

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

"Maybe I am Different?"

Maybe I am different? Maybe I can take a cigarette and not get hooked? Maybe the cigarette will make me so sick I will never want to take a cigarette again? Maybe I was never addicted anyway? Maybe I will just smoke for a little while and quit again when things are better? Maybe, maybe, maybe . . .?

Do you ever find that you are asking yourself these questions? If so, and the suspense of the answer is just killing you, I thought I would suggest two ways of finally putting these unresolved questions to rest. First, take a cigarette. This is a really effective way of realizing the potential for relapse by reinforcement of the nicotine addiction. And the cost for this valuable lesson is simply returning to the deadly, expensive, socially unacceptable habit and addiction to cigarettes. You can then either smoke until it cripples and kills you, or "just" quit again. Remember the last time? Smoke or quit, fun choice isn't it?

Of course there is another way of answering those perplexing questions of "maybe." Find a smoker who once quit smoking for a substantial period of time, say one year or longer, and then relapsed. Ask him how he liked not smoking. Ask him how he now likes smoking. Then ask the most important question, how did he return to smoking?

Let me venture a guess as to the answers to these three questions. "Not smoking was great. I hardly thought of cigarettes any more. I felt healthier, happier, even calmer. Cigarettes smelled repulsive. The thought of smoking at my old level was disgusting."

To the second question, how do you now like smoking, the response will typically be, "I hate it, I smoke as much or even more than I did before. I feel more nervous, don't have as much energy, and generally feel like a fool

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when smoking in public. I sure wish I could quit again."

The answer to the third and most important question of how did he return to smoking is almost always the same, "I took a cigarette."

It may have happened under stress, at a party, or at home alone with nothing special going on. Whatever the cause, the end result was the same -- addiction to nicotine. Prior to taking the cigarette, he probably asked himself the same questions of "maybe." He found his answer. Your answer is the same. Learn from others' mistakes and not your own. Your smoking friend is stuck in the grips of a powerful and deadly addiction. Maybe he will get the chance and strength again to quit smoking, maybe he will smoke until it kills him.

You have successfully broken free of the nicotine addiction. While your smoking may have been a potential threat to your life in the past, now your risks are dropping down to that of a person who never smoked. As long as you stay off of cigarettes, you never will have to worry about the physical, psychological, social and economical risks of smoking again as long as you follow one simple practice...**NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

Joel

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