

THE U.S. JOURNAL

OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

What's Up DOC?



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Interview . . . A Young Smoker

When did you start smoking?

My first cigarette? Age 13.

No. When you started to smoke regularly.

15.

Why hadn't you kept it up at age 13?

Too young! It's easier to smoke when you're 15 than when you're 13. It also made me sick.

Sick?

Nauseous.

Didn't it make you sick when you started up again?

It also did when I was 15.

Who else in your family smoked?

Only my sister. My father used to.

Why'd he stop?

'Cause he knew they were hurting him.

Did he try to stop you from smoking?

No, he didn't know. I kept it from him.

What about your mother?

My mother used to put posters up. She had one I remember, "Smoking is Glamorous," with an ugly woman with bad skin.

What did you think of that?

As far as my mother putting it up? Or the poster? I believed it.

Believed what? That smoking could hurt the skin?

No. That it wasn't good for you.

Then why did you start smoking?

It looked enjoyable. It looked like it tasted good. I don't think it looked glamorous.

Heard of any side effects?

Like someone had a lung taken out? None that I knew of.

That is, any problems smoking could cause?

Yes, definitely. 'cause I was getting a lot of it in school at the time. Y'know, "Cigarettes are bad." I mean, there are a lot of things you know are not good for you but you still do it.

But in moderation.

Moderation, that's true.

When was the first time you ever heard that there was anything wrong with smoking?

Probably between 5 and 7 . . . around 7. See, my father smoked a lot and I must have heard my mother after him. I remember my mother bitchin' a lot to my father.

What did she say?

I don't know what.

When was the first time in school you learned about smoking?

4th grade. But the clearest thing I can recall was 7th grade in my science class when the teacher was talking about it. He put a slide on with a lady with smoke comin' out of her nose and he asked, "Is this glamorous?" and we all said no.

Any more information in high school?

I don't think I did. No, 'cause everything in high school was on drugs.

Aren't cigarettes drugs?

Yes.

What kind of drug?

I don't know . . . Nicotine?

What does nicotine do?

I don't know.

Why is it harmful, if it is?

It causes cancer? See, I don't know enough about it to tell you.

Anything that smoking can do to you?

I know it's not good. I remember the slide of the normal lungs and the lungs from smoking.

Anything else that smoking can do?

(long pause)

Anything at all?

It paralyzes those little things in your lungs . . .

Anything else in the whole body?

I imagine it has effects all over.

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smoking has any effects. What about the "neuromuscular" system — that is, the muscles and nerves? (long pause)

Well, how about the skin? Makes your skin much thicker? I think it does.

Mouth?

Oh, yes. Stains you teeth, irritates your mouth, injures your tongue, gums, throat.

Is that what you think or what you know personally?

Speaking from experience.

Ears, Eyes?

I've never felt that my ears or eyes were hurt, but I think it must have an effect on everything.

Lungs?

Yes! The cilia is paralyzed and all the shit can't be brought up. Stains the lungs, it loses elasticity.

Heart?

I would say yes, but I wouldn't know in what way.

Stomach?

I'd say yes to that again. I can tell at the end of the day if I've smoked a lot, I need a double dose of Maalox. Ever take Maalox?

Yes.

Do you drink coffee and smoke cigarettes together?

Yes. They go very well together.

Why?

I'm not sure. I know orange juice and cigarettes don't go so well. Liquor and cigarettes do, but that's a social thing.

Kidneys?

No, I don't know.

Sexuality?

No, I don't know anything, but I

do think it has an effect on everything. After all, you're polluting.

Can you name 10 brands of cigarettes?

Benson & Hedges, Marlboro, (Pause), Virginia Slims, Vantage, Merit, More, Kent, (Pause), Camel, (Pause), Now, (laughs and says, "I can see that a lot of the new advertised brands like Now, More, Merit, Vantage are the ones I'm naming.") They still have Lucky Strike?

Where do you recall seeing cigarettes ads lately?

I don't recall them so much on television. Billboards!

Do you drive to work?

Yes.

Do you recall any specific ads?

Cheryl Teigs! Billboards, magazines.

What was the first brand you smoked?

Marlboro.

Do you know why?

'Cause I saw a lot of my friends — people in my age group, people in school — that's what they smoked. How long did you stay with Marlboro?

Not long.

How much did you smoke initially?

Hard to say.

How much now?

I shouldn't say. . . 2 packs a day.

For how many years?

4—no, yeah, 3 or 4.

How do you feel about smoking?

(sighs — thinks) I don't want to smoke. I know I shouldn't smoke, although I enjoy smoking. But that's because I smoke. If I didn't have a habit, I'd enjoy it, but I have

a habit and don't enjoy some of it.

What brand do you smoke now?

Different brands. Right now Benson & Hedges.

Why did you choose it?

I basically like the taste.

What gives it the taste?

Tobacco and whatever else they put in it. All I know is from what you told me. I never gave it any thought. I only thought there was tobacco in there, which is stupid, I know.

Why do you think one brand tastes different from another?

Before you had told me, I thought they just processed the tobacco differently.

Why does regular paper burn right up but cigarette paper take 10 minutes?

They treat the paper somehow.

Does that worry you?

No, because I can't feel it can be too much worse than the tobacco itself.

What about tar — what is tar?

Tar is a product of the burning tobacco.

Anything else? Are you supposed to think one way or the other about it? It accumulates in your lungs.

So would you want a cigarette with low tar?

That would be better.

How many cigarettes should someone smoke if one smokes?

The least amount. About 3. After you eat.

And yet you smoke. . . ?

40.

What else is in the smoke beside tar?

Whatever smoke is made up of. I don't know.

Well, What does the filter do?

Filters the smoke.

And it's safer?

Yes. Not safer, but it helps.

Any beneficial aspects to smoking? None.

Can you name any of the tobacco companies?

Philip Morris. I can't think of any others.

How much do you think the tobacco industry is spending on advertising in this country every year? \$1,000,000. I have no idea.

What's your favorite magazine?

TIME.

Do you subscribe?

It ran out.

What else do you read?

MIAMI HERALD and ROLLING STONE.

What do you think a full-page ad in TIME costs?

I don't know.

Ever see any ads in the past six months to discourage you from smoking?

No.

How much is the Government spending to educate about smoking?

Zero. But that's the only thing that'd work! I mean, if I saw some positive influence around, I probably wouldn't smoke. Wait a minute. Where do you get money for what you're doing?

Nowhere. But now do you see the need to talk about it, to see there's a lot to this problem?

Yeah. But sometimes you get me pissed off, because I don't feel like it does any good. 'Cause I know I'm gonna feel the effect one of these days. It'd be more helpful to have advertising rather than someone saying don't do it.

Perhaps one of those days isn't so far off. How do you feel now?

You're right. I wake up and I feel awful.

How old are you?

21.

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GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

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By Alan Blum, M.D.

FIRST THE good news. Karin Moser, staff writer for *The Ottawa Citizen*, a daily newspaper published in Canada's capital city, has all but redefined the word "reporter."

In a far more difficult feat than any Woodward or Bernstein playing cops 'n' robbers to uncover some political intrigue, Ms. Moser exposed a cover-up that makes Watergate look like a pinball game. But what's even more amazing is that the issue she unfolded — cigarette smoking — is, to most "hardcore" reporters, too commonplace to be considered news.

With the cooperation and encouragement of her editors, Ms. Moser spilled the beans on the tobacco industry's main product in a shocking but immediate and understandable manner. Along the way, she probably improved the health and well-being of her community as much as any physician. In dozens of articles throughout the month of June, she related the gist of extensive interviews with medical and scientific experts as well as officials of agencies which deal with heart and lung disease.

But the series went beyond mere reporting and into the realm of community involvement by offering the reader an opportunity to "start being a healthy Canadian." *The Citizen* offered free buttons

which read "I'm a non-smoking Citizen." And the reader was encouraged to send in a photograph and fill out a pledge form to quit smoking permanently on June 30, 1979. On that day, *The Citizen* published hundreds of photographs and the headline, "12 hours to go — then 1,052 butt out."

For three weeks, each day's issue carried a front-page feature story by Ms. Moser, usually with photographs of individuals like Canadian health minister David Crombie urging support for the campaign. Pictures of smoking-related lung tumors were prominently featured, along with statements by cigarette-disabled citizens. The headlines included the following: "More women getting throat cancer," "Heart surgery big convincer" (for a 36-year old patient), "Sex appeals and smokes don't necessarily mix," "Worry not about weight," and "Girl hooked at nine, quitting at 15."

In the midst of the series, guess what happened? Imperial Tobacco Ltd. pulled one and a half months of advertising. A marketing vice-president for the company was quoted as expressing "surprise" that *The Citizen's* sales department hadn't "let us know you were running this type of campaign and ask us in advance if we wanted to run our ads during that time." *The Citizen* had the perfect squelch in a page one headline: "They quit COLD TURKEY."

Too bad the company couldn't take the heat of competition, namely, an upbeat appeal. By choosing to drop out (the ads returned soon after the campaign), they let it be known that a daily dose of truth can in fact overcome their little 20-pack of lies. Ms. Moser, who will regularly follow up on her series, is deserving of something far greater than a Pulitzer Prize. A smoker herself when she began her investigation, she "joined the ranks" on June 30 and concluded her series by noting, "Somehow all the fun has gone out of smoking . . . Have a great summer. And breathe easy."

NOW THE not-so-good news. In October, I received the following letter from a reporter on a large midwestern daily newspaper:

Dear Dr. Blum,

I enjoyed talking to you. I've enclosed the article that resulted from the interview. An amazing thing happened to the story I wrote for the paper initially. In the article, I talked about the promotion of drugs in newspaper ads like the huge, colored ads for cigarettes. And

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I talked about the tobacco companies' control of the media by financing newspapers and television companies through their ads of their support of subsidiary media interests (CBS and Woman's Day).

I was naive. All of the article that referred to newspaper or media advertising and the power of the tobacco companies in the media was cut. The resulting article is enclosed such as it is . . . I apologize . . .

DR. ARNOLD Cheyney of the University of Miami is a doctor of education, not a medical doctor, but his influence may mean more for the health of the children of his community than that of any physician.

Dr. Cheyney works with groups of teachers in what is called the Basic Skills Workshop, sponsored by The Miami Herald. The Herald is involved because Dr. Cheyney's way of enhancing student's reading skills just happens to use the newspaper.

I was intrigued by this concept after seeing a full-page ad in The Herald headlined, "Bye Bye Dick and Jane." "Dear Dick and Jane," is said, "I love you, and I love Spot, too. But now I read The Miami Herald every day . . . it helps us with our math and science. And we learn big new words . . ."

I was even more intrigued by this classroom use of The Herald when in the same issue another full-page ad proclaimed, with big new words, "National Smoker Study: Merit Science Works!

I contacted Dr. Cheyney, and as I suspected, all was not selfless when it comes to The Herald. He revealed that the American Newspaper Publishers Association, the group of owners who control much of the nation's printed medium, was becoming alarmed about a future drop in circulation, so it developed programs of this sort to get 'em while they're young.

Dr. Cheyney pointed out that he does not ignore advertising when he uses the newspaper in the classroom. "When you teach a child to read," he says, "you want to teach him to read critically, to see what the truth is going to be to the reader and to society." Although he looks for bias and propaganda, Dr. Cheyney admitted that he has not emphasized the power of advertisers to influence the newspaper itself or the subliminal effect on children of the dishonest use of such words as "science" to sell cigarettes.

Using children in the classroom to build newspaper circulation is a cheap shot by The Herald and other newspapers — sort of journalistic malpractice.