

Personal Journey — Participant



PARTICIPANT'S OBJECTIVE: *To understand why I smoke/chew tobacco.*

Welcome back to the Second Wind program. By now you have thought about why you want to quit using commercial tobacco products, the method you will use to stop, and have chosen a stop date. Congratulations! This is a wonderful first step. As your stop date nears, there are a number of things you may want to do to prepare yourself for the next step...

Think about the factors that influenced your decision to start smoking. We will use these topics to begin our Talking Circle.

- ❖ *What situations triggered you to smoke then?*
- ❖ *What situations trigger you to smoke today?*
- ❖ *Do you smoke with particular people? At particular times?*

As you begin to break your addiction to commercial tobacco, you will find that these same situations may continue to influence your cravings. It is important for you to be aware of the situations that trigger you to smoke in order to avoid or overcome them.

Nicotine Dependence/Addiction

The overwhelming majority of people who smoke have a strong physiological need for the nicotine contained in tobacco products. This need is referred to as nicotine dependence or nicotine addiction because it is nicotine that is responsible for the addictive effect. People who are nicotine dependent experience withdrawal symptoms upon quitting. When a person smokes regularly, the body becomes tolerant of the amount of nicotine absorbed into the body, requiring more and more cigarettes in order to get the same physical effect.

You are in the late stages of dependence if you make the possession of cigarettes a priority in your daily life (i.e. will buy cigarettes even when in an economic pinch), when you must smoke to feel normal, when you must go places where smoking is allowed, when all your “friends” smoke, or when you have difficulty stopping.

Withdrawal Symptoms

Often, people who have become addicted to tobacco products experience withdrawal symptoms when their body stops getting nicotine. Some of the symptoms include:

- Shaky hands
- Headaches
- Hunger
- Nervousness
- Lack of concentration
- Difficulty sleeping
- Irritability

In the next session we will begin to explore methods for coping with withdrawal. For now, reassure yourself with the realization that withdrawal symptoms are only temporary (greatest during the first two weeks after quitting) and that you can acquire all of the skills necessary to overcome these symptoms.

Continue to Prepare

Have you found new, healthy ways to fill your time? Prepare yourself in body, mind, and spirit as your stop date approaches. As we mentioned last week, continue to develop alternative habits for yourself. Take a walk, drink more fluids, and get more rest, exercise, or work on a hobby. Give yourself pep talks and remind yourself of the benefits of quitting. Imagine yourself handling stress in new ways. Share your feelings with someone you trust. Ask the Creator for strength, meditate, have others join you in prayer, and create a ritual in preparation for quitting.

Native Spirit

My spirit is with the earth
With the mountains
With the water
With the trees

Strength flows from my spirit
Through my heart
Through my body
Through my family
Native spirit
Give me strength

**F. Hodge
— Wailaki**

Excerpt taken from: A Guide to Help Indian People Quit Smoking. California Rural Indian Health Board