

# OVER A MILLION QUITTERS CAN

by Lorraine Graves -CUP-

"Mind if I smoke?"

"Yup."

"What? That's not the way it's supposed to work."

"Oh yes, it is. Welcome to anti-smoking week."

"Oh God, here comes the propoganda."

"You betcha boots. We tend to be inundated with the pro-smoking propoganda in many subtle ways. It's sexy to smoke, right? The Aerospace medical laboratory states: "Any amount of cigarette smoking not only affected endurance performance, but also limited the response to training."

The report goes on to say that not only could the non-smokers go a greater distance on the tread mill but they did so with less fatigue, as did those with sports backgrounds. A point of interest is that a higher proportion of people with a history of engaging in participatory sports are non-smokers. So non-smokers, in general, can do strenuous exercise for a longer period of time while tiring less. This applies to all sorts of participatory "sports". This means you'll have more energy left over after you've shoveled out your hovel, run two blocks to get the bus and had to walk home anyways, or pushed your blessed auto all the way to the gas station.

So you mind if I smoke, eh? You self-righteous non-smokers are a pain in the ass. What business is it of yours if I want to pollute my lungs? They are my lungs.

Your smoking bothers me too.

Is that so? Do you drive a car? Cars add a lot to air pollution; far more than one or two cigarettes and you don't ask my permission to start up that heap you drive.

"I would if I wanted to run it in your living room."

"Oh".

"As a matter of fact, one of the damaging elements of tobacco smoke is carbon monoxide. The hemoglobin in your bloodstream would much rather pick up any available oxygen needed by the body. So that the body is more efficient at gleaning harmful CO from the surrounding air than it is at getting the oxygen to your system. The effect

is even more concentrated of fetuses, whose mothers are exposed to smoking. It's not just the CO but other deleterious compounds are passed on to the unborn child and the aftermath of the mother's smoking during gestation can be seen at birth weight, higher infant mortality, and more frequent neonatal distress. Did you know that even at age six, the child whose mothers smoked during pregnancy are on the average an inch shorter than children whose mothers abstained?"

"Preaching. You're trying to get me to quit. I enjoy smoking and besides if I ever did want to quit all I do is go to one of those gruesome displays of blackened lungs. That'd scare anyone into giving up the habit."

A lot of people will cease to smoke after "shock" therapy but for a limited time only. Once they get used to and/or forget the gruesome sights they've been exposed to, they're usually back to it. The people who stop smoking and stay stopped are the ones with strong self-motivation. Sometimes it takes a few tries.

"Which ways are the most effective? There are all sorts of gimmicks and gizmos. Cold turkey is the only way to quit, right?"

"Not necessarily. Anything that helps you to stop or lessen your tobacco addiction, as long as it doesn't harm your health, is fair game and likely useful for

smoke was a good feeling right from the start? Therefore, if you can learn to become a smoker, you can also learn to become a non-smoker. Once you've made the decision to quit you have the choice of tapering off or cold turkey."

Let's deal with tapering off first: The Saskatchewan Interagency Council on Smoking and Health suggests nine ways of making it a little easier:

1) Keep a daily record of where and when and why you smoke. Inspect it every evening and resolve next day to cut out the less important cigarettes.

2) Decide to eliminate cigarettes at certain times or in certain places or with certain people.

3) Remind yourself why you want to quit. If you think you have overwhelming reasons why you should smoke, write them down alongside the reasons for quitting.

4) Ask yourself "why am I smoking this cigarette."

5) Put your pack in a place where you must make an effort to reach it.

6) Smoke each cigarette halfway only.

7) Buy only one pack at a time.

8) Don't carry matches or a lighter.

9) Smoke only the cigarettes you buy.

And for those who are/into cold turkey, the council has ten helpful hints:

1) Think of quitting for only one day at a time.

8) Buy sugarless gum or candy to use instead of a cigarette.

9) Remind yourself why you quit.

10) Many ex-smokers succeed by stopping, starting, stopping and finally quitting and sticking to it.

"Great, great, but if I quit smoking I'll put on weight, and then instead of damaging my lungs it'll be a strain on my heart."

"You can put on 60 pounds before it is near the danger to your system that a pack a day habit is."

"But it doesn't LOOK good."

"Does smoking?"

"Well, my Dad used to smoke when I was little and I thought that looked kinda neat."

"Do you realize that there is a direct correlation between parental attitudes toward tobacco use and those of their children's attitudes even once these children reach adulthood? Perhaps one of the reasons you smoke is because your father did. And what do you mean he used to smoke?"

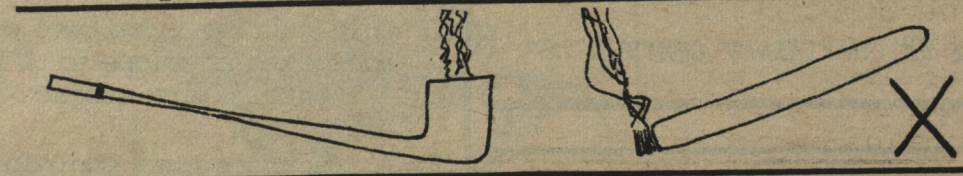
"He quit after his second heart attack."

Almost all you've said so far has been for the advantage of tobacco freaks, but you said once that most people don't smoke. Got anything to say for them?

Uh huh. BE VOCAL. Pleasantly ask people around you who are smoking to be considerate of your sensitivity to tobacco smoke.

That's it?

No. Let me finish. I've other suggestions for non-smokers. Be visual by wearing a non-smoker button. Post "no smoking" signs in appropriate places. In your car ask passengers to refrain from smoking. When travelling always request the non-smokers' section. Where such facilities are not provided or are inadequate, or when smoking regulations are not being enforced, register a complaint with the proper authority. In eating places ask for the non-smoking area. Register complaints if smoke interferes with your dining pleasure. In waiting and reception rooms, urge your physician or dentist to



someone. Anyone who's been hard up for reading material has probably perused a package of cigarettes and seen that "Health and Welfare Canada advises that danger to health increases with amount smoked." Conversely, danger decreases as your tobacco addiction decreases.

"You're calling it an addiction."

"You bet your boots I do, tobacco is a chemical and psychological habit, but you had to learn to smoke, or are you going to tell that breathing in

2) Get a buddy or a group of buddies to quit with you. If your spouse or best friend smokes, try to get them to join you in quitting.

3) Avoid company or places where temptation to smoke is strong.

4) Don't carry matches or a lighter. Put all ashtrays away.

5) Keep busy, get plenty of exercise, stretch, walk around the room.

6) Breathe deeply once in a while, particularly when the urge to smoke is greatest.

7) Drink plenty of water or orange juice.