

## Marijuana

Marijuana is a dangerous drug, not just because of its chemical properties, but because of its theft properties. Marijuana (a.k.a. pot or weed) robs people of maturation; weed is a depressant, just like alcohol, but unlike the effects of one alcohol drink, the effects of one bowl or joint can last hours. In those hours, a person is robbing themselves of their consciousness, and as a result, the brain is not developing normally because it is in a numbed state. The pursuit of weed, the actual smoking of weed, and the hours of remaining high are all lost hours. These hours could be spent in productive ways, such as developing non-chemical coping mechanisms, or creating something of use or admiration. Weed is particularly damaging to adolescence because these short, critical years can be robbed of their opportunity to develop academically, socially, and physically. Weed robs people of friends; in school, abusers can be labeled and ignored by non users. As the years pass, the addict finds themselves with less and less friends. Very typically, the only “friends” the addict has in adulthood are other addicts that use the same drug.

Weed robs people of their ability to deal with normal daily stressors; some believe that weed “expands” or “frees the mind.” What people are actually experiencing is temporary escape from their own stress. But this escape is short lived, and when the effects of the drug wear off, the person is left with the same problems. While initially weed use is thought of as “partying,” long term use turns into simply chemically changing one’s mood out of habit. This habit may turn life long, which replaces healthy, natural means of dealing with reality and daily stressors. Weed robs the abuser of their ability to deal with frustrations because the addict typically uses it to calm down. Usually, the addict loses control of their ability to manage their own emotions without chemicals, and anger and depression tend to be their primary emotions when they are not high.

Weed robs people of their ability to accept responsibility; addicts do not want to admit that they are responsible for their personal, financial, and employment problems. Weed robs people of rational thought and gives the illusion that all problems are *not* the addicts’ fault. The abuser doesn’t realize that as they work on developing their life-long weed habit, they are robbing themselves of job opportunities; more and more companies are using random drug screens, so only the poorly paying positions that do not screen are left for those with traces of weed in their urine. Lastly, weed robs people of ambition; remember, weed is a depressant, therefore when one is high, ambition to succeed is low. And people low in ambition do not succeed

in this competitive society (it is doubtful that any Nobel prizes were ever awarded to habitual pot smokers.)

People with marijuana addictions can receive help in recognizing their habit, accepting responsibility, and taking charge of their life through substance abuse counseling. Weed is a habitual drug and consumes the addict's life. But with professional assistance and a desire to make a lifestyle change, a person can stop robbing them self from all that life has to offer.