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NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

The Right to Smoke in Public

Currently, a new issue is coming into focus as a threat from tobacco usage - the possible health effects to non-smokers. Smokers feel they have the right to smoke any time and any place they choose. They feel that they are only hurting themselves. But the increasing evidence that side-stream smoke is posing a health threat to the people surrounding the smoker has opened up a whole new controversy.

It is known that children who grow up with smoking parents have more chronic respiratory diseases, such as colds, bronchitis and pneumonias, than children who grow up in non-smoking households. Many people are allergic to cigarette smoke. Reactions vary from mild eye irritation and sneezing to more threatening reactions, especially for predisposed individuals such as asthmatics, people with bronchitis and the elderly. Patients with angina pectoris who are exposed to carbon monoxide from cigarette smoke can tolerate less exercise before experiencing chest pain. Some studies now indicate that second hand smoke may be the second leading cause of lung cancer occurring in non-smokers. As a consequence, many individuals and society as a whole are turning against smokers.

To a large degree, society dictates the way its members should and should not behave. In fact, cigarette smoking got its start due to the potential health risks faced by society from the earlier use of tobacco for chewing. Tobacco chewing was a common practice of men in the late nineteenth century. Spitting, due to the excessive saliva produced while chewing tobacco, was then considered acceptable behavior. Spittoons were commonplace in homes, businesses and public gathering places. When it was realized that the spitting was responsible for the spread of the germs that caused tuberculosis, society's acceptance of spitting in public was reevaluated.

Spitting was soon viewed as an anti-social behavior, and tobacco chewing was voluntarily stopped by previous users. At about the same time, the first machines for mass production of cigarettes were introduced, and many tobacco users welcomed this new method of nicotine delivery, which did not require spitting and seemed to be risk

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free.

While tuberculosis and infectious diseases are no longer the major health threats they used to be, degenerative diseases such as heart disease and cancers are now of major concern. With the possibility of smoking contributing to an increase of these diseases in non-smokers, society is becoming intolerant of cigarette smoking.

It will probably reach the point where the disdain for smoking will be similar to society's feeling toward public spitting. If a visitor in your house constantly spits in your ashtray, you would probably toss him out. Smokers are beginning to encounter this same response from family, friends, employers and anyone else with whom they come in contact. They are not welcome as long as they have a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe in their possession.

If you don't wish to become socially ostracized due to the continuation of a dirty and degrading form of drug addiction, don't smoke nicotine. You will be free to go anywhere, any time, without worrying about whether you have cigarettes and will be allowed to smoke them. Life becomes much simpler once you break free from this disgusting addiction. Stay free from cigarettes - NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

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