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## A Drugged Nation Is Not Healthy

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Most Americans are too busy in their daily lives to face the obvious: we are a society dependent on drugs. We fought only half the war on drugs. "Just Say No" should have targeted not only street drugs but all detrimental drugs including prescription ones.

There is little ethical or moral difference between a drug pusher in the school yard seducing kids into buying the latest feel good drug and the pharmacological/medical industry dispensing antipsychotic medication to children as young as toddlers. Both the street drug or the prescription drug will lead the child down the same path of chemical dependency that ends in being a taker from rather than a giver to society.

According to the national Teen Drug Survey released Dec. 11 by the White House, teenagers are turning from street drugs to prescription drugs such as OxyContin and Vicodin. The study conducted by the University of Michigan Institute on Social Research, found a modest decrease in marijuana and other street drugs and an increase in prescription drugs. John Walters, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, said, "71 percent of young people have reported their source of supply is their parent's or friend's medicine cabinet." Theo Milonopoulos, "Survey Finds Teens Smoking Less Pot, But Popping More Pills," Tampa Tribune, Dec. 12, pg. 13.

It is a deplorable commentary on our nation that the Center of Medicare and Medicaid says 21 percent of nursing home patients, who do not have a psychosis diagnosis are prescribed antipsychotic, off label, medication. Lucette Lagnado, "Nursing Homes Quiet Elderly with Antipsychotic Drugs," Tampa Tribune, Dec. 7. To give humans of any age medication to induce docility is inhumane. When children are given off label psychotic medication it is more tragic as their lives are ahead rather than behind them.

Although children naturally fluctuate in their mood from laughing to crying, they are being prescribed off-label antipsychotic medication as toddlers. Before the 1990s it was generally accepted in the mental health profession to be illogical and unethical to label a child with a bi-polar disorder. Certainly drugging a child with an antipsychotic medication was considered going against the Hippocratic principle of doing no harm. Assisting nursing homes to control the elderly and parents to control their children is not any better than caging the elderly and children for control.

Our society has become more than drug tolerant, we have become a drugged society. Drug advertisements dominate women's magazines and television commercials. You have to wait an hour just to have a prescription filled. Recreational drugs of Hollywood celebrities to "roids" of sports idols, to sexual stimulants for anyone, psychotic drugs for the elderly and for children to control behavior indicate drugs have permeated every segment of our society. Using chemicals for daily life is epidemic.

Drugs may temporarily relieve a particular problem. The side effects to a person taking the drugs may be denied but are evident to those around us. The number of people unable to exist without mind-altering medication is destroying our power to be a vital, independent people. A large number of people dependent on drugs eventually become dependent on the government "safety net." This leads to a sick and declining society. We must reject the celebrity's lifestyle, advertising and the pharmaceutical/medical experts or sacrifice our own and our children's bodies, minds and spirits to the long-term adverse impact of drugs.


The joys of life are best experienced in a conscious state. Life's ups and downs can be painful at times although they always provide us an opportunity to learn how to better handle the next challenge of life. Problems never cease, healthy people just get better at solving them. Americans have established a reputation as an ingenious people who can overcome life's obstacles. We cannot surrender our character as a people who perseveres until we get the job done. If we as a society continue down the drugged path when the going gets tough, we will forget the advantages, assets and wisdom left to us by our ancestors.

Restoring our national vigor requires the discipline to say "no" to any unnecessary drugs.

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