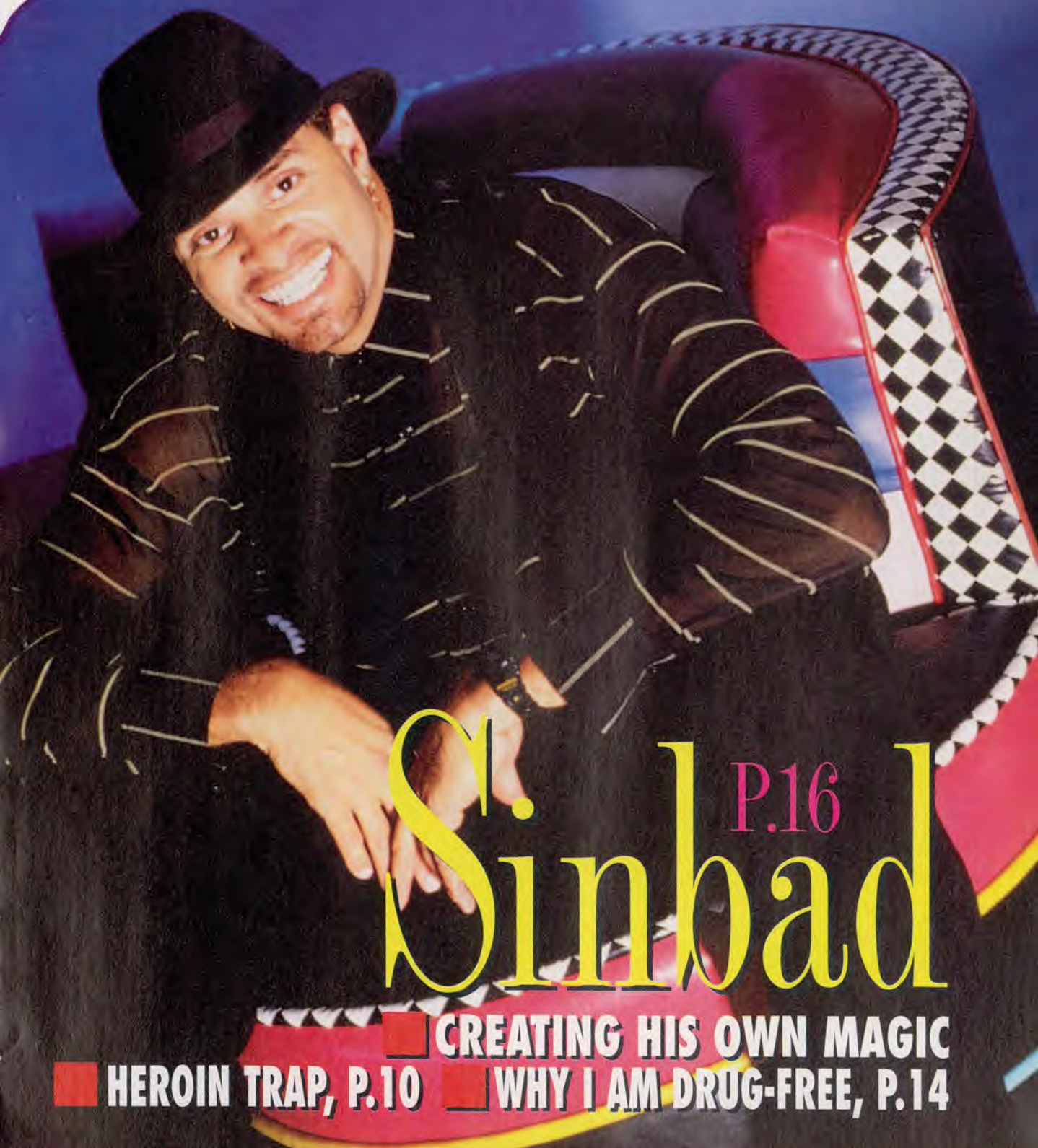


CELEBRATING POSITIVE CHOICES

# Listen



## Q. P.16 Sinbad

■ CREATING HIS OWN MAGIC

■ HEROIN TRAP, P.10

■ WHY I AM DRUG-FREE, P.14







# KEEPING SILENT

Sometimes being a good friend may mean breaking the rules of friendship.

Sometimes the real danger is not in what you do or say, but rather in what you don't do or say. And sometimes being a good friend may mean breaking the rules of friendship.

Truthfully, I think Alex had a crush on me, but I would never have embarrassed him by saying such a thing. We did a lot together during high school. He helped me with my algebra, and I proofread all his English papers. On sunny days we'd play tennis or toss around our favorite frisbee.

I always stood by Alex no matter what he did. I smiled and supported him whenever he needed me, because I knew that's what friends did for each other. So when Alex started smoking cigarettes, I tried one. We both had a good laugh at my brief but violent coughing fit. In tears I gave the cigarette back to him, stating that it wasn't for me. Still laughing, he said it was OK, and he never pressured me about it again. That was another reason our friendship was so great—we allowed each other to be different. He never made fun of me for not smoking, and I never judged him because he did.

During our senior year of high school we were at a party. It was exactly what you'd

expect from a group of seniors about to graduate. Everyone stood around drinking and dancing. Then the kissing games started.

I watched in amusement as my bottle stopped in Alex's direction. Surrounded by cheers and applause, Alex put his arms around me and gently kissed me. My stomach fluttered, and the room began to spin. The voices of our friends broke the moment, and I excused myself. Walking onto the porch, I sat down on a swing. Alex came out shortly and sat down beside me.

We didn't say anything for a long time, and then he lit a cigarette. But when a strange smell floated in my direction, I realized that he wasn't smoking tobacco. I raised an eyebrow and looked at him. He smiled and offered the joint to me. I said no, remembering my miserable experience with the cigarette. Alex didn't pressure me. He pushed his legs against the railing to rock the swing, and I leaned against him. I wondered when he'd started smoking pot, but decided to drop it. After all, we were both old enough to make our own choices in life, and smoking was his choice, not mine.

The fact that a close friend of mine was doing drugs never

occurred to me until college. We went to different schools, and an entire year passed before we saw each other again.

What a year can do to a person. I looked at this guy, my friend, and saw someone I could hardly recognize. His light-brown hair desperately needed a shampoo. He had dark circles around his eyes and looked like he'd lost weight. He sounded like he had a cold because he kept sniffing and blowing his nose. I teased him gently about getting sick during summer vacation.

"Spending a day at the beach will cure me," he said, offering a weak smile in my direction. "I'll be right back. I want to say hi to your parents."

A strange feeling came over me as I watched him toss his duffel bag into the trunk. I thought, *Something is wrong. I can't figure it out.* Maybe I didn't want to figure it out.

Pushing the thought away, I carelessly threw my bag into the trunk and knocked over his duffel bag, spilling out the contents. Alex was still talking to my parents, so I began repacking his stuff. Pushing down the clothes he hadn't bothered to fold, I felt something sharp scratch the back of my hand. Jerking away,



I stared angrily at the blood that was beginning to drip just below my first knuckle. Looking to see if he was still talking, I carefully moved aside his clothing to see what he'd packed.

Wrapped in plastic was a spoon and a small bag of a powdery substance. I turned the package over and discovered the needle that had pricked me. I was in shock. Cramming the stuff back into his bag, I slammed the trunk down and licked the blood from the back of my hand. Right then I made the decision to confront him.

Our ride to the beach was quiet except for the radio. I tried to think of a way to say what was on my mind without sounding judgmental or intrusive. I stared out the window, slowly losing my resolve to discuss something that was really none of my business.

Once we were at the beach we laughed and reminisced about high school. We exchanged stories about college life. As I listened to him, I realized that he wasn't enjoying college.

"I'm thinking about a transfer," he said softly as he sifted sand through his fingers.

"Why? You worked so hard to get there. Why do you want to leave?" I asked in surprise.

"It's just not what I thought it would be. The classes are way too stressful, and I miss my old friends from home." He squinted at the sun. "I think I'll take some classes at the local college, and then I'll have time to decide what I want to do with my life."

**His drug use was not my business; it wasn't my place to ask him about it, was it?**

"I guess that would make more sense than spending lots of money on a place that you hate." I smiled to lighten the mood. "If you want any help transferring, just ask me."

"That's what I love about you, Catie." Alex wrapped his arms around me and buried his face in my hair. "You're always ready to stand by me, and you never question what I do. I wish everyone could be more like you."

I realized then that I couldn't question him about what I'd found in his duffel bag. His drug use was not my business. Alex had not discussed it with me, and it was not my place to ask him about it. Besides, he'd probably grow out of it. Once he returned home and was in a less stressful lifestyle, I was certain he'd give it up. Alex didn't need my criticism. He needed my support, and I was going to give it to him.

We didn't see each other much after that day on the

beach. We exchanged a few phone calls, but our lives were very different—going in different directions. Alex left his college and signed up for a few classes back home. Shortly before the end of my senior year of college, I learned that he'd checked into a rehab center. I felt relief and decided to go see him as soon as he was released.

After graduation I called Alex and made plans to visit. I'd selected the perfect gift: our old Frisbee from high school. I thought it might remind him of happier times.

"Are you really coming?" He sounded like a little boy.

"Yeah. I'll be there on Friday. I've even got a present for you!" I teased.

"I won't bother guessing 'cause I know you won't tell me. You were always good at keeping secrets. I've really missed you, Catie. I can't wait till Friday." I could almost hear him smile through the phone.

Today the Frisbee sits on a shelf in my closet. I have not thrown it since college, and I really don't know why I keep it. You see, I never got to see Alex. The Wednesday before my visit he was visited by another friend. This friend also had a special homecoming gift for Alex—the gift of heroin. The overdose that followed turned out to be the last gift that Alex ever received.

Years later friends and family still wonder when he started using drugs. With pangs of guilt I can't help wondering why I never said anything to anyone. Not even to Alex. ■



# ASK GARY

B Y G A R Y L . S O M D A H L

**I don't use drugs myself, but I think people should be able to do what they want with their bodies as long as no one else gets hurt. Don't you agree? Cameron**

Sorry, but I have to disagree. Research proves that for every person who uses tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs, approximately six other people are affected. These could be family members, friends, or even strangers. Violence and dishonesty are only a couple of the negative effects resulting from drug use that hurt others in more ways than you may think. Add to this the number of innocent people killed from drunk drivers and other preventable accidents caused by those on a high or stoned, and it's easy to understand that drug use touches us all—not only those who believe it's their right to do with their bodies as they wish. We also have a right to be safe from them. Don't you agree?

**My mom's always telling me to "get high on life" instead of the stuff she's caught me using. Is that really possible? Can someone actually "get high on life"? I'm 16 and curious. Katy**

Of course it's possible to get high, feel good, be excited, and fall head over heels in love with life without having to smoke, snort, swallow, inhale, or inject anything. Nothing works better than being involved in sports, an interesting hobby, reading, writing, or enjoying a good laugh. Life is supposed to be natural and not artificially induced. It's what we make it. It's what we choose. It's not only healthier but legal and free. Try it out for a while, drug-free, and let me know which one you like better. There is no drug that could ever compare to the awesome feelings that life can give.

**A friend of mine invited me to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting last week. We were the only teens there. They were almost all older adults. Are there support meetings just for younger people to attend to help in staying clean and sober? Jason**

There are many support meetings all over the country that cater to those your age. Some of those for teens are Young Life, 12-Step Teens, and Kids in Recovery. Ask around or call your local chapter to find out where the nearest one is. If you learn that there aren't any in your city, consider starting one yourself. This could be a perfect opportunity to strengthen your own recovery. As they say: "We can't really keep what we have unless we're willing to give it away." The more you help others, the more you help yourself! Good luck.

**Could a person overdose on alcohol if they were to drink too much? Tony**

Yes, and thousands do each year. Alcohol is the powerful depressant in beer, wine, hard liquor, and coolers. It suppresses the central nervous system, causing the physical and emotional areas of the brain to slow down. This is the reason that those who are under the influence of alcohol have a delayed reaction to stepping on the brake pedal before crashing into other vehicles, or worse yet, pedestrians. Too much of this dangerous drug can cause the central nervous system to slow down to the point of going to sleep. Once in this state, the brain and parts of the body shut down and cease to perform their work. When this happens, death is usually the final result. ■



**G**o ahead, ask Gary his advice on some of those big, serious, touchy questions. This guy enjoys the rough-and-tumble of helping teens with some serious problems. Gary Somdahl is a dad who puts his skills as a licensed youth chemical dependency counselor to the real-world test all the time. His latest book is *Drugs and Kids*.

Send your questions to:

**ASK GARY**

*Listen* magazine

55 West Oak Ridge Drive  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.





# PEER COURT

## THE SOLUTION

*Looking for alternatives to locking kids up, Placer County's peer court seeks positive solutions for troubled peers.*

BY SHIRLEY M. POOLEY

**W**hen you steal from someone, you're not only breaking the law, but you're doing something that reflects on all teenagers. Adults lose their trust in us." These heartfelt words fell from the lips of 15-year-old Robert, former gang member and drug user turned prosecuting attorney. He stretched to his five-foot-four-inch height as he addressed the defendant, Colleen, a 14-year-old girl arrested for stealing a home-pregnancy test from a drugstore.

Placer County Peer Court was in session, and I was there to see for myself if peer pressure could be a positive force in combatting juvenile delinquency.

Reading the pamphlet I'd received upon entering the Roseville, California, courtroom, it stated that the defendant must be a juvenile, first-time offender, and must admit his or her guilt. Referrals to peer court came from school-site police officers, juvenile probation, the juvenile court, or local police agencies.

Sitting on the edge of my seat, I could see that the prosecution and defense attorneys, the clerk, the bailiff, and jury members—everyone except the presiding judge and two attorney mentors who hovered over their young counterparts—were teenagers.

The clamor of young voices came to a sudden, unexpected halt as the black-robed judge entered the courtroom and gazed down from the bench at the seven-member jury. "Maintain strict confidentiality," he admonished them. "Remember, what you hear here, let it remain here."

A teenage clerk swore in the jury, except for one fellow who sneaked a nervous glance at the judge and said, "Because of my religion, I can't take an oath." Defendant Colleen, her eyes downcast, slumped into the witness chair. The defense attorney presented an opening statement, followed by Prosecutor Robert; both had obviously done their homework. Prompted by his mentor, Robert barraged Colleen with questions. He then went on to deliver a riveting summation. Then jurors questioned the defendant. One young man wanted to know the defendant's intention when she went into the drugstore.

Wearing serious expressions, the jury (escorted by a teen bailiff) left the courtroom to deliberate and decide a punishment to fit the crime.

When they returned, their verdict was that Colleen apologize to the store manager, serve a

minimum of two times on the peer-court jury, perform 20 hours of community service, and tour the county jail.

Sentencing options depend on the nature of the offense. Erica, 16, who had assaulted another student at school, was ordered to attend dispute-resolution sessions, write a letter of apology to the victim she had assaulted, and serve in some capacity in peer court.

For a drug-related offense, a teen's driver's license might be suspended for 30 days to one year. Another option could be to view films on substance abuse. Karen Green, the peer court coordinator, and her staff work with the defendant and family for a minimum of six months until completion of the sentence.

Community service is considered an important teaching tool in this innovative program. Counselor Jan Romero stated, "If you give to your community, you are not likely to offend against it." The teenage offenders are sent out into the community on work projects. They might assist in river and road cleanup, baby-sit, visit retirement homes, or sell food at street fairs.

Workshops on subjects in communication skills and getting and keeping a job are offered



as part of the offenders' rehabilitation. An attorney-training class teaches skills in reading police reports and the questioning of witnesses.

Prosecutor Robert was himself a defendant in peer court at one time. "I loved to fight just for the fun of it, was suspended from school, stole, and used drugs," he told me as we sat in the library. "When I was 13, I was arrested for stealing a tape from a record store."

As part of the punishment meted out by teen jurors, Robert had to tour the jail and sit in a cell for 15 minutes. "What a shock that was," he exclaimed.

Robert has been earning extra high school credit for his community service work at the peer court for the past two years.

"I've learned to do things in a legal way and hang out with a healthy gang," he stated. "Now my friends on probation come to me and rap about their problems."

"Another benefit is that I avoid having a juvenile record. Peer court has changed my life."

His mother is joyous too about the changes in Robert's life. "He had become a very angry young man, running the streets while I looked the other way," she said. "I went into a 12-step program for my drug abuse, and now, two years later, I've gained back the respect of my sons. And now Robert gives back to society not only as a peer-court participant, but by working at a gym helping the youth pastor of our church."

Susan, another mother, told me she'd like to see a peer court in every community in America. Her 16-year-old son, Ron, was arrested for stealing a bottle of Jack Daniel's from a liquor store, but after being tried in peer court, she boasts about the



• *Peer pressure can be a positive force.*

## **"ANOTHER BENEFIT IS THAT I AVOID HAVING A JUVENILE RECORD. PEER COURT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE."**

program's effect on his behavior. "Previously," she said, "Ron was running with the wrong crowd and got into minor trouble. The neighborhood police knew most of the kids by name. Now even they have commented on how much Ron has changed."

Not only have Ron's grades improved, but his friends ask him to be their public defender. "I tell my clients," Ron adds, "that I've been there before. You can learn more from someone your own age."

Ron was chosen from among his peers to accompany several staff members to Los Angeles, California, for a workshop for law-enforcement officers to discuss youth drunk driving.

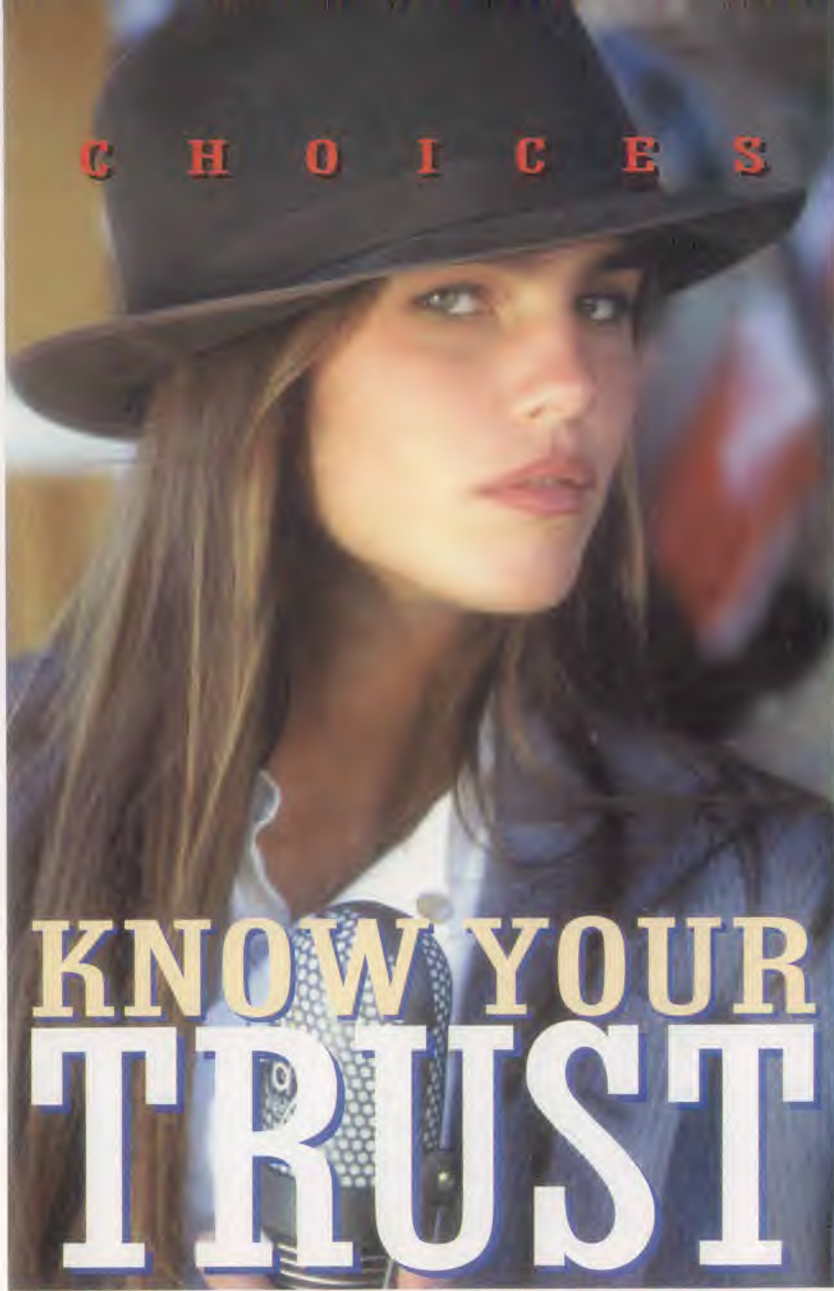
Placer County's peer court developed out of the frustration and concern of superior court judge J. Richard Couzens and county chief probation officer Jerry Harper. Looking for alternatives to locking kids up, they visited a teen court in Eureka, California. They liked the concept of teens being involved in the justice system and holding each other accountable. They held brainstorming meetings with officials from law enforcement, probation, school personnel, and the teens themselves. They also won the cooperation of the county's prosecutors and public defenders.

Volunteers have produced a juvenile justice handbook covering such topics as curfew and smoking laws. Freshmen at Auburn Placer High School study the handbook for eight weeks in their civics classes. Police and probation officers and teen offenders visit the classroom sharing their experiences. Since the peer-court program began in 1990, approximately 700 teens have been defendants, and the repeat rate is only 2 to 3 percent.

Judge Couzens has his own favorite peer-court success story: "I recall a sophomore who had been in and out of comprehensive study programs. He couldn't find himself. He liked the defense attorney role, became good at it, got a scholarship, went off to law school, and is now practicing law."

As a retired social worker who had worked for 20 years attempting to stitch together the torn lives of kids and their troubled families, the peer-court program gave me a glimpse of hope. These young people convinced me that peer pressure can be a positive force in combating juvenile delinquency. ■





# KNOW YOUR TRUST QUOTIENT?

Can you be trusted? Do you know your values and do you live up to them? Do you always try to do the right thing regardless of what others think? Take the following trust test and learn about yourself.

BY KAY D. RIZZO

• 1. Your best friend tells you in secret that she is pregnant, and she doesn't want anyone but you to know. You

☐ a. keep her secret until she's ready to tell others.

☐ b. tell two of your mutually closest friends and swear them to secrecy.

☐ c. run to the phone. After all, this is big news!

• 2. You buy an expensive gown for the prom with money you've been saving for a new computer. You wear the dress to the big event, after which you

☐ a. begin saving again for that computer.

☐ b. advertise the gown in the local newspaper's classified ads as never having been worn.

☐ c. return the gown to the store on Monday saying you changed your mind about the dress and want your money back.

• 3. You find a wallet containing \$500 on the floor of a public restroom. According to the driver's license, it belongs to Harry Blue. Immediately you

☐ a. call Mr. Blue and tell him you found his property.

☐ b. check with the manager to see if a wallet has been reported missing. If not, you keep it.

☐ c. pocket the cash and toss the wallet in the trash.

• 4. You arrive at a friend's pool party and find that it's a Miller Time bash. Booze is flowing faster than Niagara Falls. You've decided



that drinking is not for you.  
So you

- ☐ a. leave.
- ☐ b. stay long enough to please your host, then bug out early.
- ☐ c. grab a diet cola on the rocks and pretend to join in the action.

• 5. You've studied, but you just know you're going to fail your biology test. Then your teacher is called out of the room in the middle of the test, so you

- ☐ a. pray you can make up for the test with extra-credit work.
- ☐ b. check your answers against those of your nearest friend.
- ☐ c. borrow a friend's cheat sheet and write like crazy before the teacher returns.

• 6. The dorky girl who transferred from another school sits beside you in algebra class. During a break you

- ☐ a. say hi and welcome her to the school.
- ☐ b. take out your *Listen* magazine and read it.
- ☐ c. check out her wardrobe so that you can make fun of her later.

• 7. For you the spark has died between you and your boyfriend. So you

- ☐ a. level with him in a kind way.
- ☐ b. talk to your friends and hope they'll tell him it's over.
- ☐ c. avoid him when possible and hope that he'll catch on.



**Following your  
conscience keeps  
you heading  
in the right  
direction.**

## ANSWERS:

**A's**—If you scored mostly A's, you know where you're going. Following your conscience keeps you heading in the right direction. Although you are conscious of other people, you know that ultimately the choices you make are yours, and you will be the one who must live with your choices.

**Your Trust Quotient:** High. People in your life know they can trust you.

**B's**—If you scored mostly B's, you often find it difficult to do what you know is right. You find it hard to decide between right and wrong because of the "gray" areas. By habitually reasoning away your natural instincts, you will eventually silence your values.  
**Your Trust Quotient:** Shaky. You need to "firm up" your conscience. It may hurt a little in the beginning, but people will notice and begin to trust you more.

**C's**—If you had mostly C's, you've been ignoring the values and beliefs that help guide you. A little lie is still a lie. And there's no excuse for that.

**Your Trust Quotient:** Wishy-washy at best. But you don't have to stay a moral wimp, you know. Choose to take responsibility for your actions, good or bad. Determine to listen to your conscience. You'll feel good about yourself. And your reputation will improve. ▀





H E R O I N



# LOSER'S BARGAIN

## HEROIN—A FAST ROAD TO NOWHERE

B Y J E R E M Y H Y N S O N

**M**ark had been at the party a little more than an hour when two of his friends, Steve and Hank, called him outside. Wandering through the dancing, the chatter, and the hard rock, they stepped into the warm summer night. School had just ended, and Mark was looking forward to the next few months. He had just landed a full-time job in a computer store, where he would be building PCs. Mark expected to earn enough cash to be able to buy his dad's convertible; he hoped to own it before school started in September, when he would be a senior. Life looked good.

Following behind his two friends, Mark walked down the block and into a dark bus shelter, the only illumination coming from a distant shimmering street lamp. He figured they wanted to light up a joint.

Light up is just what they did, but much to his surprise what Hank and Steve pulled out wasn't marijuana.

"What do you have there?"

Mark asked Steve, who had a small pipe that he was filling with powder.

"What does it look like, dude?" Steve responded.

"I don't know," Mark answered, angry that Steve talked down to him.

"It's heroin," replied Hank.

"Heroin?" Mark uttered.

"You've got heroin? What are you going to do with it?"

"I'm going to use it for Christmas decorations," quipped Steve as he lit the pipe and took a hit. "What do you think?"

Next thing Mark knew he was facing a pipe of burning heroin. He was aghast at the thought of heroin in any form, but he also didn't want to seem like a sissy around his two best friends, who had already chided him on the fact that he didn't smoke pot anywhere near the amount they did. Without thinking of the possible long-range consequences, Mark took a hit on the pipe and soon had one of the most incredible experiences of his life, that of a heroin high.

Sadly, Mark should have thought about the long-term effects. Indeed, so should thousands and thousands of others who are getting involved with one of the most notorious and dangerous illegal drugs known to humanity.

Thinking of heroin, one usually thinks of the wild and crazy days of the 1960s, when heroin was the notorious drug that killed famous rocker Janis Joplin. Heroin—a drug that involved only the lowest of the low.

Well, it's back, cheaper, purer, and more dangerous than ever.

"Some people call it an epidemic," says Barbra Kaufman, a drug counselor. "It's at least on a tremendous increase."

Indeed, the numbers are frightening as teenage use of heroin is on a major rise. In the past six or seven years the number of reported hospital emergency room cases involving young people using heroin has increased 2,000 percent. 2,000! Among all Americans of every age group, 141,000

Mark watched his life come crashing down before him like a bad hard drive. Heroin has devastating potential and is powerfully addictive; it's amazing that anyone would go near it.



tried heroin for the first time in 1995, compared to 40,000 first-time users in 1992. Today the average age of a heroin user is 19 compared to 25 in 1989.

What is the reason for this increased use? Though a number of factors are involved, two stand out: heroin today is much purer than it used to be (an average purity of 40 percent compared to 4 percent in 1980), and it's much cheaper now. One drug counselor called it a "loser's bargain." In fact, the purity makes it much more attractive. Teens who fear getting AIDS from a contaminated needle can now snort or smoke heroin in its purer form, yet it's just as deadly and addictive as shooting it into your veins.

Heroin itself is an opiate—a drug derived from the dried "milk" of the opium poppy. It was known thousands of years ago in the ancient Near East as the "joy plant," a plant that contains morphine and codeine—effective painkillers.

In 1874 a synthesized form of heroin was marketed as a safe, nonaddictive substitute for morphine. The mistake was soon realized, and it was outlawed in the United States in 1920.

And with good reason. It has devastating potential and is powerfully addictive. Heroin, however ingested, mimics certain natural chemicals in the brain called endorphins and enkephalins that produce good feelings as well as block out bad ones. These chemicals tend to be released in greater amounts when people exercise, laugh, have sex, and do work that they enjoy—the so-called natural highs. But when people



**Heroin is one of the most notorious and dangerous illegal drugs known to humanity. Besides AIDS, a host of other health hazards exists from shooting heroin, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C.**

smoke, snort, or inject heroin, the euphoria and good feeling they experience—the heroin high—is merely the drug itself doing the work.

The problem, however, is that unlike the natural chemicals that our body produces, a tolerance to heroin is built up, so that it takes more and more of it to get the same high. In fact, after a while a person needs a dose of the drug just to feel "normal." Once addicted, people desperately crave the drug, to the point that they will lie, steal, cheat, even kill in order to get the money they need to supply what can become a \$500-a-day habit. As more and more is needed, people take more and more; in some cases they take too much, which leads to the infamous "heroin overdose."

As thousands of heroin addicts will testify, it's a lot easier to become addicted to the drug than it is to get off it. Though withdrawal itself isn't likely to lead to fatal or permanent damage, it is a living hell. Early symptoms include "goose flesh," hot and cold flashes, runny nose, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle pain and spasms, aching joints, insomnia, malaise (feels like the flu), irritability, and massive sweating. Once a person gets through this early stage, which takes seven to 10 days, depending on the amount of the addiction, they go through a "protracted abstinence syndrome" consisting of a mild increase in blood pressure, restlessness, and a strong desire for the drug that can last up to 10 weeks.

Of course, this is the least of a heroin user's problem. For those who take the drug intravenously, there's the problem of AIDS infection. Thousands of lives have been destroyed, not by the drug itself, but by the needle that delivered it. Besides AIDS, a host of other health hazards exists from shooting heroin, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

However one takes it, heroin is a fast road to nowhere. All one has to do is read the accounts of those who have been on that path; it's amazing that anyone would go near it.

Mark was one who did. And although he told himself he would never do it again—he did it again. But that was going to be the last time. But then he did it again, and again . . . and before long he watched his life come crashing down before him like a bad hard drive. ■



# LISTENING

## FEEDBACK FROM READERS

### Watergirl

People ask me why I do this,  
And I don't know what to say.  
Why can't they just see  
My happiness on game day?

The roar of the crowd  
Comes from so near.  
It echoes your emotions  
From total joy to total fear.

But they'll never know what  
it's like  
Down there by the benches.  
It's like there's a war going on,  
And you're stuck in the trenches.

Injuries are for wimps,  
And for messing up there's  
no excuse.  
You're silent while a coach  
is screaming;  
Shelling out absolute abuse.

Your pants are soaked;  
Your body's sore.  
You start asking yourself,  
"What *am* I doing this for?"

About then we get a touchdown,  
And you celebrate with the team.  
Everyone is cheering;  
You also let out a scream.

You share with your boys  
The good times and the bad.  
Getting to keep with you forever  
All the memories that you had.

I need to be with these boys,  
And take care of them like  
a mother.  
They learn they need me too,  
As much as they need each other.

They make me part of their team;  
Who could ask for anything  
more?

And I guess I've just summed up  
What I'm doing this for.

— *Sunnie Helaine Wegner, 17*  
*Hutchinson, Minnesota*

### SACRIFICE

My parents sacrifice a lot for  
me. They give me money; they  
give a lot of their time to help  
me; and they give up some of  
their fun activities. These are  
some of the reasons I think they  
sacrifice a lot for me.

Most of the time when my  
parents have given me money,  
it's for little things like candy.  
I don't even have to earn it; they  
just give it.

But time is what my parents  
sacrifice most for me. They take  
time to help me with my  
homework and drive me places.  
One time when I awoke in the  
middle of the night and couldn't  
breathe because of my allergies,  
they took me to the doctor.

They also give up the activities  
they like to do for fun to be with  
my sisters and me. Things like  
playing softball so they can be  
home and have supper ready for  
us, and bowling so they could be  
there to make sure we go to bed  
on time. One time Dad even took  
off work when Mom had to be  
out of town so he could watch  
over me.

For all of the above reasons,  
I think my parents sacrifice a lot  
for me, but that is only a little bit  
of the reason I love them so.

— *Thomas Harrison, 15*  
*Midland, Michigan*

### RAIN

Every once in a while  
The world cries out,  
Begging for understanding  
And recognition.  
The teardrops of humanity,  
Expressing great sadness,  
Fall as rain.  
The gray clouds of frustration  
And the dark skies of gloom  
Cover the earth  
Like a thick blanket.  
Thunder and lightning  
Flash from above  
Revealing our deepest troubles,  
Reflecting upon our pain.  
For a moment  
The world cries together;  
For an instant  
We share each other's misery.  
Suddenly  
The rain ceases,  
A rainbow forms over the earth,  
And the world is bonded together  
For just one moment longer.

— *Irene Cabara, 15*  
*Bolingbrook, Illinois*

### THE CAR

The car goes so fast  
and smooth.  
It turns with ease when  
I hit the gas.  
Then I push in the clutch  
and pop it into fifth.  
In two seconds I'm  
going faster than an ostrich on  
a sunny day.

— *Donny Burgwald, 14*  
*Rosemont, Minnesota*



**"I THINK ABOUT IT NOW . . .  
THE TWO DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.  
MAYBE I GAVE MYSELF A FUTURE.**

# WHY I AM DRUG- FREE

I'm at that clichéd time in my life, the "crossroads," the fork in the road, where the right way is the hard way and the wrong way is the easy way.

Why did I choose to be drug-free? It's not because of the DARE classes I took when I was in fifth grade; it's not because it was the "thing to do"; it's not because I was a loser and I was never offered anything. It's because of one night that gave me an opportunity to retrace my steps and realize that the hard way was the right way for me.

My best friend, Katie, has been in the hospital for a while now. She's there because of a pretty pink razor and her desperation. As I cry now and beg her to tell me what was going on, she answers in a flat voice, without even looking at me, "I don't know."

The thing I remember most about Katie is going over to her house after school. We would go up the front walkway to her huge house, and she would reach into her pocket and pull out a key, stand on her tiptoes, and reach up to unlock the

door. She would pick up the mail and deposit it on the kitchen table. That may sound basic, but she was only 6 years old.

My own childhood was walking home from school to a house that no matter where you went, there were people. Not one second of silence. People yelling at me from every direction: "Pick up your toys." "Brush your teeth." "Eat your vegetables." Katie had a huge room on the second floor and another room on the third floor that she used as her own personal playroom. My half of the bedroom was littered with toys and dolls that belonged to me and my younger sister, who shared the room with me. I wanted to be *alone*, as Katie always was.

Before we knew it, we were in high school. We weren't in any of the same classes, and we hardly ever saw each other. She began to hang out with a different crowd, who didn't respect rules, took smoking breaks during English, and didn't know the meaning of the word no. Anytime I was with Katie she would keep talking about her "new friends," and I had nothing to talk about except the A I had pulled in math. She made me feel as though that was no big accomplishment, since I hadn't had sex.

That's when our friendship hit rock bottom. We didn't talk for two months, and the next thing I knew, Katie was in rehab. I took this

BY MAYA ENISTON





ILLUSTRATION: RANDY JAMISON

as good news that she was finally serious about getting better, so we started talking again.

Katie turned 16 one month after she entered rehab. Her parents threw her a huge party. More than 60 people were there. I hadn't seen Katie all evening, so I went searching for her to wish her Happy Birthday. I finally saw her across the patio with Vanessa. They were sitting on chairs in the corner smoking. I stood at a distance and watched as Katie's dad approached her. I held my breath.

"Katie, are you girls smoking?" he asked.

## **"I'M AT THAT CLICHE'D TIME IN MY LIFE, THE 'CROSSROADS' — THE FORK IN THE ROAD."**

"No, Daddy," replied Katie with the joint held behind her back and smoke rising above her head.

That seemed to satisfy him, and he went inside. I stood

there, shocked. They looked over at me, and Katie took another drag.

Every night since Katie has been in the hospital I have dreamed about her lying on her kitchen floor, sometimes bleeding and crying, other times unconscious, and that it's all my fault.

I think about it now, about the crossroads and the two different directions. Maybe I gave myself a future, a promising future, one that I'm looking forward to very much. I just wish Katie were here with me. I wish she had said, as cheesy as it sounds, no to drugs and yes to a future. ▀



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**// ... IN THE LONG RUN  
YOU HAVE TO FIND A WAY  
TO DEAL WITH YOURSELF. //**







## CREATING HIS OWN MAGIC

Sinbad faces life with a healing dose of humor.

BY KIMBERLY CHENEY

**S**inbad, the self-dubbed technology evangelist for

kids of all ages, has one main message he wants to bring to the kids of the twenty-first century—getting online can be magical!

Sinbad is known for his “clean” stand-up comedy routines; numerous films, such as *Houseguest* and *Jingle All the Way*; the television show *A Different*

PHOTOS: CO IMAGE

(continued on page 28)

Sinbad



A painting of two men. The man on the left is wearing a white shirt and has his hand on the shoulder of the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a dark jacket and a beaded necklace. The title 'Just Like Me' is written in large, teal, serif font across the middle of the image.

# Just Like Me

I WAS MY KID BROTHER'S  
**HERO**



◆

" . . . Chuck wanted to be just like you. You were the one he looked up to."

B Y M A R G A R E T L . T A U B E R

I told myself that none of this was real. *I'm going to wake up, and that crazy kid brother of mine is going to be bugging me to take him with me.* I looked around the room asking myself, *What am I doing in this place? I must have gotten hold of some really bad stuff. That's it; it will wear off. I just have to sleep some more. I guess this is what is called hallucinating. Nothing like this ever happened to me before. Boy, that's the last time I mess with angel dust [PCP]. That stuff is nasty. I'll stick to amphetamines from now on.* I tried closing my eyes again, but the sweet smell of flowers was making me feel sick.

Talk about total reality—this was *too* real for me.

My stomach was making all kinds of loud noises. I heard people whispering. Someone said, "Come on, Robert, we have to say goodbye now. Your mom needs you; she's about ready to drop." I tried opening my eyes. It was my uncle, or at least it looked like my uncle. He was pulling me to my feet. I looked around the room, and there were people everywhere. I felt as though I was going to throw up. My uncle had his arm around me, and we moved toward a casket in the front of the room—a real small casket. He was edging me toward it as if he wanted me to look inside. *So what's there to be scared of if this is a hallucination?*



I looked at the body inside. I wanted to laugh, for it looked just like my kid brother, Chuck. But this kid was so clean. Chuck was never that clean even after he'd been swimming all day. And those clothes—why, you could never get Chuck into a jacket. And this kid's hands were folded on his stomach. I remember that I looked at his nails, and they were so clean. I put my hand out and covered the small hands. They were so cold—cold as ice. "OK, that's enough. I want out of this," I screamed. I started to struggle. I could feel myself slipping, and everything was getting dark. I was falling. *I'm going to wake up. I'm going to wake up*, I remember thinking. Then I cried, "I'm never going to mess with that stuff again."



**"I never once thought about what I was teaching him . . . What my lifestyle was doing to him."**

I don't know how long I slept. It was crazy, like I wasn't able to really wake up. But when I was finally able to open my eyes, the sun was shining through my bedroom window. My mouth felt as though I hadn't had a drink in months, and boy, did I smell. Then I remembered my dream—it was so real. I felt cold sweat running down my arms. I had never had a dream like that. *Wait till I tell Chuck that I dreamed he was dead 'cause he got into my stash*, I laughed to myself. I tried sitting up, but my head hurt so bad that I finally rolled off the bed and crawled into the bathroom. Dragging myself up, I glanced into the mirror. I had to take a second look as I looked through eyes that were almost swollen shut.

My stomach reminded me that I needed something to eat. I made my way downstairs where I could hear my uncle's voice in the kitchen. *What's he doing here?* I wondered.

People were sitting around the kitchen table. *Why are the neighbors here?* I asked myself. Remembering my dream, I screamed, "Oh, no, I'm not going to go there. I'm awake now." I started banging my head on the wall and throwing anything I could reach. My mother screamed at me to stop. "Robert, for once in your life, listen. Chuck is dead. You can't make it go away with your drugs this time." She kept on screaming, crying, and yelling. "Listen, listen. Chuck wanted to be just like you. Anything you did he wanted to do. You were the one he looked up to. Well, now he's lying there in his casket. Live with that." She was still

screaming and crying and trying to break away from my uncle's hold. "Stop it, Martha," my uncle yelled.

The rest of that week, that month, that year is still a blur, but I can never forget the look on my mom's face, and I hear her words every waking minute of every day.

Did I stop taking drugs? Yes, I did. But did it change what I had done? No. I was the one who gave Chuck his first drag on a cigarette. I'd let him drink my beer. What I hadn't bargained for was that he would try doing everything else I did. Yes, I killed my brother just as surely as if I'd shot him in the head. I'd have given my life for Chuck, because I loved that kid. But I never once thought about what I was teaching him. I never asked myself what my lifestyle was doing to him. I, his big brother, was always going to be there for him.

I can remember how, if he had trouble with kids in school, he would tell me, and I'd make sure they didn't give him any more hassle. I was his hero, and he wanted to be just like me. Just like me—a druggie.

I'm no one to talk when it comes to telling anyone how to live, because I don't live now—I just exist. But if you're into smoking, alcohol, and other drugs, and you have younger kids at home that you care about, just force yourself to think what it would be like. Picture looking down into the cold, lifeless face of your brother or sister and ask yourself how you'll live with it. You say it won't happen to you? I'm telling you it will. I was my brother's hero. He wanted to be *just like me*. ■



B Y E I L E E N S C H W A B



# 5-STEP PLAN TO GOOD LUCK

Luck is more about choice than chance.

**Y**ou are so lucky!" You've probably used this phrase many times. We wish each other good luck before tests, ball games, and other important events, such as graduations, new jobs, and heading off to college. While the sentiment is nice, do we really believe that success and achievement are nothing more than random acts of chance? Take a closer look, and you'll see that luck is not so much about chance as about choice, and therefore is something over

which we can have a great deal of control. If you're wondering how we can control and create our own luck, here is a five-step plan that you can follow to make yourself lucky.

## STEP 1: **DEVELOP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

Developing a positive attitude is not as difficult as you might think. Realizing

we have control over most circumstances in our life makes it easier and quite natural to have a positive outlook. A positive attitude is important because it fuels our beliefs and behaviors, as well as our direction and inner drive. If there's a situation in your life that's getting you down, find something good that can be learned or gained from it. You know the old saying, "If life hands you lemons, make lemonade." A simple cliché maybe, but good advice.



A positive attitude can be developed by training yourself to think positive thoughts. Go out of your way to smile and make positive gestures. In time, by making this a habit, it will become a natural part of your personality. Accomplishing this is the first important step to having good things come your way.

## **STEP 2 : BE PREPARED**

The next time you see someone who appears to have had a stroke of good luck, look closer and you will see that they have, in fact, earned their good fortune. Elmer Letterman, a discerning gentleman, once said, "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." Understanding this definition of luck and incorporating it into your life are essential in our five-step plan.

Luck more often than not is the end result of a long process by which people make themselves ready to act on opportunities as they arise. Thomas Jefferson stated, "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it." Hard work is simply applying your physical and mental energies into everything you do without giving up. Good things happen as the result of efforts made day in and day out.

The key to our preparation is gaining knowledge and experience. Almost any situation can be a learning experience, including

conversations we have, articles we read, questions we ask, or observations we make. When carefully evaluated, even our failures can be a valuable source of knowledge and experience. Luck doesn't depend on being at the right place at the right time. It depends on being ready when the opportunity arises. As the Boy Scout motto says: "Be prepared."

## **STEP 3 : TAKE RESPONSIBILITY**

When problems and difficulties arise, it's easy to attribute them to bad luck. Step 3 requires that we take responsibility for ourselves and begin to exert some control over our lives. We guide our luck with the choices we make. What we perceive as luck, good or bad, reflects the choices we have made in the past. For example, you choose to study for a test or to get involved in worthwhile activities. You choose to exercise and eat healthful food. You choose not to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. I'm sure you get the picture.

Choice is one of the greatest powers you have, as well as one of your greatest responsibilities. The consequences from the choices you make will dictate the climate and quality of your life, and you should strive to choose the thoughts and actions that will lead you in a positive direction. Everyone possesses the ability to love

or hate and the ability to be jealous or show admiration. You choose what impulse to follow. These choices should not be taken lightly. If you're not happy with your life, then remember, you don't have to act a certain way, participate in a given relationship, or continue a negative behavior or activity. These are all choices for which you alone are responsible, and you must live with the consequences or rewards of these choices.

## **STEP 4 : BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT**

In order for the first three steps to be effective in increasing our luck, we must maintain a constant and determined effort in applying these methods every day. Patience and persistence will assist us in overcoming the obstacles we come up against along the way. At some point everyone faces hardship and disappointment, but consistently applying this five-step plan will help get us back on the right track if we have strayed from it. Good fortune and luck are not random, but are the results of consistent positive actions. No one knows when a stroke of good luck will appear. We may be a victim of our own impatience and give up when, in fact, with a little more patience and effort there may be a great opportunity waiting for us around the corner. Patience and persistence can be the key



to that “lucky break,” which generally is the result of our actions and reactions.

## STEP 5 :

# SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES

The final step to bringing yourself good luck is seizing opportunities. If you evaluate your life, you will see that it is full of opportunities. Every interaction, every lecture, every activity we are involved in, are all opportunities to gain information, to be polite, to be honest, to make a good impression, and the list goes on. Perhaps someone we make a good impression on today will provide us with a greater opportunity tomorrow.

We can also create greater opportunities for good luck by surrounding ourselves with *good* people, acting with *good* intentions, and practicing *good* habits. We all have the opportunity to exercise, not to abuse our bodies with destructive substances, to be kind and caring, and to act responsibly, but unfortunately problems arise when we do not consistently seize these opportunities. Our failures and disappointments can become opportunities for us to begin again with more knowledge and experience than before. Look around and seize the opportunities you have today.

So remember, luck is not something we wait for, but something we achieve. Luck is the direct and indirect result of our actions and attitudes.



**L**uck doesn't depend on being in the right place at the right time. It depends on being ready when the opportunity arises.

Following this five-step plan, you will see how easy it is to bring yourself good luck. What a sense of satisfaction you will feel the next time you create, recognize, and seize an opportunity. So don't wait

another minute. Right now is the time to start changing your luck. Stick with the plan and go for it!

I would wish you good luck, but you'll take care of that yourself! ■



P R I M E T I M E S

# EXTREME

## MEASURES FOR AN EXTREME SPORT



13-year-old Jake Gough crusades for  
a skateboard park.

*by Penny Porter*

**J**ake Gough smiles and his bright eyes twinkle as he patiently explains the virtues of a sport some have labeled “extreme.” Gough contends that skateboarding is a sport (just like football or baseball), with one exception: in many small, Midwestern towns such as Platte City, Missouri, Gough’s hometown, there is no place to skate and perfect the craft. Jake is crusading to establish a skateboard park that will include areas for skateboarders, inline skaters, and also nature trails with bike paths.

This 13-year-old is pursuing every avenue within the system to voice the wants and

In Platte City, Missouri, skateboarders have no where to go. “We just want to skate,” says Jake Gough.

ILLUSTRATION: STAN GRANT, CALLIGRAPHY: ED GUTHERO







needs of the younger generation, to the chagrin of some of the people in his hometown.

Jake relates the story of his experience meeting the new police chief. "I was walking along the street with my skateboard," he begins, "and the newly appointed police chief stopped me, to make sure that I knew skateboarding was not allowed. I wanted to see what he would say, so I asked if there was any place around where I could skate. He advised me that skateboarding was not allowed in Platte County unless you have written consent from the property owner, with the owner's signature on you while you skate. The new chief then said to me, 'I hear some dumb kid is trying to get a park or something started.'" Jake pauses, his smile

deepens, and his voice has a hint of mischief. "So I said . . . Yeah, I know. *I'm that dumb kid.*"

This young activist is many things, but a dumb kid is *not* one of them. Gough is amazingly articulate, detailed, organized, and most of all determined. He stresses the fact that his supporters have been numerous and from varied backgrounds. Ironically, Gough notes that one of his biggest supporters is the former police chief. Other notable supporters include a Missouri city councilwoman, a landscape architect for the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department, a Baptist youth minister, and even the local librarians.

Jake continues, "When I first started this, I thought I could just go to the Parks

and Recreation Department and tell them what we wanted. Then we'd do car washes or whatever to get the money, and we'd be on our way. I've learned it's not that easy."

Diana Gough, Jake's mom, interjects, "Skateboarding gets a bad name because there is no place for the skateboarders to skate."

Jake went on, "Then we get into trouble for trespassing. And some kids who skateboard do bad stuff like drugs or whatever, and it's like that



**J**ake has researched this issue, organized a fund raiser, and collected hundreds of signatures on petitions.



"I have never seen a young man like Jake who is so fervent about a particular issue," says a community leader.



saying, 'One bad apple ruins the bushel.' But I have a lot of friends who skate, and none of us do that. We just like to skate."

Diana continues, "All skateboarders really like the handicapped ramps and sidewalks. Platte City is an old town, and there is no place for the kids to skate. So they end up skating wherever they can. If it's on private property, the property owners are liable, and it causes a problem. One day the kids with push brooms swept a large residential parking lot for skateboarding. But the police came and told them that they were trespassing and couldn't skate there because of the insurance liability. If the skaters had a place to go, the problem would be solved. So we are trying to find a place for them to go and not ask the taxpayer to pay for it. The kids want to have fund-raisers and exhibitions so they can promote the idea. Jake has been to the chamber of commerce and . . ."

Before Diana can finish her sentence, Jake chimes in, "I've been to the aldermen of the Parks and Recreation Department of Platte County, I have a petition of more than 500 signatures from kids and adults, and I've been to the Parent-Teacher Association open house. We had a table there for parents to sign the petition. We were at the voting polls in November, collecting signatures."

Without missing a beat,

Diana continues, "The chamber of commerce is supporting it because they have problems with the skateboarders. If the kids had a place to skate, then it would solve that problem."

Jake has researched this issue, organized fund-raisers, and collected hundreds of signatures on petitions. But he hasn't stopped there. He's worked with the Platte City Mid-Continent Public Library to host a skateboarding exhibition and fund-raiser over the summer. The library supported the effort by allowing skateboard demonstrations in the parking lot and featuring a selection of books and magazines devoted to the sport.

Another important breakthrough occurred recently. A sponsor for a grant from the Ewing Kaufmann

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**"These kids are a valuable part of our community... skating has gotten a bad rap."**

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*— Brady Testorff*

Foundation, located in Kansas City, Missouri, has been found. If Jake can obtain this grant it would significantly help defray the cost of the park. He is very enthusiastic about this turn of events. He confides that the Platte City First Baptist Church

has willingly let the skateboarders skate in their parking lot and is sponsoring the grant application.

The church youth director, Brady Testorff, says that by allowing the skateboarders to use the parking lot of the church to skate he has been able to reach kids he may never have been able to reach otherwise. Testorff pauses while collecting his thoughts: "I have never seen a young man like Jake who is so fervent about a particular issue. It has been neat to watch him be so organized and so forthright about everything." Testorff continues, "Skating has gotten a bad rap. You see the signs that say 'No Skateboarding Allowed.' If we do not provide a place for the kids to skate, it is almost like saying we don't want you here. These kids are a valuable part of our community. Hopefully the skaters feel they are just as valuable as anybody else who walks in the door. I would love to see a place the kids could go to skate."

Jake realizes that he may be fighting an uphill battle in his efforts to establish a skateboard park, but with the support of family and friends he is confident his dream will one day be realized. When asked what happens if the grant does not materialize, Jake becomes serious, but then the smile quickly reappears and he confidently replies, "Well, if we don't get the grant this time, I will keep working to raise money and reapply next year." ■



# SINBAD

(continued from page 17)

World; and his popular HBO comedy specials.

He also recently served as mediator for the launching of *Intel Corporation Computer Clubhouse Network*, a network that provides a safe, creative after-school environment in which young people work closely with adult mentors to explore their own ideas, develop skills, and build confidence through the use of technology. By the year 2005 at least 100 Intel Computer Clubhouses will be open around the world.

Sinbad, whose real name is David Adkins, has plenty to say to *Listen* readers about

We caught up with Sinbad on his way to the Grammy Awards, with his daughter, Paige, by his side. Sinbad revealed not only his warmth and his natural sense of humor, but some very special messages from his heart.

"I was a sorry kid. I was always picked last for games at school. I was slow, had no skills. Always sent home. The ugly-duckling syndrome. Then one day my father took me to the First Congregational Church to see Bobby Richardson, who had been on the Wheaties box when I was growing up. In his speech he talked about all these great people when they were kids, and I realized that they were as sad as I was! Richardson started off his speech by saying we use only

Harbor, Michigan. Their parents, Donald and Louise Adkins, provided a strong sense of family support for each of their children. With a large family there were always challenges with sibling rivalry and arguing, but at the same time there was a lot of love in the family.

Sinbad says, "I didn't get into entertainment until I was 28 years old. Before that I spent most of my life in school or playing ball or doing some other wild idea that I had. You might say I had a million dreams growing up.

"My family members were the only ones who believed in me. They were very supportive in whatever it was I tried to do. Sometimes a parent can't see what the kids are talking about. Then all of a sudden that kid turns 22 and they say, 'Oh, now I see what that was all about.' I think that's one of the most important things—believe in each other."

Sinbad says that the most important thing that his parents taught him was to believe in God—that there was Someone greater than himself. "I wasn't blessed with a lot of natural talent," he says, "but my dad taught me how to work hard at everything."

His parents also instilled in him a strong family bond that continues to this day. All of his siblings work with him. For example, sister Dorothea is vice president of Development, brother Mark is his personal manager, and sister Donna is his publicist. His other two siblings also work with him. They all live within 20 miles of one another.



S I N B A D S A Y S :

"This technology can take kids further than they can possibly imagine . . . I see it as a tool to better yourself."

technology for kids, the loving support of his family, staying off drugs, and fun information about the Internet.

Naming himself after the *Arabian Nights* character, Sinbad says, "He didn't have the strength of Hercules, but he could outwit anyone." Sinbad, who indeed talks almost as fast as his mind works, is full of enthusiasm about his two favorite subjects: the Internet and his family.

one tenth of 1 percent of our ability. I said, 'Wow! If I could use just 1 percent, I'd be Superman! So I learned not to limit myself. You are only as small as you allow your mind to be.

"Also, my mother gave me the book *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Norman Vincent Peale, and it helped change my life."

Sinbad and his five brothers and sisters grew up in Benton



Being involved 100 percent with his own kids evolved from the values he was taught as a child. His daughter, Paige, is 15, and his son, Royce, is 11. They are his top priority. In fact, Sinbad will rarely schedule a morning meeting, as he takes his kids to school. He also picks them up. They enjoy doing things together like going to the library and the movies. Videotapes are a big favorite. And, of course, exploring the Internet.

Sinbad says he was a comic by the age of 4. "I stayed up late one night peeking through the door. This guy was telling jokes, and I knew that's what I wanted to do. Comedians like Red Skelton, Bill Cosby, Flip Wilson, and Robin Williams had a big effect on me.

Sinbad's big break came in the mid-1980s on *Star Search*. He was good enough to get on the show seven times but was never the top winner; however, it did lead him to a role in *The New Redd Foxx Show*. Then Bill Cosby cast him in the sitcom *A Different World*. That led to his becoming a host of *It's Showtime at the Apollo*.

Sinbad never uses bad language in his shows, because he wants the whole family to be able to enjoy them. "That's just the way my mother and father raised me," he commented.

One of the many reasons Sinbad has survived and thrived for so long in his career is that he refuses to be lured into taking drugs. "We all make choices in our lives that sometimes we don't recover from. Whether it's drugs or



S I N B A D S A Y S :

"We all make choices in our lives . . . if you make negative choices in your life, they can stay with you . . ."

anything else, if you make negative choices in your life, they can stay with you and affect you in such a way that you may never come out of it. You might get on a downward spiral that you can never recover from. Drugs might anesthetize the bad feelings for a while, but in the long run you have to find a way to deal with yourself."

One of the ways Sinbad deals with things in his own life is to face them head on and with a healthy dose of humor. His enthusiasm for the positive things in life is infectious.

Sinbad has been a spokesperson for various corporations in bringing computers to students. In 1997 he hosted a symposium for teens with Microsoft chairman and CEO Bill Gates. Generous donations provided the Los Angeles Public Library and schools

with multimedia computers and a wide variety of software.

As one of the early adopters of the Internet, Sinbad remembers first going online in 1995 when it was just in its infancy.

"Technology by itself means nothing. It's how you use it to better your life and be creative," Sinbad explains. "It's like everybody has pencils but those with artistic ability make them do something very special.

"This new technology can take kids further than they can possibly imagine. There's an infinite amount of information at your fingertips now, and you can hook up with people in all parts of the world that you could never before have hooked up with to be able to better yourself. I see it as a tool to better yourself.

"Some people think technology is going to save kids. It's not if they don't get some other basic needs met. Like education and food and love. Technology is not a miracle drug. It's not going to save people, but don't be afraid of it. Get your hands on it, embrace it, and do something great with it."

When asked what he feels kids need most today, Sinbad answers without hesitating, "Support and love. Letting them know someone cares about them." He continues: "Mother Hale, who started Hale House, the first and best-known child-care agency for drug-addicted babies and babies with HIV virus, says it best—'You can love someone into becoming greater than they ever thought they could be.'" ■



# JUST BETWEEN US

*Listen*

## NOT-SO-DANDY CANDY

They seemed like such an innocent part of childhood. I'm sure you've seen them yourself. I'm talking about those candy cigarettes. When I was a kid you could find them at just about every candy display. At age 6 or 7 you could hardly tell the difference between a box of real cigarettes and these sweet treats. As I recall, once you got into the package, each candy cigarette even had a drop of red food coloring on one end so the thing looked as if it were burning.

Candy cigarettes have been around for almost 100 years. And for that entire time the candy manufacturers have sold their "treats" in packages that closely mimic real tobacco cigarette brands. Now understand, these pretend cigarettes left a lot to be desired as candy. I remember they tasted something like minty chalk. But if you were playing cops and robbers, or cowboys and Indians, nothing made you feel more like the real thing than a candy cigarette dangling from your lips. After all, every cop and cowboy shown on television smokes, right?

Well, I learned something about those innocent candy cigarettes recently. And what I found out made me mad! More than 150 previously secret internal documents from the tobacco industry reveal that cigarette manufacturers cooperated with candymakers for many years on the production of these candy smokes. It seems tobacco industry leaders have long recognized that candy cigarettes are good advertising to lure future smokers. Documents also show that while the tobacco industry publicly stated they wanted candymakers to stop making their packaging look like real cigarettes, tobacco leaders never once initiated legal action to force the candymakers to stop their copycat ways.

In fact, scientific research done by the tobacco industry in the early 1990s revealed that sixth graders who had "played smoking" with candy cigarettes were twice as likely to have also smoked real cigarettes. Also, kids as young as age 5 identify candy cigarettes as "smoking toys." Interestingly, the tobacco industry made a significant number of changes in the study's published research report, removing much of the data pointing to a usage connection between candy and tobacco cigarettes. The report was so sanitized that the tobacco industry ended up using it to their advantage during appearances before Congress in Washington, D.C.

Remember some of this the next time you hear the tobacco industry claim they're just selling a product for adults and that they really don't target teenagers to use their products. Not only are teens firmly in the tobacco industry's marketing line of fire; it turns out that the real targets may in fact be your little brothers and sisters.



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# PUZZLE

## Presidential Slogans or Nicknames

BY THOMAS LA MANCE

This month we will elect the forty-third president of the United States. Some past presidential elections have produced memorable slogans and nicknames for the successful candidates. Match the letter by the president's name with the slogan or nickname in the second column.

- |                          |                                            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A. William McKinley      | 1. ___ Era of good feeling                 |
| B. Franklin D. Roosevelt | 2. ___ Napoleon of the Stump               |
| C. James Monroe          | 3. ___ Peanut farmer                       |
| D. William H. Harrison   | 4. ___ Log cabin and hard cider            |
| E. Martin Van Buren      | 5. ___ The Little Magician                 |
| F. Harry Truman          | 6. ___ Old Rough and Ready                 |
| G. Andrew Jackson        | 7. ___ Chicken in every pot                |
| H. Abraham Lincoln       | 8. ___ A new generation of Americans       |
| I. Theodore Roosevelt    | 9. ___ New Deal                            |
| J. Jimmy Carter          | 10. ___ Rail Splitter                      |
| K. Herbert Hoover        | 11. ___ Full dinner pail                   |
| L. James Knox Polk       | 12. ___ Rough Rider                        |
| M. Woodrow Wilson        | 13. ___ North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| N. John F. Kennedy       | 14. ___ He kept us out of the war          |
| O. Zachary Taylor        | 15. ___ Old Hickory                        |



ANSWERS: 1. C. 2. L. 3. J. 4. D. 5. E. 6. O. 7. K. 8. N. 9. B. 10. H. 11. A. 12. I. 13. F. 14. M. 15. G.

**"Drugs might anesthetize  
the bad feelings for awhile,  
but in the long run you  
have to find a way to deal  
with yourself."** — Television star SINBAD



ILLUSTRATION (TOP), JACK PARADUE; PHOTOS (MIDDLE); C/O IMAGE PR; (BOTTOM); ED GUTHERO



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■ **MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS**

■ **BECAUSE IT'S ME**

Nicole and I always said that we had a lot  
going for us.

■ **HOW TO GET OVER BEING  
"DOWN IN THE DUMPS"**

