

7 Reasons You Should Stop Smoking Marijuana

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I was a heavy pot smoker, a pothead, for close to six years. Like most people, I started in high school, using it as a socialization tool, and then it just became an emotional crutch. After several intense years of constant inebriation, I began to wonder whether the weed I'd been smoking had made me crazier than I already was when I began. Ultimately, I'll never know which came first, but this wondrous plant certainly allowed me to reach new levels of insanity, and eventually do what I'd been needing to do for a while—break up with myself and start anew. BREAKING UP WITH THE HERB WAS THE BEST DECISION EVER BECAUSE IT FINALLY MEANT DECIDING TO TAKE CONTROL OF MY LIFE.

1. I can now feel all of my emotions.

Taking control of my emotions meant sitting with them no matter how uncomfortable — owning them, allowing them to be, but ultimately having the strength to persevere. My regular course of action was to abruptly halt this emotional spillage by grabbing a lighter and immediately sparking up. Choosing to welcome this sudden, unstoppable flood of emotions was initially overwhelming, but the level of empowerment I felt soon softened the fear of feeling vulnerable.

2. No more making excuses for excuses.

Marijuana, as with all other drugs, allowed me to be the ultimate escapist, and in escaping, I became lost and ill-equipped to handle the world — and life. Coming down from my cloud and refusing to use the green as a safety net for my depression is a tangible testament to my desire to also *overcome* emotional wounds. If I no longer have the crutch, I no longer have an excuse, and therefore cannot allow myself to be crippled. It's as if ceasing the pipe-smoking ritual was to say, "I am no longer crippled and diseased." Although I used marijuana to help numb my internal wounds, my obsessive smoking was a relentless reminder that I was in fact *very crippled and diseased*.

This state of sickness is the perfect excuse for inaction, inertia. I wanted to *do something, to do more*.

3. It opened up other avenues.

So now that I'm in my mid-twenties and have lifted the smoky green veil, there's a certain anxiety that still haunts me, but settling into a mental space that allows me full ownership over myself and a greater level of emotional responsibility has given me a newfound confidence. If I can break up with the love of my life since I was nineteen—the one I believed allowed me to survive for so long—I can survive on my own. In essence, being on my own, without my green buddy allowed me to *just be me*, and move *forward* into a new life, developing healthier habits.

4. The clarity is magical.

As a highly-creative person, I still struggle to organize my thoughts and be proactive about everything I do, but putting down the pipe welcomed a certain clarity I was lacking, missing,

forgot, and possibly never had. For creatives, a brilliant idea is especially golden— it can mark the beginning of a new story or career path. Although Ms. Mary allowed my creative juices to flow like a waterfall, I needed the mental capacity to turn them off, like a faucet. The green also severely impairs short-term memory; I wanted to make sure that as soon as an idea hit me, I hadn't forgotten it by the time I found a pen and paper. As an already technologically-challenged person, in my highest moments, I often found it difficult to get to the "Notes" on my iPhone. Which leads me to my next observation...

5. I'm less of a dummy and a zombie.

Your high depends on the type of marijuana you smoke, but an addict will usually smoke anything. Looking back, I recall countless instances of embarrassing myself while stoned, often drawing dubious stares and leading people to think I was *a lot* dumber than I actually am. I hated that. I wanted to be perceived as bright and capable. After a while, the fear of presenting yourself as an idiot trumps your willingness to look like one.

6. Reminiscing.

I almost want to say that my hardcore addiction to Mary Jane was worth it for the amazing memories—ones that I hold dear and will forever fondly recall. Although weed, like all other drugs connects people, namely addicts — the green seemed different because I was always meeting a certain type of weed-smoker — the "cool" semi-urban, open-minded, intellectual, also eager to connect and explore the cerebral abyss. I believed that marijuana united intellectuals of all colors, something I found important for my soul and sanity in my diverse, albeit segregated hometown of San Francisco.

I also loved shopping for new pieces, and admiring those of my friends. Although glass pipes and blunts were fun, I preferred the aesthetic appeal of wooden ones, and joints. Sometimes shopping for new pieces was more exciting than buying a new pair of shoes.

I also love how weed made me love EVERYONE, develop an enchanting, otherworldly relationship with music, and allowed my creativity to blossom in various ways.

But, ultimately, I love myself more than I love marijuana, as well as the stability I now have — stability that I thought this green plant was giving me all long. In reality it just catapulted me further into a black hole, and it wasn't the kind of romanticized free-spirited lifestyle I thought it would be. Addiction doesn't have that appeal in the long-term, even though being a beautiful flower-child stoner seemed like a brilliant idea for the short-term.

7. Lessons learned.

I could never call marijuana a dirty, evil drug, like meth, but I don't see myself returning to the green anytime soon.

For me, weed is like an old lover you're incredibly fond of — someone that you loved immensely, who brought countless joy into your life, but not without the pain, heartache and mental anguish; they taught you invaluable lessons and you still love them no matter what.

In the end, I will always love weed from the bottom of my heart for everything it's given me, but more so for all of the things it allowed me to leave behind.