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## *Joel's Reinforcement Library*

**NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

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# *Support Group Diversions*

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At some online quit smoking message boards you will see members who feel a need to start diversion threads - topics of conversation that have almost nothing to do with smoking or quitting. It is curious as to why people should ever feel that there is a need for such diversional tactics for a quit smoking site. Why should anyone be logging into a quit smoking support group in order to divert the group's attention away from the topic of quitting smoking?

If the person is looking to discuss other topics and enjoys the anonymity afforded by a computer, there are forums and message boards all over the Internet whose sole purpose is to bring people together to meet, communicate and share thoughts and opinions on hundreds or even thousands of different topics. Many of these resources are highly effective at creating an environment that allows like-minded people to come together and socialize. The problem is that most of these sites have very little to offer a person who is there to quit smoking and for this purpose would be very ineffective.

For over 25 years I have been running live Stop Smoking Clinics. These programs are six sessions over two weeks, each session scheduled to last an hour and a half. It is not unusual though for these sessions to end up lasting over two hours in order to cover all the smoking topics that are brought up in group discussions. There are so many different aspects of smoking raised such as the reasons people want to quit smoking, how some for medical reasons now need to quit, and the general thirsting for the knowledge of how to stay quit. Diverting the group's attention to other areas would deprive them of precious time focused on getting information that they may very well need to accomplish long-term success.

It is not that I want people to feel that they need to fixate on not smoking 24 hours a day--but I want each participant to have all the pertinent information possible to focus on the new priority of not smoking. I want the participant to have all of the ammunition possible so that he or she is sufficiently prepared to face the triggers and problems that he or she will inevitable encounter in those first few days of quitting.

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**There is enough of a variety of pertinent, interesting and important information on smoking cessation that there should never be a need to divert any cessation group's attention away from these topics to keep a board active. Quitting smoking is the reason why people should join, participate and stay in group cessation programs. People are there to reinforce their own resolve and to reinforce other member's resolve to stay quit. The goal of a quit site should be to help people to grow more secure in their quits so that they have the time and tools to really live their lives without fear of relapsing because they feel that they are not properly prepared or equipped to deal with all contingencies.**

**Smoking was robbing every smoker of precious time, both in the present, when smoking was pulling him or her away from others in order for him or her to once again deliver another nicotine fix, and in the long run by taking years or actual decades off of his or her actual life by prematurely killing the smoker. So, look upon a highly focused cessation forum as an important tool for helping every member acquire more time for life and the additional wonderful diversions that the added time will bring.**

**While engaging the group, devote all your time to focusing your attention on why you quit smoking and toward helping others focus their attention on not smoking too. You will give yourself and each other the greatest gift possible--more time to live, both quality time and healthier time. In a way serious forums can give you the "time of your life" by simply focusing on reinforcing your decision to NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

**Joel**

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