

My Cigarette, My Friend

by Joel Spitzer

How do you feel about a friend who has to go everywhere with you? Not only does he tag along all the time, but since he is so offensive and vulgar, you become unwelcome when with him. He has a peculiar odor that sticks to you wherever you go. Others think both of you stink.

He controls you totally. When he says jump, you jump. Sometimes in the middle of a blizzard or storm, he wants you to come to the store and pick him up. You would give your spouse hell if he or she did that to you all the time, but you can't argue with your friend.

Sometimes, when you are out at a movie or play he says he wants you to go stand in the lobby with him and miss important scenes. Since he calls all the shots in your life, you go.

Your friend doesn't like your choice of clothing either. Instead of politely telling you that you have lousy taste, he burns little holes in these items so you will want to throw them out. Sometimes, he tires of the furniture and gets rid of it too. Occasionally, he gets really nasty and decides the whole house must go.

He gets pretty expensive to support. Not only is his knack of property destruction costly, but you must pay to keep him with you. In fact, he will cost you thousands of dollars over your lifetime. And you can count on one thing, he will never pay you a penny in return.

Often at picnics you watch others playing vigorous activities and having lots of fun doing them. But your friend won't let you. He doesn't believe in physical activity. In his opinion, you are too old to have that kind of fun. So he kind of sits on your chest and makes it difficult for you to breathe. Now you don't want to go off and play with other people when you can't breathe, do you?

Your friend does not believe in being healthy. He is really repulsed by the thought of you living a long and productive life. So, every chance he gets he makes you sick. He helps you catch colds and flu. Not just by running out in the middle of the lousy weather to pick him up at the store. He is more creative than that.

He carries thousands of poisons with him which he constantly blows in your face. When you inhale some of them, they wipe out cilia in your lungs which would have helped you prevent these diseases.

But colds and flu are just his form of child's play. He especially likes diseases that slowly cripple you - like emphysema. He considers this disease great. Once he gets you to have this, you will give up all your other friends, family, career goals, activities - everything. You will just sit home and caress him, telling him what a great friend he is while you desperately gasp for air.

But eventually your friend tires of you. He decides he no longer wishes to have your company. Instead of letting you go your separate ways, he decides to kill you. He has a wonderful arsenal of weapons behind him. In fact, he has been plotting your death since the day you met him.

He picked all the top killers in society and did everything in his power to ensure you would get one of them. He overworked your heart and lungs. He clogged up the arteries to your heart, brain, and every other part of your body. In case you were too strong to succumb to this, he constantly exposed you to cancer causing agents. He knew he would get you sooner or later.

Well, this is the story of your "friend," your cigarette. No real friend would do all this to you. Cigarettes are the worst possible enemies you ever had. They are expensive, addictive, socially unacceptable, and deadly. Consider all this and - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!