



Fortunate To Be Alive To Tell About It!

Kim's Story - Age 44

June 26, 2002

Hi there, I'm glad you're taking the time to come and visit. Let me introduce myself, my name is Kim. I was born on December 17, 1957, in Ontario, Canada. I was born to two wonderful parents who were both smokers. In March of 1960, my brother Tad was born and in October of 1961, my sister Kelly was born.

I started smoking at age 12, stealing cigarettes from my parents and also stealing packs from the grocery and drug store (stealing.....it's true, and I don't like to admit it). But I was a nicotine addict at 12, already needing to get a fix no matter how I got it sad isn't it? My sister started smoking also, my brother never did.

At age 24, I quit for 1 month, but that one pack I kept in my dresser drawer was just too tempting.

Both my parents quit smoking in 1985. That year I married Tony in June.

My Grandpa always had a cigarette, cigar or pipe in his mouth and lived to the ripe old age of 90. He died of congestive heart failure. My grandmother who never smoked a day in her life, died at 72 of bowel cancer. My aunt who is 76, has smoked for well over 50 years and is and still going strong today.

In July of 1990, I quit again, this time it lasted a year and a half. After having a few drinks at Christmas, I asked my husband for a puff and of course one led to another and I was back to smoking full time again.

In June of 2001, I tried again. It lasted 3 days and in January of 2002 I tried yet again lasting maybe 4 days. I didn't really want to quit. Well I did and I didn't. Look at my grandfather, look at my aunt, my parents have no ill-effects, they are in their seventies now. Nothing is going to happen to me, I'm not a heavy smoker.

In March of 2002, I was going in to have some surgery. I was sent for pre-op tests, blood work, chest x-ray, EKG etc. My doctor called on March 7 to say something had shown up on my x-ray. There was a spot in my left lung. Oh my God, what does that mean exactly? I was to go and see the specialist the next day. March 7 was the last day I put a cigarette to my mouth. It was also the day my sister quit.

I saw the specialist the next day and was told it was cancer and it was very close to the heart. If it had reached the heart there was nothing they could do. When I looked at the cat scan it looked like it was touching the heart, that's how close it was. The only alternative I had to beat this was to have my left lung removed. What? Me? Cancer? Lung removed? no can't be, I'm too young for this.....

The next month and a half was very busy. I had a cat scan, bone scan and ultra sound, all were negative, which was good news. It was nowhere else in my body. I had stress tests, lung functions tests and I was beginning to think there wasn't anymore blood for them to take. I passed all the tests and was ready for surgery. My Doctor told me he didn't know if it had spread to my lymph nodes and he wouldn't know until he was in there.

On April 23rd they wheeled me into the operating room at 8:20 a.m. Five hours later I was wheeled out of surgery and placed in Intensive Care on a breathing machine. I was not only missing a lung, I was also missing a rib. Fortunately it hadn't spread to the lymph nodes.



Kim in ICU on April 23, 2002

I was hooked up to so many tubes and wires, but I was breathing on my own the next day. I was getting stronger everyday and everyday they would take a tube or wire off. On day five, I was tube and wire free and on day 6, I was released. I went to my Mom and Dad's for two weeks as my Mom is a retired nurse. I had home care for almost a month. A nurse came in once a day and changed the dressing on the incision.

I tire very easily, I can't exert myself in the summer humidity, as it makes it difficult to breathe, and I can't lift anything heavy. I have to do things slowly or my heart starts to beat fast. There is still a section at the top of the incision that is taking a long time to heal. Every night hot compresses are applied to help the healing. My left side is numb from the incision around to my underarm area and it really hurts to sneeze. It will be months before I'm fully recuperated.



Left lung incision site

Don't ever think this can't happen to you. I thought the same thing and look what happened to me. I'm one of the fortunate ones why? I'll never know the answer to that and I'm certainly not out of the woods yet either. I have to be checked every six months for the next three years.



Kim's loving little sister Kelly

My sister Kelly, who took the news very hard, was trying to find information on lung cancer when she found this site just after I was diagnosed. First off she came across the "Wall of Remembrance" (a site I still cannot visit as it upsets me too much) and then on to **Whyquit** and **Freedom**. The people, education and support here is tremendous. It's the only way to quit and keep it.

You can quit! Don't let what happened to me, happen to you. It can happen to anyone and at any age. I used to believe I was above the warnings on cigarette packs, but you know what?.....they are true.....CIGARETTES KILL, they almost killed me! I'm just thankful I can tell you this story instead of my family having to post it in the "Wall of Remembrance."



Dedicated to Youth Smoking Prevention

Updates on Kim

Links are to Freedom message threads discussing Kim & Kelly's journey

March 22, 2002 Kelly's first group message

April 16, 2002 Kim's lung removal surgery is postponed

April 22, 2002 A worried sister's surgery prayer request

April 30, 2002 Kim's first message after lung removal surgery

June 7, 2002 Three months of freedom from nicotine!

August 7, 2002 Pride in having quit smoking for five months.

September 7, 2002 Sterling Silver - education and support are freedom's keys

December 18, 2002 Kim has a seizure, a brain tumor is discovered. Her lung cancer had metastasized to her brain.

What is a metastatic brain tumor?

January 9, 2003 "10 months +..... and wishing I was going through withdrawal instead of this!"

January 13, 2003 Scheduled surgery date for removal of Kim's tumor



Kim and sister Kelly after surgery on January 14, 2003

January 16, 2003 Surgery went well and Kim is in her mom's loving care



Kim recovering, about a week after surgery

March 7, 2003 One year ago today Kim started two journeys ...

March 7, 2003 One year ago today sister Kelly did too ...



Kim pictured in April 2003 during chemotherapy.

June 6, 2003 Kim updates us on her last six months. Last chemo treatment to be June 12. As Kim puts it, "yahoo!" I have an MRI for my head booked for July 16 ... and with fingers fingers crossed I'm hoping to hear the words "You are Cancer Free"

September 8, 2003 So I asked the doctor, "can you explain this hairdo?"



January 25, 2004 Adrenal gland tumor has grown

February 13, 2004 Kim's valentine day post

March 8, 2004 Kim & Kelly's two year celebration

June 23, 2004 "My sister Kim ... passed away this morning"



In Memoriam to Kim

I once had something precious
That money could not buy
I had a special sister
And had to say goodbye
The memories and the photos
Are all I have to touch
Of that very special sister
Who I loved and miss so much
And when I'm feeling lonely
And tears fill in my eyes
I think of her at peace
And know I shouldn't cry
I try to hide my heartache Kim
As you would want me to
So when I cry my tears alone
No one hears but you.

Miss ya lots,
Kelly

E-mail Kelly

Sisters

A journal of Kim and Kelly's Freedom posts

Please share Kim's story

[FaceBook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#)

[PDF copy for saving or printing](#)

Ready to end your self-destruction?



Discover Smart Turkey Quitting

WhyQuit.com WhyQuit is the Internet's oldest forum devoted to the art, science and psychology of cold turkey quitting, the stop smoking method used by the vast majority of all successful long-term ex-smokers.



Nicotine Addiction 101 WhyQuit's guide to understanding nicotine dependency.

Nicotine Cessation Topic Index An alphabetical subject matter index to more than a thousand nicotine cessation articles, videos and support group discussions.

Joel's Library Joel Spitzer began presenting stop smoking clinics and seminars in 1976. WhyQuit's education director since 2000, Joel's Library is home to his life's work. It includes Joel's "Daily Quitting Lesson Guide." The Guide walks new quitters through the first two weeks of smoking cessation, recommending daily videos to watch and articles to read. It's also home to more than a hundred original short stop smoking articles, to "Never Take Another Puff," Joel's free ebook, and to his ever growing collection of more than 400 video stop smoking lessons.

Joel's Stop Smoking Video Index An alphabetical index to Joel's 400 videos. Each link opens a webpage where Joel shares the video together with related articles and links.

"Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home" Written by John R. Polito, a former 30-year heavy smoker and WhyQuit's 1999 founder, Freedom from Nicotine shares the science underlying nicotine dependency and successful abrupt nicotine cessation. Whether hooked on cigarettes, e-cigarettes (e-cigs), bidis, kreteks, a pipe, hookah or cigars, on dip, chew, snuff or snus, or on the nicotine gum, lozenge, spray, inhaler or patch, the book provides a road-map home.



Turkeyville Imagine surrounding yourself with more than 10,000 cold turkey quitters. Turkeyville is a Facebook support group exclusively for cold turkey quitters. The group's primary focus is helping newbies navigate the first few days. Just that first brave step, yes you can!



Freedom Freedom was WhyQuit's original 1999 stop smoking support group. No longer accepting members, today Freedom's 453,000 archived member posts serve as a valuable source of recovery insight and understanding.

Knowledge is a Quitting Method

WhyQuit.com **Joel's Library** **Turkeyville**



Index **Videos** **How to Quit**

Page created 06/26/2002 and last updated 04/01/18 by **John R. Polito**