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Why 16 of 17 New Year's quit smoking resolutions needlessly fail

Understanding the wanting tug-o-war within and how to turn the tide.

by [John R. Polito](#)

Be honest. Part of you wants to quit smoking and part of you doesn't. Put simply, quitting is an internal struggle between wanting to quit and wanting to smoke. But why?

Knowledge is power. This article invites smokers to reflect upon what happens when we become wiser than our addiction is strong. New Years is by far the biggest stop smoking day of the year. Here's hoping you find this article worthy of sharing with smoking friends and loved ones.

Doing Life for Toying with Nicotine as a Teen

Imagine serving a life sentence inside NicoTeenMistake Prison. Some with vivid imaginations simply pretend that their bars don't exist. But most attempt escape every few years, and far from being difficult, more than half have already succeeded. How did they do it? What was their secret?

Sadly, the truth about how most broke free is ignored or lied about by those selling less effective escape methods, some deadly. For example, 9,575 serious injuries that include 470 deaths have now been [documented in U.S. Chantix users](#).



In short, the reason [16 of 17](#) New Year's quitting resolutions fail is that quitters fail to abide by the [Law of Addiction](#). It's a rather simple principle that if followed provides 100% odds of escape.

But let's start from the beginning. What is nicotine dependency?

As disturbing as this may sound, chemical dependency upon smoking nicotine is a [brain wanting disorder](#), mental illness and disease that is every bit as real and permanent as alcoholism.

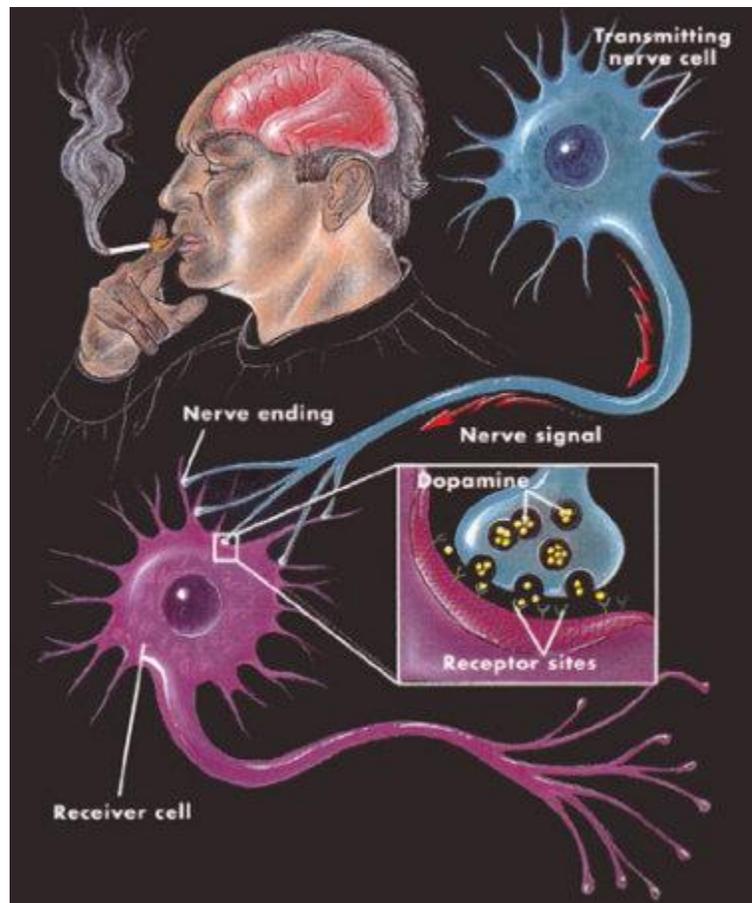
Think about the wanting felt when hungry or thirsty. Now, imagine the source of that wanting, your mind's survival instincts teacher, your brain's dopamine pathway "want" generator, being activated by nicotine.

Picture inhaled nicotine entering your bloodstream via lung air sacs called alveoli, and within ten seconds arriving in your brain. There, picture it activating and saturating brain dopamine pathway receptors. Picture continuing use and saturation eventually causing the brain to grow or activate millions of extra receptors, a process known as up-regulation.

Most of us sense "wanting" for food two or three times daily. Imagine nicotine's rather short two-hour elimination half-life combining with slowly increasing numbers of receptors, to leave you wanting more nicotine 5, then 10 and eventually 15 or 20 times a day (a process known as tolerance).

Wanting for food, wanting for nicotine. And if too much time passes between feedings, arrival of cravings for food, arrival of cravings for nicotine. The brain's sense of normal has been altered. It now requires a specific amount of nicotine in order to feel normal.

Welcome to the addict's world of nicotine normal. Welcome to NicoTeenMistake Prison. But wait, there's more.



Nicotine dependency is more than an endless cycle of falling blood serum nicotine levels creating wanting, which is satisfied briefly by smoking more nicotine.

The brain's deep inner dopamine pathways are hard-wired to the conscious thinking portion of the brain, the forehead above the eyes, the prefrontal cortex. There, they record in durable high definition type-memory cells each time wanting is satisfied, and the circumstances under which satisfaction occurred.

Yes, each time nicotine satisfies wanting a durable record is made. These potent use memories force us to vividly and easily recall how wanting is satisfied. They also cue and condition the mind as to the circumstances under which a new supply of nicotine should be expected.

When attempting to quit, this pile of old use memories may decreasingly and intermittently tease and entice relapse until their influence is silenced by time, weakened by new memories or neutralized by reason.

Given this amazing struggle of wanting within, is it any wonder that, unless we somehow awaken them, half of adult smokers already know the cause of death that'll be printed on their death certificate (smoking)? [CDC data shows](#) that 69 percent of 2010 smokers wanted to quit, that 52 percent tried, but that only 6.2 percent who last year tried succeeded.

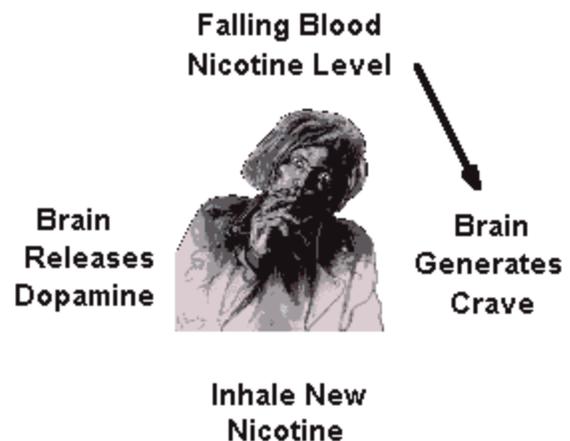
Smoke's 4,000 inhaled chemicals include hundreds of toxins, including [81 known cancer causing chemicals](#). In that the addict's internal quit-or-smoke "wanting" conflict is highly toxic, is it any wonder that each year, [according to the CDC](#), 443,000 U.S. smokers smoke themselves to death, each losing an average of 14 years of life?

Picture a birthday near your 60th being your last. Imagine an earlier birthday being a point of no return, a birthday beyond which the smoker's remaining years on earth will likely be shortened or marred by one or more [smoking related diseases](#).

Nicotine Addiction About Living a Lie

Now for the good news. It is vastly more wonderful being free than your internal wanting and old use memories suggest. Without food and water we die. Without nicotine we thrive!

Contrary to the wanting within, smoked nicotine does not give you your edge, help you cope, define who you are, and life without it great not horrible. In fact, contrary to your dependency



induced beliefs system, everything done while under nicotine's influence can be done as well or better as "you!"

Imagine coming home to a day where you go the entire day without once wanting to smoke nicotine. Is that good or bad? After the first such day, imagine such days becoming more and more common, until becoming your new sense of normal.

Imagine a temporary journey of readjustment which transports you from the insanity of smoking a stimulant which made your heart pound up to 17 beats per minute faster prior to climbing into bed, to a calm and quiet day where addiction's chatter is replaced by the deepest sense of calm, comfort and quiet that your adult body has likely ever known.

Contrary to addiction's wanting within, coming home is the best New Year's gift you could ever allow yourself. Imagine knowledge diminishing or destroying fear, anxiety and panic. Imagine becoming more dependency recovery savvy than your chemical dependency is strong.



Nicotine addition is one giant lie. While the wanting felt is as real as the nose on our face, the body's need for nicotine is a lie.

Nicotine is a super toxin which has no business inside the body or brain. Drop for drop it is more lethal than strychnine or diamondback rattlesnake venom, three times deadlier than arsenic and 166 times more toxic than caffeine. Just two to three drops of pure nicotine (40-60mg) will kill 50 percent of humans weighing up to 160 pounds (nicotine's lethal dose or LD50).

Failure to understand our wanting and captivity forced each of us to invent lies as to why we'd smoke that next cigarette. The only limit upon inventive [use rationalizations](#) was our imagination.

For example: [flavor](#), pleasure, friendship, the world's finest menthol, bargain prices, I do it all the time [so I must really like smoking](#), [I'll smoke just one](#), just one more pack, one more carton, one more year, [I'm not much of a smoker](#), it's [how I cope with stress](#), I'm [less hooked than others](#), [I really love it](#), I smoke to rebel, because [I'm bored](#), [it's my only vice](#), it makes me [look cool](#), [look more adult](#), [my friends all smoke](#), [I smoke for the taste](#), [I have to die of something](#), [my cigarettes are my friend](#), I've found [a safer way to smoke](#), [I'm not much of a](#)



smoker, my genes will protect me, I smoke for the aroma, it's not like real drug addiction but only a nasty little habit, if really that deadly our government wouldn't allow cigarettes, the person I love most smokes, I'm waiting for them to quit too, I can't quit, I smoke because I'm self destructive, I've smoked so long, what's the use in quitting now, I smoke to keep my weight down, I'll quit after I lose weight, I'll quit next week, next month, next year, my next birthday, I'll quit when our first child is born, when our next child is born, when my first grandchild is born, I'll quit each New Year's!

The common thread? Each lie totally ignored the real reason we smoked, because we had to, because wanting would be followed by a rising tide of anxiety if we didn't. It wasn't that we liked or loved smoking but that we didn't like what happened when we didn't.

And some of our most important rationalizations seemed to make perfect sense. For example, it's normal and logical for we humans to define what we like or love based upon what we find ourselves doing most. Such thinking goes like this: "I smoke lots and lots and lots of cigarettes, thus I must really love smoking."

Smoking, a stress reliever? Hogwash. Nicotine is an alkaloid and stress an acid generating event inside the body. The more stressed we became, the quicker remaining reserves of nicotine were eliminated from the bloodstream. In fact, it's hard work being a smoker, as we added the onset of early withdrawal to most stressful events. Think about it, if getting a flat tire caused us stress, once we finished smoking more nicotine the tire was still flat.

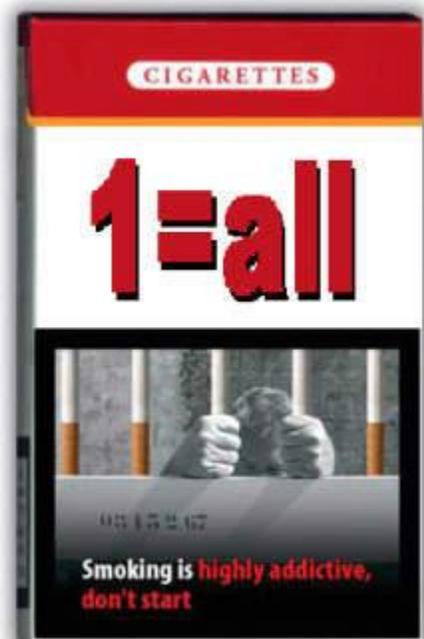
And what about all the use rationalizations that tobacco advertising signs at local stores brainwashed us into believing, such as Marlboro's "Come to where the flavor is" slogan. Did any of us really smoke for taste? How many taste buds are located inside human lungs, the place we sucked and briefly held each puff? Zero, none.

But our lies served a purpose. Who wants to look in the mirror each morning and see a real, live, honest to goodness drug addict looking back? Our rationalizations allowed us a tiny sliver of self-esteem, a way to hide the truth, that we were each committing slow suicide.

Coming Home

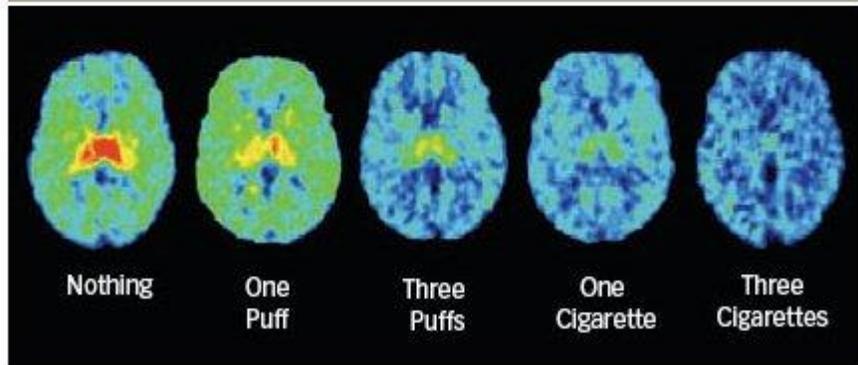
There is really only one rule which if followed makes failure impossible. We call it the Law of Addiction, that lapse equals relapse, that we can no more have one puff than the recovering alcoholic can take one sip, that one is too many and a thousand never enough. In fact, it is impossible to relapse so long as all nicotine remains on the outside.

Brain imaging studies show that just one puff and up to 50 percent of dopamine pathway receptors become



occupied by nicotine. While most walk away from trying to cheat while quitting feeling like they've gotten away with it, receptor saturation eventually wears off. Additionally, they have not only jolted and awakened their pile of old use memories, they've created a new one.

SMOKING SATURATES RECEPTORS As nicotine from a cigarette attaches to the $\alpha 4\beta 2^*$ -nACh nicotinic receptors in the brain, it displaces a radiolabeled tracer (red and yellow indicate high levels of the tracer, green indicates intermediate levels, and blue indicates low levels). The nicotine from three puffs displaced 75 percent of the tracer from study participants' receptors, and the nicotine from three cigarettes, nearly all.



It isn't long before the brain is wanting or even begging for more. It's not a matter of weakness but the purpose, design and function of the mind's survival instincts teacher, to make pathway activating events extremely difficult to ignore.

None of us are stronger than nicotine's influence upon brain circuitry but then we don't need to be as nicotine is simply a chemical with an IQ of zero. It cannot think, plan, plot or conspire and is not some demon that dwells within. Our most potent weapon is our intelligence, but only if put to work. Even then, there's really only one guiding principle ... no nicotine today!

Peak withdrawal occurs within 72 of ending all nicotine use. By then, the body is 100 percent nicotine-free, brain dopamine receptors are re-sensitizing and the brain has started down-regulating their numbers toward levels seen in non-smokers.

After the first three days, recovery's greatest remaining hurdle is in coming to terms with years of use lies. Success in doing so can make letting go of our destructive chemical relationship far less challenging.

Imagine an absence of the normal sense of loss felt with



prior attempts. Imagine residing inside a mind that sees nothing good or positive about continued use. Imagine denial, anger, bargaining and depression being absent or diminished.

Imagine the calming effect of fully accepting that this time is for keeps, no more games, that at last you're done for good. Imagine relishing the thought of becoming and remaining a comfortable ex-smoker for the balance of life.

Imagine fear of quitting and the anxieties such fears generate being absent or greatly reduced. It can and does happen.

Reflect on the fact that smokers sleep through the night without wanting, and are able to skip smoking when seriously ill. And why do so many pregnant women, and patients given a quit or drop dead ultimatum by their doctor, report almost effortless quitting?

Imagine neutralizing the tease and lure of that old pile of wanting satisfaction memories by examining each under honest light. Try seeing them for what they are, as having formed the prison bars that for years kept us locked-up inside NicoTeenMistake Prison.



Imagine retraining your mind's fight or flight panic response to correctly and honestly see quitting as safe and smoking as danger; the exact opposite as during any prior quits. Fight or flight sensors see changing the status quo as danger and sound emotional alarms throughout the body. Sooth and calm your deep, inner protective mind. Teach it the truth, that ending our self-destruction is good not bad.

Knowledge truly is power. We hope you'll visit, explore, bookmark and share [WhyQuit](#) as it was built with you in mind. There, you'll find hundreds of recovery tips, including how to minimize or avoid a host of cessation side effects felt during prior attempts. For example, [blood sugar related symptoms](#) such as an inability to concentrate, the possibility of [caffeine overdose anxieties](#) and how to minimize [weight gain](#).

WhyQuit sells nothing, is commercial free and declines donations. It shares the keys to successful cold turkey quitting. Why cold turkey? Because contrary to the average quitting product sales pitch, none of these products have yet to defeat cold turkey in any [long-term real-world quitting method evaluation](#). It simply hasn't happened.

Take your own poll. Truth is, more ex-smokers quit cold turkey than by all other quitting methods combined. Briefly, clinical trial odds ratio victories were over placebo, not cold turkey quitters. Placebo quitters joined seeking free quitting products but were instead assigned to inert placebo look-a-likes, where those with prior quitting histories sensed their normal withdrawal syndrome. Studies show that such trials [were not blind as pretended](#). Placebo isn't a real quitting method.

Pharmaceutical industry quitting product marketing plays upon your dependency wanting within. It uses those placebo victories to try and get you to fear your natural quitting instincts, by suggesting that quitting without product use is difficult and rare.

Contrary to industry marketing and the four "[Guidelines](#)" industry influence helped author, cold turkey is fast, free, safe, effective and science-based.

Knowledge is power. Your 2012 New Year's stop smoking resolution need not go up in smoke. In fact, there's only one guiding principle that if followed provides 100 percent odds of success ... no nicotine just one hour, challenge and day at a time ... to never take another puff! Yes you can!



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 - ["Never Take Another Puff"](#) - a free 149 page quit smoking book in PDF format by Joel Spitzer of Chicago, the Internet's leading authority on cold turkey quitting and nicotine dependency recovery. Discover why Joel's ebook has recorded [millions](#) of Internet downloads.
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 - ["Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home"](#) - this link is to a free 240 page nicotine dependency recovery book ebook by John R. Polito, WhyQuit's founder and a former 30-year heavy smoker.
 - [Nicotine Addiction 101](#) - WhyQuit's guide to nicotine dependency.
 - [Freedom](#) - the Internet's only 100% nicotine-free peer messageboard support forum. Explore hundreds of thousands of archived member posts.
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- [Keys to keeping your 2012 New Year's quit smoking resolution](#)
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