



BROOKLYN_BORN

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The effect of smoking on my health, my fitness and my life.

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

I was Daddy's girl, actually his only child. He was very athletic and very happy that I was also. He was proud that not only could I play ball with the boys, I was usually one of the "captains" choosing the teams.



But I was also sick a lot – bronchitis, croupy coughs, sore throats, assorted respiratory infections. I was 18 months old when they removed my tonsils. Reviewing old home movies today, the cause is obvious. As soon as Dad and his friends lit up their cigarettes, I would start rubbing my nose and eyes and start coughing.

Why didn't anyone make this connection?

We were surrounded with a different message.

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I'M SENDING CHESTERFIELDS to all my friends.
That's the warmest Christmas any smoker can have —
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Ronald Reagan

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President of the UNITED STATES of America
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Likes the Chesterfield.



CHESTERFIELD *Buy the beautiful Christmas-card carton*



LUCKY STRIKE
CIGARETTES

A CITY OF SLIDING
BY THE... (text is partially obscured)

Santa Claus



It would be another decade before the first warnings appeared and they were aimed at the smoker himself. Quitting wasn't an option for Dad. He was thoroughly addicted and perhaps he was hoping that maybe these experts were wrong.

I married a non smoker at age 19 and began to notice a difference but only at home. More than half the country smoked and they smoked everywhere. The teachers' lounges in the high schools, where I taught, were smoke filled. Teachers smoked in their classrooms and offices when students weren't present and the smell stayed in the air. Even students could smoke in "designated areas" with parental approval if they were over 16.

Slowly the tide turned. As more and more of my world became smoke free, my lungs improved accordingly. I could teach in a real smoke-free environment. I could go to restaurants. Now I really was an athlete. I could run a half marathon in a very respectable time.

Dad eventually did quit smoking. They asked him in the ER as he was having his heart attack, "Do you smoke?" He answered, "I quit this morning" and he really did.

When Dad was 75 I went with him to the Senior Olympics. He won the gold medal in Bowling. "Next time," he said, "I'm entering more events." He was a competitor til the end.



The end came too soon. There were no more competitions after this one. I wish smoking restrictions had been put in place earlier. I wish society had made it more difficult for my Dad to smoke. I miss him.

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LIZZIE888



You are so right... everyone smoked when I grew up. My dad smoked all the time and as kids we'd sit on his knee while he had a cigarette. Pipe smokers, cigar smokers - they were all around.

I started work in the 1980s, when the dangers of smoking were well documented, but smoking was still permitted in all the hospitals I worked in. In fact they had "no smoking" zones where you weren't allowed to smoke, the rest of the world being a smoking area.

Funny thing is... even though there are less smokers now and the number of places you can smoke has shrunk exponentially, there seem to be more cigarette butts on the ground than there ever have been. Is this because people who choose to disregard the health advice about smoking have a more devil-may-care attitude about everything anyway? Or is everyone just much less bothered than they used to be?

3036 days ago



DONNA5281



3036 days ago



DEBBY4576



My mom, who is 91 smoked for only 5 years, and they blame her COPD on that. It's a devastating habit. I think we , including her all smoked when we were little and all the way up till we left home, because Dad smoked. No one knew the effects of second hand smoke. I too, enjoy going into even a bar, and not being smoked out or feeling sick the next day from all the smoke (not the alcohol, I don't drink haha). I cannot for the life of me see why all the teens still start smoking. The data and research is out on it and has been for years. Guess they don't believe it, as a kid will do. I'm sorry your Dad is gone, so is mine, and I miss him too.

3036 days ago



COCK-ROBIN



3036 days ago



COCK-ROBIN



3036 days ago



BAMAJAM



I am so sorry you lost your father too soon....As Dawn posted, I do not understand why young people of today start smoking! I have grown sons and when they were young pre-teens, there was a neighbor who chained smoked. His cancer made it necessary for his voice box to be removed. His "labored and froggy" speech made a tremendous impression on my sons. NO sermon against smoking was needed, because this neighbor's sad condition "scared" my kids! They knew the smoking habit caused this illness....

My own dad smoked cigars, and often sent me to the store to buy them. I hated the cigar smoke odor, and there was no escaping the nasty fumes.

Thank you for your important blog.

3037 days ago



MERRYMARY42



the expense alone should keep most people from smoking, the smell, stinky home, and then you think about the health problems, I did smoke, one time, not alot, and quit in my 30's I do not know why I did, the smell bothered me, the smoke bothered me, and after I did quit, I started coughing and that continued for about 6 months, maybe a very good think that I did quit, my husband and I both quit the same day, our son is not a smoker and neither is his 2 boys, Thank Goodness

3037 days ago



TIGGERJEAN



It's a great reminder that your habits and your health have an effect on your family - what you choose to do or not to do really can be a life -or-death decision.

3037 days ago



CELIAMINER



As Suzy said, you blog touches hearts...I can see that from the comments. My dad quit, too...when he lapsed into a coma in his final days of dying from mouth and throat cancer at age 64. That was 1989. It took me a long time to stop being angry at him for killing himself that way. If he were still alive, he would be 88.

3037 days ago



CD8467616



You certainly touched a chord here. My dad smoked cigarettes, then a pipe, then finally quit. I smoked from age 18 to age 30, then quit. I used to smoke in class in college, when cigarettes were 25 cents a pack at the student union. I smoked during my pregnancy -- no one told me not to! When I was in the hospital after having the baby (who turned out perfectly, thank goodness) there were ashtrays on the bedside tables. Actually, that was the day I quit. It just suddenly seemed totally disgusting and I never smoked again. I consider myself very lucky that the compulsion was lifted in one go. I never completely lost the compulsion to overeat, however, Still working on that one.

3037 days ago



KA_JUN



Touching blog. As someone who used to partake and quit, one of the best things I ever did. Sad that we have this product being marketed to us that has no socially redeeming qualities whatsoever. May your father rest in peace.

3037 days ago



JANET552



What a loving tribute to your dad! Smoking was so commonplace back in those days. We should all be thankful isn't anymore.

3037 days ago



MNNICE



Quitting was one of the hardest thing I've ever done, but I'm so proud that I did it and have been smoke-free for 14 years. Even while watching my dad suffer through and die from emphysema, I couldn't quit. It is truly a horrible addiction, and I pray every day that I quit early enough to prevent adverse health effects.

3037 days ago



GINA180847



Having studied why people smoke I do understand it. People can opt out by lighting up and that is understandable only because life gets intolerable sometimes and we feel the need to leave. My experience was that I could not stand the taste in my mouth any more so went to a hypnotist and by quitting became a very different person. I would smoke in my dreams and wake up in a cold sweat thinking I had started again and it was terrifying.

3037 days ago



GINIEMIE



My dad was a 4 pack a day smoker. When he cut back on cigarettes he switched to the pipe. As a child I lived in a smokey environment. My mom smoke during the war, but I don't remember her smoking when we were little. My father blamed himself for my mom's death-but there didn't seem to be a link for her metastasized melanoma and his smoking. He quit a year and three months after mom's death when he had a heart attack. I experimentally smoked as a teen, quit then picked up social smoking in my early thirties-I was trying to lose weight and active in a theater group where many smoked. One day my, then, eight year old daughter snatched a cigarette from my hands and stomped on it, screaming at me that she did not want me to die. I quit right then and have not smoked since. I have allergy induced asthma now and along with perfumed products (air fresheners/perfumed hair products/deodorant/etc) I am allergic to cigarette smoke. I hear you and thank you for making us recall and refresh why WE SHOULD NOT smoke or accept smoking in our homes. I'd be in the emergency room if someone lit up in my house.



3037 days ago



SUZYMOBILE



Your blog will touch many hearts today. Most of us had parents who smoked and were killed by it. I certainly did. One of the smartest things I ever did, and the best possible thing for my health, was to quit smoking once and for all, 8 years ago. I'm afraid Bill never will and, worse, he smokes in the house now. I can only hope that he stops both, but I certainly can't MAKE him do so.

3037 days ago



MJZHERE



My dad died from emphysema - he chainsmoked his whole life. Fathers who smoked is one thing I wish we didn't have in common. It was such a horrible way to die - I don't know what they do now but because of the condition of his lungs, they wouldn't give him any pain medications (even with several gallbladder stones). I know I am probably over the top in this area, but I tell people (especially young people) all the time about how horrible his death was from smoking. I think it is only fair that they have all the information.

3037 days ago



CD11026554



I remember both my parents smoking back in the 60's, kids could even buy sweet cigarettes and tobacco! With so much awareness of the health issues together with the stigma now attached to smoking, I can't understand why so many teenagers still take it up. Great blog!

3037 days ago



WILSONWR



What a touching blog. Aside from "experimental" smoking as a teenager, I'm glad I never picked up the habit. Losing your Dad too soon should be a lesson to all. It's also a shame you had to live with the ill effects growing up.

My Dad was career Army - he spent 3 years in WWII, a year in Korea, and 3 1/2 years in Vietnam. He smoked during his early years in the Army, but he said he quit when cigarettes went to 25 cents a pack. He just stopped "cold turkey" because he wasn't paying that much money to smoke. Too bad it isn't that easy for most. I lost my Dad to Parkinson's Disease and Colon Cancer - I'm sure a result of being sprayed numerous times with Agent Orange in Vietnam. I miss him also.
3037 days ago



MRSJERRYBUSH



It's one part of our lives that many would like to "do over" differently. Unfortunately many of our family members, now deceased, didn't get that opportunity.
3037 days ago



BOILHAM



I am about as old as you, Eileen. My memory is that we all knew, even as children, that smoking was bad for you. We called them "coffin nails" and "cancer sticks" even in the early 50s, as a whistlin' in the dark way of dealing with what we knew to be a dangerous and potentially deadly habit.

Yeah, we all knew, but chose to ignore it. I remember laughing as a teenager when we first saw the surgeon generals warning on the 'new cigarette packs'. We laughed and said things like "oh gee, really? Cigarettes are bad for you? Who'da thunk it?"

We knew and we ignored it. Now that cigarette smoking has (finally) become a source of irritation to most, rather than a source of pleasure as it was in the past, we can act like we didn't know. But we did.

3037 days ago



MISCHAKEO



I grew up like you with the Camel cigarette ads. I wish they had learned sooner that smoking was bad for you. If you look at old movies they were filled with smokers.

Your father sounds like a wonderful man who encouraged you to be athletic. I miss my father also, who encouraged me to be athletic. Our fathers live in our hearts. Hugs.
3037 days ago



NANNABLACK



I'm sending you
3037 days ago



as I know what it feels like to miss someone you love. Thanks.



CD10259955



I hope your message reaches at least one person and inspires them to quit (or never pick up that first one). I pray every day that my son quits; he didn't grow up in a smoking home, and it breaks my heart that he started. I quit more than 25 years ago, cold turkey. One of the hardest things to do, but everyone should know that they can do it.

I miss my Dad too, so I'm sending you
3037 days ago



. Thanks for sharing your story.



CD13279394



Smoking, aside from selfish, is one of the stupidest habits you can pick up, and the honestly way to stop is to JUST STOP!!! As a medical student and now a doctor, smoking was always such an obviously unhealthy, and yet such a necessary habit for me. But when I decided to quit in December 2012, I just stopped. None of the cutting back stuff for me. I just STOPPED. And haven'e touched a cigarette since.
3037 days ago

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