

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Not a Small Problem

Hi, my name is Albert. My friends call me Al. You can call me Al if you like. I want to tell you about a problem I have. It's not a big problem, but it is not a small problem either. I guess it's somewhere in between.

My problem involves my best friend. His name is Joe, but everybody calls him Joey. Joey and I have been friends for a long time. That's part of the problem. See, Joey likes to smoke. He says he doesn't, but I know he does. He tries to hide it from me, but I see him do it sometimes. When I see him do it, he just laughs and walks away.

When Joey started smoking, he only did it after school sometimes. I know because I could smell it on him.

He smelled like old clothes, or like my dad's car used to smell. My dad used to smoke too, but he quit because his doctor told him he would have major health problems if he continued to smoke. I am glad he quit, but I am still worried about Joey.

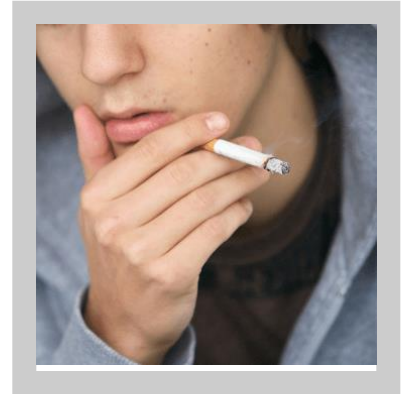
Nowadays, Joey smokes all the time. When he comes over to my house, he always brings his cigarettes with him. He keeps them in his front pocket. Once, when we were watching a movie, he asked me to stop it so he could go outside and smoke. I didn't want to stop it, but I did.

The worst part about his smoking is that he thinks it's okay. He thinks it's not a bad idea to smoke. He says, "Don't worry Al. I'm okay. I know what I'm doing." He tells me that I don't understand, but I think I do.

And what's worse, I feel it's Joe's right to smoke. I mean, it's his body, and he can do what he wants with it. Plus, Joe just turned fifteen. I'm only thirteen. That means he is older than me, and therefore he thinks he knows more than I do. Joe keeps telling me that I'll understand one day...when I get older. I hate that phrase, "When I get older."

I know he can make his own decisions, but I can't help being worried about him. He's my best friend, remember?

Anyway, I don't want to bother you anymore with my problem. After all, it's not a big problem, but it's not a small problem either.



1) Based on the information in the passage, we can understand that

- A. Joey's smoking has increased over time
- B. Joey and Albert's father share a lot in common
- C. Albert and Joey are now no longer friends
- D. Albert's father got a new car after he quit smoking

- 2) Which of these words best describes Albert's father's relationship with his doctor?
- A. friendly
  - B. fearful
  - C. strained
  - D. trusting
- 3) In paragraph 6, Albert says he hates the phrase, "When I get older." Why is this most likely the case?
- A. because Joey is always right
  - B. because it makes Joey think about his father
  - C. because Albert is older and should know better
  - D. because it makes Albert feel less important
- 4) Which of these statements best summarizes the way Albert feels about the human body?
- A. You should always respect your own body no matter what.
  - B. You should be free to do what you want with your own body.
  - C. You should obey the law with respect to your own body.
  - D. You should always do what the doctor tells you with respect to your own body.
- 5) Albert can best be described as
- A. annoyed
  - B. hopeless
  - C. angry
  - D. worried
- 6) Put yourself in Al's position. Tell how you would continue to resolve the problem he is having. What would you do next? Explain from Al's point of view.

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