

Breakthrough: Above the Influence

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In this day and age, it's very easy to conform to what our society or peers portray to be acceptable or appropriate. It's completely normal for people to conform to their surrounding however it's important to maintain one's individuality, especially teens. The significance of preserving as much of who you truly are goes far beyond your teen years and thus I feel it's important to think ahead before making potentially destructive decisions. Ultimately it's up to you to take responsibility for your actions, regardless of the reasoning behind it.

The most influential person in my life I would have to say is President Barack Obama. Not only do his achievements echo the key to success amongst the younger generations of this nation, but fills each American that has a dream with inspiration to work towards their goals, that they're well within their grasp, as is the case for me. He's a wake up call to so many out there thinking, "Oh, I'll give up, I'm not good enough, I don't cut it." He's a role model not just because of his historical presidential victory but his consistent effort towards going where he wants to go and overcoming possible barriers. e.e. cummings once wrote: "To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you somebody else, is to fight the hardest battle you are ever going to fight and never stop fighting". So how can this be applied to a teens life? The correlation is simple yet fundamental. Just as it takes courage to stand in front of thousands, it also takes courage to be you. Don't cave in to social pressure in hopes of acceptance by hurting yourself.

Personally, I have experienced first hand what drugs and alcohol can do to young people and the people that love them the most. I would never even consider hurting those who care the most about me in such a manner. It's a state of uncertainty and confusion with a mix of anger, fear, and hopelessness. Quite honestly, substance and alcohol usage do more harm than more people may think. The effects extend far beyond just impacting the one individual but their entire world; whether it is teachers, parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, the list is essentially endless. Plain and simple, entering the world of drugs and alcohol is something one shouldn't take lightly.

Although reasons vary for alcohol consumption and other drug use within young teenage groups, social acceptance is evident to be among them. I stay above the influence because I have found a balance, a sense of security and confidence about who I am. A reassurance that accomplishment through effort provides me, which overshadows any satisfaction I would receive from drinking or doing drugs. It's the stability of knowing I'm not missing out on life's precious moments because I'm physically and/or mentally impaired. School, my goals, friends, family, and other commitments continue to be my top priorities. My life doesn't include drugs or alcohol for the simple fact that I don't have the time nor the interest. Furthermore, I have a clear understanding of where I come from, where I'm at, and where I'll go. My only hope is that young folks like me develop a clear perspective of what life is all about and to achieve the strength to enjoy it drug and alcohol free.