

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

***"Well, at least I attempted to quit.
That is better than not trying at all."***

This comment was stated by a clinic participant who, after five days of not smoking, gave in to an urge and took a cigarette. It was only going to be one cigarette, he thought. But by the end of the day, he was up to his old level. So what about his logic that at least trying to quit smoking is better than not trying at all?

If this was his first attempt, it could be said that it was a learning experience. Maybe he just didn't understand the concept of addiction. He did not believe one cigarette could reestablish a physical dependency on nicotine. After taking one cigarette, he lost all control. So now, if he would ever quit again, he would not question the concept of one cigarette causing a total relapse.

But this was not his first attempt quitting. It was his second time in our clinic, as well as multiple previous attempts at other programs, hypnosis and on his own. He once quit for two months before relapsing. At that time he broke all physical dependency on nicotine. Also, after two months he successfully overcame many trigger situations which cause many smokers to initially relapse. Work pressures, family problems, and social situations are obstacles that all ex-smokers initially face when quitting. He overcame all of these trigger situations. But then, one day, out of sheer boredom, he took a cigarette. In that attempt, too, he relapsed right back to his old level. Obviously, taking that cigarette was a serious mistake.

This attempt, too, he chalked up to experience. But when considering his latter attempts, it is apparent that he learned nothing. Unless he objectively evaluates what causes his relapses to smoking, he is wasting his time trying to quit again. Because instead of recognizing his past attempts as failures, he rationalizes a positive feeling of accomplishment about them. This type of rationalization all but assures failures in all future attempts.

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Don't allow yourself to get into the same rut as this man did. On again, off again, one withdrawal after another. Quitting smoking is only the first step in smoking cessation. If you wish to make the attempt a permanent solution to your smoking addiction, stop cold turkey and - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Joel

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