

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Whatever you do don't quit cold turkey!

Most medical professionals believe that the way to quit smoking is to use pharmacological aids. They think that pharmacological aids are an effective tool for smoking cessation. Why do they believe this? They believe it because almost all of the smoking professionals of the world tell them that they work. Even the Surgeon General of the United States says that they work. If almost all world experts believe that they work, and the Surgeon General says that they work, well then they must really work. Right?

Well, I look at it like this. Lets say I see a published story come out that says a specific pill prevents colds in 100% of the cases in human trials. Then another study verifies it. In fact, every expert in the world comes out and says colds no longer exist -- the pill has eradicated them.

But most people I knew who took this miracle pill still got colds. Worse than that, I took the pill myself and all of my friends who were on the pill kept giving the cold to me. Pretty soon I would dismiss those studies and no matter how many times I see it I would not believe it. Sooner or later I would have to believe my own eyes and ears, basically my own instincts, more than expert opinion.

I have seen people use the argument of who should they believe, the Surgeon General of the United States or me. I somehow get the idea that people think that the Surgeon General is a person who has spent years and decades working with nicotine addicts. That somehow being an expert in smoking cessation is a prerequisite for being the Surgeon General.

I have been running stop smoking clinics since 1976. Back in 1976 I told my second group that they were nicotine addicts. If the people in my 1976 clinics were skeptical and wrote the Surgeon General and asked him if it were true that nicotine was a drug addiction he would have answered no it

was not.

It was clearly spelled out in the 1964 Surgeon General's Report that cigarette smoking was not an addiction. In the report of the Surgeon General back in 1979 the Surgeon General was starting to say that maybe it was an addiction, but still had put the emphasis on the habit of smoking being the primary problem. In 1988 the Surgeon General finally issued a report stating once and for all that nicotine was an addictive substance.

In all of the programs I did from 1976 through 1987 I was constantly criticized and attacked for saying that cigarette smokers were drug addicts but I had too much first hand contact with smokers trying to quit that was making it abundantly clear that the Surgeon General was wrong. So I accepted the fact that the Surgeon General and most of the experts of the world were not going to agree with me. For eleven years I was wrong that smoking was an addiction because the Surgeon General said I was wrong yet today I am no longer wrong on this fact.

The same thing is happening now when it comes to issues like the effectiveness of all of the quitting aids available today. The Surgeon General and most of the world experts say that these products increase success and that people should not quit cold turkey. Again, I have still have too much first hand contact with people who are trying to quit using these products as well as too much contact with people who are actually quitting and succeeding without their use. It is still all too obvious that in real world settings these products do not increase success and that people have a much greater chance of success by disregarding the experts advice.

So I think I am going to just take a wait and see attitude on what the Surgeon General will say ten years or twenty years from now on what is the most effective way to quit smoking. Maybe he or she will have come around by then, maybe not. But I know one thing for sure. That all of the people who decided to follow my advice on how to quit, and then stay committed in the interim to the advice that I gave them on how to remain smoke free, that all of these people will still be successful ex-smokers.

My advice to them, that is so controversial today, is simply that to quit smoking and to stay smoke free is no more complicated than just knowing to Never Take Another Puff!

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