

# Nicotine Dependency Recovery



## About This Booklet

This document was created by John R. Polito, a nicotine cessation educator and director of [www.whyquit.com](http://www.whyquit.com). These tips are primarily a product of medical studies and lessons from Joel's Library (<http://whyquit.com/joel>), an insightful collection of 100+ short quitting articles and 200+ videos.

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, 106 Aldrich Place, Goose, Creek, SC 29445 (843) 797-3234 or via email to [john@whyquit.com](mailto:john@whyquit.com)

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# Do you smoke? Is your life nearly over?

*"I have plenty of time left to quit!"*



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



Bryan started smoking at age 13. A 34 year-old Marlboro Light smoker, Bryan 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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 mom and great seafood. Married at 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 Noni holding her son was taken on March 16th, 36 days after being diagnosed with small cell



lung cancer, and three days after her 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday.



To the left is a picture taken four days before Noni's June 24<sup>th</sup> 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 [WhyQuit.com](http://WhyQuit.com).

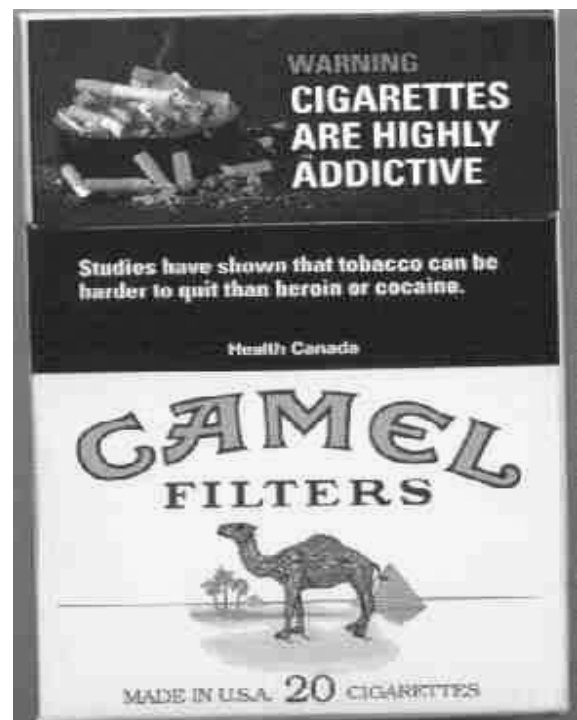
# Do you see yourself as a real drug addict?

***"It's just a habit." "I can quit if I want!"***

According to the CDC, at least 41% of smokers make a quitting attempt of at least one day each year, yet few of this year's attempts will succeed long-term. Why? Because most see and treat their true chemical addiction as though some "nasty little habit." Truth is, when quitting there is no such thing as smoking just one. Like alcoholism, recovery is all or nothing.

To the right is a photo of the addiction warning that Canada first used in 2000. It says, "Warning - Cigarettes are highly addictive - Studies have shown that tobacco can be harder to quit than heroin or cocaine."

The wanting satisfaction sensation you sense upon smoking nicotine flows from the exact same dopamine pathways as the wanting satisfaction felt by the alcoholic, heroin or methamphetamine addict. While your dopamine pathway wanting relief is accompanied by alertness instead of intoxication, numbness, euphoria or a racing sensation, you are a REAL drug addict in every sense, and it's as permanent as alcoholism.



Once hooked the only remaining question becomes, on which side of dependency's bars will I spend the balance of life?

A June 2005 study (Kandel) found that 86.8% of students smoking nicotine at least once daily were already chemically dependent based upon dependency standards contained in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, 4th Edition.

Nicotine has physically rewired your brain, growing millions of extra acetylcholine receptors in at least 11 different regions. Your mind is desensitized to its own natural neuro-chemical flow. Quitting is a temporary journey of readjustment where you allow the time needed to restore natural

sensitivities, where you break subconsciously conditioned links to smoking triggers and where you allow your conscious mind time to move beyond years of smoking rationalizations.

Do you remember the calm and quiet mind you called home before nicotine took control? Why fear a temporary journey of re-adjustment that transports you to entire days where you never once think about wanting to use? Why fear the most liberating event you'll ever know?

## 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." 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 just one day at a time, to "Never Take Another Puff."
2. **[Be Honest With Yourself](#)** - "My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a **REAL** drug addict." Nicotine dependency is every bit as real and permanent as alcoholism. Don't play games with yourself. Your brain dopamine pathways have assigned nicotine use the same priority as they assign to eating food. Treating a true addiction as though it were some nasty little habit is a recipe for relapse. There is no such thing as just one, or just once. Recovery truly is all or nothing.
3. **[Setting Quit Dates](#)** - We now have two studies showing that unplanned quitting attempts are twice as likely to succeed as planned ones. Why invite concern over some future quitting date to slowly eat away your motivation and resolve before quitting day ever arrives? Just here and now, these next few minutes, yes you can!
4. **Enhance Your Motivation** - Are you having trouble getting started? Is your motivation in need of a boost? Visit [WhyQuit.com](#) and meet [Noni](#), [Bryan](#), [Deb](#), [Neal](#), [Kim](#) or [Sean](#), or watch short [video clips](#). If you don't have Internet access, visit your local library.
5. **Knowledge is a Quitting Method** - Visit [WhyQuit.com](#), skim the free e-book "[Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home](#)," or explore [Joel's Library](#) where you can read [100+ quitting articles](#), [watch 200+ videos](#) or download Joel's popular free e-book "[Never Take Another Puff](#)."

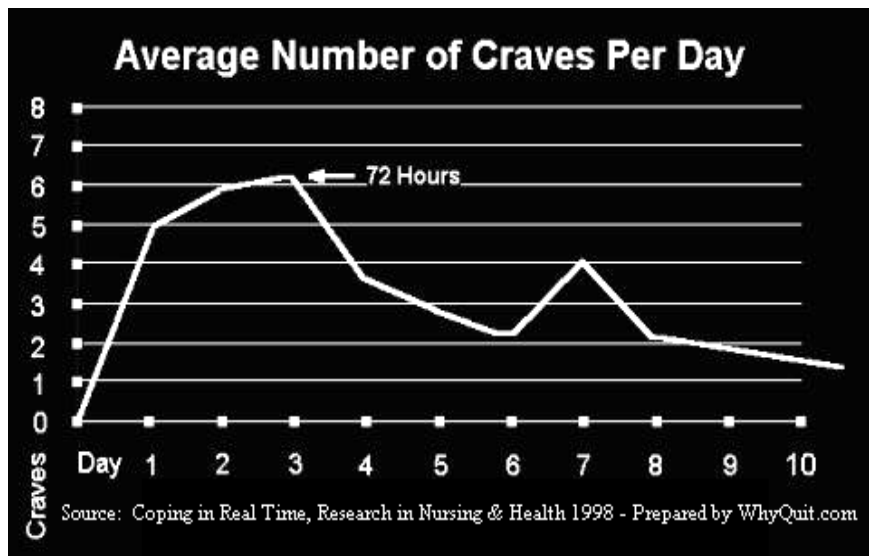
6. **Explore Online Support** - Visit [Turkeyville](#), Facebook's popular quitting site or [Freedom](#), Yuku's.
7. **Measuring Victory** - Forget about quitting "forever." Like attempting the seemingly impossible task of eating an entire elephant, it's the biggest psychological bite imaginable. Instead, work hard at adopting a more manageable "[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?
8. **Recovery is a Journey Not an Event** - When quitting, the amount of nicotine remaining in your bloodstream is cut by half every two hours. Within 72 hours all nicotine will have passed from your body. Physical withdrawal has no choice but to peak by day three and be substantially complete within 2 to 3 weeks. Subconscious trigger reconditioning normally peaks during the first week, and all but your remote, infrequent or seasonal triggers should be reconditioned 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.
9. **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.
10. **Possible Hidden Conditions** - Each puff of smoke contained more than 500 different gases and more than 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 (bronchio-dialiators), 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.
11. **Emotional Phases** - Chemical dependency upon smoking nicotine is one of the most intense, repetitive and dependable relationships you've 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.
12. **Quit Cold Turkey** - Each year, more smokers succeed in quitting cold turkey than by all other methods combined. It's fast, free, safe, [highly productive](#) and the [most effective](#) real-world recovery method of all.
13. **NRT** - The pharmaceutical industry has not been honest with you about your odds of success while using nicotine replacement products (NRT) such as the patch, gum and lozenge. A [March 2003 study](#) (Hughes) combined and averaged the seven over-the-counter nicotine patch and gum studies. It found that only 7% of study participants were still not smoking at six months. A decade later, a [July 2013 Gallup Poll](#) found that after 40 years and billions spent on marketing Nicorette, that only 1 in 100 ex-smokers succeeded in quitting by using nicotine gum. Whether a light or heavy smoker, toying with replacement nicotine [undercuts your chances](#). Treat nicotine like fire. Leave it alone!
14. **Chantix/Champix** - Varenicline failed to show statistical significance over NRT in two head-to-head studies when assessing the number of users not smoking

at both 6 months and 1 year. What sense does it make to risk your life when varenicline is no more effective than toying with replacement nicotine?

15. **Don't Get Intimidated** - Don't let the above quitting method study findings discourage you. 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. In fact, it's impossible to fail so long as all nicotine stays on the outside. There is only one rule: no nicotine just one hour, challenge and day at a time!
16. **Record Your Motivations** - Once in the heat of battle, it is normal for your mind to quickly forget the many reasons that motivated you to stop smoking. Write yourself a loving reminder letter, carry it with you, and read it often. Make it your first line of defense, a motivational tool that you can pull out during moments of challenge. As with achievement in almost all human endeavors, the wind beneath your recovery wings will not be strength or willpower but robust dreams and desires. Keep your dreams vibrant and on center-stage and no circumstance will deprive you of glory.
17. **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. Learn to again properly fuel your body by spreading out your normal daily calorie intake more evenly. Do not skip meals.
18. **Three Days of Natural Juices** - Drink plenty of acidic fruit juice the first three days. Cranberry is excellent and a bottle will likely cost less a pack of cigarettes. The acidic juices will not only aid in more quickly eliminating the alkaloid nicotine from your bloodstream, but will help stabilize blood sugars. Take care beyond three days as juices can be rather fattening.
19. **Weight Control** - You'd need to gain at least 75 extra pounds in order to equal the health risks associated with smoking one pack-a-day. Eat vegetables and fruits instead of candies, chips and pastries to help avoid weight gain. Engage in some form of moderate daily physical activity if at all concerned about weight gain. Keep in mind that you can expect a substantial increase in overall lung function of up to 30% within just 90 days of quitting. It will aid you in engaging in extended periods of brisk physical activity, in shedding any extra pounds, and in building cardiovascular endurance.
20. **Stress Related Anxieties** - Smoking is NOT a stress-buster. Recognize that contrary to popular thinking, smoking nicotine did not relieve stress but only its own absence. Nicotine is an alkaloid. As with drinking alcohol, stress causes our urine to turn more acidic. The more acidic your urine, the quicker your kidneys eliminate nicotine from your bloodstream. As smokers, we added early withdrawal to every stressful event. You will soon discover an amazing sense of calm during crisis.
21. **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?
22. **Attitude** - A positive can-do attitude is important. We are what we think. Take pride in each hour of healing and freedom and in each challenge overcome. Celebrate the full and complete victory each reflects. The next few minutes are

all that matter and each is entirely do-able. Yes you can!

23. **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 satisfy brain dopamine pathway wanting within 8-10 seconds. Realize the importance of patience to successful recovery. Baby steps, just one hour, challenge and day at a time and then celebrate the new found patience you just demonstrated.
24. **Keeping Cigarettes** - Get rid of all cigarettes. Keeping a stash of cigarettes makes as much sense as someone on suicide watch keeping a loaded gun handy just to prove they can. Toying with a 50% chance of depriving yourself of 5,000 sunrises isn't a game. Fully commit to going the distance and seeing what it's like to awaken to new expectations of a nicotine-free life.
25. **Caffeine/Nicotine Interaction** - Amazingly, nicotine somehow doubles the rate by which the liver depletes caffeine. Studies have found that your blood-caffeine level will rise to 203% of your normal baseline if no intake reduction is made when quitting. Although not a problem for most light to moderate caffeine users, consider a caffeine intake reduction of up to 50% if troubled by anxieties or if experiencing difficulty relaxing or sleeping.
26. **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 as most triggers are reconditioned and extinguished by a single encounter during which the subconscious mind fails to receive the expected result - nicotine.
27. **Crave Episodes Less than Three Minutes** - In contrast to conscious thought fixation (the "nice juicy steak" type thinking that can last as long as your ability to maintain your focus), no subconsciously triggered crave episode will last longer than three minutes.
28. **Time Distortion Symptom** - Studies show 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, especially if they panic. Keep a clock handy to maintain honest perspective.
29. **Crave Episode Frequency** - The "average" number of crave 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



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

your 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.

30. **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-extinguished 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 it reflects. The bigger the better!
31. **Crave Coping Techniques** - One coping method 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.
32. **Embracing Craves** - 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 then sense as it slowly fizzles and dies while in your embrace. Yes, another trigger bites the dust and victory is again yours!
33. **Confront Your Crave Triggers** - Recognize the fact that everything you did as a smoker you will learn to again comfortably do as an ex-smoker. Meet, greet and defeat your triggers. Don't hide from them. You need not give up anything when quitting except nicotine. Everything you did while under the influence of nicotine will soon be done as well or better as an ex-smoker.
34. **Alcohol Use** - Be extremely careful with early alcohol use during the first couple of weeks as alcohol use is associated with roughly half of all relapses. Using an inhibition diminishing substance and then intentionally surrounding yourself with smokers while still engaged in early withdrawal is a recipe for relapse. Get your recovery feet under you first. If you do use alcohol, once ready to extinguish your drinking triggers consider breaking the challenge down into manageable trigger segments. Try drinking at home first without smokers around, go out with smokers but refrain from drinking, or consider spacing your drinks further apart, or drinking water or juice between drinks. Have an escape plan and a backup, and be fully prepared to use them both.
35. **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 like [Turkeyville](#) and [Freedom](#).

36. **[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.
37. **[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 are able to maintain our concentration. Don't try to run or hide from thoughts of wanting but instead place the thought under honest light. Flavor? Are there any taste buds inside your lungs? Just one puff? For us nicotine addicts, one is too many and a thousand never enough. Treat nicotine dependency recovery as if it were no different than alcoholism. Don't debate or lie to yourself about not wanting "a" cigarette. Be honest. You do want one. But what about the thousands of others that come with it?
38. **[Love, Flavor, Stress, Friend & Boredom](#)** - Did we like smoking or not like what happened when we didn't? And what honest basis exists for determining likes and loves when no longer able to recall the quiet mind you called home prior to becoming nicotine's slave, of going days, weeks and months without once thinking about wanting to use? Flavor, stress, our best friend, coffee and alcohol's companion, something to do with our hands, inhaling carbon monoxide to aid concentration, I'll lose my friends if I quit, there was really only one reason we used. We did so because we had to, because a rising tide of anxieties would begin arriving when we didn't.
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. Spend ending time in places where you couldn't smoke, such as movies, libraries and no smoking sections of restaurants, or by engaging in activities lasting longer than an hour. And ever so slightly, push your normal limits of physical endurance in order to sample and savor 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. Don't fear coming home, embrace it!
41. **[Expect Bad Days](#)** - It is normal for all humans to have bad days now and then, even never-smokers. Baby steps, tomorrow will be better.
42. **[Avoid All Crutches](#)** - A crutch is any form of quitting reliance that you lean upon so heavily in supporting your quit (yes, a noun) that if quickly removed would likely result in relapse. Do not lean heavily upon a quitting buddy who quits at the same time as you, as their odds of successfully quitting for one year are relatively small. Instead ask an ex-smoker or never-smoker for support, or visit our online support forums.
43. **[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, where they come in contact with a vastly enhanced sense of smell. See these amazingly vivid dreams as being wonderful signs of healing and nothing more. It has no profound meaning beyond healing.

44. **See Marketing as Bait** - Your quitting means thousands of dollars in lost profits to the tobacco industry. They do not want to lose you. See store tobacco industry flavor and pleasure advertising and the hundreds of neatly aligned packs and cartons for what they truly reflect - bait. Remember, behind the pretty colored boxes and among more than 600 flavor additives is hidden what many dependency experts now consider earth's most captivating chemical.
45. **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.
46. **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, alcohol or drinking juice quickly neutralize their nicotine reserves. Witness their endless mandatory cycle of replenishment. Not so long ago, that was us.
47. **Thinking vs. Wanting** - There is a major distinction between thinking about smoking and wanting to smoke. Don't confuse the two. After years of smoking you should expect to notice every smoker within view (especially in movies). But noticing doesn't necessarily mean that you want to smoke. As for thoughts of wanting, with each passing day they'll gradually grow shorter in duration, generally less intense and a bit further apart. Eventually they'll grow so infrequent that when one arrives it will bring a smile to your face as it will be your only remaining reminder of the amazing journey you once made.
48. **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. Think about it. Only the ex-smoker can grow complacent, use nicotine and relapse.
49. **Complacency** - Don't allow complacency to destroy your healing and glory. The ingredients for relapse are a failing memory of why we quit and of the early challenges, rewriting the law of addiction to exempt or exclude ourselves, and an excuse such as stress, celebration, illness, finances, war, death, or even a cigar at the birth of a baby.
50. **Relapse Prevention** - 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 then kills you, or, you decide you really enjoy withdrawal and you want to make it last forever. As long as neither of these options appeals to you - no nicotine just one day at a time ... Never Take Another Puff!

***Baby steps, just here and now, yes you can!***

*Last updated December 20, 2013 by [John R. Polito](#)*