

Nicotine Dependency Recovery



About This Booklet

Quitting is what happened on the day nicotine took control. A common thread between all chemical addictions is how quickly the mind loses sight of what it was like to reside inside a mind that doesn't have an endless need to feed. The real neuro-chemical you lies buried beneath a pile of salient nicotine induced dopamine "aaah" memories. This booklet is about digging out, about recovering the real you!

This booklet was prepared by John R. Polito, a nicotine cessation educator and editor of www.whyquit.com. Its tips are primarily a product of medical studies and lessons from Joel's Library (<http://whyquit.com/joel>), an insightful collection of 95 short quitting articles available for download as a free electronic PDF book at WhyQuit.com (<http://whyquit.com/joel>). While there, watch a few of Joel's more than 50 free video quitting lessons or visit Freedom from Tobacco, WhyQuit's free online peer support forum.

Be sure to share this booklet with friends and loved ones who smoke. Not discovering the "[Law of Addiction](#)" through the school of hard-quitting-knocks or learning it from booklets such as this is a horrible reason to die. This booklet may be reproduced and shared for health education purposes, so long as there is never any charge or cost to recipients. Comments may be addressed to John R. Polito, 1325 Pherigo Street, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464, (843) 849-9721 or via email to john@whyquit.com

Do you smoke? Is your life nearly over?

“I have plenty of time left to quit!”



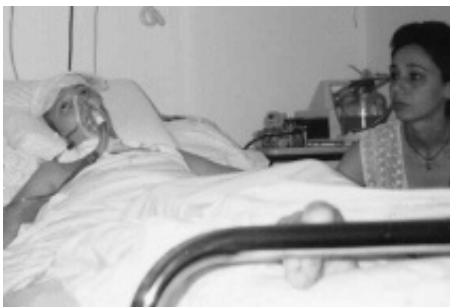
Plenty of time? Such thoughts are very likely to prove both deadly and wrong. According to the CDC, quitting is so challenging that roughly half of all adult smokers are not quitting before costing themselves an average of 13 years of life. Sadly, smoking is scheduled to claim one-quarter of smokers during middle-age.



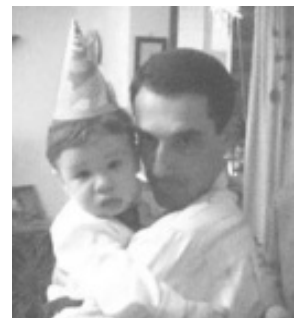
[Bryan](#) started smoking at age thirteen. A 34 year-old Marlboro Light smoker, he thought that because his mother still smoked that he had plenty of time left to quit. He was wrong. The photo above is of Bryan with his two year-old son, Bryan Jr. It was taken on March 29th. The photo to the right was taken just 63 days later on June 3rd, the day Bryan died. It shows the aggressiveness of smoking induced small cell lung cancer. In Bryan's hands is a copy of the picture of him with his son.



A Camel smoker since age 13, [Noni](#) was a tour guide with passions for history, Christmas, her mother and great seafood dishes. Married at age 30 (photo to left), she became pregnant at 32 and gave birth to her only child on December 18th. The photo to the right of her holding her son was taken on March 16th, thirty-six days after being diagnosed with small cell lung cancer and three days after her 33rd birthday.



To the left is a picture taken four days before Noni's June 24th death. To the right is a December 18th photo of her son and husband at her son's first birthday party. By then his mom had been dead for six months. Read the above stories and those of scores of other young victims at www.WhyQuit.com.



Do you see yourself as a real drug addict?

“It’s just a habit.” “I can quit if I want!”

According to the CDC, each year about 40% of our nation’s smokers make a quitting attempt of at least one day. Nicotine is so gripping that 95% who attempt fail. Key to recovery is understanding that you are dealing with a true chemical addiction. Pretending that all we have is a “nasty little habit” is a recipe for relapse. It takes a maximum of 72 hours for the body to become 100% nicotine-free and withdrawal to peak in intensity after ending all nicotine use. Like it or not, there’s a bright line in the sand that says just one puff of nicotine and relapse is assured, as you’ll end up back at square one facing another 72 hours of nicotine detox.

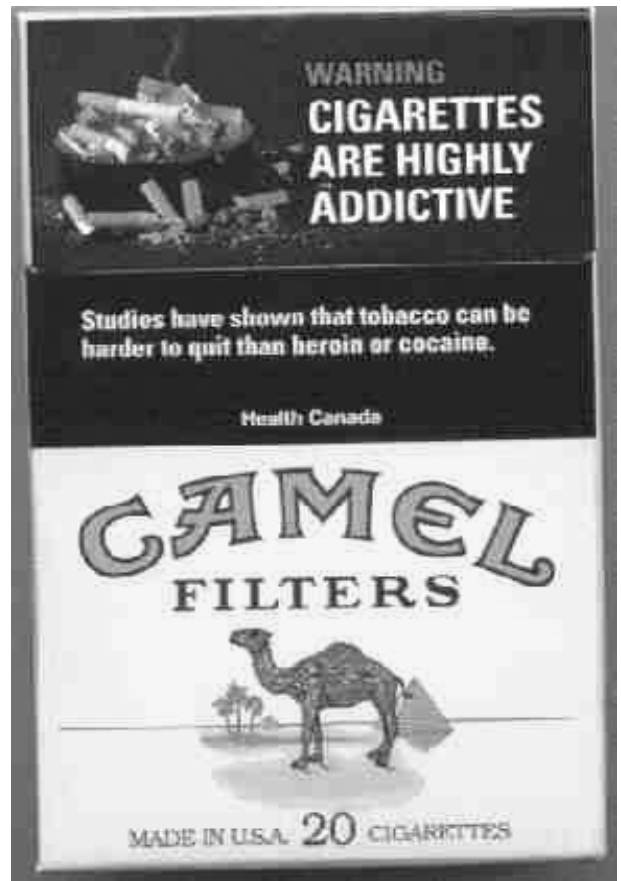
Nicotine has both hijacked your brain’s dopamine reward pathways (your mind’s “pay attention” circuitry) and physically desensitized your brain by growing millions of extra nicotinic type acetylcholine receptors in at least 11 different brain regions, a process known as up-regulation. Recovery is a temporary journey of readjustment where we allow the time needed to restore natural sensitivities, where we break all subconsciously conditioned links to smoking triggers, and where we allow our conscious mind time to move beyond years of smoking rationalizations, minimizations and blame transference.

Unlike scores of other nations, there is no U.S. cigarette pack addiction warning label. As shown in the photo to the right, Canada’s required label covers one-half of the front face of the cigarette packs and reads, “Warning - Cigarettes are highly addictive - Studies have shown that tobacco can be harder to quit than heroin or cocaine.”

Although your nicotine induced dopamine/adrenaline high reflects alert intoxication, chemical dependency upon nicotine is every bit as real, deep and permanent as alcoholism, crystal meth, or heroin addiction.

Have you been telling yourself that you’re not addicted? A June 2005 study ([Kandel](#)) found that 86.8% of students smoking nicotine at least once daily were already chemically dependent based on dependency standards contained in the [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders](#), 4th Edition.

Do you remember the calm and quiet that resided inside your mind before nicotine took control? It’s normal to feel that nicotine now defines who you are or that life without it won’t be nearly as good. Try not to be afraid as you journey home as you’re in for a real treat. Although nearly impossible to believe now you’re leaving nothing of value behind. Visit www.whyquit.com for additional motivational resources, to download our free 149 page quitting book, for free professional counseling or free online peer support.



Nicotine Cessation Tips

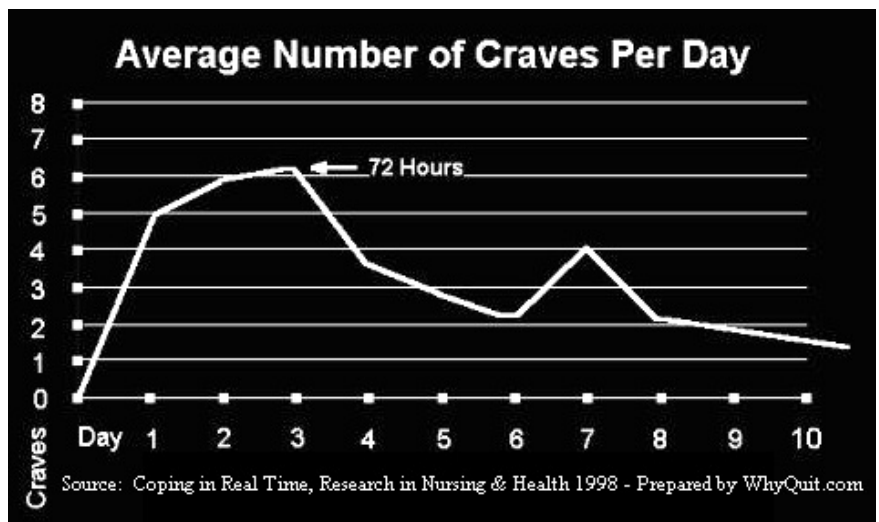
WARNING: The below information is **NOT MEDICAL ADVICE** and you should **IMMEDIATELY CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN** should you experience **ANY** condition or symptom that causes you concern or alarm, including difficulty breathing or continuing depression. The information provided is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between you and your physician. Do not rely any tip to replace individual consultations with your doctor or other qualified health care provider.

1. **Law of Addiction** - The law of addiction states, "administration of a drug to an addict will cause re-establishment of chemical dependence upon the addictive substance at the old level of use or greater." Yes, just one powerful puff and you'll be faced with again enduring up to 72 hours of nicotine detox. We're not that strong. Adherence to a simple four word restatement of the law of addiction guarantees success to all. No nicotine today ...**"Never Take Another Puff."**
2. **Be Honest - This is a True Chemical Dependency** - Nicotine dependency is every bit as real and permanent as alcoholism. Admitting chemical dependency causes us to treat it as the true addiction it is instead of some nasty little habit that can be modified, controlled, molded. There is no such thing as just one puff of nicotine. Recovery truly is an all or nothing proposition.
3. **Enhancing Motivation** - Are you having trouble getting started? Is your motivation in need of a boost? Visit WhyQuit.com and meet [Noni](#), [Bryan](#), [Brandon](#), [Kim](#) or [Sean](#), or watch more than 30 short determination fueling [movie clips](#). If you don't have Internet access visit your local library.
4. **Education is Power** - Visit WhyQuit.com, read [Joel's Library](#) one time from cover to cover, download his PDF [free book](#), watch 50 free [video quitting lessons](#), or get [online support](#).
5. **Measuring Victory** - Forget about quitting "forever." Like attempting the seemingly impossible task of eating an entire elephant, it's the biggest psychological bite imaginable. Instead, work hard at adopting a do-able **"one day at a time"** quitting philosophy for measuring victory. If you insist on seeing success only in terms of quitting forever then on which day will you celebrate?
6. **Recovery Phases** - When quitting, the amount of nicotine remaining in your bloodstream will be cut by half every two hours. Within 72 hours all nicotine and 90% of the chemicals it breaks down into will have passed from your body. Physical withdrawal peaks by day three and is substantially complete within 10 days to two weeks. Subconscious trigger reconditioning normally peaks during the first week and all but our remote, infrequent or seasonal triggers should be extinguished within a month. Conscious thoughts of wanting will gradually grow fewer, shorter in duration and generally less intense. Within a few months they'll become the exception not the rule, as you'll gradually start to develop an expectation of going your entire day without wanting to smoke nicotine.
7. **Withdrawal Symptoms** - Within reason it's fairly safe to blame most of what you'll feel during the first three days on quitting. But after that you need to listen to your body and if concerned give your doctor a call. Don't blame your symptoms on where you're going but on where you've been. See each symptom as a true sign of healing it reflects.
8. **Possible Hidden Conditions** - Each puff of smoke contained more than 500 different gases and 3,500 different particles. One or more of these 4,000 chemicals may have been masking an underlying hidden health problem such as a thyroid condition (iodine), breathing problems including asthma (bronchodilators), or even chronic organic depression (nicotine). Your cigarette's chemicals may also have been interacting with medications you were taking and an adjustment may be necessary. Stay alert and if at all concerned immediately contact your physician or pharmacist.
9. **Emotional Phases** - Chemical dependency upon smoking nicotine is one of the most intense, repetitive and dependable relationships you've likely ever known. It has infected almost every aspect of your life. Be prepared to experience a normal sense of emotional loss when quitting. Expect to

travel through and experience six different emotional phases: (1) denial, (2) anger, (3) bargaining, (4) depression, (5) acceptance, and (6) complacency.

10. **Quitting Cold Turkey** - According to evidence tables in the June 2000 USDHHS Guideline, a smoker's natural six-month odds of quitting "on-their-own" are [roughly 10%](#). Education, new behavioral skills (such as adopting a one day at a time quitting philosophy), and ongoing support can easily more than triple those odds. Contrary to the marketing hype of those selling a growing array of quitting products, almost all successful long-term quitters quit smoking cold turkey ([80 to 90%](#)).
11. **NRT** - Replacement nicotine delivered by the patch, gum, lozenge, spray or inhaler comes from the exact same tobacco plant as nicotine in cigarettes. Clinical efficacy and real-world effectiveness are two different standards. What those selling NRT fail to reveal is that in no real-world quitting methods survey to date (California, Minn., Quebec, London, Maryland, Australia) have those using NRT performed better than those quitting without it. A 2003 study combined and averaged the 7 OTC nicotine patch and gum studies. It found that [only 7%](#) were still not smoking at 6 months. It gets worse. A 1993 study (Tonnesen) found that [0%](#) of second-time patch users succeeded in quitting for 6 months and a 1995 study (Gourlay) reported a 1.6% six-month quitting rate.
12. **Zyban** - Zyban (bupropion), is a dopamine uptake inhibitor in pill form. In all real-world use surveys to date it has yet to perform better than those quitting without it, at rates similar to NRT.
13. **Chantix** - 2006 studies boast a [1 in 5](#) one-year quit smoking rate but were inflated by 16 one-on-one counseling sessions and telephone support. Real-world use rates will be [substantially lower](#).
14. **Hypnosis** - A [1998 Cochrane Review](#) of 9 hypnosis studies concluded that "we have not shown that hypnotherapy has a greater effect on six month quit rates than other interventions or no treatment."
15. **Acupuncture** - A [2002 Cochrane Review](#) of 22 studies concluded, "there is no clear evidence that acupuncture, acupressure, laser therapy or electro-stimulation are effective for smoking cessation."
16. **Don't Get Intimidated** - It's easy to let quitting method study findings intimidate us. Instead use them to gauge just how serious the challenge before you actually is. Quitting is entirely do-able, as evidenced by the fact that here in the U.S. we have more ex-smokers than current smokers. Although quitting isn't easy it is simple, and considering that you have never taken a puff that didn't destroy more of your body's ability to receive and transport life-giving oxygen, and add more cancer causing chemicals to your body, it is well worth the effort. There is just one rule ... no nicotine today, Never Take Another Puff!
17. **Recording Motivations** - Once in the heat of battle, it's normal for the mind to quickly forget the reasons that motivated our recovery attempt. Writing a loving reminder letter, carry with us and reaching for it during moments of challenge can serve as a wonderful first line of defense. As with achievement in almost all human endeavors, the wind beneath our recovery wings will not be strength or willpower but willingness (or won't power) grounded in dreams and desires. Keeping those dreams vibrant and on center-stage ensures that no circumstance will deprive us of glory.
18. **Do Not Skip Meals** - Each puff of nicotine was our spoon, releasing stored fats into our bloodstream. It allowed us to skip meals without experiencing wild blood-sugar swing symptoms such as an inability to concentrate or hunger related anxieties. Properly fueling the body and avoiding needless symptoms isn't a matter of eating more calories but spreading them out more evenly.
19. **Three Days of Natural Juices** - Acidic fruit juices will not only aid in more quickly removing the alkaloid nicotine from the body but in helping stabilize blood sugars. Unless diabetic, we recommend 3 days of drinking natural juices but be careful beyond that as juice can be rather fattening. Cranberry is excellent and a bottle will cost you about the same as a pack of cigarettes.
20. **Weight Gain** - You'd need to gain at least 75 extra pounds in order to equal the health risks associated with smoking a pack-a-day. We recommend vegetables and fruits instead of candies, chips and pastries to help avoid sugar spikes and weight gain. We recommend some form of moderate daily exercise if at all concerned about weight gain. Keep in mind that you can expect a substantial increase in overall lung function within just 90 days. It will aid in engaging in extended periods of physical activity, building cardiovascular endurance and shedding any extra pounds.

21. **Stress Related Anxieties** - Recognize that contrary to popular thinking, smoking nicotine did not relieve stress but only its own absence. Nicotine is an alkaloid. Stress is an acid-producing event capable of quickly neutralizing the body's nicotine reserves. As smokers, we added early withdrawal to every stressful event. You will soon discover an amazing sense of calm during crisis. In handling stress during this temporary period of readjustment called "quitting," practice slow deep breathing while focusing your mind on your favorite object, place or person to the exclusion of other thoughts.
22. **Quitting for Others** - You cannot quit for others. It must be your gift to you. Quitting for a child, spouse, parent or friend creates a natural sense of deprivation that will ultimately result in relapse. If quitting for another, how will an addict's junkie-mind respond the first time they disappoint us?
23. **Attitude** - Although our attitude during recovery may experience substantial swings, so long as no nicotine finds its way into our bloodstream it is impossible to fail. What's important is to keep those day #1 core motivations vibrant and alive to help offset needless fears. Fear of both success and failure is normal. Our fears are gradually consumed by realizing that everything we did as a smoker can be done as well as or better as an ex-smoker. Yes you can!
24. **Patience** - Years of smoking nicotine conditioned us to be extremely impatient, at least when it comes to our addiction. A deprived nicotine addict could inhale a puff of nicotine and have it arrive and release dopamine in their brain within just 8 seconds. Realize the importance of patience to successful recovery. Baby steps, just one hour, challenge and day at a time and then celebrate your continuing freedom, healing and risk reversal.
25. **Keeping Cigarettes** - It's a mistake to keep any nicotine delivery device handy or available. Keeping a stash of cigarettes makes as much sense as someone on suicide watch carrying a loaded gun. Toying with a 50% chance of depriving our self of 5,000 sunrises isn't a game. In that no crave episode will ever last longer than a few minutes it's good to put time between challenge and nicotine.
26. **Caffeine/Nicotine Interaction** - Nicotine somehow doubles the rate by which the body depletes caffeine. Studies have found that our blood-caffeine level rises to 203% of normal baseline if no intake reduction is made when quitting. Although not a problem for most light to moderate caffeine users, consider a caffeine reduction of about half if troubled by anxieties or difficulty sleeping.
27. **Subconscious Smoking Triggers** - You have conditioned your subconscious mind to expect nicotine when encountering certain locations, times, events, people or emotions. Be prepared for each to trigger a brief crave episode. Encountering a trigger cannot trigger relapse unless you take a puff. Take heart, most triggers are reconditioned and extinguished by a single encounter during which the subconscious mind fails to receive the expected result - nicotine.
28. **Crave Episodes Less than Three Minutes** - In contrast to conscious thought fixation (the "nice juicy steak" type thinking that can last as long as you have the ability to maintain your focus), no subconsciously triggered crave episode will last longer than three minutes.
29. **Time Distortion Symptom** - A recent study found that nicotine cessation causes serious time distortion. Although no crave episode will last longer than three minutes, to a quitter the minutes can feel like hours. Keep a clock handy to maintain honest perspective.
30. **Crave Episode Frequency** - The "average" number of crave



Although no subconsciously crave episode will last longer than 3 minutes, serious time distortion is very real when quitting so keep a clock handy.

episodes (each less than three minutes) experienced by the "average" quitter on their most challenging day of recovery is six episodes on day three. That's a total of 18 minutes of challenge on the most challenging day. But what if you're not average? What if you established and must encounter twice as many nicotine-feeding cues as the average quitter? That's 36 minutes of significant challenge. Can you handle 36 minutes of serious anxiety in order to reclaim your mind, health and as much life expectancy as possible? Absolutely! We all can. Be prepared for a small spike in crave episodes on day seven as you celebrate your first full week of freedom from nicotine. Yes, for most of us smoking was part of every celebration. Also stay alert for subtle differences between crave triggers. For example, the Sunday newspaper is much thicker and may have required three cigarettes to read instead of just one.

31. **Understanding the Big Crave** - The average quitter will be experiencing just 1.4 crave episodes per day by day ten. After that you'll soon begin to experience entire days without encountering a single un-reconditioned subconscious crave trigger. If a later crave episode ever feels far more intense it's likely that it has been some time since your last significant challenge and you've dropped your guard and defenses a bit. It can feel as though you've been sucker punched. If one does occur, see the distance between challenges as the wonderful sign of healing the incident reflects.
32. **Crave Coping Techniques** - The shower is always a safe bet. Another is to practice slow deep breathing when experiencing a crave episode. Try briefly clearing your mind of all needless chatter by focusing on your favorite person, place or thing. Another popular three minute crave coping exercise is to say your ABCs while associating each letter with your favorite food, person or place. For example, the letter "A" is for grandma's hot apple pie. "B" is for warm buttered biscuits. I think you'll find that you'll never make it to the challenging letter Q.
33. **Embracing A Crave** - Another coping technique is to mentally reach out and embrace your crave. A crave cannot cut you, burn you, kill you, or make you bleed. Try being brave just once. In your mind, wrap your arms around the crave's anxiety energy and sense as it slowly fizzes and dies while in your embrace. Yes, another trigger bites the dust and you've reclaimed yet another aspect of life!
34. **Confronting Our Triggers** - Recovery is a process of reclaiming every aspect of life. At the end of each challenge we are awarded another piece of puzzle that once complete mirrors the reality that everything we did as a smoker can be done as well or better as an ex-smoker. Meet, greet and extinguish your triggers. Don't hide from them. We need not give up anything except nicotine.
35. **Alcohol Use** - Be extremely careful with early alcohol use during the first couple of weeks as it plays a role in up to 50% of relapses. Using an inhibition diminishing substance while surrounded by smokers during early withdrawal is a recipe for relapse. We need to get our quitting feet under us first. Consider breaking trigger encounters down into more manageable tasks (drinking at home first without smokers around, being with smokers but refraining from drinking, spacing drinks further apart, or drinking water or juice between drinks). Have an escape plan and a backup, and be fully prepared to use both. In that nicotine is a stimulant you may feel more intoxicated quicker.
36. **Support Expectations** - Don't expect family or friends who have never been chemically dependent themselves to have any appreciation of your challenges or the time required to achieve substantial comfort. It simply isn't fair to them or you. Find an ex-smoker and ask them if they'd mind being your mentor for the next 90 days. Online you'll find a number of wonderful quitting [support groups](#).
37. **No Legitimate Excuse for Relapse** - Recognize that smoking nicotine cannot solve any crisis. Fully accept the fact that there is absolutely no legitimate excuse for relapse, including an auto accident, financial crisis, the end of a relationship, job loss, a terrorist attack, a hurricane, the birth of a baby, or the eventual inevitable death of those we love most. Picture yourself not smoking through each and every step needed to overcome the most difficult challenge your mind can possibly imagine.
38. **Conscious Thought Fixation** - Unlike a less than three-minute subconscious crave episode, we can consciously fixate on any thought of wanting to smoke for as long as we're able to maintain our concentration. Instead of trying to run or hide from thoughts of wanting trying placing the thought under honest light. Flavor? How many taste buds are inside human lungs? Just one puff? For us

nicotine addicts, one is too many and a thousand never enough. It is dishonest to debate with our self about wanting to smoke "a" cigarette. Instead, we need to be honest and ask how we'd feel about going back to all of them, to our old level of nicotine consumption or greater.

39. **Reward Yourself** - Consider putting aside the money that you would have spent buying cigarettes and treat yourself to something you really want after a week or a month. Save for a year and go on a vacation. Even if unable to save, reward yourself by quickly climbing from that deep smoker's rut and spending time in places where you couldn't smoke, such as movies, libraries and no smoking sections of restaurants, by engaging in activities lasting longer than an hour, and by ever so slightly pushing your normal limits of physical endurance in order to sample the amazing healing within.
40. **Fully Commit To Going the Distance** - Don't be afraid to tell people around you that you have quit smoking. Fully commit to your recovery while taking pride in each and every hour and day of healing and freedom from nicotine, and each challenge overcome. Shed needless fears of success.
41. **[Avoid All Crutches](#)** - A crutch is any form of quitting reliance that is leaned upon so heavily in supporting a quit, that if quickly removed will likely result in relapse. Try hard not to lean upon a quitting buddy who quits at the same time as you, as unless they too are an educated quitter their odds of success are small. Instead ask an ex-smoker or never-smoker for support, or visit a free online support forum such as WhyQuit.com's [Freedom from Tobacco](#).
42. **[The Smoking Dream](#)** - Be prepared for an extremely vivid smoking dream as tobacco odors released by horizontal healing lungs are swept up bronchial tubes by rapidly healing cilia and come in contact with a vastly enhanced sense of smell. See it as the wonderful sign of healing it reflects and nothing more. It has no profound meaning beyond healing.
43. **[See Marketing as Bait](#)** - Arresting your dependency means thousands of dollars in lost profits to the tobacco industry. They do not want to lose you. See store tobacco advertising and the hundreds of neatly aligned packs and cartons for what they truly reflect - bait. Behind the pretty colored boxes and among more than 600 flavor additives is hidden what many dependency experts now consider earth's most perfectly designed chemical of addiction.
44. **It's Never Too Late** - Regardless of how long you've smoked, how old you are, or how badly you've damaged your body, it's never too late to arrest your dependency, become its master, and commence the most intense period of healing that your mind and body have likely ever known.
45. **Study Smokers Closely** - They are not smoking nicotine to tease you. They do so because they must, in order to replenish a constantly falling blood-serum nicotine level that declines by half every two hours. Most nicotine is smoked while on autopilot. What cue triggered the public feeding you're now witnessing? Watch acid-producing events such as stress or alcohol quickly neutralize their body's reserves of the alkaloid nicotine. Witness their endless mandatory cycle of replenishment.
46. **[Thinking vs. Wanting](#)** - Thinking about smoking and wanting to smoke are two different things.. After years of smoking you should expect to notice and smell smokers but it doesn't necessarily mean that you want to smoke. As for thoughts of wanting, like a slowly opening rose bud, with each passing day they'll gradually grow shorter in duration, generally less intense and a bit further apart.
47. **[Non-Smoker or Ex-Smoker](#)** - What should you call yourself? Although it's normal to want to be a non-smoker there is a major distinction between a never-smoker and an ex-smoker. Only the ex-smoker can grow complacent, use nicotine and relapse.
48. **Complacency** - Recovery transports us from active dependency and not being able to remember the calm and quit mind we enjoyed prior to chemical enslavement, to a point where we can no longer remember the emotion and effort expended in quitting. It would be wise to take a few notes.
49. **Relapse** - Remember that there are only two good reasons to take a puff once you quit. You decide you want to go back to your old level of consumption until smoking cripples and likely kills you, or, you decide you really enjoy withdrawal and you want to make it last forever.
50. **Just One Guiding Principle** - As long as neither of the above two options appeal to you, staying free is as simple as, no nicotine just one day at a time ... Never Take Another Puff, Dip or Chew!