

# **Tobacco Free Florida**

## **Written Journal - Quitting Smoking**

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2/17/09

I just received my video camera today. Pretty cool. I opened everything, charged it and recorded my first video...in HD. I talked about how I started smoking when I was a freshman in college. It was a stupid decision, but when you crave something and are addicted to something it is really hard to stop. I know this journey to quit is going to be tough and that I need to make some real life changes. It is more than just quitting a bad habit, it is unconditioning routines and lifestyle. I have conditioned myself to smoke cigarettes at certain times like:

1. Wake up in the morning (1-2)
2. Drive to work (2-3)
3. Office break before lunch (1-2)
4. Lunch break (2-4)
5. Office break (1-3)
6. Drive home from work (2-4)
7. While at home (2-4)
8. After dinner (1-2)
9. Winding down (2-4)
10. Before bed (1-2)

Even if I just add up all the minimums that I just listed above...that is 15 cigarettes a day or more I smoke. And if I go out...FORGET ABOUT IT...I will smoke an additional 10 to 20 cigarettes.

I always said I was going to quit because I didn't want to smoke when I have kids...but I think I was just putting it off and I didn't have a motivation to quit yet...until now. I am both excited and nervous to quit smoking, but overall I would say I am thankful to be given this opportunity.

I got through Day 1 without smoking...wasn't too bad, but I know it is just the beginning...

2/19/09

I flew to Charlotte, North Carolina today to visit some friends for the long weekend. We are going out to a pub for some beers in a little bit...I know it is going to be hard not to smoke. It seems everywhere in North Carolina they allow smoking...probably because they produce a lot of the tobacco around there. Well I hope I can be good this weekend...it's not going to be very easy. I know these friends don't smoke, but I have been a little down and depressed and I know I am going to want to smoke for comfort. I will try to stay strong.

2/22/09

Today the Magic play the Miami Heat in Orlando. I am at the airport about to fly back to Orlando from Charlotte...it is 5:30am in the freaking morning and I want a cigarette so bad. Nothing makes me want to smoke more than when I have to wait around...for anything. Also all these people and lines and ARGH I just want to go outside and smoke. Luckily for me I also don't want to have to go through security again...that is even more a pain in the ass.

My trip to Charlotte was kinda bad when it comes to being tobacco free. I smoked a couple cigarettes on Thursday, on Friday and on Saturday as well. It was really hard after going out drinking with my friends, and not smoking...but today is Sunday and life is hell again and I am going back to work today after being on vacation and I will have to deal with stress and anxiety and not smoking. Whatever...

2/27/09

Let me start by saying that I have had a pretty good week. Since my trip to Charlotte I have not smoked at all! Anytime I really wanted a cigarette I would whip out my video camera and start recording myself. I realized that in the car I just needed to keep myself distracted...so I talked to myself, sang to the camera etc. When I was at work and I wanted a cigarette I would go outside the cigarette smoking area and just take a break, but I would breathe in fresh air rather than smoke. I also have been chewing a ton of gum. When I got home in the afternoons or evenings I would have all this anxiety and energy, so I decided to pick-up a new hobby...exercising! I have been running on the elliptical machine, using my WiiFit and playing basketball with my friends. Being able to exercise has helped a lot. Also I stopped going out and drinking because I know I am not at a point that I can drink and not want to smoke.

Tonight was Tobacco Free Florida Night at the Magic game. We played the Pistons...and lost, which sucks. Tobacco Free Florida had this Smokifier Van that takes a picture of you and shows you what you would look like aged and what you would look like aged as a smoker. Jeez I look frickin horrible. Also they had two really good seats at the game, but in those seats sat skeletons with shirts that said how many fans are killed each year from smoking. It was a strong way to make a point. I guess I realized tonight that I could be just another statistic...I could be one of those skeletons. I am glad I am quitting. I am not going to lie, it is hard...but I know I can do it.

2/28/09

Today we were at ESPN the Weekend at Disney's Hollywood Studios. I was there to assist the Orlando Magic Dunking Dancers with their dunk routine. It was cool being able to tell all the girls that I was quitting smoking. A bunch of them knew I was a smoker because we all went to Puerto Rico a year and a half ago for an event and they saw me smoke when we went out.

Also when we go out sometimes after Magic games to bars or clubs or whatever they have seen me smoke.

It was not too difficult to not smoke at Disney. I didn't see smokers at all and I didn't smell people smoking either. I think Disney has designated smoking areas for people that smoke. I used to be against that, but I am happy that I didn't have to have people smoking in my face all day.

The Dancers did an awesome job with their dunk show. After the dunk show we got a VIP escort around the park so we were able to ride a bunch of rides without waiting in line...sweet!

3/4/09

Today we had a Tobacco Free Florida Pep Rally at a school to talk about the importance of not smoking. When I was growing up I remember these things seemed so cheesy to me...I think they still are. There must be a better way to teach kids not to smoke. I had a really frustrating afternoon. I thought I was going to get out of work early and I wound up having to stay late and drop tickets off. Not only is the car a place I like to smoke, I was in a lot of rush hour traffic which makes me want to smoke and I had planned to get off early and exercise and everything just felt like it was getting ruined. I eventually made it home and I did exercise and I feel better, but when I was in the car today...oh boy...if I would have had a cigarette I might have smoked it.

3/9/09

So on Thursday we did this thing Kaboom where the whole staff goes and builds a playground in one day. It is my third year doing it and I think it is one of the best community service projects we do all year long. I recorded a story about Kaboom last year...I was hiding in between some cars smoking my cigarette because I didn't want people from the office to see me. Of all the people in the world who could've walked up, my VP and the new Executive Vice President caught me smoking. They didn't say anything at the moment, but my Vice President asked me later when I was going to quit. I told him I never tried and I didn't really want to. I was so embarrassed and if anything, it was them that I was hiding my habit from. It was nice this year at Kaboom to not have to hide somewhere to smoke.

You know, my co-workers for the most part are ALL tobacco free. Hardly anybody smokes, and I was probably the youngest regular smoker here. I feel proud being able to tell people I quit. It is also great reinforcement to not smoke because I would be embarrassed if any of my co-workers saw me smoking after I have been bragging to everyone that I quit.

Last night was a big victory for me because it was the first night since I quite smoking that I went out drinking and I didn't smoke!!! Yay!!! I am not going to lie, it was hard. I have been chewing a lot of gum and I am getting sick of it. I probably drank more than I should have as well because I

wanted to smoke so I just kept my mouth busy by drinking...when will the cravings just go away?

3/13/09

So I am at this carnival festival type event in Winter Springs right now and I have to work this event until midnight...ouch! I really want a cigarette badly. A lot of people here are smoking. Speaking of that, we worked a Watch Party for the Magic game at NASCAR Grille on Monday and they put us in an area near the smoking patio and the smoke just poured into our area. It is hard to not want to smoke when it is in your face like that.

I cleaned my car out the other day. It is nice when it doesn't smell like smoke; although I think the deodorizer only masks the smell...it is hard for me to get rid of the smell completely. Still no cigarettes for me!!! Yay!!!

3/19/09

So I am at work now and I am feeling pretty good. I was sick the last four days so it was really easy for me not to smoke. Now that I am feeling better I hope the cravings don't return.

I look behind me and I see my chart that has how many days I have been tobacco free. I see that this is my 31<sup>st</sup> day since I quit smoking. The only mess-ups I had were while I was in Charlotte. I am not drinking still because it is too hard to not want to smoke while drinking. My cravings have decreased significantly. I do not wake up and crave a smoke anymore. Driving in the car is still difficult but I do things like sing at the top of my lungs or call people on the phone to keep myself busy and distracted. I am still working out or playing basketball almost daily as well. I have set goals for myself. I am trying to be healthier, so I am working out, eating better and getting more sleep. I feel so much better. Quitting smoking has been a whole lifestyle change for me and it has lead to good things. I am finally motivated to get in shape, I am not going out drinking anymore, I have found that I do have the will power and strength to do this and I am also really proud of myself. Another positive thing is that I don't smell. Everywhere I went I was carrying lotion and cologne to make sure to cover up any smell of smoke I had. I feel like I smell good now everywhere I go (as long as I don't sweat).

I realize that I have come a long way in just 31 days and I can't wait to see what the future brings. I may still carry the camera in case I get the urge to smoke and I just want to distract myself by filming and talk to the camera. I keep telling people that I am so happy to have had the opportunity to quit, but I realize that I have always had the opportunity to quit...I just needed to take advantage of it. Better late than never...