

The Smoking Illusion

By
G S Burroughs

Copyright © Gary Burroughs 2016

Gary Burroughs has asserted his rights under the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be
identified as the author of this work.

All Rights reserved

For Mum.

The Smoking Illusion

Part One

A Call to Arms

The Semantics of 'quitting'

Introduction

My Shadow and I

Your Inner Elf

Part 2

The Seven Pillars of Deceit

1: Pleasure and Relaxation

2: Addiction

3: Habit

4: Freedom of Choice

5: The Number 36 Bus

6: Urban Myths

7: Fear

Part 3

Stopping

No Willpower Required

Cutting Down

Nicotine Replacement Products

To Vape or not to Vape?

Triggers

When to Stop

D-Day

Don't Stop Stopping.

Part 4

Epilogue

Raison D'être

Part One

A Call to Arms

For smokers who should know.
For former smokers who want to know.
For non smokers who need to know.
And for every-one who knows a smoker.

Welcome!

And thank you for buying my book. Or Stealing it. Or borrowing it. However you acquired this book, thank you.

If you are a smoker my one and only rule is DON'T PANIC! Reading this book doesn't mean you've committed yourself to stopping. No one ever has to do anything they don't want to do. I'm not going to tell you stop. If I thought that was going to work, it would have worked by now. There are going to be facts and figures about how dangerous smoking is. But you know them already. It will be nothing new.

You already know smoking is dangerous. You know it causes cancer and a whole host of other horrible diseases. This is nothing new to you. You are bombarded, day in and day out, with messages from the Government and General Do-Gooder that you should stop smoking. And you should do it today. Every-time you turn around it is cancer of this month, or cancer of that month, or National non smoking day, or Stoptober or any one of a billion well intentioned methods of drawing your attention to how stupid they think your habit is.

And does it help?

No, of course it doesn't. That's why you still smoke. You and millions of others.

Truth be told most of the campaigns I've mentioned create the very same anxiety and restlessness that you believe smoking alleviates. So you smoke a cigarette.

All smokers, if told that they could take a pill and they would never smoke again, or feel that anxiety or restlessness, or feel that feeling deep in the pit of their stomachs that urges them to smoke and enhances their feeling of loss and emptiness; all smokers, given the opportunity to free themselves from the shadow of death that haunts their shoulders on a daily basis, would take that pill instantly. Whether they admit it publicly or not. I would have done. In a heartbeat.

All smokers secretly hope for the Holy Grail of stop smoking secrets. That Holy Grail probably doesn't exist. No two smokers are the same and no two ways of stopping smoking will work for those two disparate smokers. This book may be the closest you get to the Holy Grail.

This is not a book about stopping or, even, a book about the dangers of smoking. This is a book about smokers and smoking. This is a book that will hopefully strip away some of the fog and illusion that clouds the mystery of smoking.

Your little friend, the cigarette, has played a masterful trick on generations of smokers. It continues to play that trick today.

It is nothing more than an illusion.

By understanding the illusion it may well bring you a step closer to breaking it.

Know your enemy. Understand him. Believe me, he's not really your friend. He exists only to ensure his existence. It is a perpetual cycle of deceit.

You do not have to stop smoking. By the end of Part 2 you may want to. If you do, carry on. Read Part 3, Stopping. Do what's right for you. Give yourself your life back.

It may even be that you don't smoke or are a former smoker or a health care worker or a teacher. Or maybe a mother, a son, a daughter, father, uncle or friend of someone who does smoke, and you want to understand what it is about that noxious substance that holds so many normal, intelligent people so firmly in its grasp. If this is you, then well done. You are one step closer to understanding the illusion of smoking.

But do not underestimate the cigarette. It is a powerful, dangerous and elusive foe. It will not go quietly into the night. We must be vigilant, always on our guard.

Consider this a war. Smokers are the casualties. They would rather face the almost certain prospect of death than be without the cigarette by their side.

Know your enemy.

Understand him.

Only then can we defeat him.

Gary Burroughs. 2016

P.S

Please note that I am not a doctor or a pharmacist or a scientist. I am a former smoker. It is the only knowledge I bring to the table. The facts in this book are true, a simple Google search will confirm the majority of them for you. Cancer charities and Government agencies will be happy to supply you with the details. My theories are my own, and are based on my experience of smoking. They are not the result of complex and in depth analysis of the human mind by degree wielding people in lab coats, or by a 25 year study of human behaviour. This information is out there, if that's your thing.

This is how I stopped. This was my way. It worked for me, and I think it may work for you. You won't know until you've read the book. If you are in any way concerned about the effects of stopping smoking always speak to your doctor in the first instance.

This book is just another weapon in your arsenal in the fight against the cigarette. I hope you find it fun to read, too.

The Semantics of ‘quitting’

For clarity I will not use the word ‘quit’ at any point during the remainder of this book. If you find the word ‘quit,’ beyond this chapter please write to me at once, and draw my attention to my FUBAR. I will have the offending word removed immediately, and my proof readers shot.

I will also not use the phrase ‘giving up’ and offer the same assurance as above.

Firstly, ‘quitting’ or ‘to quit’ is such an ugly word. It’s very negative. I don’t like it. If I were part of the team that was tasked with coming up with anti-smoking slogans or campaigns I would strike out the word ‘quit’ every time I stumbled upon it.

For me, it represents failure. To quit something is to fail at it. Quitting levels upon the ‘quitter’ a sense of failure and of defeat.

Stopping smoking is the diametric opposite of failure. It is the single most beneficial thing you can do for your health. It is loaded with success and achievement. We should not wear it down in the minds of former smokers that they have, in some way, failed. They haven’t. Their lives will be brighter and, with any luck, longer. They will also be free from the daily requirement to smoke. This is a freedom to be truly celebrated.

As for ‘giving up’ this also represents, in the mind of the smoker, a sense of loss and of defeat. It is a very negative phrase. Imagine all

the times in your life when you have 'given up.' They were not positive times. They represent times of failure. They certainly do not represent times of success or achievement.

Strike this phrase from your mind. All anti smoking literature, or smoking cessation methods, agree on one thing. There is absolutely nothing to give up. You should not see stopping as a loss. It absolutely isn't. You will gain so much in stopping that your life will change for the better.

You will not be obliged to smoke.

Your clothes will not smell.

Your teeth will not blacken.

You will save a fortune.

You will massively enhance your chances of NOT being the 1 in 2 smokers who die because of it.

You will dramatically increase your chances, if you are not one of the 1 in 2 who dies up to 30 years prematurely, of NOT being one of the 30 or 40 remaining smokers who develops a life changing illness because of smoking.

There is NOTHING to give up. The following pages will further enhance this opinion, even if you don't share it right now.

For these reasons I will not use the word 'quit' or any of its derivatives, or the phrase 'giving up.' From herein I will use the word 'stop.'

You will be doing nothing more than stopping something that may kill you or permanently scar you.

That's it. It's just about stopping. Drawing a line in the sand and saying to ourselves 'no more.'

Stop.

Introduction

Please don't feel obliged to stop smoking just because you've bought this book. Buying this book does not mean you intend to stop now, or in the future. The problem with smoking, and smokers in general, is that, by the very act of smoking, they tell the world that they do not want to stop. If they did, they would.

Smoking is a sinking ship. Ex-smokers are the rats deserting that ship in their thousands. They cling on to every bit of flotsam and jetsam they can find in a desperate, and often futile, attempt to escape the ship. Some don't make it and crawl back, demoralised and dejected, to their former life, back to smoking, back to their sinking ship. They huddle under heat lamps and corners of city streets, bemoaning the changing world and quietly ignoring the possibility of impending death that looms ever large on the horizon. They are forever in the presence of Death, and he is a shadow that haunts their every waking hour.

Some make it. They cling on to some scrap of hope and drift purposefully towards their own salvation. Once there, they realise that life is sunnier, brighter and fresher smelling. Their food tastes better, their clothes no longer smell of day old tobacco and the shadow of Death recedes far from mind. Some will even reach out to those still on the ship and extol the virtues of their new, brighter life. Some will forever miss their sinking

ship and never quite truly believe that it had nothing to offer. They will relent and return, never truly understanding the power and lure of their sinking ship, the SS Tobacco. This book is primarily aimed at those three types of smokers:

The 'I don't want to's.'

The 'I want to, but I don't know how.'

And the "I've stopped. For now.'

The problem with the ones that don't want to stop is that, by the very nature of not wanting to stop, they won't read a book about stopping.

So this is not necessarily a book about stopping, although that is clearly the desired result. No. This is a book about cigarettes, not stopping. It's about smokers. Feel free to smoke. Knock yourself out. Puff away. Think of this as a 'bare-all' exposé of your favourite musician or actor. You may not want to hear a bad word said about them in public, but in private you want to get all the juicy gossip. And this is it. The juicy stuff. The secrets the tobacco companies would rather you didn't hear. Think of me as a second rate gossip columnist in a third rate daily.

If you are one of the 'I don't want to's' please stop at the end of Part 2 and don't read Part 3. It will be of no interest to you. None whatsoever. Close the book. Move on. Nothing to see here. Chuck it over the side of the ship. One of your friends, one of the 'I want to but I don't know how,' will be glad of something to hang on to.

For those that want to but don't know how, or are too frightened of the unknown to try, you have nothing to lose by reading this book. You may

continue to smoke, if you wish. Once you begin to understand the subtle and very powerful illusions at play you may wish to stop. Good for you. Read Part 3 Stopping, and find and use whatever means of stopping that suits you. There are no real right and wrong ways to stop. We are all different. Trying them all won't hurt. Stopping smoking is a battle and one of the most important challenges in your life. Winning this battle may literally save your life.

What you have in your hands, in this book, is the ammunition and weaponry you will need to face your fight head on. Go for it. I promise you will not regret it. Being free of the shackles of smoking and that relentless shadow of Death that was forever looking over my shoulder, was one of the most liberating experiences of my life. I have never looked back.

For those who are already on the beach of 'non-smokingness' it is wise to be aware of how sneaky and clever the cigarette can be. Only by fully understanding the illusion, by understanding how the cigarette silently inveigles itself into your subconscious, can you claim to be truly free of its grasp. Don't be one of those who suddenly and quite unexpectedly find themselves back on the deck of the SS tobacco, looking back at the serenity of my beach and wondering what went wrong. Put your guard up. Keep it up and stay free.

I ought to tell you that I am not a smoker. I used to be, but I stopped. I got off the ship. My

first and second major attempts failed miserably. I got off the ship temporarily, only to find myself drawn back into its loving embrace. I suppose I was one of those who didn't really want to stop. I 'enjoyed' smoking. I was an ardent 30 a day smoker who only wanted to stop because I felt I should. It was a healthy thing to do. I also didn't like feeling that I *had* to smoke. Although all smokers, including myself at times, believe and say that they 'choose' to smoke, it occurred to me that I couldn't just stop. I had to have a cigarette. I had no choice. My head started to hurt trying to fathom out the amazing and quite stark contradiction at play here. If I 'chose' to smoke, why couldn't I 'choose' to stop? And, if I couldn't choose to stop, did that mean I had no choice in smoking? Rather than smoking being a matter of personal choice, had my fundamental freedom to choose, been quietly squirrelled away from me without me noticing?

And how did the cigarette manage to be all things to all men? Smokers say they smoke when they are at their most stressed and anxious while almost in the same breath extolling its virtues when they are at their most relaxed. How does that little stick of burning leaf manage to play both ends of the scale without any obvious conflict of interest? I stumbled into another contradiction for which I had no answer.

And then a friend at the pub asked me how my stopping smoking was going, just seconds after watching me light my third one that hour.

Badly, said I.

To which he replied that he used to be a 40 a day militant smoker until he got up one morning and decided he didn't want to smoke any more. He gathered up his cigarettes and lighters and ash trays and threw them all away. He then went to work and carried on with his life as if he'd never smoked a cigarette before. He never looked back. He never smoked again. He never felt any withdrawal and never once felt that horrible, empty, distracted felling in the pit of the stomach that all smokers fear.

And what made it worse was that he couldn't tell me, with any certainty, how or why. There was nothing I could use. I almost felt worse knowing that there's a way to stop smoking without going through any pain or misery. And the key to that knowledge was deep inside someone who didn't know what it was, and, because he had stopped, no longer cared.

Then I read an article about a middle aged man whose 12 year old daughter asked him, tearfully, if he was going to die. She had seen the anti smoking ads on TV and it had frightened her. He never smoked again. He stopped instantly. No pangs.

If I am permitted to use the language of the young, WTF?!

How? How did he do that?

For god's sake, someone, tell me!

And no-one could. I visited all the stop smoking sites, all the self help websites and anti smoking blogs. I read all the books, good ones and bad alike, and they all, in their own unique

way, said the same thing. Everyone hinted at answers, without ever revealing them. The biggest and best selling stop smoking book came closest of all, without actually revealing what the secret was.

I was on the hunt for the Holy Grail. It appeared I was on my own. Given that I now realised that no-one had any concrete answers, just a re-hash and re-coating of existing solutions, I turned to the only person who could help me.

Me.

I decided to challenge every concept I thought I had about smoking and examine them with a logical and intelligent mind. It is possible, surely, to hold two opposing thoughts in one's head, and not have to agree on one over the other?

I enjoyed smoking. Did I?

It relaxed me. Did it?

It gave me pleasure. Did it?

Life won't be the same without it. Really?

Slowly but surely I began to peel away the cloak of mystery that holds smokers in its pernicious grip. What I found surprised me, not only in as much as I had not realised it before, but in that I found it hard to believe that no-one else could see it.

One of the most masterful illusions I had ever come across had been played against me. And not just against me but against everyone who smokes or who has ever smoked. What surprised me most was the cigarette's unique ability to convince us all that no trickery is involved, that

there is no illusion. The greatest trick the devil ever played was to convince us he doesn't exist.

Magicians never play the same trick twice. Never. To do so gives you a supreme opportunity to see how the trick is played. Once you work it out the magic is lost and you invariably lose respect for the magician. I once watched Magician Impossible perform what was, on the face of it, a brilliant trick, until I unwittingly fell upon the solution. I felt deceived. Lied to. I haven't watched his show since.

As soon as I saw the illusion of smoking or 'The Smoking Illusion', as I went on to call it in my head, stopping was easy. I stopped 11 years ago.

Shortly after I stopped for the last time a smoking friend, who had known of my militant smoking tendencies and my previous failed attempts to stop, asked me how I had found it so easy to stop this time. I was glad she asked. I desperately wanted to share with her my story and my theories around my 'Smoking Illusion.' I actually felt that it was my duty, as a friend and former smoker, to share with others the secrets of how to get off the SS Tobacco.

Half way through my theory, or my anti-smoking rant, as I'm certain it was seen by others, my friend turned to another smoker and said, "There's nothing worse than an ex-smoker."

And with one fell stroke the cigarette played another of its sublime tricks and cut me off from those I was trying to help. I learned a valuable lesson that day. The cigarette was a powerful and

oblique master of his game. Taking him on was not going to be easy.

So I didn't bother. I had won my fight. I'm not the sort of person to press my ideals or morals on anyone else. Those of my acquaintance will tell you that I became the opposite of a typical 'ex-smoker.' I sat with my smoking friends, I kept going to pubs when smoking was still permitted indoors and I allowed smoking in my home and in my car. It never once bothered me and I never once felt the need to climb back on the SS Tobacco. Smoking had lost its magic. I had seen the illusion, the spell had been broken, I no longer feared the cigarette's lure.

In the years that have followed I have expanded and solidified my ideas. They have formed nice, regulated, files in my head. But they have mostly stayed there, getting dusty. I didn't need to share my ideas. How could I convince an ardent smoker of the futility of what he's doing? What business was it of mine?

In February 2014 my mum, the centre of my life and the centre of my family's world, who had stopped smoking many years previously, was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus. She passed away just over 80 days later. I realised then that the cigarette had played yet another masterful trick upon me. I had believed him when he said that he was no longer my problem. He was lying to me. I was wrong. He was still my problem. He is your problem. He is everyone's problem.

Smoking is not just a personal, subjective choice. It does not just wrap you, the smoker, up in its toxic cloak of smoke and mirrors. Half of all smokers will die from smoking or smoking related illnesses. And behind you, as you are finally laid to rest after your painful and distressing illness, will be your family and friends, who will carry the memory of the pain of your illness firmly on their shoulders, and will forever mourn your early exit.

But then, you may be one of the lucky half that doesn't die. If you are, excellent, I'm pleased for you. Truly. Just remember that for every smoker that's carried off the ship in a box, 20 or 30 of the remaining half will suffer life changing illnesses caused by smoking.

And, finally, some perspective.

In 2013, 33169 people died of gun related incidents in the USA. They all made the news, to varying degrees. Some made headline news. Some made international news. Such is the level of concern in the USA that the country is totally divided as to its response. The President of the USA has recently confirmed that he is going to bypass Congress in an attempt to bring in some kind of gun control. The rest of the world is, at once, both fascinated and appalled at the vast scale of the problem. Here's your perspective:

In the UK 100,000 people will die this year from smoking related diseases.

In the USA that number will be 480,000 souls.

Globally, 6,000,000 people will die from smoking related diseases.

Smoking is the single biggest tragedy that mankind will face this year.

Get off the ship. Let's help everyone get off the ship.

First of all, let's understand your enemy.

My Shadow and I

In the previous chapters I alluded to a 'shadow of Death' that continually haunts the shoulders of smokers. You may think that my imagination has run away with me a little, that I have waxed, shall we say, a bit too lyrically. But it is important, I think, to understand a bit more about this shadow. Without this shadow many smokers, including myself, would never even have entertained the thought of stopping smoking. He is the one unique factor that is present in all of us, smokers and non-smokers alike. He is our impending death and forever lurks nearby, mostly in the shadows, but occasionally brought to mind when something alerts us to its presence.

Let's say you don't smoke. Good. Well done. I approve. For most of your day and week and even your year, if you are lucky, you aren't even aware of your shadow. He is almost never brought to mind. And then, one day, you book that holiday you so desperately need and start to mentally pack all the things you need for a week or two of sun, sand, sea and other stuff. And just as you are at your most excited, you arrive at the airport. You unexpectedly grow anxious at the prospect of flight. Everyone does, to some degree.

May I introduce you to your shadow?

He's not a stranger to you, you have most likely met him before. Perhaps when you had a

headache that wouldn't go away and you started to wonder if, actually, you might have a brain tumour, and be dead at any moment. Or maybe that rash is meningitis or your cough, lung cancer. What about that lump on your leg or that funny looking mole you keep meaning to get checked out? Worse still, what about the moles you can't see?

And so you self diagnose, via Google, of course, always prompted and cajoled by that Shadow that has now firmly installed himself just behind your left shoulder. He is death come amongst us and he grows stronger and more frightening at every moment he is not tackled and suppressed. Every click and scroll brings you right up to the door of almost certain death, and your Shadow grows stronger and darker at your side.

Your symptoms fit. It is definitely a brain tumour. Chelsea 93, not a football fan, knew someone whose brother had exactly the same symptoms and was dead within the hour. In fact, it's a wonder you are still alive. And so your shadow grows ever more powerful and omnipresent to the point at which your headache grows worse. You can't sleep. You become sad and depressed at the prospect of your impending demise. There is so much you haven't done, so much to do. You won't get a chance to write a bucket list let alone do anything on it. You'll never get to swim with dolphins or feel the warm blue waters of the South China Sea lap at your toes.

When you wake up, finally, you discover to your great surprise, and evident relief, that your

headache has gone. Gone too, is your shadow, back to the darkest part of your mind where you are able to forget he ever existed. By the end of the day you will have most likely forgotten you even had a headache, let alone being moments from death.

With the light of day often comes a newer, fresher outlook. Positive thoughts take control and all is forgotten.

Your Shadow is not necessarily your enemy. He is the darker side of your Inner Elf, who we will meet next, and is, in many ways, as stupid and malleable as your Elf. He grabs hold of the merest nugget of fact and stands at your shoulder beating you over the head with it.

Such is the society in which we live today that danger and impending death lurk at every corner. A glass of wine will kill you; the sugar in your tea will kill you, and so will the tea. But don't switch to coffee as that will kill you too. Don't eat bacon. Or sausages. Or processed food. Or beef. Or lamb. Or chicken. Don't drink alcohol. Don't live in cities as the pollution will kill you, or the murderers and rapists. But if you live in the country and fall ill you are more likely to die there than in the cities because of how long the ambulance will take to get to you.

And so it goes on. As a society we have become obsessed with health and safety. We are becoming more risk averse.

The darker side of our Inner Elf, our Shadow, is fed a diet of health and safety obsessed data and, like the child he is, he gets a bit carried

away. Sadly the data is often one sided and there is no reason or fact to balance it out. You let your Shadow loose on the internet and all is lost.

More often than not, however, we are able to take control of our shadow. He does not become an integral part of our daily life. He rarely haunts us for long. Our headache gone, our Shadow recedes to the back of our mind.

He is with us as we climb the stairs of the aeroplane and as we taxi for take off. Planes crash, you know, and they do say take-off is the most dangerous part. Some even go missing, or are shot down, or fly into mountains. We are able to temper most of this with the knowledge that flying is still the safest form of transportation. And, let's face it, the only way you are getting to that beach is to fly. By the time we have landed and settled into our holiday our Shadow is gone and almost immediately forgotten. We are able to go on and enjoy our holiday, entirely Shadow free.

Sometimes the Shadow does not go away. He stands behind our shoulder and pokes at us relentlessly. The shadow will not go away. He gets stronger and darker with every passing day.

There are two types of people who will suffer this incessant darkness and discomfort. The first of these will benefit from their Shadow. They will take heed of his message and act upon it. The mole was raised. It was of an irregular shape and size. It was worth getting it checked out. It was cancer. It isn't now.

Your Shadow is a full on worry-wort. He will worry about anything. He's your Inner Elf's stupid

twin. But that doesn't mean he's always wrong. He will, in most cases, go away on his own. Whatever it was that brought him out of the shadows, the danger or threat of danger, will have gone away. So too, will your Shadow.

The other type of person is a smoker.

Their shadow is as powerful as every body else's. More so, in fact. Most people, I call them non-smokers, get to spend their day or week or year, largely free from this incessant cloak of doom that follows smokers around.

Smokers NEVER escape their shadow. It is always with them. 50 years of anti-smoking campaigning and science has brought the smoker's attention to the fact that smoking can kill them. Actually, more than 'can.' It probably will. Even if it doesn't kill them it could do them considerable harm. They may become ill because of it.

Even if the most ardent and militant smoker declares, publicly, that it is all nonsense and, what the Hell, he'll take his chances, his Shadow cannot be suppressed. It will be there when he lights every cigarette and inhales every toxic chemical deep into his lungs. He may even deny his Shadow exists. That he is entirely free from any worry or concern. The only person he will be lying to is himself.

His Shadow knows that every cigarette he lights may be the one to set off a fatal chain reaction within the cells of his body.

He will cough and, despite himself, he will wonder...

He will get a sore throat, and he will wonder...
He will struggle for breath one day, and he will wonder...

His lungs will hurt one day, and he will wonder...

His heart will beat awkwardly one day, and he will wonder...

His Shadow will be with him at every single waking moment of the day, brought forth more powerfully and more vividly at least 20 times a day, and he will never leave the smoker's side.

It is your Shadow that you must pay the greatest heed to. He is trying to tell you something, to help you. Any pleasure a smoker thinks they achieve through smoking is almost always lost because of this unwelcome interloper. Most, if not all smokers, finally stop because of the message their Shadow is trying to get across.

I stopped because I didn't want to be constantly in fear of the painful death I was most likely inflicting on my body. My Shadow scared me. I'm a gambling man. A 50/50 chance of dying from smoking is stupid odds.

The only thing that held me back was that there was a greater power at play. A formidable force that held me so powerfully within its grasp that I genuinely feared that I would never break free.

I found my Holy Grail. I found the key to my own salvation. I found the key to the mystery and the illusion of smoking and I managed to shatter the magic.

Never forget your Shadow. He may be silly and easily led, but he never lies. He just gets carried away with himself. But do not ignore him. He's telling you something.

He's trying to help.

Your Inner Elf

Do you remember when you were born? Me neither. Not that I was there when you were born, I meant that I don't remember when I was born. I don't know you. I wasn't there.

When you were born you were most certainly conscious, but you have absolutely no conscious awareness of your life or your surroundings. You have not yet developed into a conscious, sentient being. You are a mass of bawling limbs and baby fat.

Despite this, you know how to breath, although this process often needs the intervention of someone's hand across your backside in order to get it going. When presented with breast, all babies proceed to feed, and the body somehow seems to know what to do with this, how to extract the right stuff essential to life and growth, and where to put the bit it doesn't need. Your conscious participation is not required. It is as though, somehow, you have been pre-programmed to do this. A bird in its nest high atop a tree has not been taught by its mother how to fly. She did not patiently draw it a picture or lovingly warn it that, upon leaving the nest, it must flap its tiny little wings like a frenzied nutcase in order not to plummet to the floor in a bundle of broken limbs and feathers.

You have been pre-programmed with the fundamental code necessary for all animals to

survive. This is your Brain, and it works day and night regulating your temperature to the correct level, pumping your heart to the correct beat, and ensuring your lungs attain the correct level of oxygen for your continued existence. It does this and a billion other essential processes without your conscious intervention. Clever, isn't it? To use a computer analogy, this is your computer's CPU, or Central Processing Unit. When you buy a new computer it will be ready for use straight away. The programmes and software you add later will determine what sort of computer you have.

We then enter the realm of your Conscious and Unconscious mind. For clarity I will hereafter refer to your Conscious mind as your Conscious Mind, or just your Conscious, depending on the context in which I am using it. I like to keep things simple.

For further clarity I will no longer refer to your Unconscious Mind, or Subconscious Mind, using those words. It will hereafter be known as your Inner Elf. I do this for a number of reasons the primary one being that I can't rightly decide if your Unconscious and Subconscious are the same thing. Scientists, and people with degrees and PHDs and stuff, use the term Unconscious, almost never using the word Subconscious, to describe their theories. Those without a degree, or any formal education, or New-agers or flower powery people, as the educated classes mockingly refer to them, choose Subconscious as their chosen word.

I also prefer the play on words evident in Inner Elf. Rightly, this should be spelt Inner 'Elf, as the apostrophe is required to denote the missing 's', as in Inner Self.

However, since I coined the term 'Inner Elf' I have somehow managed to personify my Unconscious Mind to appear to me as an actual Elf. Perhaps I have 'Elfonified' my mind? Either way, no apostrophe is required. He is an actual Elf, and comes with all the mischievous characteristics you would expect.

Please imagine him on your right shoulder. (Or her. Entirely up to you.) Your left shoulder is required for your Shadow.

It may also help if we, from time to time, and whenever the thought catches me, refer to your Conscious being in relation to our computer analogy. Your consciousness is rather like the RAM in your computer, or Random Access Memory. Whenever you start a particular programme, useful information that is likely to be required quickly is taken from your CPU (your brain) and temporarily stored in your in your RAM (your conscious being) so that it can be accessed without delay. Your Inner Elf is your HDD or, more simply, your Hard Drive. Everything you store on your computer is etched deep into your HDD (or Inner Elf) and stored there permanently. Everything you have ever done, ever smelt, ever touched, ever felt, ever heard, is held here. It is as big as your life is long. It is impossible to erase anything from your Inner Elf. Your Conscious Mind (RAM) will often refer to both your brain

(CPU) and your Inner Elf (HDD) for relevant information that will help it decide a particular course of action.

A dry mouth, for example, would indicate a lack of fluids in the body and the Conscious Mind would naturally look to the brain for the correct process to follow.

Now let's say you are going to watch a film with your partner. Your Conscious Mind is about to make a choice of one particular film over another. To make this choice your Inner Elf supplies a bank of memories of films you have watched and enjoyed in the past. In the early days of your life your Inner Elf may have been subjected to a diet of awful, and badly made, Cowboy and Western films. Your father may then have thoughtlessly named you 'Gary' after Gary Cooper, the Western star. Or he may not, depending on whether you are me or not. Either way, your Inner Elf remembers, whether your Conscious Mind is aware of it or not, and absolutely no consideration is given over to films of this genre.

You may not be consciously aware of the programming that has gone into your Inner Elf, but your Inner Elf is. He remembers everything. Such is the scope and depth of his knowledge that most of the pathways that would lead you to these memories have been closed off. We all struggle to remember a particular day in a particular year in our lives. The only times we can consciously go back and re-live, are times that stand out for a particular reason. Holidays,

birthdays, Christmases and special occasions, are all readily available to the Conscious Mind. The rest isn't. Most of it is only available to your Inner Elf.

Unfortunately your Inner Elf is a blithering idiot and is easily deceived. Most of human nature's biggest character flaws are related to the wrong processes being collected by your Inner Elf. In diametric opposition to that, is human nature's greater character successes. The rich and famous, the world's great leaders, top actors, politicians and writers, singers and business leaders. All of these have Inner Elf's that have, at some point, collated the correct response to a certain situation, or situations. They are not normally beset by the same problems or errors that most people's Inner Elf's pass on.

We are all, at some point in our lives, victims of our Inner Elf's stupidity.

The problem is, we created our Inner Elf. He is a product of our life. He developed alongside our Conscious Mind as we grew from toddler to child, and from child to teenager, and from teenager to adulthood. We are the product of our surroundings, our parents and our teachers, our siblings and our friends. We are also the product of our age. Much of what we are today, of who we are today, is due to the programming we received as we were growing up.

Children of the 1950s may be more thrifty and have different idea of sexuality and identity. Children of the 1980s may be more tolerant and children of the 2000s more risk averse.

We programmed our own Inner Elf. We probably didn't do it very well. Problems in adult life may well stem from some poor programming at an early stage. It is almost impossible to fix the problem as most of our programming is controlled by our Inner Elf and is not readily accessible to our Conscious Minds. Consciously we may be painfully aware of the dangers of smoking but our Inner Elf controls the network of programmes that control our impulses and desires. Without access to this, how can we hope to change the programme?

There are hundreds of books out there that seek to show you how to access your Inner Elf, and fix the neural pathways that lead you the wrong way in life. There is a set of books around a particular theme called NLP, or Neuro-linguistic Programming, and, without going into too much detail, as it confuses me, it seems to be based on the theory that in order to be successful we should try and achieve the same mindset as successful people. However they think, however they act, do the same. Copy them, copy their results. Basically, re-programme your Inner Elf.

Then, of course, there's good old psychoanalysis. This is the professional element. The degree wielders. The people that actually know, or at least have studied, how your Inner Elf goes about fucking things up. Used a lot by Americans, I'm told. I have nothing bad to say about them. Or Americans. If your position in life is such that you can't cope, that it's all gone to Hell in a hand-cart and, rather than being the one

who's able to hold his head, you're the one that's lost theirs, then I thoroughly recommend their services. You may get it free of charge in the UK or, if not, there are loads of helplines to call.

Chances are, though, you're like me. A couple of years of in-depth psychotherapy would probably do you good, but it seems to be an excessive way to fix the silly things in life. Like your lack of success, love or mild depression. Or smoking.

So in steps the flower power element. The non-degree holding psychotherapist with the key to your Inner Elf. This is about leaving your Conscious Mind behind, of creating the right conditions where you can access that level between your conscious awareness and unconsciousness. These people call it your sub-conscious.

This is where hypnotherapists take you, where you are far more susceptible to suggestion. By entering this space you will be able to find, and fix, the programming that is wrong. In essence, they create new programming and deliver it straight to your Inner Elf. Over time, the theory is, your Inner Elf's responses to external factors will change, and whatever was wrong in your life will change with it.

I love this stuff. Auto suggestion, hypnosis, meditation, affirmation, relaxation therapies, yoga etc etc. They are all about positive thinking and PMA (positive mental attitude) and every book you read, of which there are many, will guide you effortlessly to your new life.

Except it's never really worked for me. Sure, the relaxation techniques are marvellous. If you want to learn the true art of relaxation I thoroughly recommend you try their techniques. They really work. But then I come to the New Age stuff, like Cosmic Ordering and my BSF goes off the scale. (This is my BullShit Factor that I developed while working in retail. It is a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no BS and 10 being so much of the stuff that we could drop it on France and grow daffodils. Common 10s include Cosmic Ordering, Health and Safety and Jeremy Corbyn.)

And I don't mean to be negative, but sometimes I really hate positivity to the point that I want to batter the person displaying it with a shovel. I'm not allowed to be negative in my current job. All negativity is suppressed and people displaying negative tendencies are smothered with so much fake positivity that it makes me want to vomit. Negativity must be allowed to thrive. It's helpful, it has its place. If you don't have negative feelings about certain aspects of your life, how will it ever change?

And the one element that links all of the techniques that try to re-programme your Inner Elf is that they all ignore your Conscious Mind.

So let's not fall into that trap. Let's examine your Conscious Mind and pay some respect to its immense power.

Please take a moment and stop breathing. Hold your breath for 10 seconds.

Done it? Good. Well done. You just proved how powerful your Conscious Mind is. You over-

ruled your brain and commanded your lungs to stop. You have ultimate control. You da boss!

Indian Kafirs have been known to be able to consciously reduce their heart beats to the point at which no pulse can be found.

Now think about blinking. See? I bet you made yourself blink a few times, even though it wasn't necessary. How powerful is your Conscious Mind?

Right up until the 1950s it was believed that the human body could not run a mile faster than 4 minutes. People had tried since antiquity. People even recorded times of 4 mins 01 second, further adding more proof, if it were needed, that breaking 4 minutes was impossible. Such was the level of this belief that everyone's Inner Elf said so. It could not be done. It was impossible. There's a case to be had here that suggests that the Inner Elf may have played a major part in preventing this from happening. It created the circumstances which lead to the continued failure of running the mile in under 4 minutes. The Inner Elf became the master of the illusion, the architect of its own 'truth.'

I know nothing about Roger Bannister, the man who finally held a torch to this lie, by breaking the 4 minute mile. I know that his Inner Elf must have been weak, or programmed differently. I also know that his Conscious Mind must have had immense power to over-rule his Inner Elf. Once the illusion was shattered more and more people began to put in sub 4 minute miles. Today it was

a very common occurrence. The world's collective Inner Elf was changed.

Also during the 1950s the Americans were caught up in a race with Russia to be the first into space. Almost since the end of the Second World War, this race took place in secret laboratories and highly classified secret military bases all over the world. Both countries wanted the kudos of being the first in space.

In the US a team of scientists and engineers were tasked with developing a rocket that could break through the Earth's upper atmosphere and break free from its gravitational pull. Ever since the industrial revolution, man had realistically dreamt of leaving planet Earth.

Science, however, said it was impossible. Despite the fact that this collection of scientists and engineers desperately wanted to succeed, their collective Elf's thought otherwise. Once again it became the architect of its own lie. The Americans weren't even coming close to solving the problem.

Their team leader at the time had intelligence to suggest that the Russians were nearing the completion of a rocket that would propel them into space. What is more, if the Americans didn't solve the problem soon they would lag behind the Russians so far that they would lose the greatest challenge of all. To be the first on the moon.

So the team leader told his scientists and engineers a little lie. He told them that the Russians had done it. They had made it into space. The US had lost the race.

In an instant the collective Inner Elf's of a hundred intelligent people was re-programmed. It was possible to go into space, all they needed was a solution.

Eventually they found it, although the Russians did make it into space first. But because they solved the problem when they did, they were not far behind. The Americans would go on to win the race to the moon.

So what do we know about our Inner Elf? Well, he's you; a combination of all the ingredients that have gone into the mix that resulted in what you see before you today. He is the holder of the key to everything you have ever seen or ever done. He has it all. He is also where your programming is stored. He is your programme. He follows commands that have been programmed into you over the years and responds to external influences accordingly. He is also the programme that launches and underlies your Conscious Mind. What you do consciously is a combination of commands from your CPU (your brain) and your HDD (your Inner Elf.)

And he's a colossal idiot.

He cannot tell truth from fiction. A good book, or a good film, will be the same to him as reality. He is easily fooled and tricked and is liable, occasionally, to believe the most ridiculous things.

Ultimately, you created him. You made him. He is you.

If you want to, you can control him. You can re-programme him, or over-write the errors that he has picked up.

To understand the illusion of smoking, and how this works, it is essential to understand that your Inner Elf is a result of ingredients that YOU acquired.

These ingredients form the illusion that smoking has created. By understanding the ingredients, or recognising them, and understanding the part they play in deceiving your Inner Elf, only then can you start to re-write the programme.

Part 2
The Seven Pillars of Deceit

1: Pleasure and Relaxation

“I don’t want to stop. I enjoy smoking.”

Yes you do. And no, you don’t. You just don’t understand the illusion at play yet. When you’ve got to the end of this chapter, or the end of the book, come back to this part and re-read that quote. I offer few guarantees in life, but I guarantee that when you give that sentence another look it will seem quite different to you.

I cover the part about freedom of choice or free will, or whatever you want to call it, later on in section 4: Freedom of Choice. There’s a great deal of work to be done about those 5 words, “I don’t *want* to stop.” The truth is that you haven’t accepted yet that you *do* want to stop. Your little friend, your burning leaf, your little stick of formaldehyde and a million other life ending chemicals, needs you to want him or else he no longer exist. He only exists because he’s wanted.

Take that favourite show you watch. You know, the one that got cancelled. The one people stopped watching. The show that few people ‘wanted.’ New shows are created and dissolved within the blink of an eye. Few survive beyond the pilot, fewer still beyond the first series. The very first show of the very first series must, without any shadow of doubt, build within you, the viewer, the desire, the ‘want,’ to watch the next episode. They are designed with that in mind. That first episode must hook you, and it must

hook you in such a way that you will wait 7 days until the next episode. Each episode will develop its characters and plots and sub-plots until you just have to watch every episode religiously until the final episode. Then you, “absolutely can’t wait” for series 2. Episode 2 cannot exist unless episode 1 creates the right kind of ‘want’ in you that makes you sit down and watch it. Almost all TV shows are made this way. That’s why Box-Sets are now the only way to watch your favourite show. We now binge watch TV. We can’t help ourselves. Our Inner Elf cries, “Go on! Just one more.” And who can argue with their Inner Elf?

So what does that have to do with smoking?

Well, if you hadn’t smoked that first cigarette, you wouldn’t have wanted the second one. Chances are the first one was bloody horrible. The reasons behind that first cigarette, and the several that followed, and that first pack you bought, are manifold and complicated. Very often it’s a right of passage for young people, or an act of rebellion, or peer pressure, or an idea that smoking is cool and grown up. Or, indeed, a combination of all of the above. When I was a teenager in the 80s I remember watching a popular Saturday night TV show in which the American lead actor, a naturally charming, tough, brash, man of the world type character, did something cool and impressive and was quick witted and sophisticated to boot. Then he leaned nonchalantly on a wall and lit a cigarette. It was a defining moment. It was almost as though, in that one act of lighting a cigarette, the cigarette had

suddenly acquired all the attributes the actor had portrayed. It had quite cleverly piggy backed its way into the 'look.'

For a developing mind these are desirable attributes. To be able to acquire them all by simply smoking a cigarette is too hard to resist. Smoking is cool. The cigarette then becomes a feature of who you are. The teenager suddenly casts off the shackles of childhood. Smoking adds a level of maturity to them them. They grow up. The fact that smoking is now public enemy number one just adds more flavour to the act of smoking. It is rebellious. It is boundary pushing. They are making decisions for themselves. At some point, invariably an adult, usually a teacher or a parent and, disappointingly, someone the teenager trusts and respects, will say, "Well, I suppose you are old enough to make your own decisions."

And the damage is done. Smoking has embedded itself into the smoker's psyche. It is their mentor, their friend, someone who has shared the journey through their right of passage together. They have now smoked so many cigarettes they no longer remember the discomfort they suffered when trying to inhale the first few or, indeed, that unique nicotine rush that only smokers will recognise after a long period of abstinence. At no point did they actually enjoy the act of smoking. This has to be worked on. It takes time. But not much. And before you know it you're a 20 a day smoker and soon after that 10 years have passed. Then 20. Then 30. You are now

convinced you enjoy it. Why else would you do it? There has to be some pleasure in it, surely? Why else waste so much money on it? And, after all, it relaxes you, doesn't it?

So, if we are being honest with ourselves, we can possibly accept that no-one really 'wants' to smoke that first cigarette. Many other factors are at play, youth and inexperience are two of the main ones. Not many people take up smoking in their 30s. And, being honest, you probably didn't enjoy it either. Here, the cigarette becomes the master illusionist. As with the actor before, smoking begins to creep in to all areas of our lives and piggy backs on our emotions and pleasures. It creates no pleasure in itself, it merely associates itself with those we already have. It quietly invades our lives to the point we firmly believe that we would miss the genuine pleasures we have if we are unable to share them with a cigarette. It is a constant bewilderment to smokers that non-smokers can enjoy anything at all. And why aren't non-smokers constantly stressed?

Therein lies the most powerful smoking illusion of all. So we'll start there.

How does smoking relax the smoker?

First of all we need to accept that we all, smokers and non alike, suffer stress and anxiety. We all deal with it in our own ways. Smokers smoke. Some people binge on Box-Sets, others take up jogging. Smokers are the only ones who take on stress on a case by case basis. They get stressed, they have a cigarette, and the stress

goes away. Normal people, I like to call them non-smokers, accept that a little bit of stress is not a bad thing and, anyway, it usually passes quite quickly. When it does pass the non smoker will not even have noticed while the smoker will attribute his loss of stress to his little friend the cigarette. This doesn't happen consciously. Your Inner Elf is being trained subversively by the cigarette. The next time you feel stress your Inner Elf will attribute the success of relieving that stress previously, to having a cigarette, and therefore prompt you for another. A powerful connection is being made. This is a devastatingly strong trigger. You will most likely have responded to this trigger by lighting a cigarette and, in turn, your stress will have gone away again. Which it would have done anyway, whether you had lit a cigarette or not.

Another curious fact about this element of stress relief is the part the cigarette plays in *creating* the stress in the first place. One of the side effects of nicotine withdrawal is the feeling of stress and tension the body feels as nicotine levels subside. The reason non-smokers don't feel stressed all the time is because they DON'T smoke.

But your Inner Elf is an idiot. He doesn't see this. The only link he makes is between having stress and relieving stress by having a cigarette. Your Inner Elf will continue to attribute your stress relief to the cigarette and will continue to reinforce this every time you have a 'stress cigarette.' So great, in fact, is this illusion that most smokers

who find themselves in a position of some stress will relax by the mere thought of a cigarette. The very act of pulling a cigarette from its pack is enough to send your stress packing. In fact, why not try it? The next time you are feeling stressed and your trigger has fired just take a few minutes to sit back and imagine yourself having a cigarette. Make the pictures come alive in your head. Make them colourful. Over emphasise every act of smoking. Imagine it's warm outside, the sun is on your face. Or it's raining and the rain is dropping onto the roof of your little smoker's shelter. Hear the rain drops, smell the freshly cut grass, feel the warmth of the heat lamps on your face. Feel the fabric of your pockets as you retrieve your favourite brand of cigarettes. Feel the anticipation, smell the comforting aroma of unburned tobacco. Feel the warmth from the lighter's flame as it lights the tip of your cigarette and listen to the initial crackle as paper and leaf ignite. Take a really good, deep, breath of air. Hold it, just for a second, then exhale. Continue to imagine the rush of nicotine, picture the smoke as it leaves your mouth and tendrils of smoke curl up at the end of your nose. Imagine yourself tapping the ash from the end of your cigarette into an ashtray and then repeat.

Good, deep, lungfuls of air. And exhale.
Imagine yourself finishing the cigarette.

Did it work?

For some of you it will. For some of you it won't have worked as well. For some it won't have worked at all. Some of you won't believe that

imagining having a cigarette can possibly work as well as actually having a cigarette. But this is an extremely powerful device that can be used if you decide in future to stop smoking.

Don't believe it? Remember your Inner Elf? He can't tell the difference between reality and fantasy. He responds in the same way to imagined situations as real ones. Ever watched a scary movie and felt your heartbeat racing? Hairs stand up at the back of your neck and arms? Felt the urge to look away? To run? Or maybe your fists clenched, ready to fight off the danger? This is your Inner Elf responding to external factors. It responds like this because it doesn't know that what it is seeing, or imagining, isn't real.

The better the imagination, the better the film, the better the body's response. When you fantasise about smoking, make it real, make it big, make it bold and bright. And when you take deep, imaginary breaths, take really deep clean ones. There's a reason for this too.

Right then, altogether now, take a really big, deep breath. Fill up your lungs. Hold it for a moment and exhale through your nose.

And repeat.

You don't even have to bother imagining smoking a cigarette. Although this is a powerful device and one which easily tricks your Inner Elf, the simple act of inhaling air deep into your lungs will have a relaxing and restorative effect.

Don't believe me?

Do you remember a time when you were young and upset about something that you were utterly inconsolable about? Do you remember someone, probably your mother, putting a loving arm around you and telling you to take a big, long, deep breath? Ever wondered why? More to the point, did you ever stop to wonder why it worked?

If you ever have the misfortune to be involved in an accident one of the first things the first responder will do, if they are able, is to apply a mask to your face and hook you up to a cylinder. It's the same with heart attack victims, pregnant mothers, little old ladies who fall over in the street, and a whole host of other situations in which a poor human being is suffering a trauma of some kind. On comes the mask. Gas is applied.

This particular gas is way more powerful than nicotine. This gas is a life giver, not a life taker. We can't live without it. We call it oxygen.

Delivered pure in these situations the oxygen levels in the body increase and flood the cells, protecting those that are in danger from dying out. For heart attack victims in particular this is, and can be, a vital life saver. By protecting the cells of one of our most vital organs, oxygen prevents the heart from being irreparably damaged.

For trauma victims, or for those who are stressed or anxious, or for the little boy or girl who has just fallen off their swing, oxygen does something else to the body. It floods the brain

with 'feel-good' juices. For many of us we don't have access to a cylinder of pure oxygen and a mask so our bodies do something that it is innately programmed to do. We take deep, long, slow breaths.

Sometimes, particularly when traumatised or stressed, we often forget to breath at all and it is only when cajoled by someone nearby who isn't traumatised or stressed to "take a deep breath" that we begin to take control of ourselves. Oxygen floods our 'feel-good' receptors in the brain and we begin to feel better.

I guarantee that everyone who reads this book will have uttered the words "take a deep breath" to someone in their lifetime.

Look at people who meditate, who find a comforting and relaxing place to unwind. Look at the practitioners of yoga. Look at how their breathing is controlled and managed. Look at how deep they breath. They're relaxed, right?

Go grab a self help book from your local bookseller. One of those that deal specifically with stress and anxiety and depression. The very first thing they teach you is deep breathing exercises. In fact, it's possibly the only thing they need to teach you.

So how does it work? And how is understanding how it works going to convince you that smoking doesn't aid in your relaxation?

First of all, humans are stupid.

We don't breath properly.

We breath very shallow breaths. Go on. Take a look at yourself. Take a look at other people.

Watch how they breath.(Don't stare for too long, you'll get arrested.) See what I mean? Shallow, regulated and regimented breaths. We don't have to think about breathing. It's done for us. And, to be fair to the human body, it doesn't do a bad job of it, and shallow breathing is more than adequate for our needs. We don't need to deep breath all the time.

When we do take a deep breath two things happen. Firstly, considerably more oxygen is suddenly taken into our lungs. Secondly, a part of our lungs that we almost never use, the deep bit, the bit that expands our stomachs when we do use it, is suddenly flooded with oxygen. It must get giddy with excitement.

The little oxygen receptors in our lungs suddenly fire up and pump good old fashioned, life saving, gas into our blood stream and to the four corners of our bodies. And our brain. Which relaxes us no end.

So how does this relate to smoking?

Well, there are two types of breathers on this planet. Shallow breathers and deep breathers. I call them smokers and non-smokers.

Non-smokers almost never deep breath, they don't need to. Shallow breathing is more than adequate for their needs. In fact, most non-smokers never give their breathing a second's thought.

Smokers, on average, deep breath at least 20 times a day. Every time they smoke a cigarette.

Watch a smoker light a cigarette. Watch that initial inhalation of tobacco smoke. Watch how

deep they inhale. Watch how their stomachs expand. See how they hold it in for a second? See how every time they press that little stick to their mouths it is followed by a long, deep, breath. Look how relaxed they get.

You see, when a smoker inhales all that smoke and all those life ending chemicals and carcinogens, he also takes in something else. OXYGEN.

Here the cigarette plays its most sublime trick. It convinces the smoker that any sense of euphoria, or relaxation, is entirely down to the cigarette. In fact, all the cigarette does is relieve the anxiety or restlessness that nicotine creates. Any sense of relaxation or pleasure is almost entirely down to a sudden hit of oxygen.

I find it ironic that smokers have unwittingly found the amber nectar of life. The answer to stress and anxiety, the key to life. It's ironic in that it will most likely kill them. Any pleasure they do glean from it will quickly be overcome by their Shadow. Far from relieving their anxiety, their anxiety will increase. It is a vicious cycle of delusion and trickery.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Just by understanding that your little friend is a liar and a cheat and offers nothing to you by way of relaxation, you are another step closer to breaking the illusion.

“But I'll miss my after dinner cigarette.”

If, as promised, you are being honest with yourself, you will, by now, have accepted a

number of truths. One of these is that smoking does little more than relieve the tension and that feeling of restlessness that smoking creates. This is due to nicotine naturally diminishing with your body. Non-smokers do not feel this stress. Smoking perpetuates smoking.

Even if the truth has not yet sunk in, give it time. It will. Logic is the supreme truth. Yet all smokers will have their 'favourite.' There will be one cigarette, maybe two or three, that smokers will say they enjoy the most. It is also the one they say they will miss the most if they stop smoking. It may be the first or last cigarette of the day, the one you have with tea or coffee. Or maybe with a glass of wine or a cool beer in the evening. For most smokers, however, the one they 'enjoy the most,' the one they will miss more than any other, is the post meal cigarette.

In order to explain this illusion, or how the illusion works, or to explain how the cigarette adds nothing by way of pleasure to your dinner, let us first review what we have already discovered.

Firstly, the cigarette does NOT relax you. Non-smokers do not have that stress or feeling of restlessness that smokers believe smoking relieves. This is caused by nicotine leaving the body. It is relieved by replacing the nicotine, in most cases by smoking. It is important to recognise this sequence of events and its cause and effect. By recognising why you feel this restlessness, and how it is caused, we can

manage the symptoms should you decide to stop. I'll cover this in greater detail in Part 3 Stopping.

Secondly, the cigarette does NOT relax you. It piggy backs on the sense of euphoria and pleasure that is acquired through inhaling oxygen. Everything you have believed until now, in fact possibly the whole basis of your smoking life, is being thrown to the wind. That secret, and curiously undefined ingredient within the cigarette that helps a smoker relax, is being shown to be a fallacy. It does not exist. If there is an ingredient in cigarettes which aids relaxation then I would be extremely grateful if the pro-smoking lobby or the cigarette manufacturers would let me know what it is.

Nicotine? Nope. Doctors don't prescribe nicotine to aid in anxiety relief or as an anti-depressant. Nicotine has almost no effect on the body other than to relieve the stress, and that undefined sense of emptiness, that nicotine withdrawal creates. Smokers get no pleasure from smoking. It is an illusion, and will most likely be a difficult one for militant smokers to accept.

But logic and truth are powerful allies. Trust them. Trust your intelligence. Feed your Inner Elf with this information. Now that he has it he won't be able to forget it. You may consciously reject this information, but your Inner Elf probably won't. We are planting seeds of our future success.

So why are there special cigarettes? Ones that smokers will miss and crave the most. The after dinner, post drink, post sex ones. You enjoy them? Right?

No.

The cigarette is a parasite. It attaches itself to genuine pleasures and convinces the smoker that any pleasure gleaned is entirely its own doing. Let me explain further.

For most people eating food or drinking your favourite tippie is a genuine pleasure. We may go to a pub or a bar and be among friends, play cards or darts or maybe even a game of pool. We socialise with our friends, chat and argue amicably or dine out at our favourite restaurant and eat our favourite foods. We are filled with a warm glow of satisfaction and of genuine pleasure. Non-smokers feel this glow too.

So you've just finished your favourite meal and sipped at your favourite glass of wine and your body is filled with a warm sense of satisfaction, of pleasure. Real, genuine, feel-good pleasure. But at some point in the past, possibly when smoking was allowed inside restaurants, or maybe inside your own home, you reached for a cigarette and puffed merrily away. I used to do it between courses. Smokers still do this today. They put their coats on and their gloves and scarves and they congregate on the street like rejected lepers. By the time they get back I'm halfway through my second course. I'm not freezing to death, I can still feel my fingers, my food isn't cold and I haven't just assaulted my taste buds with cigarette smoke.

Exactly what pleasure do you get from this?

Yet in the past your Inner Elf has associated having a cigarette with the pleasure of a good

meal. As soon as you've eaten something a massive trigger is fired deep inside your unconscious, which prompts you to light a cigarette. It is the first thing ALL smokers do on finishing a meal. You don't 'choose' to have that cigarette. There is no 'choice' involved. It is forced upon you. (More on that in section 4, Freedom of Choice.) The cigarette is not guilty of giving you pleasure. It is guilty by association only. It does absolutely nothing to enhance your meal. In fact, quite the opposite.

Smoking numbs the taste buds. It kills the nerve endings in your mouth responsible for taste. Rather than enhancing the flavour, smoking destroys the bodies ability to taste it properly. Stopping smoking does not mean you will enjoy your food less. It will taste better and you will enjoy it more.

Smoking numbs your sense of smell. It kills the nerve endings in your nose responsible for your sense of smell. Again, smoking masks the smell of your food and the receptors in your brain, which ignite your saliva glands into preparing for a good meal, will not work properly. As a smoker you will not enjoy your food as much as a non-smoker. Your mouth will not water as much in anticipation of food as it will for a non-smoker. Stopping smoking will return to you a pleasure that smoking has stolen from you. A real, genuine, make you feel good, pleasure.

Smoking irritates the mouth and the throat. It irritates the oesophagus and the stomach. It can

irritate them to the point of causing cancer. Trust me, I have some experience in this area.

By stopping smoking the irritation will cease. You will enjoy your food more, your body will process the food better and the pleasure gleaned from eating will increase exponentially. You also won't be accompanied at every mealtime by your Shadow.

It is also true that a by-product of stopping smoking can be weight gain. Smoking suppresses your appetite and, rather than helping you enjoy your food more, it prevents your body getting the pleasure from eating that it deserves. Rather than enjoying your food more, smoking cigarettes does the opposite. It makes you enjoy it less. It's a startling contradiction. A difficult contradiction that some smokers may find hard to accept.

As for gaining weight, I'd rather be a bit fatter than dead. And, actually, all you need to do is apply a little common sense and self control. Nicotine withdrawal can be very similar to the pangs of hunger that we all feel naturally. In fact, most smokers confuse their hunger pangs for the urge to have a cigarette. It is another sublime illusion played against us by the cigarette. The trick is to recognise the difference. There will be more on that in Part 3 Stopping.

And no-one is stopping you replacing your cigarette with an apple, for example. Or grapes. Or any number of healthy products you can buy, rather than crisps and chocolate bars. You may well find after eating something healthy that you

no longer 'need' a cigarette. Try it one day. An apple certainly won't kill you.

Your post sex cigarette works in a similar way. It merely piggy backs on a genuine pleasure and convinces your Inner Elf that you couldn't possibly enjoy your post hump glow without first lighting a cigarette.

Let me pop this particular bubble of self deceit for you. (More fairly, this should be the cigarette's deceit.) If you are a man and you smoke you are more than twice as likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction than non-smoking men. Smoking weakens the flow of blood to the penis resulting in weaker and shorter lived erections. It also suppresses your sexual desire and reduces your sperm count. The simple truth is, if you stop smoking, you will desire sex more, have harder erections that last longer and your fish count will improve. They'll be stronger too.

And if you are female don't think that smoking doesn't do equally damaging things to you. It's all about blood flow and, if you smoke, it won't flow well. You will desire sex less and you will not enjoy it as much as a non-smoking women.

Smoking is bad for your sex life.

What we have discovered here is that smoking does not aid in your enjoyment of something pleasurable. It has piggy backed its way into your unconscious mind, or your Inner Elf. It is a parasite. An unwelcome invader of your mind. It has hoodwinked and deceived your Inner Elf. Think about every time you 'enjoy' a cigarette. Is

it really the cigarette you enjoy? Really? Or is what you are doing pleasurable in itself?

Your cup of tea or coffee. When you wake up or go to sleep. Mealtimes and break times at work. All these things are pleasurable in themselves. Recognise this fact. All the cigarette does is develop a situation whereby, when you are engaged in an activity that you particularly enjoy, a trigger is fired deep within your unconscious mind and your Inner Elf demands a cigarette. I'll be covering how to recognise triggers and how to deal with them in Part 3 Stopping.

So do you enjoy smoking?

No, it's an illusion. A trick. Your Inner Elf is being deceived.

Most smokers continue smoking to relieve the stress, and that felling of emptiness, that nicotine withdrawal has created. This is a perpetual cycle of deceit. It's a bit like cutting your arms with a razor blade in order to enjoy the feeling of having the stitches removed.

Any pleasure that a smoker believes he achieves through smoking is actually achieved through an accident of chance. The very act of smoking draws a significant amount of oxygen to a larger area of your lungs. This, in turn, creates a natural high, wrongly associated by your Inner Elf as being caused by the cigarette itself. Another perpetual cycle of deceit.

Every time you smoke you reinforce your Inner Elf's belief that smoking is the cause of your pleasure. It isn't. Smoking merely relieves the

stress that smoking causes in the first place. Another cycle of deceit. Non-smokers do NOT feel this stress.

And then there's the cigarette, the parasite. It's a wolf in sheep's clothing, an interloper, an unwelcome intruder in your mind, a liar and a cheat with a direct line to your Inner Elf. The cigarette piggy backs on genuine pleasures in life. And every time you smoke after a meal, or after sex, you reinforce the idea that somehow the cigarette is responsible for this pleasure. Eventually smoking a cigarette after these events becomes a learned response. You'll eat, a trigger will fire, and you'll automatically reach for a cigarette.

And repeat.

2: Addiction

Being addicted to smoking, or that intriguing and versatile compound 'nicotine,' is often touted by smokers as the main reason for not stopping. Nicotine, they say, is one of the most addictive substances known to man. It has powerful and, to non-smokers, often supernatural properties. It's like magic.

"I'm an addict. It's an addiction. An illness." It's more difficult, they go on to say, than giving up heroin. It's been medically proven. And so the self delusion continues. You smoke, therefore you are addicted. As an addict you quite readily admit that you have no control. And, as such, it is almost impossible to stop. So a powerful excuse has been found to justify why smokers continue to smoke. It is a wonderfully crafted illusion.

It is a sublime and often unremarked upon paradox.

Smokers honestly, and without any hint of irony, remark that they continue to smoke because they enjoy it and that it is their right to do so. Their freedom of choice, as it were. Whilst almost in the same breath they claim that it is difficult, almost impossible to stop. They are addicted. It's an addiction.

In so doing they admit the illusion at play without ever seeing it.

If you claim you are addicted you are admitting that you have NO CHOICE but to continue to

smoke. It is an addiction, and by the very nature of addictions, you have no choice but to continue. You have no freedom to choose. It has been taken away from you by the very same substance that uses that very same 'freedom' of choice against those who seek to curtail its influence.

You have to take your hat off to the cigarette. It really is a masterful illusionist. What a marvellous paradox.

So let's examine the truth behind this so called 'addiction.'

Before we take a look at the effect nicotine has on the body let's first examine what it truly means to be an addict. What constitutes 'addiction?'

When we say 'addicts' most of us think of serious, anti social addictions, such as alcohol, drug and gambling addictions. This is an excessive, almost compulsive addiction, over which the addict has no control. The drug in question, be it alcohol or heroin, lights up reward pathways in the brain connected with pleasure. The 'highs' connected with these drugs are so high, in fact, that in order to replicate them, the user must repeat the initial process that caused them in the first place. And so the user returns to the drug in question. Such is their nature, however, that the body builds up a tolerance to the drug to the point at which, in order to achieve that initial 'high,' the user must increase their use. Addicts continue with their addiction, be it drugs, alcohol or gambling, despite the knowledge of the certain harm they are causing to themselves.

And so the cycle begins and, at this point, we are able to draw significant parallels with smoking. This is where, however, a major divergence takes place. Someone truly addicted to a substance, such as alcohol or drugs, will find themselves wholly at its mercy. Their lives will become one long obsession with their drug. Careers will be lost, families broken, lives ruined as they lurch desperately and uncontrollably, towards their next drink or fix.

Heroin addicts do not stand socially under heat lamps and on street corners, looking for a vein to inject into. Heroin addicts live painful, sad, desperate lives knowing that what they are doing to themselves is ruining their lives. This is the power of true addiction.

Alcoholics will often hide their addiction from their loved ones in the sure and certain knowledge that what they are doing will ruin their lives. But they are truly addicted and they cannot stop. Alcohol has taken control of their lives and is slowly destroying it.

Gambling addicts too, although not addicted to an actual substance, can be said to be truly addicted. The act of gambling has been seen to activate the same reward pathways as alcohol and other drugs. Gamblers too, may become secretive about their addiction and hide it from their loved ones; and even go as far as stealing from them to fund their habit.

True addiction ruins lives. It destroys families and wrecks careers. Genuine addicts will not hesitate to resort to illegal activities to pay for

their addiction. Young women resort to prostitution, young men to violence and robbery and gamblers to stealing from their loved ones. All of this in a spiral of self destruction.

I did none of this when I was addicted to nicotine. Nicotine does not behave in the same way. Nicotine addicts do not behave in the same way.

At no point during my smoking life did I run out of cigarettes and suddenly go outside and batter a little old lady over the head for the contents of her handbag. Girls of my acquaintance, who smoked, did not offer quick hand jobs in the car park for a pack of 20. Smokers do not lie and steal to fund their addiction. They are, generally, normal, productive human beings who use their own money to fund their addiction.

The addiction to nicotine is so mild, in fact, that smokers don't even notice the withdrawal symptoms when taking part in an activity that prevents them from smoking. Like flying, for example. Or going to the cinema, or going to a restaurant or at work. Smokers do not allow their addiction to interfere in the daily running of their lives. Not like alcohol or heroin users, whose addictions take over their lives to the fullest degree imaginable.

So can we really categorise smoking as an addiction? Are smokers truly addicts? Or is there another game at play here? Is there an illusion that we can't quite see yet? Is the cigarette playing yet another masterful trick upon those that call it their friend.

Let's take a look at the main, active compound in cigarettes, nicotine. Unlike the vast majority of chemicals and compounds within the cigarette whose names elude us, we are all familiar with nicotine. It is the substance that smokers 'know' that they are addicted to. But, unlike heroin or alcohol, all nicotine users continue to function normally. It is at once, our friend and enemy.

Upon smoking a cigarette the smoker floods his brain with nicotine. It works fast, too, usually causing a response within 10 seconds. Nicotine activates a neurotransmitter in the reward pathways of the brain called dopamine which increases the smokers sense of pleasure. All smokers get this 'hit.' But, like the speed with which is applied, the effect is short-lived, and the dopamine levels speedily return to normal. In order to maintain this illusion of pleasure (remember, this is a chemical response, no actual pleasure is being achieved) the smoker must continue to puff away at their cigarette. Have you ever wondered why smokers who are deprived of a cigarette for some time, puff away madly at it, when they finally get chance? Now you know why. Puffing away rapidly has the greatest affect on the dopamine levels in the brain and, as a consequence, on the reward pathways. The smoker feels good. His little friend the cigarette is so designed to be the right length to deliver the right amount of nicotine into the bloodstream for the required effect. Here, again, the cigarette, and the cigarette manufacturers, play a clever trick. Nicotine does not hang about for long. It leaves

the body quickly and, if you never smoked again, would have left your body entirely within 48 hours. Its breakdown in the body has another effect on you. As it leaves your body it slowly creates a 'hunger' within you, or an indescribable feeling of restlessness, that your Inner Elf quickly attributes to be down to the fact that you haven't had a cigarette for a while. So you light another cigarette and the dopamine levels in your reward pathways are suddenly elevated to a new high, giving you that pleasure that you believe you need. The demand for a cigarette, based on the time it takes for dopamine levels to fall and nicotine to start to ebb away, occurs several times a day. Just more, in fact, than the contents of an average pack of cigarettes.

It is important to note here that people who don't smoke are perfectly able to naturally increase their dopamine levels, by engaging in activities that they truly enjoy, and which are, by and large, not as detrimental to their health.

Smoking almost guarantees its existence by hoodwinking the smoker into believing that there is some chemical within the cigarette that aids pleasure and relaxation. Nicotine would seem to be that chemical, yet nicotine also does something else to the body. It perpetuates its cycle of deceit by diminishing the bodies capability of regulating the neurotransmitter, dopamine. There is an enzyme called MAO (monoamine oxidase) which regulates, and keeps in check, the bodies dopamine levels. Smoking decreases the levels of MAO and, as an effect,

the body is subjected to artificially high dopamine levels. Once again, the cigarette perpetuates its own existence.

We've now established a couple of facts, one of which all smokers will readily agree with, whilst most smokers will need some time to think about the other.

Firstly, yes, nicotine is addictive. It raises dopamine levels in the body and gives the user a short-lived, but pleasurable 'hit.' It is so short-lived, however, that smokers must return quickly and continually to the cigarette in order to achieve this 'hit' that they require. This is why smokers who have been deprived of a cigarette for some time will take short, greedy, puffs in order to satisfy their cravings. The cigarette is conveniently designed to be the right length for this purpose. As soon as you stop smoking nicotine immediately begins to leave the body. Cigarette packets have been cleverly designed to be just short of the required amount for a day's use. This, in turn, leads to a mild feeling of panic within the smoker, which propels the smoker to buy another pack to tide them over until the next day. This is the sole purpose of packs of 10. There is absolutely no need to sell cigarettes at this low quantity. The smoker is quietly and cleverly led to believe that the smaller quantity and lower price are a good deal. It is not. It is merely buying itself time before a long day lays itself out before you and a packet of 20 suddenly makes its way into your pocket.

Secondly, nicotine addiction is not the same as alcohol addiction or drug addiction. They bear almost no comparison. To say that they do is to fundamentally misunderstand the devastating impact true addiction has on sufferer's lives. Nicotine addicts, or smokers, do not lose their grip on their lives. They remain fully in control. The withdrawal effects of alcohol and heroin are so bad, and so powerful, that people have died stopping. In nearly all cases of alcohol and heroin addiction some degree of medical intervention is required. For many, forced periods of abstinence, medication and therapy in specialised clinics is a necessity. These are life long addictions that require a lifelong cure.

Nicotine addiction is not even in the same league. Smokers are never woken in the middle of the night because of the pain and mental anguish of withdrawal. If a smoker smokes 2 cigarettes per hour, in order to relieve the symptoms of withdrawal, how is it that most smokers are able to put in an undisturbed 6-8 hours of sleep? Without so much as batting an eyelid. I know smokers who won't go on flights longer than 4 hours because their cravings are so bad, but who will easily clock up a 10 hour sleep on a Sunday.

Nicotine withdrawal is quick. It will leave your body, in its entirety, within 48 hours. Effects of nicotine withdrawal are so mild as to be barely remarkable. If you were stuck on a desert island with no hope of a cigarette, you would be absolutely fine. You would not die. You may

become distracted for a time, but the bodily effects of nicotine withdrawal would be so mild you probably wouldn't feel them. And they would be gone within a couple of days.

The physical side of nicotine addiction is pathetically weak.

It is mostly an illusion.

Don't give it a second's thought. We'll deal with how to manage it later in Part 3 Stopping.

The real addiction is wholly psychological. Which is the point of this book.

Because that's an illusion too.

3: Habit

One of the many and varied reasons smokers give for not stopping smoking is 'habit.' It's a habit, therefore you are compelled to do it.

If you are smoking ask your self a simple question. Do you do it, sometimes, out of habit? Because it's what you've always done? Have you ever said these words? Have you ever used the word 'habit' to describe your smoking life? Have you ever lit a cigarette only to find there was already one in the ashtray? Or, as I can confess to, already in your mouth?

I'm sure you have. In fact, I'm certain of it. It's a last-ditched fall-back for those desperately trying to get off the SS Tobacco. The cigarette finds as many arguments as it can to maintain its hold on those it's slowly killing. It uses the smoker's mouth as a conduit to the outside world, and uses its spurious arguments to hold back those who try to curtail its deadly influence.

So let's examine the masterful illusion, 'habit.'
Here's the paradox:

If you smoke out of habit then any pleasure or relaxation gained from the act of smoking is an illusion. You smoke because you have to, not because you enjoy it. So, Pillar 1 has been proved, by you and your cigarette, to be a genuine illusion.

If it's a habit then it's not an addiction. If you continue with this chapter we will go on to explain

the true meaning of 'habit.' Just for now, take my word for it. Habit is not an addiction. Pillar 2 stands firm.

If you believe that you smoke out of habit then from herein out I forbid you to declare that you smoke because of freedom of choice. We will look into this particular illusion next, in Pillar 4, Freedom of Choice. For now just accept that if you are compelled to smoke because of habit, then you have no choice. Pillar 4 proved before we even get there.

If it is truly a 'habit' that compels you to smoke, have you ever wondered what that strange and uniquely powerful force is? What force is so powerful that it overrides your free will? Is it really so powerful?

Once again we need to go and have a little chat with our Inner Elf. And when I say chat, I mean slap him about a bit. Your Inner Elf is the cause of your misery. Habit is not a bodily response to the withdrawal of nicotine. If it was we could fix the problem right now by slapping on a nicotine patch and carrying on with our lives. But it's not that simple. Most smokers will tell you, or at least those who have tried to stop, that even with nicotine replacement products, the compulsion to smoke is too great to resist. That's why so many rats return to their sinking ship. Almost never out of choice.

So what on earth is going on? What is habit? Why is it so powerful? Can we overcome it?

Happily, yes.

Habits are breathtakingly easy to break.

By knocking down this, your 3rd Pillar of Deceit, having already dealt with the first two, you are well on your way to being ready for Part 3 Stopping.

So, what is 'habit?'

It's another programme that you created and gave to your Inner Elf to run. It may have been that the first step to creating your habit (and this applies to all habits, not just smoking) was entirely of your own free will and down to a perfectly free and natural choice. This is unlikely to be entirely true of smoking, as a smoker's first cigarettes were probably due to a combination of other factors.

Whatever the reason, you started to do something. And then you did it again and again and again and again.

Some say that a habit is formed by doing something repetitively at least 30 times. After which, no conscious thought will go into engaging in that activity. Two packs of cigarettes and you're stuck. Your Inner Elf has received new programming. You are now compelled to smoke by your Inner Elf. Your new programming has been successfully installed. Worse still, your first pack of cigarettes created that feeling of restlessness and anxiety that nicotine withdrawal creates and your Inner Elf now has two powerful programmes compelling you to smoke. By your 3rd pack, smoking has you well and truly in its net.

If you can accept that nicotine is mild, and actually barely worth mentioning, then we can

probably accept that some other force is applying its will greater than that of nicotine.

That's 'habit.'

It's a behavioural impulse that was programmed by you. And, what is more, you can change that programme. Re-programming is easy.

Now, I know that a lot of smokers will be thinking that this is all a bit of 'dash, topped up with some 'balder.' I can hear them now, as I have heard them a million times, that, "I'm too old. I've been smoking for too long. It's too hard to break this habit."

Sorry, but I don't agree. You are never too old. It is never too late. Not while the opportunity to stop remains. The moment your Oncologist tells you that you have just months to live then, and only then, is it too late. If you're not there yet, now's a good time to stop. Also, anything that was quick and easy to create, will be quick and easy to destroy.

So let's talk about teaching old dogs new tricks.

Let's talk about Pavlov's Dog.

Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov made a rather important discovery during the late 1890s. Pavlov was running an experiment to measure the impact of the association of food with a dog's saliva responses. What Pavlov knew at the time was that a dog's saliva was being created whenever food was being placed before it. There was no learning involved here. This is a natural response managed by the dog's brain (or CPU)

whenever food was supplied. This is called, in science land, as an 'unconditional response.'

What Pavlov began to discover was that whenever he entered the laboratory, the dogs began to salivate, whether he brought them food or not. And they only salivated when he entered the room, not when his assistants did. His assistants never fed them. What he discovered was a 'conditioned response,' or what we now call a Pavlovian response.

The dogs had learned something that wasn't apparent at the beginning of the trial. They had associated Pavlov with food over a short period of time and their 'conditioned response' was to salivate in anticipation of food. The thing I find most important is what Pavlov later termed the 'Law of Temporal Contiguity.' This is the time taken between a conditioned stimulus being presented and an unconditional stimulus being achieved.

For Pavlov, who spent the rest of his life dedicated to this study, this was a vital compound in the creation of a Pavlovian Response. He began experimenting by ringing a bell every time he fed his dogs. Over a short period of time he found that all he needed to do was ring the bell in order to get his dogs to salivate in anticipation of food. The dogs had associated the bell with food and a 'learned response' was achieved. More importantly was that the shorter the time between ringing the bell and delivering food to the dogs, the stronger and more powerful the 'learned

response' became. This is the "Law of Temporal Contiguity.'

For non-sciency people like you and me, let's look at it another way. Let's look at gambling.

It is well recognised among gambling awareness charities that certain games of chance are more 'addictive' than others. Lottery scratch cards, for example, are more associated with 'addiction' than playing the weekly National Lottery. Fruit machines more so than a fiver each way on the favourite at Aintree. This is entirely due to Pavlov's 'Law of Temporal Contiguity.' It takes mere seconds to go from buying a scratch card to knowing the result and a lot longer if you have to wait for the start of a horse race, and even longer before you know the result. Fruit machines are almost instant, but the chances are buying a lottery ticket and knowing whether you have won or not, can be a matter of days. The time between laying your bet and receiving the result, determines how 'addictive' that game will be.

The time taken between lighting a cigarette and achieving a result, is a matter of seconds. This is why smoking appears so hard to stop for many smokers. Over time you have programmed your Inner Elf with a wide variety of Pavlovian responses.

When you wake up.

When you drink tea or coffee.

After food.

After sex. And so on.

You hear the bell, so to speak, and your Pavlovian response is to smoke. The shorter the time between the bell, or your trigger as we will call it, and reaching for a cigarette, the stronger and more powerful the trigger will become. The more you do it, the stronger it will become.

Re-programming a Pavlovian response should be quite easy. This is why I say you may continue to smoke if you wish to. You are able to change these 'learned responses' before you stop. We can eliminate some of the major impulses behind you reaching for a cigarette *before* you come to stop. (We will cover this part in greater detail in the section on Triggers in Part 3 Stopping.)

Remember, a habit, or a Pavlovian response, or conditioned response, is *learned*. It is learned over a very short period of time. Habits can be created by repeating the act no more than 30 times.

If they can be created, they can be destroyed. If your Inner Elf has learned something wrong, then you are not lumbered with it for life. Change it. Learn something new. Change your Inner Elf's programming.

If we can accept that the impulse to smoke, or the habit, is a Pavlovian response, then we are a step closer to reducing its strength. The power behind a Pavlovian response, and its ability to compel an automatic response from us, seems to lie in what Pavlov termed 'The Law of Temporal Contiguity.' The shorter the time between hearing the bell ringing and being given food, increased the power and intensity of the Pavlovian

response. Surely then, if we rang the bell and subsequently, and slowly, increased the time before given the dog food, we would reduce the Pavlovian responses' efficacy? The Pavlovian response would weaken. Upon hearing the bell, the dog would not salivate quite so much. One day it wouldn't salivate at all, and the Pavlovian response would be dismantled. The trigger, as we will call it, would cease to fire.

Now all you have to do is recognise those times when you are compelled by some unknown force to smoke. Start to recognise your triggers. When you make a cup of tea or coffee do you find yourself automatically reaching for a cigarette? Good. This is a Pavlovian response, a trigger. Recognising it gives us an opportunity to dismantle it. Write down all the times you are compelled to smoke. At break times. With your morning coffee. With a glass of wine. Just after eating, or just before going to bed. Maybe in the few moments after getting out of your car and going to work. Start to consciously be aware of your triggers.

Then STOP.

You do not have to stop smoking. Just pause. Be aware of your trigger firing. Do not reach for your cigarette immediately. Remember, this is not about depriving you of a cigarette. You may smoke. Just not right now. Wait. Just for a minute or two. Do this every time you notice a trigger firing. Be aware of triggers you know will be about to fire. Tell yourself that you will not immediately light up after a meal, or as you sit down with your

tea or coffee. You will STOP. Pause. Wait a minute or two. If we are able to delay the time between the trigger firing and reaching for a cigarette we will be able to slowly reduce the power of the trigger. When it fires tomorrow, or the next day, it will not be as strong. Continue to expand the time between the trigger firing and lighting a cigarette. Slowly but surely you will start to re-programme you Inner Elf, and the urge to smoke will weaken. The compulsion, or the habit, will not be as strong. You may automatically start to smoke less, with no feelings of stress or anxiety. You may still smoke as you read this book. Keep recognising your triggers and delaying your response. As we move towards Part 3 Stopping, you will have done a lot of the hard work without actually committing yourself to a stop date. Making that commitment may become a lot easier.

Before we get there, however, there are one or two more Pillars of deceit we need to tackle.

4: Freedom of Choice

“It’s my right to choose.”

I fundamentally agree with the individual’s right to self determination and their right to lead their lives in any manor they choose, providing it does not impinge on the safety of others or their own self determination.

Let me put this another way. If someone chooses to go out on a Saturday night and drink to the point of blindness and their limbs have lost the ability to carry them home in a straight line, and they then, subsequently, trip over a cat and crack their heads open on the kerb, then tough luck. Personally, I’d leave them there. It was their choice to drink to excess. They, and they alone, should deal with the consequences.

Unfortunately for those that have to pay tax in this country, more specifically me, an ambulance will be kindly dispatched to their rescue. A nice man or woman will ask how they are and they will probably vomit all over them. They will ask their name and they will become aggressive and non-compliant. They will swear at them as they try to stem the flow of blood from their heads. The ambulance crew have a duty of care to them, despite not knowing them, or actually caring for them, and they will eventually deliver them into the arms of even more caring people, who will look after them until those 12 pints of strong lager and a couple of whiskey chasers have ebbed

from their bodies and they eventually become aware of the most horrendous headache they have ever had. It will not become immediately clear if this is due to their well deserved hangover, or the 12 stitches that criss cross their forehead.

In the United Kingdom, all this will be entirely free of charge. Free, of course, but for the people who have to pay for it. People like me. Taxpayers.

Personally, as someone who has no duty of care over these people, as I wasn't one of those that contributed to their night of excess, I would have just walked on past, or rolled them into a hedge, so that they were no longer a nuisance to others. They chose to drink. They should deal with the consequences.

I confess, I drink alcohol. I like it. It tastes nice. I am aware of the health risks associated with drinking alcohol and thus I try to drink moderately. I do not drink every day. When I do drink, I don't drink excessively or to the point at which my eyes cross, my speech slurs, or my legs behave like those of a drunken duck on ice. I have, in my day, fallen into ditches, hedges, and doorways, been the victim of an over enthusiastic bear-hug which ended with me face slapping a door frame, and spent many a sad morning talking to god on the big white telephone. I made my choices. I accepted the consequences and dealt with the repercussions myself.

I make informed choices. I lead my life in the way that I choose to. It may not be your way, or the right way, or even the best way. But it's my

way. I decided. I made the choice. I'm a grown up.

The question is, though, am I actually making *informed* choices?

Sure, my little drunk chap in the example above made some really bad decisions. But at what point did he stop making an informed choice? He probably, like many of us do, made a free and informed choice to go out drinking that night, fully aware of the dangers associated with alcohol. At what point during the night did he stop making decisions for himself, and give himself, or at least his freedom of choice, over to the alcohol? Was his freedom to choose taken from him? Did he actually have a choice?

Freedom of choice is described as an individual's opportunity and autonomy to perform an action from at least two available options, unrestrained from external parties.

You're in a shop. Sales assistants hover expectingly about you like vultures, half intending, at any moment, to swoop down and peck away at the dying carcass of your wallet.

Before you are two televisions. They are almost identical. They are both slim screens, 52 inches wide with full HD and with almost identical image quality. They are from different manufacturers and are not too dissimilar in price. Here is your freedom to choose. Choose one. Which one do you choose?

We are interested here in the mechanics of choice. How do you decide which one to buy? Why do you choose one over the other?

It could be as simple as one TV looking prettier than the other. Recent studies have suggested that buying choices are often made on the aesthetics of a product, rather than any complex specifications. That's still a choice, and a fair one at that. You've chosen something because it's pretty. And why not? One should never have anything in one's home that you do not consider, or believe, to be beautiful.

Maybe it was the price? Being 10% cheaper than the other model made good financial choice. Another well made, justifiable choice.

Perhaps the name of the TV swayed you? You have confidence in the brand.

This is freedom of choice. You are making a free and informed choice.

What if, though, the manufacturer of TV No1 had stumbled across a unique and powerful pheromone which, when sprayed onto the TV, increased its potential buyer's feeling of pleasure? When faced with the choice of two televisions, one gave the purchaser a sense of pleasure and of excitement, the other seemed quite dull. It made itself desirable, albeit unfairly.

You'd buy that one, wouldn't you? I would.

Is this freedom of choice? Have you been allowed to freely chose between two things 'unrestrained from external parties?' Has your independence and autonomy been violated?

No, it's not freedom of choice. You have been cheated. Your freedom to choose has been denied. You should be angry.

Back in the 1950s advertisers in America stumbled upon a brilliant way of selling their products to an unwitting and naive audience. It was called Subliminal Advertising. A single frame of, say 'eat more popcorn,' flashed up onto the screen so fast as to be unnoticeable to the human eye. The conscious self could not see it, as it was too fast, but, sadly, the Inner Elf within us all, did see it, and responded accordingly. I told you he was stupid.

The early trials of subliminal advertising were found to be largely untrue, and this form of advertising had little effect on sales, but an interesting theory had been launched into the public domain. The last 60 years have seen a clever and well managed use of subliminal advertising in films and television. Product placement now even exists on British Television and the advertising benefit of this cannot be underestimated. Continually seeing Coca-Cola being drunk during your favourite shows, for example, must play heavily on your buying choices when in the supermarket. Subliminal advertising, in its truest sense, is still illegal on British television today.

If you are subjected to subliminal messaging then can you actually pronounce yourself free to choose? Or is this an external factor of which you have no conscious acceptance of, that fundamentally bypasses your right to choose?

Do you choose to smoke cigarettes?

Is there a choice involved?

If we at least accept that a choice requires the acceptance of one particular course over that of another, then we must, by virtue of this, come to the conclusion that the choice available to smokers is whether they should smoke or not smoke. No smoker ever makes this choice. They are compelled to smoke by other forces within their minds, notably their Inner Elf.

Those that do, finally, exercise their right to choose, or their freedom to choose, always choose to stop. Most are unable to. 85% of smokers who attempt to stop, fail. How can this be? You have chosen to stop smoking. It is your right to choose. It's the very same 'right' that smokers bandy about when trying to justify their continuation of smoking.

If 85% of smokers who attempt to stop fail in this attempt, then it can only logically be argued that their choice to stop was revoked. Their freedom to choose was overpowered by something much stronger. They do not choose to return to smoking. Having been there myself I can only describe this as a felling of 'inevitability' and of begrudging acceptance that you **MUST HAVE** a cigarette.

Hopefully you have already read parts 1 to 3 of the Seven Pillars of Deceit and you probably, if not publicly, admit that there wasn't much choice in those first cigarettes you smoked. There is a reason that that I have placed the discussion of 'choice' as the 4th Pillar of Deceit. If you have already read parts 1 to 3 then you may have convinced your Inner Elf that a number of factors

are at play, which keep the smoker within the cigarette's cycle of deceit.

Firstly, that feeling of restlessness, or that unbearable sense of stress, that smokers feel, is caused by the previous cigarette. Smoking a cigarette merely relieves that tension that the cigarette caused in the first place. Non-smokers do not feel this stress. The sense of stress, and of stress relief, is an illusion. When you feel this stress your Inner Elf commands you to light a cigarette. You do not choose to. It is cause and effect. Your conscious participation is not required. There is no freedom to choose.

Secondly, your Inner Elf is also convinced that any 'high' achieved by smoking is entirely down to the cigarette. It isn't. Your Inner Elf is wrong, bless him. Oxygen is more than likely to be the cause of this feel-good 'high,' not nicotine. As a smoker you could choose to get this 'high' without smoking. But you can't. The choice has already been made for you. You must have a cigarette.

Thirdly, smoking piggy backs on genuine pleasures in life and convinces your Inner Elf that any pleasure you feel is due, primarily, to the cigarette. Again, your Inner Elf is mistaken. He has been programmed wrong. He is simply responding to triggers. There is no choice involved. Smokers have no choice but to smoke. As with Pavlov's dog in Pillar 3, smokers continue to smoke as a direct result of external influences, or Pavlovian responses. More triggers. No choice is required. Smokers do as they are told by the illusions that smoking creates. More than any

other section of society it is smokers that have fewer freedoms of choice.

Let's say, for arguments sake, that you have decided on the balance of all that you have heard so far, that you are going to exercise your freedom to choose. You are going to make that decision now. These are the choices before you:

To Smoke:

A 1 in 2 chance of dying because of it. A chance that if you don't die you may become one of the 30 or 40 remaining smokers of that other 50% of developing life changing illnesses because of it. You choose to continually pay the high financial cost of smoking. You choose to spend the rest of your life under heat lamps in the freezing cold, and in smoker's corners, continually legislated against, and part of an ever decreasing band of users. You choose to spend the rest of your life in the company of your Shadow. He will not go away.

Or, not to smoke:

An increased chance, every day that you don't smoke, of NOT dying from a smoking related disease, long before your natural time. An increased chance, with every non-smoking day that passes, that your life will not be restricted by a smoking related illness. You choose the financial freedom from having to purchase cigarettes every single day of your life. You will get a true sense of freedom from the obligation to smoke a cigarette. It really is a life affirming moment when you consider yourself a non-smoker. And you choose

to be free of your Shadow. He really does darken your side.

As a level headed, sober, reasoned and intelligent human being, please consider why you 'choose' to smoke.

Are you sure you have a choice in the matter?

5: The Number 36 Bus

This should be subtitled as the “I could die tomorrow’ argument that smokers use, not necessarily to justify the act of smoking, but the continuation of smoking. Every smoker uses this argument, I certainly did.

“Life’s short.”

“I could get hit by a bus tomorrow.”

“I knew someone who stopped smoking and died a week later in a car crash.”

All these things are true, life is certainly short and, yes, you could get hit by a bus tomorrow. And I do not guarantee that if you do stop smoking today that you may not die of something else. Eventually. Maybe even next week. Life’s fickle like that. It’s full of surprises.

There you are merrily strolling down the highway of life with all the other rats, and boom. You’re dead. Didn’t see it coming. Couldn’t get out of the way. The next day you’re in a funny shaped wooden box and before you know it you’re being heated to 5000 degrees. Then someone you know, a mother or a father or a brother or sister or a wife or husband, or maybe even a 5ft tall disabled gentleman with a pronounced limp, sprinkles you all over a bush and plants a flower. If you’re really loved and missed you’ll get a plaque and people will

remember you until their turn comes. And so on. Such is the cycle of life. We all die.

But if you're reading this there's a bloody good chance you're not dead. You are still on that highway of life struggling to survive with all the other rats. And if you still smoke, you've probably not been told you're dying because of it. No one in their right mind, with their beautiful, exciting, terrifying, and often incredibly painful life ahead of them, wants to get off the highway of life. Life is fascinating and mysterious and often full of breathtaking joy, and we all want to see what happens next.

So let's go back to that rat that got hit by a big fat 'BOOM' and suddenly found himself dead. What if that 'boom' was a big, fat, London bus, a double-decker bus no less, painted in brilliant red, with a big, shiny, number 36 at its head. What if our rat saw it coming? Let's face it, they are big and red and shiny. Who wouldn't see it?

What do you think he'd do?

He'd get out of the way, naturally. Our inherent survival instinct is to survive. To preserve life. To stay alive. We are naturally programmed to avoid dying at all costs. Life always tries to find a way.

At no point would our rat stand there and say, "Oh, well, I have to die of something," and wait patiently to be squished. He won't sit there and think to himself, "I might get killed by something else next week, so it might as well be today."

He'll move out of its way.

And herein lies a quandary I've noticed when it comes to smokers. When crossing the road they

don't run blindly across like lemmings at a 'World's End party.' They stop. They look both ways, and wait until their passage is clear. In fact, they go to extraordinary lengths to *avoid* being killed prematurely. It is incredibly unlikely that anyone, let alone a smoker, will be hit by a big, red No. 36. The natural, innate instinct, in all humans is to survive.

Just after the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015, I was working in a house in deepest, darkest, Warwickshire for a gentleman in his 50s who I never saw without a cigarette in his mouth. He puffed away like a proverbial chimney. Not that I know of any proverbs that include chimneys, but I'm sure you get my gist. Throughout the last hour of my visit he was engaged in a heated conversation with someone who I took to be his daughter. I didn't know it to be his daughter for sure, as it was a telephone conversation, and she was elsewhere. The general sense of the conversation, or at least the bit I heard, was the gentleman of the house imploring the person on the other end of the line, not to travel. He had already cancelled his plans to go to London that week and was currently in the process of cancelling his plans to travel abroad the following year. A terrorist attack was likely, the cities weren't safe, flying wasn't safe, going abroad wasn't safe, etc etc. I'm sure you can imagine the conversation, as I'm sure similar conversations were heard all across the world.

And I watched in quiet admiration at the illusion his cigarette was playing on him. It was a

defining moment in the creation of this book. I suddenly saw it all. What a masterpiece of deceit. What a wonderfully stitched network of cloak and mirrors the cigarette has laid across generations of smokers.

Without any hint of irony this particular man engaged in the single most deadly activity known to mankind, whilst anxiously avoiding doing something that offered almost no threat of danger to him. Despite recent attacks you are more likely to get eaten by a shark than get caught up in a terrorist incident.

Despite several high profile plane crashes in recent years flying is still the safest form of travel. In 2014, 2000 people died in commercial plane crashes around the world. Nearly 6,000,000 died from smoking.

I started to watch, with some growing amusement, at some of the other lengths smokers would go to to avoid dying prematurely. Every time a smoker did something that aided in the preservation of their lives, of the continuation of their existence, it gave a greater voice to the lie that they lived carefree and that they might “die tomorrow.’

The truth is alarmingly simple. Smokers do everything they can NOT to die tomorrow, just like non-smokers. They wear seat-belts in cars, helmets on bikes; they drink moderately and try to eat healthily; they look both ways on roads and they apply sun-cream in the summer. The only occasion at which smokers blindly ignore their own safety and recklessly continue with

something that will most likely kill them, or maim them permanently, is in the act of smoking a cigarette.

How powerful is the cigarette that it can override human nature's most basic survival instinct.

Why? How? What kind of illusion is at play here?

I know, let's play a game. On the table in front of you there is a 1 million pounds (1.5 million US dollars). It's a lot of money. It's yours, all yours. You can spend it how you please. It's tax free.

On the table next to your money is a pill and a glass of water. In order to take the money you must first swallow the pill. Go on. Take the pill. I promise it won't kill you.

Well, not today.

The pill is a cyanide pill. It is coated in a time release substance that will slowly dissolve until the cyanide is released. Then it will kill you. Unlike tobacco it will not affect your health until it is released into your body. You will not develop dementia or asthma. You will not develop coronary heart disease, or emphysema. You will not have to have limbs amputated. You will not suffocate slowly and your loved ones will not be forced to watch your slow, painful demise.

When it happens it will be instantaneous.

And I promise you won't die today. Or tomorrow. Or even next week. Enjoy your money.

But it may be the week after. I have no way of telling. Worse still, neither do you. But still, enjoy your life. How's your Shadow?

It maybe next month. But maybe not. It may happen next year, or the year after. Who knows? For many people who take my pill it doesn't happen until they're quite old. 20 or 30 years from now.

Actually, some people die of old age before the coating wears off. And then there was the person who took the pill and died the next week in a car crash. And you have to die of something, right?

Even non-smokers die. People who don't take my pill die. Not taking my pill doesn't mean you won't die.

We all die. Fact

Let me share another fact with you. There is nothing sadder in this world than being the architect of your own demise.

My pill is almost humane by the standards of tobacco. With my pill you die instantly. You never get time to regret your decisions, to mourn the premature ending of your life. Smokers do. They get a long time to torture themselves over the folly of their choices. Smokers die slowly.

What makes it worse is that YOU caused it. YOU made it happen. You are dying early because of YOU.

The even more peculiar illusion here, an often unremarked upon paradox, curiously unique to smokers, is that they only ever apply this particular Pillar of Deceit to smoking. In all other aspects of their lives they are strangely preoccupied with staying alive.

We all die of something, sooner or later. Even non-smokers. Some non-smokers may even die

of illnesses more commonly associated with smoking, without ever having pressed a cigarette to their lips. But while we have breath in our bodies and the fire of life within our hearts, everyone, including smokers, make every effort to avoid dying prematurely.

Without exception, no smoker ever applies this to smoking.

As if, somehow, smoking is different. It isn't. It's worse.

Can you see the illusion? Take a look at your life and recognise the paradox. The cigarette is the single most deadly thing you have in your life. It will most likely kill you, terrorism won't. You probably won't die in a car crash or a house fire or in a plane crash. You probably will die of smoking, or suffer a life changing illnesses because of it.

Shake off that cloak of deceit and see smoking for what it truly is. Apply the same logic to smoking as you do to checking your fire alarm or carbon monoxide detector, or putting your seatbelt on, or any number of other, sensible activities that you engage in to give you the best possible chance of not dying tomorrow.

Your little friend, that little stick of burning leaf, is playing a masterful game with you. And he is in control. He is deceiving you. The cigarette exists purely to ensure you will smoke another. The cigarette's entire *raison d'être* is to perpetuate its own existence. Everything about smoking, from the quantity they sell you and the box they come in, is designed to ensure you buy the next packet.

It will try and convince you that you can't live without it, that life, somehow, won't be the same.

And it will use this puerile argument, this Pillar of Deceit, to help you try and defend itself against those who seek to destroy its evil grasp on the world. It will use this argument effectively and without any hint of irony. As a smoker, you will have taken refuge behind this pillar and used its argument yourself. I know I did.

It's time to come out from behind this pillar and see the illusion for what it is. See the paradox. See the contradiction. Be honest and true to yourself.

And we all do die of something.

But the argument here is flawed. It's faulty. Think about my cyanide pill. It's nothing more than a metaphor for smoking. No reasonably thinking human being would take that risk. Let life, that wonderful adventure that we are all on, bring whatever it wants to your door, and deal with it accordingly.

Don't help it bring death and misery to your door. You can live without smoking, and life will not only be the same, it will be better.

And your Shadow will slowly ebb away into the darkness, where it belongs.

6: Urban Myths

There's a statue on the south eastern side of Piccadilly Circus in London of a small, naked boy, with bow and arrow drawn, called Eros.

Only it isn't Eros. Never was, never intended to be, still isn't.

I once mentioned this to my father, a London boy born and bred, who, known for his continued tendency to never be wrong, debated this with me for some hours. I was clearly wrong. Of course it's Eros. It's always been Eros, ever since he was boy. That's what everyone calls it. And, as far as that goes, I have to concede that it has always been *known* as Eros, although that doesn't necessarily meant it to be true. This was a defining moment in my journey to adulthood. Firstly, I had found my father to be wrong, which amused my mother no-end, although I daresay we will revive this argument the second he reads it. Secondly, I understood the phrase, "the masses will more easily fall victim to a big lie, than a small one," so coined by that colossal example of 20th century psychopathy, Adolf Hitler.

Eros is NOT Eros. It is officially titled the 'Angel of Christian Charity' in order to appease the Victorian sensibilities of people unused to seeing statues of naked children in the heart of London. It is actually, and more truthfully, Anteros, Eros's brother, who better epitomised the work of 19th

century philanthropist, Lord Shaftesbury, for whom the statue commemorates. A hundred years of calling it Eros, doesn't make it so.

And that, in essence, is the heart of an urban myth. It is something that the general masses believe to be true because someone said it was. This is made truer by the addition of confirming statements that purport to add reference to the lie. For example, most Urban Myths begin with, "my friend's brother.." Or, "My Dad's cousin..," in order to add the missing element of fact to the story. In re-telling the story, most people keep the chain of fact relatively small. You never know that person yourself, otherwise you'll be asked, by people like me, to bring the evidence to the table. It is always someone just outside your circle of knowledge.

If you Google Jeeves you'll find millions of urban myths, mostly created by over imaginative American teens trying to scare their friends. They're good fun and, more often than not, easy to spot. They include stories like the babysitter who gets prank calls asking her if she's checked on the babies yet. She eventually calls the police who trace the call back to the house she's in. There's a phone upstairs. They tell her to run for her life. it doesn't end well.

However, some urban myths are so deeply embedded in our collective consciousness that, also like the Statue of Eros, they are unlikely ever to be erased. For example, it is commonly believed that the alcoholic mixer, Angostura's Bitters, is poisonous in large quantities. It isn't. It's

named after the town Angostura, in Venezuela, and does not contain any Angostura bark, which is poisonous.

There's also the defence of Rourke's Drift, during the Zulu wars, made famous by Michael Caine in the 1964 film, 'Zulu.' It is commonly believed that this is a fine example of a Welsh Regiment holding firm against a determined and heavily reinforced enemy. Not so. Sorry, but that's not true. It wasn't a Welsh Regiment, even though the film depicted the soldiers as being from the South Wales Borderers. They weren't. The actual regiment involved was B Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot, the 2nd Warwickshire Regiment. It had its HQ in Monmouth (yes, I know, Monmouth is in Wales) which, at the outbreak of the Zulu wars, was in England. The border did not move for some years after the war when it was ceded to Wales and the 2nd Warwickshire regiment was renamed the South Wales Borderers. The researchers behind the film made a boo boo.

But today the myth continues and, in due fairness to the Welsh, because the HQ was so near to Wales, there was a higher concentration of Welshman in the regiment than was typical of British armies of the day. These were mostly made up of itinerant English and Irish farmers. For the benefit of fact, of the 122 soldiers of the 24th Regiment present at the defence of Rourke's Drift, 49 were English, 32 were Welsh, 16 were Irish and one was from Scotland. The nationalities of the other 21 are unknown.

So how does this play into the hands of smokers? What urban myths play a part in perpetuating the smoking illusion?

Urban myths are common and believable but once you shine the light of truth and fact into its deepest crevices, they can often be found wanting. All we have to do is dig a little, and investigate what we are being told.

So far we have established that smokers believe that smoking relieves stress, reduces anxiety, increases pleasure and brings joy and overwhelming happiness into their lives. If you are still with me at this 6th Pillar Of Deceit, there's a good chance you're on your way to accepting this illusory deceit. These are not urban myths, they are just illusions.

But what about that chap you met once, whose aunty smoked 20 a day for 80 years and lived to be 94. Is that an urban myth?

Probably. I think so, although the truth is that not everyone who smokes will die of smoking. People must have lived into old age and smoked their way there. I just don't know of any. Not personally. And maybe, just maybe, that 94 year old aunt couldn't breath well for the last ten years of her life, bound to a dirty old armchair in the wing of an old people's home, because her arteries were so clogged she could no longer walk. Maybe, if she had stopped smoking all those years ago, or never started, she could have lived to be 104 and spent her twilight years walking around the gardens of the old people's home, and being able to breath.

If smokers use this odd reason to continue smoking then all hope is lost. It's a ridiculous reason to continue. Please don't use this argument. If you smoke you will probably not make it to old age, and, if by some stroke of luck you do, I have little hope for your quality of life. You have a 1 in 2 chance of dying from smoking and, if you are lucky to dodge this bullet, the odds on getting a life altering illness are uncomfortably high. These are not good odds. In fact, these are no odds at all. It's like jumping into the seas off the coast of South Africa with fish guts and entrails for a swimming costume. You are going to get bitten, sooner or later.

And then there's the man who smoked for 40 years and when he tried to stop smoking he collapsed and was rushed to hospital. They said it was due to stopping, that he should rethink his plan. It was, they said, safer to continue smoking.

Well, now, that's just not true, is it? Whichever version of that urban myth you've heard, it isn't true. I've heard this one many times and from many quarters, even from my father, but it is just not true. Beyond a mild sense of irritation, nicotine withdrawal will not hurt you. It's not like you're giving up eating or drinking or even breathing. Stopping smoking will do you no harm. I have no personal connection with anyone who has suffered like this, or with anyone who has gone to hospital because they tried to stop smoking. I know of no-one who has died trying to stop. On the contrary, if you do not stop smoking

you are almost certain to end up in hospital. 1 in 2 of you won't come home.

This is a myth that has no basis in fact. I have never met anyone who has suffered like this. Not one person that I could name personally.

If this myth genuinely concerns you, go and seek some professional advice. Go and see your Doctor or pharmacist. Get some actual, real life, first hand fact, not this made up nonsense. It's an excuse smokers cling on to to avoid stopping. Pay it no attention.

Then there's the NHS. Britain's National Health Service. According to smokers, their taxes pay for the NHS. We should all thank smokers for their contribution. Their high taxes do good, without them the NHS would collapse.

For people who don't live in the UK you may not fully appreciate what a magnificent institution the NHS actually is. Whoever you are, regardless of age, sex, race, wealth or any exclusion I can't quite think of, you are entitled to free health care. Absolutely everything from medication to x-rays, from amputations to CT scans and from general practice to emergency care. It is all free. We are not expected to pay a penny towards the cost of our health care.

Except those who work and pay tax in the UK. Our taxes fund the NHS and the government and the military and the civil service and so on. Tobacco tax is not ring fenced in that all the taxes are put into a big pot and divvied out as our elected government sees fit. This all worked quite well until the NHS started hiring managers

instead of nurses and it all started to go tits up. Our beloved NHS is facing financial ruin.

You can pay for private healthcare in the UK or take out private health care insurance. This elevates you above the hoi polloi, and entitles you to faster, more personal service, in private rooms and with access to more expensive treatments.

Smokers believe that their taxes prop up our falling NHS. They believe that they prop up the economy. Well, let's examine that.

Firstly, tobacco tax is not ring fenced. It goes into a big pot with all the rest of the money. But, for argument's sake, I'll concede that tobacco taxes raise more money than the NHS gets in funding. This called the truth, and I am not afraid of it. But would the NHS collapse if no-one smoked?

No, of course not. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Just imagine if 48,000 people in the UK did not die of smoking this year. Find the figures for your own country. What if 480,000 tax paying Americans did not die this year, or next? Imagine if they did not have to be treated with expensive medicines in a desperate attempt to keep them alive or prolong their lives. Imagine if 48,000 people returned to their homes as happy, tax paying people, who could go out and do a bit of shopping and add more coin to our rapidly depleting coffers. And what of those who don't die of smoking? The 20 or 30 of the other half of 48,000 people who don't die but who suffer from life changing illnesses because of it? That's

960,000 people in the UK drawing vital resources from the NHS each year. Imagine if they didn't smoke. Do the numbers for your own country. Imagine the pressure that stopping smoking would take off the health services of our countries.

The truth is if smokers didn't smoke they would spend their spare £10 a day (\$14.50) on something else. The economy will survive quite happily. The economy, your economy, will no longer bear the weight of having to support those that smoking harms. Former smokers will live longer, and, in virtue of this, pay more tax. The NHS would not need the same vast sums of money to guarantee its survival into the 21st century. Just think what would happen if smokers stopped smoking today and paid a little of their £60 (\$86) a week habit into private healthcare insurance. How good would our NHS become?

There are many more myths held up by smokers as an example of why they should continue smoking. I have included the most popular. You probably know of a few more. Don't take them at face value. Question them. Hold them up to the light and look for the truth. They are Pillars of Deceit that hold up the lie. You are being misled. No-one but smokers believe these myths. Separate yourself from them and look at them for what they are, what they are trying to do.

Smoking is trying to perpetuate smoking. It exists purely to ensure its existence.

A gentleman of my acquaintance once told me that he will stop smoking when his Doctor tells him to.

By which time, my friend, it will be too late.

7: Fear

And so we come, inexorably, to the last Pillar of Deceit. The final refuge of your little friend. His last hope. His last stand. Like an injured tiger, pinned into the corner by common sense and logic, lit up like a beacon by the light of reason and truth, he has nothing left to lose. And nowhere to hide. He will fight. He is not yet beaten. Far from it. He has his most formidable weapon still to hand.

FEAR.

This is a particular fear unexplainably unique to smokers. If you have never smoked you will not understand. You may have gone days or even weeks without tea or coffee, or your favourite bag of crisps or your nicest bottle of wine. At no point would you have felt that crippling fear that all smokers fear when facing up to the possibility that they are about to stop smoking. Never thought about stopping? I don't believe you. Every smoker has contemplated stopping. You may well have been put off by that big, fat ball of anxiety that sat at the pit of your stomach, growing larger and more intense with every day that brought you closer to your stop date. On your stop date it would have been a solid form of black cloud that would have put your shadow to shame. Every reasoned thought, every fact, every detail, that led you to the point of stopping, is now

forgotten in the darkness. All there is is fear. And you will succumb to it because you are afraid.

I did. Many times.

Can I explain that fear to a non-smoker? No, I can't. It's almost beyond description. Even for someone like me, with a fairly creative grasp of our language, even I struggle to knit together a collection of words to describe this fear. And yet, it is the cigarette's most pernicious weapon. It is his last throw of the dice. His last punch. And it's going to be a good one.

And it's an illusion.

Have you ever tried to explain to someone who is afraid of, say, spiders, that there is nothing to fear? That there is no real harm in those little six legged balls of panic inducing invertebrates? Even in Australia, where spiders are the size of small dogs, there is nothing to fear. Since the introduction of anti-toxins in the early 1980s, no-one has died from a spider bite. See? Nothing to fear. Perfectly safe. I declare Thursdays a 'go cuddle a spider day.'

And what about that particular sub-species of human being who, on seeing a flash of lightning, scream, and proceed to climb onto the ceiling, moments later descending into a quivering heap of rattling bones and skin, upon hearing the clap of thunder that slowly rolled in behind? Did you try and reason with that person? Explain the science behind thunder and lightning and the shockingly low rates of 'death by thunder?' Sure, you will explain, lightning can be dangerous. But once you've seen it it can't hurt you. No-one

hears the shot that kills them. And almost nobody ever gets hit by lightning. Particularly people in semi-detached houses in suburbia. It's quite safe.

It helped a lot, didn't it?

No, of course it didn't. It made absolutely no difference whatsoever. It made no difference to them that their fear was irrational and their response to it non-sensical. What good did it do, you may well ask your loved one, if you dare, by screaming at the top of your voice and launching yourself upwards and backwards at breathtaking speed, at the sight of a spider no bigger than a penny?

It may be an irrational fear, but it is a fear nonetheless.

So what category of fear does stopping smoking fit into? Rational or irrational fear?

Back in the days before Google told us all we need to know, early humans were in considerable danger. Daily, if not hourly. Our existence, in the early days of our history, was perilous and fraught with danger. Back in those days humans feared spiders because, on being bitten by one, your brain would melt and you would die. So, humans rationally feared spiders. And snakes. And tigers and lions and woolly mammoths and so on. Rational fear's purpose was to keep us alive. Fear was good. Fear was powerful and omniscient. Without fear we would have blindly gone up to a lion, patted him on the head and said, "nice kitty." At which point we would have stayed for dinner. Fear makes up a part of our survival instinct. It is one of our most atavistic

senses. Without fear, we would not have survived. Even today, in an era where innate survival instincts are being largely eroded by health and safety regulations, risk assessments and idiots in high-viz vests telling us, the people who actually work for a living, how do do our jobs, fear still plays an integral part of our lives. We respond to fear and we adjust what we do accordingly. Because no-one wants to die prematurely, right? (No.36?)

However, we now live in a society that is so risk averse that our innate and atavistic fear response is slowly being eroded and diluted. We are growing a generation of people who won't know that a pan of boiling water is hot unless there's a sign, in big neon lights, saying, "Caution: Hot."

This aside, many people do suffer irrational fears. This may be a fear of spiders or dogs, or the number 13 or the fear of flying. These fears are so common, in fact, that we give them clever names that no-one can pronounce. Like triskaidekaphobia, the fear of the number 13.

But what, actually, is an irrational fear?

In many cases this is a genuine fear that has gone a little crazy. All of us, at some point or another, have felt fear when flying. It is quite common and not at all unnatural or silly. We are not birds and flying is not a natural human instinct. We have all grown up seeing the horror stories that follow major airline crashes. Of course we feel fear. Yet for most of us we are able to rationally accept that flying is not that

dangerous, that thousands of planes fill our skies on a daily basis without serious incident, and that flying is the safest form of travel. Fear does not overwhelm us.

For some, however, it does overwhelm them, and their minds run loose with all the terrible things that will happen to them when the plane crashes. Fear will grip them and rational thought will be shown the door. Over time, when the prospect of flying arises, fear will overpower them.

Irrational fears are nearly always 'created.' Like the psychological addiction to nicotine, this is created over time and, more often than not, from an early age.

Upon hearing a storm approaching my family will invariably run outside to watch the show. We will gasp in awe at the natural light show before us and ponder at the power that made such a large bang. And no, we don't get out much. TV hasn't been the same since ITV cancelled the Benny Hill Show.

And when I say my family, I mean everyone apart from one member who, upon hearing the storm approaching, would have burst into tears and found somewhere to hide. She will then be joined by her children, all screaming and crying. They will stay there until the storm passes. They are the only ones who do this. The rest of us would have stayed outside staring at the sky in childish wonder until hail the size of golf balls started knocking us out.

Why, you ask? And well may you ask.

When she was very little, and annoying, she was sent to play at her 'other' grannies house. The 'other' granny from the 'other' family. They were not like us. Upon hearing storms approaching they did not run outside in search of a Darwin award and try to catch hail in their open mouths. No. Upon hearing a storm this 'other' family would scream, leap upwards and backwards at incredible speed, and seek refuge on the ceiling. They all had a collective, irrational fear, and they passed it on in a spectacular way to our impressionable little girl, who has since passed this on to her children.

So what on earth does this have to do with smoking? How is that 'fear' that smokers feel when contemplating stopping nothing but an illusion?

It CANNOT be a rational fear. A rational fear is a genuine emotion that alerts the recipient to the prospect of some danger. There is NO danger in stopping. It will not hurt you or kill you. Nicotine withdrawal is not the same as heroin withdrawal and you will not imagine psychotic looking babies crawling across your bedroom ceiling. In fact, any withdrawal you may feel will be mild and short-lived and can be largely negated by a nicotine replacement product. More to the point, given that nearly 6 million people will die from smoking this year, why are you not afraid of smoking? That would be a genuine fear. But you're not frightened of smoking, even though you should be. Everyone should fear smoking.

How clever is the cigarette?

In some ways it could be argued that the 'fear' smokers feel when approaching their 'stop' date, is an irrational fear. It has no basis in logic or fact and stands no reasoned analysis. But people who have an irrational fear, and people who fear in a rational, atavistic, manner, share one particular fear singularly lacking in smokers. They genuinely fear some danger in their actions.

Smokers do not fear the danger of their actions, if they did they would stop smoking. There is NO danger in stopping. Quid pro quo. There is no fear in stopping.

Smokers do not fear stopping.

So what is it?

I'm not a doctor or a psychologist and I have no answer to that question. I cannot analyse it from a professional, educated standpoint. I can give it no name. All I have is my own experience, my own feelings and my own evaluation of my own mind.

On my final, and successful, attempt at stopping, I felt almost no fear. That ball of anxiety that I had felt on so many previous occasions, had been almost entirely eradicated. I went into my first day almost free of any 'fear.' I felt empowered. Stopping had become a challenge and for the first time I felt I might actually get free. On the second day I was entirely free of any residual 'fear.' I had broken through the cloud. It was almost as if, by understanding the illusions smoking was playing on me, I had unexpectedly weakened my 'fear.' And it wasn't a fear. I wasn't afraid.

Fear of stopping was no more real than Santa Claus. It just doesn't exist. It is an illusion cleverly crafted and designed to hold smokers within its deadly grasp. The 'fear' smokers feel is little more than a fear of the unknown. And yet, even that was not true. All smokers are non-smokers once. Can you remember a time when you didn't smoke? Were you stressed or restless? Did you constantly crave a cigarette? More importantly, were you afraid, before you started smoking, that life couldn't be 'right' or 'the same' without a cigarette. Did you feel that fear that you feel when you are about to stop?

No, of course you didn't.

Non smokers do not feel this fear. It was a fear caused, created and nurtured by smoking.

Smoking causes it.

You should fear smoking, not stopping.

When you stop your fear will go. You will be free.

You have nothing to fear but fear itself.

Part 3

Stopping

No Willpower Required

That's it, you've started part 3. This is not the end, it is the beginning. This is the start of your new life, a life free from unnecessary expense; free from daily exposure to some of the world's deadliest chemicals; free from addiction; free from the shackles of smoking; free from the Shadow of death that follows you around; free... just free.

Believe it. You can do it.

If you are a smoker and you are here, congratulations. Well done. Pats on back all round. You may continue to smoke. Read these last few pages before deciding to stop and prepare yourself with all the knowledge you will need to defeat mankind's greatest killer. This year, not one single cause will kill more people than smoking. This is not an illusion. It is a dreadful, evil fact. Make a genuine choice. A choice free from influence. See the illusion for what it is and accept the truth. The more you believe and understand the easier it will be to re-educate your Inner Elf. People do it everyday. You can be one of them.

Stopping smoking is not that hard, although it is not that easy either. All you have to really do is stop. Re-educate, or re-programme, your Inner Elf and let the little scamp do all the hard work for you. You already have the knowledge and power.

The following pages will show you how to bring these weapons to bear.

No willpower is required.

So, what is willpower? What does it do? What is it?

Many people will happily accept that they have no willpower. If they open a bar of chocolate with the express intention of only eating a chunk or two, or open a bottle of wine with the thought that they'll, 'only have this one,' most people, including myself, will find themselves munching their way through the bar of chocolate in its entirety, or, two hours later, find themselves in the position of having finished the bottle. Such is the lack of willpower that the vast majority of us display. I often think it would be nice to leave a packet of sweets in the car for the occasional 'dip' only to find that the second I open them I am compelled to finish them. Sweet things do not last long in my home. I have no willpower.

I brought this defeatist sense of failure to my efforts to stop smoking. How on earth was I going to power my way through the trauma of stopping? I wasn't strong enough. I was lazy and weak willed. I even believed that it would be easier just to carry on smoking. And that's exactly what I did.

Please let me assure you that no willpower is required. If it was, I'd still be smoking. The only strength you need will be on the day on which you finally choose to stop. Your 'stop-day' or D-Day, as we will know it as. Hopefully these following pages will make that day even easier and, after your first couple of days, you're re-

programmed Inner Elf will take care of the rest. You won't even notice.

So what is willpower?

Simply, will power is the power of your will, or the power of your conscious mind, against something you strongly desire.

You want a cigarette, but you have made a clear, conscious decision not to smoke. You stay strong and a day passes. Maybe two. Maybe a week. But your will is being assaulted on all fronts by that little man in your head. Your Inner Elf is firing triggers at you 30 or 40 times a day. In order to defeat these triggers, and to deny your Inner Elf, you must remain focussed and strong. But no matter how strong you think your willpower is, it can't stay that strong all of the time. One day, quite unexpectedly, the right trigger will fire at the right time, and you will consider it easier to smoke again. Back you go to the SS Tobacco. It's not because you are weak willed, it's because your inner Elf, or at least his programming, is stronger.

Wouldn't it be nice if you woke up one morning and you didn't want a cigarette? No desire whatsoever. You throw your cigarettes away and that's it. It's all over. You stopped. The triggers are so weak you barely notice them. Or they just don't fire at all. How good would that be?

Also, how do people do that? How did the father, confronted by his distraught daughter, manage to stop so completely and easily?

Without knowing it, and without even knowing how or why, they instantly re-programmed their

Inner Elfs, and never once felt loss or grief or fear or cravings. They put their Inner Elf on the right track and let him do all the hard work.

By reading this book you have begun that task of re-programming your Inner Elf. You may even be one of the lucky ones whose Inner Elf requires no further assistance, and runs off and sorts stuff out. If that's you then choose today, choose now, as the day you free yourself from the chains of tobacco. Take your cigarettes, your ashtrays, your lighters, filters and rolling papers, bag them up and take them as far away from your home as possible, and dispose of them in a way that makes them irretrievable.

If you are one of the lucky ones I would certainly recommend reading on. You've already bought the book, why not finish it? There are hints and tips on recognising triggers and how to dismantle them, and other hints that may help you stay focussed and in control. Remember, tobacco is a powerful foe. Don't underestimate its abilities to get back into your head. Best to be prepared, right?

Like most people though, we are not that lucky. Your little friend, the cigarette, your 'rock,' has ingrained itself so deep inside your psyche that the little bugger's going to take some shifting.

You have made the perfect start. Without meaning to, and whether you intended to give up smoking or not when you started this book, your Inner Elf has probably already accepted much of what you've read. Now, every time you smoke, the illusion you've been subjected to all these

years has been shattered. There's no magic in the illusion, once you know how the trick has been played.

No willpower is required.

And now the choice is truly yours. You can make a genuine, informed choice. Even if you choose to read no further, to continue smoking, together we have planted seeds of doubt in your mind. You may not stop today or tomorrow or even next week, but your Inner Elf *knows*. He will wonder if it can be true? Can you be free? Can it be that easy?

And one day you will come back to me. It will play on your mind. You'll read my words again, and then you'll read the next bit. Then you'll stop for good.

Don't stop trying, ever. It's never too late to stop and you are never too old. It took me 3 major attempts to stop. On my third attempt I had developed the embryonic theory that has since gone into producing this book. My Inner Elf had all the training he needed. All I needed to do was stop. Just don't rely on your Inner Elf entirely. He's an idiot after all. He can be convinced of almost anything. Make him hold onto the logic and the truth. Feed him, educate him, re-programme him, and don't underestimate his power.

The following pages, if you are ready, will help you prepare for the most important decision you can make with regards to your health.

Today is the beginning of the end.

Cutting Down

Cutting down has to be a good start? Right? I can take on my triggers, fight my demons and that sort of thing? It can't hurt? Surely? It can only be a good thing?

Sorry but no. By all means continue to smoke while reading this book. My whole purpose in writing this book is to help people get off the SS Tobacco. Or, at least, those who want to get off. I also want to reach out to those who don't want to stop. I want to give them the knowledge and the power to help them persuade their Inner Elf that it's a good time to stop. That smoking does nothing for them, that it's an illusion.

Now you're here, at this particular part of the book, there's a good chance you want to stop. You want to know how to do it. You want to discover some secrets. Some of you may consider that cutting down is a fair compromise between stopping and smoking.

It isn't.

When you cut down you will still feel the same sense of 'restlessness' that nicotine withdrawal inflicts on your body. All that happens when you cut down is that you deny yourself a cigarette and defer that so-called pleasure to another moment in time. Rather than dealing with the issues involved with smoking, and the illusions involved, you start to reinforce your Inner Elf's idea that smoking is the source behind your pleasure. You

have denied yourself a cigarette, and your anxiety and sense of restlessness will increase until such time as you 'allow' yourself a cigarette. Such will be the sense of relief you feel after such an absence that, by forcing that absence upon yourself with the promise of a cigarette later, you are somehow 'rewarding' yourself. The cigarette is your reward. This merely reinforces your Inner Elf's idea, or delusion, that smoking is the primary reliever of stress or giver of pleasure. Cutting down simply reinforces the illusion rather than weakening it, and will make stopping very much harder.

This is another reason why cigarettes are sold in packs of 10. It makes stopping harder.

Don't do it.

If you have come so far as to believing that stopping is the right way forward then don't make it harder on yourself.

Make a decision. Pick a date. Stop.

Nicotine Replacement Products

Should you use them or not?

A number of books I have read suggest that by using Nicotine Replacement Products, or NRPs, you are somehow not getting the 'point' of their book. You missed something. I missed something. We passed whatever secret it was they thought they were sharing with us, and have now had to resort to desperate measures. I don't agree with that at all. We are at war, you are at war, and you should bring as much intelligence and heavy weaponry to bear, so that you can win.

I used patches religiously from Day 1 right up until the point at which I held the last patch in my hands. I'm certain that the patches helped keep my mind off the fact that my body was experiencing nicotine withdrawal. I know that I've said, many times, that nicotine withdrawal is mild, but there's no point suffering it if we can negate its impact. Without nicotine withdrawal affecting our concentration we are able to accept that all the other urges we feel, like that feeling of 'emptiness' in the pit of our stomachs or that 'something' that urges us to smoke is NOT nicotine, or nicotine addiction, but deeply ingrained psychological impulses or Pavlovian responses.

This is the smoking illusion. We can now see it, accept it and defeat it. Why not have a bit of help? It's not going to hurt and NRPs are said to

dramatically increase your chances of successfully stopping. The more ammunition you have, the better.

I also enjoyed the extremely entertaining and colourful dreams that the patches are renowned for giving you. It got to the point that I couldn't wait to go to bed just to see what happened next. This is clearly just me, though, as most users report this as one of the reasons they don't use them. Personally, I loved it. Some users also reported getting numb arms and skin irritation. I can report that, too, although the irritation it caused on my skin was nothing compared to what I feared smoking was doing to my lungs. I moved the patch (or at least, a new one) to a different part of my upper body every day. The numbness in my arms was certainly not worth mentioning.

And the thing that sets NRPs above e-cigarettes or vaping, or even smoking, is that they are not meant to be used permanently. Their use is scaled from high strength, for 20 a day smokers or more, to middle strength and low strength. The nicotine is reduced with each course until you finally stop using them. You won't even notice the final step off. By then you should be free from any nicotine dependency, real or imagined, and able to live the rest of your life unencumbered by having to smoke.

It's a truly liberating experience.

NRPs have come a long way since I used them and I'm now led to believe that you can use a combination of NRPs to better increase your chances of successfully stopping. Best thing to

do is ask your doctor or pharmacist. Get some real advice. Don't forget that the manufacturers of these products do not want your business forever. Their products are designed to help you, not trap you to a lifetime of servitude.

While we are on the subject of NRPs, and before you read the next section on vaping, I think it's important just to cover the NRPs that mimic the act of smoking. These are the products that look and feel like cigarettes, even down to a glowing red end. They work by releasing a small amount of nicotine into the user's lungs via inhalation. The idea is, I imagine, to make the user feel that he is not missing out on smoking, or not 'giving' anything up. This, sadly, completely misses the point on stopping smoking. It is not about nicotine. Nicotine withdrawal is irritating and uncomfortable but at the very most, just annoying. It's the psychological element to smoking that causes the biggest problem. By using a product that mimics the act of smoking you will not be taking any steps to change your behaviour or to re-programme your Inner Elf. Using these products reinforce the illusion of smoking, and do little to undo its hook. Avoid them at all costs.

To Vape or not to Vape?

Vaping did not exist when I stopped smoking but I'm sure that if it did, I would not have used it.

Firstly, I do not consider myself a vain man, but I cannot look at someone 'vaping' without feeling a sense of pity for them. They look silly. They have a metal stick in their mouths and steam coming out of their ears. They couldn't look sillier if they were sucking on a candy cigarette and pretending to smoke. Some of these things even have lights. Seriously. Real lights that change colour. And the list of flavours is endless.

Strawberry, raspberry, butter pecan brûlée, apple and cinnamon, Gummy worms and sweet tarts, strawberry custard and cookies, blueberry popsicle, pink lemonade, peanut butter and marshmallows. Truly endless. All seemingly and innocently appealing to children.

They use powerful marketing techniques, too. By the side of every locked up and hidden tobacco counter there is a brighter, more inviting display of vape kits and e-cigarettes, accessories and liquids. It's all very bright and well lit and powerful ad-words leap out at you from the display. Words like 'e-liquid' 'quality' 'premium' and, my favourite, 'gourmet.'

Everything about vaping is very modern, exciting, bright and alluring, both trendy and sophisticated. Ideal marketing for catching the

young and impressionable, but also for catching those smokers who are tired of their shadow. All the 'coolness' and 'sophistication' of smoking, without the health risks of smoking. (That we know of.)

You would think, on balance of vaping being a healthier alternative to smoking, that it would elicit my stamp of approval. Not smoking a cigarette is the goal here, surely? Job done, one might say.

And it's true, vaping has to be a safer alternative to smoking an actual cigarette? Doesn't it? Just think of all those life ending chemicals the smoker will no longer be inhaling. That has to be a good thing?

Well, I'm not a doctor or a scientist so my opinion on whether or not an e-cigarette is safe or not would have no basis in experience or fact. E-cigarettes certainly haven't been around long enough for anyone to establish any concrete evidence for or against. Smoking has been around for hundreds of years, and people are still debating its true, devastating impact.

However, nicotine is a poison, and a deadly one at that. The growing prevalence of so much nicotine based liquid in bright shiny bottles called 'pink lemonade' and 'gummy worms' will surely lead to some very ill, or very dead, children.

But that is not why I would not use e-cigarettes or vaping, as a Nicotine Replacement Product. Or to help me stop smoking. E-cigarettes appeal to smokers because it is so much like smoking, and therein lies the problem. Using e-cigarettes continues to reinforce your Inner Elf's belief that

smoking adds something of importance to your life. It reinforces, rather than breaks, the illusion of pleasure and relaxation. Your Inner Elf cannot tell the difference between a fake cigarette and a real one.

Using any aid to stopping that reinforces the act of smoking, such as mimicking the inhalation of smoke, or copying the actual, physical, act of smoking, will not help you stop. It will only perpetuate the cigarette's power within you and make it even harder to stop.

Nicotine Replacement Products work by dealing with the bodies natural response to nicotine withdrawal while allowing you to mentally and consciously work on the psychological attachment to smoking. E-cigarettes reinforce your psychological attachment, they do not weaken it. Furthermore, NRPs are designed to be used on a sliding scale, from high content nicotine base to begin with, sliding down to a low nicotine content over the course of a few months. After which the user (now a non-smoker) stops without any further nicotine induced stress. That feeling of 'restlessness' and 'emptiness' has gone too. Along with your Shadow.

Whatever e-cigarettes claim in their packaging and advertising, they are not a good way for smokers to wean themselves off cigarettes. E-cigarettes are meant to be used permanently. Some even have clubs you can join. None of their material ever talks of a 'sliding' sale of use, before stopping altogether. They are not designed to help you stop.

The e-cigarette manufacturers have cleverly, and perfectly legally, tapped into a section of society desperately seeking the Holy Grail of stop smoking secrets, or the key to smoking without the dreadful side effect of death. Sadly, most people who use e-cigarettes will smoke a real cigarette again. It won't be quite the same unless it's a real cigarette. Their attachment to smoking will be strengthened, not weakened.

In the US alone 35 million people actively try to stop smoking.

It's a huge market for e-cigarettes.

I wish I'd thought of it.

Triggers

Often, after a meal, or after sex, or with a cup of coffee during break times, we automatically reach for, and light, a cigarette. This is not a choice. It is an automated response. A learned response. The cigarette has cleverly programmed your Inner Elf to automatically reach for a cigarette at pre-ordained periods during the day. No consideration is given to having a cigarette. The smoker does not stop to consider whether he actually wants one or not. The decision has been made for him and a cigarette is duly lit.

Triggers are extraordinarily powerful. All smokers respond to them by automatically lighting a cigarette. I guarantee that every smoker that reads this will remember an occasion when they lit a new cigarette while an unfinished one burned untouched and unloved in an ashtray. The smoker initially responded to a trigger by lighting a cigarette and then resting it in an ashtray. All this was done without the intervention of the conscious mind. Almost immediately another trigger fires and suddenly the smoker has two cigarettes on the go. None of this is done consciously. It's a subconscious (or unconscious, who knows?) reflex. Your Inner Elf is responding to a trigger or a command. This is a deep-set programme installed on your CPU. So powerful is this trigger that I have seen people burn their

hands trying to put a new cigarette in their mouths, whilst an unfinished one was still there.

By now you should have some understanding of what a trigger is and how it contributes to your smoking. You do not smoke on these occasions out of habit. It is a learned reflex. Your Inner Elf is responding to an external factor. Remember Pavlov's dog in the section on 'Habit?'

Pavlov's dog was quickly trained or, at least its Inner Elf (they are probably Inner Cats for them) was quickly trained to salivate in anticipation of food.

This is a trigger. As it is learned, so too can it be un-learned, or in due deference to the grammatical shape of this sentence, it can be re-trained.

First we need to identify your triggers. Only then can we set about dismantling them. But before that I want to remove one of your major triggers from this equation. In a sense, it is not a trigger, but an actual request from your body for nicotine. It is that sense of 'needing' a cigarette due to the length of time that has passed since your last one. It is this 'addiction' element of smoking dealt with in Pillar 2: Addiction. It is most definitely a trigger, and a potent one at that, and, as Pillar 2 explained, it is likely you will be able to overcome this trigger without too much difficulty once all other considerations have been tackled, and with the intervention of a NRP.

I exclude it here simply because all other triggers can be identified and dismantled whilst

you *still* smoke, while this particular trigger can only be tackled at the point of stopping.

So, down to business. List your triggers. Get a pen and a piece of paper and actually write them down. They will become more real that way. A secret isn't a secret when it's written down and out in the open. It's how all illusions are broken. Write it down and pin it to your notice board, or tape it to your desk at work, or on the dashboard of your car. A lie cannot hide from the truth once it's out in the open.

Your triggers will mostly be the same as mine, and, in most cases, the same as everybody else's. This isn't a lack of individuality on our part, rather a lack of creativity on the part of the cigarette. He is immensely predictable and boring. He piggy backs on our genuine pleasures in life and, as most of our fundamental pleasures are the same, so too are our triggers.

I'll start you off, I'll list those of mine that I can remember.

- 1: Stressful occasions
- 2: After a meal
- 3: With a cup of tea or coffee
- 4: With an alcoholic drink. Or two.
- 5: Waking up in the morning
- 6: Breaks at work
- 7: Watching a favourite TV show
- 8: Driving
- 9: Just before, and after, work
- 10: As soon as I get home
- 11: Between courses of a meal
- 12: After sex

And so on.

There are probably more. It's been a while since I smoked. My triggers have not gone off since. You probably have more, or more personally tuned ones. That's fine, list them. Identify them. The key is to identify a trigger every time one fires.

Every time you are about to smoke a cigarette, STOP. Consider. Do not just respond unwittingly to your Inner Elf. Think. Why are you about to smoke that cigarette? In particular, that one right there. Why that one? What is it going to do for you? Consciously make yourself aware of why you are about to smoke that particular cigarette.

Which one is it?

Identify the trigger.

Once you have identified your triggers and you have become more consciously aware of the factors at play, we can start to slowly dismantle them.

Remember, you do not have to stop smoking while we do this. It is perfectly possible to dismantle, or weaken, your triggers, and stop them from firing, before you finally stub your last cigarette out. You may find, as your triggers cease, that you begin to smoke less. This is not cutting down. You are not denying yourself, you just don't want a cigarette as often. This is a good thing, as it will prove that our re-programming is beginning to work, and save you money to boot.

So, we have identified stress as a major trigger. We can't avoid stressful situations in life as it is an unavoidable fact of life that shit

happens. We don't have to compound this by smoking. Go back and re-read Pillar 1, Pleasure and Relaxation. Cigarettes only relieve the stress or feeling of stress that cigarettes created in the first place. If your stress is as a result of something else, your little friend, the cigarette, will not help. STOP. Consider. You are stressed. That's fine, we all get stressed. Non-smokers do not reach for a cigarette because they know it does nothing to change, or relieve, the stress they are feeling. Take a deep breath. Hold it. And relax.

Repeat.

Although I have said that you may continue to smoke throughout the process of recognising and dismantling triggers, it is very important that when you are conscious of a trigger being fired, you DO NOT smoke. Resist it. Take yourself away from the situation and relax. Take a few minutes for yourself. Take long, deep breaths. Imagine you are smoking as you inhale, but do not light a cigarette. Imagining you are having a cigarette will go a long way to suppressing your trigger and giving you the opportunity to negate its impact. (Re-read Pillar 1.) Remember, your Inner Elf does not know the difference between reality and imagination. Take long deep breaths. Give your body the natural 'high' that deeply inhaled oxygen gives you. Your body will respond accordingly and you will begin to relax slowly and your stress will ebb away. Your Inner Elf will believe that you have had a cigarette and the trigger will stop firing.

Do not smoke. We are trying to break a learned response that forces you to smoke when stressed. We can break this learned response by identifying the trigger and responding to it differently. It will start to weaken every time you respond to it differently. This is your re-programming. Break the chain of command. You are not denying yourself a cigarette, you are just not having one right now. Take deep breaths, have a nice cup of tea or eat an apple.

Wait until the stress has long passed before smoking a cigarette. After a few stressful occasions your Inner Elf will stop demanding a cigarette. You will find yourself in stressful situations and no trigger will fire. You may not immediately notice that it hasn't fired, but you will. You will start to automatically pause and take deep breaths. You may find, as I did, that you eat more fruit. It certainly didn't contribute to any weight gain, and apples are cheaper!

Let's consider the post-meal cigarette. Or the between courses one. We've established already that the cigarette offers nothing of value to your meal. It does not make it taste better, or smell better, or digest better. In fact, the reverse is true. Smoking ruins the taste, the smell and your bodies digestive capabilities. Fact. This is an undeniable truth. Having a meal in itself is a pleasurable thing, often as part of a pleasurable occasion. Smoking does nothing but piggy back on genuine pleasures. Often times the meal or the occasion is ruined by a collective mass of smokers leaving the table to huddle outside in the

cold, so that they may do little more than respond to their triggers. Whatever pleasure was being had by those attending the meal, or that special occasion, would have been paused, momentarily, while those who believe they are exercising their right to choose, are summoned by their Inner Elf to suck on a burning leaf.

In order to defeat this trigger, we must simply identify it when it fires, and stop responding to it.

IDENTIFY

STOP

CONSIDER

TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

Identify your trigger. Do not respond. This is a genuine, conscious choice. One that is not being made for you. This is a true, genuine, freedom. This is what freedom of choice is all about.

When you have finished your meal, or your first course, do not respond to your trigger. You know your trigger is going to fire because it always does after a meal. You can be prepared.

Identify your trigger. STOP. Consider everything we have discussed. Take a deep breath. You can have a cigarette later, on your terms, and when you decide, not when you are commanded to do so. You are not denying yourself.

Make it a conscious effort. It may actually help to keep your routine as close as possible to the routine you had previously. If you used to go outside after your meal or between courses, then get up and go outside. Do not smoke. Your Inner Elf is an idiot and will be quickly deceived. By

taking regular, deep breaths, and imagining having a cigarette as colourfully as possible, your Inner Elf will get the same sense of satisfaction and pleasure as though you had actually smoked a cigarette. Remember, that sense of well being, of pleasure, is largely due to the increase of oxygen to the brain. Your Inner Elf won't know the difference.

Eventually your conscious mind will take control and your triggers will begin to weaken. One day it will fire, you will, without thinking too hard about, identify that it is a trigger, or a command, and you will stop. You will consider what we have learned and you will take deep breaths. One day your trigger will become so weak that you will just not respond to it, even if you still smoke. You will enjoy your meal even more, and the occasions even more so. Sooner or later the idea of needing a cigarette after meals will recede. The pleasure of not smoking at meal times will start to be reinforced. Your re-programming is well under way. Your trigger to smoke will stop.

Identify. Stop. Consider. Breath. Break.

Break the routine. Change it. Re-programme your Inner elf.

I hope, by now, you are beginning to understand what it is we are trying to do. Smoking is a self perpetuating cycle of misery and deceit. What we are trying to do, before we actually stub out that last cigarette, is break elements of that cycle of misery. By breaking certain links in the cycle we can effectively

weaken it. If the cycle is weakened, so too will its power of over you. When you finally come to smoke your last cigarette it will no longer have that power over your Inner Elf. Your Inner Elf will start to respond differently. You won't feel that emptiness in the pit of your stomach, that feeling of loss, that unidentifiable 'something' that pulls you back to smoking. By the time you finally come to stop you will have laid the groundwork deep within your Inner Elf that will help to successfully maintain your new, non-smoking, status. You will be free.

But do not be complacent. Smokers, especially long term smokers, will have ingrained, deep within their Inner Elf, the idea that smoking is a fundamental part of their lives. The triggers will fire regularly and powerfully to begin with. The key is in how you respond to them. Responding to a trigger by smoking, will enhance and reinforce your trigger. Not smoking following a trigger will weaken it. Remember Pavlov's 'law of temporal contiguity?' The longer the time between a trigger firing (after a meal for example) and responding to that trigger by smoking, the weaker that trigger will become.

If you haven't put out your final cigarette yet, you may continue to smoke. However, do not smoke in response to a trigger.

IDENTIFY. Is this a trigger? Which trigger is it?
STOP. Do not smoke.

CONSIDER. Think about the illusion. Smoking will not help.

BREATH. Take a deep breath. Enjoy the oxygen.

BREAK. Break the chain, break the cycle. Be free.

So far so good. Let's do a quick re-cap.

You may smoke if you wish to whilst participating in this exercise. Practising this regularly will begin to dismantle the strength of your triggers so that when you finally arrive at stopping, they will not have the same power over you.

IDENTIFY. To begin with, list your triggers. Add new ones to the list every time you discover one. Then, when you identify a trigger firing, **STOP.**

STOP. Do not smoke. This is the only choice you get as a smoker. The choice **NOT** to smoke. Your trigger has fired and your Inner Elf has demanded a cigarette. Say no. Take control. This is your life, you should be the one to decide when to have a cigarette. You are not Pavlov's dog. Do not behave like it. Tell yourself that you will have one later, when you decide.

CONSIDER. Think about why you want a cigarette at this particular moment in time. Are you eating? Drinking? Is it break time? If it is an automated response to an external influence then it is a trigger. Responding to the trigger will enhance it, not responding will weaken it. The more you fail to respond, the weaker the trigger will become. It is a learned response. Re-programme it. Re-educate your Inner Elf. Consider all the illusions we have discussed. Remember the 7 Pillars of deceit. Smoking is

lying to you. You do not need it. Life will not only be the same without cigarettes, it will be considerably better.

BREATH. The greatest trick the cigarette ever played on us was to convince us that he supplies us with some pleasure. He doesn't. What the cigarette actually supplies us is an often fatal blend of carcinogens and chemicals that weaken the body to the point of shortening its life. It gives nothing by way of pleasure. What the body actually takes from smoking is oxygen. Lots of it, deep into the right parts of our lungs. Pure, unadulterated, life giving, pleasure inducing, relaxing, oxygen.

So, **BREATH.** Take a deep breath, hold it, deep at the bottom of your lungs and exhale. Repeat a few times. Don't worry about the cost, it's free. And you don't have to go outside and huddle under heat lamps to enjoy it. It's yours, whenever and wherever you want it. Such is the power of this device that your Inner Elf, ever the idiot, will be deceived into thinking that you've actually had a cigarette. The same receptors in your brain that fire when you smoke will continue to fire when you follow this deep breathing exercise. They fire because of the oxygen, as much as anything else. This is most probably my most powerful tip. Practise it often, it really does work.

BREAK. Break the chain. Break the routine. Remember Pavlov's 'law of temporal contiguity.' Make the cigarette unwelcome. If you normally have a couple of cigarettes in the car on the way to work every morning then, **STOP.** Start your car

and get out, whatever the weather (the worse the better. Handy if you're British,) and have your cigarette standing on the street. Feel the trigger fire on your journey? STOP. Literally, stop the car. Preferably on a dark, dirty, miserable lay-by. Get out of your car and smoke then. The less desirable the situations are in which you smoke, the less desirable smoking becomes.

Smoke with tea or coffee? STOP. Break the chain. Make tea and coffee drinking or alcohol drinking or food consuming, a cigarette free environment. Do not smoke immediately after. Identify your triggers. Allow yourself the option to have a cigarette later. You are not denying yourself. When you do, finally, have a cigarette, do not have it in your usual place. Go outside. If it's cold, don't wear a coat. If you're in the pub, go alone. Don't go to the smoking shelter. Be alone. Be cold. Be wet. Be miserable. Your Inner Elf will not enjoy these moments and will begin to associate smoking with displeasure. Eventually he will stop asking for them. Your triggers will weaken immeasurably.

IDENTIFY
STOP
CONSIDER
BREATH
BREAK

When to Stop

This, above all, was the hardest decision I had to make. It is not an easy one, although, on the face of it, it should be. Pick a date. Stop. There, sorted.

Only from my perspective as a smoker, it was not that easy. Every book I ever read, every pamphlet that I ever perused, every website that purported to hold the key to a lifetime free of smoking, said exactly the same thing. Pick a date to stop. Stop. There, sorted.

All you had to do, the moment you stop smoking, was to follow their somewhat oblique instructions, and you will be free. Even if you seek help from your doctor you will be instructed to pick a date to stop and will be warned, a little unfairly, that if you continue to smoke beyond this point, or relapse at any time, they will withdraw their support. A round of applause, please, for the idiot who just made stopping harder.

At no point does anyone help you with the decision making process. No one examines the restraints or difficulties you face. It's almost as if they've never had to stop themselves.

When should you stop? Monday? Tuesday? Friday? The weekend? This week? Next week? Next month? When should you buy your last pack of cigarettes? What if you run out before your stop time? More to the point, what time should you stop? If you smoke your last cigarette at 10

pm on Thursday, is Thursday your stop day? Or should you only count full days in your calculations? What if you wake up in the morning and desperately crave a cigarette? The weakest moment for most of us is the moment we wake up. Should you save your last cigarette for that moment? If you do, when should you start using NRPs? Now? In an hour? When?

You would like to stop on Friday, but Friday is the last day of the week and you always go out on a Friday and Bob will be there and Bob smokes. Bob will offer you a cigarette. And it would be a shame to ruin the weekend.

Monday then.

But Monday's Monday and the first day of the working week. It's always busy on Mondays. You don't think you could cope on a Monday. The urge to smoke would be too powerful.

Friday then. But Friday's Bob day. Ok, so you can avoid Bob for one night? Don't go out. But it's Caroline's birthday soirée on Saturday. Bob will probably be there. Everyone will be smoking.

The following weekend? John's wedding.

The next weekend?

Now it's nearly the summer holidays and you've booked a cheap flight to Greece and it would be a shame to waste the opportunity to buy some cheap, duty free, cigarettes. (Trust me, every smoker, including myself, laments the lost opportunity of saving money on duty free cigarettes.) Perhaps you'll stop after, then. But then, it would be silly not to smoke those cheap cigarettes?

When you go back to work then.

But then it will be Monday again. And then Friday, and Bob. And then Christmas and New Year. It would be silly to stop then. Too difficult.

What about a New Year's resolution? But they never work. So February then. Cool. Monday? Friday? What time? Morning? Night? When should you throw all your smoking paraphernalia away? And so the nightmare continues.

There is no good, or bad time to stop. And, although I'm loathe to admit it, all those who tell you to pick a date and stop, are right. You must pick a date. It must be a line in the sand. It must be black and white. Write it down in your calendar and underline it twice.

Unlike the others, though, I'm going to try and help with the irritating details.

Firstly, what day? There is no right and wrong, universal answer to this. The day you choose to stop will be based on your own individual circumstances. It won't be the same as the next person. We don't all have a Bob. And, actually, I don't think avoiding Bob on a Friday night is the right thing to do. In fact, I think seeing Bob and sticking to your normal routine, the one that makes you happy, is the right thing to do. Actually, I'll go further. I think it's the *best* thing to do. When Bob offers you a cigarette and you raise your hand in a defiant 'no' you are defeating a major trigger. By the time you get around to next Friday you'll be a week into your new life. You will have defeated and weakened a week's worth of triggers and you will be even stronger.

Bob may well offer you another cigarette, innocently, and you will rise to the challenge again. Bob will stop asking. Bob will be sad. Give Bob this book. Help Bob.

So, back to the Friday. What time should you stop? Should you have a cigarette in the morning or just after you finish work? Should you clear your house of tobacco products or wait and see what happens?

Well, don't wait and see. You're telling your Inner Elf that you are going to fail. Don't think like this. Throw everything away. If you do fail, and you might, they are easy to replace. When you stop, clear them out. If I was going to stop on Friday I would actually stop on Thursday night. Smoke your last cigarette and apply a patch, if that's how you have chosen to go into battle, and take all your tobacco products to a place where they cannot be retrieved. If you do fail this time, the least you can do is make it hard to go back.

Wake up Friday morning and follow the instructions coming up in 'D-Day.' Read them first and store them in your memory. Or take this book with you and dip back into it when you need to.

Based on this scenario I think Friday is the wrong day to stop. You will need to think sensibly over your own circumstances. Ignore next week or next month or the summer holidays or festivities, if you are at the point of considering a stop date, it must be soon. Do not prevaricate. It's got to be from now and in the next 7 days from finishing this book. There is never a good, or a bad, time to stop.

Friday is wrong because it's your first day of not smoking and your triggers and influences will be at their most intense. Your Inner Elf will not be in the right position to help, yet. His greatest education will be in the act of stopping. Only then will we be able to properly re-programme him.

Bob is your biggest trigger that day. It is at this point, with the weekend ahead of you, when you are most likely to relent. You will say, "Well, I went nearly 24 hrs, that was good. I'll try again Monday."

Never defer. There is never a better time to stop than right now.

However, Monday would have been a better day to stop. Choose Monday. For most of Monday you will not be in a position to smoke because you are at work. Your triggers only fire naturally a few times during the day, compared to Saturday, when they will fire continuously. This means you will be able to identify the *exact* times when your triggers will fire and take advanced steps to defeat them. Knowing exactly when your triggers will fire and being able to identify them when they do, will give you conscious power over them.

Apply a patch Sunday night. (If that's your choice. Any NRP that you choose to aid you that doesn't mimic the act of smoking, is a good thing.) Immediately dispose of everything smoking related and ensure you can't retrieve them easily. If you are not using a patch, stop on Sunday night anyway. Take whatever it is you've chosen to help with the symptoms of nicotine

withdrawal first thing Monday morning, and follow the steps outlined in the next chapter. Do not smoke Monday morning. By now you should have enough knowledge to be able to defeat those first pangs. You should be easily prepared for them, and you should be able to overcome them effortlessly.

If you have read and absorbed much of what we have learned during the course of this book, stopping may not be as hard as you think. You may well find it considerably easier than you were expecting.. It certainly was for me on my last attempt. I began to enjoy the challenge. I definitely enjoyed NOT smoking.

By stopping on Monday, in this scenario, it will be 5 days before you meet Bob. By this time you will barely notice the triggers firing. Dealing with Bob, and the weekend ahead, will be so much easier.

Always be ready though, particularly in the early days and weeks, for the cigarette to fight back. It will certainly try. A trigger that you have not identified will fire and you may not immediately identify it. The urge to smoke will be very intense. All you have to do is STOP. You do not need a cigarette. Try to identify the trigger. CONSIDER. How did you miss this trigger? How did you not see it coming? Consider the illusions at play and remember Pavlov's dog. This is an automated response to an external factor. Your Inner Elf is responding as per his programming. BREATH. you do not need to smoke. Get your kick from oxygen. It's free. BREAK. By now you

should have broken most of your triggers. This is just another one to deal with. Break the chain and re-programme your Inner Elf. Remember this trigger in future and be ready for it. Refer back to this book as often as you need to. Remember, IDENTIFY, STOP, CONSIDER, BREATH, BREAK.

So now you need to consider when is the best time and day for you? If you don't work, or are retired, are there times when smoking is difficult because of a particular activity? Maybe you play golf on a Wednesday? or go to college on a Tuesday?

Don't avoid situations where people you know smoke. The cigarette will use this to make you feel like you've given something up. You're not giving anything up. You're merely stopping an activity which will surely make your life a misery, or, in the worst case, end it. Every time you are placed in a position where the temptation to smoke is at its greatest, and you decline the opportunity, you will massively weaken this assault on you. Facing down your enemy at these times will mortally wound it and diminish its power over you. The illusion will be shattered. One day you won't have to identify, stop, consider, breath or break. Your Inner Elf will no longer be responding to the triggers as his programming will have changed. Before you know it you'll be a month free of smoking. Then two months, then a year.

But first you have to stop.

There is never a good time.

There is never a bad time.
There is just 'now.'

D-Day

You've stopped. Well done. And congratulations. Rather than having your right to choose slowly chipped away from you, you have made the only choice genuinely available to you. You have chosen to stop. You have chosen to stay on the highway of life, and to live.

You will probably not die today, with any luck. You will not die from smoking today, and you certainly won't die because you've stopped. Far from it. Every moment that you go smoke free increases the likelihood that you will not be one of 6 million people who will die from smoking this year. Or the 6.5 million people who will die next year, or the 7 million the year after.

With every second that passes your chances of becoming one of the catastrophically ill people who have illnesses directly related to smoking will tumble away until, in many cases, your chances will be the same as if you had never smoked.

These are mostly long term benefits of stopping. Short term benefits will include your heart rate and blood pressure returning to normal within 24 hours. Carbon Monoxide levels will be eliminated within 48 hours. Carbon monoxide is deadly. It bonds to blood cells in your body very quickly and prevents oxygen from doing so, causing all sorts of cardiovascular problems. Just think of the oxygen 'high' you will be getting just 2

days after stopping. Stopping smoking will increase your pleasures, not reduce them.

Your circulation will improve within 24 hours resulting in improved feeling in your fingers and toes. Nerve endings in your nose and on your tongue will repair themselves, increasing your sense of smell and taste.

Within 24 hours of stopping your chances of having a heart attack will already have started to drop. Smokers are 70% more likely to suffer a heart attack than non-smokers.

Only good things come from stopping. Only bad things come from smoking.

Now, there is nothing to do but stop. Prepare yourself thoroughly before your D-Day. On the evening of your last cigarette clear everything away. Dispose of all your cigarette related paraphernalia. Take whatever NRP you have chosen to bed with you and if you have decided to use patches, apply one before you go to sleep.

Remember, nicotine withdrawal is so mild that it NEVER wakes you up, but all your triggers will be waiting for you when you finally arise. Be ready for them. You will be at your weakest and most vulnerable in the first few moments of waking. Be prepared for this. Do not relent. Do not smoke. No harm will come to you. Tell yourself continuously that stopping is the best thing you will ever do for yourself. Every time you feel the powerful urge to smoke, stop. Identify the trigger.

STOP. Don't do anything, just stop. Take a few moments for yourself.

CONSIDER. Think about everything we have learned. You don't really want to smoke. even if your Inner Elf says you do. You don't actually enjoy it. It's an illusion. There's no pleasure to be had knowing it will probably kill you. Just think what it would be like to live without that constant Shadow behind your shoulder. Think how healthy you will become. Think of the money you will save. Smoking doesn't relax you, oxygen does. So breath.

BREATH. Take a long, deep, rewarding breath, and hold it in. Fill up your lungs until your stomach expands and hold. Repeat. Do this a few times.

BREAK. Break the chain. Every time you override or ignore your impulse to smoke, or you programming, or your Pavlovian responses, you will weaken them. Slowly, but surely, you will re-programme your Inner Elf. Your responses will weaken and so too will your urge to smoke.

You will notice, following the breathing exercises, that the urge to smoke will immediately diminish and you will carry on with whatever you were doing without resorting to lighting a cigarette. In the early days it is better to imagine that, as you are inhaling all that lovely oxygen, that you imagine that you are smoking too. Make it big and colourful and bold and as real as you can. Your Inner Elf is a dumbass and will think you've had a cigarette and the urge to smoke will go away. Do not miss this step. It's vital to your success.

On the first day your triggers will fire often, and powerfully, and, if you have gone to lengths to keep yourself busy, you can mostly reduce this to a minimal degree. What you will notice over the next few days is that the urge to smoke will occur less often and that its strength is significantly diminished. So much so, in fact, that you will begin to consider them with contempt, and breeze over them with ease. Continue to use this exercise. We've almost beaten it, but it's wise to be careful. Remember:

STOP. CONSIDER. BREATH. BREAK.

Stop. It doesn't hurt to take a moment.

Consider. Allow your conscious mind do the decision making.

Breath. This is the most powerful device in your arsenal. Use it to good effect. It makes a massive difference.

Break. Re-programme your Inner Elf. Give him some new code to work with.

Continue with your life as you have always done. Change nothing. If you usually go outside during your breaks, then continue to go outside. Walk around, breath in the fresh air. If you've done this right you may feel strong enough to stand with your friends in smoker's corner, and not miss out on the juicy gossip. Be careful, though. Stand up wind (you'll begin to notice it doesn't smell nice either) and remain vigilant. Say no, if asked. Be firm but polite. Make it sound as though *they* are the ones missing out. Eventually they will stop offering you one of their cigarettes

and start to ask, “how?” How long have you stopped? How did you do it?

Be careful how you answer. It’s best to tell them how long you’ve stopped and nothing else. Smoking is a very personal thing, unique to the individual who engages in it. Publicly they will defend smoking and cigarettes and will use many of the Pillars of Deceits in their arguments. They will be particularly defensive against ‘former’ smokers. You will lose any debate you engage in as, “there’s nothing worse than an ex smoker.”

Give them a copy of this book or show them how to get one. Tell them they don’t even have to stop smoking, just because they’re reading it. Smoking’s about choice, right? Help them choose to read this book. It won’t hurt them. Privately they may have altogether different ideas about smoking. They may feel scared about the effects of stopping, or scared of the unknown, scared of not being able to stop. Let them read this book in private and let the knowledge of the illusion work its magic.

No-one forced you to read this book. It was a private choice. Hopefully it has helped you. Just don’t force it on anyone else. Offer it, suggest it, recommend it and lend it.

Good Luck.

The first day is the hardest but then, the first step on any journey is always the most difficult. The longer you are a non-smoker, the longer your journey may be.

Don't Stop Stopping.

Stopping is not easy. If it was easy no-one would smoke. 85% of people who attempt to stop without any help or assistance, will fail.

By reading this book you have willingly taken yourself out of that 85%. Seeking help and advice from professional sources will improve your chances even further. Buy more books. Find what works for you. Using NRPs will bring another formidable weapon to your armoury. Don't be afraid of asking for help. This is a difficult battle to win, but the rewards it brings are immeasurable.

Don't fear failure. Failure is ok. Failure is just one of two potential outcomes from trying to do something positive. People who try are not failures. The only failure in life, is not to try. On the fields of defeat we sow the seeds of our future victory. Let's go digging!

I successfully stopped on my third major attempt. After 2 unsuccessful attempts I had discovered what it was like to actually stop smoking. I knew the pressures, the draw, the urges and the discomfort. I also developed much of the theory that makes up this book. On my third attempt I had no illusions. I didn't believe smoking relaxed me or de-stressed me or improved my meals. I no longer fell victim to the cigarette's deception. What is more, on my 3rd attempt to stop, I *knew* it would be my last. It was my big challenge and I was determined to defeat

my enemy. I understood my enemy, I knew what he was going to do. He needed me, not the other way around. I was in control this time. I was exercising my right to free choice and self determination. My Inner Elf was ready.

I got off the ship.

So don't be afraid to fail. Embrace it, but learn from it. Examine the reasons why. Did you do anything wrong that you could, perhaps, avoid a second time around? Would it help to read this book again? Or another book? Did you use the wrong NRP? Remember, what is right for one person, may not be right for you. Discuss your options with your doctor or pharmacist. Whatever you do, don't stop trying.

Those that find it easy to stop are likely to find it easy to start again.

It was difficult for me and will most likely be difficult for you, but this only increases your chances of staying off cigarettes in the future. I sometimes wake up in the night in a cold sweat, having dreamt that I was smoking again. It absolutely terrified me. I was so disappointed with myself. I can't tell you the relief I feel when I wake up and realise it was all just a horrible dream.

Once you have broken yourself free from the shackles of smoking, you will never want to go back.

Please, don't stop stopping.

Part 4

Epilogue

Raison D'être

Thank you for reading my book. Whether you smoke or not and regardless of whether you have stopped because of this book, we have come on a little journey together. It has been a short book, not because I'm too lazy to write any more, but because anyone who wants to find the secret behind stopping smoking doesn't want to trawl through War and Peace to get to it. I wanted it to be readable and, more importantly, I wanted it to be fun to read. Things that are fun to read are easier to read and this in turn encourages you to continue reading. Faced with the prospect of a 500 page tome with small lettering and paragraphs that go on for months, would have disheartened me. So I kept it short and punchy. I hope you don't feel cheated.

The journey that I went on to get to this point, started almost 11 years ago. Even earlier, perhaps. I smoked and I didn't want to smoke anymore. My Shadow had become a pest and I didn't like it. My theories, disjointed and myriad at the time, showed me that there may be a way to stop smoking that wasn't painful or distressful. On my third major attempt, I stopped. Over the years my theories solidified and became more regulated and ordered. By and large, though, I kept them to myself.

In February 2014 my mother fell ill. She was 68 years old and had been a smoker for most of

her life. When my mother started smoking it was almost compulsory. Everyone smoked. Everyone smoked everywhere. There were no regulations and no horror stories to accompany the smoking monster. Even though medical science was beginning to get its head around the danger that smoking presented, this wouldn't become mainstream for many years. Decades, in fact. They didn't know then what we know now. We cannot judge the past based on today's standards. It was a different time. A different world.

Even throughout the pregnancies and births of my two sisters and, finally, my entry into the world in the early 70s, my mother continued to smoke. She did not know better. How could she? No one knew. Not for sure. My Dad smoked too. Ours was a smoking household.

Most of my childhood memories of family life, and mum and dad, contain the cigarette. It's almost as if I've had a lifetime's relationship with smoking. When I was small, mum used to send me to the shop for 20 B&H. I got sweets. I still have a major sweet tooth. Even today the initial whiff of a cigarette being lit, particularly with a match, will send me back to those halcyon days. Our childhoods were not ruined by smoking, though I'm sure, as kids, we stank to high heaven. But then, everyone's kids would have stank. Everyone smoked.

I have memories of sitting on my Uncle Charlie's lap in London's East End, where my family grew up, and being regaled with stories of

my Uncle's adventures in the Second World War, and his life in the Royal Navy. He was sunk twice. Once by the Germans in the Mediterranean, and once by the Japanese at the end of the war. He always had a cigarette on the go. He always rolled them, long before it became fashionable and trendy. The smell of cigarettes, of smoking and of the sulphur of a burned out match, is a potent link to my past.

I am not anti smoking. I hope that has come across. I don't like what cigarettes do, or how they do it. It is a pernicious substance that does no good to anyone that uses it. I never wanted to write this book. I was quite happy for the world to carry on in ignorance. It wasn't my job to convince you to stop. And even if it was, I wasn't sure I was capable of being able to convince you. It's your life, do as you please.

And then mum fell ill.

Cancer is not what it was. People survive long, productive lives after a cancer diagnosis. Survival rates are high and rising. We had every cause to be hopeful. We determined to fight it together as a family. Mum was the centre of our world. We were not about to let her go easily.

I knew little about Cancer of the Oesophagus at the time. I resolved not to Google it or find out more. I'm glad I didn't. I'm not sure I would have coped if I knew what we were about to face.

The Doctor was hopeful. Mum was otherwise fit and healthy. We had a good chance, he said. He lied.

I was with mum when she went for CAT scan at Northampton hospital. She had to drink a strange, blackcurrant flavoured liquid, and wait for an hour before the scan. I laughed and joked, as I usually do, and wound her up about needing the toilet. We had no reason to be worried.

I was with her and my oldest sister when they broke the news. The cancer was advanced and had spread to other parts of her body. The prognosis was not good. With chemotherapy we may get a year, maybe more.

We didn't. Every step we took was one step behind the cancer. It beat us at every turn we took. Mum deteriorated rapidly and left us in May 2014.

I never really got chance to grieve properly but that's the subject of another book. It'll be a good one too. You'll love it. But I did get a lot of time to think, and to study. I began to ask the usual grieving, "Why?" Why my mum? Why this cancer? Why didn't we catch it early? Why couldn't we treat it successfully? Why did it happen so fast?

I researched Cancer of the Oesophagus and resolved to do my bit to help the fight against it.

It's an evil cancer. Mercifully it is still quite rare, but alarmingly it is on the rise in the developed world. It is the 14th rarest cancer in the UK, but is the 5th most common cause of death by cancer. In the US rates of this cancer have exploded 600% since the 1970s. Breast Cancer sufferers have a 82% chance of surviving 10 years or

more. Cancer of the Oesophagus sufferers just 12%.

I started to ask more and more, "Why?"

Simply, Cancer of the Oesophagus nearly always manifests itself too late. The oesophagus, or food pipe, is in such a position in the body that it can't alert the owner to any problems until it's too late. But then, as I discovered, that's not strictly true.

If you suffer from heartburn or acid indigestion, you are being warned. Take note. Do not suffer in silence. You may have something called Barretts Oesophagus, a condition notable by a change in the cells of the lining of the oesophagus which can lead to cancer.

Smoking is a major contributor to this.

If you smoke, the chemicals from your cigarette irritate the lining of the oesophagus and weaken the muscle between the oesophagus and your stomach. So much so, in fact, that acid from the stomach will accidentally rise back into your food pipe. It is made worse by lying down down after a meal, drinking alcohol and hot drinks.

Nothing, however, comes close to the damage that smoking does.

Cancer of the Oesophagus is 90% preventable. And, if caught early, treatable.

I don't blame my mum. Everyone smoked. She did stop a few years ago, but I suppose the damage had already been done. We know now. You know now. Please don't let these things come as a surprise to you.

I resolved last year to try and raise awareness of this Cancer and of the condition called Barretts Oesophagus. I'm sure, like me, you knew little about either. I had never heard of Barretts Oesophagus. Have you?

I resolved, somewhat ambitiously, to travel around the world to 80 destinations, and tweet and blog and write my way as I went. I would stand in front of 80 world famous landmarks and take a selfie of my ugly mug with a sign raising awareness of this cancer. I would then return home and become Bill Bryson, and write a witty and erudite travel book. My plans have stalled somewhat. I still hope to do this one day. My mum encouraged my wanderlust. I think she'd be proud.

And then, suddenly, just before Christmas 2015, I became, as Jeremy Clarkson put it, un-busy.

So I started writing this.

And now, it appears, I have finished.

If, in reading this, just one person stops smoking and doesn't die from it, then I will have done something few people outside of the medical profession can lay claim to have done. I will have saved a life. I hope so.

Once again, thank you for your indulgence.

