

INTERVIEW WITH KIMBERLY

What was your first experience of smoking?

It was with a group of friends, like one of my first parties that I'd been to and I tried it and made a fool of myself and started coughing so I thought, 'OK, I won't do that again.' I think I bum-puffed it anyway so I didn't really know how to do it, copying what they did in the movies. But I just remember it wasn't really something I wanted to get into. I'm quite an active person and I know the effects of it. I know the long term harm it can cause to your skin. I know my step-nana died from throat cancer cos she was smoking from a young age. When I learnt about all the chemicals that go into cigarettes, that was a big turn off. I really don't see the point in it.

Do you think the number of people who smoke is going up or decreasing?

I'd say decreasing. A lot of the people that I do know who smoke, are trying to give up or have tried to give up quite a few times.

In your opinion what is the worst thing about smoking?

That it's addictive and once you start it's difficult to give up. Also, the effect that it has on other people. It's not very nice when you're at work and you're trying to eat your lunch and there's smoking all around. It causes non-smokers damage as well. Second hand smoke causes just as much damage for the people around them so it's more responsibility on smokers. But I think it's still important for non-smokers to be really supportive of people who are trying to quit. As with most things, it's not easy to give up a habit.

What do you think about second hand smoke and how it affects you?

I think that smokers have a responsibility not only for their own health but the people that they smoke around, it's causing them damage as well, so that's something that they should think about.

I'm happy with my decision to be a non-smoker because it means that I'm really fit and active. I can keep going, do a lot in my day, not get tired, can breathe easy and well and that doesn't slow me down.

What do you think would be a good way of supporting someone attempting to quit?

Encouragement. I suppose it's pretty difficult if you are trying to give up and if you're going out at night, people are going to smoke. It must be difficult to try and be strong enough so just offer support. If they really are trying to quit then you should step up and be a good friend.

What do you think of the influence that celebrities who smoke have on young people?

Personally I think that smoking is a decision that you make by yourself. It's well advertised, the health risks it has, so I think it's a personal decision. I think being a role model, you have a certain amount of responsibility in making good decisions. You go through life under a microscope and your decisions, whether you want them to or not, they have effects on the people who look up to you. For that reason I try not to make any bad decisions but at the same time if people choose to smoke I think that's their own decision and they just have to live with the consequences.

How do you think smoking affects other entertainers' performances?

I suppose being an actor, voice is really important and the long term that can do damage to it and your skin, which are all big factors to your success whether you want them to be or not. It's always good to age gracefully. For me especially, I'm an older actor, I'm nineteen playing a fifteen year-old. It's not going to look very good if I start aging. Disney might not want me, damn. Talking to the makeup ladies before we came here, they say that they can notice it quite a lot in the skin and things when people start smoking and how it can have really quick and dramatic effects on the hydration of your skin.

What do you think about product placement of tobacco in the movies?

I don't really think it is okay. I think that they're trying to sell a product that has no benefits to anyone. It only causes you damage and makes you unhealthy so I really don't think that advertising them is the best way to go. In the same sense I know that people are addicted so it's kind of a two edged sword, it's quite difficult. If people are addicted they're going to keep buying it no matter what.

What would be your advice to a young person experimenting with smoking?

Smoking slows you down and there's no real point in doing it. Once you start it's difficult to stop and a hard habit to break and expensive as well. There's really no point.

Do you think there's peer pressure on teenagers to become smokers?

Not really. I mean, I think that it's sort of getting a bit dated now. I didn't really experience a lot of that at school. We were really well-educated from a young age and I never associated with many groups that had a lot of smokers. I definitely don't think it's as bad as it was but I still think that there is some peer pressure out there.

Do you think these days it is okay to be smokefree?

Yeah, I think it's perfectly fine to be smokefree. I don't think you're judged in any way.