

Steroids

by

Alan Palmieri

Steroids... the reason I left all interest in bodybuilding behind in the 1970's. For years I didn't pick up a weight, read a book or magazine on bodybuilding nor did I attend any contests. I totally turned my back on something I dearly loved and that had been a major force in my life for many years prior. What once was exciting and a joy became the most despised activity I could think of. No... I never took steroids or any other muscle enhancing drugs, then or ever. I was and have remained totally and completely against their use period! The only exception to this is when a doctor, for some severe medical condition, may prescribe them. That is the only exception I make for anyone taking something that, in my opinion has ruined bodybuilding.

What is the very foundation of bodybuilding? Isn't it what the name implies? To build the body! That is what I always thought and still believe. I don't want to jump too quickly here because I'm no saint or an example to be followed. Over the years I've done more than my fair share of consuming strong drink and puffing cigarettes. Things I no longer do and have not done for many years. Although they are not healthy habits and not things that should be associated with bodybuilding, still, there is a difference. Smoking or drinking alcohol is bad for the body and we know that. Unlike steroids however, nothing is implied that makes a person think either will "pack on muscle" or give you that "cut to shreds" appearance.

Steroids are a cop-out and never should have been tolerated in bodybuilding to begin with. That was and remains my objection with all the present bodybuilding organizations and associations. They could do something about it if they so decided.

Where there is a will there is a way! The problem is there is no will; only empty words and even words have grown to a whisper in recent years. Bodybuilding should police it's own and clean it up.

Steroids destroy the life of the users, not an opinion, a fact. Steroid use in bodybuilding cannot, does not and will not, ever... have a good effect on bodybuilding. One of my favorite sayings, that can be testified to by my son-in-law is; "That which does not kill you makes you stronger." Steroids kill, so what can bodybuilders say about them?

People can deny and shrug off the harmful effects of steroids all they want. They can justify their use; they can even attempt to take the high road in the discussion. Some can even deny ever using them. It doesn't make a hoot to me. Facts are facts, not the twisted to make your point facts, the hard – bare facts of truths that point to the dangers of steroid use.

I've had friends and I have known amateurs as well as professional athletes and bodybuilders who have been swept up in the steroid and drug use culture. Sadly, some of them are no longer with us. Some have endured serious health problems and don't even resemble their former selves. Others are still at it and not only has their outward appearance changed, so has their mental and emotional state, and not for the better either. Time bombs, tic... tic...tic... What a shame and a waste, all for what?

The most upsetting and disturbing thing about steroids and other bodybuilding drugs is the impact they have on our youth. Kids in middle school and yes, even some in elementary school have talked to me about cycling steroids. It's crazy! I would have hoped the great organizations and great bodybuilders would have cleaned up the sport on their own. Instead their inability to do so has helped spread the epidemic not only across various sporting events but also down the ranks to young children. Where will it stop? When will it stop?

It's kids and teenagers that discover bodybuilding for the purposes of not only being an outlet but for self-improvement as well. The acceptance and open flaunting of the use of steroids sure isn't something I think bodybuilding should be proud of. I've had some users tell me: "Look, we don't knock the clean boys so why should they knock us?" "Let them do what they want and we'll do what we want." The problem with that attitude is the impact it has on the kids. These guys don't even try to hide their use of drugs from them. It's not as simple as you think. The influence some bodybuilders have on others, especially our youth is tremendous.

During teenage years individuals feel indestructible and could care less about what can or will happen 10, 15, 20 years of more down the road. What is a real risk seems like no risk at all. If a role model does it and looks healthy, why shouldn't they? It's a vicious and dangerous trap.

I'm thankful for the well-known and publicized bodybuilders who once used steroids and now speak out against their use. Their message is one bodybuilding organizations should highlight and promote. A call to cleaning up is what is needed. Small organizations are trying but the problem is just that... they are small. Not until the "big boys" decide to take action will we ever see bodybuilding become something we can be proud of. An activity we would want to see our youth participate in, something wholesome and good for everyone.

Well, once again, for I don't know how many times, I've said something against steroids. I've learned it won't have much of an impact but I've at least spoken out and maybe just one person will take notice.

© Copyright 2005 Alan Palmieri