

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

"Help Me, I've Relapsed!" A plea for help or a cry for attention?

When I run clinics, everyone has my phone number and pager numbers to reach me 24 hours a day. I always tell people that in case of an emergency, call me anytime day or night. I actually tell them it doesn't even have to be an emergency. If in the middle of the night they wake-up and feel good and just want to say hello and everything is fine, that is fine with me too (my family hates this part of my nature, but has learned to live with it). Luckily, not many of them take me up on this offer but the option exists. I just want them to get the sense that there is help available to them when needed. I have no problem with anyone calling for help at any time, when help can be given.

But calling me in the middle of the night to tell me about a relapse is totally unnecessary. Paging me in the middle of the day and maybe interrupting my dinner or a television show, or even an interesting commercial to announce a relapse is also unnecessary. Once a puff is taken there is no emergency anymore, no real sense of urgency. Nothing is on the line now. The quit is blown already.

There is no real significance to the second, third or even tenth cigarette, they were all the result of the first puff, as are all the other hundreds of thousands and maybe more than a million that are destined to follow. Is it that I don't want to know about the relapse? Not at all. I tell them they are more than welcome to send me a post card, third class if possible. It will get to me eventually and I can update my records, but there is no need for me to actually have to be woken up and lose a second of sleep for such an announcement.

The support offered at online message board quit smoking forums works on the same principle. It may take a few minutes before someone gets to the board, but usually not long. While waiting the person has plenty of reading material available. They can read the [daily posts](#), explore specific forum topic areas like "[relapse prevention](#)," spend some time in the forum's article [library](#) or even visit WhyQuit.com. There is

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plenty of material to reinforce anyone's resolve, anyone who wants their resolve reinforced that is.

Bottom line. Post before you RELAPSE. Read and read until someone gets back to you. The odds are if you refocus your thoughts, a reply to your message will not even be necessary, just a nice reminder that someone cares. But you will have already passed the crisis state. It doesn't take long.

There may still be an ongoing trauma in your life at the moment, but those problems were going to be happening whether you were an active smoker, an ex-smoker, even if you had never smoked in your life. But if you think about the real situation you will realize that your relapsing to a deadly addiction will not in any way, shape or form help resolve the ongoing problem. It will just give you another life threatening problem that you will need to contend with.

If your relapse eventually results in your premature death, everyone you know and leave behind will have to live with the same kind of grief and frustrations too. Do you want all of your children, parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, and just plain acquaintances to feel the need or acceptance to relapse to a deadly drug addiction in your memory? If not, don't you need to teach them that lesson now while you are still alive? It is the same lesson that you can teach yourself every day. The lesson--that you can quit smoking and you can stay off smoking under any circumstances as long as you always remember to NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

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