

THE FREEDOM EXPRESS



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Tobacco Free Florida's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Tobacco Program at Florida State University College of Medicine

Fall 2014

A Grandpa's Promise

Even though Garnett Hill knew cigarettes were harming him, the craving for nicotine always seemed to overcome his resolve. He coughed. His chest hurt. He felt tired a lot of the time. Despite these strong reasons to quit, Hill still struggled with remaining smoke-free. His daughters' requests on behalf of the family were what finally gave him the resolve to quit for good.

Not wanting to expose others to secondhand smoke might sound like a typical reason to quit, but it might surprise you to know that Mr. Hill does not have any grandkids – yet. Mr. Hill's daughters had begun telling him “We want our children to know their Grandpa”, so one day he made a promise to himself, his daughters and his future grandchildren, and he meant it.

When the Gateway Peace River Center announced it would hold Quit Smoking Now (QSN) classes in April 2013, Hill decided to give it another try, for his family's sake. After so many failed attempts, it's no wonder that Hill approached QSN with doubts. At the first class he remembers thinking he hoped it was not another one of “those classes” that was not going to work for him.

But QSN was different. In the class, Hill learned about the powerful physical addiction

of nicotine and the harmful health effects that it has on the body. Learning the science of nicotine addiction helped him see that his difficulty quitting was not about weakness or failure. It's hard to quit. In the program, he learned strategies for coping with cravings and with smoking triggers. The class, which met once a week for an hour, taught him the importance of not ‘going it alone’. Sharing the process helped Hill to maintain his resolve to quit and make it through the tough moments.

Armed with the lessons he learned through the program, he felt better prepared when his quit day arrived. During the first days and weeks without cigarettes he began to notice positive results. The cough eased up. He had more energy. Food smelled and tasted wonderful again. He became more active. Although he had feared weight gain, he actually lost weight due to his increased



Ms. Megan Bailey & Mr. Garnett Hill

activity level.

Mr. Hill is reaping the benefits of success. “I can do things I could not do before,” Hill said. “I can go for a nice walk and not worry about running out of breath. I never realized how bad I stunk! Now people tell me I smell nice. It feels great to be a non-smoker.”

As he remained tobacco free, these health benefits translated into a major improvement in his quality of life and a major positive change in his self-image.

Hill shares advice for people trying to quit, “This Quit Smoking Now program is special. It is personal and someone is right there working with you. It's only 1 hour per week and it can really change your life. My strongest belief is that if you really want to quit and you stick with the Quit Smoking Now program you will succeed. But you have to really want it. Go ahead and try it.”

Coaches Corner

“I am so delighted with Garnett because he was in my first ever QSN class. Garnett is a shining example of improved mental health and physical health by becoming tobacco free. He has become a great role model for his family and for the clients at the Peace River Center. He often sits in on the new QSN classes to offer advice, support, and encouragement to future quitters. I am pleased to announce that he has now celebrated one year of being tobacco free and an awesome quitter!”

- Megan Bailey
Tobacco Treatment Specialist

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Great News on Quitting & Mental Health!

While evidence is clear that smoking affects our physical health, and causes more than 5 million deaths a year, it is not so clear how much smoking affects our mental health. What's more, a lot of smokers seem to think that smoking actually improves their mental health. Often, regular smokers report that they smoke cigarettes to help them with emotional problems, feelings of depression or anxiety and to relax and relieve stress.

Confusing symptoms

Since smokers experience irritability, anxiety and depression when they have not smoked for a while, researchers think that smokers

might be confusing the relief of withdrawal symptoms with positive feelings and better mental health. Because the nicotine in cigarettes relieves nicotine withdrawal symptoms, some smokers think that smoking is actually helpful to them. Unfortunately, the opposite is true!

Promising Study Results

In a 2014 study*, researchers reviewed 26 studies to see if there was a significant change in mental health status in patients who quit smoking for at least six weeks. The results were promising! Researchers found that anxiety, depression, mixed anxiety and depression, and stress were significantly

decreased in patients who quit smoking for six weeks or more. They also found that psychological quality-of-life and positive mood significantly increased for those who quit smoking.

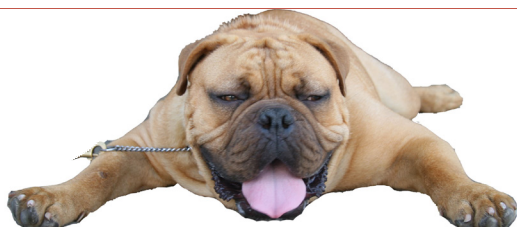
Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that smoking cessation (quitting smoking) has a positive effect on mental health. The researchers suggest that this may be because once smoking has stopped and withdrawal symptoms are over, many of the mental ups and downs caused by the craving for nicotine stop as well.

Studies show that people who Quit Smoking -

-  Experience **less** stress
-  Have **less** depression
-  Are **less** anxious

Need help quitting? Please contact the Tobacco Free Florida's AHEC tobacco program at (850) 645-9710.

*Taylor G et al (2014) Change in mental health after smoking cessation: systematic review and meta-analysis. BMJ. 2014; 348: g1151



Second-hand smoke and your pet

by Vanessa Byrd



Recent studies reveal that secondhand smoke is harmful to pets. In light of this, we wanted to see if we could find some firsthand information about what secondhand smoke does and how harmful it really is. So I put in a call to Northwood Animal Hospital in Tallahassee, Florida, to see what they could tell us. Of course, I was worried that I might sound ridiculous asking about secondhand smoke in pets, but I was relieved when around 9:30 that same night, I received a call back from the emergency vet on duty. Dr. Morgan Guoan was a pleasure to speak with. I was surprised when

she shared that she had witnessed the effects of secondhand smoke in a patient while she was in veterinary school, so she was no stranger to its ill effects.

Dr. Guoan has seen the effects of second hand smoke on many animals, including dogs, cats and even birds. Since becoming a veterinarian in 2012, she has treated patients with coughing, wheezing and even lung disease. Sound familiar? She says that the same ill effects that smoking causes in humans are also seen in pets who are exposed to smoke. But here's the good news: Dr. Guoan says that as soon as

the irritant (in this case cigarette and/or cigar smoke) is removed, "the patient's health absolutely gets better!"

Just one more reason to celebrate being smoke free! On behalf of your pet, we would like to give you a big, slobbery "Thank You" for being a quitter!



A Winner's Legacy of Hope

To everyone else, Mary was just another member of the Quit Smoking Now (QSN) class. But Mary held a deep secret. A week after she joined the class, her doctor broke the news that she had inoperable cancer, for which there was no cure.

Mary informed her Quit Smoking Now tobacco treatment specialist, Mrs. Dailey, of her cancer diagnosis. With a heavy heart, Mrs. Dailey let Mary know that she understood why a class to quit smoking was no longer a priority for her. But to her surprise, Mary didn't want to stop taking the class. Instead, she wanted very much to finish the class and to be an inspiration to friends, family, coworkers and others who had the desire to quit smoking.

Another thing Mary didn't want was pity. She didn't tell anyone in her class about her diagnosis and she asked that Mrs. Dailey keep her secret as well. She completed the entire class without anyone else knowing. True to her word, Mary finished the 6-week class and completed all the requirements to be a QSN graduate.

For the class 'quit day', Mrs. Dailey asked that each class member bring something small to give to their classmates for the celebration. In response, Mary brought laminated copies of A Winner's Creed, making

sure to bring enough for each of her classmates to have their own copy.

On graduation day, as friends and family begin to show up for the celebration, Mrs Dailey noticed several people holding red roses. First one, then another, then another - until there were well over a dozen people there with roses- all people who loved and supported Mary and wanted to be there for her graduation. With tears in their eyes, everyone witnessed this outpouring of support as Mary and her classmates declared themselves smoke-free. It was a graduation to remember.

Sadly, two weeks later Mary passed away, but her legacy lingers on. Slowly over time, Mary's grandson, daughter and neighbors began to join the QSN class. They were inspired by Mary to begin their own journeys towards being smoke-free. Mary's legacy has touched so many since then. She proved that life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster hand, they go to the one who trusts himself, and always

thinks 'I Can'.

Many thanks to Mary and to her children for unselfishly sharing Mary's story and desire to help others become smoke-free.

A Winner's Creed

If you think you're beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't
If you'd like to win, but think you can't
It's almost a cinch you won't
If you think you'll lose, you're lost
For out in the world, we find success begins
with faith
It's all in the state of mind
Life's battles don't always go to the
stronger or faster hand
They go to the one who trusts himself, and
always thinks
“I Can.”

- Walter D. Wintle



Food never tasted so good!

Here's why your food tastes (and smells) so much better

Many of us are aware of other ill-effects of tobacco, but very few smokers are aware of how much smoking significantly impairs both the sense of smell and taste.

Smoking allows your taste buds to be in direct contact with chemicals that affect their ability to recognize the four basic tastes of salty, sweet, sour and bitter. Additionally, we use our sense of taste and smell to warn us of dangers, such as fire, poisonous

fumes, and spoiled food. Often, as Mr. Hill mentioned in the newsletter cover story, you also lose your ability to smell yourself!

Because smokers cannot smell or taste as well as nonsmokers, there is a tendency to eat poorly and be less comfortable in social situations. Smell and taste contribute to our enjoyment of life by stimulating our desire to eat – which not only helps us remain healthy, but also adds to our social life. Experts say that while the chemicals do not completely destroy the ability of the taste buds to recognize the four basic tastes, the degree of recognition is significantly decreased. The good news is that within days of not smoking, your taste buds begin to recover!



Worried about weight gain?

Now that you're smoke free and can actually taste your food again, you may be concerned about weight gain. Relax. Experts say that the average weight gain of ex-smokers is about 6-8 pounds. That's it. However, to help avoid weight gain (and get other benefits), follow the tips below:

1. **Exercise.** Even as little as 30 minutes of exercise a day can help prevent weight gain, as well as strengthening your heart and lungs.
2. **Avoid junk food.** Eat healthy snacks and avoid foods that are high in sugar, salt and fats like butter and oil.
3. **Consider NRT** - Since weight gain usually happens in the first week after withdrawing from nicotine, consider using the patch, gum or lozenges to help you.

In the Next Issue

WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Got a success story? Got tips on how to quit smoking? Any questions for our tobacco treatment specialists? Please share! Together, we can beat this! If you have a success story, or you know of one, please write us or give us a call. We would love to hear from you! Please send us your emails to freedomexpresseditor@gmail.com

INFORMED TO QUIT
INSPIRED TO QUIT
I QUIT WITH AHEC



IS BOREDOM YOUR TRIGGER?
WHAT TO DO INSTEAD OF SMOKING

TRYING TO GO IT ALONE?
WHY SUPPORT GROUPS MIGHT BE A BIG HELP

SMOKING - A BAD HABIT OR AN ADDICTION?

REAL PEOPLE TELL WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WEAR THE PATCH

Thinking about quitting tobacco?

We can show you the road to success.



Use the link below to find a calendar of classes in your area!



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