Legalize It

February 27, 2012 By Reed Vreeland

For decades, marijuana has been legally—and illegally—smoked, ingested and vaporized to treat the symptoms and side effects of HIV/AIDS and its treatment. Cannabis has been shown to allay severe symptoms of nausea, weight loss, pain and neuropathy. Many people find it so effective, they are willing to purchase and use it without a prescription. Some maintain that legal bud is less medicinally effective than its cousin straight from the street. If you have an Rx, you can legally use marijuana in some states (for example, Colorado), but the feds want to keep all weed illegal. Here's what some of you had to say about the healing power of "Mary J."

Marijuana saved my life many years ago when I couldn't keep any food down. It continues to enhance my life by reducing the pain of neuropathy, relieving stress and eliminating minor depressions and other minor ailments. I believe it is a natural high and a gift from a higher power to make our experience here a little more pleasant.
—**Mighty Mouse, San Francisco**

I have had the prescription pill [of medical marijuana], which does very little for my nausea. I'd prefer smoking. I don't abuse it. And when I do smoke, I don't drive. I believe each person is affected by marijuana differently. For me, I become very relaxed, and it takes away most of the nausea I live with every day. Weight loss is one of my biggest problems. I have [gone] from a healthy 125 pounds to 95 pounds. Like I say, it's a daily struggle.
—**Sharon, Brownwood, TX**

Marijuana is no good. Smoke kills, period. If you want the drug, then take Marinol [also known as dronabinol].
—**Mary, Los Angeles**

When, oh when, will the feds get it? I began intermittent use of herb in 1972. I know of no one who has OD'd on it, was addicted to it or fought because of it, and I have seen very few DUIs [driving under the influence]. Even my doctor has said she doesn't know of any patient who uses the herb who has gotten complications or problems from its use, as opposed to alcohol and tobacco. It's the only thing that works for my neuropathy, and it's much less expensive than Neurontin, with no "bad" or unsafe side effects.
—**J.C., Gaithersburg, MD**

I am also HIV positive, and I do not need marijuana to cope with my disease. There are plenty of

ways of coping with HIV without being a pothead. Medical marijuana is the perfect excuse for a lot of teenagers who want to use pot, and for a lot of people who are drug addicts. If you are in a terminal stage and you have only a few months to live, by all means use it. Otherwise, please stay away from drugs, especially before having sex since it seriously impairs your judgment when it comes to using protection.
—**MP, Los Angeles**

It’s sad to see that it is taking so long and so much of a fight to get medical marijuana legalized. I do not personally use pot, but I know my hubby would benefit from it. But we are in Oklahoma, land of Bibles and Baptists, so it will never happen here. All the income it would generate would also be helpful. And who knows, I might try it if I had a vaporizer.
—**Ron W., Broken Arrow, OK**

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