

Why Do You Think They Call It Dope, Dope?

It's heartbreaking to watch talented, brilliant Hollywood stars self-destruct or head down the road to perdition in light of Philip Seymour Hoffman's recent death from drug overdose.

Many of the young, once-professing-to-be-Christian entertainers, such as Miley Cyrus, Lindsay Lohan (whose mother told me she was a Christian when I interviewed her when Lindsay was a young child), Justin Bieber, and Dakota Fanning (who came to the Movieguide Awards several times professing her faith), have given up their faith and values for dope.

Of course, society no longer seems to care, in spite of the fact that scientists and investigators have shown that there's a strong connection between all sorts of drugs, and not only self-destruction but hurting others, including mass murders. David Kupelian's book, *The Marketing of Evil*, has a detailed chapter on the connection between drug use and mass murder. In Ancient Greece, the word for *drugs* was the same word for *sorcery/witchcraft*.

Watching the public antics of some of these celebrities makes one wonder whether the Greek didn't have a word for it. I grew up in the entertainment industry, and after my mother died when I was a young teenager, I dove headlong into the culture of drugs and licentious behavior. The stories are legion of taking piles of drugs, from marijuana to LSD to THC to cocaine, and dividing it to see how much we could take.

My wife doubted the stories until she went to my Dartmouth 40th reunion and one person after another came up to talk about the big drug punch I had made at our fraternity for more than 120 people, some of whom never fully recovered. The

promise of drugs was always the same. Perhaps you'd reach nirvana, find out the meaning of life, overcome your limitations, get rid of your cares and so forth.

Eventually, a small crowd of us sat on top of the Dartmouth gymnasium, ripped out of our minds on several drugs, and talked about how the promise of drugs was merely a mirage that didn't deliver what they promised. I never had a bad trip in the way many other people reported, but there were moments where I blacked out and voices from real people, such as the Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, who cautioned me, "Why do you think they call it dope, dope?"

We have lost that cautionary voice. We think we can live without limits and that excess is freedom. Actually, excess is bondage. Gluttony leads to obesity. Anger leads to pain. Dope leads to oblivion. At one point, someone gave me a Bible, and Jesus rescued me. When He did, I woke up and the promise became reality. Life made sense. God turned my problems into blessings, soon giving me a beautiful wife and four wonderful children.

Thus, there is real freedom that can be found only in Jesus Christ, who came to set us free. That is a message we have to help these celebrities know. Celebrities like Philip Seymour Hoffman, Heath Ledger and countless others endear themselves to many people. They are role models whether they want to be or not. Their self-esteem and egotism has grown to tremendous proportions.

None of that satisfies. It's a mirage. If you turn away from the mirage toward the light, you'll find all that you're seeking, including the fact that, as one Harvard friend who was redeemed from the darkness said, "God gives you back your mind."