

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

"The only time I think of cigarettes is when I receive one of your stupid letters!"

"The only time I think of cigarettes is when I receive one of your stupid letters!" Recently, a clinic graduate expressed this sentiment when I inquired as to how life without smoking was going. He was trying very hard to forget that he had ever smoked. It was a part of his life that he no longer wished to dwell upon. But my follow-up correspondence was making forgetting impossible. He was now at the point where he threw out my letters without even opening them.

The fact is that I continue to send these letters so that the ex-smoker will never forget about smoking. For if he is like most ex-smokers, he will never totally forget his smoking past. He will forget the cigarettes that made him sick, the ones that made him feel socially ostracized, and the countless ones he smoked daily without even being aware that he was lighting them. Most important, he will forget the cigarettes he didn't want to light but which were alleviating urges that were too powerful to control. In essence, he will forget about the majority of cigarettes he had smoked, and then, only occasionally, he will remember a "good" one.

And then it happens. One day at a party, under stress, or just out of boredom, he will get the desire for that "good" cigarette. By having distanced himself from his past addiction, he will have forgotten or just no longer accept the fact that even "one puff" is almost certain to result in full and complete relapse. Because he no longer accepts his addiction, he sees no reason why he shouldn't be able to enjoy a good cigarette. So he tries one. Maybe it will be a great cigarette, maybe it will be a horrid one. It really doesn't make a big difference. Good or bad, it will take control and he will once again be an addicted smoker. He must now suffer all the physical, emotional, social, financial and health consequences that accompany nicotine addiction.

I actually sent the letters to everyone from my clinics for two reasons. First, as stated above, to keep the ex-smoker from getting complacent and losing a quit. The second

Visit WhyQuit.com and Explore [Joel's Library](#)

was in the sad cases when the smoker had relapsed, the letters were to serve as a constant reminder (usually referred to as pestering) that smoking was a problem that needed to be dealt with. There were plenty of times that people came back saying that one of the letters brought them back to quit again. Those were some of the most wonderful effects I felt these letters had.

Never allow yourself to forget your smoking past. Yes, there may have been some "good" cigarettes, but there were certainly a lot more bad ones and even the "good" ones were slowly killing you. What is sad is that the man who made the comment, as well as all the others like him who really need to read the letters, will never see this one before it's too late. They will have thrown the letters out without ever having opened them. Maybe next time they quit smoking they will know better - if there is a next time. Consider the full ramifications of just one cigarette and then choose to - **NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

Joel

© Joel Spitzer 1989, 2000
Page last updated by [Joel Spitzer](#) on August 23, 2003

WhyQuit.Com | [Joel's Library](#) | [Email Joel](#) | [Prevent Relapse Index](#) | [Next Article](#)

