

## James Butler's Newsletter #6 February 03

So how many Valentine's cards did you get? More importantly, did you get one from the person you wanted to?!

In this month's newsletter:

- A guide to kicking a habit - and replacing it with a better one
- Details of my 8 Week Just Kick It Intensive Coaching - just £200
- An inspirational quote (well, I was inspired!)
- A trusty mother-in-law joke to finish

**"I'm addicted to you baby, you're a hard habit to break....."**

Don't you just love those early 80s soft rock classics? (It was Chicago for those still wondering.) But addictions are hard to break, and addictions don't have to be crack cocaine or heroine, it can be smoking, gambling, picking your nose at traffic lights or Australian soap operas. And they all damage us in some way (especially the nose one).

This month I am focussing on giving something up (not just smoking) because March 12th is No Smoking Day in the UK. Even if you are not a smoker, please read on because I suspect we all have some habit we would like to break or change. Some principles for kicking a habit are common, whatever the issue, which I have presented below. Specific information for smokers is available by clicking [here](#). And please understand I am making no judgement on people who do smoke, drink, gamble etc (I've done all of those in one day, I think).

### 3 Tips for Breaking the Habit

1. Get your mind round what you want to do (it will be your biggest ally):
  - Frame your intention in the right language. Our neurology isn't good with negatives (If I tell you NOT to think of a blue elephant what do you do?). Use phrases like "I treat my body with respect" or "I use my money constructively" or "The only TV I watch is educational".
  - Really explore the benefits of carrying on as you are - until you understand those and get the benefits from another source, the draw back to the old ways will still be there. This is linked to social/commercial conditioning we all have as we grow up and become adults. For example, smoking is a sign of maturity, or cigarettes help when we are stressed, or diamonds are a girl's best friend. (That last bit was a subliminal message for my wife.)
  - Identify the pain associated with the habit (our subconscious mind is very good at avoiding pain once we inform it). This might be

really knowing what lung cancer does to people, or looking at how much you owe the bookie, or thinking what you could have achieved instead of watching the goings on at the Queen Vic. For example, a 20-a-day smoking habit costs £1,600 a year. Which, in the UK, means you have to earn at least £2,400 a year to pay for it. What's that as a % of your salary?

- Write down the reasons for breaking the habit, and carry them with you when you do kick the habit. They may inspire you in your hours of need (because there will be some).
  - Break it down into chunks - fellow UK coach George Metcalfe talks of how he crossed out all the time in a day that he didn't smoke - when asleep, when riding his motorbike, when answering the call of nature, when playing sport etc etc. You then realise you only need to kick the habit for, say, 2 hours a day.
2. Put a support system in place:
- Now we have enlisted the power of your subconscious, and really got to understand the reasons for kicking the habit, its time to get some help.
  - Set a date to kick the habit (March 12th is as good a day as any).
  - Consider how you will help yourself. Think how you can reward your achievements (this isn't about punishment, it's about celebrating a richer/healthier/more pleasant smelling/ more active you). Set milestones to tick off and celebrate too (1 day, 1 week, 1 year, 3 lifetimes if you believe in re-incarnation).
  - Kick the habit with a friend. If your habit is truly antisocial, consider carefully who you share your problem with, but otherwise find a like mind to support you/compete with/empathise with. Smokers can find such networks at [www.givingupsmoking.co.uk](http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk). I'm sure other organisations can be found on the web for most mainstream habits/addictions.
  - Tell supportive people what you are doing (note the supportive). What you don't need is people saying "Pah, you try that every year" or "What, with your willpower?". What you do need are people who will pat you on the back, support you in what you're aiming for and help you back on the wagon if you falter. Draw on the love of those around you (most people are flattered to be asked for help).
3. Just do it (as Nike's Kick-a-Habit programme would be called):
- Your Just Kick It Date has come, you wake up and reach for the cigarettes/vodka/bookies' phone number. What do you do?
  - Go back to your reasons - remember this is not a sacrifice, it is a positive choice for a healthier/better life.
  - Draw on your support network.
  - Celebrate success - first hour, morning, day, week etc.

- When learning to juggle, we don't decide we have failed and stop when we drop a ball. If you slip, get over it and kick the habit again. As the NHS Smoking Helpline says "Don't give up giving up". (but if you are 'giving up' 20 times a day you might want to go back to step one!)
- The first two weeks are the worst, so really push to get through those. After the third week you are cementing your new behaviour (it is said it takes 21 days to make or break a habit).
- Remember that for most habits the temptation will come back. Being tempted isn't failure, just recognise the temptation, where it came from, and seek to avoid/counteract that source in the future.
- Remind yourself of your reasons.
- And then remind yourself again.
- And then realise how healthy/wealthy/energised/more peaceful you feel now.

A key thing I have learnt in researching this newsletter is that the period after you give up is a lot easier if you put a lot of work into the period before you give up (which is why giving up on 31 December after 8 pints of lager, 3 vodkas and a kiss with a copper is rarely successful).

### **My 8 Week Just Kick It Intensive Coaching Programme**

To support people around No Smoking Day (though this is not limited to smoking), I have developed a coaching programme which provides more materials and one-to-one support over 8 weeks, including daily check-ins for those crucial couple of weeks after the Just Kick It date. The Programme costs just £200 (equivalent to a 20-a-day smoking habit over the 8 weeks) and is available from February 26th 2003.

Briefly, the programme coaches you through the exercises outlined above, along with specialist support tailored to your particular habit. Daily check-ins at key periods ensure you have at least one supportive person in your team! The Programme is designed to support you until the 6th week of your new habit/life, well after most of the withdrawal symptoms/ hunger pangs/ obsessive behaviour will have subsided. For full details click [here](#).

As an incentive, to mark No Smoking Day, I will donate £25 for every participant to a cancer research charity - and send the participant Chicago's Greatest Hits.

### **Smoking Trivia**

I found researching this article very educational. There is a wealth of information out there on kicking habits in general, particularly smoking. Here's some I wanted to share:

- *120,000 deaths a year have been linked to smoking in the UK*

- *Over 5,000 property fires in the UK are caused by smoking each year*
- *12 months after giving up, the heart attack risk is half that of a smoker*
- *3 months after giving up, major improvements in the male physiology occurs. Guys, I'll spare you the details, but let's just say blood flow increases and you'll have more tiger in your tank.*

### **Inspirational Quote**

"I have missed more than 9,000 shots, lost almost 300 games, on 26 occasions been entrusted to take the game-winning shot... and missed. I have failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." **Michael Jordan** (possibly the greatest basketball player ever)

So my challenge to you this month is - if failing didn't matter, what would you dare to do?

### **And finally.....**

Before you read this joke, I want you all to know this was in NO way inspired by my recent trip on safari with my own mother. (I love you Mum!)

*A big-game hunter went on safari with his wife and mother-in-law. One evening, while still deep in the jungle, the wife awoke to find her mother gone. Rushing to her husband, she insisted on them both trying to find her mother.*

*The hunter picked up his rifle and started to look for his mother-in-law. In a clearing not far from the camp, they came upon a chilling sight: the mother-in-law was backed up against a thick, impenetrable bush, and a large male lion stood facing her, preparing for the kill.*

*The wife cried, "What are we going to do?"*

*"Nothing," said the hunter husband. "The lion got himself into this mess, let him get himself out of it."*

Have a great month everyone, and remember my business grows by referral. If you know anyone who might enjoy this newsletter (or who you want to give up smoking!), please forward it on.

Warmest Regards

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