

# Television: the undiscovered drug



After a long, hard day of school and work, I trudge up the stairs to my apartment. As I approach the door, I can already hear the mumbles of the television. I open the door and am not surprised to see my sister on the couch, hand on remote, flipping through channels.

I am now accustomed to this picture. My sister could be crowned couch potato queen. She watches television day and night-so much that my cousins and I now refer to her as the Human TV Guide. She knows what's on at a specific time on a specific channel. She has the channels of different stations of different areas memorized. She could tell you what channel MTV is in Torrance.

She could tell you what channel USA is in Rowland Heights. She could tell you what channel TNT is in Fullerton. My sister has memorized practically everything there is to know about television. Yet, she has difficulty memorizing the multiplication table, all due to the effects of watching television endlessly.

Television has had a detrimental effect on many youth. Television has dulled the mind of an average youth. Youths today is used to having their information passed to them on a silver platter. Not as many youths like to read anymore because it involves too much work. My sister hates to read, not only because there are words involved in that activity, but also because it is now impossible for her to visualize the world presented within the book.

It is also impossible for her to focus on a book because of the short attention span she has developed, and reading books just takes too much time for her. Television presents the world to her, a different world every thirty minutes,

which holds her attention. This now leaves her no mental work to do, except to decide which channel she would like to watch. Because watching television requires no mental work, the brains of the adolescents that watch television are not stimulated enough. This may lead to a slower learning process, which would then explain my sister's inability to memorize the multiplication table.

Television consumes time youths should be dedicating to more important and more essential things in their lives. Television takes away time that should be devoted to homework. When my sister gets home from school, she will immediately flip the television on, leaving her homework for later. When she finally decides to do her homework, the television will remain on, and she will sit on the couch with her books propped up in front of her, giving it only half of her attention. Homework takes longer to complete, and it probably will not be her best work since only half of her concentration was focused on it.

Television also takes time away from quality family time. Most adolescents do not have a strong family connection. Families whose only time together is at the dinner table will waste precious quality time with their heads turned towards the television. The youth of today lose the strong morals and values they can get when spending time with their family. Television can even take away time from friends. When I spend time with my friends, I like to talk with them or go out.

When my sister spends time with her friends, they spend the whole day watching the television. Their conversation revolves around what they are

watching on the television. Most teens have the majority of their day devoted to the television. Television has exposed a world of violence, drugs, and sexual immorality to our youth, causing them to be apathetic towards these issues. Many television shows have made at least one of the three aspects, violence, drugs, and sexual immorality, a normalcy. The Simpsons is a show that is enjoyed by many teens.

This show depicts violence as something comedic. Regularly, in this show, the father chokes his son at least once, and the children watch a cartoon show called Itchy and Scratchy, in which a cat and mouse try to kill each other. Our youths today find this violence funny. When they encounter violence in real life, they do not consider it serious because they experience it everyday on the television. Characters in television shows such as Married with Children smoke, and although there are commercials advertising against smoking more than ever, smoking on the television gives our youths a different message. This advertises for the cigarette companies for practically free.

In The Drew Carey Show, all the main characters spend their free time in a bar drinking. They even make and sell their very own beer. Cheers is another show that advocates drinking. Most of the show takes place in a bar. These characters in television shows have influence on our youth.

Sexual immorality has also become common, which is exemplified by a show called Friends. Friends depicts each of their characters as people who sleep around. Sex is an integrated part of their lives and is expected when any one

of the characters have a significant other. Undeclared revolves around college life in which college students have sex with each other “ just for fun.

” Adolescents of today model their behavior after characters like these who live in worlds of violence, drugs and sexual immorality, and they do not realize that what they are doing is wrong because to our youth, whatever they see and hear on television is right. When television was first invented, its purpose was to bring the family together and perhaps present a way in which we could receive information faster. In modern times, the television has managed to affect our youth in ways we would not have imagined. The family gathering concept has disappeared. We have accomplished a faster way to transmit information, but it was a little too much information a little too fast for the wrong audience. Television has taken over our way of life and we must stop the effects it has had on our youths and our society before it is too late.