

Nicotine Anonymous

THE BOOK: A Work in Process

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(July 1990)

August 14, 1990

Mary Deborah Cowan
4328 East Capistrano
Phoenix, AZ 85044

Dear Mary:

The enclosed package was sent last night and today to a list of 52 media influentials including:

Wire Services-Major - AP, UPI, Reuters, Dow-Jones, Gannett, Copley, Scripps-Howard.

Wire Services-Minor - Bay City, Capital, County, Northern California News Satellite, Western, etc.

Syndicated TV Shows - 10 separate, health oriented shows.

Television Networks - ABC, CBS, NBC, MacNeil/Lehrer, etc.

Newspapers - NY Times, LA Times, Washington Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, Baltimore Sun, SF Chronicle, SF Examiner, Oakland Tribune, Sacramento Bee.

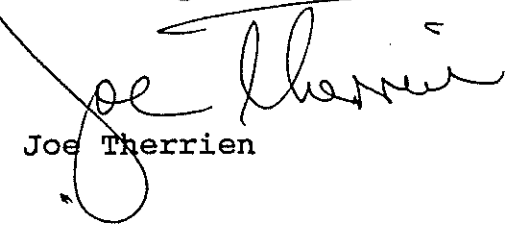
Magazines - Time, Newsweek, Parade, USA Today, People, etc.

Syndicated Writers - About five whose general description indicated they might have an interest in our work.

Now, let's see if we get any coverage of the story.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



Joe Therrien



NICOTINE ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES
2118 Greenwich Street, San Francisco CA 94123 / (415) 922-8575

August 15, 1990

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From:
Nicotine Anonymous World Services Office
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San Francisco, CA 94123
(415) 922-8575

Contact: Joseph H. Therrien

NICOTINE ANONYMOUS, NEW NAME IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TOBACCO ADDICTION.

After seven years of operation, the international organization now known as Nicotine Anonymous, announced its new name today and reaffirmed its commitment to helping nicotine users gain freedom from that drug.

Nicotine Anonymous was founded in California in 1983, based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. The twelve step program followed by members of Nicotine Anonymous is designed to help them rid themselves of their addiction to tobacco in the same way that AA helps its members free themselves from alcohol.

From the beginning, Nicotine Anonymous has followed the AA program and adapted AA materials for its purposes with the permission of that organization.

Starting with one meeting in Los Angeles and another in San Francisco, Nicotine Anonymous now has 400 weekly meetings in 43 states in this country as well as dozens more in Canada, Europe, South America, Mexico, Africa and the Middle East.

The name change was required because a private, for-profit smoking cessation program operator, unaffiliated with any twelve step program had previously registered the original name, Smokers Anonymous.

Rather than litigate the issue or pay a licensing fee, it was decided to make the name change to Nicotine Anonymous and continue operating as before.

All that is required for membership in Nicotine Anonymous is a desire to stop smoking or using tobacco in any form. There are no dues or fees for membership.

(M O R E)

SMOKERS ANONYMOUS

THE BOOK

- A WORK IN PROGRESS -

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(April 1990)

PARTIAL DRAFTS OF THE BOOK OF SMOKERS ANONYMOUS

In 1988, we prepared a long questionnaire. From the many responses which were received, we have written a draft of a portion of the book of Smokers Anonymous, and that section of the draft of our book appears as Part I (pages 1-32) of this printed material.

In addition to forming the background for the text in Part I, the questionnaire answers also contained a wealth of ideas which we felt we should share with our members as direct quotes. The following Part II (pages 33-82) of this material consists of all of the various questions that formed the questionnaire, and after each question, we have repeated some of the more "quotable quotes." The process of creating this portion of the book is not complete, but we wanted to share with you the results as they exist now.

Finally, Part III (page 83-end) of this material is the draft of our discussion of the Twelve Steps as applied to nicotine. The writing and editing of this portion of the book is still in somewhat preliminary stages. We are happier with the drafts of some of the Steps than with others, and we are aware that there are some gaps, and we jump around between present to past tense. Nonetheless, we hope that there are some gems in this draft material which may be helpful and inspiring.

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PART I: TEXT BASED ON QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Every day began the same. Anxious, tired, lacking energy, groggy, hung over, drugged . . . and with a nearly immediate and overwhelming craving for nicotine. The thing which normally got many of us out of bed was the lure of nicotine, except that sometimes we had our first hit even before we found the strength to arise. After the first "fix," we felt armed and ready to face the day.

The average age when we began this insane ritual was 16. From then until we stopped, nicotine affected literally every minute of our lives. Even as we slept, the drug was moving through our bloodstreams, changing our breathing patterns, altering our heart rates, reshaping our dreams, and getting us ready for the next morning's fix.

Nicotine was part of our every emotion. Irrespective of the feeling or perceived need, nicotine was there. Restlessness, fear, anxiety, anger -- there was nicotine. Happy, socializing, cozying up with a book -- there was nicotine. Drinking, driving, writing, talking on the phone, watching TV, in between courses and after eating -- nicotine was there. Whatever the time of day, the setting, whomever we were with, the drug was with us, was bonded to us, seemed totally appropriate and necessary.

Nicotine was our closest, ever-present companion. Even the colors and shapes of the packaging of whatever delivery system we chose -- cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chew, snuff -- gave us solace. Advertising could not dupe us, we claim. Yet brands were chosen according to our sense -- manipulated by media and promotional gimmickry -- of what made us most sophisticated, most

feminine, most masculine, most like whatever celebrity -- most like whatever image or fantasy or escape we sought.

Our friend, our ally, our constant companion. The power that kicked us into gear at the start of the day, propped us up throughout the day and enabled us to keep going, and then was present to tuck us in at night. Our companion in loftiest gaiety and deepest sorrow. All things at all times, and always dependable. How could we not love our nicotine?

Yet the romance was troubled. While we had disproved what our parents had told us -- that smoking would stunt our growth -- we were not able to argue with the physical symptoms that gradually began to affect nearly all of us. And the scientific evidence gradually built to an irrefutable proof that nicotine was a killer, whether through the agency of heart attack, cancer, respiratory failure or a host of other horrors. The Surgeon General had been putting out warnings for a couple of decades, and there was the small print on every package, on every billboard, in every magazine ad. We saw the warnings, even when we closed our eyes. We knew the warnings. The warnings were deeply ingrained in our brains. But denial, and addiction, won the day, the week, the month, the year

Getting hooked on nicotine often required a learning process. Our bodies, being smarter than we were, rebelled. We coughed, choked, felt nauseous, and maybe even vomited. Nevertheless, through persistence, the project was mastered. We could be like big folks -- parents, movie stars, other idols. Or we

could rebel. Whatever the motivation, we succeeded in learning. We got it right, and we got hooked.

Whether the first encounter with nicotine was alone or with friends, there usually was a fairly rapid transition from experimenting to the point where the drug had won the upper hand. Very quickly, the desired feelings clicked in -- whatever they were, whether to be "tough," "cool," "grown up," "in," "out," "rebellious" -- and suddenly we were set apart from ordinary folk.

Once we discovered that nicotine could give us what we perceived we needed, it was not long before the drug came to our aid for most everything and anything. So, we smoked whether we were up or down, or whether we wanted to get up or down, or whether we didn't know which way was up or down.

Very quickly, we learned to smoke through it all. Some were able to continue, at least for a while, with sports and more physically demanding activities, but for most, those types of activities -- indeed all of our horizons -- very quickly became limited.

The encounters with disapproval of our behavior often came quickly, particularly in more recent years. There were implications, or accusations, of weakness. To avoid the criticism, a choice often was made to associate only with other nicotine users. But there really was no hiding from a growing shame and secret fear that a substance was gaining control of our lives and our beings. As attempts were made to quit -- proving

futile time and time again -- there came a growing sense of desperation, slowly for some and more rapidly for others. There was an increasing thought that we would be addicted until the day we died, that no matter how good our intentions, the drug would run roughshod over them. As the failures and defeats mounted, self-esteem declined accordingly. There was a spiral, and it was definitely downward, taking us with it.

In retrospect, smoking was part of an overall deceptive existence. It often started with lies to parents -- a fairly serious event in the lives of most young people. The lies then were compounded by stealing cigarettes from parents as well. Then there were lies about how many cigarettes we smoked. The lies and deception made the downward spiral spin even faster

We offer up countless "reasons" why we started smoking. Our friends smoked and we wanted to fit in. Could we be accepted by friends if we didn't smoke as they did? We had parents who smoked, so we knew from childhood that we would grow up to be smokers. Or, "I started smoking at age 17 so I wouldn't get fat; my mother said it was better to smoke than to be fat." For those who started young, there was the attempt to appear grown up, to look like the adults. Especially in the 1940's, 50's and 60's, smoking was an acceptable, fashionable entry into adulthood, a common rite of passage. Smoking was part of the "good life" and every movie star seemed to smoke. Smoking was also related to boredom -- there was nothing more constructive to do with life!

Behind these "reasons" hides a grimmer reality: virtually none of us made a fully conscious, informed decision to become a smoker. People around us -- peers and parents and idols -- smoked, and we imitated their action, on a dare, out of curiosity, or monkey-see/monkey-do, just to see what it was like.

Whatever it was that we "discovered" when we began, the discoveries kept us coming back for more. A sense of maturity, rebellion, sophistication, badness, being "in" (with either an "in" group or an "out" group), being "cool." With a cigarette, nothing more was required to become suave, debonair, or rebellious. An instant transformation occurred -- from the mundane to the glamorous and beyond. At the least, we could find "acceptability," or better yet, admiration and esteem in our own eyes, and in the eyes of those around us.

Our bodies began to crave the physical sensations produced by the drug, just as our emotions began to crave the sense of psychological betterness which we came to associate with nicotine. Nicotine began to mask or allay some vague, nagging fears -- or maybe some more specific fears. "Smoking masked my fear of people." Or, "smoking masked the fear of communication with others. It also masked my fear of 'doing' something by keeping me seated with a cigarette."

While many of us used nicotine for years without being concerned about it, most of us eventually began to feel guilty about the way we were treating our bodies and/or our pocketbooks. With an increased awareness of the effects of nicotine, and with

people quitting all around us, there came either a heightened sense of feeling "less than" our peers who, seemingly, were able to quit so painlessly, or a concocted idea of being "better" than the quitters -- somehow tougher in the "ability" to continue to smoke despite public opinion.

An increased sense of isolation began to develop out of the same "habit" that originally had "helped us fit into society." This was perhaps not entirely unwelcome, for by now some of us courted isolation and used nicotine to take, or keep, us there.

Smoking came to affect every part of our lives: professionally, athletically, in our leisure time, socially and sexually. There was an inability to work without nicotine, arising out of the firm belief that nicotine was our great aid, that it was the fuel that fired creativity. Sitting and smoking usually was the chosen preference over moving about -- over doing anything athletic. Sedentary activities, combined with smoke, were the focus of leisure time and social activities. Sex without cigarettes was unthinkable.

The physical consequences of smoking became more pronounced and more undeniable. The loss of breath and voice, or worse yet, cancer and the loss of even vocal cords or lungs. Or the loss of a child, as one woman has written: "I believe smoking caused a miscarriage during my 5th month of pregnancy so that we lost the only boy I conceived." Circulatory problems. Emphysema. The list goes on. It was part of life to have chest pain and aching lungs, and to know that the poor complexions and facial wrinkles

in the mirror were the results of smoking. There was burned clothing, burned furniture, but far worse was the terrible fear of getting very sick, maybe even dying, because of smoking. And then we smoked to mask that fear, too.

Family life suffered as well. The circumstances vary, but one dramatic story reads like this:

"Three of my four children are addicted to nicotine and the youngest one, I lost custody of. My hopeless emotional condition, fed by nicotine, was a large contributing factor. The child was allergic to smoke and had four fever convulsions before we would even agree not to smoke in the house. The doctor threatened to charge both me and my husband with child abuse unless we stopped smoking around this baby."

Faced with such experiences, most of us tried to quit or at least to control our smoking. The first attempt was usually the latter, with the following among the various techniques tried:

- * Buy one pack at a time
- * Change brands
- * Go places where smoking was not allowed
- * Cut down, count cigarettes
- * Smoke only at certain times of day
- * Quit work
- * "Tried paying a fine for each cigarette smoked, and succeeded only in building a nest egg for the next carton."

There seemed to be little support for trying to quit, or so the rationalization went. Friends who were still smoking were probably threatened by our quitting and did not encourage our efforts, though few would actively campaign against a quit-attempt. But mostly it was a tacit support from smoking friends

and family which we managed to twist into a promotion of the continuation of the "habit": They don't talk about quitting, so why should I? The rationalization also would go something like this: "My entire family (except my mother) found it impossible to live with me when I tried to quit even a few hours, so they encouraged me not to quit."

The denial that nicotine represented a major problem fueled a continuation of the nicotine addiction. The wide circulation of health literature in the 1970's and '80's began to help break this denial. The concept of nicotine use as an addiction came later and has been less readily accepted. "I just thought that smoking was a nasty habit." Yet our behavior as smokers showed the depravity and insanity of the true addicts that we were, willing to go to any lengths to get the next fix. Digging through garbage cans, picking butts out of ashtrays or even the gutter in the street, walking in rough neighborhoods or driving in freezing blizzards in the dead of night, ignoring the great dangers to self and possibly others. No amount of embarrassment or degradation seemed too much to endure in pursuit of nicotine.

"It was one of those dreary, rainy nights. A perfect night for staying home. I had just removed my makeup, set my hair in pincurls, donned an old, faded housedress and a pair of heavy wool socks and had, finally, curled up on the sofa to read the paper. But I found I couldn't concentrate. All I could think of was that I wanted a cigarette. And I knew that I didn't have any hidden in the house. I tried to put it out of my mind, but I got to the point where I couldn't stand it anymore.

"I didn't even bother to take out my pincurls. I grabbed an old, holey raincoat and put on a funny looking pair of high-heeled rain boots -- they were bright orange -- over my thick socks. I drove to the convenience store at a shopping center near my house. As luck would have it, I saw someone I knew in the store and, because of the way I was dressed, I was too embarrassed to go in.

"There was a bar a few doors away. It looked nice and dark. I went in there. I didn't immediately see a cigarette machine but there was a man standing at the bar, smoking. I went over to him and offered him a quarter for a couple of cigarettes.

"He gave me three or four cigarettes, but refused to take my money. Before I could even thank him, he looked at me pityingly, put his arms around me and said, 'Are you okay? Can I get you something to eat? Is there anything I can do?'

"I realized that I looked like a derelict, standing there with my hair in pincurls, that old house dress hanging below the torn raincoat, wearing orange boots over my wool socks. . . as I begged for cigarettes.

"I assured the man that I was alright, thanked him for the cigarettes and, clutching them, slunk out of the bar into the night, terrified that the man would follow me and see me get into my brand new car. I rode home knowing that I had just hit a low point in my life."

We used nicotine to get over shyness in groups, to distance ourselves from people, and to isolate. Nicotine use put up a smokescreen between us and those we "feared." Many of us felt "sophisticated" while using nicotine -- debonair, poised, worldly, powerful, brave, confident. One person describes what nicotine did for his feelings of self like this: "Cool. A quietly charismatic center-of-attention rock star type. Mysterious. Important. 'I've been there.'" But another person combines the "cool" and the "positive" with a more negative flip-side: "I felt secure, shameful, poised, perverse, cool,

controlled, contrived, but most of all -- sick." Low self-esteem definitely was one of our leading trademarks.

Nicotine changed our relationships with others, including non-smokers and anti-smoking advocates. We resented these types. They made us mad. It was possible to get angry just watching public service messages on TV suggesting that we consider not smoking. We felt discriminated against. Public places ceased being safe. One person writes,

"Sometimes I'd be eating at a restaurant counter and someone would complain that my cigarette was bothering them. My reply was often brutally cruel, such as 'So move down six stools -- who needs you?'"

Even the home front could turn into a war zone over nicotine usage. "I had conflicts with my boyfriend. I did quit smoking in bed. He didn't like the smell in the bedroom." Another person writes: "My father didn't want me to smoke in the car because it got into and stayed in the air conditioning system. Of course, I would try not to, but the obsession to use nicotine would get me into it and then we would fight." Yet another had conflicts with his wife: "My wife lost her first husband to lung cancer so she feels pretty strongly about me smoking. I 'HAD TO QUIT' -- period."

Many times, our first attempts to quit were merely because we wanted to satisfy someone else's desire that we not use nicotine. Quitting was almost always with a total disbelief that there could be life after nicotine. We could not imagine the simplest acts -- such as making a phone call -- without having a

cigarette. More complicated endeavors like eating a meal or having sex were inconceivable unless accompanied by nicotine.

We also were blind to the financial costs of using nicotine. Few ever looked closely at the money that we sent up in smoke. "After my first SA meeting, I figured it out -- \$1,100 per year and \$23,000 since I started 21 years before. A down payment on the house I'd always wanted."

There was only a grudging willingness to admit that nicotine had anything to do with the bronchitis, sinusitis, colds, coughing, asthma, and poor circulation that were our lot. We avoided reading medical reports that had to do with the effects of nicotine. We burned holes in our clothes, carpets, furniture, and burned ourselves and our friends. We caught the burning tips of cigarettes between our fingers, or dropped them in our laps, sometimes while driving. For those who chewed tobacco, we spilled tobacco juice on ourselves and our cars, beds and lovers.

We got into accidents because of nicotine use. There was lost time at work and sick days (sometimes with loss of pay). But we were good at rationalizing or overlooking these mishaps, never adding them up to see the big, ugly picture. Nicotine worked its evil in tiny, easily-ignored increments.

Despite the fierce and pervasive denial, however, we tried to quit. We paid for these failed attempts financially, and psychologically:

"My emotional response to failing to stay stopped was of guilt and a sense of impotence It simply reinforced what I already knew, and what I held as a partial attitude toward life anyway -- I am crippled/wrong/a failure, and no matter how hard I try, I stay crippled/wrong/a failure."

Reactions to the inability to quit usually included frustration, self-hate, and a desperate resignation to continuing to use nicotine forever. Some would become more determined than ever to quit. But before that finally happened, we lapsed back into smoking for days, weeks, months or years.

Life as a nicotine addict was based on denial. Most of us felt unhappy and put-upon by everyone and everything. Bad things "happened to us" and lots of negative stuff fell on our heads, intruded into our lives, and otherwise got in our way. Shame over the addiction fed our feelings of bad luck, causing great bewilderment and animosity. We were plagued with doubt, anxiety and resentment. Happiness was seldom an option.

As part and parcel of being "put upon," many of us thought we would find "happiness" if other people, or circumstances, "would just change." We spent enormous amounts of energy trying to control others, or like Don Quixote, we charged windmills. We procrastinated. We escaped into nicotine and/or other drugs. Whatever our "solution," we avoided confronting the real culprit -- our addiction.

A sense of security in social settings was always readily available behind the protective shield of nicotine. When society and the law began to regulate our behavior by restricting the places where we could smoke, we got defiant and mad, ignoring the

rules and breaking the law. The other reaction for many was to tuck our tail between our legs and go elsewhere to indulge "our habit." Whatever the response, it is difficult to imagine how the ever-increasing regulation of smoking could have had any positive effect on images of self.

The people in our lives were concerned for our lives, but rarely to any effect. Family, children, loved ones, friends and colleagues cared about us and were worried about our nicotine addiction. They were concerned; they were annoyed; they complained; they cajoled; they begged. We continued.

Almost all of us had adverse physical symptoms of one type or another, running the gamut from just bad breath, stinky fingers, tight chest -- to cancer, emphysema, high blood pressure, heart problems. We all had something, however much we denied it or attempted to ignore the symptoms.

To facilitate the denial, we designed some system or other to camouflage the smell on ourselves and in our homes, cars, offices. We cleaned and scrubbed. We used toothpaste, mouthwash, mints, candy, gum, perfume, cologne. We opened windows, bought smoke-eating machines, used Lysol, vinegar, ammonia, incense, scented candles. One person baked muffins:

"When my mother was coming to my house, I would air it out for hours. Then I would bake a batch of blueberry muffins because the scent of the muffins would permeate the house and make it smell wonderful. My mother could never understand why I ate so many blueberry muffins."

But no matter what we did to attempt to erase the nicotine addiction from our lives, we still stunk and so did our clothes,

our cars, our homes and our offices. We also polluted the physical environment around us by tossing a cigarette or cigar butt, emptying a pipe or spitting tobacco juice on the sidewalk, in the rose garden, on the beach, or wherever, and dumping our car ashtray filled with butts, ashes and matches in a parking lot, and otherwise pretty much leaving our litter like a filthy trail any and every place we went.

On the psychological level, our inability to escape from the grips of nicotine had a devastating impact on our self-esteem, our self-respect and our self-love. Coming to realize that this was true was a slow process. Taking action upon the realization took even longer. Even though we knew for years that we should quit, we didn't believe that it ever could come to pass.

Nonetheless, most of us tried something along the way, and the variety of options was great. We tried the cold turkey - white knuckle approach. We cut back, switched brands, went from non-filter to filter and onward to "lights." We paid a lot of money for commercial programs, or spent a modest sum on health society offerings. We used acupuncture, hypnosis, behavior modification, jin shin jyutsu, and we chewed nicotine gum.

But none of it worked. To be sure, some of us managed to stop using nicotine for various periods of time with one or more of these approaches, and in some cases, the period off nicotine stretched over a period of many months, or even years. But ultimately, the drug won out. Back in nicotine's clutches, we

set up new denials and rationalizations, and succumbed once more to the addiction.

Despite our best attempts at denial, we were killing ourselves, and we knew it. Not only our bodies, but our spirits as well. "I was psychologically tortured about being a smoker for all of the years that I smoked. I would call it a feeling of dichotomy or schizophrenia." We all know something of the strain of this personal dishonesty. We said we were going to quit soon, yet we knew we were lying.

Our bodies were warning of illness, but the messages got sidetracked as the craving for nicotine overpowered reason. And so we continued. But gradually, there was an increasing sense of being sick and tired of being sick and tired.

"I never really associated being sick and tired with smoking. I did know that my morning hack was a direct result of cigarettes and that my shortness of breath in the evenings was because I smoked too much throughout the day. But it didn't click that I was sick from the cigarettes."

Our minds played strange games around nicotine. All these games were designed to perpetuate our denial and our inability to take responsibility for our lives. By refusing to accept responsibility for being addicted to nicotine, we took away the ability to stop.

Somehow, we ultimately reached a point of desperation where we could not stand the lies, deceit and self-destruction any longer, and we found our way to Smokers Anonymous. The initial reaction may have been less than positive. One person describes his first meeting like this:

"I thought it was the craziest bunch of goons and religious nuts I'd ever seen congregated in one place. I thought virtually everyone there was whacko and I couldn't understand why I was there or what on earth these jerks could do for me, and I was very disturbed by the God stuff. When I attempted to inquire about it, I was told that I could not ask any questions until after the meeting was over. But I came back anyway. I was just that desperate."

But whether we liked the first meeting or not, there was some sense of hope -- or at least resignation that this was the last possibility of hope. There was a core of people, with varying degrees of success, all actively working to live free of nicotine.

Success was not instantaneous for all. Or necessarily "forever". A return to using nicotine was part of the process of getting to the real "bottom" in some instances.

"After three months of SA and being free of nicotine, I had a slip and smoked for a month again. That one month was sheer and utter hell, which got worse and worse, disastrously so. One day, I simply couldn't go any lower. I thought I was going to lose my mind, and I think I would have if I had not decided then and there that there could be no more nicotine for me."

Hitting bottom. Getting to where "death looks like a holiday." Getting to that point where we are willing to go to any length not to use nicotine. Finally becoming willing to confront the reality of the problems we were trying to camouflage behind the smokescreen. Being ready for the process to begin. "I realized that I had needed to wait for the miracle to happen in God's time, not mine."

However we got to SA, and however desperate we may have been at the time, there was the nagging fear and doubt about whether

we could quit. After all the failures, all the false starts, all the best intentions, there was little hope. "I hoped against all odds that I could quit and stay quit."

The fear of another failure loomed very large, however. The thought of never using nicotine again had caused failure so many times in the past, and we had trouble imagining that it wouldn't happen again.

"One day at a time" really was a totally new concept for us. It was something different from anything else we'd ever tried. Perhaps without thinking about it, or even being aware of the notion, the concept of "staying quit only for today" lessened the terror of next week, next month, next year, and the rest of life alone without our "friend."

Another new idea was powerlessness. That is the first step of Smokers Anonymous -- admitting our lack of power over nicotine. The admission requires an acknowledgment that we, as individuals, have failed and that the drug has won. And it requires us to recognize that we will continue to fail. Acceptance of powerlessness requires acknowledging that all of our past failures and self-loathing are destined to continue and repeat themselves until by all odds we end up killing ourselves.

Some of us knew we were powerless over nicotine when we first came to SA. "I had to recognize my powerlessness because of the total control nicotine had over me." Or, "I could not ignore all the many, many times I had failed to quit, so I must have been powerless over nicotine." Or, "Just the idea of

quitting made me shrink like a spider on a hot stove, so I knew that it was bigger than me." For others, awareness of the concept came later -- "that day, six or so weeks out, when I could have killed for a cigarette." And for yet others, there was sort of a middle ground: "I guess I knew I was powerless, but it didn't acquire any meaning until I got so terribly sick, and yet, was still unable to stop."

However and whenever we came to accept our powerlessness, we then had to confront the concept of a Higher Power -- the "power greater than ourselves." For some, particularly those with strong religious beliefs or practices, or with experience in some other Twelve-Step Program, the idea was not difficult, or at least the concept of a Higher Power was not something totally foreign.

For others, however, the initial confrontation with the idea of a Higher Power was just that -- a confrontation. "Higher Power? You gotta be kidding!" "Don't give me your crazy religious stuff; I'm here to quit smoking." A miracle of the program is that the same skeptic who thought initially that the idea must be a joke, now says, "I'm on my knees most mornings praying to my Higher Power." Others of the initial skeptics write of their later thoughts as follows: "Peace of mind and my very sanity depend on being able to surrender to my Higher Power." "My Higher Power is the 'thing' which lets the nicotine craving wash over me and protects me from having to give in to the urge."

For most of us, before we could admit our own powerlessness over nicotine and recognize even the possible role which a Higher Power might play in rescuing us from our drugged-out insanity, we had to "hit bottom." Various terms and descriptive phrases can be substituted as a way of expressing the idea of "hitting bottom." Getting to Total Desperation City. Quit Smoking or Die. Being jolted awake by the "raw emotional state I was in." Getting rattled to the core so as to dare to "go to any lengths" not to use nicotine. To be so desperate, so far down, so lost, so sick that we can grasp in our brains and in our guts that nothing is more important than not taking that next hit of nicotine. To be able to live the line, "Don't smoke even if your ass falls off!" Hitting Bottom. Definitely not a fun place to be! For some of us, though, a real "down place" we need to reach before we can entertain the notions of getting "up" and into Recovery.

As we come to more meetings, we find that our attitudes gradually change. In spite of feeling certain that we will never be free of nicotine addiction, we are not using the drug. We learn to turn our will and our lives over to a power greater than ourselves. We are learning humility and compassion. We gain more self-confidence and begin to understand for the first time how serious our nicotine addiction really is -- how it affects us spiritually as well as physically. We experience courage and hope. We find lessons in faith and tolerance at meetings and in

daily living. We feel that we need to maintain honesty, both to ourselves and to others, to successfully remain free of nicotine.

The Serenity Prayer reminds us that we cannot change the urges or cravings for nicotine. In a broader sense, we learn to use the concepts in the prayer as tools for coping with the many things in daily life over which we have no power. At the same time, we learn that what we can change is ourselves, our attitudes, our thinking, the way we act and react, and this applies both to our nicotine addiction and to life in general.

A Higher Power guides us to healthy choices if we remain open to being guided. For many, particularly during the first year of recovery, the main concern is with avoiding nicotine. Sooner or later, though, the compulsion does lift, and then concerns can turn to nurturing an on-going spiritual program.

Our lives have improved since coming to SA. We feel better and look better. However, we experience our feelings with more intensity than ever before. At times, this emotional intensity leads to the thought that we are worse off than before. But as we learn to use the tools of recovery in all the challenges which we meet in our lives, we find more serenity and hope than we could previously have imagined. Out of that awareness comes the realization of how much better off we are.

We learn that good people can do bad things, and that we need not take ourselves quite so seriously. Through surrender and the acceptance of powerlessness, we find that we need not be slaves to nicotine or the tobacco or advertising industries

anymore. We find that we can do hard things, that our feelings and fears are not unique. We take better care of ourselves as we learn to live one day at a time.

We reach out to others now as we take responsibility for our own peace and happiness. We have learned to believe in miracles. Most of us are not quite ready yet for the "parting of the sea"-type miracle, but on a personal level, we believe in miracles because we are seeing one every day in ourselves. We experience a spiritual awakening of our own being which is as individual and personal as each of us. There is a new vitality, a life, a sense of forward or upward movement and purpose that never had been there before.

We feel safe, one day at a time, that we will not use nicotine. As long as we stay close to our groups and our program, we feel our chances of not using nicotine increase dramatically. Sometimes we find ourselves craving sugar or other sweets, or salty or fatty food, or alcohol or other drugs or sex -- something to take us away -- and the intensity of the craving may be surprising. Many feel more anger than while using nicotine. In reality though, we were just as angry before. The feeling was deadened, however, by the drug.

We learn how not to react so quickly. We learn to turn to our Higher Power, whether through prayer or some other means of contact, and we begin to accept that we have embarked on an adventure. We are no longer afraid of losing control because of anger.

By going to meetings and through other involvements with Smokers Anonymous, we remain nicotine free because we share ourselves with others. We feel our Higher Power working within us. Contemplating the sea of faces at a meeting ("The Mount Rushmore Effect") reminds us that we don't want to begin to use nicotine again before the next meeting. Newcomers remind us of our own desperation of not so long ago, and of what it was like at our first meetings. We are able to express and receive kindness and love in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

We who have had the opportunity to speak at a meeting and to share our stories, experience, strength and hope with those others who are struggling with the same problem, have found out astonishing things about ourselves. The safety we feel at meetings enables us to share what we need to, without fear, without feeling judged.

Through listening to others and with personal introspection and the help of a sponsor and one's Higher Power, we begin to understand the Twelve Steps and to move our way through them -- one at a time and in order. Often we do not perceive exactly how we are working a particular Step, or why, but we know when we have done it.

Experience has shown very clearly that service in Smokers Anonymous is an incredibly important tool for remaining free of nicotine. There is a wide variety of options open for doing service: organizing a new meeting or acting as chairperson or other volunteer for an existing meeting, becoming a sponsor,

making or taking phone calls, organizing social events, answering mail. The service commitment can shift to fit the person, the mood, and the particular day or period of time.

Although meeting formats vary, we all agree on the need for discussion and sharing at those meetings. Step-study meetings are very helpful, especially if SA is one's first, or only, Twelve-Step Program.

Whatever the format, there is something about SA which keeps us coming back. There is acceptance and understanding from people who share the same problem of nicotine addiction. We experience -- some of us for the first time -- genuine caring, love and support. Perhaps the biggest surprise is the awakening of hope. We who were utterly convinced we never could stop using nicotine begin to believe in the possibility of that happening as we listen to others share their experience, strength and hope.

Smokers Anonymous does not work by itself, however. Many of us are in great denial about our addiction to nicotine. We are unable to admit our powerlessness over the drug, or have difficulty with the concept of a Higher Power, let alone surrendering to that other "force." Without serious attention to the Twelve Steps, most of us believe that it is not possible to remain nicotine-free for long. Some have been content to do Step One, then jump to Step Twelve, leaving the in-between Steps to the others, only to find that the drug grabs us again when life gets more stressful or complicated. Or we stop going to meetings and simply forget that we are addicts. We take that first hit of

nicotine, forgetting that one hit is too many and a thousand will not be enough.

Because we share a common disease and a common recovery from it, a special bond develops among our members. In a setting that is safe and supportive, we learn to trust and to take risks about living. We learn first-hand the truth of the saying that we cannot fully know our own story until we share it with others.

The relationships we form in SA evolve as we progress in our recovery. We find we no longer are the first one out the door at the end of a meeting. We begin to go for coffee afterward and talk regularly on the phone to our new acquaintances and friends. We share more and more of ourselves and begin to explore the interrelatedness we need to develop as functioning human beings. Our isolation is lifting along with our compulsion to use nicotine.

Recovery from nicotine addiction is not a singular event. It is a process of living one's life. It begins when we stop using nicotine and admit that we are powerless over the drug, and continues for so long as we don't use, and remember our lack of power over, the drug. But the admission of powerlessness over nicotine does not make the drug any less cunning or baffling, and left on our own, the drug's control over us never slackens. Nicotine addiction, like addictions to alcohol, heroin and other drugs, is a serious and deadly disease which remains with us for life.

It is often surprising how supportive others can be when we begin to look for solutions to nicotine addiction. It is possible to find support even from those who continue to use nicotine. When that is not the case, we learn that others can make their own choices. This can help us remain conscious of our own decision not to drug ourselves.

Occasionally, though, being around a smoker can trigger a craving. SA keeps us focused on just how devastating the addiction is and how grateful we are to be free of it. The urge will pass, whether we use nicotine or not! Letting the urge pass one more time builds on the growing sense of freedom from the drug, leading to increased joy and serenity. As one of our members sums it up, "I'll simply say that since I have quit nicotine, I have had more days of being happy, joyous and free than I ever knew could be possible."

Probably none of us can say that the journey without nicotine is without bumps and jolts, particularly at first. Weight gain is a common complaint. Food seems to take care of some of the oral cravings, and we eat more candy, gum, pretzels, carrots, ice cream, toothpicks, elephants, the kitchen sink and whatever else is not nailed down. One person claims to have eaten "all of Southern California."

Eating more often is accompanied by exercising more. Gradually, a balance returns. And as people tell us we look better, we begin to realize that we do feel better, whether physically, emotionally or spiritually.

A variety of new emotions also may be part of the process of recovery from nicotine addiction. Nearly all of us in SA discover that we experience more of our feelings and feel them more deeply than when we drugged ourselves. Attendance at meetings and contact with members of the group are tools for dealing with these new emotions. Another tool is the Serenity Prayer, which one person uses to deal with an emotion such as anger, as follows:

"The Serenity Prayer is in the back of my mind always, and I find I use it often to get rid of anger. Turning things over. I get mad at my work partner and try to control his behavior. That fails. In the past, I would have lit a cigarette and done battle with him. Now, the Serenity Prayer ("Give me the strength to accept the things I cannot change...") lets me look at the cause of my anger, and let go of it."

No matter what our specific religious beliefs may have been or are, participation in SA and concentration on the Twelve Steps has led us to realize that there is a power greater than ourselves. The power can be a God, other people, a doorknob. Something or someone to turn difficult things over to. One person uses the number 51 as his Higher Power. The idea came originally from giving the urge to smoke the number "49" and the urge not to smoke the number "51." Then, every time the urge to smoke came, he could turn things over to the "numbers," and "51" won out because it was bigger. Now, a couple of years later, he has expanded "51" into being every positive and powerful energy source or idea in his life.

Having a Higher Power to turn to eases the unmanageable moments of life. As nicotine addicts, we used the drug as a

technique for coping. By not using nicotine, we create a need for a substitute, but at the same time make room for some more positive energy. As one person expresses it,

"I turn things over to my Higher Power because my life is unmanageable. I used to sit and smoke and turn my will and my life over to cigarettes. By not smoking, I have made room for and now trust my Higher Power instead."

Another view of a Higher Power is a candle flame:

"I see my Higher Power as the flame of a candle. I feed this flame with all the things I have no power over -- my nicotine cravings, my desire to change other people, my egotistical attachments, and so on. And with each thing I throw into the flame, the fire gets brighter and stronger."

To have a Higher Power, one does not need to be religious or to believe in a particular God, or indeed in any God at all. All that is necessary is a connection with a positive force greater than oneself.

Most of us in SA feel good about the program and would do little to change it, other than to make sure that it continues to grow and to reach those who still suffer from nicotine addiction. There is a sense that SA likely will continue to be a part of our lives. Attendance at meetings helps to ensure continued freedom from nicotine and provides opportunities for giving help to newcomers.

Answers to puzzling problems and solutions for emotional upheavals in daily living also can be found at meetings. "I reaffirm my priorities and commitment to a smokefree life every time I attend. I get to share myself and get to share in others' recovery. I always learn something." Meetings provide

"friendship, support, continued inspiration, vivid reminders of the grim past" as well as "someplace where I can talk about my crazy feelings related to not smoking" and find "serenity and reinforcement to stay clean."

The intense, all-consuming cravings disappear -- more or less, or totally. Sometimes there is a potent thought of a cigarette, "but crave is not the word any more." With the passage of time, being nicotine-free ceases to be a "daily struggle." But sometimes there may be something low-key, something nagging. "It's not a struggle, but sometimes I just miss smoking -- like an old friend." The addict in us continues to call sometimes.

In the process of giving up nicotine, there are other habits that seem to get modified as well -- even something as mundane as not lingering over a meal. There are reports of less caffeine, less alcohol, less cola, less brooding -- along with less nicotine. Fewer times staying up late, fewer trips to bars, less contact with smoking friends, less sitting in a favorite chair watching TV. "Just a whole lot of excess has been curtailed."

There is a vast array of substitutes for that which has been eliminated. Working out, walking, exercise, friendship, school, knitting, "being with feelings and emotions I'd been avoiding all my smoking career."

One of the further byproducts of "taking better care" is a sense of increased energy and of lessened fatigue. That is not

to ignore the fact, however, that especially in the beginning, many report being totally exhausted as they go through initial withdrawal. There are improved complexions, improved circulation ("I'd forgotten what it was like to have warm hands and feet"), better sense of taste, vision and smell. And a sense of smelling better -- breath, hair, hands, clothes, bodies, cars, apartments, offices.

Emotionally, we are much improved -- although we wonder about this at times, mostly because emotions can be felt so much more strongly without the drugging effects of nicotine. But there definitely are fewer and less dramatic mood swings, and we are less volatile and erratic. Our tolerance level for others increases, leading to less frustration and anger being directed inward.

A heightened sense of well being also seems to work its way into our lives. There are nearly unanimous reports of an improved sense of confidence both in one's inner self and outer self as well. At the same time, however, there seems to be an increased "fuzzyheadedness." Initially, nearly all express a sense of loss of concentration. Yet, we find that our ability to focus returns, enriched.

Many of us report an improvement in our sex lives as well. More interest, more enjoyment, more responsiveness, more daring, more candor. One person says:

"The exertion of the sex act used to put me into coughing and choking spells. It was painful, awkward and embarrassing. Now I can enjoy the physical side of lovemaking, as I no longer have trouble breathing."

Another asks, "Why isn't this benefit stressed more in stop-smoking campaigns? But, of course, no one would believe it." Probably not, considering the heavy emphasis on sex and pleasure in the marketing of nicotine (and nicotine delivery systems).

Life seems more fascinating:

"I am more interested in life. I'm not 'living in my head' like I used to when I smoked, so I am more aware of happenings around me -- sights, sounds, people, etc. I am paying attention to and living in the 'here and now.' I am having adventures."

Relations with those who continue to smoke often change. In public places, especially restaurants, we move away from smokers, finding seats in the nonsmoking sections, whereas previously nothing but the smoking area would do. Sometimes we find ourselves spending more time with those recovering from nicotine addiction rather than those still suffering from it.

Our attitudes toward those who continue to be addicted, however, does not include evangelism on our parts. If they seem interested, we are glad to mention SA and our experience. When confronted by smokers, we experience a mixture of feelings such as sorrow, sadness and pity. There may also be a feeling of gratefulness and gladness that it isn't us. However, as addicts we may very well be envious -- "Why can they do it and I can't?" At the same time, we thank our stars and note how self-destructive and compulsive they are being. "They must hate what they're doing to themselves." And of course, "There but for the Grace of God go I!"

The increasing public campaign against nicotine seems to provide a mixture of fortification and irritation. Pronouncements such as those of the Surgeon General renew our resolve, though. Yet at the same time, much of the public ballyhoo against smoking and tobacco is so superficial, and demonstrates such an appalling lack of understanding of the power of the drug and of the phenomenon of nicotine addiction, that we easily can be repulsed and irritated by it.

As part of the research for this portion of our book, we asked the question, "Tell us whatever else you think is important concerning 'What it is like now' in your freedom from nicotine." The following random sampling dramatizes the power of the program of SA as a means of rescuing us from one of the most terrible drugs available in the marketplace:

* "The best part of quitting is not to have to be thinking, planning, torturing myself with ideas on how or when I should quit smoking. Every day of the last 5 years of my smoking, I woke up thinking, 'I should quit before it's too late.' But I kept putting it off until I heard about SA. I finally found success! And freedom!"

* "A sense of freedom that I am no longer controlled by a substance. My actions are no longer restricted by a need to do something that is not fruitful or necessary for anything except satisfaction of unimportant sensory pleasures."

* "I am truly a grateful recovering nicotine addict, because I believe it is a mind altering drug. The most important

part of my freedom from nicotine is experiencing life without the veil it brought with it."

* "I have hope now, where previously there was only despair, and this has changed me profoundly. I am grateful for Smokers Anonymous and all the gifts it has given me."

* "FREEDOM AT LAST!"

PART II: THE QUESTIONNAIRE & "QUOTABLE QUOTES"

I. WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

1. What did you feel like when the morning alarm went off?

"I always felt awful when the morning alarm went off. . . . My chest and throat were sore and raspy."

"I always felt bad in the morning. I had a headache, scratchy throat, a cough and depression."

"Like it was time to smoke. Craving was there!"

"Reached for smoke as I turned off alarm. . .terrible."

"Like staying asleep."

"Like shit, out of breath, jungle mouth."

"Logy."

"I felt like I didn't want to get up and that I didn't have the energy for it. I usually didn't look forward to starting a brand new day."

2. How long after the alarm until you first thought of a cigarette?

"I had a cigarette as soon as I woke up, while still lying in bed. It was the first thing I thought of and the first thing I did."

"I thought of a cigarette immediately."

"Instantly, if not before."

"Immediately."

"Not long - went for coffee and the morning paper and 5 to 10 cigarettes."

"After breakfast."

"Many times the thought of chewing tobacco (I chewed and didn't smoke) was the only thing that could make me get up out of bed."

3. When did you smoke your day's first cigarette?

"Usually as soon as I turned the alarm clock off."

"I got up, went to the toilet, made a cup of instant coffee and lit up."

"First thing out of bed -- or in bed."

4. Then how did you feel?

"Relieved."

"I was dragging."

"Couldn't wait for second and third smokes."

"Like circulation beginning to flow; could go on with day."

5. How long before the next cigarette?

"Right away. I chain smoked."

"Immediately."

"Maybe an hour."

6. Was your morning smoking routine the same each day?

"Yes. Three packs a day. Pot of coffee, or two."

7. Did you associate smoking with certain (circle appropriate): emotions; activities; physical surroundings; times of day; people? Give brief explanation.

"I always associated smoking with depression, anger, and 'serious conversation.' I always smoked while drinking, reading, and driving. I always smoked in my car, in my bed, in bars, in restaurants and coffee shops and in the hallway at school. I always smoked all day long. . . . I also always had smoking 'buddies' at work and as friends."

"Smoking was my response to any emotion."

"When I worked, I smoked. The nicotine seemed an aid to my creativity. I also felt guilty about it because I knew it was detrimental to my health. So I suppose my actual feeling was conflict."

"Used as stress reducer; could 'meditate.'"

"Smoking was a way to get a drug inside my body. Anytime, anyplace was a good reason to smoke."

"Did most of my smoking alone. Most prevalent times were under states of anxiety or boredom, especially while on the phone, reading or long writing project."

"I used nicotine in connection with all emotions."

8. Did you smoke when you were nervous? If yes, did it help and for how long?

"I always smoked when I was nervous. It always helped but usually for only 15 minutes or less. Then I just had another cigarette. I often used cigarettes to tell time."

"Yes. It was my method of stress management."

"Yes; sometimes it made me more nervous."

"Yes, was like having a cane for a cripple."

"Yes, never thought about it. Just kept lighting up."

"It did fix me, that's for sure. But then the stuffed feelings would invariably return, and I would be at the same loss over what to do with them."

9. Were you troubled by the irrationality of your behavior?

"I never saw my behavior as irrational, even though I knew cigarettes were bad for me. I was not 'irrational.' Smoking was just something that I did."

"I don't think I would use that word. . . . I saw it as a bad habit, something I was going to stop 'one of these days.'"

"Mostly I blocked thoughts about it -- until I came to SA. SA ruined my smoking."

"Of course I was troubled by the irrationality of my behavior. Smoking kills. I didn't want to kill myself. But I was and am an addict."

"Absolutely not. Just a bad habit I had."

"Yes. I couldn't understand, nor was I willing to take the time to try."

10. Were you embarrassed to be a smoker or to be seen smoking or to know that people could smell smoke on you?

"I was increasingly embarrassed by my smoking. I didn't realize until after I quit that everyone could smell it on me."

- "Not really. I was proud. . . ."
11. What effect did advertising have on your brand selection and loyalty? Did you choose a brand by its packaging design and color or by its tar/nicotine content?

"My first brand was Salem. . . . Next I switched to Kool which I think says a lot about how I would have liked to have seen myself. My next and last brand was Benson & Hedges Menthol Light which I think I must've picked because it sounded British and sophisticated."

"Yes, I was influenced by Viceroy's package, still find it pleasant."

"Switched to Benson & Hedges because I liked the advertising."

"Advertising had a direct effect on my brand selection. When 'lights' came out I switched to those, when 'low tar' came out I switched to those, when 'ultra lights' came out I switched to those and stayed with them to the end. Although I was an addict I tried to choose the least harmful type of cigarette."

"Advertising did not seem to affect my selection. I stuck with brand I first smoked as a teen."

"I smoked Nat Sherman Havana Ovals 'cause they're expensive and strong."

"In the days when I started, the TV said, 'Winston tastes good like a cigarette should.' Nobody cared about tar/nicotine content then."

"Advertising and package design did nothing. I went for lowest nicotine and tar that I liked."

"I liked everything about my brand - Copenhagen. I liked it because it was rumored to be the strongest you could get. And it was manly."

12. Did the Surgeon General's warning have any effect on you?

"The Surgeon General's warning was completely ignored, simply another ink mark on a package which I did not read."

"Yes, it made me think I should quit sometime in the future."

"It did not . . . stop me from smoking for many years. It did, however, add to my guilt."

"Yes, I laughed."

"It always bothered me some, then a lot when he compared nicotine addition to heroin. It was one factor of my stopping."

"No."

13. At what age did you begin smoking continuously?

"Started at age 5, addicted by 11."

"Started at 17, though smoked on Saturdays whenever I could at 14."

14. Did you have to learn to smoke? Describe briefly.

"I remember choking and having to practice. I also remember having to learn the 'correct' way to open the pack after someone made fun of me for opening the whole top of the pack. . . ."

"An older friend taught me how. I practiced inhaling, coughed a lot, but was determined to master the art."

"Yes, bought a pack, but didn't know how to go about it."

"No, I liked it. It made me feel complete."

[From a tobacco chewer] "Yes, I would just keep the chew in until I felt like I was going to puke. Each day I could keep it in longer."

15. Did you feel peer pressure to smoke? Comment briefly.

"Yes, the 'hip' kids who seemed to know how to handle situations smoked, and I wanted to be like them."

"When I began smoking in 1958 it was 'fashionable, sophisticated, grown-up.' Yes, there was peer pressure. I smoked to be one of them, to belong, to appear grown-up and sophisticated like the others."

"No, I was a loner."

"Yes, I smoked with the rest of the guys. I liked the feeling of 'belonging to the group.'"

"No, I just wanted to be different."

16. Did your parents smoke?

17. Did you smoke more when drinking alcohol?

"My regular amount was 1 1/2 - 2 packs per day, but when I was drinking (and especially when I would do speed) I would smoke 4-5 packs in one day."

18. Did you smoke more when feeling (circle appropriate) lonely; tired; hungry; mad; hurt; happy?

"I always smoked more when I was tired and when I was hungry. I smoked faster and 'harder' (inhaled deeper) when I was angry."

"I probably smoked more when I was mad and/or hurt. Smoking helped me stuff anger. I also smoked when I was hungry. . . ."

"Most when I was tired, mad."

"Tired, hungry, mad, hurt, lonely, happy and in that order."

"I smoked more when lonely. It was my friend. Tired? Yes, it was the pause that refreshed. Hungry? Yes, it was a distraction. Mad? Yes, get more hyped up, more mad. Happy? Yes, smoked to feel good."

19. Have you ever been told, while hospitalized, not to smoke and had to sneak about to find a way to have a cigarette?

"Yes, when I had a heart attack, I had to resort to looking for butts in the ash trays and then scouting up a pack of matches."

"No, but I was told by the doctor when I was pregnant that I should stop smoking but I just couldn't."

20. Has your smoking stopped you from getting involved in certain activities? List them.

"My smoking has prevented me (even now, not smoking) from hiking, running, swimming, and it used to stop me from laughing (I always coughed) but now I can laugh."

"I figured if I was killing myself with cigarettes, a physical fitness program would be pointless and hypocritical."

"Countless times. I would not join in groups of people going out after a movie because I wanted to go home and sit there and chew tobacco. I would cut short wonderful times with close friends and/or lovers to go home and be by myself to chew."

21. Has anyone indicated they thought you were weak because you could not stop smoking?

"Not weak, just hopelessly addicted."

"Yes."

22. Have you ever lied about your smoking?

"I have often lied about my smoking. Early on, I denied that I smoked at all, in the middle stages I denied how much I smoked, and in the late stages I would sneak and lie about restarting."

"Not in words, though I didn't smoke in front of certain people or groups leading them to believe I didn't smoke."

"It happened primarily with a girlfriend. . .and every time I lied to her, I felt like I was the most worthless, horrible person on Earth."

23. Have you ever stolen cigarettes?

"I started out by stealing cigarettes from my mother, I stole from anyone I could, and eventually I stole money to buy cigarettes."

24. Did you feel that you were a "serious" smoker, that while others could quit, you would smoke until you died?

"The way I heard this, which I feel correctly describes me, is a 'hope to die' smoker. I was really trying to kill myself slowly and I knew it. I hoped I would smoke until I died, and I smoked a lot to get there faster."

"Yes, after I tried several times to quit and heard about people who had quit I felt there was something wrong with me."

"I always thought I'd quit, but I began to wonder if the day would ever come."

25. Did you feel unattractive because you smoked?

"Originally, I felt 'cool' because I smoked, but eventually it registered with me that it was very silly looking and unattractive."

"The last few years of my smoking it no longer seemed like a sophisticated thing to do. I didn't want to be 'that kind' of person any more. I felt very unattractive."

26. Was it uncomfortable to be around non-smokers?

"I always pretended that it was no big deal to be around non-smokers, but it was a total pain in the ass. I had to go outside, interrupt conversations, watch them wave their hands at

smoke, cough, move around, etc. to get away, all of which was work for them but embarrassing for me. Also, when I lived with my sisters for two years (both non-smokers) I had to smoke on the front or back porch regardless of the weather."

"Yes. I felt they were judging me and looking down on me."

"To a degree, especially if it was several hours at a time when I'd have to have a cigarette break."

27. Did you feel guilty about smoking?

"I often felt guilty for smoking after I tried to quit the first time and relapsed. Just about every cigarette after that was guilt-ridden. Before then, I thought smoking was good and wondered why some people complained."

"Yes, especially when my daughter said she was afraid I would die."

"At the end, people would occasionally complain about my smoking. I hated this, but I knew they were right. I wouldn't admit they were right, but inside, I felt guilty."

28. Did smoking mask fear of anything?

"My smoking masked my fear of people and being rejected by them. No matter what anyone said, I still had my cigarettes."

"Yes, fear of everything! Fear of trying new things, being with people, being alone, failure, not measuring up, not knowing the answer, etc."

"Smoking masked my fear of people."

"Yes, of being a nerd."

"It masked fear of everything - especially myself."

29. Did smoking affect your performance (circle appropriate) professionally; athletically; during leisure time; sexually, when with friends?

"I've never been athletic, but when I tried, the smoking hurt a lot. Smoking was my leisure time activity. I lost many lovers/boyfriends/dates by smoking (but not my actual performance sexually). And smoking alienated me from many friends."

"It's difficult to concentrate during the moment when you need a nicotine fix. This is especially true when those around you are non-smokers and you are trying to pretend that you are okay."

"Professionally, [nicotine] was my great aid, I saw it as the fuel that got my creativity flowing. What a crock."

"Nicotine slowed me down sexually."

30. Did you have to make a choice between cigarettes and (circle appropriate) jobs/promotions; friends; lovers; sports?

"I remember one job interview in particular. It would have been a very good move for me professionally. But I noticed a 'no smoking' sign and I knew I couldn't work there."

"I chose cigarettes over physical fitness."

31. Did you feel increasingly isolated when you smoked?

"Yes. Isolated and guilty and afraid."

"No, but then I frequently felt isolated, smoking or not."

32. Did you experience a "high" feeling when you smoked?"

"Yes, I used to inhale very deeply in search of a 'buzz,' a dizziness."

"BINGO!"

33. Would you go to any lengths to get a cigarette?

"I have driven in a frenzy for 30 miles for a cigarette. I have picked butts up off the ground at a campsite. I have stolen cigarettes. I have bummed them from strangers. I would go to any lengths for a cigarette."

"When I lived in Northern California, ten miles outside of town, I would drive into town late at night to get cigarettes if I had to."

"Yes, I was sure I'd die if I didn't have one."

"Hunting in the bottom of the trash for half-smoked cigarettes so I wouldn't have to go out and buy a pack in the middle of the night while I was still working. . .and if I found none, I'd get dressed and go get a pack as late as 2:00 a.m. if I had to keep working."

"Travelled 45 minutes by bus to get the 'right' pipe tobacco."

"Yes, and I did. I went out at all hours for tobacco. . . . When visiting strange places, I would spend an entire day (if

that's what it took) finding a place that sold Copenhagen [chewing tobacco]."

34. Did you ever think of yourself as "less than others" because you couldn't quit smoking?

"Yes, very much. I think that it was that feeling I most wanted to be rid of and the reason I decided to quit."

"I always thought of myself as 'less than others' because I smoked, period. I could always quit and did 50-60 times, but I always smoked again, and because it was unhealthy, I was 'less than.'"

35. Why did you start smoking?

"I started, at age 11, to be 'cool' around the other neighborhood kids. I knew I was gay at that time (actually, I knew I 'liked boys' but had no idea what 'gay' was). I wanted to be accepted, and stealing cigarettes from my Mom was the way to go."

"Peer pressure, rebellion."

"Shyness. Nervousness with people."

"To be more 'adult,' more 'sophisticated.'"

"Part of the good life, like booze."

"It made me feel complete, belonging to the group. I wanted to feel grown up."

"Thought it very sophisticated and glamorous, also to be rebellious."

"The rest of my family was into substance abuse of one sort or another, so [chewing tobacco] was mine, all mine."

36. What support did you get to keep smoking?

"The people I wanted to be like were smoking. My friends were smoking. Lauren Bacall was smoking!"

"Free samples helped."

"Everyone in my family except my dad smokes and so I could chew tobacco and sort of fit in better."

37. Did you see yourself as a nicotine addict while still smoking?

"No, I thought smoking was just a bad habit."

"I knew I was hooked on cigarettes, but it wasn't until I tried nicotine gum . . . that I realized I had a physical addiction to nicotine."

"Even though I was sober two years in AA when I quit smoking, I never connected smoking to being addicted, not in those words, until I came to SA."

38. How did you try to control your smoking?

"Counting cigarettes, looking at the clock, deciding when I would smoke and how long the pack would last. Buying them by the pack instead of by the carton, telling myself this pack would be the last, etc."

"Set goals, limits, etc. Didn't work."

"'Controlled' smoking."

39. What is the worst consequence of your smoking?

"Not fully living for those 20 years. Not discovering my potential until middle-age."

"The prospect of lung cancer or emphysema. Living in constant fear."

"Almost totally homebound today; on oxygen now."

"Wrinkles."

"Emphysema."

"Psychologically. I felt less than. I felt . . . that I would never really do the things I wanted. Especially in the areas of writing and finding a mate."

"[Nicotine] killed my spirit. It took away joy and life from my body. It numbed me out. It deadened all sense of adventure and freshness and wonder. It limited my ability to love."

40. Did societal pressure to modify your smoking bother you?

"Societal pressure bothered me, but did not get me to stop. If anything it helped me entrench against them and I used that as an excuse to smoke even more."

"I remember how pissed off I was when they would no longer let you smoke in movie theaters."

"No, I welcomed it. I wanted to quit for a long time. The societal pressure merely reinforced my growing resolve to quit."

41. Did you have conflicts with others as a result of your smoking? If so, describe such an incident in detail.

"When I was married, my husband wouldn't let me smoke in the house. Of course I did it anyway when I thought I could get away with it. He would reprimand me like I was a child. One time he said something to the effect 'You'd rather smoke than be with me.' I knew he was right and there was really nothing I could say. I wanted 'it' to be different but felt I had no control."

"Yes, pipe smoking was nasty to others."

42. How many times did you try to quit smoking? How long did you last each time?

"Four times over 20 years. . . . One week was the maximum."

"About 300 times or more, lasting at the shortest an hour or two, at the longest 11 months."

"Quit '1000 times' - sometimes for only hours; then days or even weeks - then something would trigger. . . .Quit for good 21 Jan 1984 when intubated for first time [now on oxygen]."

"I tried every waking morning in the last few years. I would wake up and swear to myself. . .but always, after that first cup of coffee. . . ."

43. Did the immediate cost of smoking worry you? Was it clear to you what the cost was? Did you know how many dollars per year you spent on cigarettes?

"The immediate cost of smoking didn't worry me until my last relapse. Up until then, cigarettes were a higher priority than money, so it was important to have cigarettes (I measured my self-worth by the pack) and money was just so I could afford cigarettes (and booze and drugs -- two other 'priorities'). It was always clear to me exactly how much cigarettes cost, and occasionally, I would compute how much I was spending. At 16 -- \$300+/year. At 33, when I finally quit for good in SA, I spent \$1500+/year."

"I never thought of total cost of smoking in real terms. Vaguely, I knew it was a lot. After my first SA meeting, I figured it out: \$1100 per year and \$23,000 since I started 21 years before. A down payment on the house I'd always wanted."

"When I first started it was no problem as they were only 20 cents a pack, and then only 5 cents in service in WWII."

"No I didn't think about it or care."

"Never. . . . The addiction always lived in absolute luxury at the expense of all else."

44. When you had stopped smoking, what event(s) or feeling(s) provoked you to smoke again?

"I had just spent \$80 at the hypnotist for the second time and the same day my husband said to me, 'You're such a bitch, why don't you just smoke.' So I did."

"When I relapsed, I used any excuse I could find. The last relapse was over sexual problems with my lover. Before that it was my weight gain. Other excuses went from relationship breakups to 'just because I want to.'"

"Upsets, belief that I could control it."

"Nerves, probably."

"High stress; situations which would force me to confront deep feelings."

"I figured that since I'd already quit, I could have just one. What a hoot."

"I gave up [other] drugs 8 years ago and thought that I could smoke because it was legal."

"Emptiness. I could not stand the emptiness inside. I filled this emptiness with [nicotine]. . . and when I didn't, the emptiness filled me."

45. Were you defiant toward any person, regulation or propaganda that suggested you should quit?

"Defiant was my middle name."

"Always have had trouble with authority figures."

46. What was your emotional reaction when you failed to stay stopped?

"Self hate."

"Every time I relapsed (from age 21 to age 33) I felt increasing shame, low self-worth ('I couldn't even control myself

enough to quit smoking'), guilt over secondhand smoke damage, but most of all a quiet, desperate, hopeless fear that I was going to die a slow painful death from cigarettes and smoking and no matter what I wanted to do, that was that and I could never quit."

"Frustration, anger, self-loathing. And, partly, relief."

"Disappointed the first times. The last time I failed, I cried and felt desperate."

"Guilt. A sense of defeat. Powerlessness over the addiction."

"Deep depression and fear bordering on suicidal."

"Complete frustration."

"What the hell happened to my life?"

"Shock, fear."

47. Did you smoke to alleviate shyness?

"Yes, you could say that I did smoke to alleviate shyness. I always looked at it as helping me feel like an adult and yet I also know that smoking gave me a 'smokescreen' to hide behind."

"Absolutely."

"Actually, it helped me to isolate even more."

48. Did you want to create a smokescreen around yourself? If so, for what purpose?

"Yes, 'smokescreen' to keep others from seeing the real me, because they would go away if they knew who I 'really was.'"

"I never thought of that until after I stopped. But I was really hiding -- from everyone else -- and from myself."

"I used smoking as a coping device in some situations. At an interview or meeting it would help alleviate anxiety."

"For protection and comfort."

"Yes, to keep others out."

"Yes, to keep a barrier between me and the world out there."

49. List some words that describe how you saw yourself when you smoked.

"Embarrassed, alone, dirty."

"Strong. Independent. Manly. Unique. Creative."

"When I smoked, I saw myself as: cool, casual, indifferent, in control, masculine, professional, adult, together, romantic, busy, valuable. When I relapsed, I saw myself as: weak, worthless, shameful, incompetent, hopeless."

"Suave. Tough. Serious. Profound."

"Macho, cool, smart, sophisticated."

"Compulsive. Guilt-ridden. Powerless. In conflict. Angry at myself. Fearful of the consequences."

"Elite, swell, slick, and oh so swell."

"Self-destructive, a failure, weak, stupid."

"Disgusting, weak, unfree of compulsions."

"In control, meditative." [pipe smoker]

"Anxious, intense, addicted, individualistic, rebellious, too weak to quit."

50. While still smoking, could you imagine life and your usual activities (e.g. telephoning, sex, dinner) without cigarettes?

"To make a phone call was unthinkable without first getting cigarettes, lighter and ashtray stationed by the phone. Then, I'd light up. Finally, I'd dial."

"No. Life was inconceivable without nicotine."

51. Did you have medical problems connected with smoking?

"Out of breath, cruddy tongue."

"My blood cells were overproducing due to lack of oxygen and my blood was starting to thicken."

"Nicotine affected my peripheral circulation."

52. Did you ruin clothes, bedclothes or furniture with burns or ashes?

"I burned everything: car seats, clothes, furniture, carpets, linens, sinks, wood surfaces, other people's car seats and clothes, and other people."

"Oh, indeed. Tables, floors, car seats, clothes, you name it."

"I would occasionally spill my spit cup contents [from chewing tobacco] on important things, like myself, others, term papers, books, people's carpet, car seats, etc. Until you've done it, you don't know how disgusting it is to have to clean it up."

53. Did you wreck a car due to smoking?

54. Did you lose time on the job due to smoking?

"Yes, frequent respiratory illnesses."

55. Were you honest?

"No. I was covering up my feelings with cigarettes."

"Yes, and innocent as well."

56. Were you a reasonably happy and well-adjusted person or did you seem to have more than your share of problems?

"I was an emotional, physical and spiritual wreck. I had lots of problems."

"I had more than my share of problems."

"I was very unhappy with life much of the time and had many troubles."

"Problems, problems, problems."

"More than my share of abnormal life."

57. Were your problems the result of other people's malice and mistakes?

"My problems were the result of God's malice and mistakes (so I thought)."

"I was a professional victim. If they had treated me better, given me the breaks, etc., I would have a better life."

"Most of the time, I tried to make others responsible for my problems. Once in awhile, I'd take the rap for a small problem in order to preserve my credibility."

"Came from dysfunctional family and I've made a lot of mistakes in trying to grow up in an imperfect world."

58. Did others have to change in order for your life to be all it should be?

"Other people needed to change for my life to be all it could be, but I also knew that I needed to change, too."

"I didn't know that I had any personal power, that I could . . . say 'no' and make different, better choices."

"Yes, but they didn't."

"That was what I thought and tried unsuccessfully to do."

59. Did you promptly attend to disagreeable chores or did you usually procrastinate?

"I would sit and have a cigarette and think about what I was going to do. Life often seemed overwhelming."

60. When faced with too much to do, would you escape into a drug?

"I was continuously overwhelmed by life, so I continuously smoked and drank to get away from the pain."

"Yes. Mostly nicotine, coffee, and sugar. But alcohol was/is an issue too."

61. Did you make use of alcohol or drugs for recreation?

"I've been a social drinker to the extent of a couple of drinks on an evening out. In the 60's I did my share of experimenting with pot. I've never been much of a user of booze or drugs. My addiction has always been nicotine."

62. Did smoking make you feel more secure socially?

"It used to. Then it had the opposite effect but I still needed it. In other words I needed the drug to feel comfortable but the act of smoking in front of non-smokers made me uncomfortable."

"Yes, in the beginning, but then increasingly insecure."

"It was cool at first, but later on I was ashamed."

63. How did smoking regulations affect you?

"I stayed away from places where I couldn't smoke, even if there was something going on I wanted to see. I could go an hour without a cigarette, so would sometimes brave a short event in hostile territory."

"Very little, but I saw nightmares ahead in the regulations now in the hopper."

64. How did your smoking affect those around you?

"They hated it."

"I think people who knew me and loved me put up with it and accepted it. But a lot of people were very grossed out by it. I must say, there was something I liked about being associated with being gross."

65. Were you bothered by other people's smoking?

"Not cigarettes, unless strong and streaming in my face. Hated cigars."

66. Did you have any physical symptoms resulting from smoking?

"I didn't realize it until after I quit . . . but I must have been allergic because the constant headaches stopped as soon as I stopped smoking."

"Mild emphysema."

"Wrinkles and increasing thickening of blood, small cough."

"Pains in my chest, poor circulation, pains in my arm, arms and legs falling asleep a lot, headaches, sores in my mouth."

67. How did you try to overcome the smell of smoke on you and in your home?

"I used to spray cologne in my hair, use breath spray. I would open the windows and spray with Lysol."

"Perfumes, sprays, incense."

"Air fresheners, open windows."

"Sprays, open windows, incense, still stank anyway."

"Vinegar in a bowl."

"I didn't bother. The place just stank of smoke."

"Open windows and lots of washing and scrubbing."

II. WHAT HAPPENED

68. Did you stop smoking before or after getting to your first SA meeting?

69. Did you tell many people beforehand that you were going to stop?

"No, not this time. I didn't even tell myself that I was going to stop."

70. What other methods or organizations did you use to try to stop smoking before you came to SA?

"I tried cold turkey. . . , a SmokEnders clone and hypnosis three times."

"Smokenders, hypnotist, doctors, therapists, ministers, books."

"Hypnosis, acupuncture, nicorette gum, American Cancer Society"

"I didn't think I could, so I never tried."

71. What kept you coming back to SA?

"I kept coming back to SA because I knew I was a completely helpless smoker and I had faith that if AA could help hopeless drinkers, then SA could help me."

"The emotional support and the knowledge that the 12-Step program works. We were all doing it together. The possibility of being free kept me coming back. I never doubted that it would work."

"I belong. The others there share my addiction. We have a common enemy. I feel the support is invaluable and working the 12 Steps is the only solution for me."

"Support, seeing others making it."

"The people! Desperation, personal commitment to group."

"The support and non-judgment about slips."

72. Was there a particular situation, person or place related to your doing something about your nicotine problem?

"No, it has been gnawing at me for years. I simply couldn't tolerate the guilt any longer."

"Intubation - life support system."

"Friends who died from AIDS; heard nicotine was the most immuno-suppressing substance we put into our bodies."

"My friend's wife said her husband, who is heavy smoker, would die before she would. I want to be around to see if she collects on the insurance."

"A lot of things were taking place in a lot of areas in my life all pointing to stopping smoking."

73. Did anyone intervene?

"Hospitalized 3 weeks."

74. Did you find that your recovery in another 12-Step program was contingent on quitting nicotine?

"Well, I didn't realize that until much later."

"First of all, I heard about SA at an AA meeting. Secondly, every time I drank I relapsed on cigarettes."

"I had been going to [another 12 Step program] for awhile, where I faced the issue of my compulsive behavior, the most compulsive of which was smoking. I became familiar with the 12-step program there, which is why I knew SA would be the answer for me."

"No, but the opposite was true. I felt my recovery from my nicotine addiction was being blocked by continued (modest) use of alcohol."

"Yes. I had been in Al-Anon for about three months . . .and I knew that if I wanted to get healthy I would have to quit [nicotine]."

75. Was nicotine threatening your job? Your live life?

"It was threatening my peace of mind."

76. Did a doctor tell you you had the beginnings of emphysema or some other ailment?

"Yes, in 1980; continued to smoke until 1984."

77. Did you start feeling like an air polluter? Did tossing cigarette butts begin to bother you?

"I never really felt like a polluter and tossing cigarette butts never bothered me because they were so small. I see now that not only was I polluting the air, but that my butts were polluting the landscape and possibly even starting fires. . . ."

78. Did you feel victimized by the tobacco and advertising industries?

"Yes, and by the power elite which supports the tobacco industry. . . ."

"No. If I felt 'victimized' by anything . . ., it would be ignorance. The ignorance of the 40's and 50's victimized a lot of people because cigarettes were thought harmless at that time."

"Yes, by the entire universe."

"No, but they are the world's biggest drug dealers."

79. Did Humphrey Bogart's or Yul Brynner's public anti-smoking testimony have any effect on your decision?

"I still think of Yul Brynner to this day. I think this kind of testimony is extremely valuable. Many stars are coming out these days against drugs and booze and are exposing their own addictions and recovery process. It has made an impact. I think the same is true with nicotine addiction. Yes, Yul Brynner had an impact on me."

"Yes, I heard them both. They were sobering."

"Yul Brynner's made me feel very uncomfortable."

80. Did you experience a sudden "moment of clarity" about your smoking? If so, please describe.

"No particular moment. . ., just a growing awareness as the information began to be made public."

"Yes, 'it didn't work anymore, it wasn't in.'"

"Yes. I'm much too marvelous to die for a cigarette."

"I had thousands of 'moments of clarity' . . ., several a day, at least."

81. What made you realize that "NOW" is the time to stop?

"I think I realized that I'd been saying, well, when I'm 30 I'll stop, when I get it together, I'll stop, when I'm more relaxed I'll stop, when I get organized I'll stop. I guess I realized that I was always pushing it into the undefined future and that this was that future and that the future future was going to be more of the same."

"The guilt became too great for me to cope with. I love my life. I want to live it. An aunt died of emphysema. An uncle is in treatment for lung cancer. Another uncle died of heart attack. Another aunt had a bypass in her neck due to clogged arteries directly related to smoking. They were all smokers. They come from both sides of the family. I'm not getting any younger. . . .I don't want to end up like them."

"All the pieces finally came together recently."

"I kept making excuses and felt my birthday was the perfect time, finally."

"I was getting healthy in another 12-step program -- and I wanted to be totally healthy."

82. Any particular "last straw"?

"Felt so sick."

"The desperate feeling when I ran out of tobacco."

"There's a cute lady I'd like to get to know and she goes to SA."

"My grandson crying when I left, wanting my visits to last for years at a time and realizing that I've been shortening my life."

83. Was there a unique "miracle" that led you to SA? Describe.

"My son gave me the SA questionnaire - he quit 2 weeks ago in California. . . ."

"I'm an AA person. The 12 Steps are awesome."

"I just don't want to be addicted to any drug."

"A woman at work left literature on my desk and told me about the meetings she had gone to. Finally. . . , I just went."

84. Did stopping nicotine use correspond to a "getting in shape" program you set out upon?

"It wasn't planned that way, but I had so much nervous energy when I quit, and I was concerned about weight gain, so I started riding my bike every day when I first quit. That helped me mentally and physically."

"No, but once off cigarettes I was free to begin a physical fitness program without feeling I was defeating myself."

"No, it's too late. [On oxygen system]"

85. What role, if any, did a feeling of dishonesty to yourself play in your decision to stop?

"I got tired of lying to myself and to others that I had quit when I really hadn't."

"Indeed."

"I felt ultimately I was only kidding myself."

"None. I knew the shit will kill and I knew that I will be an addict until the day I die."

86. Did you become sick and tired of being sick and tired?

"I was sick and tired of being who I was."

87. Did the probable reversal of damage to your body encourage you to stop?

"No, already too late. Have emphysema."

88. Have you slipped since coming to SA? If so, what did you learn?

"Yes . . ., I learned that I had to ask God for help and use the program for support. . . . It was a good lesson."

"Yes, and it taught me that I have to wait for the miracle to happen in God's time, not mine."

"I smoked the first two months in SA."

89. Did you feel utterly hopeless about quitting nicotine?

"Utterly hopeless is exactly how I felt. No matter what I did, I always began smoking again."

"I felt hopeless when left to my own devices. I knew there was hope with help."

"Yes, it was the toughest of all, although AA is my main program."

"Absolutely. I felt that I would literally, physically die."

90. What role, if any, did friends stopping play in your decision?

"A big one. Many of my friends have quit smoking. Some of them were as addicted as I. I felt if they could find a way to quit, so could I."

91. When you first came to SA, did you think you could quit?

"When I came to SA, I knew I could quit. I had done it many times. My big fear was 'could I stay quit.'"

"I wasn't sure."

"Pretty much so, though I was aware of being led by a higher power, step by step."

"No."

92. How long did your acute physical withdrawal last?

"Acute physical withdrawal lasted for three to four days for me every time I quit. When I quit this last time using SA and God, I had absolutely no acute physical withdrawal symptoms at all. A gift from God."

"About a week, and it wasn't all that bad."

"I don't know how to answer that. I did not go through a hellish time the first week or two. I think the freedom from guilt was such a reward that I hardly noticed the withdrawal. However, when faced with serious writing deadlines and the prospect of long hours at the computer, which is where I did most of my smoking, I still -- 4 weeks later -- have a miserable time. I do not want to smoke, but I want to run away from my work, because smoking and work were a team."

"About one month."

93. How long has your emotional withdrawal lasted?

"The heavy emotional withdrawal lasted for about 3 weeks and then periodically . . . I get a thought about smoking and 'really

want' a cigarette I have learned to be honest and say 'I want a cigarette' since that is what is going on in my head. I 'say' it today, rather than 'do' it."

"Three to four suicidal months."

"It is still happening."

94. Was SA your first 12-Step program?

95. What were your earliest impressions of SA?

"I felt I belonged. SA members and I share a common addiction. They understand my battles, I understand theirs. I fit with them 100%."

"Loved it from the first meeting."

"Silly, but sincere."

"This is just like AA. It might work."

"A caring, comfortable group."

"I have always liked the people. I immediately felt that this was my last chance -- if I couldn't quit here, with these folks, I would never quit. . . ."

96. How did you learn of SA?

"About 2 years ago I dated a man who went to SA. He told me about it."

"A friend."

"Through the alphabet soup grapevine."

"In the newspaper. I was looking for an alcohol-free activity that was free admission."

"Once a guy at an Al-Anon meeting told me about SA. I thought it was a bunch of crud -- a 12-step program for cigarettes? My first judgment was that this was taking the 12 step program idea too far."

97. Were you afraid to quit?

"I was not afraid to quit. I was afraid of relapse."

"Yes. It's a fearful thing to part with an addiction."

"No. I was afraid I couldn't quit."

"It was the absolute most frightening thing I have ever faced."

98. How long before the 12 Steps began to make any sense to you?

"It is only now, as I write this, that I understand how to apply the steps to smoking. This questionnaire is showing me my powerlessness and also serving as an inventory. . . ."

"It took a couple of weeks and much reading."

"They made sense all along. They were the support system I needed to stay stopped."

"Right away. Correct the reasons I smoked in the first place and have much better chance of staying off the drug."

"One week."

99. Do you have a sponsor? Are you someone's sponsor?

"No, but I have close friends that I have made in SA and we support each other."

"I use the people in the program as my sponsor and sponsees."

"Yes, I got a sponsor after my second meeting."

100. Did you have trouble with the concept of "powerlessness"? What happened to give it meaning for you?

"I knew when I came in to SA that I was a hopeless cigarette addict and that 'the little fuckers' controlled my life. Powerless and unmanageable applied, but it took 23 years of pain and failed attempts before I could seek help from SA (even though I knew AA/12-Steps worked in my life.)"

"I think I was a little cocky when I first came to SA. . . . It was after I slipped that I really came face to face with my powerlessness. I asked God for help and I got that help but it was not easy for a while after that."

"I knew I was powerless from the fact that I knew that cigarettes were no good but kept smoking anyway."

"It's a very basic part of my church doctrine."

101. How did you initially relate to the concept of a "higher power"? Has your attitude changed? Describe.

"I had a child's idea of God which was not as bad as some but it was very immature. It didn't matter. It worked anyway. But during the last several years I have made practicing the 11th Step an important part of my daily life. I have pursued different types of meditation and spiritual paths. It's a very personal relationship with a power that is always available to me simply by going within to commune. It's a big cosmic joke that we all look everywhere except where it is! It's a continuing wonderful experience and one that I wouldn't want to miss for anything."

"'Higher Power,' I call God, is my concept of a universal life force in and through everything. The only change was that originally I couldn't say 'God,' and now it doesn't matter and I can say 'God.'"

"I had trouble with the concept of a Higher Power. I do not believe in 'God' as most people do. I believe in some sort of a force. I believe in the higher part of myself. That's the best I can do."

"Through metaphysics."

"Group was my higher power."

"I had a Higher Power from AA who I put in charge right from the start in SA."

"I've been a Roman Catholic for 42 years."

"I relate to the power of the group as my Higher Power."

"I have always thought of it as God. I have not had God or any spiritual power in my life for 8 or 9 years. . . . My coming to the point. . . where I could say 'I can't do it alone anymore' was the beginning of God returning in my life."

102. Describe "hitting bottom" as you experienced it.

"Smoking when I didn't want to smoke. Noticing that I had two cigarettes lit at the same time."

"Hospitalizations very frequent before and after quitting."

"Still stuck with emotions and cigarettes weren't working anymore."

"When I was smoking Walgreens' bargain brand tobacco."

"Thank God I didn't have to."

"I ran out of excuses and my birthday was my last hope of saving face. . . ."

"I had no doubt that I had to quit and at the same time realized I couldn't do it alone. I remember saying at my first meeting, 'I don't want to [use nicotine] anymore but I can't stop, I have no control over it. I am terrified that I am going to go home after this meeting and use. I don't know what to do.'" "

103. Did you believe you had to be off nicotine before going to your first SA meeting?

104. Did you go to your first meeting alone or with a friend or relative?

"I went with my lover David who also quit that day."

"I agreed to meet a friend there."

"Alone."

"I went with someone."

105. Were you surprised to learn that SA is a spiritual program and not a smoking cessation program?

"No. I wasn't surprised. It all seemed to make perfect sense to me. I was glad it was a spiritual program and not just a smoking cessation program. Even though it was all new to me, I welcomed the newness and the change. My life had not been working. I needed a spiritual program."

106. Did you feel welcome at your first SA meeting?

"Yes. But to tell the truth, at my first meeting I just wanted someone to hold me very close and tell me over and over that it was going to be all right."

107. If you had a slip after joining SA, did you avoid meetings or keep coming to them? How long did the slip last?

"I kept coming to meetings."

"I kept coming to them and hanging on."

"Haven't slipped, but it took 3 1/2 months of meetings before I stopped."

108. If you've had a year or more of sobriety, do you still attend SA meetings on a regular basis?

III. WHAT ARE YOU LIKE NOW?

109. Are you a member of another 12-Step program? If so, do you find that you need a separate participation in SA?

"Yes. I consider both programs as all one big part of my recovery. I don't do a 3d step in one program and do it again in another. I did my 4th through 7th steps in SA and I don't plan to do them again in my other program."

"Yes, but I don't get the support I need for nicotine in [my other programs] and I think the level of honesty is greater in SA."

"Yes, I belong to AA and ACA also. I find that separate participation in SA is mandatory for me. Otherwise I might 'forget' how not to smoke."

"Yes, separate participation. I go to CODA because of relationship patterns. I go to SA because of nicotine addiction. There are different issues involved."

110. What attitudes have changed in you as a result of coming to SA?

"In general I think I see things more clearly -- myself and others as well as situations. I feel that I'm not hiding the truth from myself. I've discovered I'm capable and have more self-esteem and confidence in my abilities. I do things that I enjoy and feel good about it. I like myself more because there's more to like. I'm really living now. I have positive feelings about the future and my ability to create a better life for myself."

"The number one change for me, other than smoking-related, is I now express my anger. I used to stuff my anger with smoking and then get nasty and revengeful. Now I've learned to express that anger and my whole attitude has become much mellowed."

"A feeling that I'm doing something positive for myself. Lack of guilt. Better health."

"Oh, I'm so smart now; my IQ has increased at least 20%."

"Being more tolerant of myself and others."

things; my intuition tells me which things I can and cannot change - I've been doing this a long time."

"I cannot change the weather, the time I get to ride on the planet, human nature. I can change myself. The courage comes from within and I believe it has always been there."

"It's a long-term project."

113. Is your main concern still with avoiding nicotine?

"Actually, the addiction was to nicotine, but my obsession was, and I still today avoid, smoking cigarettes."

"Yes. My second concern is getting my work done without the cigarettes. My third concern is dealing with my anger."

"Not my main concern, but it does concern me."

114. Has your life improved or worsened since coming to SA? In what ways?

"My life has improved 100%. I finally got it that the time is now and nobody is stopping me from doing anything except me. I am learning how to set goals and take the steps necessary to achieve them."

"It has improved in that I no longer live with the guilt of smoking, I am no longer killing myself. It has gotten worse in that I have no means of stress management anymore. I have a lot of anger and other stuff coming up."

"Very improved."

"Feel better. More energy."

"Improved for the most part. I'm proud that I quit and appreciate a lot of the rewards including new friends at SA. What has worsened is my weight and clothes I can no longer wear, plus carrying around too much weight which saps energy."

115. Have you learned, through meetings, things about living that you're glad to know? Describe.

"I learned that the urge to smoke would pass whether or not I satisfied that urge with a cigarette. This was the best news I'd ever heard! From this, I've learned the meaning of 'this too shall pass' in a personal way that I didn't have before."

"I can live without smoking, one day at a time. Talking about the craving or obsession and being honest about having the

"I have changed my entire internal life. More than anything, I am aware of my sickness when it sets in. My sickness includes feeling sorry for myself, being selfish, dishonest, being the victim, feeling angry and resentful or arrogant, being ashamed, being afraid, and judging others. Now I know when I am doing these things. I also know why I do them. And I made steps every day to change all these character defects and replace them with love, humility, spirituality, patience, fellowship, service, acceptance, courage, and honesty."

111. Do you feel more honest? How, if at all, do your feelings about your honesty relate to your continued freedom from nicotine?

"Instead of smoking 'at' somebody I'm able to speak up and state my truth. I'm not depressed like I used to be."

"I inform people what is on my mind. . . .As a result, there is so little bulldinky left in my life."

"Yes. I don't want to be full of shit, or go back to being stupid, or go back to the slow death."

112. What is your understanding of the Serenity Prayer:

- a. What are the things you cannot change? Are you able to accept them? How?
- b. What are the things you can change? Have you the courage? Where does the courage come from, or has it always been there?
- c. How do you know the difference between the things you can and cannot change?

"The SA pamphlet 'The Serenity Prayer for Smokers' is very clear and describes my feelings and understanding of the Serenity Prayer much better than I could here."

"I cannot change other people. I can't change 'the system,' the world, not even my own child. I can change my attitude and my actions. It's pretty easy to see the difference. . . [but] it's not always easy to accept."

"I cannot change my craving for nicotine. I cannot will myself to stop. I cannot change the fact that I'm an addict. I accept the fact that I have cravings for cigarettes. The thing I can change is how I deal with those cravings. They don't have to be fed. The courage to not feed them comes from my higher power (whatever the hell that is), the group support and working the plan daily, moment by moment. . . ."

"I cannot change my obsessions and people, places and things; I can change my behavior, feelings and reactions to those

craving/obsession, takes the power out of it and I don't have to smoke."

"That I can live happily as a non-smoker."

"Powerful things can be done with the help of a group of people who believe in what they are doing."

"Being more accepting, reaching out, opening up more."

"I've learned about reaching out to other people and taking responsibility for my own peace and happiness."

116. Do you believe in miracles?

"Absolutely yes!"

"Yes, but my definition of miracle may differ from yours."

"Yes, I am one."

117. Have you had a spiritual awakening?

"I am in the process of having a spiritual awakening. As I work the 12-Steps, it becomes clearer and clearer."

"I have always been spiritual in my own fashion. It is a lifelong journey."

"Absolutely."

118. Do you feel safe - that you won't smoke again?

"Yes, I feel safe. I know that as long as I am honest with myself I won't need to smoke."

"Absolutely not. I know that if I don't use the tools to maintain my sobriety I will surely relapse. I've done it too often (relapse)."

"I feel that smoking is not an option for me anymore. But I need the meetings and the support."

"Fairly safe. Always a question."

"Hell no, do you?"

"I'm scared that it's still a possibility."

119. Did/do you crave sugar or sweets?

"Absolutely. Like never before."

120. Do you feel more anger than you did while smoking? If so, how do you deal with it?

"No. At first I felt more anger because I'd been stuffing it for so long. I was really angry for awhile. But now I feel that I'm less angry than I was when I was smoking. I try to use the steps to determine if I'm at fault or if the anger is 'fair.' In which case I try to express it constructively to the person I'm angry at. Sometimes that's not possible so I'll vent it with a friend so I can get rid of it."

"Yes. I'm having trouble dealing with the anger. I find myself 'turning a lot of things over' and letting go of things I can't really control. I find myself even letting go of things I can control when they're not high on the priority list or when the effort involved isn't worth the end result."

"No. I take 5 deep breaths."

"I feel more of everything now. . . ."

121. If you feel more anger, are you afraid of losing control? How do you handle that?

"I pray if I think I might lose control. I talk to myself because I know that if I lose control I'm the one who will suffer more than anyone else. I've learned that I don't enjoy my anger like I used to."

"I usually say the Serenity Prayer and deal with what's in front of me. I try to de-escalate a situation that is volatile."

"I don't know."

122. How do meetings help you remain nicotine-free?

"Meetings are a weekly reminder to me that I am an ex-smoker and that I am hopelessly addicted and can relapse without maintenance. They also help me meet newcomers and to work with them."

"By listening to newcomers complain about how bad they feel; it reminds me of what it was like. It also gives me a chance to share my experience, strength and hope as well as what's going on in my life today."

"The support is of utmost importance, knowing you're not alone in this battle, being encouraged by those who have gone before you, getting 'tips' on things that help you through, and being able to share the agony and the joy with others who understand."

"Peer pressure/group support. Reminders of how hard it used to be."

"Knowing I'm not alone."

"When I speak, I get a reinforcement inside that is very supporting to what my goal is."

"Meetings get me out talking and being with people who share some of my problems. They give me the chance to express kindness and love. They give me the chance to receive kindness and love from others."

123. Have you been a speaker at an SA meeting?

"Yes, and everyone wept too!"

124. Are you particularly concerned with helping the newcomers?

"Yes, since I learned in AA that the newcomers are the life-blood of the organization."

"Right now I'm concerned with helping myself."

125. Do you feel safe at SA meetings?

"Absolutely."

"Why not?"

126. How do you work the Steps?

"I thank God every day that I don't have to smoke today. I pray and meditate daily. I take personal inventory and ask God's help in doing better. I carry the message of SA whenever and wherever I have the opportunity."

"In writing."

"Follow the AA Big Book."

"Pray, show up at meetings, listen to my sponsor . . .and listen to myself."

127. Have you been secretary of a meeting? Do you do any other service? If so, what?

"Yes, and also doing other volunteer work in the community."

128. Do you socialize with other members of SA? If not, would you like to?

"I'm moving in that direction."

129. How does your spouse/significant other feel about your involvement with SA?

"David, my lover, is a member with me and is extremely supportive of my sobriety, as I am of his."

"I am a widow. My husband died of lung cancer from smoking."

130. If you moved to a place without an SA meeting, would you start one?

131. Would you be interested in writing your story for possible inclusion in the SA Big Book?

"I'm too new for my story to be of value to anyone yet. I think, however, that most people in the creative arts who smoke as I did also feel that their creativity is tied to their smoking, that the smoke is a sort of magic creative fuel. This should be addressed in the Big Book."

"It covers 43 years - might be too long."

"Yes, because I am a gay man and I smoked a pipe."

"For a price. Actually, I'd be thrilled to."

132. How has your physical health changed?

"Have emphysema; disease progressive."

"Better breathing, sense of smell, increased physical endurance, exercise more enjoyable."

"Yes, markedly."

"My emphysema is arrested."

"If I get to feeling much better it will be too much to bare."

"Circulation has improved. Don't have sores in my mouth. Feel better all the way around."

133. If you have made new friends in SA, how have these friendships helped in staying stopped?

"We talk out our feelings and that helps in staying off cigarettes."

"Support and love."

134. For those belonging to other 12-Step programs, how do you handle frequency of meetings for your respective programs?

"I don't worry about it. . . ."

135. What meeting formats do you like?

"All of them."

136. What factors do you think keep people coming back to meetings?

"In the beginning, identification with others and hope. Then, friendships, love, caring about the meeting itself, needing to carry the message, feeling of having a home group."

"I think the stories and identifying helped me, but more than anything, having a place where I could share my problems was the major draw. Chips were the tool that got me into SA and I love them."

"The desire to get well and overcome addiction. The sense of safety. The fellowship. A sense of belonging with others who understand."

"The friendly, safe environment."

"Love."

"Other success stories."

"It's the program of attraction not persuasion."

"Support and acceptance."

137. Why do you think some people stop coming to meetings?

"I suppose some don't come back because they slip and are ashamed to face the group. Others . . . need a 12 step program but will not go because they resent any and all reference to God."

"Fear."

"They become complacent."

"They haven't hit bottom yet."

"Guilt over not being able to stop; hopelessness."

"Their lobotomies grew back together."

"If they slip, then guilt sets in. One may be disappointed in oneself. 'I've failed and cannot face the group.'"

138. Do people who smoke react negatively to your having stopped? If so, how do you handle them?

"Everyone who I've encountered has been supportive except for some AA people in meetings who don't want to hear about 'not smoking.'"

"No. They usually go to great lengths to tell me about how they are going to stop as soon as they take the weight off or get their act together in some way. Or they talk about how little they smoke. But I just listen and don't judge because I know that no one can quit before they are ready."

"Yes. They become afraid and perhaps a bit resentful. I just let them be who they are. I don't talk up the program to them because I know they are not in a place to hear what I have to say. In fact, I don't talk up the program to anyone unless they ask for it."

"No, they know it's killing them. I let them see the sparkle in my eye. I let them ask themselves if they can have what I have."

139. Do you reveal your SA membership when the subject of smoking arises?

"Not unless I hear someone talking about a desire to quit."

140. Do you live or work closely with someone who smokes? If so, how does this affect you?

"No, thank God."

"I work with several people who smoke; one of them is my boss. I have no problem with them smoking -- they don't do it in the office or around me. On the other hand, I do get the feeling they resent me a little for being in SA and getting off nicotine."

141. Do you do anything now for entertainment that you couldn't or wouldn't do while smoking?

"Tennis, running, bike-riding."

"I can go to a theater and sit through a whole movie."

142. Are you a smokers' rights advocate?

"NO."

143. What are you like now?

"I am much more patient with people. I see that each of us is doing the best we can at any given moment. I'm also much more disciplined (and working on it) and more goal-oriented. I have a positive attitude most of the time when I used to be negative and cynical. I've learned that I have access to the power I need."

"I'm a fire-breathing dragon, amazed by the scope of my anger."

"More at peace, happier, healthier."

"A lot easier to get along with. People say I have mellowed out a lot."

"I'm tired. It's 2:30 a.m."

144. Do you feel that you have more time now? What, that is new, are you doing with your time?

"Yes, I definitely have more time. I'm going to real estate school and teaching myself word processing."

"Yes; writing and singing."

"Making toys for abused/neglected/AIDS children - giving back to society."

"Exercise, return to school."

"No, but more money. I go to school at night (28 credits last year with a full time job); I'm writing a book and a play at the same time; I read a lot; I go to lots of meetings and do service; I help AIDS patients and clean my house when I have time left over."

"I spend a lot of energy making the yard and shrubbery look nice."

145. Did you notice an increase in putting something in your mouth?

"I ate lots of peanut M&M's."

"Yes, I rediscovered food in a big way, and I have had to deal with that. It is still sometimes a challenge."

"I ate all of Southern California."

"Yes. Food and sugar."

146. Do you feel increased physical energy?

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Yes, especially in the morning."

147. Have you begun a regular exercise program since stopping smoking?

"Not quite regular, but I stay active."

148. Do you think that your physical appearance has improved? If so, does this play an important role in keeping you off nicotine?

"Yes, less wrinkles, squinting, etc."

"Yes. It is positive reinforcement. My skin is smoother and clearer. All my senses are heightened and more alive."

149. What new emotions have cropped up? What SA tool or message, if any, do you use to deal with these new feelings?

"No new emotions, just so much anger that I didn't know was there. The main ways I deal with this anger are sharing in meetings and expressing the anger directly."

"I had a lot of anger in the beginning as well as feelings of loneliness, grief, fear. I use the telephone to talk with other people in the program. Sometimes I call newcomers and that makes me get grateful real quick! Also, I remember that feelings pass and that I do what I'm supposed to do today no matter what I'm feeling. Sometimes I just say well I'm depressed today but that's okay, it's not a big deal. Whereas in the past if I were depressed I would nurture the depression and really get into it. I don't do that anymore."

"Some anger. 'This too shall pass.'"

"Frustration, anger, resentment. Tool to respond: 'Choose a loving response.'"

"Deep seeded anger."

"If I get to missing my old friend nicotine, I call someone on the phone list and we talk about it."

"Am still sorting through them."

"Everything you can imagine. I pray, talk to people, try to take it easy and slow."

150. Do any of these feelings endanger your continued sobriety? Which?

"I don't think I ever feel in danger of actually smoking. But my most destructive feelings are fear of inadequacy and financial ruin. The "F" word: Future. This is the stuff I have to be careful with. I am really vigilant about my program when these things come up, but I don't ever think that smoking would make it better."

"They all do."

"No, I learn to stay with the feelings and deal with them."

"No, none of the crap I'm going through makes me want to take a cigarette. Nicotine represents poison and death. I'm learning a new method of coping with my anxieties and angers."

"Feeling less acceptable with my gained weight."

151. Have your concepts of "God," however you define the term, changed since you came to SA?

"This is a big problem for me. I have major resentments toward organized religion. I do not believe in a 'God' as man has defined this power. I believe there is a life force and that's the best I can do right now."

"Before SA, I didn't have a God. Now I do. The concept doesn't matter. I don't worry about the concept -- that will come slowly."

152. How, if at all, do you get the concept of God to relate to you and your daily living?

"Through daily prayer and affirmations to myself that this life is a journey and God is the guide."

"I use the Science of Mind and Unity which is basically this: My thoughts and my words are creative. I am co-creator with God and my life is actually an expression of God. I don't have to try to 'get,' but only to accept in mind what God has already given."

"I think of this force as a great spiritual space. . . something like a vast river. . .and as I turn things over they go into this space and the force carries them away. . . . There is a higher spirit within myself. . .I suppose I rely on that more so than the great force. (As you can see, I'm struggling with this.)"

"I put my hand in God's and God takes care of everything (if I don't get in the way.)"

"Looking to my God as my protector and guide."

"I get down on my knees and pray in the morning and at night."

153. Did you meditate on a regular basis before coming to SA? Do you now? If your practices have changed, describe what happened.

"I guess I do meditate in that I sit still and 'listen' but it's not a particular discipline."

"Yes, every day."

"Well, I sit down and just let it flow."

154. Did you pray on a regular basis before coming to SA? Do you now? If your practices have changed, describe what happened?

"I used to pray in the traditional manner which is to ask God for things. I now pray in what I believe is a more effective way. That is to state the truth, for example, I am whole, perfect and complete, instead of God, please make me well. It works."

155. What about SA was most important for you during initial detoxification?

"The meetings and the chips have been and still are the most important things to me."

"It gave me hope. It gave me some ideas that I could use to get through the awkward moments. It gave me a place to go and friends to talk to about how I was feeling."

"Having somewhere to go for support."

"Keeping busy."

"The phone list."

"Wanting my chip."

156. What about SA is most important to your maintaining freedom from nicotine?

"Hearing the newcomers share their pain reminds me of what it was like. I know that it's easier to stay stopped than to quit."

"The other people."

"Keeps me focused; group support, constant reminder we are addicted people, Serenity Prayer."

"Maintenance."

"Speaking up at meetings."

"Not wanting to let myself or the group down."

"The fact that it exists."

157. Has your self-esteem improved?

"My self-esteem has improved in that I do not live with guilt every second of my life."

158. Do you ever experience cravings for nicotine?

"No, not cravings, but occasionally if I'm under a particularly stressful situation and I see someone light up, I think, wow it would be nice to be able to escape for a moment. And then I say, thank you God I don't have to smoke today."

"I am not feeling the craving for nicotine as much as I'm feeling deprived of my 'companion.'"

"Yes, but seldom."

"Sure."

159. Do you have a relationship with a higher power?

"The higher power within myself."

160. Are you more in touch with your feelings now?

"Yes, the good news is you feel your feelings and the bad news is you feel your feelings."

"Yes. I am more aware of them and I express them more now (anger and others)."

161. Have you gained weight?

"Yes, I gained about 30 lbs, but I have since taken it off and regained about 10."

"I gained 35 pounds in the first year. The weight levelled off and I kept 5 pounds. I look terrific now. People always tell me how healthy I look."

"No, was I supposed to?"

162. How long do you expect to need meetings?

"I don't thing I really 'need' meetings in the sense of smoking or not. I need them to stay in touch with my feelings because there is no place else to do this. I also go to meetings to carry the message because I'm grateful I don't smoke."

"Forever."

"Forever and ever."

163. Do you use the phone to call someone when you need help?

"YES!"

"Yes, sometimes very hesitantly."

164. Have you become involved in another 12-Step program since coming to SA?

"Yes, ACA issues became very important and so I began working in ACA about a month ago (10 months smobriety)."

"The other way around."

"Have stopped drinking alcohol, but find that I do not need a separate participation in AA. I just use the steps from SA to not drink."

"No."

165. Do you think that SA places enough emphasis on the Steps and spirituality?

"Absolutely not. Even when I think of it, I don't place enough emphasis. Hopefully the SA Big Book will explore and guide me and other ex-smokers/nicotine addicts along these lines."

166. What do you get from going to meetings?

"Support, reminders, and comradeship."

"Encouragement, support, strength."

"Support, feeling not alone."

"Euphoria, a natural high."

"A laugh a minute."

"Other sets of eyes to look into, voices to listen to, and ears and hearts to speak to."

167. What about SA would you change?

"More emphasis on the Steps."

"Just coming to meetings is not enough, you have to work the steps."

"Let people out there know that there is a program to help them."

"Nothing."

168. Do you feel that you (circle appropriate): Have more energy? Are less tired? Look better? Look younger?

"All of the above."

169. Do you have different friends? Do you still associate with smoking friends?

"I did have to let go of a couple of smoking friends, not because they smoke but because I decided I didn't really like them!"

"All smokers are adolescents to me now."

170. Do you move away from smokers in public places?

171. Do you experience fewer mood swings?

"No, I experience more feelings and consequently, I experience more mood swings, although not nearly as powerfully."

"Yes!"

172. Are you more tolerant?

"I am LESS tolerant, but more willing to take a look at it, understand my lack of tolerance and let it go."

173. Do you feel less volatile, edge?

"I feel less volatile and edge now . . . but the beginning of my smobriety was very chaotic with emotions."

"I feel more volatile and edgy [four weeks after quitting]."

174. Would you say your general health is better? Describe.

"Yes, for one thing I don't have headaches constantly. I also don't cough for the first 10 minutes every day."

"My general health is better. I have more strength, no cigarette hangovers, I can breathe better. I can laugh hard without coughing. This is a big sign of improvement."

"No, too late; have emphysema."

"Voice better, no coughing, colds over more quickly."

"Emphysema is arrested."

"Can smell and taste again and don't cough any more."

"No longer cough, colds shorter, better color."

175. Have you cultivated new interest? Describe.

"I have developed an interest in art, drawing, painting, writing, sculpture, etc. I never noticed that this came about after I quit smoking."

"Yes, I began in earnest an active spiritual search. I also decided to learn how to play tennis which I had always wanted to do but had never tried."

"Yes, music and writing."

"Putz around outside and in the yard."

"Not really -- I am just getting further into the things I like to do -- yoga, playing music, exercising, playing sports, writing, being with people."

176. Overall, are you more interested in life? Describe.

"I would say I have a curiosity about what makes us tick as humans. I see people in general very differently and more lovingly. I am more interested in trying new things and taking risks."

"Trying to find ways to 'pay back' society."

"Started college at age 48."

"Yes. If I can do this, what next?"

177. Do you think your sex life has benefited? Describe, if you wish.

"Definitely. I have become dateable. Also, it's great not to kiss an ashtray."

"Yes, an orgasm is a lot more intense lately."

178. Have old friends/relatives come back into you life?

"My relationship with my parents is improving."

179. How often do you crave a cigarette?

"This is hard to explain. I do not crave a cigarette. I feel insecure and at a loss when I am working and this is because I have no cigarettes, but I do not crave a cigarette to remedy the problem."

"I've totally lost the obsession to suck toxic gases into my body."

"Varies."

180. Have you substituted some positive action for smoking? Describe.

"I substituted both drinking water and taking deep breaths. Also, I got honest and say 'I want a cigarette, right now!'"

"I drink lots of liquids, chew on a piece of plastic straw."

"I sit down and let it flow."

"Yes. Loving myself and other people."

181. Did you have to give up some habits that accompanied smoking in order to give up/stay off nicotine?

"In the beginning I had to give up coffee, but I soon went back to it. I think what I gave up was sitting around thinking about 'things' and making unnecessary lists. I am much more active now."

"Yes, alcohol, getting too hungry and tired."

"Yes. Isolation, self pity, arrogance."

182. Do you have more confidence in your inner self? In your outer self?

"Yes, I am beginning to trust myself and validate my own inner experience."

183. Do you think you're smarter, i.e., can comprehend faster? More?

"I'm more willing to try to comprehend something or learn about something or try to do something"

"Yes, nicotine screws up one's head just as any other drug."

184. Have you become evangelical about not smoking? About SA?

"I would not say I was evangelical, however I believe that they think I am."

"Maybe just a bit. I try not to be because it turns people off. I'm less so as time passes."

"It's not my job to make others feel guilty about their smoking, and evangelism always uses guilt as a tool to win souls to religion. But my friends know I'm in SA and they're amazed that an addict, such as I, was able to stop smoking. . . and they know they can come with me any time they want."

"Very low profile style."

"No."

185. Is not using nicotine a daily struggle? An occasional one?

"Nicotine/cigarette smoking is an occasional struggle."

"Not using nicotine is not a struggle. Working at my computer without my 'companion' . . . is a struggle."

"Sometimes."

186. Do you know of others who have been inspired by you to quit?

"Feel that I've been inspirational to help some along the way."

"Yes."

187. Do you work with newcomers? How?

"Always. I give them my phone number and share my experience, strength and hope. Occasionally, they will work the steps with me, but I'm a tough sponsor so I don't hold onto anyone."

"Yes, we talk and lend each other support."

"Yes, by being supporting and showing faith that they will do it."

188. How many SA meetings per week do you attend?

189. Are you glad for your powerlessness over nicotine and for what it has brought into your life?

"No, it's a pain in the ass. Powerlessness is a painful, scary, hopeless, desperate feeling and I hate it. SA has helped me with it and I am grateful SA was there to help. . . ."

"You people must have stayed up late thinking of this question."

"I'm not glad to be powerless over nicotine, but am grateful for bringing the people and benefits from SA into my life."

"Absolutely. My nicotine addiction gave me something concrete to work with. Even though I had been in Al-Anon for three months before joining SA, things came together like a whirlwind once I quit [nicotine]. Especially my Higher Power."

190. What do you feel when you see a person smoking?

"I think of my own addiction. I empathize with the smoker and his or her need for the substance. I am utterly grateful that I am not smoking."

"Glad it's not me."

"Disgust, feel sorry for them."

"Empathy for their suffering."

"I thank God it ain't me."

"Oh you poor bastard."

"Sad if it's a young person; sorry the others need it."

"I feel joy that I'm not doing nicotine."

191. Do you feel fortified by the recent public reactions against smoking? Irritated by them?

"I'm grateful that I quit when I did."

"I am 100% in favor of anything that will help people stop smoking. There is no other legal substance in existence as dangerous as cigarettes. Only some drinkers become alcoholics. Many people drink moderately all their lives. But all habitual smokers are addicts. It is a deadly substance subsidized and supported because of the money involved."

"I'm pleased that an awareness is growing."

192. What, if anything, do you do for your health (besides not smoke!) that you didn't do before?

"Exercise and eat healthy food."

"Work out at the gym."

"Enjoy large quantities of herbs."

"Stay active, take long walks."

193. Tell us whatever else you think is important concerning "What it is like now" for you in your freedom from nicotine.

"Looking back, I believe that I began truly living a full life after I quit smoking. It gave me the confidence to try a lot of other things. I became more active and energetic and yet more peaceful and serene. It's an incredible freedom!"

"Happy not to have the smoking paraphernalia around. Not a slave to cigarettes. No more guilt."

"I can be there for others seeking to kick the nicotine addiction. It was the toughest thing I ever did in my life."

"I certainly feel more at-one-ment with the creator. I enjoyed the questionnaire; I made fun of some of the questions but they're all actual."

"What it's like now, that's what is important. I feel so much better, from the first thing in the morning, all through the day. I don't get so upset about the little things, and I seem to laugh at others who do."

"I still consider not smoking a miracle. . . .I'm most grateful for SA and don't think I could've done it without them."

PART III

STEP ONE (Edit No. 2)

Admitted we were powerless over nicotine -- that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step One involved a profound reevaluation of our relationship to nicotine. First, we had to become willing to give up any notion of controlling the use of this substance in our lives and then we had to take a realistic look at the power nicotine had over us.

We smoked and loved to smoke for many reasons -- because we felt it made us look sophisticated, it made us feel good, it reduced stress, helped us concentrate, it had a calming effect, etc., etc., etc. After a time, although we still enjoyed many aspects of smoking, the negative effects began adding up and we began to rethink our position on nicotine. We began trying to stop smoking.

Valiantly, we tried modifying our smoking behavior; not smoking at work or in the bedroom or in front of the children, sitting only in a particular chair while we smoked or only when out of doors. We switched brands, used tar reducing cigarette holders, smoked only "natural cigarettes," smoked only at certain times of the day, with certain people, at special events, etc., etc. Nothing worked for long. So, we began to consult the experts. We sought help from physicians, hypnotists, psychiatrists, acupuncturists, self-help books and countless smoking cessation programs. Sometimes we were able to quit, but we could not stay quit.

To our great surprise, in Smokers Anonymous we began to find strength through surrender to this powerful drug. We accepted our utter lack of control over nicotine. We realized that we were truly addicts and that we smoked for the same reason that alcoholics drink -- because we could not stop. Left to our own devices we would continue to smoke, continue to destroy our bodies, suppress our feelings and alienate our families, lovers and friends. After countless attempts to control our "habit" it was a great relief to give up and seek help. Coming to a Smokers Anonymous meeting was a step toward acknowledging that we alone could not solve our problem with nicotine. By doing Step One, we turned the tables and surrendered, admitting our powerlessness.

Understanding that our lives had become unmanageable was a further acknowledgement that nicotine use was more than just a bad habit. The destructive aspects of our smoking went far beyond the obvious damage we did to our bodies. We saw that, as addicts, our smoking had ripple effects into all aspects of our lives and the lives of those around us -- from burn holes in clothes and furniture to painful hospitalizations, from the private humiliation when someone rejected us because we smoked, to the public ostracism and isolation of having to go outdoors to smoke despite the weather.

The more we looked at the role nicotine played in our lives, the more we realized how much nicotine controlled us: from the continual checking our supply to our decisions of when to take breaks, from choosing where to eat, to choosing friends and

associates. It influenced our relationships with family members our levels of physical activity and our choice of homes.

Understanding and experiencing both parts of Step One, that we are powerless over nicotine and that our lives had become unmanageable was indeed a good beginning. We now went on to Step Two to continue our way out of this dilemma.

[step1.ed2 4/10/90]

STEP TWO (Edit No. 2)

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

In Step One, we admitted our powerlessness. For some of us, this was an ego-shattering admission. We looked back at our personal history of nicotine addiction and back at our attempts to stop using. Every attempt had failed. We realized that we could not stop -- that neither self-recriminations nor analysis of our situation helped. We felt like personal failures. We wanted to ask "Why us?".

Now at Step Two we began to find answers to our questions, and to live in the solution. Having admitted our own powerlessness we began to open ourselves to finding a source for some power greater than ourselves, greater than our addiction. This took willingness and flexibility.

Those of us who had a prior religious conviction looked to our God as we understood God. Those of us who had developed a skeptical attitude about religion found that coming to believe in a higher power was no small task. We rebelled against those who attempted to convince us of their conception of God. We were resistant to involvement in what appeared to be an unquestioning faith. We were suspicious of anything which seemed like a cult. For some of us the concept of God we had been raised with was a wrathful, punishing entity that inspired fear and then loathing. We found that whatever our original conception of a power greater than ourselves was, it had failed us.

A flexibility in our approach to the second step and an open mind helped. Being willing to 1) admit that there might be a power greater than ourselves and 2) expand our vision to see if we could indeed find a power greater than us are key. Some of us, for example, decided that the group or the fellowship could be our higher power, based on the inspiration we felt from others at meetings. The energy we felt was uplifting and healing.

Some of us found that our reasoning and logical ways of thinking acted as barriers in our search for a power greater than ourselves. We attempted again and again to find our higher power with our rational thinking to no avail and came to realize at last that there was another approach. "Coming to believe" was a process that has little to do with mathematical precision or scientific certainty or rationally figuring things out. Instead, we saw that it had to do with our own personal convictions, with what we were willing to accept. It was instead our personal understanding based on our own individual experience. The willingness to remain open to the idea that we may not know what was best for us helped us to be open to "higher" sources of guidance in our lives. In coming to believe we took a leap of faith and we moved ahead in our process of recovery.

We examined our behavior while using nicotine. We always thought we were fairly sane, that we understood what sanity was. The use of this word in the second step seemed a little dramatic. Realizing the destructive quality of this substance, we began to admit our insanity. Insanity is like being wrapped up in an

endless loop tape. Our own input was more of the same insanity. We needed input of a higher level to break the loop. Admitting our insanity and coming to believe in the existence of a power greater than ourselves that could restore us to sanity went hand in hand.

Each of us came to our own individual understanding of our higher power. As we came to this understanding we awakened a sense of hope. We were not alone after all. Our recovery was enhanced by our willingness to be humble and accept our humanness. We may have found our higher power within us as expressed in our higher selves. We may have had a traditional and comforting God from our childhood. We may have used the group, or our awe of nature as our concept of something outside of ourselves that was in its very essence larger than we could imagine. We saw others' success, and we listened when they suggested that we suspend our rational thinking and give our higher power an opportunity to work in our lives, to help us heal and to restore us to sanity. Then, one day the evidence was overwhelming, that a power, full of love, compassion and forgiveness was at work in our lives. This power, this force, and our connection to it and to other people led to a life free of nicotine.

[step2.ed2 4/11/90]

STEP THREE (Edit No. 2)

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

So far our work in the steps had been reflective and contemplative. We accepted our personal powerlessness, the unmanageability of our lives, the need for faith in a power greater than ourselves, and the reality of our own insane actions.

Powerlessness, unmanageability, and insane behavior had brought most of us to a state of hopelessness. The message here was that despair could be translated into surrender. Surrender could lead to the willingness to try anything. And that 'anything' could be a faith in a power greater than ourselves. Yet faith or belief by itself was not enough. We had to act on that faith. We plunged over what appeared to be a cliff, which in reality was the entry to an unbelievable freedom.

Now we came to a step where we found the suggestion--"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him" as radical, sometimes greatly contradicting what we had been taught. How many times had we heard that we should be able to exert willpower to rid ourselves of the nasty little habit of smoking? We were taught that we could only rely on ourselves, and that we needed to pick ourselves up by our own bootstraps, and that no one was going to do it for us and, if we

wanted it done right we should do it ourselves -- the creed of self reliance.

Unfortunately, this philosophy had proven highly ineffective in dealing with our addiction to nicotine. When we honestly examined our own efforts, most of us admitted that self reliance had failed time and again. For most of us, stopping and staying stopped was no longer under our own control. We needed to find help if we were to quit this all-consuming addiction.

Yet even when we were demoralized over our failure to control our nicotine usage, many of us found it extremely difficult to ask for help. We associated help with dependence, and reacted to encroachments on our independence with resistance. No one was going to tell us how to run our lives. We felt as we did as teenagers who were told we had to submit to the will of our parents and we reacted with behavior similar to the immature teenager. This is not strange considering that the average age we started smoking was 16 and one of the most common reasons for starting smoking was rebellion from parental standards.

We needed to let go of this personal rebelliousness in order to ask for the help we so desperately needed. But how? We found we had arrived at the point where we realized that dependence on people, places and things was not the answer, but that a dependence on a power greater than ourselves was the access to a true independence of spirit and a power which could aid us in fundamental and profound changes in ourselves and our own lives.

We came to believe that God would do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Arrived at this juncture in our program, we had admitted defeat. Our rebelliousness was gone. How did this happen? We asked for help. We made an effort not to do it our way, but to listen to our Higher Power. We saw that our much gloried-in willpower could now be used to align our lives with our Higher Power's will for us. As Bill Wilson, who first wrote on these twelve steps said, "...Our whole trouble had been the misuse of will power. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us."

But to who or what did we surrender and listen? In the early stages of our recovery, we were novices at effecting a conscious contact with our Higher Power. Most of us attempted prayer to accomplish a direct link with the power which would do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

We also believed that God spoke to us through other people. Our SA friends were often a conduit to our Higher Power. What we heard in meetings, and in conversations with non-nicotine using people aided us in approaching our Higher Power. We listened intently in meetings. We read the literature. We made more program phone calls than ever before. We sought out a sponsor, an individual who became our mentor in the steps and our guide in the program.

What exactly were we turning over? We found that we needed to turn everything over -- our time and all our actions and interactions, including the simple sustaining act of breathing.

Our primary goal was to establish contact with a Higher Power to aid us in changing ourselves and our lives. This resulted in our stopping and staying stopped from nicotine usage. We in Smokers Anonymous found that when we tapped into this Power and to the best of our ability made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him, we were supported in quitting our nicotine addiction and were established in a new well-being of body, emotion, and spirit.

The third step is a fundamental step -- the building block on which we could proceed with confidence. Before proceeding, we focused on this step until we were comfortable that we had made contact with and started to develop a trust in our Higher Power by the simple act of becoming willing to make the decision suggested in the step.

The first time we worked this step some of us chose to do it with another person, often our sponsor. We said a prayer in which we prayed for freedom from self will and ego and the power to do our Higher Power's will for us. A prayer which we found useful is: Relieve me of the bondage of self. Help me abandon myself to the spirit. Move me to do good in this world and show kindness. Help me to overcome and avoid anger, resentment, jealousy and any other kind of negative thinking today. Help me to help those who suffer. Keep me alert with

courage to face life and not withdraw from it, not to insulate myself from all pain whereby I insulate myself from love as well. Free me from fantasy and fear. Inspire and direct my thinking today; let it be divorced from self pity , dishonesty and self-seeking motives. Show me the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love. I pray for all of those to whom I've been unkind (family, acquaintances, people at work) and ask that they are granted the same peace that I seek.

We find that we never graduate from the third step. In fact, most of us pray the third-step prayer on a daily basis. It became a tool in our recovery which brought us acceptance of the world around us, enabling us to live one more day without the desire for nicotine.

[step3.ed2 4/10/90]

STEP FOUR (Edit No. 2)

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step Four was a daring deep look into the mirror, taking stock of what we saw. The purpose of the exercise was to enable us to sort through the chaos of our lives. By taking an inventory, we got a clear picture of the disorganization and unmanageability that had held us captive in our addiction.

The word "inventory" comes from a Latin word meaning "to come upon, discover." And among Webster's dictionary definitions of "moral" are the ideas "to make the distinction between right and wrong in conduct" and "to serve to teach the principles of right and wrong." These literal definitions were good guidelines to keep in mind while doing this Step. By means of the look in the mirror, we attempted to discover, to learn, to make distinctions between good things and bad things in our conduct -- to sort out between what was right with us, and what was not. We sought to take stock of ourselves -- what worked and what did not work in our lives.

According to the language of Step Four, the moral inventory was to be "fearless." Yet most of us were afraid as we stood on the threshold of this step because we were so aware of the negativism that pervaded our lives during the years of our addiction. Thus, we were deeply frightened of taking the hard look at ourselves that was called for by the Fourth Step. We

knew ourselves as bad people, as failures, as losers to the drug nicotine and we really did not want to look that in the face.

But we were on the way to being done with those self-destructive notions. And we recalled that we no longer were alone. Reflecting back over Steps One, Two and Three, we realized that we had the positive energy and guidance of a Higher Power to help us take a hard look. We had heard others in Smokers Anonymous share their experiences with the Fourth Step, and had heard that they had discovered as a result that they weren't as wretched as they had thought or feared. Trusting in others' experiences, and with the help of our own personal Higher Power, we were not frightened of what we would discover when we dared to inventory ourselves. Recalling that we had decided to surrender to our Higher Power, we dared to let ourselves be guided through the Fourth Step. The paralysis that had gripped us for so long no longer stood in our way. No longer did we need to be stuck in the dishonesty that clouded our lives as nicotine addicts, because with the help of our own Higher Power, we could dare to be honest. We found the nerve to take a look, for the first time.

Also included within the language of Step Four is that we were to make a "searching" moral inventory. There was no magic measuring device which could tell us how much, how deep, how long we were to look at ourselves. But the taking stock was to be searching -- to the very best of our ability at the time. There was no such thing as a "good inventory" versus a "bad inventory"

-- as long as it was the best possible. The best possible was that which could be accomplished by total honesty, humility, candor, surrender and willingness, with the help of one's own Higher Power.

Many of us experienced some pain doing our Fourth Step inventory. But it was important to remember that the purpose of the inventory was not to cause pain. The object was not to etch in stone that we were terrible. We were not trying to hurt ourselves by rubbing salt in our wounds. Rather, we were trying to get a handle on how we had been living our lives. Recalling the literal definitions of "moral" and "inventory," we were trying to "come upon, discover," "to make the distinction between right and wrong in conduct," and "to serve to teach the principles of right and wrong." We wanted to inventory what worked and what did not work for us, so that we might separate out, and stop, the useless patterns of our past. We wanted to know how we got stuck in our past so that we could find our way out of that trap -- so that we could find freedom from nicotine, and freedom from our old selves. We were trying to free our spirits, to let our souls breathe. We were seeking to get free of yesterday so that we might live today, each day, one day at a time.

Just as there was no correct definition of a "good" inventory, there also was no absolute "right" way to take stock. But we found that writing it down was a basic and necessary starting point. Putting our inventory on paper made it more real

and made it easier for us to be certain that we had been as searching and fearless as possible.

One way to get started was to answer (or reanswer) the questions in the Smokers Anonymous Questionnaire (which appears in Part II of these materials.) Done thoroughly, the Questionnaire gave good insight into what we were trying to accomplish through using nicotine -- how we got started, when we used it, what emotions and factual settings seemed to be involved, how and why we got dragged down by the drug, how we came to be trapped in our addiction, and so on. Patterns emerged in the responses. Ideas cropped up. Those patterns and ideas were explored further. And further. We just kept going. Anything that popped up was inventory material. The goal was thoroughness. There was nothing which did not belong on the list. It was not possible to have something on the list which did not belong there. It was easy: if it came to mind, it went on our list.

A second approach which worked for some of us was to make lists of personal assets and liabilities and to write about them. We wrote about what we did and did not want to have happen in our character development. We described our hopes for the kind of person we wanted to become in the future. We contrasted this with how our liabilities had trapped us, and we categorized those liabilities:

Fears.

What fears? Why fears? Who fears? Where fears?

Anger.

What anger? Why anger? Who anger? How anger?

Guilt.

What guilt? Why guilt? Who guilt? When guilt?

Failure. Escape. Hiding. Isolating. Loneliness. Denial.

Resentment.

The list went on, and we kept writing. We put the liabilities down on paper. We analyzed them: where they came from, what they did to us, why we hung onto them even though we knew they were destroying us, how they affected those around us. We asked for help from our Higher Power to really look in the mirror and confront our liabilities.

And we did the same with our assets, starting with the miracle that already had begun: we were clean, we were not using nicotine anymore. We made that an asset with a capital "A". We thought about all the positives: our courage, serenity, peace, caring, love, humbleness. Again, we just let the list keep going. We thought about the attributes and let ourselves be guided by a Higher Power into exploring them as far as possible. Where did these plusses come from? How did we latch onto them? What did they give us? Why did they make our lives function better?

Others found that a third approach to the inventory was to start with lists of persons, institutions, principles, events or

other "realities" that we felt had played important roles in our lives. Then we explored what their influence or affect was on us.

That process of exploration involved looking at the people and events which had led to past fears and blocks to intimate relationships. Or to lack of positive motivation, or to self-loathing. We sought to find who or what got us to feel or think negatively. Much of it happened early in life for many of us, and so it was important to go back as far as we could remember even some hazy details. Much of it amazed us. A kid in second grade told us we had funny looking ears, and we still were ashamed. A parent told us we were a stupid brat, and we were carrying that around years later. Some of it was more serious, of course. A parent beat us, or deserted us. But whatever it was, we advanced our cause of getting free of the past by getting it down on paper.

For those of us who found that making these lists was too vague, a fourth approach was easier. We wrote a totally honest personal autobiography which gave us the insight into what happened along the way that led us into the addiction trap. From our understanding of what happened, we got a better picture of where and why and how we were damaged, and how that damage had influenced our behavior since.

It was not necessary, or perhaps even possible, to understand where the autobiography was leading us while we were writing it. In other words, sometimes it was not until we were

finished writing down our own life story, that we were able to go back to the beginning and see the individual events in a bigger perspective. But with the advantage of the bigger picture, what before had seemed like an "isolated" little dumb thing, suddenly became a big "Ah ha -- so that's what that's all about." With the "Ah ha," we could get a concrete liability or asset isolated, pinpointed, and on a list. And with the "Ah ha," some of the chaos of the past disappeared. We succeeded in putting our finger on something. It went on a list. No longer was it part of the big fluid nothingness of confusion and chaos in our life. And we continued the process of exploration of assets and liabilities that emerged from this process, just as others did with the alternative approaches to taking their inventories.

Many of us who already had done a Fourth Step in another 12-Step program found it helpful to rethink our inventories; giving special attention to the unique impact nicotine addiction played in the chaos of the past. For example, many of us found that nicotine, as contrasted with other addictive substances, blocked our feelings, our emotions, and our interaction with other human beings and the world around us. Whether we were hiding defensively behind the smoke screen, or blowing smoke offensively at others, we had crippled ourselves emotionally in ways that seemed to be unique, or especially aggravated, by nicotine addiction. Thus, our recovery from other substances, as well as from nicotine, got a special boost when we did a special inventory of nicotine-related assets and liabilities.

The Fourth Step allowed us to take off our wraps. It afforded us the opportunity to really look for the first time at who was on the outside of the mirror. Taking that look changed us forever. From the honesty we dared to summon up, we received an incredible gift -- the ability to distinguish between truth and lies about ourselves. This gift allowed us to focus on the basic truth about our own inherent goodness. The lies of yesterday no longer held us in the muck of confusion because we had separated out the beautiful truth about ourselves and our lives. This truth guides us today and tomorrow, each day as it comes to us.

[step4.ed2 4/06/90]

STEP FIVE (Edit No. 2)

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

In making the Fourth Step inventory, we put into an organized form, all the chaos, confusion and trouble of our past. We made an extensive review of our life. Then what?

Step Five was getting rid of the old stuff. It was the biggest spring housecleaning of our life, and its aim was to get rid of all the cobwebs, dustballs and other junk and debris which had accumulated during the long winter of our addiction. It was getting into position to replace the old garbage with positive new thoughts and ways. It was getting free -- getting free of what had not worked; getting free of what had trapped us in the deathly grips of nicotine for so long. It was taking out the trash.

The success of cleaning out the old garbage during Step Five depended on having dug it out and put it in piles in Step Four. It was not enough, however, just to have written the inventory. Some of our old stuff was on the list, but buried -- sort of swept under the carpet. We knew it was there, but we hoped that nobody else would find it. Nonetheless, if we really wanted to clean house the old dirt could not stay hidden under the rug.

Thus, the objective of Step Five was to admit what we had found. We had made a private admission to ourselves, but to make certain that we were not cheating, we also admitted everything to our Higher Power. It mattered not that a wiser God already may

have known. It was our act of admission and humbleness which was mattered.

Step Five also required us to share our inventory with another human being. For many of us, this was even more frightening than the admissions to our Higher Power. Admitting all of the details of our past torments to another person was just so concrete, so real. And so humbling. It required swallowing our pride.

Humbleness -- that was the core of Step Five. Becoming humble was what it was all about. The Fifth Step was about getting conscious of our shortcomings. It was about becoming modest and not proud or arrogant. It was about not pretending and about not running and hiding. It was about getting real and becoming very human.

The Fifth Step involved sharing intimate personal details with a trusted person and getting humble in the process. We shrank down to our core and to who we really were. Through sharing ourselves and our deepest secrets with another person, we opened ourselves up. In that way, we made it possible to be healed from our addiction to nicotine.

Becoming honest was a way to get free to be who we were. We stripped naked and stood in all our bare glory without any of the disguises that had hidden us when we were nicotine addicts. When we admitted to ourselves, to our Higher Power and to another human being who we were, we became free of our past sufferings,

and we become free to love ourselves and to stop trying to destroy ourselves.

We were very careful in selecting the other human being with whom we chose to open ourselves up during the Fifth Step. The object of the experience was candor and honesty, trust and openness. The other person had to be someone who would allow us to feel as absolutely free and open as possible. For some of us it was our sponsor or another person from SA. For others it was a clergyman or a therapist or a friend. Whomever we selected, it was someone we thought would let us be totally honest and open.

As we candidly shared our secrets, we discovered that we were not as terrible as we had thought. Somehow in the process of describing "the worst thing we've ever done," the terribleness of it all was lessened. The most terrible things really were not so awful after all.

We also discovered that all of our fears, troubles and supposed shortcomings were not very unique. In the process of opening ourselves up, our confidants frequently shared with us many of the very same things that we were telling them. We discovered that our troubles and tribulations were just part of the human condition. We were not awful. We were humble, normal -- and just very human.

Step Five. Taking out the trash. Gratefully letting go of the past to get ready for the present, having a new spiritual awareness of our membership in the human race, and having that be just quite all right.

[step5.ed2 4/06/90]

STEP SIX (Edit No. 2)

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Before we began Step Six, many of us found it useful to sit down and meditate and consider our work so far. If we had been thorough, we had done a great deal of work, some of it very difficult.

In our meditation, we reflected on the first three steps. Once again, we accepted our powerlessness, reiterated our faith, and recommitted to our decision to surrender to the care of our Higher Power. We realized we had deepened our understanding of the process of recovery. After concluding that the examination of our lives which we did in Steps Four and Five was as complete a job as we were capable of, we were ready to take Step Six.

Step Six is a transition step. It is where we really began to change. We needed to consider what this change meant to us. Through Steps Four and Five we came to know ourselves, more deeply than we ever had. We came face to face with what worked for us and what did not work, and with our effective and ineffective traits. We came to understand that there were reasons for our behavior. In Step Six we examined these reasons. We examined the motivation for our behavior. With this additional knowledge, we began to consider means of meeting our needs in healthier ways. In other words, we were ready to have God remove our defects, or ineffective traits, of character.

We saw that each of our character defects was two-sided. Each had the potential to hurt us, as we saw in Step Four. But each also could bring us pleasure, a sense of acceptance, and the means of avoiding stress, fear or pain. Now, we learned how to incorporate pleasure in our lives in healthier ways. We came to see how our need for acceptance could be met without injury to ourselves. We realized that stress and fear, once acknowledged and accepted, could be greatly diminished. Our new-found faith did not explain away pain, which we think is an integral part of life, but it did give us the courage to face it, and to feel it, instead of using nicotine to stuff it or avoid it.

We found it effective, in working Step Six, to recognize the benefits and penalties we get from acting out our character defects. We began to understand why we did certain things, and what it was we were trying to get in the process. We learned to recognize that, in the process, we also got many things we did not want.

We realized, for instance, that our overly-judgmental approach to life worked as a way of boosting our own sense of self-worth and helped us cover up our feelings of inadequacy or fear. At the same time, we came to understand that this approach kept us separate from those we were judging. It locked us into a false sense of superiority. It deprived us of honesty in relationships with others.

Once we understood what we really were attempting to accomplish, we developed new methods for getting the same results

in ways that were not self-destructive. In our pursuit of authentic self-worth, we acknowledged our own positive attributes and built on them. We were no longer concerned with how we were perceived by others that we allowed our self-worth to be determined by their opinion.

In our attempt to deal with our feelings of inadequacy and fear, we came to realize that these were normal human feelings. We understood and accepted our limitations. Sometimes we aren't old enough. Sometimes we aren't young enough. We are not superman or superwoman. We can't do everything. Furthermore, we live in a sometimes dangerous world and fear is a legitimate emotion.

Once we realized that these feelings were acceptable, we focused on them in a different way. We examined what it was that made us feel inadequate. We learned what it was which frightened us. Armed with the kind of information these efforts provided, and with the help of our Higher Power, we could prepare for situations in new ways that reduced or eliminated feelings of fear and inadequacy.

When we came to understand the concept of being "ready" to have our ineffective character traits removed, we were able to consider being "entirely" ready. We became willing to let go and change. The notion of "entirely" was something we worked toward, a goal. We were comforted by the thought that we sought progress and not perfection. We thought back to the Third Step when we decided to turn our lives and our will over to the care of God as

we understood God. We confirmed that we meant our entire life and our total will.

In Step Six we moved from one period of our life to another. We learned the difference between holding on to the past and letting it go. We began to learn to stop living in the pain of yesterday and to start to live in the pleasure of today. We were now truly ready, with a clear conscience, to ask God for help.

[step6.ed2 4/12/90]

STEP SEVEN (Edit No. 2)

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Right smack in the middle of the Twelve Steps, after the relief of admitting our powerlessness over nicotine and after the searching review of our moral inventory, we put ourselves on the line and asked God to remove our shortcomings. We asked Him to take away the roadblocks we had constructed which kept us unhappy and afraid and incapable of meeting life without our drug, nicotine.

The step itself required only that we "Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings." Let's first think about the word "Humbly." Some of us were put off by this word because it so closely resembles the words humiliate and humiliation. These words seemed too negative. We came to understand that the word "Humbly" did not mean debasing ourselves. What it meant was seeing ourselves in our proper place in the grander scheme of things. We acknowledged our higher power as a higher, or more complete, or more encompassing entity than ourselves. We saw that our Higher Power was more, and that we were less. But we are not less in a bad or pejorative sense. We are less in respect to our higher power. This is the correct understanding of humility. It is the acceptance of our very true and our very human limitations.

Accepting our human limitations or our ultimate humanity is different from the process of acknowledging our shortcomings,

which we did in Step Four. As we progressed from that step through Step Six we identified, admitted, considered and began to psychologically detach from these shortcomings. We called them "inventory" in the Fourth Step, "wrongs" in Step Five, and "character defects" in Step Six. Whatever our label for these ineffective behavior patterns, we realized that our addiction itself was the prime example. We also realized that the guilt and shame we felt about our shortcomings was part of the reason we smoked. As we accept these shortcomings as normal human failings, as our extreme responses to basic instincts, we acknowledge our imperfection. We realize our previous behavior patterns have not worked for us or for others. We see that they have made our lives unmanageable.

Now, reflect back on the second step. There we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Here is where we ask that higher power to do so. In Step Six having explored various alternatives to our shortcomings, we are now ready to take the Seventh Step.

We took the step by saying the following words: "My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go from here to do your bidding. Amen." We have found that there are many appropriate ways to say them, but what works best for many of us is aloud in a quiet room where we can hear what we are saying and reflect on

it as we say it. In bed, on awakening and before getting up works fine. On our knees works too. The important thing is to say the words. Often. They can form the basis of a worthwhile daily meditation alone, or together with other prayers or affirmations.

We have found that these words can do more than get our day off to a strong start. They can take the edge off situations and feelings long enough for us to forget the urge to smoke over them. When we think about the many times our resolve not to smoke has crumbled in the face of tough situations and intense emotions, we recognize our limitations. Step Seven reinforces our sense of powerlessness and our willingness to ask for help.

Asking for help has often been difficult for us. We wanted to believe that we were totally self sufficient and independent. Our willingness to see ourselves as needing help, which was an essential part of the First Step, left us with a feeling of emptiness. It was when we started to work the Second Step that this emptiness was filled with our faith in a power greater than ourselves. To our great surprise we found that our decision to surrender our will, and our willingness to ask for help from a higher power, or even from our fellow human beings, was a liberating experience. Not only did it remove the unrealistic pressure we had placed on ourselves, but we began to make progress. In fact, our very definition of the word progress began to change. We leave it up to our higher power to remove

these shortcomings. We learn that whether and when they will be removed is up to our higher power, and not up to us.

As we increase our conscious contact with our higher power, we hope to also increase our knowledge of our higher power's will for us. Perhaps in this way we will come to understand why our higher power leaves us the capacity to behave ineffectively. After all we have made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him.

Nicotine, as many have described it, is cunning, baffling, powerful and patient. We are never free from our addiction. By working the Seventh Step and the recitation of the Seventh Step prayer, we ask for help from our higher power to "grant me strength as I go our from here to do your bidding."

[step7.ed2 4/12/90]

STEP EIGHT (Edit No. 2)

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

We continued our journey toward our one-day-at-a-time reprieve from nicotine addiction in the Eighth Step by preparing ourselves to make amends to all those we had harmed and by becoming willing to make amends to them. The purpose of this step is to achieve freedom from guilt over our past actions and interactions with other people.

We define "harm" as being any form of physical, mental, emotional or spiritual damage that our actions have caused others. If we kept our fourth-step inventory, we may already have had a list of people with whom we have had negative interactions. Many of us used this as our starting point for Step Eight. We surveyed the whole area of personal relationships and searched our memories for the people to whom we had given offense. The more recent and damaging the relationship, the quicker the memory surfaced. We went back through our lives, asking for guidance and direction from our Higher Power and put the names of these people on paper.

While preparing this list of "amends due", the 'addict' within sometimes attempted to color our thinking by all sorts of rationalizations, especially if we prematurely anticipated the actually making of amends that takes place in the Ninth Step. Step Eight suggests that we make a list and become willing...this

is not the direct amend-making step. We stayed in the Eighth Step and worked the Ninth Step in its proper turn.

As we looked upon our list of people to whom amends were due, we put out of our minds the wrongs, perceived or real, that others may have done to us. Our purpose was not to evaluate the behavior of others but to look only at our part of the interaction. We had to keep in mind that we were here to clear away the wreckage of our past, not to make others accountable for their wrongdoings.

Some instances of harm were directly related to our nicotine use, especially if we had been inconsiderate or selfish in our habits around family, friends or co-workers. We looked at the impact of our second-hand smoke on those who had been in our presence, remembering both the individuals we knew and all the strangers who crossed our path. We looked too at the pollution we added to the environment with the cigarette butts we left on city streets and mountain trails. We also looked at the more subtle harm we caused our relationships by the ways we used cigarettes as a barrier to intimacy, creating a true smoke screen to maintain an emotional distance between us and those in our lives. If our smoking generated physical harm, such as cigarette burns, we listed the restitutions that were due.

We then made note of harm we did that was not directly related to our nicotine habit, including those we harmed due to our anger, fears, pride and other personality traits which we explored when we did our Fourth Step.

Some of us found it valuable to place ourselves on our amends lists, since so much of the damage caused by the use of nicotine and the defects accompanying our addiction, such as isolation and low self-esteem were of greatest harm to our own bodies and lives.

We found that we made little progress in our new way of living until we backtracked and made an accurate and unsparing survey of the wreckage of our past. We were not be able to develop the best possible relations with every person we knew until we "came clean" to ourselves, to God, and to another human being, and now -- to the people involved in our tornado-ridden path.

There was a long period of reconstruction ahead. A remorseful grumbling or mumbling that we were sorry was not going to work. A sponsor or trusted friend could help us achieve the objectivity in preparing to go to these people. We did not hesitate to seek advice from our fellows and we asked God for the willingness to proceed to Step Nine.

[step8.ed2 4/13/90]

STEP NINE (Edit No. 2)

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The Eighth and Ninth Steps were our effort to bring ourselves into harmony with the world around us. Now, we carried out the housecleaning that, so far, had been essentially inward and reflective.

We made amends one at a time with care and compassion. Taking a name from our Eighth Step list, we reflected on the nature of harm done to that person. Now was the time to try our hardest to put ourselves in the other person's shoes concerning our past interaction with him or her. What was it like to be on the receiving end of our poor behavior? How was that person's view of the world or personality altered as a result of what we did? Did our actions cause another to lose trust in people in general? We asked ourselves how we had a negative influence or impact on others.

Usually, this reflection stirred an eagerness to set matters right. Seeing things from another's perspective conjured up a sudden and uneasy awareness of the pain or disappointment our actions had caused. Although these feelings made our amends heartfelt, we could not let them lead to morbid reflection and remorse. That kept us from the positive path of action which is the focus of this step.

The best antidote for morbidity was a calm and open manner and straight forward attitude. We put our new-found awareness of

the nature of harm done into the background now and, praying for guidance, asked God for the best way to amend the injury. We asked around the fellowship and found other people who had dealt with the same type of amends. We consulted our sponsors. We trusted that our thinking would be directed by our Higher Power and then we proceeded.

Contacting the person harmed, we explained that our addiction to nicotine was in abeyance through our practice of the spiritual program of Smokers Anonymous. That program stresses that we must put right wrongs we had done in the past and repair relationships with people we had harmed. And that is why we were here.

We went on to explain in appropriate detail the harm we'd done. While this did not instantly remedy matters, its long-term effect was powerful. If we'd caused a material loss to the person we offered to make repayment. But most often the harm was emotional and spiritual. Where emotional damage had been done, we apologized and stated that we were trying now to live honestly and in harmony with others.

Often saying we were sorry was not enough. Sometimes the person we were talking to was skeptical especially if we had in the past remorsefully made apologies and promised changed behavior and then simply gone back to our old ways. Changing our actions and making "living" amends was necessary. "Living" amends are acting and doing the healthy, loving things to others that we had promised previously. Apologizing for past negative

actions and stopping them in the present was not enough, we had to now take positive personal actions towards others and strive towards establishing the correct relations with everyone we come into contact with. Long-term reconstruction of relationships comes through consistent behavior over time.

We also remembered to take our inventory and not the other person's. We talked of what we did, not of what the other person did. Even if we firmly believed the other person contributed 90% to the problem and we caused only 10% of the situation, we talked only about the 10% we were responsible for. We were there to clean up our side of the street only. If the other person in the spirit of reconciliation talked of their actions, we simply listened and thanked them for their comments. We did not judge, criticize, or argue.

The person being approached may not have responded with forgiveness, but with anger. We did not try to make them see our point of view. We accepted their feelings, expressed that we hoped in the future they could forgive us, and left it at that and in God's hands.

We made sure that we did no amends in any way which would cause further harm or pain to the person affected. We did not reveal secrets that felt good for us to confess but which would cause pain to the other person. We avoided emotional dumping that selfishly gave emotional release solely to ourselves.

Often our self centered behavior caused discomfort or harm to groups of people or to people who anonymously passed through

our lives. People who endured our cigarette smoke in confined spaces such as elevators, or people who saw our discarded cigarette butts along a pristine mountain trail. In these cases many of us found that we needed to make amends to the world in general. We sought ways to repay the world in general for the harm we did. This could take the form of volunteer work with environmental groups or service in SA or other smoking recovery programs, or other less formal activity that is of service to people in general.

In certain cases we could not make direct amends to people harmed. They had died or we had lost touch with them or they refused to see us. In these cases we found that the "amends to the world in general" concept worked. If we had been a poor daughter or son to a now deceased parent, we took actions towards others who were in similar situations to our parents; we adopted, helped and loved a senior citizen. If we could not communicate to the person harmed, we made a living amends to someone we could interact with.

In our explanation of what we were doing we usually mentioned Smokers Anonymous and how it had brought us to the current situation. However, our purpose was not to explain our program or our new found spirituality. If talk of programs and God made others uncomfortable we did not press those issues but got down to the business of making amends.

It takes time to make amends. We learned patience through the process. It takes courage and a willingness to proceed on

principle in a course whose outcome we could not predict. We learned to plan our course of action, to carry it out determinedly, and to accept whatever results it brought. We proceeded in the knowledge that this had worked not only to keep us free of nicotine but also to help us achieve a new rapport with others and to reduce our sense of loneliness and isolation.

Having done the best we could to restore the emotional and material security we disrupted in those we harmed, we began to see the world in a new light. We knew now that our individual actions radiate more broadly in the world than we had ever imagined. As a result of our admission of our powerlessness over nicotine, we came at last to understand the real point of our power. In this pursuit, we gradually discovered that our knowledge and tolerance of others had increased and our place in humanity had become, for the first time in our lives, truly comfortable.

[step9.ed2 4/12/90]

STEP TEN (Edit No. 2)

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

During the first nine steps, we concentrated on identifying and giving up the problems of the past. We had turned our will and life over to the care of God. We had set the stage for moving into the rest of our life with joy and freedom.

Step Ten helps us stay in check daily on our progress in this new life. On an ongoing basis, we examine our daily actions and interactions with ourselves and others, we identify any problem areas in terms of our behavior on that day, we make amends to those whom we might have offended, and praise God and ourselves for our successes.

This step helps us to be right with our selves, others, and God. Healthy behavior and healthy attitudes are important to recovery from nicotine dependence. Through this step we are given the opportunity to keep our commitment to strive for openness, honesty, humility, and love for ourselves and others. It is our path to peace and serenity. It clears the path to closeness with ourselves, others, and with God. Step Ten helps us to maintain the behaviors essential to remaining abstinent from the use of nicotine.

The Tenth Step asks us to continually be aware of how our actions influence the lives of those around us. This helps us maintain an awareness that we are as important to other people's recovery as they are to ours. We learn to be responsible to the

values we cherish in relationships with others, such as, openness, honesty, and truthfulness. Step Ten provides us with the direct knowledge that these values be our guides to our behavior.

Working this step daily provides us with continuous feedback on our progress and on our stumbling blocks. It may reveal to us just how often we make amends to others before we are willing to change our behavior. We began to see our resistance to change, openness, honesty and humility when we are able to see the struggle we have inside. Especially when we don't want to admit our wrongs or apologize for a hurtful act upon someone else. Strength can come from acknowledging our resistances and may provide us with the humility that may be necessary in asking for help.

The Tenth Step helps us keep our side of the street clean and is a great reminder to keep the focus on ourselves. When we can do that, we are generally more assured that we are still on course and our faith is strengthened that we will receive the promises of sanity and serenity.

[step10.ed2 4/14/90]

STEP ELEVEN (Edit No. 2)

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

Our lives have been spent creating distance between ourselves and the peace inside us. We have crafted clouds of smokey fog between us and our Higher Power to the degree that we no longer can see our Higher Power. Step Eleven is what we do to clean up the fog and see ourselves and our relationship to God in a clear and serene light. It strengthens the connection between us and our Higher Power. Breaking the step down into smaller components can help in examining this important step.

"Sought through prayer and meditation..."

Each person must come to his/her own understanding of what praying means. Prayer is viewed by some as a "heightened perception of intuition." Others see it as talking with their higher self, or talking to God. Some people already established a form of prayer before they got into the program. These people perhaps didn't have a problem initiating contact with a Higher Power. Others find it difficult if not impossible to pray. The important thing is to do whatever we need to strengthen the bond between ourselves and a power greater than ourselves. People with difficulty in praying can also ask for help from fellow S.A. members. A sponsor can be especially helpful at this stage by sharing experience, strength, and hope.

There are no correct or incorrect prayers, way of praying, or places to pray -- but it is crucial that we sincerely seek

God's will. Whatever works, works, and is not to be judged by others. Some people only feel they are praying if they are on their knees, humbling themselves before their Higher Power. Others pray while they work, jog, or drive their cars. It has proved useful to begin our day with some kind of prayer, asking God for guidance and to direct our thinking and actions towards God's ends. At night, before going to sleep, we can take some time to mentally list all the things we have to be thankful for today -- one more day of being nicotine-free, our health, friends, loved ones, our jobs, our homes, etc. We can reflect on the changes that have occurred in our lives since we stopped using nicotine and started letting go of egotistical, self-willed attachments.

In the past, many of us prayed to God only to ask for specific things or results. Now we ask ourselves, "How can I request a specific outcome when I ultimately don't know what is good for me or someone else?" Acceptance, not control, is the key. As long as we ask for specifics, we are not letting go and letting God. By adopting an attitude of "Thy will, not mine, be done," we are given far more than we ever dreamed. Instead of asking for what we want and what we think we need, we focus on offering ourselves to God, as willing servants, ready to perform actions as God sees fit.

As with prayer, meditation techniques vary widely and each person must find his/her own way. Meditation leads us to become still, open, and receptive. It helps us go inside ourselves, to

be quiet, to empty ourselves so God can come in and fill us up. Sitting calmly in front of a candle can help to produce a state of inner calm and single-mindedness. So can sitting alone on an isolated beach, under a tree in the mountains, or in a chair at a kitchen table. One way to begin to meditate is to simply sit still and focus on the breath as it moves in and out. Let the diaphragm do the work -- just observe what happens. Another tool some people use is to visualize God in the heart. Let it expand and take over the body, the room, the world.

"...to improve our conscious contact with God..."

Whatever we do for our Eleventh Step, it is most important that we do something. This Step is an action step. While many of us start by doing Step Eleven for a few minutes a day, we find through experience that it is possible to have a connection with our Higher Power at all moments of the day and night. While this is very difficult, it is possible. Many find that the more contact they have with their Higher Power, the more serene they become.

Some have discovered useful tools for gaining a more constant contact with God, and here are a few:

- ask God for help when making decisions.
- perform every action as though it were a gift to God.
- come up with an image of God (candle flame, ocean, etc.) and imagine that image as much as possible.
- think of ourselves as a tool in the hands of God.
- repeat program slogans to ourselves.
- think of ourselves as a cell in the body of our Higher Power, or a star in the body of the universe.

"...as we understood God..."

Every person must come to an understanding of God/Higher Power that works for him/her. There are no rules for this. God can be an inner voice, nature, other people, or a rock. The program can work only if we are free to explore our individual paths and realize the experience of God we need for today.

It is useful to remember that finding an understanding of God is a process, not an event. We have our whole lives to search for God, for meaning, for answers. There is no hurry. Today is enough. God will give us what we need to find, to do what we need to do.

"...praying only for knowledge of God's will for us..."

How do we know what God's will is for us? Sometimes it can be easier to think about what God's will is not. It can't be God's will for us to continue using nicotine. Using nicotine drew us away from God. Quitting the use of nicotine began to move us closer to God.

If we concentrate on praying for God's will and performing God's will, our own petty desires and egotistical wants start to diminish. We become more serene and flow with our own essential nature. We find that the fruits of our actions are God's concern and not ours. We become more involved with action and less concerned with results. Life is easier when we get our egos out of the way and firmly establish our minds and hearts in our Higher Power.

"...and the power to carry that out."

This is the last thing the Eleventh Step suggests -- that we pray for power to carry out God's will. Some see this power as willingness, strength, acceptance, courage, and commitment. Others put all these things together and call it faith. Faith does not mean stupidity or blindness. Faith means to accept with open eyes and loving hearts the duty which lies before us, knowing we will be taken care of and will get what we need. Some say that faith is our relationship with God. It takes faith to let go and let God. Once we get rid of old habits, desires, and attachments, we may feel a need to attach to something. Step Eleven suggests we attach to our Higher Power and nurture faith to do God's bidding.

No one is perfect. But if our motivations are clear and unselfish, directed towards our Higher Power, our Eleventh Step will lead us to deep and lasting serenity.

[step11.ed2 4/14/90]

STEP TWELVE (Edit No. 2)

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to nicotine users and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The theme of the Twelfth Step is our new-found way of life, the freedom, joy and serenity which we have discovered through the awakening of our spirit. The power of the Twelfth Step is that it provides a guide for how to live the rest of our lives.

There are three components in this step. The first is the "spiritual awakening," and this refers, of course, to where we have been in the past and what has happened to us. The second two parts -- to "carry the message" and "practice these principles" -- are the guides for living and for our future.

If we look back over the course of the previous steps, it is clear that we are seeing a process of spiritual awakening. There has been a slow growth and change. Recognizing the unmanageability which our addiction to nicotine spread over our lives, and learning to admit powerlessness did not happen without effort. It took work.

Beginning to believe in the notion of a Higher Power and starting to "Let go and Let God" was not easy for many of us. We struggled, resisted and fought. But gradually, we managed to peel off another layer of the onion, and we got through Steps Two and Three. We continued to evolve, to grow, to become aware.

The process continued. Gradually, step by step, we fought our way out of our deep slumber. Through what surely was the

greatest struggle of our lives, we awakened to an altered sense of ourselves and our lives.

For many, the change included an awareness of the significance that we are on this planet, that we are alive, and that there is joy and happiness to be had, today. Here and now.

We awakened from that time of slow suicide by nicotine use, when our spirits were drowned in a vast ocean of self-loathing, smashed by endless waves of craving, fear and failure. We managed to find a way to get up on top of the waves and ride them and have fun, instead of letting them crash over us and pound us into the sand. We found a surfboard. We found a Higher Power. We found a strength to save us from ourselves. We managed gradually to tap an inner resource of our own belief system, our own imagination and our own faith -- a God as we understand God. Someone, something, anyone, anything greater than ourselves.

We began to understand that the dis-ease we felt as nicotine addicts -- the destructive self-consciousness, the inadequacies, the depression, the false bravado, the irrational aggressiveness, and the grim self-loathing -- all grew out of a core sense of loneliness and fear. We thought we could do it ourselves. We were alone and tried to ease the pain through nicotine.

Eventually we were able to recognize the insanity caused by our self-imposed isolation. And then we allowed ourselves to find a companion. That which we call a Higher Power.

We learned to work at keeping in contact with our soul, with

our Higher Power, we found an ability to remain serene despite the ups and downs. We discovered that we can ride the waves.

With that discovery, life became and remains a series of small miracles and increments of wonder. By acknowledging, accepting and welcoming our own spiritual existence, we became less likely to wallow in self-pity or to brood an afternoon of our life away. By finding the peace to ride on our planet in its journey, every moment has its own reward. Every moment becomes sacred. And every moment enriches us because we have learned to live today, here and now. Every raindrop that falls, every breath we breathe, every mountain we climb, every toe we stub and every wind which howls are all equally significant because we experience them. They exist, and when we exist as part of them, we are not alone. When we are not alone, we need not kill ourselves with nicotine.

This is what we mean when we talk about a spiritual awakening. This is what has happened through the process of the steps.

Nonetheless, we remain addicts. And when we begin to experience the joys of being free from using nicotine, we run the risk of thinking once again that we can control things. That is the risk of being an addict. As the suffering of our nicotine-past recedes, the temptations which got us in trouble return. This brings us to the latter parts of the Twelfth Step -- the action plan for continuing to live free of nicotine.

We have learned that the best way to keep our madness from resuming control of our lives is by sharing our new gift of life with those who are still suffering. We call it "carrying the message," which we do in two ways: we give away the gift we have received through sharing, and we let our lives be examples for others.

The way we carry the message to those who are still using nicotine is by sharing our experience, strength and hope with them. It is simple and it is safe. We know of the miracle in our own lives, and we can share it with persons still suffering. But in sharing, we must be vigilant to remember that what we share is our experience -- and no one else's.

We can share the strength we have found through honesty and humbleness. And we can share the joy we have found through tapping into a new source for positive energy, the happiness we have found in surrendering to something greater than ourselves, to a Higher Power.

As we share the gift of our own miracles, each act done in gratitude, no matter how small the separate undertaking may seem, has its own lessons and rewards for us. We give what we have received and thereby get even more. We who have been at the depths of despair and agony learn as we help to lift others from that dreadful place. Our own joy increases as we see others being helped by what we have learned for ourselves. There is joy for us in helping a newcomer through just one craving for

nicotine, since as we know all so well, each single craving is deadly.

What we actually do to help the nicotine user through a craving may be very simple and may not entail more than talking for a couple of minutes, or giving a hug or a squeeze on the hand. We know the pain because we have experienced it. Our joy in helping is not diminished by the simplicity of the undertaking because we understand its importance.

Through helping others, we learn compassion, patience and tolerance. These wondrous gifts help us accept ourselves and reaffirm our own worth and growth. Our own simple, honest message of our recovery from nicotine addiction is powerful beyond belief. By attending meetings and making ourselves visible and available, we provide the greatest service possible. The more we participate, the more we are active, the better we can and do carry the message. We are not out to seek converts.

We show the way by example. This is the third part of Step Twelve. We practice the principles of recovery -- the principles we have learned through the process of the Twelve Steps --and we practice them in all of our affairs. These principles include such things as acceptance, surrender, humbleness, tolerance, patience, willingness, openness, love, hope, faith, trust, joy. These are the principles which rescued us from the loneliness and fear. They become ongoing principles of enjoying freedom, joy and serenity in our every day lives.

In addition, when we practice these principles in all our affairs, we do a superb job of carrying the message. Others who knew us before cannot help but notice the changes in us as we move forward in recovery. We carry the message by being in our own recovery all the time.

What started as a desperate focus on quitting using nicotine, blossoms and grows into a freedom to live. With awe and humility, we learn to enjoy the most precious gift of all -- the acceptance of our own humanness and the awareness that we are not alone.

Like life itself, the steps are a process and a cycle. We live the steps by practicing their positive principles in all our affairs. Step Twelve is not the end. It is the rest of life. It is freedom, joy and serenity.

Welcome to Smokers Anonymous.

[step12.ed2 4/14/90]