

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

How would you deal with the following situations?

Your 2-year-old is having a temper tantrum because he wants a new toy. Would you;

- 1. Leave him alone until he calmed down**
- 2. Give into his demands**
- 3. Give him a tranquilizer**

Your 7-year-old is anxious about next week's Little League tryouts. Would you;

- 1. Assure him that he can do it**
- 2. Practice with him and tell him to try his best**
- 3. Give him a valium every three hours until the game**

Your 14-year-old is crushed when she is not asked to the sophomore dance. Would you;

- 1. Fix her up with one of your friend's children**
- 2. Tell her to go anyway**
- 3. Give her cocaine to pick up her spirits**

Your 15-year-old is self-conscious about being 5 pounds overweight. Would you;

- 1. Cook lower calorie meals**
 - 2. Enroll her in a diet or exercise program**
 - 3. Put her on appetite suppressants**
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All of these young people are experiencing what adults would consider "growing pains." A little time, patience and positive reassuring will help them overcome all of these difficult situations.

The fact is, as long as anyone continues to develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, professionally or spiritually, they too will experience growing pains. Adults are prone to hurt, pain, sadness, depression and anxiety just as children are. These feelings are all necessary if we wish to continue to develop our minds and bodies. Without such growth, we would not experience happiness, satisfaction, contentment or purpose to their full extent.

The third choice in each of the above situations was, of course, ridiculous. We would not subject our children to chemical hazards to overcome such trivial problems.

However, as adults we are fully capable of practicing such dangerous behaviors for our own relief. Take cigarette smoking as an example.

When you were still a smoker, how many times would you say you had to smoke because you were lonely and sad without your friendly cigarettes? How many times did you say that you had to smoke because of all the stress in your life? How many times did you tell yourself that many social activities were just not fun without your cigarettes? How many times did you say that you would gain too much weight if you quit smoking? All you were saying was that you needed nicotine, a drug, to overcome everyday life problems.

It was not until you were off cigarettes that you realized you could overcome such problems without smoking, and in most cases more effectively than when you were a smoker. Once you had quit you realized just how much a source of stress dependence upon nicotine was to you. You were caught by a socially unacceptable and physically deadly addiction and were quite often aware of it. This is when you had the desire to give them up, but thought the pain of quitting too great to even attempt it.

Even today, you probably still desire an occasional cigarette. It may be in a stressful situation, at a party after a few drinks, or at a time when you find yourself alone with nothing better to do. The fact is, there is nothing worse you can do than take a cigarette. One cigarette will not help you over the problem. In reality, it will create a new problem, a disastrous situation of a revived and reinforced addiction, with all the physical dangers and the dirty means of delivery that come with it.

So, next time you have the desire for a cigarette, sit back and take a few moments to reflect upon what you are setting yourself up for. Do you need that drug? Do you want that addiction? If not, simply remember - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Joel

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