



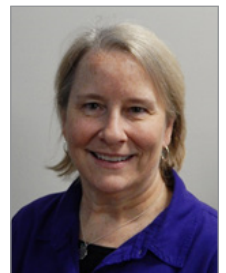

NEW DIRECTIONS®

Why I quit
and how I did it



Joan's Story

"I hope that my story will inspire others to quit. I can't promise you the change will be easy, but I can promise you it will be worth it."



Why I quit and how I did it

Joan's Story

Joan manages one of the case management teams at New Directions. She formerly was a health coach and led the tobacco cessation program for Employee Assistance Program (EAP) clients. Joan also serves on the wellness committee for New Directions' employees. Joan does not guarantee the methods that helped her quit smoking will work for everyone, but she hopes her story will be an inspiration for others to quit.

JOAN'S STORY

At age 14, I decided to 'try' smoking because my parents, siblings and some peers smoked. It seemed cool and grown up to me. I loved the Virginia Slim commercials.

Within a short time, my older sister showed me how to smoke 'right' by actually inhaling. I was off to the races after that, smoking over a pack a day for the next 14 years.

Stop. Start. Repeat.

My efforts to quit began when I was 17. Sometimes I tried over a bet with other smokers, while other times I tried by gradually reducing the amount, by counting my cigarettes, or by having a friend hold my pack and limit my access.

A few times I made it for months without smoking. But then I'd get lulled into thinking I could smoke 'just one.' One was never enough.

Coughs, infections and pain set in at age 20

Once I hit my 20's, my back and lungs started to hurt. I developed a cough and battled more than my fair share of colds and infections. Not only did I feel bad physically, but also mentally. While going to college, I worked with at-risk adolescents who were allowed to smoke at a group home. I'd take my smoke breaks with them, despite feeling guilty about being a negative role model.

My success started with a detailed plan

After I completed my degree, I made my final, big push to quit. I completely cleaned and deodorized my car, home and clothes. I joined a soccer team to start exercising. I started chewing gum. I bought and kept Nicorette gum with me at all times. I kept a rubber band on my wrist and snapped it when I had a craving (ouch!). I chewed a lot of Nicorette, which caused me to develop a nausea response when I smelled smoke. I told everyone I wasn't smoking. I stayed away from places that allowed smoking.

Saving money and feeling good

I set my 'smoking dollars' aside each month and treated myself once in a while to new clothes. I also charted how much money I saved each week by not smoking, and wrote the amount on my calendar. I spent more time outside, experiencing the scent of nature – not smoke.

What quitting did for my lifestyle

It's been many years since I smoked my last cigarette. I feel grateful for my healthy life today. Quitting started a domino effect of healthy habits for me. Was the journey easy? No way. I got grumpy because I missed my smoking habit. I failed many times. But I know the alternative – suffering from a chronic condition – would be worse. And I witness that when I see my mother, who is a lifelong smoker with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease.

Coaching others to quit was so gratifying

The pride and accomplishment I felt after I quit exceeded many other things I've achieved in my life. Years after I stopped smoking, I had the opportunity to become a New Directions' health coach. In that role, I helped our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) clients quit smoking through our smoking cessation program. That was a tremendous privilege and brought me great joy.

I hope that my story will inspire others to quit. I can't promise you the change will be easy, but I can promise you it will be worth it.

-Joan

If you or a family member needs support to quit smoking, please contact your company's employee assistance program, your insurance plan, or the National Cancer Institute for helpful [tips](#) and resources.

For employers interested in a smoking cessation program for your organization, please call New Directions at 855.340.6297. Or email us at sales@ndbh.com.



About New Directions

Founded in 1995, New Directions helps people live healthy, balanced lives. The fast-growing health care company provides managed behavioral health care services, employee assistance programs (EAPs), organizational consulting and health coaching to large regional health plans, Fortune 100 companies, employers and labor groups. For more information, visit ndbh.com.