

Medi-Vision™ Film Transcript

40: Quitting Smoking (1) The patient's viewpoint

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Introduction DCA

Quitting smoking is best thought of as a *process* rather than an *event*. It is most likely to succeed in long-term when the doctor or other health-care professional helps the patient understand;

- Why they smoke
- The health benefits from stopping
- How to deal with the behaviour and rituals which surround their smoking
- How to deal with the nicotine addiction, which has such a central role.

In this film we examine the process through the eyes of eleven individuals at various stages of quitting.

Uses of film (with second film in series)-

- to help professionals be more effective in helping their patients quit;
- may also be useful to show your own patients, to help them understand the issues surrounding their own attempts to quit.

Why people smoke....

Jey (with GS)

Started under emotional pressure, when arranged marriage was going wrong; encouraged 'it will calm your nerves!' Felt sick and dizzy, and vomited early on, but soon became addicted.

Denise (with MB)

Started at Art School, aged 19, when asthma seemed to have abated; 'the in thing to do'. Now aged 40; thinking of quitting over past few years, mainly for health reasons.

Luis (with LHF)

Smoking 48 to 50 years; once quit for 30 days, 15 years ago- no medication; fell into the trap again - while drinking, smoked to keep friend company. *Excuses not to quit*; 'smoke fascinates me' ... I like the smell of it... it made me feel real cool...a thing to do... helps me to relax'. Just got tired of making excuses!

Vandar (with LHF)

Convinced for a while having a cigarette helped him to think better...awareness of hands... a 'security blanket'. Cigarette 'there for the bad, and there for the good'!
Realised ten years ago that he was addicted to nicotine & cigarettes. Not bothered by social acceptability! Even smoked when he had pneumonia; 'little inhale and choke'!!

Jey (with LHF)

Smokes alone, to get time out for herself. A stress smoker? Uses it to help her concentrate, stay still, and think.

Why people decide to quit smoking

Denise

Because of asthma, concerned that health was deteriorating to the point where she would be unable to recover. Time to 'stem the tide of impending illness'. Previous half-hearted attempts to quit.

Lilia (Luis' wife; with LHF)

Very ill with asthma, shortness of breath, and bronchitis. On nebuliser and inhalers, prednisone. Doctors told her smoking was related to her asthma. Stopped, and has had no relapse for 2 years.

David (with LHF)

Asthma for 3 years- yet still continued to smoke. Now- wants to instil pride in himself; given confidence through attending classes. These reinforced his determination; not easy to do, but now feels he has necessary confidence.

Joyce (with MB)

Was very heavily addicted. 1996- operation, and smoked one cigarette an hour all through the night. Came to hospital pick up daughter's tablets - saw notice 'Addiction' on Maudsley hospital wall. Husband enquired, and booked her in to the group clinic. Wakes up with arthritis, and smoked through the night (so severely addicted). Now- has not smoked for 13 months; 'I only don't smoke for today; I still have some craving'. Useful trick of the mind; she still *takes it one day at a time*.

Vandar (with LHF)

Wife has always wanted him to stop. He has smoked 32 years, married 11 years. Past 3 years, definite deterioration in health - wheezing in chest.

Learning from previous quit attempts

Andrew (with MB)

Getting out of breath; and numbness in feet and legs. Saw Consultant, who advised three things: lose weight, exercise more and, (priority), stop smoking. Walks for an hour every day- improvement. Previously, legs and feet were hurting (claudication). 'Blocked arteries'.

Michael (with MB)

Stroke. Previously had an active life; now little activity. Depression and inactivity. Has to go out for exercise- but goes to the Pub, where he has a pint of beer. Difficult to avoid smoking there. Drifted back to smoking. Now 2 years later feels his life is better sorted out, with better chance of success.

Joyce

When she had hysterectomy, doctor told her not to smoke for 5 weeks. On discharge, doctors were smoking in the lift!! **Bad example!** Lit up immediately!

Rob (with LHF)

Talking about nicotine addiction for 2 years. This June he quit the day after father's day- stayed quit for 8 weeks. **'Cold turkey'** (ie no medication). Restarted when he had a confrontation at work- anger. Walked away. Police were called, because he scared the other man. Lit a cigarette; immediately **'felt like an old friend had come back'**. Panic and fear relieved. Instantly felt secure, could think more clearly. A few weeks later, feels bad again- more pains, does not sleep as well. *More difficult to stop smoking than giving up drugs or alcohol!* Has come down from hard drugs in Institutions, and not suffered as much.

Kathy (with GS)

Lost the ability to resist the cravings. Weight gain is a problem; self-esteem goes down, preoccupied by thoughts of weight. Becomes less of a priority as time goes on.

Jey

Son's problems with school; needs to think about ways to cope without smoking. Succeeded for three months, and now knows she can succeed in the future.

Quitting as a process (1)

Preparation

David

LF Smoking, and **three sides to a triangle**.

Habit: working on this for a month. Strongest scores were for stress, stimulation and relaxation. Get rid of lighters, ashtrays and routines of smoking. Delay- 'two minute time outs'. Holding out, finds the craving subsides. Delayed as long as possible and found cigarette didn't taste as good.

Chemistry: helped him to understand the brain chemistry. 'Nicotine has taken over and is dictating what I did, when and why I did it'. Wants to regain control of his brain.

Medication; he has chosen to quit without medication & 'face the turmoil all at once'.

Vandar.

Now week number 4 in the process; planning to quit in 2 days time. Smoked 50 cigarettes a day, cut down 20% to 40/day; next 2 days plans to cut to 20. Current tools- a lot of **delay, deep breathing, walking**. Information from scores on questionnaires: **handling, rituals important;** also smokes for **relaxation & handling stress**. Now is a good time to quit, because they have little stress- business going well etc.

Denise

Never felt she was going to go and buy a packet of cigarettes. But felt *very emotional*, cried a lot *as if she had suffered a bereavement*. Put these feelings to positive advantage; thought of it like *'an unhealthy relationship that I was leaving'*. The feelings of loss and grief and pain were finite and would eventually go. Profound feeling of loss. She feels able to be positive and put it into context- purge herself of feelings associated with a 20-year relationship. She could always rely on cigarettes, unlike lovers!

Rob

LF: When will you be ready to start again? Need to disrupt all smoking patterns which have become really comfortable again. **No cigarettes & lighters at your finger tips; 2-minute time-outs, no automatic smoking.** Need for a **plan, leading up to a quit date.** He is ready now- doesn't like to procrastinate!

For review next week. Smokes 20 to 40 per day, most on a work-day. What does that tell you? You're a **stress smoker!** Need to work on *'I gave in to nicotine dependence because I didn't develop a strategy to cope with the land-mine of stress that blew up in front of me'*. Need to imagine all sorts of stressful events in the next year. What am I going to do when these things happen? People who don't smoke experience the same feelings, and they don't suddenly become smokers! I don't need to either. Work on coping strategies. Also need to discuss medication.

Given a **'take charge card'**; **sign up on this number** (paid for by tobacco tax), *put it where his cigarettes normally are; take it out when you want a cigarette, and during 2-minute time out think, 'in a month's time I'm not going to be smoking. What am I going to do then to deal with my stress?'*- Practice- eg trying deep breathing. After 2 to 5 minutes, when urgent craving has gone away, then you can make the decision whether you are going to have a cigarette now or not.

Kathy

This time she prepared differently! Spent more time 'getting psyched up'. Made it her top priority. **Books:** read 'Feel the fear and do it anyway', by Sue Jeffers; and 'Struggle and dance with life'. And used the **group** and **nicotine replacement**.

Quitting as a process (2)

Medication

Kathy

Nicotine chewing gum. How did you wean yourself off that? Used 4mg gum, then 2mg, Difficult, because she felt she was becoming addicted to chewing gum! To stop, she switched to the nicotine **Microtabs** (sublingual lozenges); dose absorbed through the mouth, but without the need to chew. Whole process took 6 months. She then went through a 'mini-nicotine withdrawal', with symptoms of irritability etc normally associated with stopping smoking; this was less severe and lasted about 1 to 2 weeks.

Michael

Started on the **nicotine patches**; never aware of the patch, so moved to the gum. Using **gum** 'as a deterrent' which he does not use immediately, but is always there.

Andrew

Used the gum in a different way from Michael; every time he felt like a cigarette, chewed a piece of gum; most important thing was not to smoke, number of pieces of gum taken not important.

Denise

Nicotine patches- the main thing that helped her to stop. Enabled her to get through the initial period of nicotine withdrawal, which can weaken your resolve beyond measure. That is why she failed before. The patches helped that resolve. Did not feel nearly as agitated; more a sense of feeling of sadness and grief, rather than anger and aggression. Helped her to step away from '**very front-line feelings**' and concentrate on what was going on underneath. Physical symptoms largely taken care of. Invaluable in helping her stick to her decision.

Joyce

Used the patches for three months. Very helpful, never missed a patch; applied patch delivering 15 mg nicotine in 16 hours. Still slightly fancied a cigarette. Started picking and eating.

Luis

LF: **Bupropion.** Started on one a day, then two a day, before the class. Helped a lot; thinks about smoking, pictures himself smoking but is now able to resist. Without medication he would probably succumb. Helped with craving. Talked about nicotine withdrawal causing an unstable period for 2 to 6 weeks. First week was worst, second week much better. **Side-effects?** constipated him a little- drink more, Metamucil (fibre). **Plan:** to stay on bupropion for one month after he is through the withdrawal symptoms.

Vandar

LF: This week started on **bupropion**, in preparation for his quit date. **Side-effects;** dry mouth ? a little worse; difficulty getting to sleep. **Benefits;** bupropion makes the cigarettes taste 'off'. Within 3 days, they don't taste as good, and the 'rush' on drawing on a cigarette has gone. **Plan;** Friday night, a little ceremony- last cigarette, and put on **nicotine patch.**

So far- dealt with the handling needs (working on this for three weeks); bupropion, which has taken away some of the craving and made cigarettes less attractive; next step- stop cigarettes and all the toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke, and replace the one chemical your body needs- **nicotine.** Tobacco from this time on is not an option. **When you feel like you need a smoke, use nicotine nasal spray.** Next- break chain of the addiction, and take away nicotine. Wean off nicotine in 2 months or so, leave on bupropion for another month. Taking apart the smoking one piece at a time, at a pace he can handle. **Escaping from the addiction triangle!**

Quitting as a process(3)

The value of groups

Joyce.

'I'd kill for a cigarette!'... 'No, Joyce, look at it this way- you'll die for a cigarette!'. Convinced she could not have stopped without the help of a group. Still slightly fancies a cigarette. Felt terrible to start with. All she could do was take the dog for a walk!! Pinching cigarettes from shop check-outs, she was so used to picking up her cigarettes and taking them in to people's houses! Forgot a lot of things- for about 6 months.

Kathy.

Meetings were important markers. A lot of genuine caring and concern. They would exchange Emails. Others would pick up if one member was struggling. Extra support! Feeling of not being alone; genuinely being empathic. Tended to attribute even normal feelings to smoking cessation.

Jey.

Encouragement! Felt she could do it.

48.26 Quitting as a process (4)

Monitoring carbon monoxide

GS: Demonstration of technique. Measured by taking a deep breath, counting down for 15 seconds, then slow expiration into the machine. Measured in parts per million translates to a percentage of haemoglobin in blood carrying CO in place of O₂. A clear encouragement. Health benefit comes very quickly.

50.35 Quitting as a process(5)

Immediate health benefits of quitting

Luis.

Three weeks tobacco-free. He can walk without his legs hurting (intermittent claudication)- arterial flow better; even hair growing on legs!! Socially feels much better- so many places where smoking is now forbidden. Sense of smell and so taste is much better- important to him, as he loves cooking, and always prided himself on knowing smell of many spices. *Now smells spices he couldn't smell before.* 'If I didn't have smell I would be a garbage cook!' Giving himself an enhanced gift. Saved about 45 dollars (in 3 weeks). His wife is going to reward him- a mini-trip together. Implied that he has *impotence*- which may improve on quitting.

Denise.

Lives at the top of a hill. Previously she was never able to walk up without stopping to gasp for breath several times. Now able to walk up the hill without stopping. Dramatic reduction in need for inhalers. Can remind herself when she sees smokers sitting around and apparently having a good time, that that is *an illusion*- the reality is endless prescriptions of Ventolin and Becotide, unable to walk up the road, and probably dead by the time she is 60!

Joyce.

Friends especially notice she is not nearly so breathless on exertion, and say that she looks much younger!

Lilia.

Husband Luis' smoking bothered her enormously once she had quit herself. Passive smoking of his exhaled fumes! Constantly fighting over it. Luis may not have believed his smoking was making her asthma worse, but now accepts this.

Andrew.

Improvement in the pain in his calf muscles and the soles of his feet. Much improved claudication distance

Vandar.

Saving in money- he spends about US\$2,000 a year. Next he and his wife plan to take \$1,000 each and spend it on something special- eg pieces for his computer.

Kathy.

Rewards. Gave herself lots of treats month by month- set of De Cruzo pots and pans, foreign holiday with her son and friend, very expensive Filofax, modem, access to the Internet- all 'fabulously justified' because of the money she has saved by quitting smoking!

Quitting as a process (6)

Avoiding weight gain.

Kathy.

Tends to gain about 2 stone (=28 pounds) on quitting. Less, and slower when using the NRT. Piles on when she stops nicotine replacement. This time, gained over about 2 months. Combating it by walking to and from work every day, and being more sensible about snacking.

Luis.

Has diabetes mellitus, so it is especially important he does not gain weight, especially once he stops bupropion. (note- on average smokers gain about 7 pounds on quitting, mainly through loss of appetite suppression).

LF: Luis given a certificate of completion for attending the class; encouraged to tell his story to other smokers among us veterans.

We recommend that you now view the second film; Quitting smoking (2); the role of professionals, where many of the issues raised are discussed in more detail.

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