

Quitting Is Easy

by Nathaniel Tower

I took up smoking just to show the world how easy it was to quit. It's been five months now, and my wife is wondering why I haven't yet.

"It takes time baby. I have to develop the addiction first," I tell her.

"Please stop," she begs me. "It's so gross I don't even want to kiss you anymore."

I can verify this statement. I'm not sure when the last time we shared a good passionate kiss, the kind where we slap our tongues around the other's mouth.

"Look, I'll quit soon. I just need to make sure that I'm addicted. Otherwise it's too easy to quit and I won't have proven my point."

"And exactly who are you proving this point to again?" she asks with a roll of her beautiful green eyes. It looks like sea foam bouncing around on flawless shores. For a moment I think about quitting just so I can kiss her, but my willpower is too strong. I can't give into temptation.

"Honey, this is our ticket to millions," I plead with her as I reach for the carton of cigarettes on top of the fridge.

"And how is that exactly?"

I have to pause here. I don't always think through exactly where I am headed with something, but I'm always convinced that I'll get to where I want to go. Nothing comes to me, and I don't want to seem like I'm racking my brain too much, so I just go with my gut.

"Don't worry about it. You'll see it when it happens. I can't give away all my secrets." I am tempted to go on a little longer, but any more than that and she will know for sure I'm stalling.

"You're stalling," she says.

I light my cigarette and take a deep drag.

"Hey, I told you not to do that in the house. Get the hell out of here with that. Do you want the walls and furniture to turn

yellow?" She waves her arms frantically in the air as if to ward off some evil.

"Relax, I'll put it out." I put it out just to show her how easy it's going to be for me to quit. My hand almost immediately begins to shake.

"I want you to stop by the end of the week. Stop or I'm leaving you." The sea foam is gone from her eyes. They're acidic now.

"Hey, look how easy it was for me to put that out." I put my shaking hand behind my back. "Look, I think the addiction has just about fully kicked in." I wrap my arms around her to show what a great husband I am. "I've never been addicted to anything after just one time."

Oops. She immediately pulls out of my grip and shoots me a death stare. I can feel her eyes burn through me. The look is almost as bad as the need for a cigarette. I know what she wants me to say, but saying it now will only make her appear to be happy. It's one of her many tricks. She makes me say something because she's angry, then she pretends to be happy, but I can sense that she is even more upset because she thinks I only said it because she wanted me to say it, which is apparently worse than not saying it at all.

"I'm going shopping," she says to interrupt my thoughts. I don't bother to tell her what she wants to hear. I'm just thankful that she's getting out of the house. My veins feel like they'll collapse if I don't get some nicotine in my system right away.

"Alrighty, babe. Need me to do anything while you're gone?"

"Yeah. Just one thing. Don't smoke."

"Fine. I won't smoke. I'll just throw everything I've started away."

"Good. Throw that damn carton away while you're at it." She turns on her heel and marches for the front door without bothering to tell me where she's going or when she'll return. I know I'm supposed to ask, but I know she won't tell me when I do. Either

way she'll be mad, so I might as well just save face. I don't want to look weak in front of the cigarettes.

I hear the door slam and my shaking hand immediately reaches for the carton. I have to be honest here. The cigarettes took their full affect about two months ago. It's been like a disease ever since. If Amy knew how many cartons I was plowing through then she would at least take away my credit cards and kick me in the balls. Amy would never divorce me, for any reason. Her parents divorced when she was a teenager, and she despises divorce more than anything, even more than smoking. Still, I'm not going to tempt her too much, so I grab a pack out of the carton and head for the backyard. She'll know I was smoking, but at least if I do it back here then she'll pretend she doesn't know. She won't even act pissy or give the impression that she thinks I'm hiding something. As long as it doesn't seem to affect her, she really doesn't mind.

I light the cigarette before I even get outside. I wait until the door is halfway closed before I take my first puff. It's an instant feeling of relief. I may have become addicted to sex a lot quicker, but the rush of smoke into my lungs and veins defeats any orgasm I've ever had. I always used to wonder why people smoked. Now I wonder how anyone can give it up.

I sit on the deck and puff my brains out, one cigarette after another, until the whole pack is gone. I don't think about much while I inhale, just about how I might actually quit and if I really could become a millionaire based on my experience. I'm sure I could write a book about it. Or at least a blog. People would want to hear all about how I did it. Quitting really could make me millions.

But then again, what's millions compared to this rush?

I bury the cigarettes in the backyard like a dog before my wife comes home. I know I'll be looking for them tonight.

