

Francesco Meli

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### Let's Go On A Trip Together

There are many people who think that values among youth of this generation are crashing down. They think that youth can no longer recognize what is good or wrong for themselves, living their lives day by day without thinking about their futures and consequently making poor choices. Life is made up of many choices, an innumerable number of decisions that shape the individual. Drug use is one factor that negatively transforms a youth who is no longer focused on making wise choices. When one tries to understand why young people abuse drugs, the reasons are many: to feel relaxed, to forget, to cope with stress, to deal with family problems, peer pressure, sometimes just for fun or glamour, and other times even to lose weight. It must not be forgotten that every action has consequences. Using drugs, the individual may temporarily solve his dilemma but underneath this action there is a consequence much worse that may last forever in his life. Most of the time, drugs seem to be the perfect choice in the short-term, but end up being the worst choice in the long run.

When an individual takes drugs, there are three main stages: the immediate effect, the secondary effect following the high, and lastly, the long-term effects that are all those effects following a regular use of a drug. Below is an analysis of these three stages for two of the most recognized and popular drugs used by teens: Marijuana and Ecstasy.

In studies done by The Partnership, an association that fights for a drug-free America, it was found that the short-term effects of marijuana include problems with memory and learning, distorted perception (sights, sounds, time, touch), trouble with thinking and problem solving, loss of motor coordination, increased heart rate, and anxiety (NIDA) To people who have never smoked marijuana before, these effects may seem to be entirely negative. Instead of analyzing just the narrowed scientific effects of this drug, users focus on pleasant effects: "Use of marijuana includes seeing visions or colors, out of body experience, floating feeling, laughing, and a new point of view of your own life (Marijuana Passion)." Surely, some people would find the first series of negative effects acceptable, considering that there is a second list of much more nice effects occurring in your body. One must consider though, that this fantastic effect of disconnection goes away after a few hours. After several hours that one smoked, feelings of laziness, tiredness and depression may show up and the only way to return to the first stage is smoking again. Then, what is the problem? If smoking again is the solution the users say, "Let's do it." Before starting to smoke constantly though, one must consider the long-term effects. The most relevant long-term effects revealed by studies done by Virginia State University show "Psychological dependence requires more of the drug to get the same effect, Diminished or extinguished sexual pleasure, Lower sperm counts, difficulty having children in men and Increased risk of infertility in women (Virginia State University)." So now the question is "Is this really worth it in the long run?" Marijuana takes the individual far away from his main goals and it makes him fight for the next use.

Now, let's consider a second and more powerful drug: ecstasy.

TheGoodDrugsGuide.com, a free online guide of drugs, says: "The effect of ecstasy builds quickly, coming on in waves within the first two hours, strengthening with each pass. A

lightness of mood and relaxation gives way to waves of physical pleasure, euphoria, openness and empathy to others around you. The awareness of touch is strongly heightened. The muscles relax.” All these effects may seem to involve the user in a wonderful and distorted world full of brightness and happiness. Physical pleasure, strong awareness of touch and openness are a mixture of symptoms that every single person should be afraid of. It wouldn't be the first time to hear of a guy and a girl having a sexual relation caused by this strong drug. Beside the obvious consequences of having sex with a stranger, the immediate effects of ecstasy easily bring the individual to do things he wouldn't do normally. Even for ecstasy, after an unforgettable and beautiful time spent under the effect of drugs, some comedown symptoms are going to show up. After the high, ecstasy usually produces a “hangover effect”, which is also known as coming down. Other side effects include a loss of appetite, depression, muscle aches, and feeling tiredness that cannot be alleviated by sleep. It also impairs ones ability to concentrate, particularly on the day after taking it. Some people may also experience anxiety and paranoia (“The Good Drugs Guide”). These effects usually begin the day after taking the drug and can last for several days, says the expert Michael Shannon, writer of “Drugs in Australia: Ecstasy”. Is it a necessary part of having a great time dancing with friends? No one needs to compromise two to four days out of their week for some extra and unhealthy “fun” on the dance floor. The individual who regularly uses ecstasy damages the cells in the gut and brain that produce serotonin, the chemical that regulates mood, appetite, and pain. Irreversible harm can also occur to functions involving learning and memory.

Marijuana and ecstasy are just two of the very many drugs abused among teens. Everybody though, should always take in consideration every single effect and then evaluate how it could interfere with their life. Giving a false state of happiness and

involving the person in a distorted world, drugs are just cause of confusion and disillusionment which obviously are not good factors for living a focused, happy and organized life.

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