

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.

