

# The Ice Breaker

***Moms and Dads Against Meth, Inc.***

E-mail: [madatmeth@yahoo.com](mailto:madatmeth@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.methawareness.org](http://www.methawareness.org)

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“Do the one thing you think you cannot do. Fail at it. Try again. Do better the second time. The only people who never tumble are those who never mount the high wire. This is your moment. Own it.”

-Oprah Winfrey (1954 - ), *O Magazine*, September 2003

## ***THE BAD NEWS: NDIC releases gloomy Meth Threat Report for 2008***

The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), a component of the Department of Justice and the nation's principal center for strategic drug intelligence, has released the 2008 National Methamphetamine Threat Assessment. This strategic assessment presents an analysis of key trends and developments regarding methamphetamine production, transportation, distribution, and abuse in the United States. The assessment also offers an in-depth strategic predictive analysis of future trends.

Despite progress in reducing domestic methamphetamine production, methamphetamine trafficking and abuse remain a significant threat in the United States. Methamphetamine produced in Mexico continues to dominate the U.S. drug market. Preliminary 2007 methamphetamine seizure data, compared with data in 2006, indicate the possibility of a decrease in methamphetamine production in Mexico. Some drug markets in the western United States report sporadic and temporary shortages of methamphetamine, while markets in other regions report stable or increasing availability.

Mexican methamphetamine distribution networks are expanding in many U.S. drug markets, supplanting local distributors and methamphetamine-related crime, such as identity theft, is increasing. Canadian methamphetamine production has increased with some of this production intended for distribution in the United States.

In addition to the national-level strategic assessment, the report includes overviews of the methamphetamine situation in each of nine Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) regions covering the country. OCDETF is a federal drug enforcement program that focuses attention and resources on the disruption and dismantling of major drug trafficking organizations. OCDETF provides a framework for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to work together to target well-established and complex organizations that direct, finance, or engage in illegal narcotics trafficking and related crimes.

In preparing the 2008 National Methamphetamine Threat Assessment, NDIC partnered with federal and state agencies in the collection of data and information. A copy of the 2008 National Methamphetamine Threat Assessment can be found at:  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs26/26594/index.htm>.

Source: *PRNewswire-USNewswire*

## ***THE GOOD NEWS: New Study Shows Decline in Teen Drug Use***

A survey done by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research shows that illicit drug use by teens has declined. The survey studied behavior of 8th, 10th and 12th graders nationwide.

The number of 8th graders reporting use of an illicit drug at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey was 24 percent in 1996. The current study shows that number to be 13 percent in 2007, a drop of nearly half.

Among 10th graders, the rates dropped from 39 percent to 28 percent between 1997 and 2007. Twelfth graders' use dropped from a peak of 42 percent in 1997 to 36 percent in 2007.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse financed the survey of 50,000 students, which found that the drugs most responsible for this year's decline are marijuana and various stimulants, including amphetamines, methamphetamine and crystal methamphetamine.

"The most encouraging statistic relates to the use of methamphetamine, which has plummeted by an impressive 64 percent since 2001," President Bush said, of the survey findings.

An exception to the downward trend is the continued popularity of prescription pain killers. Vicodin and Oxycontin use among teens continued to rise, with 1 out of 20 seniors having tried Vicodin. Among eighth graders, 2.7 percent had tried the drug, ninth graders: 7.2 percent, and tenth graders: 9.6 percent.

The trend toward prescription drug abuse also showed in the rising numbers of teens using sedatives and antianxiety medications such as Valium.

A disturbing rise in use of Ecstasy was one of the more surprising aspects of the survey. After a decline in the early 2000s, when teens perceived more danger in use of the drug, among seniors, use has risen from a low of 3 percent in 2005 to 4.5 percent in 2007.

Among other findings, amphetamine use has fallen by more than one-half among 8th graders to 4 percent and by one-third among 10th graders to 8 percent this year, after peak numbers in the 1990s. Amphetamine use among 12th graders has fallen by about one-third to 8 percent this year.

Marijuana remains the most widely used of all the illicit drugs. The decline in 2007 in annual marijuana use among 8th graders fell from 11.7 percent in 2006 to 10.3 percent in 2007. Tenth graders showed a modest continuing decline in marijuana use, while 12th graders showed no further change this year after a significant decline in 2006.

After a sharp increase in the use of anabolic steroids by male teens in the late 1990s, 2000, 2001 and 2002, the annual prevalence rate has dropped by more than half among the 8th and 10th grade males to 1.1 percent and 1.7 percent, and by 40 percent among 12th-grade males to 2.3 percent this year.

The number of U.S. teens who smoke has shown significant declines in recent years, particularly among those in their early teens. The rate of 8th graders who reported smoking dropped to 7 percent from the peak level of 21 percent in 1996.

The study, titled *Monitoring the Future*, tracks smoking, drinking and illicit drug use among the nation's secondary school students, surveying 8th, 10th and 12th graders in more than 400 secondary schools every year.

### ***90 Ways to Stay Sober***

1. Stay away from that first drink or drug, taking the 1st step daily.
2. Attend AA and NA regularly and get involved.
3. Progress is made ONE DAY AT A TIME.
4. Use the 24 Hour plan.
5. Remember, your disease is incurable, progressive and fatal.
- 6 Do first things first.
7. Don't become too tired.
8. Eat at regular hours.
9. Use the telephone. (not just after the fact but during too.)
10. Be active—don't just sit around. Idle time will kill you.
11. Use the Serenity Prayer.

12. Change old routines and patterns.
  13. Don't become too hungry.
  14. Avoid loneliness.
  15. Practice control of your anger.
  16. Air your resentments.
  17. Be willing to help whenever needed.
  18. Be good to yourself, you deserve it.
  19. Easy does it.
  20. Get out of the "IF ONLY" trap.
  21. Remember HOW IT WAS. Your last use, the feelings etc.
  22. Be aware of your emotions.
  23. Help another in his/her recovery, extend your hand, listen.
  24. Keep turning your life and your will over to your High Power.
  25. Avoid all mood-altering drugs, read labels on all medicines.
  26. Turn loose of old ideas.
  27. Avoid using situations/occasions.
  28. Replace old using buddies with new AA or NA buddies.
  29. Read the *Big Book*.
  30. Try not to be dependent on another (sick relationships).
  31. Be grateful and when not, make a GRATITUDE list.
  32. Get off the "Pity Pot"...the only thing you'll get is a ring around your bottom if you don't.
  33. Seek knowledgeable help when troubled or tempted.
  34. Face it! You are powerless over alcohol, people, places and things.
  35. Try the 12 and 12, not just 1 and 12 or 1, 12 and 13!
  36. Let go and Let God.
  37. Use the God bag and the answers: *yes, no or wait, I have something better in store for you*. Don't forget to say thanks.
  38. Find courage to change through the example of others who have.
  39. Don't try to test your will power—give an addict one shovel and one pail and in one hour he/she will need 100 wheel barrels.
  40. Live TODAY, not YESTERDAY, not TOMORROW - projection is planning the results before anything even happens.
  41. Avoid emotional involvements the first year—you end up putting the other person first and lose sight of "your" program.
  42. Remember your addiction is—cunning, baffling and powerful.
  43. Rejoice in the manageability of your new life.
  44. Be humble—Humility is not in thinking of your self more, but in thinking more of yourself less often. Watch your ego.
  45. Share your experience, strength and hope.
- Cherish your recovery.
47. Dump your garbage regularly  
GIGO = Garbage In Garbage Out.
  48. Get plenty of *restful* sleep.
  49. Stay sober for *you*—not someone else, otherwise it won't work.
  50. Practice rigorous honesty with yourself and others.
  51. Progress is made ONE DAY AT A TIME, not 10 years in one day!
  55. Make no major decisions the first year.
  56. Get a sponsor and use him/her. (not just selectively share).
  57. Know that no matter what your problems, someone has had them before. Don't be afraid to share, as a

problem shared is one 1/2 solved.

- 58. Strive for progress not perfection.
- 59. When in doubt ask questions. The only stupid question is the one not asked. You weren't afraid to speak before, so why start now?

Use prayer and meditation...not just pillow talk, *get on those knees*.

- 61. Maintain a balance: spiritual, physical, emotional and mental.
  - 62. Don't use other substances as a maintenance program.
  - 63. Learn to take spot check inventories.
  - 64. Watch out for the RED FLAGS ... things that give excuses for poor behavior and inevitable relapse.
  - 65. Know that it's okay to be human ... just don't drink or use over it.
  - 66. Be kind to yourself; it's about time, don't you think?
  
  - 67. Don't take yourself so seriously—take the disease seriously!
  - 68. Know that whatever it is that's causing pain—it shall pass.
  - 69. Stay as away from the DRY DRUNK SYNDROME as much as possible.
  - 70. Don't give away more than you can afford to, your sobriety comes first and must be the number 1 priority. Protect it at all costs.
  - 71. Take down those bricks from the wall around you; you'll be able to see the daylight better. Let people know who you are.
  - 72. Get a home group and attend it regularly.
  - 73. Know that the light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming train, but actually a ray of hope. Drop the negativity.
  - 74. Know that you are not alone, that's why the "We" is in the steps.
  - 75. Be willing to go to any lengths to stay and be sober.
  - 76. Know that no matter how bleak and dark your past may be, your future is clean, bright and clear if you don't drink or use today.
- Stay out of your own way.
- 78. Don't be in a hurry—remember "TIME = Things I Must Earn".
  - 79. Watch the EGO. "EGO = Ease God Out".
  - 80. Protect your sobriety at all costs. Keep the light on you.
  - 81. Learn to listen, not just hear. Be open-minded and nonjudgmental.
  - 82. Know that if your insides match your outsides, everyone looks good.
  - 83. If the rest of the world looks bad, check yourself out first.
  - 84. Gratitude is in the attitude.
  - 85. When all else fails ... punt! Up the number of meetings!!!
  - 86. Remember FEAR = FALSE EVIDENCE APPEARING REAL!
  - 87. Remember FINE = Fouled up, Insecure/insane, Neurotic and Emotionally imbalanced...watch the FINE.
  - 88. Handle what you can and leave the rest, don't overtax yourself. You can only accomplish so much in a given 24 hours.
  - 89. Honesty and consistency are key factors in recovery.
  - 90. Let the little kid in you out —learn how to laugh from the gut.

—Anonymous

Word of the Month: Passion

We all use words to praise, to express love, to hurt, to vent our anger, and to try to make others

understand us better. We've chosen twelve words that we think can have both very positive and very negative connotations, and we'll take a look at both sides each month.

Interestingly, the etymology of the word comes to us via the French, from Latin *passio*, *suffering*, noun of action from perfect passive participle *passus*, *suffered*, from deponent verb *pati*, *suffer*.

That answers a question that plagued me during my childhood in South Dakota, where the Passion Play in the Black Hills didn't have anything to do with my idea of passion, the only kissing being when Judas kissed Jesus, and that was not a passionate kiss. I later assumed that it was Christ's great love, or passion, for mankind that led to the title.

The definitions of the word include: *great emotion; fervor, determination; the object of passionate love.*

Thus, writing can be my passion (and I have to admit here that *suffering* and *determination* are the key words in that pursuit!), and I can have passionate love towards my husband, and I can discuss politics with great passion, as well. What a great all-purpose word!

**It's the soul's duty to be loyal to its own desires. It must abandon itself to its master passion.**

**Rebecca West (1892 – 1983)**

**Only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things.**

**Denis Diderot (1713 – 1784)**

**When the habitually even-tempered suddenly fly into a passion, that explosion is apt to be more impressive than the outburst of the most violent amongst us.**

**Margery Allingham, *Death of a Ghost*, 1934**

A man enters his house and finds his wife with another man. Furious and hurt, he grabs the nearest weapon and kills them both. The man's defense attorney will make a strong case for temporary insanity, particularly since the man remembers nothing after entering his home. The media will describe it as a "crime of passion."

**Passion makes the world go round. Love just makes it a safer place.**

**Ice T, *The Ice Opinion***

It seems that our passions, those diverse and contradictory emotions that drive us, lead to many of the troubles in the world. No doubt, some should be reined in to avoid conflict with others; one person's passion for opera at top volume might be another person's torture. (Just ask the editor's son!) Perhaps Tennyson has it right:

**The happiness of a man in this life does not consist in the absence but in the mastery of his passions.**

**Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809 – 1892)**

## Editor's Corner

I've been at this "fighting meth" thing for a few years now. I've seen successes that make me want to shout to the heavens with joy (Elsie and Rebecca, former and current Butterfly House residents), and failures that make me want to go back to bed for a few years (the ones we couldn't reach before they spiraled off into prison or worse).

Watching the news, I can generally point out the factors that led to the murder, the robbery, or the police chase, pretty much by seeing the mug shot of the perpetrator. Meth leaves its mark on the user in skin pallor, sores on the face, and that haunting, hopeless look in the eyes.

Sometimes I get mired in those horror stories and forget about the little beacons of hope around me. I see a news story, or a program like A&E's *Intervention*, where at the end of the show, they report that the person relapsed after a month, and I let it get me down. I lose hope.

I'm fortunate in having shining examples like Elsie and Rebecca to take comfort in, but I feel sorry for the parents, spouses, and others who love a meth addict and don't know where to find hope. There's a huge group of people who need to see where the hope is, and I wondered how to reach them all.

Last week, I watched *American Idol 7*, and there was the answer: Jessica Brown, of Longview, Texas, former meth addict and now a stay-at-home mother of two, was on her way to Hollywood to compete for one of the most coveted awards in the country.

The show's producers saw a human interest angle in Jessica's candor about her addiction, and opened her segment with statements about her addiction to meth and the changes she has made in her life. Jessica's mother was also interviewed and shared photos taken of her during her meth use. The contrast between Jessica then and Jessica now was stunning. After learning about the obstacles she had overcome, the cameras followed her to the audition, where she did a great job of singing "I'll Stand By You" for the judges.

I held my breath as the judges decided if her performance was good enough to send her through more of the competition, and I'm sure I'm not the only person who cheered when she was approved.

It's all about hope. It can be elusive, tenuous, and hard to hold onto, but what a glorious light it brings to the world!

## Mike's Homecoming Prayer

*Mike's poetry first appeared in the Ice Breaker in December 2005. He was in jail, awaiting sentencing for crimes he committed while addicted to meth, and he wanted to help M.A.D.A.M. in any way he could. In that capacity, he reached out to other inmates, handed out the copies of the Ice Breaker we sent to him, and encouraged others to share their stories, poems, and artwork with us. At one point, he even helped my son, who spent a few days in jail with him. As he readies himself for his release date, a few weeks from now, he shares a prayer he wrote.— Ed.*

My Dear Father:

Through the very breath of your spirit, you've transformed the heavens and earth....The universe is your footstool, I am just merely a grain of sand. With no comfort for your steps as you walk along the shores of your creation. It's with these words, thoughts, and love, that I experience the loving presence of you...

My Father, I may not know what the future holds for me, yet I do know that good awaits me in the unknown. You are powerful enough to have created the sun, moon, and the stars, yet gentle enough to have created the delicate petals of a fragile flower. You created me, and being a part of your majesty, greatly blesses me. Father, much of my life has been a search for meaning and purpose, however, now I know that my search was not about me, but it was for You. I know because I find the peace I long for during my quiet talks with you. I have grown wiser and learned from my experiences. I understand what a blessing it is to give expression to the peace of God now and forever. I feel your love, my Lord, assuring me that I am never lost or alone. Even in my darkest moments, you are with me.

You are my greatest supporter. You have absolute faith in me, even if I seem to have none in myself. Father, your Grace is powerful enough to transform feelings of weakness, loss, or loneliness into feelings of peace, strength, and serenity. I am able to meet life with faith and courage, thank you, Lord Jehovah. For yours is the way of peace, love and life. Such understanding blesses me spiritually and physically. I feel your Glory flowing through me as life and energy. My purpose is to live in your light and to be a instrument through which your life flows.

I believe in the Divine timing on a divine plan; I heard you say "Lean on Me and I'll help you through any pain. I'll be your ears when you can't bear to hear, I'll be your heart, always filled with courage and hope. I am your rock, your fortress, your everything." I think about those precious people who go about helping me quietly. They see me as the special individual, creation of God, that I really am. I know that I too am giving from the love of God within; what better gift could I give than the very love out of which I was created? Which brings greater healing to a troubled soul, giving or receiving forgiveness? Whether or not I receive the words of forgiveness I long to hear, I can always give it to myself and others. I am willing

to forgive, Lord, and to be forgiven, just as you have forgiven me.

I have learned not to give up when a door closes, in my life because I know you, Father, are opening a window to new opportunities and showing me the way. You give me strength and courage to take the first step in a new direction or back one step if necessary.

I know when I feel the winds of change rushing at me, I can remain flexible by using the wisdom you have given me. I know that it is you, Lord God, who gives me the understanding which enables me to overcome challenges. Lord, I know I can be tender and strong, resilient, yet grounded. Life is not always easy, but you are always with me to help me along the way. The confusion that seems right in my face has retreated. My responsibility is to be aware of the order that is here and to flow with it. I am giving up worry and stress and allowing myself to be immersed in your order and peace.

Because your love flows through me, I am fulfilled. What a blessing it is to be calm and relaxed as I deal with the pressures of everyday life. Lord Jehovah, your spirit is always within me, surrounding me. I can move beyond fear and concern knowing that I am in the presence of God. My own need for healing may go beyond the physical and what can be seen in the outer, I need to be healed of the emotional pain that had become the challenge to my peace of mind. My faith is in you, and I commit myself to following the guidance and inspiration that I receive.

I am free for the power of God within has set me free! I have the courage to claim my freedom through my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and I reclaim it now. I take this same feeling of security with me wherever I go. I can draw upon this strength any time I feel weary by turning to you, Father, in prayer. In prayer I feel God's peace and love.

May Grace, Mercy and Peace be your glory in love and truth.

Your servant, Michael John