

## No Smoking Day – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006

We won't tell you how bad it is for you because we know you know that



In this article you won't find all the usual reason as to why you should quit smoking because we know you know all of that. In fact not only are you aware of the lethal effects, in the event that you momentarily forget, the government has kindly had it printed on each and every packet of cigarettes for you. In this months article in light of it being *No Smoking Day* on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March we thought we would unveil the truths about your addiction and what you are really going for when you smoke.

You may just think that you are addicted to the tobacco but how do you know this?

Go ahead and read the next paragraph as if it does not apply to you because there is an important question at the end of it for consideration for you.

The three main ingredients in cigarettes are Nicotine: a powerful, fast acting, addictive drug. 2. Carbon monoxide: a tasteless, odourless, poisonous gas. 3. Tar: particulate matter composed of a variety of chemicals, many of which are know to

cause cancer in animals. Aside from the three main ingredients there are thousands of harmful chemicals that have been identified in tobacco smoke including but not limited to: Acetone: a solvent used in nail varnish remover.

Ammonia: found in dry cleaning fluids.

Arsenic: a poison used in insecticides.

Benzene: a known cancer-causing agent, used in fuel and chemical manufacture.

Cadmium: a highly poisonous metal, know to cause liver, kidney and brain damage in humans.

Formaldehyde: a poisonous liquid used to preserve dead bodies.

The question we have for you is this; "Which of these do you like the most?"

Do you like the tar or is it the Benzene? Consider before reading on which one you enjoy most of all. If you are not sure go and have a cigarette right now and try to work out which one you enjoy most of all. Because you smoke a lot of these things everyday and from experience of working with hundreds of smokers we know you must really enjoy one or more of these ingredients. Have a look on your packet and see what the ingredients are and try to discover your favourite one or few. Because you chose one brand over another do you not. So you should be able to pick the ingredient that makes one brand better than the next.

Do it just as you would when you eat a dish that you really enjoy and you find yourself picking out the herb, spice or flavour that you really like in the dish. Or perhaps you enjoy tasting wine, so taste that cigarette like you would any good glass of wine and experience its bouquet and flavour on your palate.

You might think we are joking but this is serious.

Given it is *No Smoking Day* today we want to help all the smokers out there to understand their habit so that should you ever decide to quit at least you will know what you are dealing with. An informed smoker has a better chance of quitting for good than a blind smoker. Plus an informed smoker is quite simply more aware of what they really enjoy in smoking besides the obvious.

Smoking is not dissimilar to an addiction to food, drugs or coffee even. The structure of addictions is just like a strong interpersonal relationship. An addiction is a relationship with an item and/ or its perceived benefit that you have conditioned over time so successfully or with such intensity that it has become a part of your identity and hence your life. It has become as much a part of you as brushing your teeth in the morning.

Some people even say it is as if smoking has been hardwired into them which is why some people find it so difficult to quit.

Consider for a moment what smoking gives you.

- Does it help relieve your stress levels?
- Does it help you stay thin?
- Does it make you feel like one of the group?
- Does it give you an identity?
- Does it give you something to do with your hands?
- Does it help you avoid doing work by giving you an excuse to leave the office for 15 minutes 5 times a day?
- Does it make you feel comfortable at a bar?
- Does it make you cool?
- Does it make you look older or more mature?
- Does it make you feel like you are being a bit naughty doing

what you know you shouldn't?

- Does it give you what the Marlborough Man had?
- Does it make you look sophisticated or important?
- Does it make you look or feel sexy?

It does give you something or why would you do it? Maybe it used to give you one of these feelings above but now it no longer does but you still keep up the habit.

Knowing you are a smoker I want you to hold a few questions in your mind all at the same time. By holding them in your mind I mean read them and consider them but don't answer them, just be aware of the questions:

1. If you knew you could quit, would you?
2. Why have you not quit already?
3. What would being smoke free give you? Honestly.

Ask yourself each question a few times and hold it in conscious awareness without answering it, just consider it.

Now, imagine that you have quit smoking. Just imagine that you have been smoke free for a few weeks. What would you notice you gained back first? Would you notice your ability to breathe freely? Maybe you would notice your sense of taste or smell return. Perhaps you notice something different about the first few weeks of spring. Are you noticing a new energy or vitality having quit?

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### The Addicted Smoker

When you first started smoking it was a conscious decision to do so. There are hundreds of reasons for lighting up that first cigarette. Common ones are peer pressure, a perceived identity you would have as a smoker, thinking it will help with stress, wanting to take some time out for yourself etc. As a coach working with smokers who have decided to quit I am most interested in how someone maintains their habit of smoking. At a deep level the once conscious decision to smoke has become an automated response. Where initially smoking was a conscious decision now it is conditioned into your neurology which is to say it does not require conscious thought anymore.

Take Joe for example: Joe started smoking because he enjoyed the sensation smoking gave him when he had a few drinks on a Thursday night. He would be in a bar with his friends and he thought that a cigarette helped him to relax after a big week. He believed it gave him sensations that allowed him to just relax into the night and he liked that.

After doing that on many occasions at the bar he then noticed he would be lighting up on his way home and again he felt it gave him the opportunity to relax. Then he noticed that sometimes if his day was particularly stressful he would find himself outside the office in the freezing cold puffing away. The social smoker in him had quickly become a constant smoking.

The trigger for Joe was stress and he was going for relaxation. The cigarette gave him a sense of being able to relax. Taking time out for himself to just take a few deep breaths and momentarily forget about everything. Whilst it is clinically proven that smoking does not provide relaxation but rather the large inhale and regulated long breaths is what provides the relaxation he believes it is the cigarettes.

Joe's mind paired together or glued together the following:  
Feeling stressed and a cigarette = relaxation / escape. So now each time Joe feels stressed he automatically finds himself reaching for a cigarette. He may sometimes experience that he has already lit the cigarette before he's even thought about doing it. That is because his mind is running the pattern faster than he can consciously think about it. Feel the stress reach for the cigarette, feel the stress reach for the cigarette....



Joe has now smoked for nine years and has what is known as an empty habit. An empty habit just means that Joe no longer smokes because he

wants to relax but he simply smokes because he smokes. There is no need being fulfilled anymore. Many longer term smokers have empty habits. The act of smoking does not give them what it once did but they can't seem to stop doing it.

### Why is it so hard to quit if I am not getting anything out of it?

Why so many people find it so hard to quit is that they do all their quitting work at the level of consciousness. By this I mean they read up about how to quit, they might write down why they want to quit, they may set goals around how many they will allow themselves each day. Many smokers buy patches or chewing gum and consciously replace them and chew the gum. This is all very valuable but considering habits live in the domain of the unconscious mind also known as the sub-conscious, then that is the place at which the intervention needs to take place.

To quit smoking people really need help getting over the 'hump' as I like to call it. The period where the cravings are at their strongest as the biochemical withdrawal process begins.

To help a smoker quit I work with them to design a new response strategy to the triggers that cause them to smoke. So rather than feeling that smoking gives them something pleasant we replace those feelings with all the things they hate about the habit at the point when they are deciding to have that cigarette. This gives the smoker a conscious choice in the moment when they need it as to whether or not they really want that cigarette. This is what is missing in a habitual smoker – the conscious decision in the moment on whether they actually want to smoke.

This intervention takes place below the level of consciousness as this is where the addiction lives at present. It is for this reason that hypnotherapy and Neuro Linguistic Psychology are so effective in helping smokers kick the habit. It provides the smoker with a new strategy that they automatically begin to run unconsciously replacing the old strategy for smoking. This auto-firing strategy is what gets smokers over the hump or the time when the withdrawal symptoms are taking place and the cravings and urges are at their peak.



## In Summary:

Smoking is a conditioned pattern of behaviour that occurs below the level of consciousness. When the smoker commenced it to satisfy a conscious need but very quickly it turns into an empty habit. The easiest way to quit the habit is to begin a new neural strategy that breaks the smoking cycle and give the smoker back the choice in the moment when they need it most (right before they light up). This new strategy becomes part of the person's neurology and gets them over the hump of the first few days / week when the withdrawal symptoms are at their peak. By the time the once smoker begins to experience the benefits of having quit they are well on the way to enjoying their new decision and loving the changes.

At Become we are assisting smokers on a biochemical/physical, psychological, interpersonal, and spiritual level. By interrupting the pattern that sustains the addiction at the sub-conscious level you can interrupt the conditioned response (the habitual pattern). We've helped hundreds of people break their addictions and create new choices for healthier and happier lives.

If you ever decide to quit we will help you break the habit. Every client who contacts us who expresses the desire to quit smoking will be interviewed. We are looking for congruence and honest desire and commitment to the cause. Quitting smoking is a partnership where we can support you to become smoke free but we can't make you quit if you are not really committed. The inherent desire must be there first.

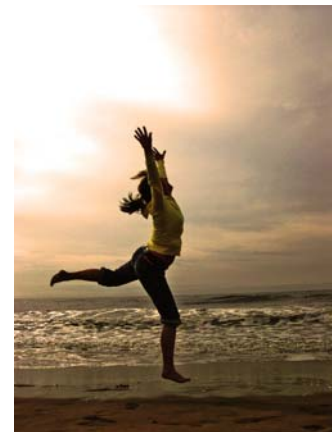
The cost of quitting smoking is inexpensive in comparison to what you spend on cigarettes each month. Become Coaching charges £300 to help you to quit. If you smoke 40 cigarettes a day that is the equivalent to a month of cigarettes. If you smoke 20 day then it is equivalent to two months of cigarette purchases. It really leaves no butts.



For the smokers amongst you who do want the **gruesome facts** you can choose to read on. You will also find an article this month by Cancer Research UK on our website.

- Think of who you smoke with because 1 in 2 smokers in the UK will die from a smoking related disease. That is either you or your friend or partner.
- It is thought that smoking is responsible for impotence in 120,000 men in the UK aged between 30 and 49.
- Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of cancer worldwide
- On average in the UK 1 person every 15 minutes dies of lung cancer or 92 people a day in the UK.
- Half of smokers who die are middle aged
- Risk is even more dependent on duration of smoking than on consumption.
- Smokers who stop before the age of 35 have a life expectancy not significantly different from non-smokers, while stopping in middle age, before the onset of cancer or some other serious disease, avoids most of the later excess risk from tobacco.
- Each day 450 children in the UK take up smoking.
- Children are far more likely to smoke if other people at home smoke.

- It is a common misconception that 'light' or 'mild' brands of cigarettes are less damaging to health than 'high' tar brands. Research has shown that smokers of 'light' and 'mild' brands inhale up to eight times the levels of nicotine and tar than the pack labelling suggested. Smokers need to satisfy their cravings for nicotine so they change the way they smoke to ensure they get the hit they need.
- There are over 4000 different compounds in tobacco smoke; many of these are toxic, cause cancer or damage cells.



**Martine Snow**  
**Performance Coach**  
**Become Coaching**

Martine has helped in excess of 100 people kick the habit of smoking last year alone.

