

FFN - TJH

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## Introduction

### Your Greatest Awakening Ever

You may be like me, not a big book reader. But if wanting to end nicotine use, Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home (FFN-TJH) is worthy of your time. If allowed, it will aid in turning fear to excitement, dread to delight, anxiety to calm, bondage to freedom, and destruction to healing.

As hard as this may be to believe, ending nicotine use need not be horrible or even bad. In fact, someday soon you'll look back upon this temporary journey of re-adjustment as possibly the most amazing chapter of your life, your greatest personal awakening ever.

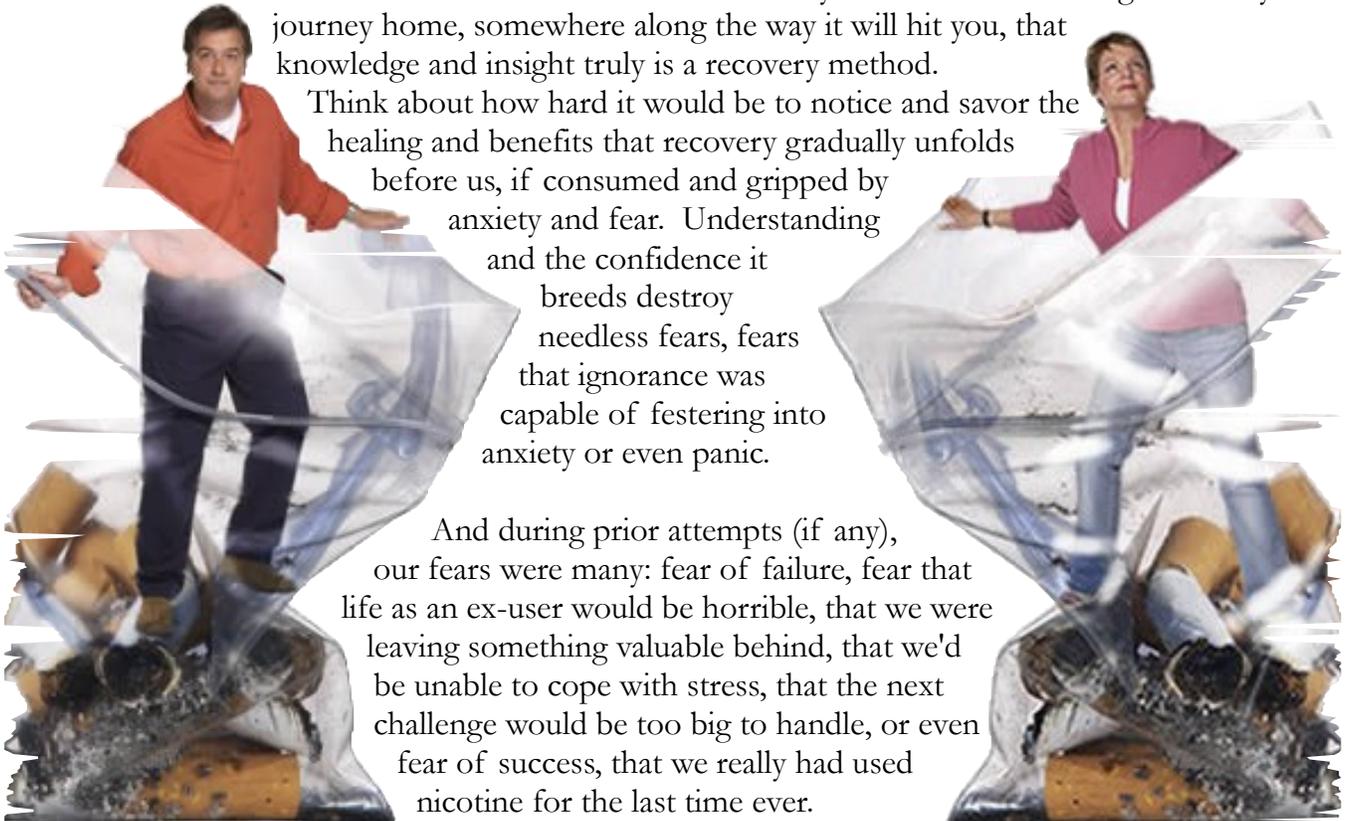
You see, nicotine addiction is about living a lie. Life here on Easy Street is calm, rich and wonderful, not more stressful, boring and empty. With knowledge as your ally, you're about to discover that you've journeyed far from that peaceful pre-addiction mind that was once home.

How many times have we heard the phrase "knowledge is power"? But when it comes to breaking nicotine's grip, until now, you've likely failed to devote the time needed to educate your intelligence. Instead, most of us turned to worthless products, pills or procedures; to quick fix magic cures promising fast, easy or effortless success.

You are about to become far smarter than your addiction is strong. And as you journey home, somewhere along the way it will hit you, that knowledge and insight truly is a recovery method.

Think about how hard it would be to notice and savor the healing and benefits that recovery gradually unfolds before us, if consumed and gripped by anxiety and fear. Understanding and the confidence it breeds destroy needless fears, fears that ignorance was capable of festering into anxiety or even panic.

And during prior attempts (if any), our fears were many: fear of failure, fear that life as an ex-user would be horrible, that we were leaving something valuable behind, that we'd be unable to cope with stress, that the next challenge would be too big to handle, or even fear of success, that we really had used nicotine for the last time ever.



## Who is John?

The anguish of attempting to break free in ignorance and darkness can easily overwhelm freedom's dreams. How do I know? Because I squandered three decades of desire to stop using by not knowing how.

My name is John, [John R. Polito](#), and I'm a former 3 pack-a-day smoker. Failure after failure, after one final failed anxiety-riddled attempt in early 1999, I surrendered. I totally gave up on giving up. It was then that I first admitted to myself who I really was. I was a "real" drug addict, no different from the alcoholic or heroin addict. And I accepted my fate. The pace of my failing health was accelerating, and I would die an addict's death. My most liberating admissions ever, I no longer needed the many excuses I'd invented to explain that next cigarette.

They all boiled down to just one. It was simple. "My name is John and I'm a REAL drug addict." Having achieved acceptance, strangely, I was no longer afraid. For some still unknown reason, on May 13, 1999, I typed the words "quit smoking" into an Internet search engine. A couple of clicks later, I found myself reading messages inside a stop smoking group.

There, watching the caring support between strangers, people who'd never met, I was overwhelmed. So, I typed my own little message. I told them that what they were doing in supporting each other was beautiful, but that it was too late for me, that I'd given-up trying. The rest is history. A flood of caring replies reached through the screen, tried pulling me in, and left me in tears. Two days later, on May 15, 1999, I smoked my last cigarette ever.

Totally consumed by long overdue success, on my two month anniversary, July 15, 1999, I created a website. I named it WhyQuit.com. Originally, it simply sought to preserve and share the tragic story of a 34 year-old Marlboro smoker. It was a story that hit home. It left me feeling lucky, that I'd somehow, maybe, dodged a bullet.

His name was Bryan. He was a 20-year smoker who had started at age thirteen. The news article included a sobering photo of a totally emaciated young man lying dead in his bed. According to the story, the death bed photo was taken just two months after Bryan was diagnosed with lung cancer. In the photo, his grieving widow is sitting in a chair beside him, hugging the couple's two year-old son, Bryan Jr.



Over the years, WhyQuit's content grew into a mega-recovery site that today attracts 2.2 million unique annual visitors (different IP addresses). I've since presented roughly 100 live recovery programs, and written hundreds of cessation articles, including a handful that have appeared in peer-reviewed medical journals. Today, I continue to serve as director of two online support groups, Freedom and Turkeyville, which together have nearly 9,000 members.

Which brings us to this book, FFN-TJH. First released on December 31, 2008, it's unique in taking direct aim at our addiction's root cause, nicotine. It also documents the abrupt nicotine cessation

("cold turkey") science-base. It's a body of knowledge that pharmaceutical industry financial influence has done its very best to suppress, hide and destroy.

I wish I could claim credit for most of what you are about to read. I can't. The insights that follow were not discovered during my own thirty-years of chemical captivity. Nor do they flow from my own failed history, reflecting roughly a dozen serious attempts.

This book, FFN-TJH, is not the result of the invention of some new method or product, or of ideas or concepts born inside this mind. Instead, it simply shares the keys to the method that each year generates more successful ex-smokers than all others combined.

Nearly every lesson shared was mined from the discoveries and accomplishments of others. It's the reason for more than 400 footnotes. But as you'll soon discover, most of the key discoveries shared were made by an amazing man with almost super-human observational skills, a man with the ability to discern fact from fiction.

## Who is Joel?

Frankly, FFN-TJH would not exist without the insights and teachings of [Joel Spitzer](#) of Chicago. Since 2000, I've studied and shared Joel's clinical observations. They are insights he began harvesting as early as 1972, first as a volunteer smoking prevention speaker for the American Cancer Society, and then as a smoking cessation counselor and paid staff member beginning in 1977.

I challenge you to locate any other person who has devoted their entire work-life, nearly 40 years, full-time, to helping smokers break free. More than [350](#) six-session stop smoking clinics, [690](#) single-session seminars, and an additional dozen years working online with smokers, Joel truly is the Henry Aaron or Babe Ruth of smoking cessation.

On January 20, 2000, out of the blue, a man I'd never met e-mailed me offering to share the more than 80 stop smoking articles he'd written.

Joel's articles quickly became the primary lessons shared at Freedom, what was then an anything-goes, free online peer-support group that Joel could clearly see was floundering horribly.<sup>1</sup>



*A young Joel Spitzer holding wrapped slices from the lungs of a smoker and non-smoker.*

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<sup>1</sup> [Freedom from Tobacco - Quit Smoking Now](#) was founded on September 8, 1999 as a free peer support forum at MSN Groups. On February 21, 2009 MSN shut down all MSN Groups. In anticipation of the closing we moved Freedom to Yuku's free forums where we officially opened "Freedom from Nicotine" at [www.ffn.yuku.com](http://www.ffn.yuku.com) on January 18, 2009.

Joel had written his collection of articles as follow-up reinforcement and relapse prevention letters, which were sent to graduates of his two-week clinics. During those clinics he'd taught new ex-smokers to take recovery just one challenge and day at a time. Now, for the first time, he used the closing of each article to remind them how to stay free, by simply sticking with their original commitment to "Never Take Another Puff!"

As I read through the 80 or so articles, I was hammered by ringing truths on a wide range of cessation issues. Joel raised scores of concerns that I'd never once considered. How could I have overlooked all these factors?

I was left stunned and humbled by how little I actually knew about either smoking or stopping. Who was I to think that I was somehow qualified to create and co-manage an online stop smoking support group? This guy was the real deal!

Nicotine's relationship to eating, stress, alcohol, vitamin C, anger, its influence upon heart rate, depression, and sleep, how did I miss all this? Where had I been? Why hadn't I seen smoking nicotine as true chemical dependency decades earlier, or realized that replacement nicotine actually undercuts success, or grasped the importance of extinguishing use cues while avoiding crutch creation?

Before Joel arrived, Freedom's co-founder, Joanne Diehl, and I had grown horribly frustrated. Members were relapsing to smoking left and right. Failure was everywhere. It was as if our support group was somehow fostering defeat.

Each new announcement of a member's failure and return to smoking brought lots of virtual member hugs, and encouragement for them to once again jump into the pool. It was as if the group's affection and attention was an invitation for others to relapse too, so that they could return and enjoy their own relapse party.

More than once Joanne had wanted to pull the plug and shut Freedom down. But now, here was a guy whose entire life had prepared him to deliver on the forum's name, Freedom from Tobacco.

Without hesitation, we begged Joel to take charge of what was then little more than an anything-goes motivational pep-rally. Although he declined, he did agree to join us and assist as a co-manager and to serve as WhyQuit's director of education.

I named his large collection of reinforcement letters "[Joel's Library](#)" and placed the library enter-stage at [WhyQuit](#). More than a decade later, that's where they remain, freely available to all.



*Joel on Fox News on May 12, 2004 challenging pharma industry assertions that nicotine gum is not addictive.*



Joel's Library is today home to more than [100 articles](#) and nearly [200 free video counseling lessons](#). Joel's life's work continues to be the heart and soul of our online work.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the often-repeated title of Joel's popular free e-book, "[Never Take Another Puff](#)," has become relapse prevention insurance for countless thousands.

Roy, who was six weeks into recovery, said it well. "The 'Never Take Another Puff' mantra is one of the most powerful phrases I've ever heard in my life. It can move mountains. It was my only shining light in a mass of darkness and guided me back to a normal nicotine-free life. It is effective because it is so simple and innocent. It has the power of innocence."



*Joel presenting one of his nearly 200 free video counseling lessons.*

A simple four word restatement of the Law of Addiction, you'll find that I've broadened it a bit in FFN-TJH to "never take another puff, vape, dip or chew."

I've searched long and hard for any work comparable to Joel's. Except for individual lessons here and there by particular counselors and authors, and Allen Carr's excellent assault upon smoking rationalizations, I've been unable to locate any collection of work that comes close.

What I did find were individual studies by scores of dedicated researchers, studies that aid us in better understanding the amazing effects upon humans of this chemical called nicotine.

Since the summer of 2000, I've also been on a quest for answers as to how government health officials were duped into feeding replacement nicotine to those addicted to it. And I have shared what I've learned at WhyQuit.

I've learned that those selling approved cessation products need for you to fear your natural instinct to abruptly end use of nicotine. In that most go cold turkey, if a pharmaceutical company wishes to increase its product's market share, it has no choice but to lie to you about how most real-world ex-users succeed, including "your" real odds of success.

Take your own poll of all the former nicotine users you know who have been free from all nicotine and all stop smoking products for at least a year. How did they do it? You'll discover a giant turkey in the room, that someone has been lying to you.

A July 31, 2013 Gallup Poll found that only 8 percent of U.S. ex-smokers owe their success to replacement nicotine (NRT), Zyban, Chantix or Champix, that 92 percent succeeded without it. A careful reading of the poll suggests that the vast majority of ex-smokers (roughly 75 percent) credit

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2 Spitzer, J, Joel's Library, [www.WhyQuit.com/joel](http://www.WhyQuit.com/joel)

their success to tactics normally associated with and defined as cold turkey (the abrupt cessation of nicotine without use of cessation products or procedures).<sup>3</sup>

<i>Trying to be as specific as possible, what strategies or methods for quitting smoking were most effective for you? [OPEN-ENDED]</i>	
	<b>Former smokers</b>
Just quit/Decided it was time/Quit cold turkey	48%
Willpower/Commitment/Mind over matter	8%
Support from family, friends/prayer	6%
Used nicotine patch	5%
Was experiencing health issues related to smoking	5%
Stopped being around people who smoke	4%
Used chewing gum/candy/seeds/lozenges to help	3%
Used electronic cigarette	3%
Cut down, then quit	2%
Used prescription drugs	2%
Became pregnant	1%
Used hypnosis	1%
Used nicotine gum	1%
Other	12%
Nothing	2%
No opinion	3%
<b>July 10-14, 2013 - GALLUP® - Copyright © 2013 Gallup, Inc.</b>	
Source: Gallup Poll, Most U.S. Smokers Want to Quit, Have Tried Multiple Times, July 31, 2013, <a href="http://www.gallup.com/poll/163763/smokers-quit-tried-multiple-times.aspx">http://www.gallup.com/poll/163763/smokers-quit-tried-multiple-times.aspx</a>	

Included within the 8 percent attributed to approved products, the Gallup Poll found that only 1 in 100 ex-smokers credited nicotine gum for their success. That's after 40 years and billions spent marketing Nicorette nicotine gum, while zero was spent encouraging cold turkey attempts.

Search as you might, you will never see any pharmaceutical industry commercial or website telling smokers that, depending on where you live, cold turkey continues to be the method responsible for

3 Gallup Poll, Most U.S. Smokers Want to Quit, Have Tried Multiple Times, July 31, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/163763/smokers-quit-tried-multiple-times.aspx> grams help? Journal of the American Medical Association, May 1990, Volume 263(20), Pages 2760-2765

generating 70-90% of long-term successful ex-smokers.<sup>4</sup>

These ex-users owe their success to ending use of all nicotine, not to devices that replace it, designer drugs that imitate it, vaccines that partially block its entry into the brain, or to magic herbs, vitamins, hypnosis, needles, lasers that imitate needles, to motion sickness shots that make you too sick to smoke, or (as we'll discuss later) to Billy Bob's Lima Bean Butter.

## A Journey to Unconscious Competence

FFN-TJH teaches the world's most productive and effective method. In doing so, it attempts to remove the mystery and as much anxiety as possible from recovery, so as to afford you the ability to notice and savor the richness of coming home.

Smart turkey is about to put you back into the driver's seat of your mind. It's my hope that you'll learn to relax and embrace your healing. Already, hundreds of millions of worldwide cold turkey success stories, it's my hope that FFN-TJH contributes to swelling their numbers even greater.

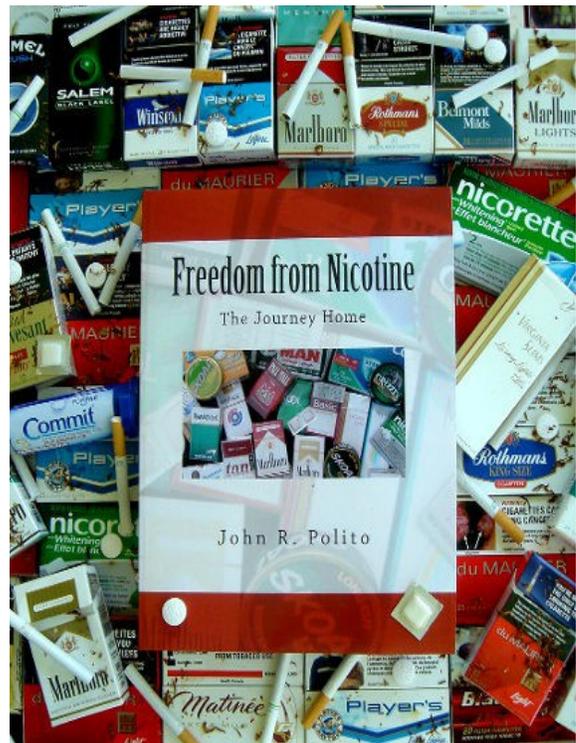
Although [free PDF versions of FFN-TJH](#) are available at WhyQuit, it's my hope that the [paperback](#) and [Kindle](#) versions available online through [Amazon.com](#) allow our work to reach beyond the Internet, to enter libraries and schools, and become loving gifts to entrenched users.

So here it is in a nutshell. As health care futurist Joe Flower puts it, you're about to find yourself "in the mush," the same mush I was wading through when Joel entered my life on January 20, 2000.

According to Flower, there are four phases to change induced learning: (1) unconscious incompetence [not knowing that I knew almost nothing about my addiction], (2) conscious incompetence [Joel making me aware of how little I knew], (3) conscious competence [mastering Joel's teachings], and (4) unconscious competence [having those lessons become as second nature as walking].

As Flower suggests, once competence is achieved it becomes difficult to recall how we could ever have been anything else.<sup>5</sup>

If FFN-TJH aids you in achieving conscious competence, please don't allow it to collect dust on some



4 Doran CM et al, Smoking status of Australian general practice patients and their attempts to quit, Addictive Behaviors, May 2006, Volume 31(5), Pages 758-766; Fiore MC et al, Methods used to quit smoking in the United States: do cessation programs help? Journal of the American Medical Association, May 1990, Volume 263(20), Pages 2760-2765.

5 Flower J, In the mush, Physician Executive, Jan-Feb 1999, Volume 25(1), Pages 64-66.

book or cyber shelf. Consider sharing it with a friend or loved one still trapped in active dependency. Frankly, there is no more loving gift we can give that the insights need to reclaim our priorities, health and life.

If just starting out, congratulations on your decision to reclaim your mind! You are about to live the time-tested adage that "knowledge is power. Just that first brave step in saying "no" to that next fix, yes you can!

Breathe deep, hug hard, live long

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John", with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the bottom left.

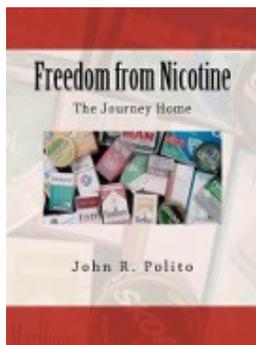
John R. Polito  
Nicotine Cessation Educator

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