

THIS LITTLE ESSAY DRIVES HOME THE POINT, IN A FORCEFUL MANNER, THAT EACH OF US IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE. AND IF YOU DOUBT IT, READ THIS A SECOND TIME. YOU DO COUNT.

XVXN THOUGH MY TYPXWRITXR IS AN OLD MODXL, IT WORKS SWXLL XXCXPT FOR ONX OF THX KXYS. IVX WISHXD MANY TIMXS THAT IT WORKXD PXRFXCTLY. TRUX, THXRX ARX 42 KXYS THAT FUNCTION, BUT ONX KXY NOT WORKING MAKXS THX DIFFXRNCX.

SOMXTIMXS, IT SXXMS TO MX THAT OUR ORGANIZATION IS SOMXWHAT LIKX MY TYPXWRITXR- NOT ALL THX PXOPLX ARX WORKING PROXRLY. YOU MIGHT SAY, "WXLL, IM ONLY ONX PXRSON. IT WONT MAKX MUCH DIFFXRNCX." BUT YOU SXX, AN ORGANIZATION, TO BX XFFICIXNT, NXXDS THX ACTIVX PARTICIPATION OF XVXRY PXRSON. THX NXXT TIMX YOU THINK YOUR XFFORTS ARXN'T NXXDXD, RXMXMBXR MY TYPXWRITXR, AND SAY TO YOURSXLF, "I AM A KXY PXRSON AND THXY NXXD MX VXRY MUCH."

#### 12 GOOD THINGS TO ALWAYS REMEMBER

- 1) IF YOU OPEN IT, CLOSE IT.
- 2) IF YOU TURN IT ON, TURN IT OFF.
- 3) IF YOU UNLOCK IT, LOCK IT UP.
- 4) IF YOU BRAKE IT, ADMIT IT.
- 5) IF YOU CANT FIX IT, CALL SOMEONE WHO CAN.
- 6) IF YOU BORROW IT, RETURN IT.
- 7) IF YOU VALUE IT, TAKE CARE OF IT.
- 8) IF YOU MAKE A MESS, CLEAN IT UP.
- 9) IF YOU MOVE IT, PUT IT BACK.
- 10) IF IT BELONGS TO SOMEONE ELSE, GET PERMISSION TO USE IT.
- 11) IF YOU DONT KNOW HOW TO OPERATE IT, LEAVE IT ALONE.
- 12) IF ITS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, DONT ASK QUESTIONS.

"IF I COULD WISH FOR MY LIFE TO BE PERFECT, IT WOULD BE TEMPTING, BUT I WOULD HAVE TO DECLINE, FOR LIFE WOULD NO LONGER TEACH ME ANYTHING."

Submitted by:  
Jaey Don Rucinski

I FIRST MET HER IN HIGH SCHOOL. SHE WAS OLDER THAN I, AND EXCITING. SHE'D BEEN AROUND. MY MOM WARNED ME TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HER. MOM CLAIMED NO GOOD COULD COME FROM OUR RELATIONSHIP.

BUT I KEPT MEETING HER ON THE SLY. SHE WAS SO SOPHISTICATED & WORDLY. IT MADE ME FEEL GROWN UP JUST BEING WITH HER. IT WAS FUN TO TAKE HER TO A PARTY THOSE DAYS. SHE WAS ALMOST ALWAYS THE CENTER OF ATTENTION.

WE BEGAN SEEING MORE & MORE OF EACH OTHER. WHEN I GOT A PLACE OF MY OWN, SHE WAS A FREQUENT GUEST. IT WASN'T LONG UNTIL SHE MOVED IN WITH ME. IT MAY HAVE BEEN COMMON-LAW, BUT IT WAS HEART BREAKING FOR MY MOM. I KEPT REMINDING MYSELF I WASN'T A KID ANYMORE. BESIDES, ALL MY FRIENDS DID IT.

WE LIVED TOGETHER FOR YEARS. I SELDOM WENT ANYWHERE WITHOUT HER, BUT I WASN'T BLIND. I KNEW SHE WAS SCREWING AROUND WITH ALL MY FRIENDS. WHAT'S WORSE, I DIDN'T CARE. AS LONG AS SHE WAS THERE FOR ME WHEN I NEEDED HER (AND SHE WAS), IT DIDN'T MATTER.

THE LONGER WE LIVED TOGETHER, THE MORE ATTACHED I BECAME. BUT IT WASN'T MUTUAL. SHE BEGAN TO DELIGHT IN MAKING ME LOOK FOOLISH IN FRONT OF MY FRIENDS. BUT STILL I COULDN'T GIVE HER UP.

IT BECAME A LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP. I FIGURED OUT HER GLAMOUR WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A CHEAP MASK TO HIDE HER SPITE & CYNICISM. I COULD NO LONGER SEE HER BEAUTY AFTER I CAME TO KNOW HER TRUE CHARACTER.

BUT OLD HABITS ARE HARD TO BREAK. WE HAD INVESTED MANY YEARS IN EACH OTHER. EVEN THOUGH MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HER MADE ME LOSE A LITTLE RESPECT FOR MYSELF, SHE HAD BECOME THE CENTER OF MY LIFE. WE DIDN'T GO ANYWHERE. WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. WE DIDN'T HAVE FRIENDS OVER. IT WAS JUST THE TWO OF US. I BECAME DEEPLY DEPRESSED AND KNEW SHE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY MISERY. I FINALLY TOLD HER I WAS LEAVING FOR GOOD. IT TOOK A LOT OF GUTS, BUT I LEFT.

I STILL SEE HER AROUND. SHE'S JUST AS BEAUTIFUL AS WHEN WE MET. I STILL MISS HER NOW AND THEN. IM NOT BOASTING WHEN I SAY SHE'D TAKE ME BACK IN A MINUTE. BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I'LL NEVER TAKE UP WITH HER AGAIN.

IF YOU SEE HER GIVE HER MY REGARDS. I DON'T HATE HER I JUST LOVED HER TOO MUCH.

CHANCES ARE YOU MIGHT KNOW HER—HER NAME IS CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE. " "

#### THE LOW DOWN ON DRUGS

I AM WRITING THIS FROM A PRISON CELL: "

DRUGS ARE EVERYWHERE, THEY'RE EASY TO GET, EASY TO USE AND EVEN EASIER TO GET HOOKED ON. THESE WORDS CERTAINLY HAVE THE RING OF TRUTH, BUT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW HOW HOOKED THEY CAN GET. I KNOW BECAUSE I GOT HOOKED ON METH (ICE) THE FIRST TIME I TRIED IT. I LOST MY JOB, I LOST MY NEW TRUCK AND I LOST THE RESPECT OF MANY PEOPLE WHO LOVED ME.

MORE THAN ONCE, I PROMISED MYSELF I WOULD QUIT THE CRAZINESS, AND I DID QUIT—FOR 24 HOURS. BUT I COULDN'T STAY AWAY FROM THE STUFF. IN 2005 I WAS ARRESTED FOR MANUFACTURING METH. I'VE BEEN IN PRISON SINCE THEN AND I HAVE A LONG WAYS TO GO BEFORE I GET OUT OF PRISON. "

SOMETIMES I WONDER WILL THIS NIGHTMARE EVER END? PLEASE LET ME TELL YOU READERS THAT DRUGS KILL AND WILL TAKE FROM YOU EVERYTHING YOU HAVE EVER CARED ABOUT. THIS IS REAL TALK. IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT TRYING IT FOR KICKS, DON'T. IF YOU ARE USING IT, GET SOME HELP. YOU DON'T WANT TO END UP IN PRISON LIKE ME. IT'S VERY LONELY AND IT'S PURE HELL!! I PROMISE YOU IF YOU'RE MESSING WITH DRUGS IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU END UP IN A JAIL CELL OR IN A GRAVE YARD IF YOU DON'T GET SOME HELP NOW.

FOREVER KEEPING IT REAL, JOEY DON RUCINSKI  
"THE OUTLAW"

*Joey Don Rucinski*