

11th January, 2008

## **CIGARETTES, A ROAD TO HELL!**

DEAR DIARY, this is the 6th month that I've been clean! I'm so happy that I've finally stopped smoking and I use the word stopped cautiously. I've stopped smoking in the past, but so far this has been my longest and happiest time without killer cravings.

Smoking has been one of the worst experiences of my whole life. It has truly been a road to hell. If it had killed me, it would have served me right because no one has any business burning and inhaling rolled up leaves, arsenic, nicotine, benzene, chromium, nickel, ammonia, catechol, pyridine, carbon monoxide and cockroach. Actually I made up the cockroach bit, but it might as well contain roaches. Roaches would be the least poisonous ingredient! All these chemicals are inhaled into the one and only set of lungs God has given you, doesn't it seem crazy? Cigarette addiction is like a long drawn out suicide.

Being addicted to nicotine turns you into a self righteous ignoramus. When people look at a smoker in a public place with loathing, a smoker will look at them like what you f\*\*\*\* looking at? But non-smokers just don't get it. A person who has never ever smoked in their entire life just doesn't understand why a sensible grown up would light leaves which stink and cause cancer and not just light it but inhale it too. Where's the joy? What's the point? It's not as if it contains vitamins and minerals. It doesn't make you pretty. It's not an aphrodisiac.

I started smoking out of curiosity and curiosity got me a 20+ year habit. My first time, I thought it was horrible but I persevered until I got the hang of it; when you get the hang of it, you're hooked. It's taken three serious attempts to eventually stop and as much as I'm relieved right now to be a non-smoker, I still get the odd flash back of lighting up and it fills me with dread because somewhere, some how, it's still a part of me.

When you're a confirmed smoker, no amount of harassing, banning and Government Health Warnings will make you stop. I think if a smoker saw someone coughing up their lungs in the street, literally, until you saw the pink tissues with the black tar and blood everywhere, they'd have nightmares, but I'm sure this wouldn't stop the smoker. Anyway, a smoker always thinks that smoking induced illnesses and death happen to other people.

# The AUGUST MAYFIELD Diaries

Smoking is a multi-faceted habitual trap. Not only are you addicted to nicotine, it's part of your life-style habit too. Some people smoke after a meal. Some people light up during a telephone conversation. There are others who smoke as soon as they get in the car. Some people smoke when they're stressed or hear bad news. Others will smoke socially; drink in one hand and ciggie in the other. But it's a complicated habit and people develop the smoking habit alongside the nicotine addiction so it's difficult to break the two-fold cycle.

Smoking stinks. I love to smell of perfume and soap and body lotion... but with a hint of ashtray? No! But when you're a smoker nothing in the world will stop you from lighting up, not even the stench. I really didn't care if I stunk; so long as I could put an end to that little nicotine monster saying FEED ME.

Smoking makes you out to be a liar too, you tell people you smoke less than you actually do, you pretend it doesn't cost that much, or when you quit and then start again, you swear on your mother's life that you've not had a sneaky cigarette. Also, smokers console themselves with comments like I might as well have one bad habit, after all I could get hit by a bus tomorrow! Who do you personally know that died being hit by a number 37?

Brides in their beautiful white gowns are puffing away at the reception. Children as young as 12 are puffing away in their school uniform, these kids have no idea that they'll still be puffing away against their will in years to come. Sick patient's having had a tracheotomy play Russian roulette with their lives, puffing away. Even pregnant women, carrying a brand new life are puffing away. This shows you how truly addictive cigarettes are.

Smoking turns you into a complete nutcase. I've searched in my own dust bin to smoke a butt when I've run out, I've been to the petrol station at midnight in my nightie and coat for cigarettes, I've begged a stranger in a nightclub for one, I've stood in someone's cold, rainy garden because they don't allow smoking in their house. I actually remember standing on my friend's brother's balcony smoking. His house was a cess-pit, a complete tip, it smelt of beer, body odour and rancid bin but I had to go outside so that I didn't pollute his already stinking flat with cigarette smoke. Even then, I didn't see that I was on a road to hell!

Over the years, I've burnt my curtains, clothes, furniture, I've even burnt people. I've also almost crashed my car because the cigarette I've thrown out the window flies back in and you panic because you don't want to feel the pain of a cigarette burning in your lap nor do you want your car to burst into flames, at the same time, you have to control the car!

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I've done nearly every undignified thing imaginable and still, I sit on the fence terrified, because I never know if one day, I'll be stupid enough to say "oh go on then, just one".

If cigarettes cost £15 for 10, they'd still be bought but I'm 99% sure that if smokers could swallow a pill and immediately stop smoking without cravings, they'd pop a pill in a heartbeat.

*August Mayfield*