

Dear Bill:

My husband had two sons from his first marriage, one who became a high school math teacher and coach and who successfully raised a family in his one and only marriage. The other son, younger by five years, had lived for a longer period of time with his mother, who had lupus and was also an alcoholic/addict.

For her younger son's 15th birthday, she gave him a case of beer and taught him how to smoke pot... and from then on, he slowly moved farther and farther into the same world as his mother. By the time I met him, he was 21 and in college, but not even close to graduation.

He finally left college and started looking for jobs, but of course without a degree, little was available to him. He blew through several jobs before he went back to his mom's house, with the reason that she was very sick and needed his help to take care of her.

After she died, he stayed there, and he did manage to clean up for a while, get a job and several promotions, got married, and fathered a beautiful baby girl. However, about three years into his marriage, when he was working as an assistant manager at a major truck stop, his boss discovered that money was missing from the safe. It turned out that my stepson was buying heroin with it.

The company sent him to a detox center a couple of hundred miles away, where he lived for six weeks and seemed to do well, but it didn't take long for him to slide back into heroin use. He went back to detox, but left before finishing the whole course this time, and his wife told him not to come back home.

He lived with us for a little while before taking off for an aunt's house (she had agreed to take him in under her very strict rules) in Arizona. He got a job in construction and soon moved to an apartment with one of his cousins... and all the drug behavior started all over again.

Then suddenly, at age 32, he was found dead. It has never been clear if he shot himself or if his cousin shot him during an argument or what. His father and brother were devastated, and I was just horrified. *Age 32... only 17 years since his mother had introduced him to pot.* Since then, I've never doubted that pot was dangerous in itself or a gateway.

Marilynn in TX

Bennett, William J.; White, Robert A. (2015-02-03). *Going to Pot: Why the Rush to Legalize Marijuana Is Harming America* (pp. 114-116). Center Street. Kindle Edition.