

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Take it ONE DAY AT A TIME

This concept is taught by almost all programs which are devoted to dealing with substance abuse or emotional conflict of any kind. The reason that it is so often quoted is that it is universally applicable to almost any traumatic situation.

Dealing with quitting smoking is no exception. Along with NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!, ONE DAY AT A TIME is the key technique which gives the smoker the strength to successfully quit smoking and stay free from the powerful grip of nicotine dependence.

When first quitting, the concept of ONE DAY AT A TIME is clearly superior to the smoker thinking that he will never smoke again for the rest of his life. For when the smoker is first giving up smoking, he does not know whether or not he wants to go the rest of his life without smoking. Most of the time the smoker envisions life as a non-smoker as more stressful, painful, and less fun.

It is not until he quits smoking that he realizes his prior thoughts of what life is like as a non-smoker were wrong. Once he quits he realizes that there is life after smoking. It is a cleaner, calmer, fuller and, most important, healthier life. Now the thought of returning to smoking becomes a repulsive concept. Even though the fears have reversed, the ONE DAY AT A TIME technique should still be maintained.

Now, as an ex-smoker, he still has bad moments every now and then. Sometimes due to stress at home or work, or pleasant social situations, or to some other indefinable trigger situation, the desire for a cigarette surfaces. All he needs to do is say to himself, I won't smoke for the rest of today; tomorrow I will worry about tomorrow. The urge will be over in seconds, and the next day he probably won't even think of a cigarette.

But ONE DAY AT A TIME should not only be practiced when an urge is present. It should be practiced daily. Sometimes an ex-smoker thinks it is no longer important to think in these terms. He goes on with the idea he will not smoke again for the rest of

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his life. Assuming he is correct, when does he pat himself on the back for achieving his goal? When he is lying on his deathbed he can enthusiastically proclaim, "I never smoked again." What a great time for positive reinforcement.

Every day the ex-smoker should wake up thinking that he is not going to smoke that day. And every night before he goes to sleep he should congratulate himself for sticking to his goal. Because pride is important in staying free from cigarettes. Not only is it important, but it is well deserved. For anyone who has quit smoking has broken free from a very powerful addiction. For the first time in years, he has gained control over his life, rather than being controlled by his cigarette. For this, he should be proud.

So tonight, when you go to sleep, pat yourself on the back and say, "Another day without smoking, I feel great." And tomorrow when you wake up, say, "I am going to try for another day. Tomorrow I will deal with tomorrow." To successfully stay free from smoking, TAKE IT ONE DAY AT A TIME and - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Joel

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