

The face of social suffering: the life history of a street drug addict essay samp...

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The book entitled the face of Social Suffering by Merrill Singer tells us about the life story of a drug addict who poses and tries to answer questions of many broad public concerns about social responsibility, illicit drug use, hidden economies and social inequality.

The author tries to give us a clearer view about health impact of alcohol and illicit drug use based on an interview with a man whose name is Tony who is a street drug addict who grew up from the inner city. He learned ways of selling and using this prohibited medicine from his father. In the latter part he became an enforcer in a street gang then he was also imprisoned. He has done heartless violent acts and learned on that he was also suffering from HIV infection.

United States political economy is clearly shown in the book whereas Tony's life story can be considered as an insider and a personal view of a marginalized world that intertwines with the society and politics.

One unique thing with the story is that it attempted to understand different forces that contribute to risky behaviours that one may get from using drugs especially during the time when drug users know about its deadly and damaging connection to various diseases.

The book discusses important issues about social inequality in our society was structured and its great impact to the lives and options of those people who are unfortunately at the bottom of the social ladder.

The book is divided into 8 fruitful chapters that give readers a clearer picture about Tony's life. Each chapter lets us imagine the scenario that the

character underwent all the events and transitions from one point of his life to another.

The first chapter of the book is entitled *A Life on the Edge* where an introductory part about his life was given. How important it is to know other lives, What catches my attention is the sub-chapter of chapter one The History of Life History where ones life history is really relevant in the character of Tony in the story. He was clearly introduced to us in the first chapter and later on was fully developed in the next chapter that tells us how he became that person.

The next chapter which is *Into the World: Of Drugs and Families* explained who's the great influence why is that Tony turned out to be a street drug addict. For the person whom instead is giving him proper guidance, care, attention and stands up for the family is the same person who made him take drugs and introduced him to the darker world of drug addiction. As the saying goes it runs in the family is what the exact scenario that can be drawn out of these words. Like father, Like Son as what they say. Whereas in addiction family tends to break and the only god for addicts are those illegal medicines and they worship that drugs in their dreams and bad omen tends to break free out from them.

Becoming a youth and dealing with the street life is given in the third chapter entitled: *On the Prowl: Preteen Years* . As young as his age, Tony could have stayed schooling and was taught good things in life but reality bites that being born in that place is never easy and you were exposed to an

environment where all you can do is to bear and deal with its evidently lessons be it good or bad for your life.

Total boom on Tony's career was narrated on the fourth chapter *becoming a Dope Dealer*. His demonic ways as a pusher influencing other people to use this cannabis made him more hooked in the black bad world. There's no way out for him to be uncaught in the limbo of demonization. Everyday there's violence, there's money on drugs but there are certain things he can never achieve. Peace of mind and a clear conscience. Yes, the prestige maybe there but it will soon fade away which is obviously shown in the latter chapters.

Being the Lord of his own world he also became a part of a gang where he can find love among companionships. Blood relation doesn't really count. Tony and his gangmen has a brotherhood of their own and considers themselves as Men of Tomorrow. Being war with other people and messing more of their lives are the usual activities that they do to cope up with the way of living that they think they don't have any choice but to deal with. This is the fifth chapter: *Into Ganglife*.

Chapter six is about *Out of Ganglife*. Moving out of your comfort zone is not as easy as eating pancakes. Once your into something and you have learned to have that with you and you live with it everyday of your life its never easy for you to turn your back away. For Tony being out of his ganglife has provided him grave consequences and hence many lessons in Lives.

Everything changes and everything happens for areason for at the end of the

day there's always a lesson to be learned. Depending on how the person contemplates on that issue.

As a normal human being we have to experience sexual gratification and being a man for Tony has given him the chance to love and be loved. Only to find out the harsh reality that he is suffering an incurable illness. He was diagnosed with AIDS/HIV a sexually transmitted disease that made him more stigmatize as to what kind of life he is living. That in the game of love there will come a time that you'll meet different strangers, Lovers and other Strangers that made him what he was Today, an AIDS victim. One good thing is that during this time there will be someone who could accompany you all through the remaining years of your life. This is the second to the last chapter, *Drugs and Romance in the Time of AIDS*.

The last chapter entitled The meaning of life gives the structure on the kind of Society that Tony lives in. Views on social responsibility, illicit drug use, hidden economies and social inequality as fully indicated as you go along the life of Tony being a street drug addict. The face of social suffering indicates the kind of social milieu on Tony's time. Being a full blown drug user made him into something else because he was born in a suffering society where in fact there are people who can help and do something about such problems like addiction, poverty and more enhanced social status in life.

As I further analyze the story, the book gave me a clearer understanding about life in our society and come up with significant findings about the

society, government and politics, communities, sociology and moreover for the readers individuality.

Government, the sect where major responsibility for the people's welfare is greatly considered it should be the main concern in developing the society. But reality speaking, politics is always there and politicians tends to be more careless on the welfare of the people because they are too busy minding their on personal welfare and family wealth development.

Life in our society is never easy. Every individual needs to do something to be able to cope with in the survival of the fittest for in the end the main sword in this battle is the individuals' eagerness to live in a more competitive righteous way of living where you don't need to underestimate other people and abuse the power and authority given to you.

Dependency should never be an issue as an individual because you have to be responsible doing things in your own way. But in Tony's case his father is one great person who influenced him to be like that. But it does not necessarily mean that he cannot do something about it. You can always say no if its against your will and you know that its not right to do such thing as using drugs. Life is a matter of choice and we always do have one.

What could possibly weaken the book is the capability of introducing vices and the bad image of the society that people lives in. There are some points that biases are present because the blame is all set on the society, the government and the harsh reality of life in a poor and depress area.

The influence of peers and the practice of irresponsible sexual encounter which leads you to illness like HIV/AIDS. Where in fact every one can make a difference no matter where you came from and what kind of society you live in from the day you were born. It is not the fact that you were born poor. It is the fact that you still choose to die poor much worse you even stick to be buried poorer.

The book is highly recommended to be read by others. The youth, the government officials, parents, teachers and other people from all walks of life. The life experiences of Tony should not be confined on bookshelves. It should be shared to every individual to learn more about reality. What wrong was done and what could we do to make every moment of our life meaningful even if we are living in the most depressed areas on earth.

For the youth who are considered to be the hope of the nation, this book will serve as a lesson for them as to what could possibly happen if we choose to have misconstrued ideas about the place we live in, the people we deal with and the decisions we make based on others' thinking.

The government officials, for them to be awakened of what reality is all about. The bitter humiliations that they are experiencing as per the book says that careless public officials give hopeless economies because most people who are seated on their pedestals merely enjoy and sooner destroy people's future because they were too busy making money for themselves. The book will become their source of challenge and prove the world that they are different in their ways of leadership.

Parents of course are one great target of this book. Responsible parenthood and smart parenting techniques are scopes to be consider in contrast to the character of Tony's father. The idea of child rearing is never an easy task and once you decide to have children you should be responsible enough doing things for them and making most of what you have to raise them properly and guide them to the right path.

Teachers, professors and great educators of time should also take time browsing and reflecting on the books pages. Might as well consider priest, pastors and the like who are inclined in prophecy and teaching values to other people.

Social responsibility is the issue in the story we are also responsible for the society, how we should lead and empower the marginalized sectors of the society through the people we socialize with and the environment that we are all in. Proper creation of knowledge and human development should be put in mind in accordance with social responsibility.

Illicit usage of drugs will bring you nowhere. It kills all your youthfulness, your persona and morale as an individual. Influencing other people is also one great point that was stressed which will make readers be aware who the people we should get along with. If we choose those people who will make or break our personality. At the same time safe sex and loving with discipline is also a factor. Choose the one whom you can be yourself and could give you a good influence in life than those who will take you to the wrong side of the coin.

After further reading one may conclude that we are ready to be committed to work for the building of a society based on justice, peace, respect for human dignity and the integrity of creation.

Justice among leaders and the people in the society. Justice among oneself and the responsibility of giving help to those in need fairly so as to avoid abuse of power and poverty. Peace in a way that if there's already justice then there's noway for protests and complains. There will be no drug addicts because one common cause of addcition is depression because of poverty.

Peace to avoid building unnecessary organizations like gangs and fraternities that produces delinquent unproductive youth.

Respect for human dignity in searching for the right peers and the right partner in life. Who we are dealing with also reflects the kind of personality that we have.

The ability to have respect to integrity of creation because as God's masterpiece we have to bear in mind that social suffering is not a mere problem, hence a great challenge in our life that we have to face everyday because we still have one way to look when everything seems to be unpleasant and unbearable. The only way is up.

This is a book for all generations and for all professions. The face of social suffering is the reality of the society. A reality that should not be taken for granted. We have to deal with it and we have to work on it altogether.

Works Cited

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Long Grove, Ill. : Waveland Press , ©2006.