

THE
POT
HOLE

THE DOPE DELUSION.

By

DAVID GREY

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The Dope DIET

The 'The Dope Diet' is an intimate diary from the perspective of David Grey's family about his struggles with smoking dope.

As the subtitle states he lost more than 8 kilos, money, family, friends and nearly his sanity during his journey, crusade for legalization and acceptance

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PART 1

The Romance begins.

So when I met a lovely girl in the south of France with a joint in her hand I was fatalistically drawn to her.

My romance was almost like a storybook beginning when I met her on the beach through a mutual acquaintance.

Like all drug related encounters this romance started with an amusing 'lost in translation' beginning. There I was with my 20 euros asking a friend to acquire a little green bag and instead of her taking the money she requested that I meet a mystery supplier in person.

This got my alarms bells ringing and while she was innocently was trying to arrange a date, I had the distinct feeling that I was being set up to meet a cop and get busted.

That evening the young lady was arranging a relaxed smoke on the beach with me while I was acquiring some pot for a friend from London.

I was reluctantly waiting on the beach for a car to pull up and felt I could potentially be bundled into a van and interrogated for trying to purchase a nominal amount of contraband.

One can easily understand how prohibition throws normally law-abiding citizens into situations and circumstances, which raise their fear and paranoia.

Much to my relief a girl in pretty pink jeans turned up and the three of us proceeded to find some isolated pebbles to admire the view, listen to the ocean lapping on the rocks and enjoy a casual flirty smoke under the stars.

I eagerly admired the new brunette called CC who very quickly caught my attention.

Captivated by this young lady I felt a strong sense of abandonment so threw myself into getting to know her as well as possible. She mentioned that she had planned to relocate to Madrid so I threw caution to the wind and invited her to the beach the next day.

So like all self respecting Brits the next day I woke up early put on my board shorts to go to a near by beach and meet my friends from London. The day unfolded perfectly with us ending up in a memorable passionate embrace in the pool.

The combination of a beautiful setting, pot, friends, sunset and everything else was really the start of a great romance both with CC and pot. It is genuinely hard to describe the great feeling of having exactly arrived in a place where I wanted to be.

The stage was set for my love affair with marijuana to commence and like all things prohibited the 'forbidden fruit' aspect of it only made my late introduction even sweeter.

Food tasted better, sex was the best and I felt like I'd found the counterculture revolution of our time, which was legitimately going to make the world a better place along with a beautiful ally.

The U.K.- French alliance was strong and the intent was very cordial.

The next few weeks were spent primarily in bed in a haze of pot smoke and apart from tending to survival needs of food and water we spent hours in my apartment growing very close and embracing our

newfound mutual affection. The combination of love and sexual desire along with a mutual enjoyment for pot was a magical formula for connecting and essentially finding a perfect partner.

CC had to travel for work that only made our mutual affection grow as absence made the heart grow fonder so on her relocation to Madrid the stage was set for our next adventure.

The early stage of our romance was based purely on lust, a genuine excitement to get to know each other with the pleasure of shared experiences while seeing life in a new perspective.

The romance that ensued was deep and complex and we got on well with the backdrop of discovering new city, attempting to see the tourist sites and avoid the winter weather.

The marijuana aspect of our relationship was interesting as being bonded by the mutual enjoyment of getting high and laughing together was undeniably endless fun.

During the time I spent with CC I felt an incredible sense of appreciation. I knew this was a rare and privileged opportunity to have a beautiful girl who enjoyed and shared my passions for architecture and culture so we got to explore the city and walk the streets in beautiful and romantic settings.

We did well to mitigate any arguments or conflicts as we spent many hours just laughing and joking despite being slightly pressured by spending so much time together.

Most mornings I would leave CC to sleep whilst I snuck out of the bedroom to have a quick coffee and morning smoke on the balcony.

I'd know she was up when the radio started playing and I'd flick on the toast so she would have something better to smell other than the smoke.

We'd play the same upbeat music most morning that allowed us to exchange smiles, go about our morning routine but not feel too claustrophobic together.

Smiles, kiss's and touch, rather than words, got us ready for the day ahead.

There is a very fine line between luxury and decadence; the balance of enjoyment and overindulgence is a constant battle.

The human experience seeks daily rewards and chasing comfort and dopamine is the constant challenge that we all face.

Modern life throws a huge amount of temptations at us on an hourly basis and once something is added to our list of enjoyments its then difficult to live without.

Our primary temptation is food and we are all guilty of overindulging in an ice-cream binge.

The issue of marijuana is that it's on the cookie list, whilst classified at a medicine for some, I know that my initial use was recreational and primarily a method of searching for more pleasure and a means to fully enjoy my life.

What is difficult to understand is cookies make you fat slowly and marijuana was having a subtle and adverse effect of my personality and was ruining my life.

Regardless of the pleasure I derived from its use the reality was a high price to pay but it was subtle and difficult to detect.

The primary difficulty about having a drug problem is that it becomes a problem apparent to other people *before* it is a problem to you.

I, like many others, could not see objectively that any of my issues were drug related or therefore made worse with my drug use.

It's easy to see 'life' as problematic and I never assumed that pot was making it worse for me.

There I was sitting with a joint in my hand fantasizing about changing the world, joining the softest revolution of our time.

Like many others I fell in love with the concept of advocating the issue and I had found a cause and purpose that matched my aspirations.

The end of unneeded incarceration, great potential medicinal benefits and peace on earth.

Every young man feels the pressure of trying to amount to something, make a stand, attempt to make a positive change on the planet and with the magic of the internet all one can share the great work that has been already been done.

In 2014 Uruguay was the first country to legalize marijuana and Washington and Colorado have also legalized it on a federal level for recreational use.

This made me feel that I could embrace and test the legality myself.

The hard truth for me is that I made the classic mistake of wearing it on my sleeve for all to see, as it seemed to fill a void. It filled a cause and persona that I had been longing for.
This is where the problem started.

I was seduced hook line and sinker and off I trotted flagrantly throwing caution to the wind and essentially throwing myself under the bus.

A hard reality, that I learnt slowly, was the prohibition is also applied financially and getting high will do very little to help.

The politics of marijuana are closely associated with rebellious youthful causes of the next generation who take a moral standpoint

against the powers that be.

The Internet has exploded with expose documentaries about the financial system, food industry, monetary system and the global advocacy of marijuana is quickly following.

My constant dichotomy was that I agreed totally with the change in legislation but also felt it was worth highlighting the potential potholes associated with being a drug user.

'Freedom' is the ability to appreciate but not fall into dependence or abuse a substance.

I'd liken it to falling in love with a stripper; you know its a bad idea from the beginning but its attractive and feels like a challenge worth undertaking; you can continue to bullshit yourself that you've got it all under control, but it was one way from the beginning.

Once you've committed to this path the inevitable rock bottom heartbreak is inevitable.

It is almost the right of passage for modern man to avoid the hazards of drink, drugs, debt, obesity, venereal disease, unwanted pregnancies & cancer with the reward being his inevitable death!

At the ripe age of 35 I had managed to dodge most of these bullets, with an exception to drugs. I then spent the last two years in a 'cloud of stoner logic' trying to battle my personal prohibition with my new love for marijuana.

The last forbidden fruit.

The simple fact that marijuana is essentially illegal and hard to acquire only makes it more appealing.

This hurdle, plus misinformation regarding its effects, means that the first joint you smoke opens the question to why has this been the forbidden plant for so long?

The social peer pressure and the rebellious coming of age story whereby ones passage to adulthood is almost defined by the crossing the bridge into alcohol consumption, smoking and drugs is a script that is universal.

The very nature of social desire to fit in and assimilate with the cool kids and rebels is too attractive for most young people to resist.

These people are glamourized in popular media and celebrated but it does not mean its suitable behavior for most people. No one is smarter or improved by any of these vices.

The simple fact is cigarettes, alcohol and drugs have all been revealed as having negative health and financial consequences so ironically they are far more anti social than can ever be explained.

Getting drunk or high makes social situations more complicated and potentially problematic.

As it stands the legal issue is clear in my mind; that incarceration is inhumane but this does not deal with the very real dangers of social issues arising from dependence and essential pacification of frustrated rebellious young people chasing a good time.

The simple truth is no one is enhanced or improved when under the influence of drugs and the danger with Marijuana is the self-medication element for pain relief is still essentially illegal.

The initial laughs and pleasures of appreciating food, sports, sex and sleep throws the user into a classic preacher role. It's easy to remember that pot is a fun and recreational activity and getting high with your friends, the fresh perspective it brings to novel experiences opens a huge door.

Where that line is drawn a user must be very disciplined about and more importantly identify what is *not* enhanced with pot use. More easily said than done.

The research follows and highlights its non-toxicity and potent medicinal qualities so that throws a user into a new arena.

It's natural to walk blindly into a world of trial and error, where pot slowly incorporates itself into the every day.

Because there's no overdose line, weights and measures can be very easily adjusted the switch was too easy to dust some pot into my cigarette like adding some sugar to your tea. It was all too natural.

My lack of concern about pushing it to the point of overdose meant that my tolerance of it as a day-to-day habit quickly grew.

The week would pass in a blink of an eye, and a month passed with very little being achieved.

Smoking a pure joint and blowing ones mind is most people's first experience followed by the paranoia associated with getting caught. This is quickly followed by a healthy respect and a more measured approach to consumption.

Universally inescapable.

There is no hiding from the exposure to drugs and regardless of age, race or geographic circumstance drugs are an integrated part of

modern life.

It is impossible to escape the inevitable reality that drugs have permeated every geography and social class.

It is one area where the average person will be exposed or introduced to these illicit substances, so the legal classification shift that we are seeing globally is even more important.

The best someone can hope for is a balanced recreational use that currently still has great stigma.

The nature of marijuana is that it does not provide motivation or the need to change; a condition that marijuana users often suffer.

I personally found once the door was open it was very hard to close.

The general perception of pot smoking is partying and laughing with friends but the truth for me was one of isolated use and a tool to combat the further isolation of unemployment.

This situation almost felt inescapable and at times deeply depressing.

Drugs and drink are never a good solution to anything but a combination to get high then escaping the day or tackling any issues.

Addiction & Pacification

'A deed becomes a habit, a habit becomes a characteristic and your character determines your destiny.'

My view on addiction is that we all have a need for air, water, food and sleep but if this constant hungering for satisfaction is high jacked by drugs, coffee, sugar, tobacco or alcohol the short term stimulated

senses send constant miscommunication.

Often people misinterpret the pain in ones stomach as hunger when in fact its thirst for water so salty foods only exacerbate the need. It does nothing to satisfy the long-term requirement for water.

From the early stages we all have the potential 'death by mouth journey' and what we chose to consume in a 24-hour period, compounded over a decade, then a lifetime will end up determining our quality of life and eventual cause of death.

What we consume is what we become or the classic 'you are what you eat' and more importantly this applies to drinking and smoking.

More than ever the majority of people are consuming more sugar in liquid form and considering alcohol is essentially sugar water my personal view is that a lot of alcoholics have a sugar addiction.

The 'no go's' like meth and heroin are well documented, thanks to "Breaking Bad" and provoke a lot of fear in those with addictive habits.

I would say as a cigarette smoker there is a serious risk with marijuana due to the enhanced pleasure of smoking pot compared to plain tobacco.

The simple fact is that Prohibition has not worked and if one wants to get pot it is easy to access and essentially pretty affordable.

My personal experience is that it enhances ones circumstances if you're in a good place but if times are tough and your going through a rough patch the added sensitivity or shift in perspective is very harmful.

Never add a drug problem to money problems, if you are seeking work or having trouble with work then avoid drinking or drugs.

Ironically it's exactly when you're having tough time or times are stressful when the vices start to appear more attractive. Marijuana particularly presents a potential cozy escape from the

anxiety caused by modern life; it made it worse for me.

The need to see marijuana as beer or whiskey is important for drawing a line of recreation and dependence. The wake and bake lifestyle is preserve of college students on holiday but the subtle issue with Marijuana that is dangerous and grey but it has an unknown psychological impact, which blurs the lines and justifies the use.

Marijuana was tough to kick for me because I never believed I was addicted and it's not physically addictive. Without the down side it's easy to take a short break and then go back to it, which is minor addictive behavior.

If something is forbidden then it becomes more attractive and the pressures of modern life, financial anxiety and capitalism has created a competition for anything that provides some escape.

Its very hard for me to assess objectively whether it had a good impact on my personality, this is very subjective and whilst it triggered dopamine and produced a good feeling I'm yet to see someone genuinely benefit from a drug habit.

My Journey

Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll.

The issue I have is that I can't handle weed and it took me a long

time to realize it.

I had previously given up my work and left London to explore the world, discover a new place out of the rat race, and perhaps a wife in a sunny fruitful environment.

My journey took me to Australia where I started work as a Divemaster on a boat in Cairns.

For the first time I had found an environment where I could live completely on my terms and I had found a dream job that really was something I would pay to do.

I found a very healthy balance of working hard 6 days a week and chilling out in the evening on my balcony with a joint and watching the sun set over the mountains.

Once I had found Byron Bay and Nimbin, where marijuana and their cookies are totally legal, my life would change forever.

My initial thinking was if I went public or come out so to speak as a weed smoker I would be able to debate and hopefully end my personal prohibition.

The thinking being that prohibition of any activity starts with oneself then the next person who says No.

I felt that if I was as open as possible and polite and considerate in my smoking habits that I could redefine the social tolerances and reclassify it as healthier alternative to a tobacco.

The seduction went a lot further in that I felt that the global championing of this cause could be the legacy and higher calling that I'd been searching for.

The cancer research aspect of my personal justification was potent and dangerous in the sense that I felt quite noble in opening the path for cancer sufferers to self medicate when needed. It could potentially justify that I was primitively doing my own research but this was hardly scientific and probably a weak justification for bad

behavior.

The very real and good news that Marijuana has been found to help cure breast cancer by the University of Madrid is undeniably the positive news that all stoners love to hear to support a change in legislation. It was heart-warming optimism rather than the oppressive criminal sanctions and punitive threats that weed smokers have faced for so long.

I felt drug users and addicts had been very misunderstood and unfairly treated historically and could potentially be the last group of heavily persecuted minorities undefined by sex, race or age.

What actually followed was two years of destroying my reputation as a normal functioning self-sustaining adult, which threw me into intervention after intervention with little result due to a deep twisted logic so hard to unwind.

The difficulty was that smoking cigarettes has permeated every aspect of my day from morning ritual with a coffee, post meals to night outs socially smoking, which inevitably meant that weed quickly crept into my every day. Once the floodgate once opened it was hard to close.

I quickly gained confidence with smoking everywhere, anytime and justifying it as a healthier alternative to cigarettes.

This meant that my identity as a slightly high constant stoner who clearly had a dependence issue was quickly established.

In retrospect had I done this with alcohol or any other stimulant I would have been easily able to see the potential for concern, it had almost become a personal challenge to see if I could operate in this cloudy haze.

The inevitable paranoia or at least sensitivity to being the law breaker in any circumstance brought about unwanted whispers if not unneeded attention all for the wrong reasons and undeniable changed my social status.

I probably enjoyed the initial rebellious protagonist role playing with a slightly naughty school boy type attention seeking or even worse someone who was leveraging his social status and relationships to justify a self indulgent / self destructive habit. It was clearly not socially accepted behavior.

Even in the face of homelessness and no work prospects I was still struggling to historically justify my self-destruction and warrant future support for the change in legislation and perhaps even relapse of my own bad habit.

It was the adolescent chest beating and arrogant flagrant disrespect for the law that was likely my undoing.

A potentially harsh analogy but like alcoholics people don't like being around people that are drunk or high.

Similar to the principle of the rule of law social behavior is fundamentally dictated by the individuals in said situation and for the most part people don't object too heavily and tolerate pot smokers. The truth is there are rarely legal ramifications to smoking in public but the commercial viability of being stoned in any work situation is distinctly different.

Like George and the dragon here I was trying to take a stand on the legal and social stigma attached to weed smokers by attempting to be a fresh face of rehabilitation whilst shooting myself in the foot socially and commercially.

I was doing my best to advance my life and self sustain a life in a competitive rat race and trying to carve a piece of the pie.

When I found that my job prospects and money quickly dried up the chicken and egg debate of whether the drug habit was now pacifying my daily depression or if my habit was worsening it?

The truth is that I still don't fully understand whether Marijuana was the problem or whether I was facing the hard reality that I had not found a job or vocation so tried to make it Marijuana.

To stoners the world is bright and wonderful if prohibition is over and

an attempt to be a part of the momentum that brings that day closer is so attractive or such a fantasy that it partly justified the self-sabotage.

This martyr mentality is dangerous and appeals to a self-sacrifice that is not noble or required.

If pot is one day legal it will never be socially acceptable to be high everyday and my association with tobacco replacement was false and flawed in logic.

When I had to return to smoking normal cigarettes due to social circumstance I felt quite put out and sentenced to cancer by that imposing force.

It didn't occur to me that I could just not smoke anything and save the self-destruction.

The Grand Delusion

So like a moth to the flame drugs caught me looking for a healthy alternative to a slow death from pizza, beer & Marlboro and I had the romantic notion that I could be the Marlboro Man of Marijuana.

I set off to be the next James Bond or bond Villain.

The simple question I asked myself was - what would a Bond do if he smoked pot? Easy, he'd smoke it anywhere, any time, any place with style and good manners of course.

The scene was set so instead of using a gold Dunhill lighter in Les Ambassadors casino in the infamous Dr No opening scene I would take the issue to the streets of Mayfair and London and start the debate by lighting the fire and essentially bringing to the War on Drugs back to the streets of London.

Daniel Craig very kindly left a great legacy and Layer Cake being one of my favourite films with Sienna Miller and that Yellow Range Rover totally captivating my attention both consciously and subconsciously the Yellow movement was in full swing.

One place that couldn't have been a more perfect environment was the outdoor gym. A great place to exercise but with the distinct benefit of weed being a great training partner.

As a mild pain relief and anti-inflammatory I quickly found myself with the combination of good music really excelling at Yoga, Calisthenics and body weight exercises.

Being in the zone training and really connecting with my body was a distinct advantage and the primary motivator to maintain my course so I went a long way to convince myself that I was really onto something.

It also really helped counter the standard lazy stoner stereotype and made a strong case for very good publicity, I figured if I got myself into great shape then people would really want to know the secret, which for a change wasn't steroids.

My goal was to do one arm pull ups, the thinking being this is the ultimate competition with oneself and really sets the bar in terms of personal strength to weight ratio.

I was very aware that all the health magazines and supplement companies spend millions talking about the latest and greatest fads in how to get a six pack and what the latest athletes are eating and drinking and it had occurred to me that getting on the front cover of High times with a six pack attributed to pot could be a fun way to get a date.

I also found riding the tube whilst standing up greatly enhanced the heightened awareness of my balance and posture and essentially became an expert in skiing or surfing the tube whilst exchanging a smile with a pretty lady if possible.

It really was like a game to see what the universe would present and whilst I'd previously picked up a girl on a bus I figured the tube was

a real challenge, it was also one area where people rarely smile and realize how lucky they are to be gliding through the heart of the city in relative comfort.

Riding the tube early in the morning during winter rush hour can be quite an imposition on personal space its also a great test of perspective and sense of humor.

One thing I tried to keep reminding myself whilst smoking was this is just a joke don't take it too seriously and in the words of Bill Hicks "it's just a ride".

The primary goal was to be different, but to be different one has to do something different. No one else I knew was flagrantly breaking the law and essentially staging a mild revolution whilst promoting the evolution of the legal reform with so many beneficial aspects with little down sides.

The fact that Colorado had been such a success with little if any down side only further frustrates the Green lobby or Marijuana users in other parts of the world.

One aspect of pot was hard to describe that listening to music and dancing whilst high is perhaps the closest I've come to finding some form of utopia or deep connection that really emphasizes what it is to be human and perhaps the highest form of evolution that really does set us apart from any other species.

Taking this one step further I am confident that the human body is synchronized and even best described as an instrument in its self.

Music has an incredibly evocative power over us but definitely heightened whilst smoking pot.

Listening to Jimmy Hendrix or Lenard Skynyrd with a joint is something I'd like to hope could be universally appreciated globally and legally one day and there are so many good songs and films supporting this aspiration that it seems hard to think how slowly the legislation is responding to the intelligentsia on this issue.

All men aspire to find a cause or an area for improvement and I really felt that pot was mine or perhaps was an escape from my own personal mediocrity.

In a time when life feels somewhat scripted with the marriage, mortgage, management standing for a cause and trying to evoke change truly appealed to my desire to live and life less ordinary.

The fact that I felt that it was the best thing to do with my time when 200,000 strong petition to Parliament was presented to legalize and globally the debate was being brought to the UN by Richard Branson, I felt it was worth me doing my part & needless to say enjoying the journey of rediscovering my favourite city with the slightly green cloud perspective.

I can honestly say this cause and this plant have undeniably seduced me for the last two years.

It genuinely felt like a fatalistic calling, almost dangerously so, the more I was told not to the stronger my resolve grew. This is the undeniable truth for anything prohibited and a hard truth to face retrospectively when all the resistance was so well intended.

There is a real sadness attached for anyone who struggles with self destructive habits who have friends and family who attempt to help by denying access to the vice in question and who struggle with this concept of logic or lack there of.

Like all great struggles this felt like an almost self sacrifice to the cause with the reality that there will one day be a last man tried and hanged in the gallows of The Tower of London so to will there be the last man arrested for smoking pot.

I will openly admit I did not want to go that far and don't feel the criminal record would be worth while or helpful in any capacity so I will admit I did not push things that far and didn't plan on doing so.

That would merely be a Darwinian award for stupidity hence why now writing a book is more my style.

I made some considerable mistakes whilst advocating the use of and legalization of this plant.

Perhaps the cliché of drug use and addiction was more my battle than the advocacy of the plant itself.

Perhaps as a marijuana user I had missed the vital reality that anyone seen to be using drugs will not be taken seriously regarding advocacy due to the self-interest and potential cry for enabling.

Not unlike a perceived alcoholic advocating the morning tippie a 'dope smoker' cannot be the primary cause for legalization even if he or she evokes sympathy regarding the punishment associated with the legal status of the plant.

I had to accept that I very luckily avoided the legal wrangling and very fortunately never had any legal consequence from my habit.

The issue of enjoyment and recreational pursuit was my initial attraction and like many others I have come to see the great potential for medicinal and therapeutic aspects of the plant.

That said the legal and social status has caused a significant rift In my personal and business life it is with some regret that I had jumped on what seemed to be a great opportunity for championing a cause that I felt could have been the great battle of our age.

This all sounds very honorable and potentially political so hence the real catch 22 that most marijuana users face.

History is well documented and the initial cause for prohibition shown in 'The Union' documentary, which is freely available on You Tube.

In a time when climate change, war, economic collapse and a general meltdown of the financial system one can be slightly forgiven for seeking a vice to pacify ones anxiety.

Being born in the eighties with a constant mixed message of desire, fear, total glamorization of aspirations, material gain for conspicuous consumption's for consumption sake etc.

I felt the desire to take a different path and break the social convention.

Choose your vice carefully

Having been Marlboro smoker of 20 years I found it easy to justify the switch from toxic carcinogen to herb, and new documentaries like 'A culture high' and 'Breaking the Taboo' really got me motivated to jump on the bandwagon, join the new movement and end the stigma associated with traditional weed smoking.

As an athletic, relatively young, professional I figured I'd missed the hippy rebellious teenager stereotype as I could be accepted as the new face of modern marijuana smokers.

Through healthy debate and research I would bring the issue to the floor and confidently end my own personal prohibition.

This appealed both to the modern Jack Daniels saloon man in me and the slightly naughty rebellious aspects of my personality.

It was a coming of age statement and admittedly egotistical as I figured 'who the fuck is really going to try to stop me? I'd be too polite and well dressed in the right environments for anyone to waste their resources and no one has the right to tell me what I can and can't do!

It was a principal of sovereignty and anyone who would condone smoking a Marlboro cannot argue that smoking a joint is any worse.

This sense of flag waving at times can call out the apex in any situation and from a primal territorial perspective define the 'guest or host' rules.

I would say this is true of censorship. If someone's language is offensive, either in volume or words, normally all it takes is a polite

word to remind the person offending to reconsider.

As a smoker the law has been well established 'outside' is the norm.

This puts a cannabis smoker in a 'catch 22' whereby you are almost forced to wave that green flag very publicly.

At the early stage it felt like an easy win to sit in the smoking section and light a joint rather than a Marlboro and anyone who objected I almost could laugh at and point out the hypocrisy.

The move from carcinogen to non-carcinogen was set for my social experiment with my responses in place.

I had positioned myself very well to both intellectually argue my own sovereign ability to consume whatever I felt best for my body (who could argue with the switch from cigarettes?) Potentially there was a healthy upside with anti inflammatory and pain relief quite an aid to yoga and general sports and training.

Then there was the financial argument; with cigarettes being so fucking expensive Marlboro was becoming a real luxury I was happy to find cheaper rolling tobacco alternative and the light dusting of herb was a distinctly healthier alternative to beer or whisky.

It was easily justified on a boring Monday night instead of spending £5 quid a pint in the local pub or wasted calories on wine.

The financial double-edged sword of drugs and poverty and the intertwining relationship between drugs, depression and financial hardship is potentially a real global issue.

I, like many other young, single, pleasure seeking members of society drank and smoked for social acceptance and hedonistic reasons.

Smoking cigarettes, or cannabis, have no real logical reason or justification but can perhaps be best explained with a David Attenborough perspective of a Peacocks feathers, this peacocking or flagrant self-destruction is almost a statement to the opposite sex that I am strong enough to poison myself and still thrive.

This and the imitation of film, music and iconic fashion idols is really the only potential explanation that I could think of.

Base imitation explains a considerable amount of perceived stupid behavior and perhaps the purpose of this book is to stop anyone walking the same path or potentially making the same mistake.

I not here to advise but perhaps highlight the potential pitfalls of my logic and previous behavior.

Prohibition is commonly financial and the average person is not able to justify the fiscal implication of smoking 20 cigarettes a day certainly in London where a packet of Marlboro is more expensive than a meal.

Back to CC

I woke up at 6.30 am as the sun broke through above the rooftops but I dare not move in case I disturbed CC.

We had not gone to bed until about 2.30 a.m. and that wasn't to sleep. We smoked, talked, made love, smoked and talked a lot more. So why was I awake again now?

I looked over the room, which was strewn with our clothes, one big mirror leaning against the far wall and a large painting of a purple sunset. What a mess we lived in but somehow I had never noticed it.

CC turned over and opened her eyes.
“Are you awake darling” She said her French accent.

“No. Yes. Not really. I don’t know am I awake?” I gave her a kiss on the cheek and turned over. My god I wasn’t even sure if I was awake or was this all a strange dream. My head was thumping, I was smoking too much, hardly eating and having sex day and night.

This was heaven and we could do what we want, when we want and how often. How long could we live like this?

I put a pillow back over my head and tried to sleep before we hit the next day’s activities.

All I could hear was the blood rushing through my head mixed with pure adrenalin and I felt totally pumped. This wasn’t working and made me feel anxious, lonely and nervous.

“I’m awake CC” and I reached over, climbed on top and shared her warm side of the bed.

Next thing I knew it was 1.00 pm the afternoon and our day had begun.

PART 2

Pot history

My history with pot was pretty usual in the sense that early in high school I had been introduced to weed and for the most part tried it with enthusiasm but unlike most I shied away due to the risk of a drug caution was far too high a penalty so gave it a swerve. It occurred to me at a young age that the penalty far out weighed the crime and the risk of a criminal record was too high a price to pay.

I must admit I also didn't really dig standing in a bush in a park on a Saturday night with the risk of getting arrested, call me old fashioned but the distinct lack of chicks just didn't appeal.

Then later at University I smoked a few joints and mixed it a few times with booze but again I was too young and it really didn't stick as a habit at the time.

The primary early reason was the punishment out stripped the benefit or the pleasure pain ratios were far too extreme at the time.

I suppose I was probably pretty risk averse and the combination of smoking and drinking was enough, adding drugs at the time was too much for a teenager to tackle.

I was undeniably lucky not to have met a girl who introduced me to these vices at an early age.

The power of persuasion and influence are hard to resist when combined with sex.

Young men are hardly known for their resilience and the potential marketing influence of a woman in a bikini is still potent for men of any age. I can now see the incredible influence of marketing behind beer and alcohol.

I had personally had good luck of avoiding any issues with Alcoholism, which was due to the very good fortune of having a friend

who owned a bar. The novelty of a free bar wears off with a few hangovers and drinking for drinking's sake has short and long term health impacts demystifying the marketing.

Alcohol has rarely been a performance enhancer and I often saw it as a tool for cockblocking, especially the competitive drinking that is quite common or stag doo mentality.

Inherently there is also the financial consequence of drinking which, given the clear hierarchy of venues and labels associated with alcohol, is a tool for undeniable discrimination.

This fiscal reality is not really a justification but more a realistic explanation why Marijuana trumps alcohol and cigarettes from a health and financial perspective.

The legal classification and social acceptance issue is still overwhelmingly against the use of Marijuana.

Five million premature deaths from tobacco smoking, environmental arguments against pesticides, green hemp production of houses, cars, clean energy & food are raging topics.

The sky was the limit and the timing was perfect. This felt like the intelligentsia movement against oppressive governments looking to profit of private prisons and the future was looking very green indeed.

The global potential for change and even the hero status for those who really took the battle to the final stages of the United Nations and NATO, it was all feeling rather potentially epic! I had found what I felt might be the cause of our time.

I even swore not to have children in a world where they would face the oppression of prohibition and potential threat of incarceration or even death for trafficking plants.

This was an education in language, horticulture, medicine, agriculture, commodity values and global law all rolled into one.

Hunter S Thompson had the Rum Diaries and Fear and Loathing in

Las Vegas and I felt I could reappear on the London social scene and make a splash. I had the great luck and fortune of being well known in the right places and knew the right people and had an impeccable reputation.

I was always polite and never got into any trouble so the risk of offending anyone or causing any harm was genuinely negligible.

This was the new War on Drugs where there was no need for any casualties or victims.

London as the world stage was perfect and given its current international and diverse population is really the perfect stage for battle / debate to commence. Even the police didn't carry guns so things had very little risk of getting out of hand.

Concerns

My constant concern about marijuana now is that it is all encompassing and felt like a true calling to end prohibition both personally and globally.

I found a life time's worth of work combining politics, law and a great potential business and I wanted to change the world so joining the movement towards legalization was appealing both from a consumer perspective and intellectual one.

It is this very love for the cause and the danger of falling for the delusion that would make a difference.

The concern was that after months of consumption and risk taking on my part there was no real pay off and there never would be.

The truth about pot is well established and the movement towards legalization is well under way but I was trying to normalize a drug

habit and be accepted by my friends and family as a drug user. This was never worth fighting for.

What I did in private and at my own discretion wasn't anyone's business and I didn't need to get high all day everyday to gain acceptance.

I had somehow convinced myself that I should be able to incorporate this leisure activity into all aspects of my life. This was wrong and quite damaging but I didn't heed the warnings and fought on persistently.

I incorporated pot into my training and social life to the distinct detriment of my ability to find work and get settled back into a normal work life balance.

Back to CC

"Give me your card blue" I asked CC who was standing behind me in the street puffing on a cigarette listening to music.

"Here put your card in here I don't know why I cant get out any cash?" I had shoved my debit card into the ATM 3 times and each time it had said 'no funds'.

"Shit this means I have to ring home. Shit, shit, shit. How can ring and ask for money again?" I was talking to a girl tapping her foot and looking at me like I was an alien.

“What do you need? I don’t understand? My card? Its at home.” She shrugged and threw the stub into the gutter, turned around and wandered off.

“Shit we have no cash and no food”. I was irritated with a women I adored and wanted to scream something in the street.

I stayed by the machine and shuffled not wanting to follow her and show my anger.

“D a v i d come with me please” She called back and I didn’t to be asked twice. God how men trot after beautiful girls broke or with money as one small sweet word and we are done for.

She tucked herself under my arm like a lost sparrow and we were the richest couple on earth.

“Is your card dead?” She asked and laughed lighting another cigarette. I knew she didn’t care yet but we were eating at home, buying supermarket wines, using the buses and only using my tobacco for joints. This was no joke and I had very suggestions as how we could do any better with me not working.

“I am not working until next week but lets get my card and pick up some chinese for dinner-I fancy noodles” she said as if that would solve our problem.

“Ok I need to make some calls so you go up and I will join you in 10 mins ok?” Shit I had to find out what was wrong with my card and my head was bursting at all the questions I was going to get.

Watching her walk up the stairs reminded why I had never left and gone home. Did I love her or did I love the permanent party we had together? I wasn’t even sure I could leave either of them as my previous live seemed so dull and meaningless now. Shit this was going to bite me.

Pacing the pavement outside our regular little café I called home and practiced my speech. It rang and rang but no one answered and in a way it was a huge relief.

As I ran up the cracked and broken marble stairs in the dim half light I remembered we had enough dope for one night, plenty of tea wine and some risotto rice.

“Well that will be a short night we had better go to bed early or watch another film again” The door was open with the familiar Hotel Coste music playing in the back ground with her in the kitchen wearing nothing but shorts.

You cant have it all in life and this was about as good as it was going to get so I pushed all thoughts of work and money to the back of my mind as another day wasn't going to make a big difference. I was wrong...everyday was making a difference I just didn't notice.

The forbidden fruit.

Pot had become my reason d'être and I had been seduced by the forbidden fruit.

The Adam and Eve analogy will not end there, one of the great issues with pot in general is ironically by prohibiting access to this little weed the authorities, parents or governments only increase its appeal.

The source of drugs is usually a friend and or new lover and this presents the very real problem with drugs with the good times becoming a priority.

Parents, boss's, mentors, teachers, husbands and wives all have their relationships thrown into question when drugs are introduced.

The people you share drug experiences with, like old friends from school or university, fall into a small group of your inner circle and become trusted allies and are very important for measuring when or if you are starting to have a problem.

The idea of an intervention is preserved for these close friends and family and can be the lifeline that people need to start to make them aware that recreation has ended and abstinence or at the very least a healthy break is needed.

Prohibition & Commodity values

I don't confess to be a commodity trader but apparently 1 gram of cocaine costs £100 in London. Go to any local super market and compare this to a 100 gram flapjack for £1 and you can start to get a good understanding of scarcity black market pricing and economics.

It is beyond comprehension and hopefully soon a thing of the past. How could the free press, intelligentsia, intelligence agencies of the world really stand by and watch such abuse of power.

The Internet has changed the global legal framework now more than ever and whether its stoning homosexuals or incarcerating heroin addicts the old school repressive penal system is slowly becoming a thing of the past.

We as a global well educated very well informed populous are no longer so trusting of authority and common sense and egalitarian principles of the golden rule of 'do unto others as you do unto yourself' is clearly the future if not the present in most parts of the developed world.

Repression and iron-fisted rules are on there way out if not already extinct. The 1960's generation of free love and the Beatles are currently the ruling class and one doesn't really have to convince

people that the writing is on the wall.

We are a generation who don't need to argue too heavily we can fight ignorance with a simple phrase, Google it! This relates to Marijuana, which is now widely recognized as a medicine and a pretty harmless recreational herb.

I am not an advocate of mixing any mind-altering stimulants with potential liabilities. (Operating heavy machinery etc.) Reputation is hard to earn and drugs don't help.

Marijuana's well known recreational label places its users in the position that no one will pay you to get high, this can invoke social jealousy or stigma associated with lazy weed smokers.

People lose any sympathy for someone who is genuinely suffering tough times emotionally or financially if they are getting high, it's quite the double-edged sword.

A person who gets fired for being high at work could lose his wife, house, kids and then his mind.

The reality of marijuana is its ability to heightening the senses so produce a person who is far more sensitive to criticism.

If someone's seen to be fucking up their life most people are quick to make critical observation and lack patience.

The formulaic and stereotypical path that people follow isn't now obvious to a person classified as stoned.

My own personal experience with this was that I was legitimately pre-emptively trying to avoid the inevitable cancer or emphysema that Marlboro was likely to cause but simultaneously rendering myself totally unemployable and potentially homeless. Replacing Marlboro with Marijuana was commercially a fucking bad idea to say the least and didn't actually prove to be the cheaper option.

The other more immediate health concerns pre-emptively curing my undiagnosed cancer were pretty stupid at best.

This was admittedly some pretty dumb stoner logic that in retrospect I needed to think through a little more intelligently.

The grey area here is that when I was under pressure financially, struggling to make my way, looking for a sustainable career mixing pot with this financial anxiety was and is tough to justify, the currently illegality means it's not currently a way to self feed.

The real scare I got whilst dating CC was that whilst she had totally won my heart with pot she quickly jokingly diagnosed me a crazy and I could easily foresee this being a seriously dangerous negotiation tactic especially when put into the context of divorce or parental custody.

This is an all too real fear that as a pot smoker no court in the land would give me custody of my unborn kids.

I luckily have not had to face this real sentence but I assure you I would be fucking crazy if some Judge took my kids away on account of my choice of anti-inflammatory. Ibuprofen is twenty times less effective but legal.

The ability for someone to introduce and allow you to use drugs in their presence gives them a special trust. They have something over you that allows you to be high in their company and they accept you being stoned and lowering your guard which means you share some real experiences and expose aspects of your personality that rarely appear, sometimes silly giggles and other times very real emotions and insecurities. The danger is when they say you've had enough or they don't want to share in your consumption patterns. This is the first warning that should be well observed and respected and one should take note that perhaps you should curb your use as well and reign in the habit. Make sure you don't always gets high when your with that person and don't be externally dictated to, take the initiative to organize other activities that don't make your relationship solely about drugs and don't always be the person who supplies or uses in their company.

The crutch.

I will admit to leaning more on alcohol, cigarettes and drugs as a crutch during times of stress as a person is desperate to escape and have a 'good time'.

Trying to have a 'good time' and the association of using drink and drugs, as an essential indulgence is a real problem.

The formula for a good party is the combination of sex, drugs & Rock and Roll. The desire to go hard and then go home was the determination of binge partiers as a sign of stamina to chase the good times until the end.

Marijuana is a far less physically stressful drug than cocaine or alcohol so you can stay in the game longer and not face the awful health consequences heavy drinkers and coke users face.

I knew that using alcohol to cure a hangover was the first sign of alcoholism but didn't realize that waking up and getting stoned was just a bad.

I was using drugs as a way of avoiding growing up, to continually chase the party, which really meant chasing girls. Unlike whiskey drinkers there was no prospect of performance issues because pot doesn't have such adverse effects on the labeedo.

The difficulty is when alcohol and drugs no longer are a good time.

The easy example is smoking cigarettes. In the eyes of a non-smoker, who could never imagine any positive or pleasure sensation related to what is an undeniably disgusting, smelly, stupid and unhealthy habit.

Similarly alcohol has rarely been seen as a performance enhancer in any capacity but that said getting blasted has aspects of nostalgic leisure. It's ridiculously expensive and hangovers suck. But who would want to go on a stag do sober?

People are fundamentally in pursuit of happiness but often use drugs, stimulants, Marijuana and alcohol as physical or emotional pain relief. Essentially it's a mask for a deeper problem.

Interestingly mushrooms, MDMA, LSD or DMT are all therapy based but seem far less habitual perhaps due to their more intense affects.

Marijuana is also therapeutic depending on the quantity and means of consumption, and in large quantities has some pretty psychedelic qualities.

There is an issue with people wrongly diagnosed with mental health issues owing to drug use and lose their reputation impacting them socially and economically.

I knew that it was probably crazy to openly come out as a pot smoker or flagrantly break the law and risk the criminal punishment associated. I'd like to say that I chose to dive on the right grenade. I genuinely don't want my kids to have to face the same potential issue in the future and strongly believe the world will be a better place once prohibition is over.

Food, money, sex and drugs are not on the national curriculum but are probably the four most important factors in adult life.

The interesting reality of the economic debate around pot is that is so easy to produce or grow individually that no Monsanto or Phillip Morris company has got behind the legalization because they could not control future supply.

Even the debate about future government revenue is unlikely to have significant impact, whilst there is undeniable commercial sales revenue and therefore potential for medicinal application and recreational VAT, as it's a very high yielding crop certainly at its current valuation of £20 per 8th of an ounce or 3 grams.

PART 3

Geographic differences.

At the start of 2016 we are at an interesting stage of the progression of the War on Drugs. In some parts of the world Marijuana is a booming business and medicine but in others death sentences follow use or possession.

This leaves 7.3 billion people somewhere in the middle with the mixed message of distinct social & commercial disincentive to be labeled a drug user but the potential desire to recreationally explore drugs.

The vast majority of people are massively misinformed and scared of the consequence of any exploration.

The majority of medical professionals don't have a fully informed or up to date research on what the average teenager is consuming on the black market and the truth about marijuana will take at least a decade to level out the global playing field.

Basic questions.

The ultimate question for those with a drug or alcohol issue is; would they turn back the clock and never try the product again?

When could they identify the change from leisure to dependence?

Do they look forward to drinking or smoking again for pleasure or have to out of dependence?

Would their next episode really be the fun they imagine or would it likely end in catastrophe?

What is the likely outcome from someone getting stoned?

They may eat pizza, fall asleep, talk a lot, giggle or are they likely to die?

This can often be dictated by external circumstances often depending on location i.e. Colorado or Saudi Arabia?

The cannabis issue is often external punishment is far more damaging than the effect of the drug itself which is easily slept off. How someone behaves when high is very subjective and difficult to predict.

Marijuana is a mind *and* behavioral altering substance and can evoke changes perspective, awareness, increasing sensitivity to social interactions.

If more aware of themselves, then new or unfamiliar circumstances can cause paranoia or irregular behavior.

Any drug use it opens up an individual for high levels of scrutiny and can exaggerate so expose cracks in ones personality.

The following social isolation for anyone using crack, meth or heroin

would quickly see their lives deteriorating around them.

This is similar to Marijuana but perhaps more subtle and slower due to the perceived tolerance and acceptance in some circumstances.

The real chicken & egg debate about substance abuse and trajectory of behavior is the question;

Does the drug cause the deterioration of someone's life or is that a personality flaw cause the person to use drugs to escape them from their inevitable collapse / bottoming out?

Money is an interesting analogy for addiction, as it's easy to see that someone who loses a job, money, or the ability to earn quickly deteriorates into poverty.

The inevitable outcome of being broke and the need for help or assistance is hard to find.

Is anyone who starts habitually using drugs inevitably headed to a point where they will have to quit or die?

To then restart their lives without said drug?

It often correlates with their financial circumstances deteriorating, hitting rock bottom, the loss of close relationships, partners, family and friends.

I've never heard of a drug addict getting rich, but drugs are not exclusively the curse of the fiscally challenged but a major issue for all, a truly universal pit fall for all ages with the younger generations most vulnerable.

The Surgeon General in the US openly admits that cigarettes and alcohol are far more damaging to health and potentially fatal.

Pot is fairly soft in this capacity, with many individuals going their whole life's without major cause for concern or reported abuse.

Back to CC

I leaned forward to try to tell the taxi guy this was the end of the road and we would like to get out now. He looked over at CC and shrugged his shoulders like I had spoken Japanese to him and they both laughed.

Considering I was paying the bill I found their intimacy a bit irritating but he this was Barcelona and I was happy not to be driven around a ring road for an hour first.

We had arrived at the beach after 2.00pm and we didn't want to pay for chairs so we wandered down to the water side and dumped our bags behind us to lean on.

CC stripped down in seconds and took out a joint.

"You can't smoke that here! Put that thing away. Why did you even bring it along?" I was horrified and suddenly her judgment was a danger to us.

"I thought you would like it" She looked so hurt and I had been getting very short with her this last week.

"No I don't want a problem in public and no I don't want to attract attention to us any more than you already do" I tried to sound logical and reassuring. She turned away. It was nice backside but that was all I was going to see for the next two hours. I looked left and she

looked right down the beach but generally we looked like such a perfect pair.

It was like being married- well suited on the outside but full of cracks underneath.

Even in retrospect it is hard to fully know what changed or whether our instincts were mature enough to know it wasn't meant to be.

What was strange was the ending of my relationship with CC was the beginning of my downward spiral with pot. What became very obvious was anyone with a pulse would have enjoyed the early honeymoon experience of sexual discovery and general fun with the added bonus of seeing new places. What perhaps was difficult was when things got into a normal routine and when reality kicked in the novelty wore off for both of us and we were better off alone. The day-to-day pressure of everyday life got the better of us and perhaps we took our relationship for granted and the cracks started to appear and were too much to rectify. Our relationship worked on many levels but practically speaking it could not survive the realities of everyday life and unfortunately after our lovely time in together we remain friends.

I cant say accurately whether we would have bonded so strongly had pot not been present, there was an undeniable truth to the fact that we spent a lot of time together most of which we were stoned. This was an important factor as the acceptance of being a pot smoker starts with the person next to you. Prohibition starts with the person your with and this applies to any activity, if your with a friend who has an allergic reaction to nuts suddenly nuts are off the menu. My initial appreciation about CC was not only the physical lust but the ability to open up and really talk for hours whilst we were high, we'd spend hours together talking about our pasts or future aspirations and this level of acceptance was enhanced by pot and the ability to relax and be myself and not be told this behavior is forbidden was very welcome and appreciated. This combination of double dopamine of falling in love with the added benefit of being allowed to indulge in an enjoyable vice was the magic formula for having a good time.

The cliché of sex, drugs and rock n roll was my undoing really can apply and I through myself head first into the temptations and would

probably do so again. I don't regret having done this it was really just the inability to make this last forever which was hard to come to terms with. It might have been the break up and the difficult adjustment to return to normal mundane life. Love is a form of madness and when combined with drugs the spectrum of emotions can be quite extreme and can give you great highs but equally extreme lows and this is all part of the growing process.

It is very rare to find a partner who really has a chance to see you in your most honest and exposed state, essentially physically and emotionally naked and then embrace and reward you. The love trick is almost the closest to a religious or spiritual experience when you feel the universe is rewarding you with primal satisfaction of sensory experiences. The affection and warmth is mutually reflected and having someone tell you how great you are is rare but always appreciated.

Drugs & Money.

Regardless of the vice or the individual one can assess the potential benefit detriment balance according to a hierarchy of needs and prioritization.

As soon as the balance tips towards the detriment to health or personal relationships any individual has to weigh up the perceived benefits of any given behavior.

But how can they if they are stoned?

How clearly are they thinking?

If they prioritize the drug where is the normal yard-stick?

Money is always a harsh objective measurement for defining the scale, as realistically leisure based recreational habits like drinking, smoking is rarely fiscally rewarding.

Me again

I personally got mixed up when I classified my consumption as medicinal for pain relief.

This shift from recreation or initial pleasure pursuit to pain relief is subtle in its transition and I don't feel that I stand alone in this.

The chicken and egg scenario of more back pain and back sensitivity heightened was brought on by marijuana use.

Truthfully my relationship or link between marijuana and training undeniably pushed me into a potentially dangerous cycle of over training and causing pain that in turn formed a deeper dependence it.

Also the justification, self-manipulation and bullshitting oneself supported the continual addiction.

We all have the delicate egotistical pride issue of accepting that a bad habit, then becomes a characteristic, which can play a decisive role in determining life.

It's a hard one to change.

I have personally caused considerable personal damage and it's still hard to fully understand how much damage has been done.

Perhaps I will never fully be able to quantify it.

How can any individual really access the cost of a burnt bridge that cannot be replaced?

Long childhood friendships reclassified to that of dependence and shifting from leisure to reliance.

Once labeled an addict can one ever truly regain the precious and previous social standing?

The sympathy or empathy I once received was replaced with frustration and anger so can rarely be reversed?

With the constant fear of relapse how can you help someone who is not helping themselves?

Drug addicts rarely get the opportunities they so desperately need to break the cycle.

They need time for objective thinking, a break from themselves, their cycle, habit and behavior.

It's undeniably dangerous cycle of self-destructive habitual behavior so hard to differentiate between habit and dependency.

I personally had a severe difficulty of breaking continual boredom, the isolation unemployment evokes, the concept of facing a day no money to spend, and without anyone to spend the day with.

The attraction of smoking a joint, listening to music and exercising felt like the only constructive way to spend the time. Kicking a ball around and creating games kept me physically active and cost nothing so past the time in what felt like a relatively constructive manner.

The prospect of watching day time TV or spending the day browsing the internet soon wears thin as the ever present draw to getting high

and letting the time slip by lingers.

My greatest regret is that I didn't listen or couldn't listen to friends and family that tried to convince me to stop smoking.

I had a close group of friends and family who quickly saw that I was struggling getting back in to normal life and I did a good job initially of throwing money out as my issue, muddying the water and confusing my issue.

My personal inability to see the link I had made to substituting cigarettes for weed was almost terminal to anyone's explanation and returning to my old smoking habit was undeniably worse from a physical health perspective.

I did a great job of justifying the physical benefit of marijuana and such a convincing case for pain relief that it overrode my concern about my drug use.

The combination of not being able to break my smoking habit and the boredom gave me a strange notion that I had to make give this bad decision a positive outcome.

The strange notion of campaigning for the end of prohibition etc. all combined to sabotage my life in a way that I cannot fully appreciate.

My issue might not be addiction or dependency but I can say that it did very little to improve my chances of solving my work or financial situation.

Part 4

A late London night.

I headed over to the best pool bar in London to meet an old friend one night after work early enough to get a spot on the table and scope out the local talent.

The evening started well as the whiskey and the pot started to mix so our pool skills captivated the 6 girls sitting on the table by the bar.

Eyes and smiles are caught and it becomes obvious that the two blond girls of the group are expressing the most interest.

I invite them to join us and they accepted so we started exchanging the banter, stories, with the jazz music and lighting really helping to create a lively and enjoyable vibe.

The girls being novices made for some amusing laughs and gave us the ability to take the teacher student role.

The nice thing about pool is it's easy to establish good manners and a friendly theme. It blends into an evening allowing us to show off some skills, exchange well placed smiles and important eye contact.

In many ways it was great that so the numbers weighed nicely in our favor and the girls were happy to let their hair down and feel comfortable enough to building the all important trust relationship.

Its turns out the young ladies had just finished their final exams at University and were out on the town to celebrate.

Luckily I had some friends at a nightclub around the corner so the

chance to keep moving and dance was on the cards.

I had some pot and was more than willing to share a joint with the girls who were happy to partake. I was very happy to escort the girls to the right place and felt a sense of responsibility to keep them out of trouble whilst continue my flirting with the best looking blond in the group.

We walked to my friends nightclub where I knew we would be welcomed and ushered in like VIP's.

Walking in escorted by 6 girls all looking to party are once in a lifetime nights and I knew I had hit the London lottery. Not only the girls were sweet and friendly but also it wasn't going to smash my wallet.

The next few hours flew by in a haze of shots and dancing as Laura and I really hit it off gaining an intimate comfort. Fueled by the music and the drinks we left holding together compelled to make some fun mistakes.

I walked Laura home and we walked slowly, got distracted along the way as we had a rare and strong chemistry. As bizarre as it sounds I felt a sense of wonder lust and really knew that Laura hit all the right instincts and promoted the right level of abandon. I wanted nothing more than to go up to Laura's apartment but we were both responsible and knew if I wanted to see her again not to rush and ruin what I thought could be a great thing.

Better to leave a girl wanting more than come off as a pushy desperado, so in mid embrace I backed off and left her in the lobby of her building with a smile and an unbuttoned shirt.

The evening had been a great success and to be honest a story book beginning to a story book romance. However I did manage to miss work and got fired the next day.

Laura was from Norway and I saw her a couple of times before she had to go back home for work.

I really felt that I had met my first wife as she was lovely in all the ways that appealed to me but it was a shame that geography and

practicality got in the way.

I regret not relocating to Norway but I knew this would be impossible and -30 degrees would have cooled our passions and been too harsh a reality to face in the cold light of day.

A danger

Dope is a danger because it re-aliens ones priorities and like any love that can be one-way and potentially very costly in a subtle manner.

I loved using marijuana and when anyone told me to stop I felt they were being the 'fun police', infringing my personal sovereignty and stopping me enjoy a pain free day.

The social isolation and financial consequences that followed were far worse than the short-term pleasure.

People highlighted my behavior had changed and my moods were different and my heightened emotional sensitivity made it difficult for them to deal with me.

Life can be fun when your high but it also threw me into a world where my perception was blurred and my heightened sensitivity became very negative.

My ability to expand the emotional spectrum incorporated highs but equally the depression was severe.

Most stoners are broke for a variety of reasons but there is something about the habit that mixes like oil and water.

My opinion is that poverty and financial adversity is hard enough to deal normally but drug use genuinely adds petrol to this fire that stamps out most of sympathy or assistance you need.

Our society has broken down family and social structures while people are aspiring to self-sufficiency but that leads to isolation and loneliness.

Did I get high because I was bored and alone *or* was I bored and alone *because* I was getting high? Its difficult to clarify.

Similarly; was I broke *because* I was getting high *or* was I getting stoned with the rejection of not finding work?

Nutella, Pringles, French fries and Haagen Daz are items I would challenge anyone to test their self-discipline with as our instinctive enjoyment is unfortunately directly related to poor health consequences.

We all develop through being parented and essentially loved primarily through food and warmth, then socially we encounter the pursuit of sex, drink and drugs as external factors.

Food is an excellent example here where an obese 10 year old can only blame the person responsible for feeding that child. One does not have to be very well versed to realize that sugar and carbs are the primary cause for inflammation and vegetables and protein are the healthier solution.

Drugs are much more subtle in the fact that they hijack the reward mechanism and the initial introduction to drugs which normally through friends or social connections and environment and keenly associated with leisure and pleasure.

This is the most dangerous element because the drug then becomes more important than the hierarchical needs of the individual and

poses a serious threat to all the other more important aspects of their life.

Family, friends, a home, partner, work, food are all sacrificed or threatened by getting high, this clearly is not self sovereignty but more like self sabotage.

The very notion of freedom or being free to enjoy self expression or exploration is not removing the strength and foundation of ones life but potentially adding to it. It's a huge sacrifice.

It seemed like a long stretch from smoking the first joint to then being washed up with nothing but some how this course is universally trodden.

The truth is drug users are not really well tolerated and perhaps even persecuted in modern society and only those who keep their habit very well hidden or moderate have a chance of escaping the consequences.

The people who stop and take control of their priorities often return stronger and with more resolve to not fall victim of themselves.

It's my feeling that I am stronger for having experienced adversity and know myself better having challenged my tolerances or pushed my limits. I know I need to be more self-aware regarding the temptation to indulge to my personal detriment.

The fine line of use and abuse is perhaps subjective issue and perhaps determined by the individual and the people judging his behavior.

A genuine difficulty I found was that pot proved to be a great training partner and I got into excellent physical shape.

Marijuana is not an inconsequential drug and whilst it is growing in popularity with massive celebrity endorsement it still remains a potential problem.

Adding drug use to an existing adverse situation is a bad idea.

For me marijuana seemed to act like a magnifying glass and expose the truth of any given circumstance.

Whilst there was an upside when funny or comedic situations were enhanced it also presented a darker and problematic side.

Any form of criticism or conflict of perspective was undeniably a real problem for me.

I feel that marijuana has its place in the world of therapy perhaps in its capacity to unmask people and expose the user to his or her true emotion as or responses and perhaps to exaggerate them.

If one suffers from any depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder or anxiety I would definitely advise against it.

I'm not a doctor but from my experience drugs don't mix well with pre existing conditions and could make them worse.

It felt like that marijuana put me through a ptsd experience actually stimulating memories that were very thought provoking and questioning of ones motivations.

Paranoia is a real issue with pot regarding punishment and criminal sanctions whether it be a consequence of the legislation or the social stigma.

Friends and family will talk about your behavior both to your face and in private, because no one knows of a drug users habit leading to a positive outcome.

There is always a cost and it's obvious to others that it takes a toll on the users health, wealth and happiness.

Put simply no parent wants their kids to use drugs primarily because they pay such a high price.

We all have a universal struggle in seeking happiness and our place on the world and the sensitivity produced by drug use makes this task

harder.

The ability to shrug ones shoulders and laugh off adversity is lost and the sense of impending doom is enhanced.

Who ever cares for you enough to advise against using drugs will be the very person you potentially then lose by your continued use.

This is the very real and high price of addiction.

Only those who really care will try to stop you and due to your blindness to addiction, ego and belligerence they will eventually give up or stop speaking to you.

Normalizing a drug habit is not possible and seeking acceptance is unrealistic, as everyone who knew you before will not accept that your better with drugs as they will see your use as dependence and any irregular behavior as a red flag.

I can now see in retrospect that my behavior changed substantially and whilst slow and subtle it is a strong and powerful perspective changer but with all the pro marijuana news I did not see that it had a negative impact on me. I was brainwashed by it all.

Marijuana and the history of its prohibition is almost the perfect subject to make anyone question and defend it.

I still am a strong advocate for the legalization and ending criminal punishment on a pro choice basis allowing people the sovereignty of choice but am very aware that marijuana can be abused.

No hangover after using pot contributes to its innocence so you don't wake up with a great sense of regret.

My depression and anxiety I blamed on financial problems and never really blamed weed.

Because no one ever died of weed does not mean that it is a inconsequential drug as it needs to be respected because its effects are often much more subtly damaging.

By discovering my initial enjoyment of pot I then questioned the government and their approach and the distinct cruel disproportionate punishment that people faced for using what appeared to be an innocent plant.

This moral high ground proved very dangerous and it gave me a point to argue and advocate the cause with no real benefit other than to isolate myself.

The soapbox politics is very seductive but has very little personal benefit any future change will not be a result of personal abuse.

Marijuana will reveal aspects of your personality without reserved guard and areas of insecurity you might not want publicly known or even knew existed.

The irony of prohibition is it actually comes after the abuse or dependence.

Its when you've over used or had a bad experience that one has to accept that normal life is better than a life of abuse or dependence.

The threat of losing your children, wife, close relatives or friends is a normal consequence of drug use and if it has compromised your work and livelihood, its a price I would advise against paying.

Watching someone trying to get a fix or get high excludes them from many normal activities primarily family and work as this constant recreational pursuit is unsustainable.

I would say that solo drinking or drug use is the real red flag and something that I would advise should be avoided.

I write this book as a cautionary tale for those who find themselves with the very real problem of using a substance that has the potential to cause as much harm as good.

Its not all hippy happy endings when it comes to drugs and one needs to be aware that a personal line of recreation can quickly turn into a habitual dependent relationship that turns to decadence or

abuse.

Keep aware that if you are using marijuana on a daily basis you have crossed that line so take a break.

Don't let it become your persona or identity and draw a distinct line of where and when it should be enjoyed, the less you use it the more enjoyable it is and the less likely you are to become labeled as a drug user who has a problem.

If things are starting to go wrong in areas of your life remember drink and drugs are never the solution and worth avoiding during tough times.

Be aware that the true price is not the immediate financial cost and is often not revealed for some time and often in hindsight.

The issue with pot is that it exposes you!

It's a truth serum and strips ones ability to bullshit or lie, which can be a problem if your circumstances or situation sucks!

Most people glaze over minor disagreements or differences of opinion with a shoulder shrug but this can be hard if you feel compelled to be honest.

Also 'pot or alcohol' is never the problem itself but expose an individual's antisocial behavior and ones inability to face limitations or failings. Pot becomes the scapegoat.

If someone's lazy or unmotivated pot is the perfect escape if they chose to abuse pot an over indulgence is a form of acting out or perhaps a cry for help or a more that is being neglected or misinterpreted.

If someone has a need to satiate an indulgence picking ones poison is very important so choosing an obsession with exercise or healthy eating is more rewarding than cigarettes, drink or drugs.

Pot might be a better solution than other drugs due to the fact that one cannot overdose. It's perhaps the lesser of other evils and certainly better than prescription drugs or anti depressants.

Pot is never the solution to anyone's problems but can expose or reveal an individual's ability to self-discipline or control their behavior.

The issue with pot is because you can never overdose or fall victim of abuse the social exclusion or isolating nature of this habit can cause other social or emotional issues like loneliness or depression.

That is then easily mixed in with personal conflicts, grievances, divorce, a bad break up, poverty or financial pressures.

Let's face it life has a way of dishing out a few ass kicking's and ego checking's along the journey and we all face periods of adversity and life is a challenge.

Rarely would a drug habit be the right option.

Time & Pot

The time you spend high is essentially recreational time so if you finish work and you smoke a joint go training, play video games or watch TV and relax the association with pot and recreation has been established.

The problem here is that one could start to associate pot as the reward mechanism an indulgence that potentially follows the desire to reward oneself.

A reduced dose or mild sprinkling of pot into a rolled up cigarette is an easy temptation.

The risk is that one can smoke away the week very easily without noticing and the motivation to achieve this goal becomes the ultimate form of leisure.

Getting baked fundamentally is time wasted and the idea that you will have some break through, creative thought or get much done is rarely the case.

There is a great stigma attached to getting high, unlike getting drunk, which people have a little more tolerance and understanding.

If you enjoy marijuana it is very likely that others will not condone this habit due to the illegality.

Marijuana and alcohol are a bad mix, the truth about alcohol is that it is one of the best marketed poisons on the planet, the pomp and circumstance around champagne and its attachment to celebrating is quite incredible.

Wine and beer slurs speech and guarantees dehydration and a painful hangover at a staggering financial cost is hard to fathom.

The heritage and labeling which allows the consumer to associate alcohol with celebrations is an incredible achievement and quite an astounding result of intelligent product placement.

Alcohol companies have sponsored events and people judge the quality of hospitality based on the label of the hangover juice provided is so well established that our social status is almost defined by our choice of poison.

The sense of belonging associated with a particular beer or scotch drinker and attention to detail is almost as important as food.

In a time when health conscious six pack aspiring youths have dominated the magazines and popular media people are becoming

more aware that alcohol is really just an indulgence and a costly very damaging habit.

As cigarettes have been banished to the terrace or outside of venues it is more apparent that mixing marijuana into this social affair is rare.

Mixing alcohol and pot is well known to cause nausea and potential vomiting and so the two are rarely mixed in large quantities.

The association of any vice is the ability to blame the vice for ones behavior rather than accept personal responsibility, which is dangerous.

Alcohol is toxic and can kill you quite easily if over consumed whereas pot will incapacitate in a very different manner. The indica plant will increase the effect of gravity to the point where leaving the sofa is hard to achieve and motivation for anything other than primary survival required actions is hard to justify.

Alcohol is responsible for a great deal of social bonding and good laughs but can have costly health, financial implications and dependence are a real risk.

The financial commitment to alcohol and sacrifice is rarely justified.

Similarly with pot the hours spent high are never associated with great achievement or constructively used so the social isolation and escapism is sometimes subtle and difficult to measure.

Mix this with a perspective shift and association with an illicit drug the consequence is a harsh and negative connotation.

Life is simply better without the added vice and pleasure is more fulfilling without numbing or heightening the senses.

The issue is not pot its the potential issues of drug use and the potential consequences, ruining ones life, sacrificing family and friends for addiction.

The social consequences of recreational drugs are quite poorly labeled because drugs and recreation are rarely linked.

Despite its innocent stoner image marijuana is also a powerful drug and like alcohol should be treated with great respect and deference.

It can expose you as lazy, over sensitive, self-obsessed or paranoid along with a whole host of other less than desirable aspects of ones personality.

This can also depend largely on the environment and company. Most pot smokers reserve their use for home or other safe environments where they can sleep.

I remember money being a constant burden as we all face financial pressure to varying degrees but the problem with pot is that it adds to this issue and essentially worsens it.

People will not help you with more pressing issues when drug use is present as it takes the main focus if someone won't let the vice go.

In the eyes of the on looker a homeless person spending money on drugs or drink rather than food is hard to help. This twisted priority is evidence of self-sabotage and self-harm and this exposes far deeper issues.

The key question here is anyone's lives really improved by alcohol, tobacco, pot or gambling? All have a specific price and cost but only you can answer whether they have any improvement for you?

I am lucky enough to have relatively simple tastes in women and I would consider my self a meat and potatoes kind of guy who really

loves meat and potatoes.

Being a sucker for nice eyes, a good smile and a generally healthy girl who is confident naked.

What more could a man ask for?

I'm not looking for a brain surgeon and the truth is I fall in love very easily and sometimes too easily.

Not professing to be religious but if God exists I'm sure it's a woman as Mother Nature has made the female embrace and affection so rewarding that no drug could compete or replace it.

The best way to motivate oneself out of a drug habit is to fall in love with the right girl who you don't want to lose.

One month clear.

I am over a month without smoking as I write this and have no complaint from any real withdrawals and the fog has certainly cleared.

My mistake of trying to incorporate marijuana into every aspect of my life, and then to seek an acceptance from friends and family that was impossible to gain.

The preacher behavior often seen with pot users is a method of attempting to gain support and acceptance they rarely achieve.

In a time of immediate social media and constant CCTV coverage we have to adjust to the reality that 'I was high' was similar to 'I was drunk'.

On a personal note Twitter, FB all social media and cameras are quite incriminating and are always best avoided whilst under the influence of pot and publication of selfies should be forbidden.

Capturing via video or photo moment can give some self reflection in times of sobriety as the famous David Hasslehoff moment captured by his daughters of him eating a burger whilst drunk was a strong motivator for his eventual rehabilitation.

A primary reality for me is that I have fiscal pressures that cause great concern whilst I had hoped to start a career as a lobbyist promoting the Green agenda but this has no real place in modern society.

The lack of commercial entities to sponsor this campaign has left me hanging in the wind struggling to self-feed.

Its bizarre that those currently benefiting financially from prohibition are definitely not interested in the legalization movement and see it as Governments taxing their business and flooding the supply side of the market.

As it stands if marijuana were legalized tomorrow how would that actually impact me personally?

I have to admit that having taken a month away from marijuana I am happier my life is taking distinct path to improvement.

My daily moods are much better and I have to accept that I took my habit to an unhealthy level of use and to the line of addiction and dependency.

As it stands I don't intend on smoking it again ever.

I would not advise anyone take their use to that level and would expect it have distinctly negative impact on their lives if they smoke all day every day.

Also mixing a personally challenging period of my life with a drug dependency made it worse.

If I could impart any advice to pot smokers it would be don't let it get in the way of your financial situation or mix it with the difficult and challenging job interviews and work.

I personally have not found any jobs that embrace the use of dope.

A strong sense of conflict still exists personally after advocating ending of criminal punishment for the use of a plant but concurrently highlighting that I used it to my detriment.

Social stigma is still attached to drug use and my personal issue is a well-intended social experiment has backfired.

Perhaps the fantasy of living a life in harmony with pot and finding a healthy balance of recreational use cannot be achieved.

More primary pressures like fiscal independence, the current social stigma and stereo typical lazy stoner association will not help find work or business solutions.

I now feel the health benefits, flexibility, anti-inflammatory aspects, increased appetite and sleep improvement are primarily the reserves of holiday / weekend activities.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs; food, water, housing and security all essentially are very competitive realms and drug users are rarely rewarded for their disconnect but they fall into the poverty trap.

My primary warning is that it can be something you fall in love with-literally.

Conclusion

Pot is a subtle and potentially problematic issue that will continue to be an evocative topic.

My advice is beware; follow the money and don't let it adversely affect you financially or emotionally.

The fact is smoking pot, like eating cake, triggers the dopamine receptors in the brain, which produces the sensation of pleasure, however unlike eating cake, pot is both illegal and incapacitating.

Unless you would advise someone to break the law and damage their ability to function 'normally' how could this be a good idea?

The problem with anything enjoyable, that has negative consequences, is it guarantees a negative outcome.

If someone's gets into enjoying the recreational aspects of marijuana they are faced with the real life potential criminal sanction which far out ways the benefit.

I wish I could say I achieved great things and had profound moments of clarity whilst under the influence but the truth is far less positive.

As an advocate I isolated myself and argued myself into isolation.

Everyone is quickly bored of drug advocacy and rarely interested in taking on the government on this issue so the time I spent high was really just a form of pacification and indulgence.

No one wants to join you that often and the novelty of celebration and recreation are quickly seen as dependence.

The mind altering nature of being high undeniable confuses and complicates life so that everything is about feelings, emotions and impulses rather than cognisant analytical thought and planning.

If one were to organize a holiday many would chose to detox, healthy food, sun, surf and sand and rejuvenation.

Rarely would someone decide to sit indoors to consume drugs as this is the only forum.

Anyone with any history with alcohol and drugs would honestly openly admit that most of their experiences ended with more harm or pain than pleasure.

The health and cost implications of these activities rarely result in the guilt free happy ending they initially went out to pursue.

Put simply the fact is that drink, drugs and smoking are all traps that people fall into that 99% of the time have no positive results.

'I got high and solved my problem' No one ever said.

I am continuing my life with the understanding that life is better sober and drug free.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Grey's is a world citizen which led him to writing The Pot Hole, The dope delusion. Having studied law his interest in global legal reform, economics, politics drew him into advocating the legalization of pot but the story just begins there.

His first book The Pot Hole is an intimate truthful insight onto ‘the
dope delusion’ and his observations.
The intention of his book is to help those still suffering with
addiction.



Individual support & confidential discussions can be
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The Dope DIET

The 'The Dope Diet' is an intimate diary from the perspective of David Grey's family about his struggles with smoking dope.

As the subtitle states he lost more than 8 kilos, money, family, friends and nearly his sanity during his journey, crusade for legalization and acceptance
