

Lynda: It's Not Worth Killing For

My name is Lynda, I'm 32 years old and I've never touched drugs, I don't even drink or smoke. But that doesn't mean anything; not these days. You see, six months ago I started feeling really badly and I was sick all the time. I thought at first it was just a cold of the flu. It started with little lumps on my throat, then a month later I started waking up in the middle of the night soaked in sweat. I went to the clinic and got a blood test. I found out that I was HIV positive. That means that one night when I went out, I must have slept with someone who gave me the virus.

I was so angry and scared. I think I must have cried for a month. I don't even know who gave it to me. I was pretty wild when I was younger. I didn't even think about getting infected with the virus back then.

The doctor and the social workers at the clinic helped me a lot. I'm taking medication for the disease, and I go and talk to a social worker whenever I need to. But I know that there are other things that I need to do on my own.

When I found out that I was HIV positive, I really felt like I wanted to go out and infect every man I could. I was so angry that somebody could have given me the virus and not even tell me that he was infected. I know it was wrong to think that was, but everybody knows what it's like to want revenge. Then I thought, I can't do that, that's just making a bad thing worse. I wanted to prove to myself that I was better than the person who infected me.

It was then that I made the decision not to have sex. I know that it sounds really crazy, and I admit that I still do things alone to help me relax. But I just don't think that I could bear to hurt someone else in the way that I was hurt. I admit that sex is a wonderful thing, but it's not worth killing someone for.

- 1. Characterization:** Lynda is an African American female in her first thirties.
- 2. Membership:** Heterosexual female.
- 3. Risk behavior:** She engaged in sex with multiple unknown partners without using condoms.
- 4. Goal:** Avoid transmitting the virus to others.
- 5. Stage of Change:** Action.
- 6. Influencing Factor:** She does not want to transmit the virus to others. (Pro's & Con's)
- 7. Barrier and strategy:** Lynda has decided to use abstinence to prevent the spread of the virus.
- 8. Positive Outcome:** Lynda will not infect another person with the disease.
- 9. Source:** The Lower East Side Health Project Role Model Stories Library; September 1991 – Vol. 1, No 4 (A); Susan Tross, Ph.D., Principal Investigator