

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

The Law of Addiction

"Administration of a drug to an addict will cause reestablishment of chemical dependence upon the addictive substance."

Smokers are often furious with me because they believe I caused them to go back to smoking. Why do they think this? Well, I have this nasty habit of making a really big deal any time a clinic participant takes one puff or maybe just a few cigarettes. The smoker feels I am so persuasive in my arguments that he has no choice but to have a full-fledged relapse. In his opinion, I forced him back to the lifetime dependency which will impair his health and may eventually cost him his life. He is convinced that if I had not made such a major issue out of the incident, he would just have smoked that one time and would never have done it again. How can I sleep each night knowing what I have done?

I sleep quite well, thank you. For, you see, I am not responsible for these people's relapses to cigarettes. They can take full credit for becoming smokers again. They relapsed because they broke the one major law of nicotine addiction - they took a puff. This is not my law. I am not setting myself up to be judge, jury, and executioner. The law of physiological addiction states that administration of a drug to an addict will cause reestablishment of the dependence on that substance. I didn't write that law. I don't execute that law. My job is much simpler than that. All I do is interpret the law. This means, by taking a puff, the smoker either goes back to full-fledged smoking or goes through the withdrawal process associated with quitting. Most don't opt for the withdrawal.

Every clinic has a number of participants who have quit in the past for one year or longer. In fact, I had one clinic participant who had stopped for a period of 24 years before he relapsed. He never heard that such a law existed, that even after 24 years, the ex-smoker is not totally freed from his imprisonment of addiction. He didn't

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understand that the day he tossed his "last" cigarette, he was placed "on probation" for the rest of his life. But ignorance of the law is not excusable - not the way the laws of a physiological nature are written. By the American standards of justice, this seems to be cruel and unusual punishment. But this is the way things are.

Maybe instead of going to a smoking clinic, a recently relapsed person should contact his attorney to plead his case of why he should be able to have an occasional cigarette when he desires. Maybe he can cheat just once, get a sympathetic jury, be judged innocent, and walk out of the courtroom a free and independent person. Surely, in pleading his case before twelve impartial people, he will probably have no problem convincing them that he is innocent of any wrongdoing. And, as he happily walks out of court a free and independent person, he will probably have an uncontrollable urge and then light a cigarette.

Don't look for loopholes in the law of addiction. You will be convicting yourself back to smoking. While it may seem harsh and unfair, to many, smoking is a crime punishable by death. Don't try to cheat the system - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

Joel

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