

## GRADUATION ESSAY



The three phases are really good reminders on how to change yourself, and what to do to change yourself. "Things don't change if things don't change," this one is very flagrant and blunt. If you want change, you have to make an effort to change, because the universe won't change for you. "You are where you are," this one hits a strong note for me, because it reminds me that I can't change the past, I can't see the future, so I just have to start where I am right now. It's also good to see how your progress is going, you are where you are with your progress and you just have to take it one step at a time. "Who's driving your bus," this one is a reminder of ownership of actions, and responsibilities. I am the one who is driving my bus, so I have to understand that I'm the only one in control, no one else. And finally, "your past is not your potential," this phrase is my favorite for many reasons. It's a clear indicator that you're not always bound to use drugs, have anger issues, or your past. You can change and it has nothing to do with your past. This phrase is particularly my favorite because it was one of the things I said to the principle to tell her I was arrested, and I ended being welcomed back.

My top three high risk situations are pretty obvious and simple in my opinion. My first one is parties or social media. This goes along the lines of social media depicting how people are always having fun and show off that they are using drugs, or how much fun they are having at a party. This is risky because the demeanor and way its put makes me want to be jealous, but I always tell myself "They are so insecure and so boring that they need drugs or a party to make them feel special,". Another high risk situation is my using friends, and their plans. I have always felt left out with my friends, and I know that me using drugs was a way I tried to fit in with them and not feel outcasted. So them making plans to use or talking about it makes me crave or

triggers me. But I know how they aren't the best people, so I go to my other non using friends. My last high risk situation is First Friday downtown. I've used a lot on first Fridays, so seeing first Friday makes me really have an urge to use. Recently I've been working on First Friday's so I don't have to feel left out, and that I am doing something productive.

Personally I have not relapsed, but I would imagine it's me being lonely, self destructive or jealous. My mom would most likely see me wanting to leave the house with no warning, no actual plan, and secrecy. My friends would see me hanging out with using friends and leaving them behind a lot. I would see lots of excuses for myself "I need this," "I deserve this," "It's just this once," etc.

I used to cover up my drug use with sleeping over at friends places, and minimizing. I would say to my mom "At least I'm not [xyz] they do cocaine!" "At least I'm not [zyx] they are addicted to cigarettes,". It was a lot of excuses and lack of ownership of actions.

I have noticed I'm happier, not as groggy, not as lazy, not as anti productive, and I appreciate things a lot more. I used to spend so much time procrastinating and making excuses and never starting my homework and just focusing on smoking. Now I value my time and I can focus on doing my homework with ease. I love my family more, I love my real friends more, I am more active, I laugh more, and I feel smarter. I don't have to lie or keep secrets any more which feels so great to me. The biggest changes I've seen with my family is we talk more, we laugh more, we are more supportive of each other and I can just feel a better relationship. It feels a lot better than how it used to be.

It's worth it to stay to clean because being arrested scared me so much, and I don't want a stupid mistake like that to ruin my future, I have a lot of goals. I don't want to be in a drug

culture, I find it so dumb and annoying. I want to have real friends and not people who use drugs to make them seem more interesting. I love my family, and I know they will help me whenever I need it. I want to be happy with my family and I don't want them to think I'm only using drugs. I want to be happier, I don't want to lie, I want to be the best I can be.