

Do You Wish To Quit SMOKING ?

BY ISAGANI V. TOLENTINO

A FATHER promised his three children cash reward if they would refrain from smoking until they were 21 years old. The two older kids readily agreed. However, the youngest, a boy of 7, looking depressed, exclaimed truthfully, "Oh, Dad, why didn't you tell me sooner."

The story illustrates the easiness with which one can succumb to the temptation to start smoking. But stopping the habit is another story. It is an undertaking which many want but find hard to do.

This practice of burning tobacco and inhaling the resulting smoke is impossible to discard entirely, because it is part of civilization. In the beginning, young people smoke cigarettes just for show. It is part of the yearning to be identified with the adults. It is a sign of manliness. But when the habit catches on, when the hook has taken a hold, it becomes a part of their lives. A thinker finds it impossible to produce thoughts without a white burning stick between his lips. A laborer has no pep for his chores until he has inhaled several puffs of tobacco smoke down his lungs.

The introduction of the use of tobacco forms a singular chapter in the history of mankind. According to some authorities smoking was practised by the Chinese at a very early date. At the time of the discovery of America, tobacco was in frequent use among the Indians, and the practice of smoking, which had with them a religious character, was common to almost all the tribes.

Some persons at present smoke not as a part of their worship, but they do smoke religiously. And if they practise smoking as faithfully as they practise their religion, this will certainly be a better world.

The name tobacco was either derived from the term used in Haiti to designate the pipe, or from Tabaca in Santo Domingo, whence it was introduced into Spain and Portugal in 1559 by a Spaniard. It soon found its way to Paris and Rome, and was first used in the shape of snuff. Smoking is generally supposed to have been introduced into England by Sir Walter Raleigh, but Camden says the practice was introduced by Drake and his companions on their return from Virginia in 1585.

It was strongly opposed by both priests and rulers. Popes Urban VIII and Innocent IX issued bulls excommunicating such as used snuff in church, and in Turkey smoking was made a capital offense. Some religious sects included the ban on the use of tobacco in their commandments, together with the prohibition of adultery. All prohibitions, however, regal or priestly, were of no avail, and tobacco is now the most

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extensively used luxury on the face of the earth. And, as we said, one of the hardest to do away with.

But with such a distinct place in civilization, why should one wish to discard smoking? Why should one quit enjoying the immense pleasure of inhaling and exhaling languorously those luxurious smoke?

Austerity might be bit stale to cite as a reason, considering the farcical situation brought about by our leaders' espousal of the virtue. But the preservation of one's health is certainly sufficient cause to quit the habit.

A number of months ago, the members of the tobacco cult, were jolted in their complacent state of enjoyment when some medical authorities made the startling announcement that continuous long smoking induces lung cancer. After the disturbing news, I knew several friends who made an attempt immediately to cut short their smoking. Unfortunately, news leaked out that even the doctors who made the depreciating disclosure about tobacco were continuing to smoke. They explained their disregard for their own announcement by saying that cancer due to nicotine, the poisonous alkaloid present in tobacco, develops only after a long period of indulging in the habit and that there was no certainty at that. The pleasure is worth the risk, in other words. After hearing the explanatory note, my friends found themselves once more dashing back to their favorite (because of elastic credit) cigarette stores.

But aside from preventing a possible cancer, one considering the difficult possibility of quitting smoking should also take into account the good healthful effects afterwards, if he should succeed. For instance, persons who have triumphantly conquered the habit say that they can now eat more heartily as a result of a more stimulated appetite (which may nullify the economic reason for stopping to smoke), sleep more soundly, and work with added vim and vigor.

Despite these pleasant rewards, the difficulty confronting anyone who entertains the plan of deserting the tobacco cult does not seem to diminish. But hardy souls willing to brave the obstacle are never lacking, and they can profit from the experiences of those who before them had emerg-

REFUGEE

Judge: "You are accused of deserting your wife. What have you to say for yourself?"

Plaintiff: "Your honor, if you knew my wife, you would understand that I am not a deserter, I'm a refugee."

ed from the battle and survived the ordeal with flying colors.

When a habitual smoker quits smoking, he may experience some restlessness. His mouth may become watery. To check this overactive functioning of the salivary glands, the most common advice is to turn to candy. I offer an alternative — shift to a new occupation such as that of a politician or a salesman where your saliva will not go to waste. For people threatened or actually afflicted with obesity, the latter choice is advised. I remember a friend who decided to utilize candy to discard his smoking habit which the doctor told him was bad for his heart. So he was able to do away with his cigars, but the sweet meats proved helpful to his expansion and harmful to his poor little tired heart.

If the smoker is used to inhaling expensive fags, another suggestion is to switch to a cheaper brand, which is disagreeable to his fine luxurious taste. The principle behind this is that after the distasteful experience with the cheaper cigarettes, smoking altogether may not seem pleasant.

Others find chewing a toothpick or gum helpful.

But all these helpful suggestions would come to naught if you lack that one important virtue — strong will power. It is the ability to make your mind prevail over your sensual craving. If you have it in sufficient quantity, perhaps you would not even need to follow the suggestions given above.

The writer, by the way, has never been a smoker. But maybe this does not matter because he suspects that only non-smokers like himself will read this; the habitual smokers like smoking too much to continue reading after glancing at the title.