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Smoking Cessation Tips: Wake the Healthy Habit

By Jerome Pilewski.
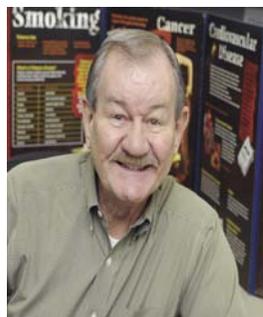
It's the time of year when many of us begin to ponder New Year's resolutions. If quitting smoking is a goal you're considering, good for you. Now, where do you begin? Humans are creatures of habit. We get into a routine, become comfortable, and will repeat that routine unless some person, place, or thing "wakes us up" to change. People can, however, change habits as evidenced by thousands of people who have quit smoking. I see this on a daily basis with the smoking cessation classes I lead. The first step to quitting is to recognize that change is necessary or desired. Smoking leads to illness and despair. Not smoking makes for health, wealth and happiness. Becoming a non-smoker requires focusing on the present and letting go of the past while preparing for the future. Be okay where you are now, knowing that lapses are part of the quitting process. Keep your "thinking" in the positive present tense. Prepare for the future: "I will change!"

Make a commitment to change. This means you will do whatever it takes to let go of your old behavior and to introduce new behaviors that serve you better. A commitment will not guarantee your success, but without a commitment, you will guarantee your failure. Set your goal by establishing a measurable time frame for quitting smoking. Write down daily objectives necessary to achieve your goal. Keep the goal just out of sight but not out of reach.

Imagine yourself already changed. Visualize how you will look and how it will feel with the change. Imagine yourself as a non-smoker and all of the benefits to your health.

Get support. Joining a tobacco cessation group can be a helpful and rewarding experience. Tobacco cessation groups are held weekly for about one hour each week. Support groups generally follow a formal six-week program and can last as long as is needed to benefit the participants. Nicotine patches are provided free of charge if an individual's insurance does not cover them. The people who come to groups and who have a smoking related disease tell us that quitting is hard, but not quitting is even harder.

I tell folks that they fail only if they fail to try to quit smoking. When someone says, "I'm not ready to quit," I encourage them and tell them that what they can do now by cutting down or quitting smoking.

Stay positive: The following is a mantra you can repeat.

"Yes, it is my time to quit. I'm learning that staying smoke free is not a station I arrive at, but a manner of traveling. I will remain vigilant as I prepare for that unprepared moment; that future thought or feeling of smoking that may pester me again when I'm least prepared. I finally realize that I must keep my thoughts focused on the positive aspects of not smoking and live without smoking one day at a time. I am a non-smoker. I do not smoke."

You get what you expect so expect the best. Believe that you can live smoke free and your belief will help to create the reality.

Resources for smoking cessation:
Whyquit.com
Quitnet.com
Learn-how-to-
quit-smoking.com

Tobaccofreeallegheny.org

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