

LIFE IS YOUR JOURNEY

By Christopher Shin

“Life is a journey. When we stop, things don’t go right.” - Pope Francis. Life is a trip with lots of bumps and hills. Sometimes you’re in the happiest mood ever or you may be in a tearing crisis. But if you take a wrong turn, you’ll end up with a flat tire. Drugs and alcohol are constant travelling companions that will take you around the wrong bend. Unfortunately, many people take that turn. But as Pope Francis once said, if you take the wrong turn, things won’t go the way you want them to. That flat tire will slow you down and, eventually, you’ll be worn out. Yes, life is your journey. There are signs on the side of the road that’ll suggest you to do drugs and alcohol. But you should be careful in making decisions, since the turns and choices you make will determine your future, and there’s no going back. It’s up to you as to how to navigate through this mess, and travel drug free. Focus on making the right choices, taking good control of your life, and making your journey the best it can be.

Along your journey, you’ll come upon a tempting sideroad. You know that you’re supposed to go on your way, but the other road looks more promising. The “other road” can be what will eventually lead you to become a drug and alcohol addict. The mixed messages about drugs and alcohol may look compelling, but you must not be fooled by these outlooks. Focus on what is being said to distinguish between right and wrong. There are many ways that messages are delivered to you: peer pressure, technology, social media, among many others. It is hard to filter out the bad from the good, but you have to figure it out because the choice you make will be vital to your life and success. If you make a bad choice, you may become a drug addict. You may drive your life into a ditch that is almost impossible for you to get out of. I found that sorting out the good influences and the bad ones can be much simpler than it seems. You can ask an

adult, such as your parents or teachers, get the opinions of your close, most trusted friends, or investigate the possible consequences of your giving in to temptations. There are studies as well as the shared stories of people who have already gone down that path. Personally, I will never do drugs because of the influence from my school, Rosa International Middle School. Every year, we have a week that is devoted on the opposition of alcohol and drug abuse called Red Ribbon Week. It really helps to highlight the horrible consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. I discovered that schools and local communities can show great examples of the healthy path, examples you can trust and follow whenever you are tempted. At a young age, it's hard to determine what is right or wrong. Sometimes, we try to convince ourselves, "Just once won't hurt, will it?" But it does hurt. Just once can ruin your life irreversibly. So don't even look down the Drugs&Alcohol Bend. You'll be tempted. Don't even think about that path. We all know how it is going to end. Don't even argue that it isn't true, that some people you know are doing it and they're fine. They're fine as of now, but won't be for long.

The bottom line is that you have to be able to control your life. Don't let your life run on automatic, because you don't know where it'll take you. Your journey can take you down a straight path, down Drugs&Alcohol Bend, or down into a ditch. Controlling your life is essential to your success. You have to have control of what you do, or your body will go wild and do what it feels like. Drugs and alcohol are very, *very*, addicting. You must take absolute control of your life, and make sure you're not exposed to the "joys" of being a drug addict. It won't make you feel better, it won't make you happier, but it'll just destroy the wonderful human being you were before. I take control of my life by believing everything that my parents, teachers, school, and other trustworthy sources say. Just like making the right choices, you have to know which sources are trustworthy or not. A friend who smokes when he or she is thirteen years old? Not trustworthy. A guidance counselor at your school who was trained to help you get away from

drugs and alcohol? Of course! You have to decide whom you believe or not. The beer advertisement or the school principal? To control yourself, think simple thoughts like this to help you understand what is correct or wrong. And don't let go of the steering wheel, because you'll go wild. Control how you live your life as it will determine your future.

Although there are many distractions along the way, there is no reason why you should not enjoy the journey. The ride has its ups and downs, bumps and hills, fun times and hardships. You can embrace the joy of this, and not be a slave to drug abuse. But if you do mess up, make the correct turn that directs your life to the life you want to live. Live the best life that you can possibly live. Don't stress out about the past, but focus on the present. Keep going forward, regardless of what happened yesterday or the day before, as long as you make good decisions. Although the past affects your present, your present lays out your future. Live a good life. Stay healthy, on task, do your job well, and don't turn to drugs and alcohol. To stay positive, you have to live the life you want to live. If failure enters your life, do better next time. If sadness occurs, do things that make you happy and be around people who make you happy. Live the journey you want to experience.

The journey you're on can go in whatever direction. It's totally up to you whether you succeed or you fall into a ditch. Make wise decisions, control how you live your life, and live the best life you can possibly live. You only live once, so why not make it a good one? Life is your journey with bumps and hills. Life is your journey that you should enjoy. Life is your journey that you can't repeat. Life is your journey and you should travel drug free.