

**WHEN...** There will come a day...  
**YOU...** It's all about you and no one else...  
**WANT...** 'Want' - a personal desire beyond any obligation...  
**TO...** Control your life vs. life controlling you...  
**QUIT...** This is a one-way street; no U-turns allowed...  
**SMOKING...** A one-word death sentence!

Smoking is not only destroying your body it's annoying to everyone around you who is a non-smoker. Quitting smoking is a challenge, but it can be done, without drugs, in a relatively short period of time and it is really much easier than you might have thought.

There's little point in attempting to quit smoking until you can honestly declare: "I want to quit smoking, but I am addicted to cigarettes/nicotine and I need help."

There are a few facts that will help a lot, a simple breathing exercise that will do more than any drug you can take or patch you could wear, and a way of becoming accountable that is pivotal in your success. The world sees you as a smoker regardless of how you may see yourself. You can't quit for 'them,' only for yourself, but as you change, the world's view of you will change as well, so here is a short 'laundry list' that covers the entire process of becoming a non-smoker:

1. Admit you're addicted and once you quit, you can't have one more – ever.
2. You have to want to quit to satisfy yourself and no one else.
3. You need someone to whom you are accountable, someone you see regularly but not a concerned family member; someone who cares about you and will support you through the process.
4. The urge to smoke is not constant, but comes and goes about as often as you currently light up; but the urge only lasts about a minute and a half at a time.
5. A short breathing exercise will overpower the smoking urge. The number of urges a day gets less and less, and further apart, every day. (A detailed description of the exercise follows.) *This is the most important item on this list.*
6. You'll need to replace your habits associated with smoking until you reach the point where you no longer want to smoke. (See also #10.)
7. The hard part is the first week; it gets easier each week, and you will be 90% successful in one month.

8. Every cell in your body is regenerated in the course of a year which means you can heal most of the damage done to your heart and lungs in about that same period of time if you work at it.

9. Quitting smoking will add at least five quality years to your life.

10. Cleanse your system with water, fruit, vegetables and aerobic exercise.

11. Once you get to a point where food tastes better and fresh air smells invigorating (a week or two), you will probably be repulsed by the smell of cigarette smoke for the rest of your life.

12. Give yourself proper rewards at meaningful intervals; you will earn them.

So, to quit smoking, admit your addiction to yourself; make the commitment to yourself to quit for your own benefit; ask a friend(s) for their support and to whom you will be accountable; get rid of all temptations (that secret stash, lighters, ashtrays, etc.); be prepared to change the things you associate with smoking (coffee, alcohol, etc.) and replace with a substitute (ie: water for coffee); and replace every urge your body creates with the following breathing exercise: The exercise is a deep breathing one with a quick release at the end. Here's how it goes.

The idea is to release the tension that builds up in your body as the urge to smoke builds up. Cells craving nicotine are banging on the walls of the subconscious hoping that your automatic response mechanism will shift into gear causing you to reach for the "pack" and light up "just one more time".

The deep breathing exercise tricks the subconscious into thinking you are smoking and the subconscious tells the addicted cells to knock off the noise. Here's what you do.

Take the biggest, deepest breath you possibly can, and hold it. At the same time tense up your body, make a fist, squeeze your arms, pull in your shoulders and neck, tighten your face muscles, suck in your gut, even tuck yourself into a fetal position if you can - with every muscle in your body as tense as you can make it in the few seconds it takes to take in that deep breath. Then suddenly, like a karate warrior, let go of all the muscle tension and blow out that breath all in one explosive move. Yell "Hi" as loud as you can (or as loud as your circumstances will permit). Believe it or not, you can actually yell "Hi" silently with almost the same dramatic effect as a noisy one.

At first just taking a deep breath will hurt your lungs, probably because it's been so long since you've filled them up with real fresh air, but don't be concerned, that searing pain will be gone very soon and the deep breath of clean air is part of the accelerated healing and cell replacement process.

I was amazed to find that the very first time I did this exercise, the urge to light up was gone. It didn't take very long for the urge to surface again, probably less

than half an hour, but repeating the breathing exercise worked once again, and I knew I was on my way. The first day it was a dozen times or more; the second not so much, the third day fewer still. The number and frequency of the smoking urges will diminish daily.

By the third day I was ready to brag, and when I met with a group of colleagues I was able to share my three day accomplishment. They were so supportive it almost blew me away. I gave a follow-up report each week thereafter and in about five or six weeks I was ready to reduce my reports to once a month. Because by then the mere smell of left over cigarette smoke was repulsive and I knew I would never want to smoke again.

I use to smoke a lot in my car. It was the same kind of conditioned response as lighting up with every cup of coffee. So one of the most popular places for me to do the breath-tension-release exercise was in my car, and the absence of other people near me became a real advantage in being able to release that deep breath with a great loud HIII!

One of the side benefits of this breathing and tensing exercise is that it also works to relieve anger and frustration from psychological factors as well as nicotine withdrawal. It also has a way of waking you up and increasing your alertness. Today I occasionally do the exercise just for the benefits of the exercise itself.

If you are about to undertake the process of quitting, perhaps a little background would be helpful. So here's my story: I thought about quitting rather often, every several years from the time I began at about 16 to the moment I actually quit at 48, but somehow I never got more than a few days into my resolve to quit without breaking the rules and having "just one more".

Well, there was the time when I stopped smoking for a little over three weeks, and the story's worth telling because the lesson is universal. It didn't work because I stopped for the wrong reasons.

I was in my forties at the time, married, and with two growing sons who were getting quite a pitch at school about the health danger associated with smoking. They urged me to quit as did my wife. Her reasons turned out to be more personal. Smoking stinks! She was angry because my cigarette smoking was smelling up her clothes, her hair, and her house. Naturally, it was smelling up both her car and mine as well.

You see, that was when I thought that as a smoker I had the right to light up anywhere I wanted. I hadn't reached the point where consideration for others had even crossed my mind...and yet I did have a realization that smoking was not good for me, that it was annoying to others, and that I would really be better off if I could break the habit.

But another thought, a defensive one, had also occurred to me. ‘Smoking was the one thing I did because I wanted to.’ It was the exception in my normal routine of being obligated to others. There were the business meetings, client demands, mother's requests, mother-in-laws taboos, children's appointments, and the little things like lawn mowing, or routine car servicing. Even my golf games were most often set up by someone else and I was forever hurrying to get to one or another of these appointments to satisfy my obligations to someone or something else.

So when I agreed to quit it became another obligation. I wasn't doing it for myself, I was accommodating my wife and kids. Naturally, it didn't take long for something to set me off and in my moment of anger or frustration I got even by deliberately heading for the nearest cigarette machine. "I'll show them," I thought, and within hours I was back to my two pack-a-day-habit.

You see, as much as they loved me, the real reason they wanted me to quit was for their convenience and contentment. Their motives were actually selfish; as long as I wasn't annoying them with my cigarette smoke they were satisfied. My withdrawal pangs were of no concern to them. Ultimately, it was my own selfish motives that got me through my resolve to quit for good – my own good.

Who cares if you quit smoking? Family, friends, co-workers, strangers, church groups, or others? Obviously, they all do, some more than others. As mentioned above, most people have their own selfish reasons for wanting you to quit. Mostly it's so their little environment will become free from the annoyance of smoking - smell, breathing discomfort, and dirty ashes, getting on their hair, clothes, furniture, car seats, and office equipment.

Sorry smokers, but cigarette smoking is a dirty, smelly habit that infringes on everyone around you with discomforts, allergy reactions, and serious health issues.

Quitting, then, will eliminate the annoyances and infringements, thus pleasing your family and friends because their world has finally been cleaned up. But, unless those around you are also ex smokers, very few persons will be able to be empathetic to the inner struggle you are going through as you fight to overcome the bodily addiction to nicotine in the early stages of quitting.

For this reason it will be most helpful to get the support of an individual or small group of people who will actively support your efforts and determination to get the cigarette monkey off your back. Their motives are not as selfish as your family's and they will continue to give you a pat on the back for your efforts as long as you need it. The people you live with will be very supportive, but only until the smell is gone from the house, clothes, furniture and car.

If you try to quit quietly as a solo effort you probably will not succeed. That's because you have not made yourself accountable to anyone, and your inner

temptations will most often be stronger than your sheer will-power. You need the praise that goes with your success, but you also need the pressure of being true to your promise...for as long as it takes.

### ***Restore, Renew and Regenerate...***

When I was a small child I can remember my Grandmother often saying: "Every day in every way I'm getting better and better." She didn't invent that phrase, but I will always credit her with my beginning to understand just what it means.

Our bodies are made up of trillions of individual cells, and the wonderful thing about that is that as each cell wears out it duplicates itself with a new cell, made from the nutrients gathered from the food we eat. The good news is that in the rather short period of time of about a year, nearly every cell in your body is replaced by a new one. The new cells that come in are exactly like the ones they replace. Healthy cells replace cells that were already healthy, and sick cells get replaced with more sick cells...unless we do something to change our own health patterns.

The message should be obvious. Smoking is a health pattern that allows cells to degenerate from healthy to sick. Quitting smoking is a changing health pattern that promotes the replacement of sick cells with healthy ones.

While I can't promise you a total healing just because you quit smoking, I can offer you the suggestion that in a little more than a year's period of time after quitting smoking and pursuing activities that promote good health, all of the cells in your body will have been recreated anew. And the healthier your life style pursuits the more apt you will be to regenerate those new cells as they were originally intended, in the pink of health.

I believe in the power of my mind to rule the functions on my body...as well as my affairs. When I began to seriously consider quitting my smoking habit, I laid claim to new and vigorous health. I told myself that all the damage I had done to my lungs, heart, arteries, and tissues would be healed in one year with a total replacement of fresh new cells for old worn out ones, if I would hold the image in my mind and actively support it with proper food and energetic exercise.

A friend told me that one of the nicest things about my quitting my smoking habit would be that I would be around as a friend for at least five years more than I would otherwise. It's nice to be wanted as friend. Especially one who is wanted for an additional five years.

But who cares, when you're in your forties, about an extra five years when you're eighty-five? I mean, if I'm going to get a bonus of five extra years, I want them while I'm still young enough to really enjoy them...like Right Now!

So that's just what I did. I gave myself a five year bonus. My aging process would just have to go on hold for five years so I could celebrate my new smoke free life to the fullest.

It's a simple gift and one only you can give to yourself too. But think about it. If you quit right now your body will regenerate all new cells in about a year, repairing all the damage previously done by over thirty years of smoking; you'll have no one to blame or to credit because you're taking responsibility for your life and your thoughts and your actions; you'll have a wonderful new habit of cleansing your body with fresh clear water; and you've put a five year moratorium on your aging process, right in the middle of your life.

(To this day people are surprised to hear my real age. Almost universally they say I look much more like I'm ten years younger.)

### ***Rewards Help!***

Have you ever bought yourself a present? Oh sure we all indulge ourselves once in a while, but when it gets beyond necessities, how generous are you with yourself?

Quitting smoking is a big deal, and it deserves a good payoff. When you've given up a habit that has been with you for any number of years, a reminder of your efforts is highly recommended. What you choose to get for yourself as a reward for your own successful achievement depends a lot on what you consider extravagant.

When I reached the thirty day mark, I bought a gold Cross pen for a cost of about \$50. Considering what I would have spent on cigarettes during that same period of time, the pen was a bargain.

There are two elements to consider in paying yourself off with a reward. Number one is time and the other is money. If you have quit any number of times before, like I did, you'll have to go without smoking considerably longer than any of your previous false stops, before you can seriously think about giving yourself a reward. In any case a month is about minimum.

However, don't postpone giving yourself a pat on the back every day along the way because the truth is that after about a week, everyone else has forgotten about your being on the road to victory except you...and your support group. Daily rewards should be fun and make you feel happy. Try sending yourself a postcard offering yourself hearty congratulations for throwing out your cigarettes.

Be a little cautious of bragging to other people about your non-smoking activities. Somehow telling the world prematurely in general has a way of diluting the effectiveness of your commitment.

The second element in self-rewards is, as already mentioned, money. Don't get carried away and run out and buy a new Porsche. The kind of self reward that will

be most effective will be something simple, something that doesn't cost more than you would have spent on cigarettes during the same period, and something that has meaning to you personally.

The thing I liked about my gold pen was that it was a symbol to me of my determination, it has a similar shape to a cigarette, I use it very often and therefore am constantly reminded of my little victory every time I take it out of my pocket (which, incidentally is the same pocket that I used to carry my cigarettes in). No one else has to know anything at all about the pen and my not smoking, because I know and that's all that matters.

Well, that's about it. The process is simple enough and you can certainly do the moment you are ready. Remember:

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My process for getting the nicotine addiction off your back is my gift to you and my desire to help make the world just a little bit better. In the path of your success, don't forget to give yourself a reward for your accomplishment. And if you find that my story, the factual information and the breathing exercise are all helpful, may I recommend that you make a meaningful (and tax deductible) donation to this publishing ministry:

*Upward Bound Journal, 10870 SW 71<sup>st</sup> Circle, Ocala, FL 34476*