



"I DID NOT EVEN KNOW THAT I WAS HOOKED."

(BASED ON A TRUE STORY)



This is a conversation with Slim (not his real name), a former drug abuser, who started abusing cannabis when he was 11 and then went on to heroin when he was 14. Slim, who is in his 50s, now works in the Social Services sector where he helps ex-offenders reintegrate back to society.

How were you first introduced to drugs?

I was first introduced to drugs when I saw my brother and his friends smoking cannabis. I was curious and eventually tried it with some of my neighbourhood friends. I was in Primary 5 then. By the time I was in Secondary 2, I had already started abusing heroin.

How did you end up getting hooked?

It started out as a weekly activity that turned into a daily affair. The irony of my addiction was that I did not even know that I was hooked. One day, I started getting chills, a runny nose, body aches and diarrhoea when I did not take heroin (after taking it continuously for a period of time). I thought I was sick. I was told by my friend that I was going through

withdrawal symptoms from heroin but I did not believe him. He told me that this sickness would go away if I took heroin. When I did, all my withdrawal symptoms disappeared and I felt normal again.

How did your addiction change your life?

Addiction robbed me of my education as I lost interest in my studies. My personal life would revolve around my drugs and my drug buddies. Naturally, it affected my relationship with my family - especially my mother - but I simply could not give my drugs up. I did attempt to stop taking drugs but it would only be for a while and then I would go back to drugs again.

How do you feel when you think about your past addiction?

I wasted almost 20 years of my life on drug addiction. I lost my youth and have hurt a lot of people, especially my family. I do regret having taken drugs but there is nothing I can do to change the past and I need to move on with my life.

Do you have a message for people out there?

I would seriously warn others not to get involved in drugs, not even for curiosity's sake. It will bring you down on a gloomy path of pain and misery. If any of you have already tried drugs, please seek help to stop it.

Slim regrets his wayward past. But nothing can bring back the time he has lost.

Life does not rewind, say no to drugs.