



Evolution Mentoring

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Empowering youth to lead extraordinary lives®

Being a teenager is enough to make you puke

The following is a true story, with name changes to protect the guilty, and a few expletives toned down from R to PG 13, sort of.

Jeremy is a 17 year old high school senior. He is, in many ways, typical of the kids I mentor.

He is good-looking, highly social, good-with-girls, intense, athletic, witty, smart, attends a fancy private school, has the potential to be a college athlete and can become on a moment's notice, an arrogant, stressed-out, entitled jerk with a wicked temper that has gotten him into his share of trouble both in school and out. Though it isn't obvious on the outside, he actually thinks about many bigger life questions and is far more sensitive than people realize.

Sometime this past year, he finally recognized that something was going on in him that led him to be so volatile. He knew he needed help.

Like most teens I meet who have any honest introspection, he recognized as well, that something is seriously wrong and screwed up with the world he is living in and the youth culture he has conformed to, and he didn't like many aspects of who he was becoming to succeed in it, even as he rose to the top of his social world.

His parents intuitively felt his issues were not due to psychological problems that a therapist would want to diagnose and treat, but rather were the critical issues and challenges of growing-up - something that is my speciality in helping teens and young adults to successfully navigate and successfully do.

He accepted his parents offer to meet me, and he quickly decided after our first session that he wanted to continue. We've been in regular contact since then, in person, on the phone, via texts, etc. Almost every conversation has been intense, challenging, and at times, filled with me pointing out to him all the ways in which he is taking the cowards way out and being just another excuse making, blaming, full of BS, follower.

In spite of this, he's kept coming back - and he's respected my opinions and insights, and asked for more even when they aren't what he wants to be hearing. As many of my clients do, he acknowledged that while he may not always like what the is hearing, he knows it is what he needs to hear.

>>>SKIP AHEAD SIX MONTHS>>>

A few weeks ago, he came in and shared this story:

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He'd been at a party the previous weekend and agreed to be the Designated Driver. Being sober amongst a group of drunks is rarely fun, but being with his high school friends made it okay. It got even better when a group of hot girls showed up, and one of them - we'll call her Dana - took an interest in him. At one point, they were "hooking-up" ("making-out" is what they used to call it when I was his age) and when she took it a little further, he wasn't complaining.

Eventually Dana asked him to give her and a few of her girlfriends a ride home and he agreed. She was stumbling drunk. After a few minutes in the car, she felt nauseous. He stopped the car and went around to her side. When he opened the door, she literally fell out onto the sidewalk, complaining of being dizzy and wanting water.

Her friends just sat there and did nothing. He couldn't believe how unwilling to help they were; not just unwilling, but seeming to be entirely uninterested and unconcerned. It suddenly seemed sad and even pathetic to him that these were Dana's best friends and this was the best they would offer her.

As Jeremy then walked to a nearby store to buy her a bottled water, he began thinking about how many times he'd seen teenage "friends" treat their other "friends" this way. He knew that even he had been guilty of being so self-absorbed and unwilling to be inconvenienced. He didn't like realizing this about himself. It bothered him even more to realize how pervasive the attitude was amongst so many people his age.

When he returned from the store 10 minutes later, Dana was still laying on the side of the road next to the car. The other girls in the car, still hadn't helped their friend.

He gave Dana the water, helped her back into the car and kept driving.

It only took a few more minutes before Dana then started puking out his car window, onto the side of the car and eventually inside the car as well.

Still the other girls didn't help. They just started laughing and making fun of her.

He couldn't wait to get all of them out of the car.

He was disgusted not just by the puke in the car, not just by the way these friends had treated one another, but the fact that he had "hooked-up" with this girl who was clearly totally drunk.

He felt disgusted with them, with himself and in a way, with his whole teen culture.

He was beginning to see it all for what it really is, for the first time.

The realizations kept coming almost by the hour since then... He couldn't stop thinking about how many stupid things he'd said and done over the past few years, including not appreciating his parents, not being a good brother to his siblings, not really being a great teammate to the guys on his lacrosse team, even when he was a captain. He thought about the teachers who'd tried to connect with him, who he had just mocked. The kids who were less popular than him who he'd had so many laughs at their expense over the years, and all the grief he's caused them...

He couldn't wait to meet with me to tell me this in person.

"I almost called you the other night but then I decided I really wanted to tell you all this in person," he said. "And I realize that I wouldn't be realizing any of these things and seeing my life for what it's been without everything you've been saying to me this past year. I've really been such an a##hole to so many people, especially my dad. I am so amazed by how much has been right there in front of me and I just couldn't see it... Even though it is all so f#c%ed up, it feels so great to finally be getting it... You have no idea how much what you've offered me is meaning to be and doing for me right now..." and then he repeated again, "And I wanted to tell you this in person."

Jeremy has a lot of work still left to be done. A lifetime of it in fact. But on the path he is now on, he can be certain that the lifetime of work he'll do, will build a life worth living and a legacy to be proud of.



His story - and the success my approach of mentoring has had with him - is not new to me. I have plenty of similar stories with my clients, but sadly, far more kids out there have stories that start the same but are not ending the same.

There are countless teens out there who need this kind of relationship in their lives, and the earfuls of ideas, insights and wisdom they get here. Parents like Jeremy's realize that it takes far more than tutors and SAT prep classes (and he has plenty) to raise a child to be ready for life.. and it takes far more than parents alone to be offering their teens this kind of training and this kind of mentoring.

I couldn't agree with them more.

My three cents: Don't rely on institutions, academics and conventional help alone to provide the guidance your kids will really need when they face the realities of growing up. Surround them with the right resources, the right adults and fill their lives with the right experiences. Both they - and the people whose lives they'll impact - will one day thank you for it.

To learn more about my Evolution Mentoring services, and how what I offer may be just what your teen needs, visit my website and contact me for a FREE consultation.