Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

"I'm Not Going to Smoke Today!"

During the quitting process, you most likely woke up thinking of this concept, either with great determination or incredible trepidation. Either way, it was imperative that you aimed a high degree of focus at this lofty goal. The incredible cravings elicited by the addiction required that you had all the motivation and ammunition to squelch the seemingly irresistible need to take a cigarette. Whether or not you understood it, immediately reaffirming your goal not to smoke upon waking was crucial during your initial quitting phase.

The fact is, restating the simple concept of "not smoking today" is not only important when you first quit. You should restate this upon waking for the rest of your life. Each day you should start with "I'm not going to smoke today." Equally important, each day you should end congratulating yourself and feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment for achieving your worthwhile goal.

For even years and decades after successful cessation, every day you continue to breathe and think, relapse to smoking remains an inherent risk. The addiction to nicotine is as powerful as the addiction to alcohol or any illicit drug. The habituation of smoking permeated almost every area of your day to day existence. You may allow complacency to fill the void left by your old addiction and habits by disregarding the monumental effort and achievement which accompanied overcoming them. Complacency causes your guard to drop and you may begin to forget the reasons you wanted to quit. You will no longer recognize the many vast improvements in the quality of your physical, social and economic well being which accompanied smoking cessation.

Then, one day when smoking seemed to be a part of an obscure past which had no real relevance to your current status, a thought for a cigarette is accompanied by an opportunity to "innocently" reach for one. Maybe it is under an insignificant social circumstance, or maybe a major life crisis. Either way, all the elements seem to be in place. Motive, cause and opportunity are present, reasoning and knowledge of

addiction are conspicuously absent. A puff is taken.

New rules are now in place. Your body demands nicotine. A preordained process is now set in motion, and, even if you don't realize what has happened, a drug relapse has occurred. The wants and desire to take back the action are overpowered by the body's demand for nicotine. You will have no control of the physiological process set in action. Soon your mind bows to your body's dictates.

You will very likely feel great regret and remorse. An overriding feeling of failure and guilt will haunt you. You will soon find yourself longing for the days when you had hardly thought of cigarettes at all. But those days will slowly become a fading past image. Weeks, months or even decades may pass before you once again musters the resolve to attempt a serious quitting process. Sadly, you may never again have the appropriate strength, initial motivation, or, tragically, the opportunity to quit again. A terminal diagnosis or sudden death may preclude the well-intentioned future attempt that may never have a chance to be realized.

Don't take the chance of becoming entrapped in this kind of tragic and dismal scenario. Actively strive to successfully remain smoke free and maintain all the associated perks—the physical, emotional, economic, professional and social benefits of not being an active smoker. Always start your day off with the statement "I won't smoke today." Always end your day with a self-affirmation and sense of pride and accomplishment for once again winning your daily battle over your addiction. And always remember between your waking up and the ending of your day to - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Joel

© Joel Spitzer 1996, 2000
Page last updated by Joel Spitzer on November 29, 2002

WhyQuit.Com Motivation, Education and Support for Cold Turkey Nicotine Cessation