

Responses to Excuses People Give for Not Wanting to Quit

Reasons:

- It's hard to stop smoking.
- I can't quit.
- I don't have the willpower.
- I am addicted.

Response:

In fact you are absolutely correct! Most people have a very difficult time quitting. Many will say that it's the hardest thing that they have ever done – so you're not alone in how you feel. But please remember many people who feel just like you have successfully quit. I know that it's very hard, but it's not impossible. There are techniques that you can learn that will help you through the quitting process and there are experts who are available to teach them to you. I know that you know how much smoking is harming you. You may want to try this: everyday while having a cigarette focus on those harmful effects or on the things you don't like about smoking (for example cost, smell of stale cigarette smoke on your clothes and hair and on your breath too.) Over time you might find that you have finally had enough and make the decision to quit just like so many others have been successful at doing.

You may want to give this a try: When you feel an urge to have a cigarette, wait 5 minutes. Tomorrow, wait 10 minutes and the next day 15 minutes. If you can wait 15 minutes at least once, it's an indicator that you can quit successfully.

Reasons:

- I know someone who lived to be 92 and he smoked his whole life.
- I have a friend who smoked during two pregnancies and her kids are really big and healthy.

Response:

It sounds like you like to gamble! This is an issue of odds, like gambling. Your friend was lucky and may have beaten the odds. The problem is that we don't know if you'll (emphasize) be so lucky. I think that you'll agree that your best bet is to quit.

Reasons:

- I'm not ready to quit yet. There's too much happening in my life. I'll quit later.

Response:

Yes you are right – and I understand that life can be very hectic and stressful, but the bottom line is that in reality if you keep saying to yourself I'll quit when things settle down, you may never find the right time to quit – life is always hectic in one way or another. If you wait until

next month or the month after that will your life have slowed down so much that you'll feel ready to make a quit attempt? The right time to quit doesn't just happen, you make it happen. Try this – every day think about the benefits of quitting, talk to friends about quitting - tell them that you're thinking about quitting, think about how you will quit. Soon, you'll feel like it's the right time to quit. I know that you can do it!

Reasons:

- I don't really want to stop smoking. I enjoy it.

Response: (give the patient time to respond to each question)

I understand that smoking can be enjoyable. What is it exactly that you enjoy most? What do you least like about smoking? What kind of an effect do you think smoking has on your health? When you weigh the up side and down side to smoking – the biggest up side being an improvement in your health – does it outweigh the enjoyment you get? Think about it. Would you like to experience better health, be better able to play with your children, have much more energy, no more smell of stale cigarette smoke on your clothes and hair and breath? Quitting can lead to a lot of enjoyment!

Reasons:

- I'll gain weight.

Response:

I know that weight is important to you and that you don't want to gain weight, but if you can put that on the "back burner" for now and focus on the benefits you'd get from quitting you can deal with your weight later. Please try to tackle just one problem at a time. No matter what way you look at it – stopping smoking, even if it leads to some weight gain, is the smartest thing you can do for your overall health. And did you know that there are medications that are now available that will help you quit and also limit or prevent weight gain? I can recommend one for you.

Reasons:

- I don't smoke that much.

Response:

I'm happy to hear that you don't smoke many cigarettes, but there is absolutely no safe level of smoking. No matter how few cigarettes you smoke – every cigarette you smoke is harming you. However, there is one good thing about the low number of cigarettes you smoke – not being a heavy smoker should make it a lot easier to quit!

Reasons:

- It's too late.

Response:

Research has shown that it's never too late to stop smoking and get the benefits from quitting. Did you know that within 3 hours of quitting, just 3 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the blood stream drops to normal; in 24 hours the chance of having a heart attack

decreases; in 3 months lung function increases up to 30% and in 1 year the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker! Not only will you gain added years of healthy living, fresher breath, improved taste, but you'll also save a lot of money! Let's face it - it's never too late to save money! Is there something you'd really like to treat yourself too or something you'd like to buy for someone? Let's figure out how much you spend on cigarettes a week, a month and a year – you'll be surprised at how much you could save and how quickly.

Reasons:

- I'm under a lot of pressure and I find that smoking relaxes me.

Response:

Many people who smoke feel the same way – they say that smoking makes them feel more relaxed. The relaxation you feel, however, is not the relaxation you'd get from listening to music or from some other relaxing activity – it's different. The relaxation you feel from a cigarette is actually an artificial "high" you are experiencing. Your body has become accustomed to nicotine, so when you get the nicotine your body craves you feel relaxed or less agitated or nervous. In reality, nicotine is actually a stimulant that temporarily raises your heart rate, blood pressure, and adrenaline level, and leads to serious heart disease and cancer in most people.

Reasons:

- Smoking stimulates me and helps me to be more effective in my work.

Response:

Many smokers feel the same way – they say that smoking makes them feel more focused and more effective at work. In reality, however, you are feeling more focused and effective because by having a cigarette you provide your body with the nicotine it's craving and as a result, you are less distracted, agitated and nervous. And because you feel less distracted etc. – you are better able to focus. In reality, nicotine is actually a stimulant that temporarily raises your heart rate, blood pressure, and adrenaline level – it's far more harmful than helpful. When people quit, over time their body and brain begin to function better. That's because the carbon monoxide that your body is producing that comes from the cigarettes you are smoking is displaced by oxygen in the bloodstream. And it's actually the oxygen that helps you think more clearly and helps you focus better. It's a proven fact!

Reasons:

- I smoke only low tar cigarettes.
- I smoke only light cigarettes.

Response:

It's good that you are trying to cut down on the harm your smoking is doing to your body, but unfortunately, low tar cigarettes are not any less harmful than regular cigarettes. Studies have found that tar exposure from a low tar cigarette can be just as high as that from a regular cigarette. The bottom line is that low tar cigarettes are no safer than regular cigarettes - there is no such thing as a safe cigarette, as the tobacco advertisers have led

smokers to believe. The only way to reduce the risk of smoking-related diseases and premature death is to stop smoking completely.

Reasons:

- I can't afford the nicotine gum (patch, cessation program, etc.).

Response:

It's true that nicotine gum (patch, cessation program) is expensive, but have you compared what you'd spend on nicotine gum to what you spend on cigarettes? I believe that you'd find that the financial cost is almost even. And that's not taking into consideration the "cost" of smoking on your health. By quitting smoking you will not only improve your health, but you would also save on what you have to pay for expensive doctor's visits and medications.

Reasons:

- I'm going to die someday anyway. So what if I lose a couple of years at the end of my life from smoking?

Response:

It's true that we all will die some day, but wouldn't you rather die peacefully of old age rather than as a younger man (woman) of cancer or some other long and painful wasting disease caused by smoking? If that is not a concern of yours, then consider how the people who love you would feel seeing you suffer that way, losing you too early in your life to a disease that you could have prevented if you stopped smoking.

Reasons:

- It's a free country – why shouldn't people be allowed to smoke?

Response:

You're right, I agree, it's a free country – with that said, why then should people who don't smoke be subjected to second hand smoke from people who do smoke? And why should people who don't smoke pay toward the cost of treating people who develop cancer and other health issues because they smoke? In reality, when you smoke it's not just you who is affected, it has an effect on others too. Non-smokers have rights too.