

## Transcript

So when you go to college, it always seems like the entire culture is dependent on...at least this particular college is dependent on going out and partying, and it seems like everyone is always just drinking every night and smoking a ton of weed. And I personally have just never really participated in that. So I'm going to be talking about Straight Edge what Straight Edge is, what it means to me, how I discovered it and hopefully you guys could take something away from it, not necessarily trying to convert anyone. Just kind of want to educate. A little bit.

So first off, the what? What is straight edge? Well, Straight Edge is a sort of movement sort of lifestyle, a little bit of both. It is typically symbolized by the letter X or sometimes 3X's. The three X's usually stand for no to alcohol, no to tobacco, and no to recreational drugs. So Straight Edge is basically abstinence from alcohol and drugs pretty much. So just like remaining sober. There are other versions of Straight Edge too like sometimes there's a version of Straight Edge that is symbolized by XVX, and the V means vegan. So there's like a lot of vegan straight edgers. But the regular straight edge is usually just the 3X's no to the alcohol, tobacco, and recreational drugs. Sometimes at certain environments you will see people with X's on their hands, so like X's drawn like on the back of their hands. And that's because that's how they mark you when you like, go to the club or you go to a concert or something if you're too young to drink. They'll mark you with the X's on the back of your hands. And a lot of people who follow the straight edge movement, even when they're 21, even when they're old enough to drink, will still choose to put the X's on the backs of their hands to let everyone know that they're straight edge and just they just sort of wear it with pride. And they do that because of how when you would go to concerts, they would mark you for if you're not supposed to be to be drinking. The X has become more than that, it's become a symbol at this point, very powerful symbol for the straight edge movement.

So, I found out about this movement because of the concerts I go to. So I go to a lot of really small concerts and a lot of the concerts are of the hardcore punk variety. So it's like hardcore music. The Straight Edge movement... there is a very, very prevalent straight edge movement within the genre of hardcore punk. They are very much tied together and we have a very extensive straight edge scene here in Tampa. It's very much flourishing. There are plenty of local bands that I've seen numerous times. That I've actually made friends with some people who play in those bands. There's plenty of local straight edge bands who practice the Straight Edge ideology. And wear the X's on their hands, there are bands like Contention, Stedfast, Resentment and Dogmatic. Those are four of the biggest straight edge bands just in Tampa, and there's plenty of them all around Florida and as well as just around the country, around the world. There are a lot of straight edge hardcore punk bands that I listen to and that's kind of how I was introduced to the movement.

And that's how I was introduced and why I chose it is because... I just chose straight Edge because I was never really interested in doing drugs or drinking alcohol. Just to start with it never really interested me. I never really felt the need to get into it. But even if I did, there are plenty of reasons why I would choose not to get into it. So when it comes to drugs, personally, just getting a little personal, my family has a history of drug abuse. My biological father, who I haven't talked to in a long time, he did a lot of hardcore drugs and other members of his side of the family also did it. And they had a lot of issues, so that's why I have zero contact with him or any of the members of his side of the family. Also, when I was in high school, I watched a documentary on opioid addiction. I believe it was called Chasing The Dragon and

they just interviewed a bunch of people who were, like, hardcore opioid addicts like heroin and that kind of stuff and that stuff messed me up. That was some terrifying, real stuff that was on that documentary. It was crazy to see what addiction can do to somebody. And um... A lot of the people who got into these addictions started off with marijuana, and I'm not telling anyone what to do or what not to do, but just saying, just seeing the detail... that detail of people always starting off with marijuana before getting into like the more hardcore stuff that, like really, really, really takes a toll on your life that just made me never want to get into even trying marijuana or trying any sort of recreational drugs. So I've had it offered to me quite a number of times, and I would always say, you know, no I'm not really interested in that kind of stuff. So that's the deal with drugs. And then when it comes to alcohol. I also have family members who drink alcohol, and I've seen what alcohol does to people and I haven't had any personal bad stories with like, actual family members that have gotten intoxicated on alcohol. But I do encounter drunk people pretty frequently at concerts and public settings. And I usually get extremely uncomfortable around them, and I usually find that they can be very tone-deaf and often they invade my personal space and just annoy me and sometimes will touch me or touch members of my family that I don't really appreciate. So yeah, drunk people make me really uncomfortable, and so that's another reason why I chose to abstain from all of that kinds of stuff.

But that's just my story. That's my personal experience and that's why I chose the lifestyle. That's why I chose to be straight edge and just not participate in any of the stuff that you see so prevalent in our culture so.... If there's anything you can take away from this? It's just that, you know, just because someone doesn't do drugs or doesn't drink alcohol doesn't mean they should be passed up as someone who's like a social outcast or a loser without any friends. Maybe just, you know, take a step back and recognize it as just a valid option and a reasonable personal choice that I have made because of the reasons that I have listed here. So yeah, thank you so much. That's my talk.