

DROWNING. Once I was bodysurfing in the ocean. The sea was rough. The current overwhelmed me. I lost my footing. **W**ave upon wave pounded onto me. I held my arm up for help. One last breaker pushed me under. Exhausted, I looked up. I was at least a metre beneath the surface. I was drowning. **B**ut I was calm. My life did not flash by. I did not panic. Engulfed by sunlight and warmth, I floated weightlessly. Time had stopped. Life had lost urgency. I surrendered to the beauty around me. **T**hen my arm was grabbed. I never really thanked my rescuer.

Thank you, all those lifesavers.

DRUGS. “A small-time drug user was repeatedly arrested; finally she went to prison. This punishment did not help anyone, nor did it stop her drug-use ... but she received a criminal record. **T**he evidence is clear that dragging people through the courts on small drug possession charges has significant social and economic costs; however, it has limited chances of deterrence. **D**rug convictions can follow a person through life, which has an effect on their employment; not to mention the cost of prosecuting multiple drug charges of young offenders, and jailing them. **P**redominantly, though, drug use is a health problem best dealt with by the health system, and the public (68%) agree with this ... to punish drug-use is not in line with community sentiment. **R**esearch shows removing criminal penalties for personal drug use causes no increase in use, nor does it increase other crime. The case for punishing personal drug use fails the evidence test.”

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