

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

The Lucky One's Get Hooked!

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF! Even though this sentence consists of four simple words, some ex-smokers have a hard time understanding the true meaning of this most-important concept. These are the unfortunate smokers who make the tragic experiment of trying a cigarette to see how they will react. There are two possible outcomes to taking a puff. First, and most likely, the ex-smoker will become hooked and return to his old level of consumption, usually within a matter of days. The other possible reaction is that he does not get hooked. In the long run, he will truly be the greatest loser.

The ex-smoker who gets hooked from the first puff will have learned a valuable lesson. If he ever quits again, he will have a good chance of long term success, for he knows from his own experience that he cannot ever take one puff without going right back to his old level. He knows that he is not depriving himself of one drag, but rather doing himself a great favor by not smoking the amount that he used to when addicted to nicotine.

On the other hand, the ex-smoker who takes a drag and doesn't get hooked gets a false sense of confidence. He thinks he can take one any time he wants and not get hooked. Usually, within a short period of time sneaking a drag here and there, he will become hooked. One day he too may try to quit and actually succeed. He may quit for a week, month, or even years. But always in the back of his mind he feels, "I know I can have one if I really want to. After all, I did it last time and didn't get hooked right away." One day, at a party or under stress or just out of boredom he will try one again. Maybe this time he will get hooked, maybe not. But you can be sure that there will be a next time. Eventually he will become hooked again.

This poor person will go through a life of perpetual relapses. On cigarettes and off, on and off. Each time he goes back, he will have to quit once again. And you know what that means - going through the two-week withdrawal process over and over again. You hated going through it once. Think what it would be like to go through it three,

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four or even more times. One participant did it thirteen times, others eight and nine times each. If they had just become hooked the first time they took a puff, it might never have happened again.

Taking the first drag is a no-win situation. There is little doubt that it will result in your returning to a powerful and deadly addiction. Consider the full ramifications of once again becoming addicted to cigarettes. The health consequences, the expense, the social stigma, the sense of failure and the prospects of once again having to go through the withdrawal process when you once again try to quit. Keep all this in mind and remember - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Joel

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