

## *Joel's Reinforcement Library*

**NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

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### *Proud To Be A Smoker?*

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"I am a smoker." Saying that 25 years ago was a way of showing yourself to be glamorous, sophisticated, grown-up, and even intelligent. It merely meant that you had a simple practice of lighting cigarettes--a habit you shared with over half the men and over a third of the women in our country. But times have changed! Being a smoker today makes you feel as popular as a leper in ancient times. In 25 years, smoking has gone from being a perfectly acceptable, even desirable, habit to a socially unacceptable, demoralizing behavior.

But smoking is more than a habit--it is an addiction. Being a smoker is synonymous with being a drug addict. This creates a whole new set of problems. A smoker doesn't smoke by choice, he or she has to smoke. The smoker must smoke in certain time intervals. If not, he or she will experience withdrawal symptoms. This posed no threat 25 years ago. A smoker could smoke at home, work, restaurants, hospitals, doctors offices, actually anywhere and anytime he or she wished. It was the perfect drug for an addict. The only time a smoker faced withdrawal was through carelessness--like running out of cigarettes in the middle of the night--but this did not happen often.

However, slowly over the years more and more restrictions have been placed on where a smoker can get his or her "fix." In the beginning it was enforced by "radical" family members or friends. Restricting the smoker's right to smoke was considered to be in poor taste by most smokers and non-smokers alike. These early activists were often criticized and ostracized by those sympathetic to the smoker's plight.

But then the effects of second-hand smoke became an issue. With the possible health implication for non-smokers becoming apparent, the anti-smoking forces had powerful ammunition to support their contention that they had the right to a smoke-free environment. More people banned smoking in their homes. Then small municipalities and whole states started regulating mandatory non-smoking areas in public places. But the strongest threat was not the restriction on smoking in public areas. A smoker could avoid such places or limit the times there.

The newest and greatest threat is now becoming an all too common reality. No-smoking rules are being enforced in the one place the smoker has to be for extended periods of time--the office where he or she works. Some employers are providing out-of-the-way areas where smokers can smoke at breaks. But other companies are totally banning smoking on the premises. This creates the problem of 8-hour withdrawal periods on a daily basis. A smoker may wish to change his or her place of employment to avoid such regulation, but there is no guarantee that the next company won't eventually enforce a similar policy.

Today, chronic withdrawal is becoming a way of life for a smoker. Smoking is a hassle at home, at social gatherings, and now, due to the enforcement of new smoking policies, even at work. Where is it all going to end? The simple fact is that, for the smoker, it isn't. Smoking is beginning to interfere with all aspects of the smoker's life, and every smoker must now ask him or herself the same question, "Is smoking worth it?" If you don't think so, then - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

**Joel**

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