

# **WHAT DO YOU TELL THE Kids**

*ABOUT DRUGS AND DRUG TESTING FOR STUDENTS .....*

*By Roger Morgan*

**Don't Gamble!** You're only going to live once.

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs kill and destroy people, particularly young people. Physiologically, the vital organs and brain are not fully developed until the mid twenties, or later. Until the brain is fully developed, young people are much more susceptible to harm and addiction than an adult.

Research has shown that if you get to adulthood before first significant use of tobacco, alcohol or other illicit drugs, you should virtually never have a problem of dependency. If you can accept one good piece of advice for life, it would be to always have the chips in your corner, so you are in control. If you have seen an addict or two, or lost a friend, no doubt you have seen through their misery that drugs and/or alcohol control them.

Look at it another way. Let's just look at your total expected life cycle, keeping in mind that people today can live longer. How long, and particularly how well you live, will depend in large part to how well you maintain your body and brain, particularly in the formative years while you are building a foundation. Some old people joke, "...if I knew I'd live this long I would have taken better care of myself." The problem is, it is often not a joke.

Adolescents are already pretty close to the safe zone .... about 21. If you get that far without abusing alcohol, or using tobacco and other drugs, in all probability *the quality of your life*, which could be another 80 years, will be enhanced considerably. A long life without quality, incapacitated with a stroke, heart attacks, brain damage, mental illness, hardening of the arteries, liver or lung damage could mean you are just trapped in a body that doesn't function. At that point, sitting in a wheel chair with an oxygen bottle and tubes in your nose, you may wish you were dead.

Approximately 3600 Americans die each month because of drug overdose. But that appears to be an accident. Just a casualty of war. Dead people can't buy drugs. The real mission of the alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug trades are to is simply to get you hooked early, so you will be a captive market for their insidious products until death does you in ... which will usually be at an early age. Approximately 142,000 people die annually due to drugs alone, and almost one of ten people over 12 years old are dependent on alcohol and drugs. Almost all of them have something in common. ***They started with tobacco, alcohol and drugs between 11 and 17 years old, at an average age of 13.***

A lot of young people don't see the harm in drugs. They see adults drink, smoke ... even use illegal drugs. But, as mentioned earlier, ***your brain is much more susceptible to harm and addiction.*** Further, if you have any history of addiction in your family, or mental illness, your chances of becoming addicted are four times greater than someone who doesn't. Observe those in your family or that you know who have died because of alcohol or other drugs, then ask yourself if you want to be like them.

Think hard also about smoking tobacco and marijuana. Neither is harmless. They adversely affect short-term memory, concentration, attention span, motivation, problem solving and clearly interferes with your ability to learn. Pot also retards the maturation process and leads to mental illness. Almost all users of hard drugs started with a little puff of marijuana. Over 60% of those in treatment for addiction are there because of marijuana. You need to maintain your competitive edge in life. While some people smoke marijuana religiously and still manage to function, the vast majority function at a fraction of their true potential as a human being. Decide carefully which side of the fence you want to be on.

The simple wisdom is just wait until you are in the safe zone. After age 21 you can legally consume alcohol if you wish. But, by then you will have all the cards in your corner, and be in control of the quality and probably the longevity of your life. You will be glad you did.=