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Dating, Drugs And Alcohol

By gprialde@yahoo.com, "Ed. D."

Dear Daughter,

I love you so much. I wish that I could always protect you from all dangers, but I know that I can't. You are growing up and you will have to face dangers and make some decisions on your own. However, I am always here and I can always be a pretty good coach. Please talk to me anytime about any problem you may have, even if you have messed up. I have messed up a few times myself.

I was thinking about my last letter on dating. I would like to continue those thoughts. As I think about the potential dangers to avoid, drugs and alcohol are at the top of the list.

The moment you learn that a boyfriend is using any type of illegal drug, begin choosing the location for the break up. Never let the relationship continue thinking that he will give up the drugs for you. I know this sounds cruel, but it is true. People who are using drugs will look you in the eye and convincingly lie about the drug use. The drug use actually alters their personality. They will lie and do things that they wouldn't normally do.

When you break up with someone over drug use, it's a little different situation. As described before, choose a semi-private but public location, such as a restaurant. Take your own transportation and enough one dollar bills to pay for whatever you order, if you are meeting in a restaurant.

Get straight to the issue. If you like him, tell him so. If he has some good points, compliment him. Then tell him that you cannot continue dating him because he uses drugs. Tell him that this is something you decided long ago and that you are sticking to it. If it is true, tell him that you still consider him to be a friend, but you will not date him.

He will try to minimize the drug use. He may say that he doesn't use drugs that often, and that it's no big deal, everyone does it. He may say that he can quit anytime he wants to quit. He may try to make you feel guilty for treating him so badly. Don't believe any of this. Tell him that only he can decide what he wants to do, you wish him the best and that you hope, for his sake, he does decide to give up the drugs. Get up and leave.

Dating, Drugs And Alcohol

In about a week or so he may call to tell you that he is off all drugs and doing great. Congratulate him and tell him that you will not consider dating him until he has been drug free for at least a year. He will then try to make you feel bad for being so unreasonable. He may even try to make you feel guilty for not helping him stay off drugs by continuing the relationship. Without you he may start using drugs again. Don't buy any of this. Tell him that it is up to him to quit the drugs, not you. You are not responsible for his behavior. By the way, if you are thinking that everyone does some drugs so there is no one left to date, you are hanging around the wrong people.

While we are on the subject, do we need to talk about drug use? I don't think that we do, but if we do, please, please, let's talk. You need to know that there is a lot of false information out there, most of which comes from the people who are using the drugs. They make it sound really good. It's not. I have seen many people lose their family, friends, their productive lifestyle, and sometimes their life, because the drug became number one in their life.

Do you know what upsets me the most? Not a single one of those people set out to destroy their life. I am certain that if these people had known what destruction lay ahead, they would have never taken that first drug that seemed so harmless. In reality, the most dangerous illegal drug is the first one taken. It seems so harmless in the beginning.

In spite of the seriousness of drug use there is a simple solution; simply don't do it. Don't take that first drug. No matter how harmless it may seem or how good other people make it sound, don't do it. Make that decision now, before you find yourself faced with "friends" who are encouraging you to "just try it." Make the decision now so that you will not have to decide when under pressure. There comes a time when you have to make some decisions about yourself. Make good decisions.

By the way, what would you do if you were with a group of friends and suddenly alcohol or an illegal drug turns up? You may be thinking "Don't take it." That's a good answer, but you must do more in this situation. You must leave the group immediately. If the individual with the drugs or alcohol is caught and arrested, the whole group will be arrested. It is important that you choose wisely when it comes to friends. I will have more to say about this in a future letter.

Let me also mention a few things about alcohol. Alcohol is probably the most dangerous drug available in terms of destruction to individuals and families. The reason it is so destructive is because it is legal, socially accepted and readily available.

For those who have trouble with alcohol, the onset of problems is slow and not even noticeable to the victim. Victims of both drug and alcohol dependence often have their world falling apart all around them, and they are in total denial of the problem and the consequences.

You are under age. It is illegal for you to drink alcohol. This makes my advice simple for now. Don't do it. It's that simple. No doubt you will find yourself at a party and there will be alcohol present. Don't do it, leave immediately. It's illegal and you could be arrested.

When you become an adult and are living on your own, you will have to decide what you will do about alcohol. Some people can drink socially and never have a problem with alcohol abuse or dependence.

Dating, Drugs And Alcohol

Other people begin with social drinking and the use slowly increases until it becomes abuse with the entire range of social, and eventually, physical problems. Which group are you in? I don't know either.

I want you to know that there is a danger involved. To avoid the danger, the best thing to do is choose to not drink alcohol. This is the safest route and the one that I recommend to you.

As far as dating someone who is using alcohol, it is similar to the drug issue. You are under age. If your date brings alcohol around you, he is putting you in danger. You could be arrested. He is being irresponsible and this is your cue to plan the break up. What if he is older and is of legal age to use alcohol? It doesn't matter. He is still endangering you. Plan the break up.

What will you do later on, when you are of legal age to drink alcohol, and your boyfriend drinks alcohol? This is not a black and white situation. If you have chosen the safe route and you do not drink alcohol, you may have decided that you will only date people who, like you, do not drink alcohol. If so, this simplifies things.

On the other hand, if you wish to continue dating the person, there may or may not be danger. As

discussed earlier, some people have trouble with alcohol and some don't. If the relationship becomes serious, discuss your concerns with him. If you have a good relationship, an in-depth discussion should not be a problem. Remember that you always have access to professional drug and alcohol counselors who can help you evaluate your situation. Be sure you are comfortable with the situation up front rather than after the marriage.

Alan Yarbrough, Ed. D. is a retired psychologist. Letters to my Daughter is a series of heart-touching letters written by a Christian psychologist to his teenage daughter. These letters deliver what most parents want to say, but rarely do. Available at

<http://www.pricelessebooks.com>

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Stopping The Drug And Alcohol Temptations

By Dee Cohen

The addiction to drugs and painkillers has received more publicity after Rush Limbaugh spent a month in rehab for an addiction to painkillers. Celebrities such as Whitney Houston and Faith Evans also were in the news for drug rehabilitation treatment.

Studies at the University of Buffalo have shown that those who fall into addictions often suffer from a tendency for self-blame and shame and this may lead someone towards drugs and alcohol as a way to

Dating, Drugs And Alcohol

cope.

Look at your own tendencies for shame if you are yourself inclined towards drugs and alcohol. Do you beat yourself up a lot after a specific situation? Or if you know someone with an inclination towards drugs or alcohol what is his or her self-esteem like?

In meditation classes it's often discussed that we are not our negative emotions, but can watch them. There is always a part of our mind that can observe our anger, jealousy, frustrations etc. Get in touch with that part rather than staying in the swirl that is a downward spiral of self-recrimination.

When there is a painful moment due to a bad situation at work etc, try and take a deep breath and remember that the boss or co-worker has their own set of issues etc. It is easy to go home and want some way to forget things and that is where alcohol and drugs can come in. But try to think about the person who insulted you. Are they really in control of their own emotions and their own reactions? Or are they just responding like a reflex perhaps based on their own family history and issues themselves?

The more we can see what other people are going through, the easier it is to not buy into their outbursts towards us and this can help stop the cycle that leads people into drugs and alcohol to soothe the pain. This helps us to be calmer and more peaceful and not part of the chain reaction.

Dee Cohen is a licensed social worker and certified yoga teacher in Florida. Visit for more healing tips.

<http://www.websitekidz.info/rehab/alcohol-rehabilitation-centerstake-an-informed-decision.html>



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