, and ability to move on. I found it through Jesus Christ and his saving grace. It wasn't through going to church more, or working on moral reformation of my character, but through a personal relationship I had developed with the living God. I became born-again and trusted in Jesus as my Savior from all my sin and things I had done. My life literally changed the night I decided to follow Him and accept His redemption. This new life inside me was transforming me and giving me new hope and new direction. I knew then that God wanted to use my story for His glory and to help others struggling with the same issues.

For those of you reading this, if you are struggling with the pressures of drug and alcohol use, you're not alone. Each of us has this need to be accepted and find fulfillment in life. But I've

learned you cannot find it in drugs and alcohol. In my opinion, trying to fill that void in life with anything but God becomes an idol and is bound to produce dead end results.

It is not easy to say no to these things. We all want to fit in and be accepted. But if you're looking at the big perspective of your life and how short it is, what is really going to matter, choosing substances or material things over God is certainly not the way to go. Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and Life."

My hope is that you can find peace and redemption through Jesus and choose to go against the current of society.

_Anonymous from Middleton, WI