

Heidi Jensen

Drug usage stems from unhappiness and the desire to fill a ravenous empty void with mind-altering substances. Many teenagers believe that short-term happiness can be achieved through short-term highs: this *never* holds true. In order to protect myself from drug usage, I will attain utter happiness through positive thoughts and kindness towards other.

To achieve zen, I must be content with myself and my actions. A positive outlook on life is one of the very few controllable things in my life. Although it is impossible to control outside situations in the world, I *do* control how I react to those situations. By having a positive outlook on life, I remain hopeful. When everything may seem out of control, looking on the bright side of things makes life more cheery and I appreciate what I *am* blessed with. I do not feel the need to use drugs to avoid the issues in my life: optimistically facing the challenges head on helps create character and strength. Finding peace and happiness from the inside means you are strong enough to battle through life on your own.

Kindness is *always* the answer. Even when times get tough, being kind to one another has a positive impact on everyone. It is scientifically proven that humans receive joy from service towards others: kindness is the best service of all. I volunteer and am an intern at Mini Horse Therapy, where I take miniature horses to organizations where people need comfort (Ronald McDonald House, children's hospitals, veteran homes.) By spreading happiness and kindness, it helps people get through their day: this prevents them from turning to unhealthy alternatives. Everyone goes through hard times, especially in high school. It can be very difficult to stay positive and continue to fight on through the days, especially when there are so many tempting options that "claim" to fix problems. But in reality, true happiness is found through self-satisfaction. By receiving and spreading kindness, the world has more joy and happiness which leads to positive environments. Positive environments are supportive and enjoyable to live in, and decreases the high percentage of depression amongst teens.

Drugs are used to create a false sense of security. By finding authentic security through kindness and optimism, I can ensure a bright future filled with success. Positive environments spread hope and allow people to flourish compared to pessimistic situations that only drag others down. Spreading love and care through the community can protect myself and others from the drug epidemic that infiltrates into the teenage society.