

# the **TEAC** life

teenagers, everyday, accepting change  
for teens living with hiv

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## W H E N W I L L T H I S S T O P ? ? ? ?

TO MANY KIDS ARE SUFFERING!!!  
YOU MAY HAVE MEDICATION FOR HIV  
BUT YOU SURE  
DON'T HAVE MEDICATION  
FOR THE FEELING THEY HAVE  
EVERY NIGHT WHEN THEY GO TO  
BED, HOPING FOR A CURE...  
HOW DO WE WAIT ON A CURE  
OUR WHOLE LIFE?  
HOW DO WE WAIT ON SOMETHING  
THATS NOT EVEN THERE ??????

# f a c i n g m y f e a r

Some of you may know me, some of you may not. Hi. My name is Mike-aka-Smash. I'm 20 years old and I'm HIV positive. I have been living with HIV all my life. 20 years. That's a long time.

For me, this year has been about recovering from my fear of dying. A couple of years ago I couldn't even look at advertisements on billboards or watch HIV/AIDS programs on TV or even read the HIV/AIDS acronym in the paper. I would turn my head because my eyes will start to water, because I was sure I had it and I would die.

I then realized I had choices, I can choose to smile or frown, stay in fear or move in love. I can choose to wait and get sick or I can choose to deal with it.

I was haunted by the fear of death, but then I confronted the possibility of dying and the only thing that died was my fear. I stopped running from my fear and turned it into a challenge, like a game. Something I could handle. Then I realized I was neither a victim or helpless, I'm just living with HIV, not dying from it!!!!!!

All of you that participate in the TEAC LIFE, all you gotta do is turn your weaknesses into strengths. If you could do that you could do anything!!!

All of you have my blessings and my love. Always. Mike-aka-Smash. Staten Islands finest one!!!!!!

## D E C E M B E R 5, 2 0 0 1

On December 5, 2001, i was told that i was H.I.V +. I was hoping, like everyone would hope, that the test would come out negative. But i guess god wasn't with me at the time. So i'm living with the virus in me. I try not to think about it that much cause when i do, i get depressed and just feel like sh\*t. That night i went home

with so many questions. I went home confused. I said to myself what is H.I.V and what is it all about. I had so many un-answered questions. That night, i woke up in the middle of the night. It was about 4:00 in the morning and I just had an outbreak realizing i can't create what life is all about. That i can't create a baby of my own.

That hurt me so much. Ever since i was a baby, myself, i wanted one to take care of. i wanted one to call me daddy... but all those dreams have been shattered away. (\*editor's note--this is not true. ask your medical provider more) How do you tell the one you love, when the time comes, and she wants to have a baby..Umm.....How do i answer that!! or when i'm in a relationship with someone...you can't do the things other teens can do...Say i'm with someone and the whole time i'm with her, i've always got to have that little thing telling me \*watch wat you do\* um....\*No don't do that...you can pass it to her like that\*.

I meen come on, how do we live like that... it's hard!! People take life for granted sometimes. They dont realize, that in a blink of an eye, life can be taken away from them without them knowin... Its so hard, you chillin wit your friends and sh\*t and you cant even let them know. Not even your close freinds... regardless if they areclose to you... you cant predict the future. any little argument or any little f\*ck up, and they can just blow you up. I'm not takin that chance. I'm not ready to be critized, not at this age....

I told one of my friends ... I've been bestfriends with her for a while and i wouldnt just tell her like that .... I didnt plan to tell her or nothing. What happen was, she came to me one day and started to cry to me. i was like, Les. what happened? She was like, he burnt me. I was like, what you meen, talk to me, tell me. She was like, she gave me enough to tell me. She told me "Frankie take care of yourself, dont let nobody take your life

away the way they did to me" I said, its to late .. she said, what you meen? I burst out cryin. and said i'm HIV+ .

She was like, oh my god. She was so suprised, she was like why didnt you tell me. I was like, I don't know but when you had the trust to tell me that you got herpes, i felt like the trust you got for me, i got the same for you... So me and her just stay on top of each other and we both know about each other's conditions...I'm glad i have a friend that i hang out with on a regular basis that knows I'm HIV positive and that i could go to if anything happened....

**y o u k n o w**

it's true what people say. People don't know what they have until they got it. when all of a sudden we were outcast. then you find out, now you're one 2.

it hurt's you just to think of the the pain inside your head. everytime you go to bed, the same old thing haunts you. it's the virus and it's not gonna stop till it kills you. but you hold on so long and pray thing's will become straight one day. so one day, you could have your kids and live a normal life.

you do look at these other young infected kids and wonder if they think the same thing you do. do they see what they are really goin through? And i know they don't cuz they don't promote themselves the same way we do.

it's so cruel, but not intentional. it's not your fault kids. It's the parents that raised you and it makes you wanna cry cause everyday you wanna die and pray someone will rescue you or pray a bullet will hit you, cause you don't know life, you don't know how it is to try to live a normal life.

you don't know until you been in our shoes. the pain. the hurt we must all fall through, cause we're not doin it willingly. we just doin shamelessly and god forbid anyone should know, cause then they will grow up to hate you! Just like they hated me, so everyday i cried and ran away. and that's all i did all my life, look somewhere else and pray. I hated getting beat up everyday maybe one day it'll all change.