

## *Joel's Reinforcement Library*

**NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

---

*“I went back to smoking when I was  
in the hospital with pneumonia.”*

---

“I was scared about how sick I was and very bored being in the hospital. I had been off smoking for about three years. But this was the first time I was really sick.” This sad story was told to me the second day of a stop smoking clinic. He joined the clinic now because he had been diagnosed with emphysema. I asked if he had already had the emphysema when he was hospitalized with the pneumonia. “Oh no,” he replied, “I’ve only been diagnosed with emphysema for a couple of years now.” Then I asked how long ago the relapse in the hospital had occurred. He thought for a few seconds and replied, “Twenty-two years ago.” Somehow, the man didn’t see anything extraordinary about this story. He had a problem and thought smoking would solve it. But, to an impartial observer, two specific problems become quite obvious.

First, if the man was really concerned about his health risk from pneumonia, cigarette smoking should have been the last thing to do. If anything, this would make the disease last longer and possibly result in more serious complications. Second, and in this case more important, his action of taking a cigarette resulted in a longer-term problem. He once again became hooked on cigarettes. Not only did he have to smoke while he was bored in the hospital. He has now smoked for 22 years because of this one mistake.

In the interim period, he developed a crippling breathing disease from all the cigarettes smoked as a result of the relapse. With proper treatment the original pneumonia would be cured and his breathing capabilities would return to normal. But the smoking now caused a disease that had permanently impaired him. Even if he did quit smoking now, he would have the limitations in breathing for the rest of life. In retrospect, this was a high price to pay to deal with a few days or weeks of fear and boredom. Especially considering both would have been resolved over 22 years ago!

Visit [WhyQuit.com](http://WhyQuit.com) and Explore [Joel's Library](#)

**Smoking is never the answer to any problem. In most cases, taking a cigarette results in a more serious situation than the problem leading you to take it. Don't make the same mistake this man did. When you find yourself faced with a real problem, work hard to find a real solution. If it is truly a problem that would be resolved when smoking, then with a little time and patience you will also overcome it as an ex-smoker. By not smoking you will have not only overcome one problem, but you will have prevented another more serious situation. You will have avoided reinforcing the powerful and deadly nicotine addiction. Once again you will have overcome another obstacle which threatened your ex-smoking status. Unless you plan on smoking at your old level of consumption or possibly even higher every day for the rest of your life, always remember- NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

**Joel**

© Joel Spitzer 1993, 2000  
Page last updated by [Joel Spitzer](#) on August 23, 2003

---

[WhyQuit.Com](http://WhyQuit.Com) | [Joel's Library](#) | [Email Joel](#) | [Prevent Relapse Index](#) | [Next Article](#)

