

TOBACCO FREE LIFESTYLES

WINTER 2007

Success Stories From Those Who Quit



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GOOD ADVICE FROM THOSE WHO HAVE QUIT:

- **My mouth tastes so much fresher now.**
- **I quit smoking for my children.**
- **I feel so much healthier since I quit smoking.**
- **It's all about will power and staying away from those who smoke.**

Wondering how others quit tobacco? Read what inspired Myriam to quit



Myriam del Pilar Salazar, the Employment Specialist for CRT's Supportive Housing Program, grew up in Colombia. She started smoking at 14, and before her 16th birthday, she moved to Bogotá (Colombia's capital) to attend the University.

At the university, "everyone was older than me and many people were smokers. I started feeling comfortable and I started smoking more," she says. "I was one of the only women who smoked in my school or community at my age. It is not common that Colombian women start smoking at such a young age.

"I smoked for around ten years. I typically used to smoke one pack a day, but if I was under stress, or on the weekends, I would smoke two packs a day. I smelled like an ashtray all the time."

Why Myriam Quit:

There were four major factors that motivated Myriam to quit smoking.

Vanity

"My mother came from Colombia to visit and she said that I had so many wrinkles, and she knew I was getting them from cigarettes! On the plane she read an article about the consequences of smoking. She gave me the article that night and the very next day we started researching online about tobacco."

Money

"I was tired of spending more than 4 dollars a day on cigarettes. And if I left my cigarettes at home, forget it! I remember paying \$12 for a package of cigarettes in New York City one night. That was crazy!"

Forced Outdoors

"A law passed about smoke-free restaurants, bars, etc. I did not want to smoke outside in the cold weather or miss what my friends and family were doing or saying, because I was the only smoker."

Health

"The final reason is the most important one, because it keeps me from going back to smoking every time I wanted to. My father is a smoker and one day he had

something on his lip which was related to cancer. After they removed it, he said 'I will never smoke again.' Unfortunately, my dad still smokes."

Resources That Help

Here's what worked for her:

- I ate every two hours.
- I drank water and Coke.
- I stopped drinking alcohol and coffee for three months.
- I worked out.
- And I was around people who do not smoke.

What motivates you to stay tobacco-free?

"My concerns about my father getting cancer and of course myself. My husband, my family, my friends are my biggest supporters. Also myself, because now I can smell my cologne. I can smell different everyday. Before I smelled the same, like an ashtray."

What words of advice do you have for people who want to quit using tobacco?

"Write down the causes, consequences, the good and bad things that tobacco is doing to you. Do your research."

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HOW I QUIT USING TOBACCO: DECLON JOSEPH



Declon Joseph, Alcohol Prevention Specialist for CRT's Healthy Teen Hartford Program is looking forward to celebrating his one-year tobacco-free anniversary on January 24, 2008 by visiting the doctor to see the difference in his health.

Declon started smoking at age 13. Nicotine addiction took over and he was an active smoker at age 15. He has smoked on and off for 10 years. He tells CeCe Fisher, CRT's Tobacco Health Educator, about his attempts to quit.

CeCe: What triggered your desire to quit using tobacco?

Declon: My health, my kids and support from friends and family.

A good friend and I quit together and we made a bet to see who would be smoke-free the longest. (I won)

CeCe: What resources did you use to quit?

Declon: I tried the patch, but it didn't work for me; it made me feel nauseated. I just went cold turkey and it will be a year in January.

CeCe: What motivates you to stay tobacco-free?

Declon: I feel so much healthier. My car, my home, my clothes all smell so much better now. My friends and family always congratulate me and let me know how proud they are that I am still smoke free.

CeCe: What words of advice do you have for people who want to quit using tobacco?

Declon: Keep trying. I stopped several times; the longest was for a year. This time I think I'm done for good.

Words to Live By:

Believe the information about the damage that smoking does to your body.

Take responsibility for your own health. Tobacco companies only make cigarettes; they don't put them in your mouth and light them.



CT Quitline for Smoking
1-866-END-HABIT



The Tobacco Free Lifestyles Newsletter is created by the Community Health Educator at CRT's Tobacco Free Lifestyle Program. To reach the program with questions or story ideas :

Call: (860) 560-5790 ext. 229

Or email: fisherc@crtct.org

READ ABOUT HOW EDWIN QUIT USING TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Edwin Campos, a CRT maintenance worker, started smoking at age 16 and smoked for four years.

What triggered his desire to quit using tobacco?

He smiles and says, "I became a father and felt it was unhealthy to smoke around my son."

His own health was another reason he quit smoking: Edwin is asthmatic. He found he could only play five minutes of basket-

ball due to the combination of smoking and asthma.

The primary resource he used to quit smoking was regular (non-medicated) chewing gum. "Chewing gum took away the smoking craving for that moment," he says.

His motivation to stay tobacco-free stems from wanting to be healthy and be a better athlete.

His words of advice for people who want to quit using

tobacco: "It's all about will power and staying away from those who smoke."

If you can fight the urge, then you can make it to a smoke free life.

How will he celebrate his one year anniversary?

Edwin states he plans to celebrate by jogging for about three miles, and to play a whole game of basket ball to see the difference in his health.

Quit Tobacco

Thinking about quitting smoking? Research shows you'll be more successful if you have support to quit, have strategies to overcome stress and know how to manage your withdrawal symptoms. You'll find all of that in CRT's new free **Freedom From Smoking** groups. See back page of newsletter.

**MY CHILDREN ARE THE REASON I QUIT TOBACCO
BY RAQUEL ORTIZ**



Raquel Ortiz, Administrative

Assistant at CRT's Supportive Housing Program, started smoking at the age of 19, and smoked a total of 13 years. When asked what triggered her desire to quit using tobacco products, she simply replied, "I quit for my children."

The resources she used to quit smoking are the patch and her willpower.

Raquel says that by taking it one day at a time, she has been able to stay tobacco free.

Her word of advice for people who want to quit using tobacco products is to "Just quit, it's not worth endangering your health."

She is looking forward to celebrating her one year anniversary tobacco-free.



Tobacco Plant

**MY PERSONAL TOBACCO SUCCESS STORY
BY WILLA BLOCH**

Willia Bloch, who is a new Planning Analyst at CRT, had her first cigarette at age 16. She kept smoking for the next 20 years, building to a 2-pack-a-day habit.

Her sister, an ex-smoker who had surgery for a mouth tumor, triggered Willa's desire to quit. Willa knew that her sister's recovery from the surgery was very, very nasty. So she paid attention when her sister bugged her about stopping.

Willa worked with an organization called Smoke Enders. "It's an eight-week group program that forces you to look at all your smoking triggers (and gradually end them).

"The program gives you a few incentives. For example, you put aside the money that you would normally pay for a pack of cigarettes, and watch it add up. Also, they have you change cigarette brands every week, so that by the end you're forced to smoke a very low tar and nicotine cigarette."

Willa lists things that motivated her to stay tobacco-free.

1) I very quickly lost that nasty ashtray taste in my mouth, and I didn't want to get it back.

2) I got a lot of positive feedback from friends and family.

3) Sometimes I would smoke at social events, even after I had officially "quit." But then I would wake up feeling really awful, so I knew I wanted to stay away from smoking..

4) I learned a lot about how bad tobacco is for your health. My mother, an ex-smoker, developed and died from lung cancer after I had quit.

5) I have asthma, which would make it really foolish for me to take up smoking again.

6) Most important - I now have two daughters and I don't want them to breathe cigarette smoke, or to take up smoking themselves!

Her words of advice to people who want to quit using tobacco is "try to cut down and see if your mouth tastes better. Try to set aside the money you're saving on cigarettes and you'll see how quickly it piles up."

Also, "if you're worried about gaining weight, drink a glass of water whenever you get hungry or you want something in place of a cigarette."

And remember that second-hand smoke can harm your loved ones (and it sets a bad example for your family).

How did she celebrate her one year tobacco-free anniversary?

Willa says "I celebrated on the day that I officially quit by going shopping to one of my favorite stores in New York City. But strangely enough, I didn't actually buy anything."

For every statistic, there is a name. For every name, there is a face. For every face, there is a story. For every story shared, there is hope and understanding. How has tobacco use or secondhand smoke impacted your life, or the life of someone you love? Share your story. Email fisherc@crtct.org



At \$5 per pack, that pack-a-day habit costs you:
\$35 per week
\$140 per month
\$1,820 per year
\$3,640 in 2 years

Interested in Quitting Smoking?

Try a powerful new program
To help you take that step!



Freedom From Smoking

Free 6 week group program, with lots of tips:

- How to manage cravings
- Stress relief and relaxation techniques
- Building your motivation
- Weight management
- Support systems
- Free nicotine replacement
- Much more!

Flexible dates & times – tailored to group participants!

Instructors are certified by the American Lung Association to help you quit smoking cigarettes

Quitting Smoking:

- Saves money- up to \$120 a month
- Saves your health- prevents heart disease, cancer, and asthma
- Saves others from secondhand smoke
- Frees you from nicotine addiction

To Sign Up: Talk to CRT staff or call 560-5790 ext. 229 to speak with CRT's Health & Tobacco Educator

