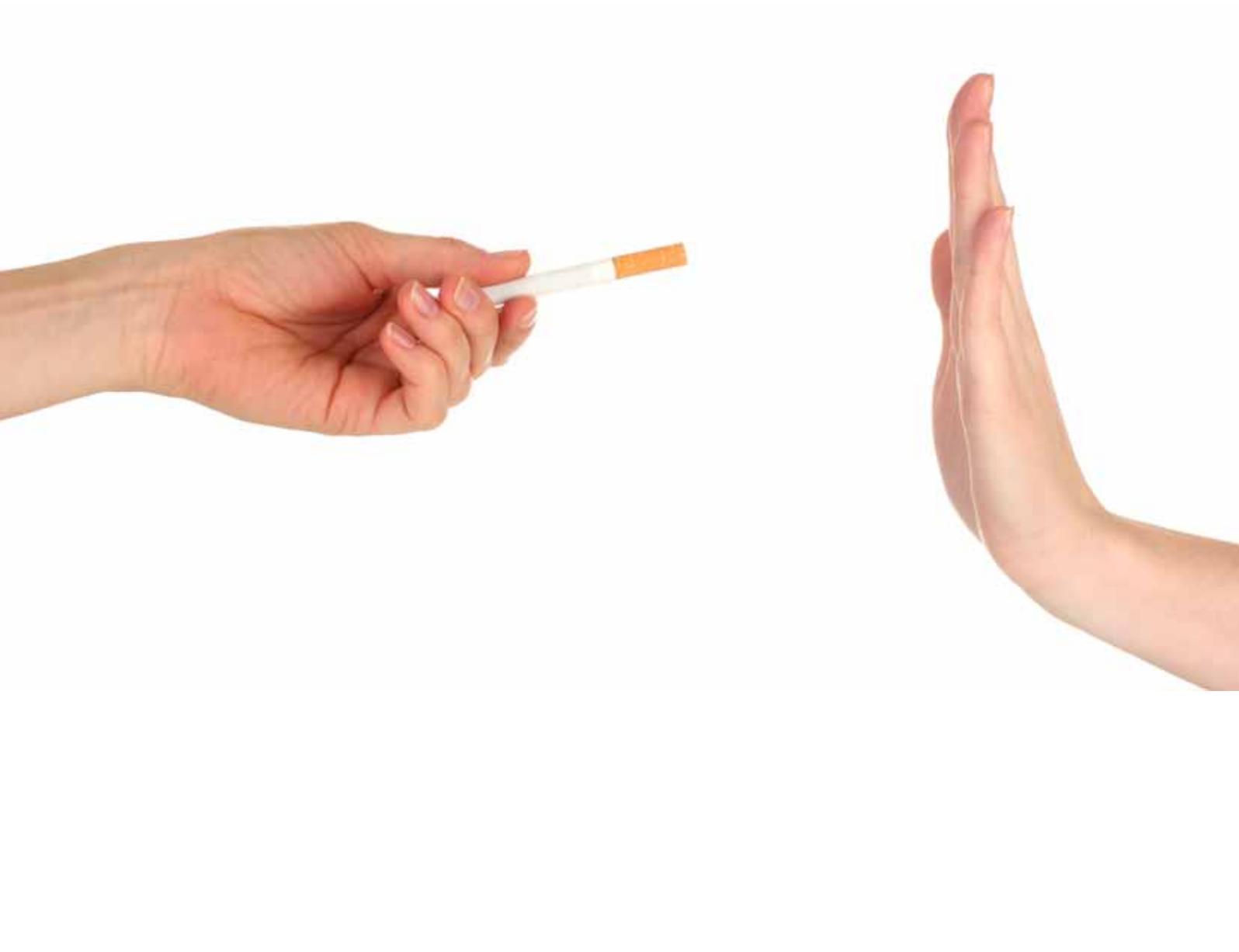

Get ready to **quit smoking**

5 part course to prepare your mind to stop smoking for good



Part 1: Why you really should **love smoking**

Hello

So you sign up for a get ready to quit smoking course and the first thing I tell you is that you really should love smoking.

So now you're thinking, what have I signed up for?!

I can't promise that by the end of this course that you'll think I'm sane but I promise you, my particular brand of insanity about smoking has been carefully honed over 20+ years of treating smokers, and for very good reasons.

All I ask is that you bear with me and enter into this experience whole heartedly and with an open mind.

Quitting smoking the traditional way is not easy. But after treating thousands of smokers, and teaching hundreds of therapists how to do the same thing, I think I know how it can be much, much easier.

And I want to teach you this through this course.

At this point, you're probably a little wary, after all you don't know me, or what my approach is all about. All I can ask you to do is to just bear with me and devote a few minutes to just reading this email as you would a story.

Its effect will become apparent later.

The idea of becoming a non smoker after many years of smoking can feel pretty daunting. I've seen terror pass over many a soon to be ex-smoker's face when they first came to me for help.

They wanted to quit but at the same time didn't want to. Over time I worked out how to help them want to quit which is a very different thing from just feeling you "should" stop smoking.

I want to find out whether you are really ready to free yourself from smoking. And this course can also help you become ready. This is the first of 5 modules in your free 'Get Ready to Quit Smoking' course.

Some of this may come across as a little weird, I admit. It has taken me nearly two decades to refine my thinking about smoking to this point, but I promise, by the end of the course, your thinking about smoking will have altered radically too.

Now I know that taking this approach will mean I'll lose a lot of smokers early. Some won't even make it past the first module of this course, and that's OK.

But if you are interested to learn whether you can move yourself to a place where stopping smoking feels easy, even uplifting, then read on...

How I went from hating helping people quit smoking to loving it

I qualified as a hypnotherapist back in 1993. I had two young kids to support. It was tough financially for a while but I had finally found my vocation and loved helping

people with hypnosis. I started seeing all kinds of clients as well as holding down a “normal job”.

I saw clinically depressed folk, people in chronic pain, traumatized and phobic people but you know what? Helping people quit smoking the way I was doing it just didn't feel right.

Although I was by now head trainer on a professional psychotherapy course, and was training tens of thousands of National Health Staff in psychology here in the UK, something still bothered me about my smoking cessation approach.

I needed to stop trying to steal cigarettes from smokers

I have to confess to you that I found treating smokers tough back then. Sure I had successes; one guy was able to stop using an oxygen tank because he quit (although, let's face it he may have stopped anyway) but something was missing in my approach.

You see many smokers didn't really want to stop or had been sent along by others who felt they “should” stop.

And other smokers seemed hell bent on subconsciously protecting their smoking habit - as if I was a thief trying take something from them. Again, often this seemed more subconscious than conscious.

What's more, quite weirdly, I found the hardest smokers to help quit were those smokers who only smoked now and then. They were much harder to help than the 60 a day smoker who preferred to do something completely or not at all.

Back then I used the old “aversion tactics” approach, trying to scare smokers away from smoking, while building up the benefits of quitting too. And although it worked for some it didn't work for many.

I felt there had to be a better way to help people escape smoking than just scaring them. (Neuroscience has since shown that trying to scare people away from smoking actually makes them want to smoke more.)

I had forgotten that smoking actually gives people things

Over the years I started to think more and more about the psychology of smoking.

How a smoker has a relationship with their smoking, how smoking is often used as a rebellious “screw you world” after a bad day, how smoking gave real perceived benefits and how it was silly to pretend it didn't. (Even today many hypnotherapists are taught to tell their clients that “it's easy to stop as you're not really getting anything from it”).

My company Uncommon Knowledge stays on top of what's happening in the psychology world, and it is clear that there are no other smoking cessation experts using this approach in quite the same way other than the practitioners we have trained.

Now I love helping **smokers quit**

Over time I learned to love helping smokers and found that I could often ease them away from smoking with no or few withdrawal effects by helping them see smoking in a totally different way, rather than just giving them a few hypnotic experiences.

I don't just mean they *thought* about it differently but also *felt* differently about it before they stopped and that was the key to helping people escape nicotine comfortably.

What the difference is when you **stop smoking properly**

I don't know if you've ever had the experience of finding someone charming and attractive, then finding out something unsavory about them? You just can't see them in the same way ever again.

And this can happen with cigarettes. The government tries this with its warnings and images, but that backfires, for reasons I already discussed.

The “Whatever did I see in you?” **effect**

But then cigarettes truly no longer have the same pull for you, you don't have to resist them any more. I call this the “What did I ever see in you?” effect. And when that happens to you, really happen, it's quite amazing.

These days when I help smokers quit smoking it's a joy. Finding ways to take the pressure off them, to help them feel differently about smoking and find healthy non-toxic ways to meet the needs the cigarettes met before is so much more effective – and interesting.

The vital change in my understanding is that when you stop smoking you are not just stopping a behavior, you are ending a relationship. This makes all the difference, for me and my clients.

I can't stand to see people **bullied**

I think the real reason I love helping smokers break their habit is because I have a strong dislike of bullies. And in my mind, getting people hooked on a product that is so bad for them is bullying of the worst kind.

The very worst kind of bully is one who convinces you that you are not being bullied so you forget to resist them.

You see there is always a part of a person that wants to quit, their lungs, their skin, even their ovaries or prostate. These are the silent victims, the parts that need representation.

To me helping people naturally come to the point where quitting feels inevitable is about restoring justice in the province of the human body. But as you'll see in a moment I never lecture smokers about the “dangers of smoking.”

Are you ready or not?

As I've said some smokers reading this will be weeded out early. A few won't make it past the first email of this free course. Why? Because maybe, just maybe, they love smoking enough to keep doing it indefinitely (or as long as they can).

By the end of this email you'll know exactly whether you are one of those smokers or not. Whether you love smoking just a little bit too much to begin to escape it.

But for the few who can't hack it, it will become clear that being free from smoking is not for them, not yet at any rate. They may need to let it continue doing its work on them for a few years more.

So this free course will help you assess whether you are ready to quit, but bear in mind you might think you're ready when you're not, and vice versa.

As I say: These sessions will also help prepare you to quit. Heck, sometimes they're even enough in themselves.

But before that, some quick reassurance...

I'm indifferent but not anti-smoking

I'm not going to be one of those judgemental, boorish and boring self righteous anti-smokers. You know the kind of person who thinks they are superior because they don't smoke. There is nothing worse.

And when you quit I don't want you to be a brow beating anti-smoker either. Why? Because hate is too close to love. When you hate smoking you're still too emotionally connected to it.

This isn't about the 'evils of smoking', it's about ascertaining whether you are ready to leave behind something that no longer fits with who you are.

So let's get to it.

For the love of life

So let's talk about love and smoking. You must love smoking, don't you? Or maybe you once did and now you're not so sure.

Maybe you love it too much to free yourself from it. People love, or think they love, all kinds of people, substances or ideas that undermine them. Or maybe you hate smoking now but feel yourself to be caught in the 'honey trap' of addiction. This is something we'll look at in your next email.

So why do I suggest you should love smoking?

Just before you discover why I think you should really love smoking (given certain caveats), I'm going to ask you to suspend judgement for a moment and to think about the habit of smoking not as a habit but as a "deal."

Okay so just what is this deal?

Your deal with **smoking**

For the pleasure of smoking you get...well the pleasure. But maybe you don't feel much pleasure but, rather, get other seeming benefits.

For instance you may have learned at some level, that smoking helped you form a certain identity - perhaps it made you feel a bit cooler, to fit in or whatever. It's unlikely this still feels like a benefit but its effects can still be there at an unconscious level.

Or more likely perhaps you've come to feel, like millions of others, that smoking helps you relax or socialize because you can connect to other smokers, or because smoking gives you something to do with your hands.

Maybe smoking feels comfortably familiar. Perhaps smoking feels like a friend - who is always there for you in the good times and bad. Maybe you now smoke just to feel "normal".

And, as I say, perhaps you simply like smoking and enjoy the taste and the quiet moments those cigarette breaks give you.

Then again maybe you feel that mini smoking breaks punctuate the day somehow. You smoke before and after jobs you have to do or it helps you relax after work just making life a little easier to manage.

These smoking benefits are by no means unimportant. And they do really feel like benefits.

So these are some of the things you might get from the 'deal' with these strange creatures known as cigarettes.

So what do they get in return?

For giving you pleasure, a sense of identity, something to lean on when times are tough, the feeling of being able to relax or concentrate, cigarettes get your money and time, some if not all of your fertility, the brightness of your eyes, the youthfulness of your skin, your sexual and general fitness and for one out of every two frequent long term smokers, your life.

Now, remember I'm not here to scare you - you know all this stuff already - I'm just asking you to assess the deal you've struck.

Does that sound like an equal and fair deal to you?

Liking smoking is not enough

My point here is that if you do continue to smoke you shouldn't just "quite enjoy" smoking you should love it like nothing else in life. Then we start to square up the deal.

Seriously, if you really love smoking to the extent that it feels like the most meaningful thing in your life then maybe the 'deal' is worth it. If that is the way it is I for one will not try to talk you out of it. And maybe it is worth it.

But when I say “love” I really mean it.

Considering what cigarettes take from you then you need to take such a level of ecstatic joy from every smoke that it actually feels worth the sacrifice.

I find it a tragedy when people say they just “enjoy” smoking because as I’m sure you can see now, that’s really not enough. You know for them the deal is a fraud.

Imagining buying a new pair of shoes and quite liking them, finding them quite comfortable but as well as paying for them you also have to give up the proper functioning of your heart, lungs and possibly just hand over your life. I don’t know about you but I’m going elsewhere for comfortable footwear!

To justify handing over all that to cigarettes (or let’s be clear here - the tobacco companies), you should love smoking more than anything. And maybe some things are worth dying for.

If nothing else compares to smoking for you, and you really feel it’s worth paying for the pleasure in this way then stop this course right now and unsubscribe at the bottom of the email please, I don’t want to rob you of your life’s meaning.

Right now you might be thinking: “Of course I don’t love them above all else! I’m physically addicted! I don’t even like smoking any more!” If so that’s promising.

Next time - an addiction check

In the next session we will look at to what extent you really are physically addicted to cigarettes and how that might affect your readiness to get rid of them once and for all.

I’m glad you’re still with me, I think that simply reading this course could make a huge difference to your life, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity,

Part 2: So how did cigarettes trap you?

Hello

We've got one question to answer in this module:

Are you too physically addicted to cigarettes to free yourself from them?

That's it. And as you'll see, it's a vitally important question before we progress any further.

In the first session I asked you to look at smoking as a 'deal'. No smokers, or very few, are naive enough to assume you just pay with money for cigarettes.

Money is generally the least of it. Since you are still reading I'll assume you feel that the deal is not worth it from your end.

You know how it goes: You start smoking, maybe when young, and it's just something you do. You "own" it at first. It, the smoking, doesn't "own" you. And, of course, you feel if you so choose you can quit at any time.

But what happens?

Bit by bit it gets under your skin. There is a point when you feel a choice has become an addiction and that's what we are looking at now. It's not just stopping smoking that's important but how you stop.

As one smoker, Ted, told me recently: "I've stopped so many times before but this time it feels like I have walked away from smoking forever; it feels so different."

I want to start this session with a quick true story from my own past. The reason for it will become clear soon...

How the sound of a key made me salivate

When I was a young kid my mum felt guilty. Why? Because she saw me as a "latchkey kid". In other words when I came home from school every day I had to let myself into the house because she was still at work.

This was no big deal for me by the way. But in an attempt by her to lessen her guilt she would bring me a bar of chocolate every day and pretty soon I came to expect that chocolate.

In no time at all the sound of her key turning in the door would make me salivate. She had unwittingly trained me like a Pavlov's dog. I mean, keys are not tasty, right?

For years the sound of a key in a lock would make me salivate whether I was hungry or not. I want you to keep in mind this example of the power of unconscious association as you continue to read.

Okay so how does the result of my mother's guilty feelings relate to smoking?

The truth about physical addiction

Some people will readily jump on the idea of physical addiction as justification for them continuing smoking.

I'm sure you've heard it... "But I have an addictive personality!" But as we're just about to see there is more to it than that...

The mania for "medicalizing" all kinds of normal human experience, from grief to smoking has meant that millions now believe they have no choice but to be a certain way (unless they take expensive drug products of course).

And the mass media don't always help:

Horror stories

From time to time we hear horror stories in the press about nicotine being more addictive than heroin and certainly some people can and do experience what feels like strong withdrawal when they quit smoking.

The so called 'reward pathways' in the brain become used to getting their fix. But how much is pure physical addiction and how much is psychological expectation? This is where it gets interesting.

Your body hates nicotine

The truth is nicotine is gone from the body pretty fast - it really doesn't stick around for long. Your blood pressure and pulse rate return to their normal levels a mere 20 minutes after your last cigarette. After just 12 hours your blood oxygen levels will have got back up to normal and toxic carbon monoxide levels will have fallen to within normal range.

After 48 hours damaged nerve endings are starting to repair and sense of taste and smell begin to return. And after only 72 hours your body will test completely, that's 100%, free of nicotine. Any physically-based craving will have peaked after this time also.

Despite the abuse it suffers from smoking, the body fights back and recovers many of its losses pretty quickly - as long as it's given a chance to do this before cell damage becomes too chaotic and uncontrolled.

And here comes the astonishing truth about smoking addiction...

Chain smokers who stop with few withdrawal symptoms

Of the hundreds of smokers I've helped over the decades, some of them have smoked 60 or 70 a day for decades. When they stop many of them feel slight or no symptoms of withdrawal.

If smoking were just a physical addiction - or even if the physical addiction side of it was all important then you wouldn't find such people quitting so comfortably.

But what is highly important in maintaining a smoking habit and also in the experience you have after quitting is your psychological expectation. I'm going to talk about something I'm sure you have experienced.

How unpleasant unmet expectation can be

You've had this experience: You're chatting to a friend and you expect to remember some famous person's name but when you 'reach for it' it's just not there.

It's on the tip of your tongue and it feels frustrating because your expectation is being thwarted.

And when their name finally pops into your head it feels like a relief!

So if you can feel that frustrated just because you can't remember Britney Spears' name, then how powerful would a major long-held expectation be?

The truth is that what you expect affects your body just as strongly as your mind.

You know your brain is powerful right? But this powerful?

You've probably heard of the placebo response, but did you have any idea just how powerful it is? (bear with me, all will become clear shortly!)

The placebo response happens when we believe an inert sugar pill is, say, a powerful pain killer. The expectation of pain relief causes an actual reduction in pain.

The placebo is real and has helped people recover from serious illness because they believed they had been given a "wonder drug" when they hadn't.

And it works the other way round too. 'Nocebo' is the term given when negative expectation produces a negative result. So people who wrongly believed they were sicker than they really were have died because they had been wrongly diagnosed and expected to die. Witch doctors would rely on this.

So you know now why I've been talking about expectation. If it can make the difference between life and death then it can make all the difference in your experience of stopping smoking.

When you quit, you heal, you don't 'withdraw'

One of the lessons I learned from taking a long hard look at how I approached helping people quit smoking was how people feel about the time after quitting.

I found that when the smoker started framing the time after they quit as healing rather than withdrawal they had much fewer so called withdrawal symptoms.

Expectation produce powerful physical responses and when you really expect something it feels right that you are going to get it. People who expect to get drunk will feel and behave drunk when given fake alcohol by researchers.

So if we can remove a large amount of expectation that nicotine withdrawal is going to be terrible then all a person has to deal with is the physical element of letting their body heal. This is why we use hypnosis - because it is much better at helping you change your expectations than will power is.

If someone is led to believe that withdrawal from smoking has to be awful then that belief and expectation may produce a large part of what they experience. But what role does expectation play in keeping people smoking?

How expectation keeps you **smoking**

Imagine you had a crazy finger clicking habit.

You click your fingers one thousand times every day. You don't click all the time though. You click during breaks at work. You click your fingers with a cup of coffee and an alcoholic drink after work when socializing or perhaps irritatingly for your partner, after your most intimate bedroom moments.

Now imagine you've clicked your fingers like this for thirty years. Just about every cup of coffee for thirty years has been consumed in conjunction to you clicking.

The thought of having a coffee or drink or break at work without clicking your fingers clicking would feel weird! You might wonder what you would do with your hands at social gatherings if you couldn't click your fingers. You have trained your brain and body to expect to finger click just as my mother trained me to expect chocolate though hearing a key in the door.

I'm sure you're getting the message... the connection between smoking and having a coffee is no more natural than clicking your fingers and having a coffee. But when we do something – anything - often enough, we come to expect is as natural. This is how any learning takes place.

Of course nicotine contains thousands of toxic chemicals and finger clicking doesn't but as I've said these toxins are cleared as your body heals when you quit in three days! So psychological expectation is still central to feeling addicted to smoking (or obsessive prolonged finger clicking)

Okay so back to our finger clicking analogy: When it comes time to quit the finger clicking habit you might come to believe you are physically addicted whereas what you have is a set of powerful psychological associations between finger clicking and certain situations.

What's more we know this is true of smoking.

"I don't even think about it... until"

Even the heaviest chain-smokers report times when they don't even think about smoking. It might be during a long distance flight, a situation in which they have never smoked and therefore the psychological association has never been built. Most people have never smoked when swimming or in the movie theatre and so the desire only reasserts itself when they come out of these places. The desire is linked to the situation, not physical cravings (although this is not to say physical cravings play no part at all).

Which leads us back to you:

Are you too physically dependent to even think about freeing yourself from smoking?

Or have there ever been times like long haul flights, visits to non-smoking friends or to the movies where you hadn't really thought about smoking?

Do you ever sleep for more than two hours without your body waking you up demanding to be fed cigarettes?

Did you ever forget about smoking for longer than normal because you had become so engrossed in some emergency or other diversion?

If the answer is yes to any of the above then you certainly are not too physically addicted to think about quitting for good.

Next time: Watch out for willpower

In your next email we I'm going to discuss when to quit and why willpower will only get you in more trouble.

Let me finish by congratulating you on getting this far. Being open minded enough to take on board new ideas like this will help you a lot when you come to quit.

Part 3: The trouble with **willpower**

Hello

In yesterday's email we looked at the power of expectation and how it can make you feel dependent on cigarettes. Today I'm going to talk about the best time to quit.

Now some people escape the smoking trap through sheer brute force - and good luck to them! By force of will they stop smoking and try not to smoke. They expend energy and effort in not smoking.

Now, don't get me wrong, this method does work for some but the problem is that it can so easily cause 'the rubber band effect'.

Watch out for willpower's dreaded ping back

If you have a rubber band to hand, grab it and stretch it. If you don't, then imagination will do nicely. When you stretch the band, everything in it wants to return to its original shape. It's what rubber bands do.

And what I have noticed over the years is that it's the same with human beings...

- A concerned mother forces her teenage girl to stop seeing her compellingly edgy boyfriend and she'll want him even more.
- Go on a low carb diet and suddenly cakes and donuts are everywhere!
- Try not to be angry with someone and within hours you're carrying on a full blown argument with them in your head!

Deny yourself the 'treat' of a cigarette then watch that desire build. And I've lost count of the number of smokers who, years after quitting, still say "Oh I'd love a cigarette with a beer".

People who stop smoking properly never say that.

Now I'll repeat - sheer force of will can and does work for some people, but it's exhausting and often doesn't last.

Trying not to smoke has you still focussing on...the smoking.

What if smoking felt stranger to you than **purple pants on backwards**

Have you ever noticed that the tasks you get done most efficiently are those which feel right to do? Not the tasks you know you should do that never seem to get done.

Not the books you know you should read, that are still gathering dust on the mantelpiece. The things that almost pull you towards them, that get done hardly without you thinking about it.

That's how I want stopping smoking to be for you. I want you to stop because it starts to feel more right not to smoke than to smoke.

Because when cigarettes feel so alien to you, so irrelevant then you don't need to exercise any will power at all.

Or put another way: Think of all the stuff you don't have to force yourself not to do: I'm guessing here but I doubt you have to force yourself not to walk down the street dressed as Tinkerbell the fairy

... or run naked through the shopping mall...

... or steal cars for a living.

You don't even think about that stuff because it's just not who you are. You don't have to spend even an ounce of willpower stopping yourself doing these things. Smoking can feel that way to you too.

A little more on growing out of smoking...

Remember when you were a kid and you were still growing? One sure way of knowing your feet were getting bigger was when your shoes started to pinch your feet.

You had outgrown them and you stopped wearing those shoes, not through sheer will power but because they had started squeezing the life out of your poor feet.

You didn't have to set a date and say "right, from Monday the 18th of January I am stopping wearing those darned shoes!" You stopped wearing them because it felt much more right and natural not to wear them now.

Smoking squeezes too. Not at first, but eventually. It squeezes years out of your precious life, it squeezes energy from your limbs, it squeezes youth from your face and blood flow from your organs. It squeezes money from your bank. It squeezes a hell of a lot more than any tight fitting shoe.

When you quit it should be because it feels more right to be free than it does to continue being squeezed.

As I've said, only quit when it feels right

And that's why I'm asking you right now to wait and only quit when your subconscious mind lets you know the time is now. In fact one guy who used our 10 steps to stop smoking course emailed me and said:

"You know I didn't even know I *had* stopped after my last cigarette. I hadn't planned to stop then - it's just that I found the gap between my last cigarette getting longer and longer until it felt natural not to start up again."

I've had so many clients tell me the same thing; that they just stopped without trying to stop. This is so much more natural than the "I've got to stop tomorrow morning!" high pressure approach and tends to be so much more sustainable.

Wait until it feels right. Will power can help bridge gaps here and there but it shouldn't be the main force you use for outwitting smoking.

In the next session I want to ask you something about your life as a whole. The way you answer will give us an idea of whether quitting smoking is for you as your life is at the moment.

Part 4: Is it really the right time for **you to quit?**

Hello

In the last email I asked you not to quit smoking until a particular tipping point had been reached.

Not the tipping point in your body when cigarettes have done irreversible damage but a tipping point in your mind when you feel totally ready to be free because it feels more natural to be free of smoking (which it is of course) than continue with the relationship.

In this session I'm going to talk with you about something else: Your wider life. But first let me tell you about Terry.

Terry the smoker, who's real problem wasn't smoking

Years ago a man called Terry came to see me to help him quit smoking tobacco. But when he arrived it became clear he didn't want to talk about smoking at all.

He wept as he told me about his failing marriage, his stresses at work, the fact that he never had time to eat properly, his terrible sleep, his anxieties and more besides. I gently suggested that we wait until his life became more stable before ejecting the smoking from it.

The truth is if your boat is so unstable that you can't stand up on the deck then you will problems balancing well enough to throw the ticking time bomb into the water to save yourself from it.

We had to get Terry "balanced on his feet" before he could stop smoking. This we managed to do surprisingly quickly. Most people don't lead perfect lives all the time. We all have stresses day to day.

We all get frustrated, bored (which is another kind of stress) or other people can irritate us. The art of living well isn't about eradicating all stresses from life (I wish) but in coming to the point where you deal with life's stresses in ways which are healthy and don't create further stresses.

It's also vital to know what you genuinely need, so that smoking doesn't hitchhike a lift pretending to be a viable way of say combating loneliness or soothing frazzled nerves.

So what do you need to live a satisfying life?

My company Uncommon Knowledge is dedicated to helping people live healthy, fulfilling lives, and this is the set of 'primal needs' we base our approach on:

In short we all need:

- a need for a sense of safety and security
- a need for connection to community
- a need for emotional intimacy with another person

- a need for creativity and stimulation
- a need for a sense of connection to something bigger than oneself
- a need for purpose and goals
- a need to feel good about oneself, self esteem
- a need to feel creative, stretched and stimulated by life.

When these needs are met life feels meaningful. When they stop being met or we fear they will shortly stop being met then we become more vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed by life. In the same way as someone can feel overwhelmed by the need to drink when they are chronically dehydrated.

Before I started working therapeutically with people almost twenty years ago my life had started to feel less meaningful. Sure I had my children to bring up and support but I didn't feel the work I was doing was meaningful, I didn't feel part of the wider community or as if I had direction in life beyond a vague sense of wanting something more.

It's so, so important to understand you have needs and actively work to meet them in your life so that parasites like cigarettes can't get their hooks into you.

But no one has a perfect life...

Few people have all these needs perfectly met all the time and that's okay but by being aware that you have these needs you become freer and less vulnerable to fake solutions like smoking and other habits.

So if you are chronically stressed by your life at the moment, chronically lonely or unsatisfied then it might not be quite the right time to disentangle yourself from smoking. Smoking, like cults, con artists or abusers, preys on the vulnerable.

But I want to emphasize that you should never wait for life to be perfect - then you could wait forever (or however long the cigarettes decide you have left).

Make sure you are at least "steady on your feet" before you fling the smoking parasite from yourself.

The 5th and final session will be with you tomorrow when you can take the 'Ready to Quit?' test.

Part 5: Take the test – are you ready to quit?

Hello

This is it, the fifth and final session in your free 'ready to quit smoking' course.

Let's quickly summarize how far we've come...

The smoking deal: we've seen how smoking is a sort of 'deal' and discussed how much you need to love smoking to make that deal a fair one. Otherwise smoking is just taking you for a fool.

Expectation, not addiction: we saw how the physical addiction idea is overplayed and how millions of people stop smoking painlessly when their psychological expectations change. Just keep clicking those fingers!

Avoid the ping back: we looked at the 'rubber band effect' and how willpower alone - a conscious effort - isn't as powerful as an unconscious feeling that you have "outgrown" smoking. When you feel it's the right time.

Steady as she goes: in session four we looked at how your life needs some balance before you have the spare capacity to escape smoking. And also how smoking tricks people into thinking it's a kind of "friend" even as it thieves or sometimes murders them. In this session I want you to take a quick test with a simple yes or no answer.

The Test: 7 questions to check if you are ready to quit

1. Can you recall times *before* you ever fell into smoking? Yes/No
2. Do you ever 'forget to smoke' or not think about it because you are in a non-smoking environment such as on a commercial flight or visiting someone in hospital? Yes/no
3. Can you envisage using other non toxic means to meet your needs for overcoming boredom, nervousness or wanting a break? Yes/no
4. Do you still believe smoking's hype or do you genuinely feel you have seen through it and want to quit? Yes/No
5. Have you got over or almost got over the classic 'smoker's optimistic distortion'. Do you still trot out the party lines like: "I could get run over by a bus tomorrow!" or "my uncle Ted smoked 80 a day all his life and it never did him any harm!" or have you seen through these kinds of stock rationalizations? Yes/no
6. Do you genuinely want to look out for and support your body? Yes/No
7. Do you love smoking enough to potentially sacrifice your life for it? Are the tobacco companies' profits important enough to you to generously hand over your health? Do you genuinely feel that having something to do with your hands is a fair exchange for your time here on Earth? Yes/No

If you answered Yes to everything but the last question then you're already a long way along the path towards becoming a true non-smoker. If you had a few more No's then the course will get you the rest of the way.

I love helping people get to the point where they feel more natural not smoking because I know what it was like to smoke - I have sat across from so many who felt themselves totally enslaved to smoking and together we have, bit by bit, loosened the chains to the point where walking away became easy. I am passionate about this now because when it comes down to it, it is about potentially saving a life.