



“The thing that worked for me when I felt that I couldn’t turn towards my parents or it was too personal of an issue to discuss with friends or people I didn’t know I wrote down in a diary what was bothering me... Writing about it at least lets it out, talking about it lets it out.” ~Mya

Natural High 3 Discussion Guide

(Teacher’s version Grades 7th-12th)

The following questions and sample answers are based on excerpts from the **Natural High 3** video. They can also be found on the DVD itself under the chapter called “Contest and Questions”. Use them to engage your students in discussion about drugs and alcohol. The questions vary in level of depth and complexity. Choose the ones you feel will be most appropriate for your students. When you are done please fill out our Feedback Form on www.naturalhigh.org. Your ideas and input are *very* valuable to us!

#1 “Sonny from P.O.D. said, “Dude I’m on a natural, I’m going to catch a natural today. Whether it was surfing or whether it was a little road trip, or just jumping on our bikes and cruising all over town.”

Q: A *Natural High* is an activity, art form, or sport that you love and that makes you feel good inside. Why does Sonny choose “*natural*” activities over drugs? What is your *Natural High*? How would doing drugs affect your ability to get your “*natural*”?

A: Sonny chooses natural activities over drugs because it allows him to better focus and concentrate on his real passion, music. Passion is defined as a strong or compelling force, affection, fondness, desire, or enthusiasm. He also has better memory, judgment, and attention; better sleep; quicker reactions; and a better attitude due to this choice. Doing drugs can mean just the opposite; they can distract you from your potential. They can make you uncoordinated, forgetful, inconsistent, lazy, unmotivated, hot tempered and unreliable. They could also destroy your family, make you want to skip school, and cause you to lose your friends or job. All these traits could greatly affect your willingness to pursue other passions and achieve your Natural High.

**Concept definition and exploration of “Natural High”. Helps kids identify their OWN natural high.*

#2 Jon Foreman from Switchfoot said, “It’s good to be able to think about the future.....even though at the age of 16 or 18 the age of 28 feels like a lifetime away, every decision I made when I was 16 has led me to where I am now.”

Q: Jon Foreman made choices in high school which enabled him to become a successful lead singer of a famous band. What is your dream for the future? What are the decisions you should make today, to help achieve your dream in the future? How would drugs derail that dream?

A: Some decisions you need to make today are: What would you like to be doing when your 28? What about for the rest of your life? If you could design your dream job or lifestyle, what would it look like? How much

money would you like to make? What would you like to be doing for eight hours a day? What type of atmosphere would you like to be in? Where would you like to live? What are the steps you will need to take to make that dream possible? (Be as specific as possible!) How do you want to spend your free time? How should you spend your free time? What are some ways you can gain experience or practice for making your dream into a reality? Who is going to help encourage you to stick with it when the going gets tough?

Doing drugs could derail that dream very quickly and effortlessly by a simple form of distraction; making you think about the short term and what you want right that minute as opposed to what you could be doing to achieve any long term, more beneficial goals. Drugs can make you feel depressed, unmotivated, lazy, and incompetent so that you always choose the easy way out in life and not the most fulfilling.

**Prompt students to think about the future and planning for it; what they need to do now to get where they want to be. i.e. not doing drugs.*

#3 Chad Butler from Switchfoot told us to, “not be afraid to be the guy to call it and say “I think we’re going to leave” You can’t be afraid to say “NO”.”

Q: What did Chad Butler mean by not being afraid to “call it” and leave a bad situation? Think about and write down how you would “call it” and leave a bad situation concerning drugs?

A: Sometimes you really have to take a strong stand for what you believe in and truly decide what and whom you want to be associated with. There are going to be times you will have to do this alone. It is not going to be easy and it requires a lot of courage, but you will be happier when you remain true to yourself in the end. Sometimes you also have to remove yourself from the situation, location, people and/or temptation all together. This may be when the pressure is coming on too strong and your will power feels too weak. The best thing to do is leave and find something healthy to occupy your time and thoughts.

**Works on refusal skills. Studies show when kids have practiced how to say no, they are more prepared when they are approached in the future.(protective factor)*

#4 Mya said, “Sometimes you do have to isolate yourself or get involved with other people that can bring some healthy decisions around you; and that can be really difficult when you are trying to please everyone.”

Q: What did Mya mean when she said she needed to isolate herself or get involved with other people? Do you ever find yourself in the same situation? How do you handle it?

A: Mya understood that hanging out with certain people affected her ability to pursue her Natural High. People meant a lot to her and she felt pressure to please them and make them happy on a pretty consistent basis. The problem is, sometimes pleasing them meant just adhering to whatever they wanted, even if it was costing her a time, life and values. Mya recognized that certain people she hung out with had an affect on her, and it wasn’t a positive one. Maybe they produced too much of a temptation to participate in things she really wasn’t fond of, maybe she felt a decrease in her will power and ability to stand up to them, or maybe it was just an uncomfortable feeling she got when she rejected their ideas on how to spend time. Whatever it was, she figured out that to beat this grief all she had to do was find people that wanted to do what she wanted to do and live how

she wanted to live. This allowed her to engage in her natural high, have fun, and have a social life all together! Mya realized she needed to take a step back and out even if it meant being alone for a little while until she found new friends and a new community that allowed her to become who she is today.

Peer relationships can function as both **risk and protective factors. Because friends usually mean everything when you're in middle/high school, this question focuses on separating oneself from bad influences and seeking positive friendships.*

#5 Darrin Henson said, “Drugs is not an option for me. Period. When people were out doing drugs, I thought about it, I made a split decision in my head. I said I could do this, which is what I wanted to do—dance, or I could do that.”

Q: Darrin Henson made the decision ahead of time not to do drugs. He chose dance over drugs. What activity would you choose over drugs? Have you made the decision to choose in YOUR head?

A: If you haven't really thought about it, you will be less prepared and more likely to just go with the flow when offered drugs. Contemplate the costs associated and have students figure out if it's worth it.

** Works on Decision making in the present. Forces students to consciously think what they WANT and what they will stand for. This will hopefully keep them being unsure about their stance and thus unsure when they are being offered/tempted.*

#6 Mya said, “Back to myself, I have never been tempted, but I would not want to disappoint the ones I love, or myself like that.”

Q: What does Mya mean when she says she doesn't want to disappoint herself or the ones she loves by doing drugs? Who would you disappoint if you did drugs?

A: Whether it's parents, friends, siblings, grandparents, caregivers, neighbors, teachers, counselors, coaches, or mentors, they love you; they care for your well-being; they want the best for you; they don't want you to get in trouble; they want you to achieve your dreams; and they want you to be healthy and happy. It would hurt them to watch you abuse yourself and your future by doing drugs.

**Consequences to the individual and further: incorporates the family/friends/loved ones aspect. How it reaches and affects others.*