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“My Drug Addiction”

A reflection shared by millions

by Kimberly Blaker

I woke up this morning and felt the agonizing withdrawal symptoms washing over me. It’s a persistent anxiousness that doesn’t cease until I get my fix.

I slipped on my robe and slippers, poured a cup of coffee, and frantically headed to the garage where I try to keep the substance from my family; and as always, my habit is waiting to greet me.

As I take a hit, a peaceful feeling washes over my body and mind. I can now begin my day feeling alive once again.

Yet, as the day wears on, I feel the chemicals drain. Every hour or so this drug starts calling me, unrelentingly, and I continue to replenish my body with the chemicals I so desperately need.

Every worrisome or sad thought and every happy reminiscence drives me to another fix. Even tiredness, hunger, and boredom can be eased through this addiction of mine.

Now, as I lie in bed, I reflect on it. It’s my best friend and my worst enemy. I deliberate about how much it’s costing me, not just financially, but the toll it’s taking on my body. It’s stealing the rug from under my feet.

It’s draining my energy and making my heart race through life. I can’t catch my breath. My skin is aging, and the substance leaves my body with a repulsive odor. I think about the diseases it puts me at risk for, such as cancer, heart disease, and emphysema. I don’t want to die that way. I want to live a full life.

I tell myself to go to sleep, and tomorrow I’ll start anew. I’ll dry up and go straight. However, as I drift closer to sleep, I know that tomorrow will go unchanged, for the craving is already creeping in again. I’m dependent in this love-hate relationship. I look forward to my next drag off a cigarette. Nicotine is my life—and will probably be my death.

.....Three years later

Fortunately, this relationship finally soured and came to a screeching halt. I kicked the habit and slammed the door behind. Through the years, I tried relentlessly to cut my ties with this shadow that seemingly couldn’t be shed; quitting cold turkey, cutting back, New Year resolutions, patches, gum, Zyban. All were temporary at best. But I never gave up.

Today, I wake up to the smell of the fresh summer breeze rather than the stench of stale cigarettes that once drenched my body. My skin glows, and my heart is calm. My midnight cough is long gone. Walking up the stairs doesn’t leave me breathless. My energy soars, looking forward to the once dreaded pleasures of life.

Now I can enjoy with my family a vigorous peddle through the park or a spirited hike in the woods. Best of all, the diseases I could almost feel setting in have erased from my mind. I now feel an inner peace I could never leave behind.

SIDEBAR IDEAS OR WAYS TO LOCALIZE: Sidebar of ways to quit smoking and any local hypnotists and local smoking cessation programs.

Kimberly Blaker of Michigan is an author and freelance writer.

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