

Freedom's "The Law of Addiction" thread

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Law of Addiction

"Administration of a drug to an addict will cause re-establishment of chemical dependence upon the addictive substance."

WhyQuit.com

Actively supporting new cold turkey quitters from 1999 to 2016, [Freedom](#) was [WhyQuit's](#) original support group. In 2017 Freedom stopped accepting new members. This page is a restored reproduction of a key Freedom thread. If quitting cold turkey and seeking support, visit [Turkeyville](#), Freedom's successor.

#02 | 2008 | [FreedomNicotine](#)

[Original video explaining origins of the concept of the "Law of Addiction" article](#)

Other related videos:

["Should I reset my quit meter?"](#)

["Don't let a slip put you back to smoking"](#)

[Nicotine is nicotine is nicotine](#)

[The Freedom from Nicotine support board's zero tolerance relapse policy](#)

The Final Truth

Assume for a moment that we made it! We learned how to remain patient during the few minutes a crave episode clamored for compliance. We knocked them dead. We stuck with it for the full 72 hours it took to empty our blood, brain and body of nicotine. At last we were clean!

Our healing and glory continued for the roughly two to three weeks it took for our mind to adjust to chemically functioning without nicotine and all the other chemicals that arrived with it. We confronted and extinguished all but our remote, infrequent or seasonal subconscious crave triggers, and tasted that very first day of total and complete comfort where we never once thought about wanting to use nicotine.

But still, we have days where our mind becomes occupied with thoughts of lighting a fire between our lips, or of chewing “*nicotiana tabacum*” (the tobacco plant’s biological name) or of a quick dip in nicotine’s pond. Years of hard to suppress dopamine “aaah” replenishment memories keep teasing us.

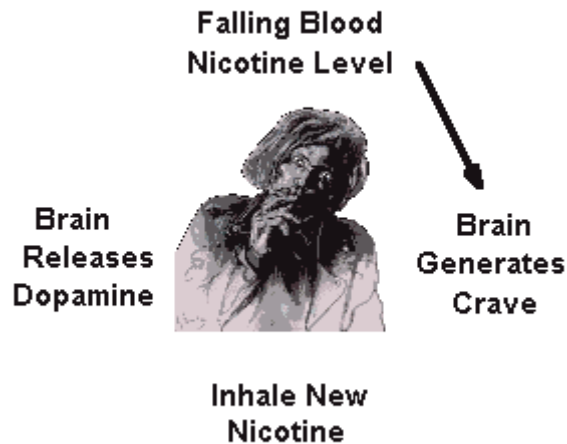
How does the recovering, rationalizing or bargaining mind’s vision of what it would be like to just once more use nicotine, compare with the realities that occur during relapse?

Recall that the 1990 Brandon study examined lapse and relapse in smokers who’d successfully completed a two-week stop smoking program. The study also documented the primary emotion felt immediately following smoking nicotine.

Assume that at two weeks into recovery, each who lapsed during the Brandon study had already succeeded in fully navigating physical withdrawal. Assume that their brains had almost fully re-sensitized. Reflect on the fact that the addict’s sense of “nicotine normal” no longer existed. By that I mean, there was no chemical missing, nothing in need of replenishment, the number of acetylcholine receptors had fully down-regulated, and their brain’s sense of homeostasis had been fully restored. So what was their prime emotion following relapse?

The vast majority had a negative reaction. Among them, 13% felt depressed and hopeless, 33% experienced anxiety and tension, 16% were angry and irritated, and 12% felt boredom or fatigue. Only 3.6% reported what most of us would have expected following normal replenishment, which was “feeling relaxed.”

Although some of us hated bondage, there is no denying that each nicotine fix brought relief from falling blood nicotine levels that were beginning to deprive us of a level of dopamine to which we’d grown accustomed. Each nicotine fix played a vital role in restoring us to a relaxed level of comfort upon which we had each come to depend.



Chronic nicotine use creates its own artificial sense of normalcy, an addiction comfort level. Yes, each fix brought the addict in us a true sense of comfort (from the pains of our own addiction) and yes, most of those memories still remain. However, one important thing has changed: our brain no longer has a chemical need for nicotine.

If we visit online quitting forums and dig back through messages describing relapses that occurred beyond week two, most will have a common ring to them. They read like this, "I had a mouth full of smoke, I was dizzy and I coughed, but I didn't get the sense of satisfaction I expected. It just didn't come!"

The thousands of enticing memories in their mind expected a sense of "aaah" relief from wanting. But their body and mind had already adjusted to life without nicotine. There was no need for replenishment as nothing was missing. The take it or leave it feeling in no way matched the relief felt when satisfying dopamine pathway want. The need to use just wasn't there. Unlike when those old want satisfaction "aaah" memories were created, there was nothing missing, no withdrawal induced anxieties or depression, and nothing that needed replenishing.

Without realizing it, while their conscious mind simply tinkered with the prospect of functioning without nicotine, their body and brain were on a path of real and significant physical healing. Falsely convinced of the need for nicotine in order to feel normal, while they briefly paused in using it, they did not embrace the prospect of life without it. They longed for what was left behind, blamed every healing sensation on its absence, and in doing so transformed a culprit into a cure. So, with great expectations they took that first puff; expectations now shattered.

So what happens next? Sadly, most are clueless as to why relapse doesn't match expectations. They find it hard not to believe and trust the small mountain of once true replenishment memories still enshrined within their head. Although relapse has already occurred and their brain will soon be begging for more, they keep digging inside the pack, pouch, tin, packet, tube or box, trying to get the experience to match expectations.

Sadly, eventually they succeed and use it long enough for replenishment to again be meaningful. Active dependency has at last been restored to its full-blown freedom shattering rage. They can then finally look in the mirror and say to themselves, "See, I was right." "Smoking did bring me a relaxed "aaah" feeling and a sense of relief!"

It's important to appreciate that any memories of those "perfect" fixes were created inside the mind of an actively feeding addict who was riding an endless cycle of highs and lows. They belong to who we once were. It's time to let go of the influence of these memories upon us. There's just one guiding principle we each need follow ... No nicotine today!

Exerpts from a free ebook by Polito JR entitled
["Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home"](#)

Predictors of smoking relapse among self-quitters: a report from the Normative Aging Study.

Journal: Addictive Behavior 1992, Volume 17(4), Pages 367-377.

Authors: Garvey AJ, Bliss RE, Hitchcock JL, Heinold JW, Rosner B.
Source: Veterans Administration Medical Center, Boston, MA.

Erratum in Addictive Behaviors 1992 Sep-Oct;17(5):513.

Abstract

We followed 235 adults for one year after a self-initiated attempt to stop smoking cigarettes. Relapse rates were much larger than expected in the early days and weeks after the quit attempt. Approximately 62% had relapsed by 2 weeks after their quit dates.

Those who smoked **any cigarettes at all** in the post-cessation period (i.e., lapsed) had a **95%** probability of resuming their regular pattern of smoking subsequently. Shorter periods of abstinence on prior quit attempts, greater pre-cessation consumption of alcoholic beverages, and lower pre-cessation levels of confidence in quitting were related to relapse.

In addition, abstainers who reported decreased confidence after cessation concerning their ability to maintain abstinence were more likely to relapse thereafter. The presence of a greater proportion of smokers in the subjects' environment also increased the likelihood of relapse. Demographic variables such as age, gender, and education level did not predict relapse. Likewise, neither baseline psychosocial stress levels, nor post-cessation increases in stress were related prospectively to relapse. Clinical implications of finding are discussed.

PMID:1502970[PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

PubMed Link: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1502970>

[Link to full text PDF copy of study](#)

Being quit for a significant amount of time now, I have forgotten some of the particulars of my early quit. However I still faithfully obey the Law of Addiction by never ingesting nicotine. Though happy as a former smoker I know better than to get too complacent. It's not often, but on the rare occasion when cigarettes do come to mind I'm sure to remind myself how One Equals All. Remembering this and recalling my quitting difficulties keeps my silly curiosities about smoking from going any further. Education really pays off.

Education isn't just reading Joel's articles alone. Its about connecting with people too. Someone I will never forget is Kim. I was here when she lost her battle with cancer. Her struggle taught me to never take my quit for granted. I learned that quitting isn't just fun and games; this is serious business. Our lives are at stake.

There's a reason Freedom requires us to learn the Law of Addiction, because knowing it will not only save your quit early on it will save it and your life long term as well. If I forget everything else on this forum I will always remember that to stay free from nicotine all I ever have to do is Never Take Another Puff.

Keeping the Law of Addiction close at heart,
Ouija

My name is Tony, and I am a nicotine addict and a proud nonsmoker. I have stopped using nicotine for 5 years, 5 months, 9 days, 20 hours, 4 minutes and 52 seconds (1987 days). I've not smoked 89453 cigarettes, have saved \$19,435.00, and added 310 days, 14 hours and 23 minutes to my life.

Ouija (Gold) / Nicotine Free Since 2003
One Puff Away From Two Packs A Day
Never Take Another Puff
No Nicotine Today!

#04 | 21 Mar 2009 | Dionne

Good early morn Tony: you wrote a wonderful letter, it was good to read even being the believer I am.

I'm also into a long time quit and wouldn't consider the ridiculous notion of putting burning material to my mouth or any addictive chemical into my body. The thought is soooo stupid it pales all others. So anyway just thought I'd tell I like the entire thread.

You were read today in Kauai while waiting for the dawn so I could lace up my running shoes and get on down the road. I had my 68th birthday a few days ago and I assure you I would not be running nor probably alive if I hadn't quit over 8 years ago. I hadn't run in almost a year when I found the courage to step up to Freedom.

Yours, Dionne

#05 | 22 May 2009 | dixieanny

[WOW! I certainly put this in my new Favorites folder for Freedom From Nicotine. Thanks alot!](#)

Ann - Free and Healing for Eleven Days and 44 Minutes, while extending my life expectancy 1 Day and 12 Hours, by avoiding the use of 441 nicotine delivery devices that would have cost me \$128.02.



Related videos:

[Addiction - the Surgeon General says ...](#)

[Criteria of addiction](#)

[The power of nicotine addiction](#)

[Were you addicted?](#)

["What should I call myself?"](#)

#07 | 26 May 2009 | Jenni

This is really good stuff here to take in, absorb, and apply to my life. I've been quit a little over a month now and it's easier but it's still a part of me as far as I will always be an addict but I know I can't take not one puff or I'll destroy all I've worked for and accomplished. Besides it's a stupid thing to do to my body. I used to think I deserved a cig now I know I don't deserve a cig and/or nicotine in any form. It has no positive effects or outcomes only if I am addicted then it will feel good to feed the addiction but then I am not in control, it is controlling me.

I'm not going to let cigs, nicotine or smoke rule my life, take my breath, take my health, take my life. I'm never going to take another puff, not today if it comes down to it I'll just get through this day and do the same thing tomorrow. Thanks for the article it's the positive reinforcement I need instead of negative reinforcement that used to be provided by cigs YYYYYYYYYYUCK! NTAP (((hugz)))

#08 | 27 May 2009 | dixieanny

I agree so much, Jenni! I could visualize you with your arms up hooraying that message you just wrote. Thank you.

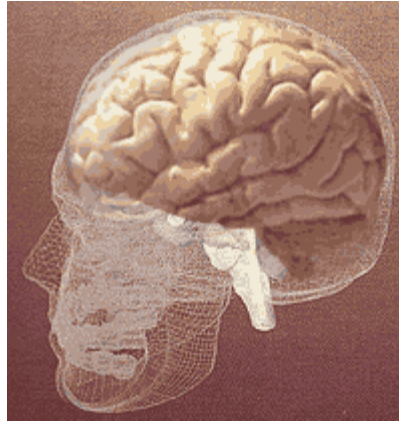


🌹 Ann - Free and Healing for Sixteen Days, 12 Hours and 53 Minutes, while extending my life

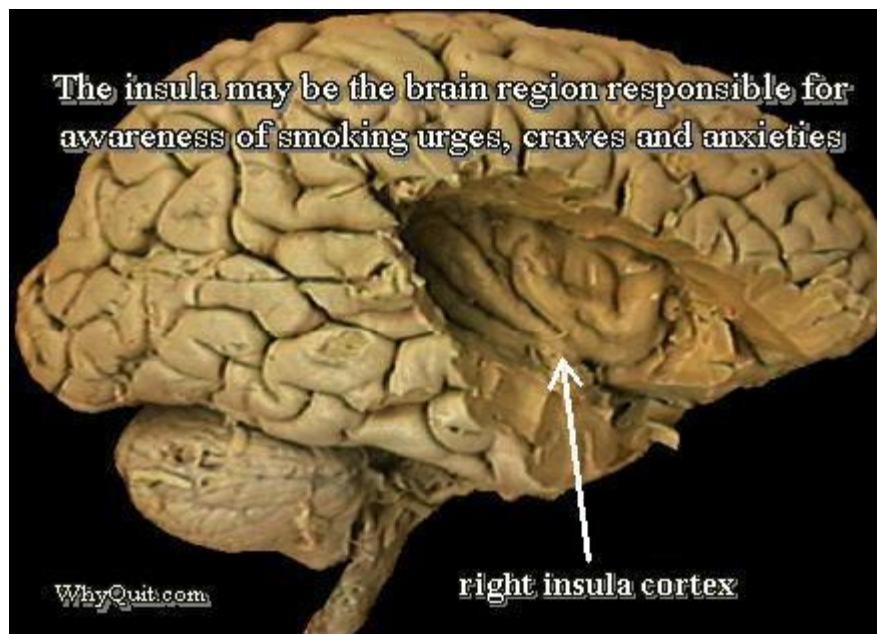
expectancy 2 Days and 7 Hours, by avoiding the use of 661 nicotine delivery devices that would have cost me \$191.96.

#09 | 10 June 2009 | [John](#)

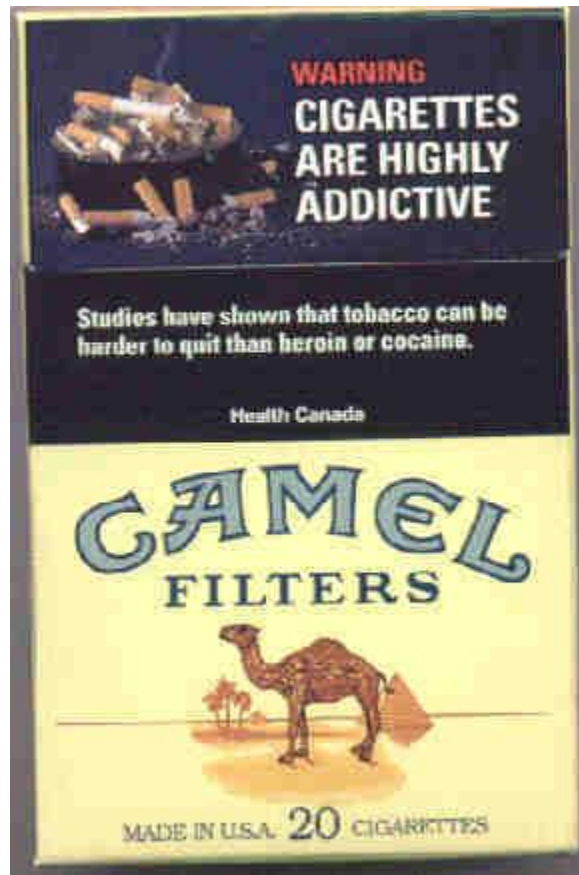
If you think that one hit of nicotine won't cause your brain to see using it again as important as eating food, forget it!



If you think that one hit of nicotine will not soon cause your brain to beg for more, forget it!!



Our brain's reward and punishment circuitry was designed to make sure that species survival events are not ignored. Drug addiction is about external chemicals taking these pathways hostage.



Although our dopamine high is accompanied by alert stimulation instead of numbness, euphoria, speed or drunkenness, we are true drug addicts in every sense.

We can't kill our addiction. We can only arrest it. Once hooked, the only remaining question is, on which side of the bars will we spend the balance of life?

Just one rule ... no nicotine today!

#10 | 30 June 2009 | [John](#)

Experimental model of smoking re-exposure: effects on relapse.

Psychopharmacology (Berlin). 1992; Volume 108(4), Pages 495-500.

Authors: Chornock WM, Stitzer ML, Gross J, Leischow S.

Source: Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Francis Scott Key Medical Center, Baltimore, MD 21224.

Abstract

This study used a short-term laboratory model of smoking cessation and relapse to prospectively examine the effects of programmed self-administered smoking re-exposure during early abstinence.

Sixty-seven subjects who had quit smoking for 3 days were randomly assigned either to smoke five cigarettes in their natural environment or to remain abstinent during the exposure period. The main hypothesis, that relapse to regular smoking would be quicker and more prevalent in exposed subjects, was supported.

All exposed subjects had relapsed by 2 days post-exposure while 16% of unexposed subjects remained continuously abstinent throughout the 8 day study.

This behavioral effect was seen in spite of acute decreases in reported desire to smoke and increases in guilt measured just after exposure. The study supports a role for stimulus re-exposure effects in the relapse process and suggests that additional research on experimental re-exposure is warranted.

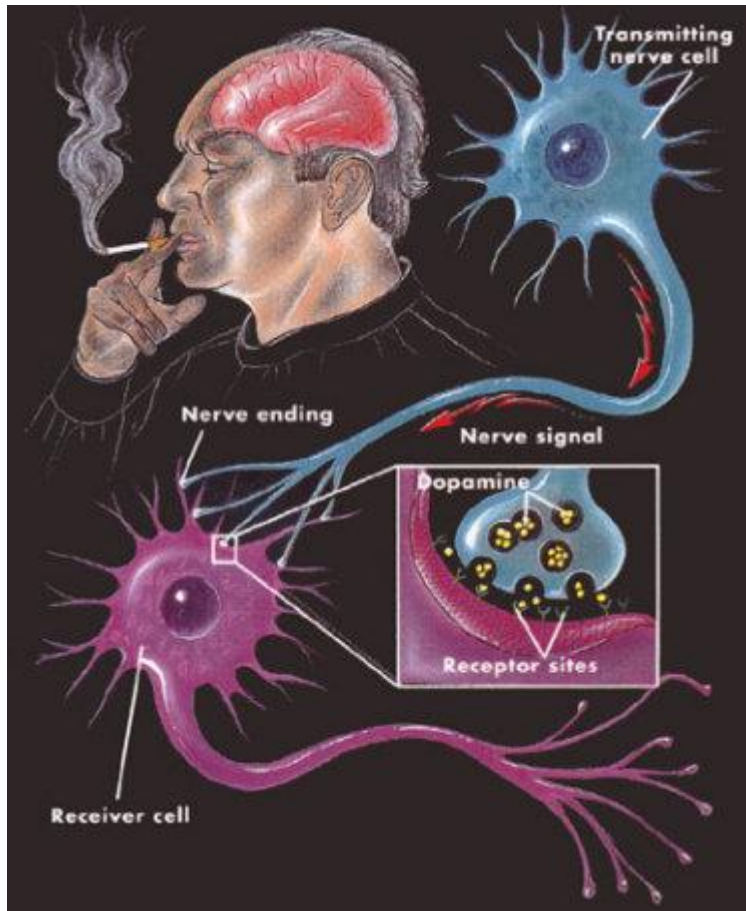
PMID:1410165[PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

PubMed Link: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1410165>

**There was always only one rule
... no nicotine today!**



**The next few minutes are all that matter
... and each is doable!**



We may think that we can get away with just one, just once but within 8 to 10 seconds of that first puff up to 50% of the brain's $\alpha 4\beta 2$ -type nicotinic receptors will become occupied by nicotine, creating a dopamine "aaah" sensation that our mind's priorities teacher will record in high definition memory. We may walk away thinking we've gotten away with just one, just once but our brain will soon be begging for more! There's only one rule ...

No Nicotine Today!

#12 | 16 Aug 2009 | bquit

Hi to everyone, well I think I finally quit smoking for good this time. I started when I was around 13 and am now 50. I have tried to quit numerous times before but deep down I didn't want to. I got a scare a few weeks ago, bad sharp pains and a very heavy feeling in my chest. I went to the doctor convinced I had cancer but he didn't seem concerned after examining me. I asked for a chest ex-ray just to be sure, I haven't heard back yet which means good news. I quit the next day and although it has been tough at times I read and read on here and that helps. I have been quit for 14 days at noon today.

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Knowledge is a Quitting Method

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Page created January 20, 2018 and last updated on January 22, 2018 by [John R. Polito](#)