

Just Imagine



eleven stories of becoming
smokefree in pregnancy

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This book is dedicated to our children.

Please share it with others.

Smokefree Support Options

If you would like support to become smokefree we suggest that you talk with your midwife, doctor or another health professional, or call the smokefree coordinator of your district health board. These people will know the support options in your area.

Or call the Quitline on 0800 778 778.

Acknowledgements

Just imagine if every child was smokefree from the start. What would that mean for our children, families, communities, nation? The eleven stories in this book tell of bringing this vision closer. They are told by participants of Smokechange. We acknowledge the hundreds of other people with similar stories that are not told here.

These stories have been shared in the hope that they might encourage and inspire others. They are not just for people who smoke. They are for any person who is not happy with the way things are and wants to see a change in his or her personal, professional or family life.

We are most grateful to the story-tellers themselves. They believed in this project, participated in interviews and were willing for their stories and photographs to be published in this book. We also acknowledge them for the changes they have made and the leadership they have shown to others.

Threaded through their stories of change are stories of support. We wish to acknowledge those who gave support:

- family members, friends and others who were there for people on a day to day basis
- the professionals who raised the issue and nudged people towards Smokechange support
- the Smokechange team who were a constant through the ups and downs of every person's process.

On behalf of all who read these stories we say 'thank you'.

Foreword from an obstetrician

A smokefree pregnancy is one of the best gifts a family can give their child and it is a gift that can last a lifetime. When a pregnancy becomes smokefree, cigarette toxins go. There is more oxygen and blood supply for the placenta and baby, making a safe and healthy start to life more likely.

If all New Zealand women were smokefree in pregnancy we would have far less suffering and loss in pregnancy. Smoking is the main preventable risk for a wide range of pregnancy problems. These include miscarriage, very early birth, poor growth of the baby, bleeding from the placenta, stillbirth and infant death. In my practice as an obstetrician, dealing with high risk pregnancies, I see women with these complications every week.

Supporting every pregnancy to be smokefree is one of the single most important aspects of antenatal care. As an obstetrician, I believe it is a professional obligation to discuss smoking at the first antenatal visit, refer parents who smoke for extra support and follow up at every subsequent visit.



May the stories that follow inspire you. They tell of different people in different situations who took up the challenge to become smokefree and were empowered by doing so.

Lesley McCowan
Associate Professor of Obstetrics
University of Auckland
National Women's Health, Auckland DHB

Foreword from a midwife

These stories highlight for mothers, and for midwives, that they can, and do, make a difference. They show that, with support and encouragement, people can achieve goals not thought of.

Pregnancy and childbirth are life changing events for women and their families. They are times when women make life decisions about their bodies and birth experiences. These decisions equip them with strength that can change their lives and influence them to achieve things they had not thought possible.

Midwives understand this. They see it over and over again. Knowing the power of self-determination to bring about change drives midwives to actively encourage and support women to change their attitudes and habits about smoking in pregnancy and to accept support. The important role of midwives is made clear in these stories.

For nine years the New Zealand College of Midwives has been a partner with Change for our Children (formerly Education for Change) in providing smokefree education to midwives. Participants have welcomed the 'partners in change' approach and applied it to other issues of concern, such as family violence or their own smoking, as well as to smokefree pregnancies.

May midwives and parents read these heart-warming stories and feel great pride in the women and men who shared them with us.

Karen Guilliland
Chief Executive Officer
New Zealand College of Midwives





Antz

Antz is one year smokefree. A heart-felt comment from her nine-year-old son triggered her to change.

'... I don't want you and Granddad to die.'

What got me started this time was when my older son gave me the harsh word. He saw an ad on TV to stop smoking and for some strange reason he just turned around and said 'Mummy, you shouldn't be smoking anymore.' And I'm like, 'Why?' and he said 'Because I don't want you and Granddad to die.' And it was sort of like, 'Oh yeah, that's a bit scary', because my partner smokes as well.

I said 'Well, why don't you growl at your Granddad and your Daddy?' And he said 'No, its you, Mum.' So I quite took it to the heart. We were just sitting there watching TV, but I had to go outside, after he said that. It was him saying that. It got to me.

I smoked with both boys, when I was carrying. They both turned out fine, but I didn't like getting people's reactions when I was out. I used to hide behind my partner for a sneaky puff at the plaza. I don't want to hide. The last thing I want is to walk across the plaza and have people think 'There goes that Māori woman smoking with an unborn child.' I got these weird vibes.

Last year I was pregnant, but I miscarried. That sort of took a toll on me as well. I don't blame myself for the miscarriage. But I thought 'Oh, stuff it.' and that's when I called Smokechange. She sent me out the patches and gum, but I never took them. I said 'Nah. I'm going to do it the hard way.' Thought I'd just do the 'cold turkey' style..

The first two weeks were hell. My dad would come in and go for a smoke. I had to have something in my hands, so I played on

my phone. Crosswords helped, too. Then my friend called and asked if I wanted to play netball. Ever since I've been playing netball, it just hasn't dawned on me to smoke. I'm just enjoying the air and my breathing is really good.

The first game of netball I could feel my chest getting tight, a real pain, but I took my time and kept playing. It started to come right. After a while, I found I could run faster and not have to lean over to catch my breath. Then I wanted to power walk everywhere! I just wanted to walk. I felt a lot more energetic.

When I'd smoke, I'd get up and the first thing I'd do was have a cigarette. The first time I'd eat would be at lunch or just after. Now I get up and have breakfast and three course meals. I just jump out of bed and it's 'Come on kids, lets go.'

I feel much better than when I was smoking. I'm not the same person. Now I'm chatty, I've got more to say. When I was smoking I found it hard to have a conversation because I would run out of breath.

My children, they've noticed that I get on the floor and play cards with them. Before I'd just sit there and just watch them, and they'd say 'Can you come and play?' and I'd say 'Na.' because I'd just had a cigarette and you don't want them smelling it on you. Now I'm taking them down the park and running around with them. That's what they like. Now we make it a Sunday thing so they always look forward

'Ever since I've been playing netball, it just hasn't dawned on me to smoke.'

'When I was smoking I found it hard to have a conversation because I would run out of breath.'

to Sundays. But if it rains, we'll just find something here to do, or just mess the house up, make huts.

Usually I'd just sit there and have a cigarette and just watch them instead of mingling with them. It's good that both me and my partner are playing with our children 'cause before we'd say 'Go and play in your room. Mummy and Daddy are watching TV.' That was like pushing them aside. Or, we'll be outside having a smoke and they'll be trying to come out and talk to us, and we're like 'Yeah, yeah, yeah.'

'I didn't want him looking at me thinking "My Mummy might die." '

I've been smokefree for a year now. Thinking about my baby and what my son said to me last year helps. That was really daunting for me and I wanted to have a little cry. I was shocked my boy would say that to me, and feel that. They see the person dying on TV and then think 'That could be my Mummy or Daddy.' It was my son that made me try and give up. I didn't want him looking at me thinking 'My Mummy might die.'

'I like having a clear mind, not in smoke.'

I feel happy. I feel really good, eh. I can breathe nicely, have a good conversation without running out of breath, feel healthy. I like having a clear mind, not in smoke. It's weird not having tar in my system, good weird. And my fingers are not reeking of smoke. I enjoy being clean, smelling fresh.

My kids love it. They expect me to chase them around the house. Last month my younger one just came out with 'It's good you're not smoking, Mummy because the baby can grow.' and I said, "Yeah, I know, darling.' That was a good comment.

We had a smokefree gathering a couple of months ago for my birthday. Because all my family smokes, I suggested it and they did it. We were all in the back yard and you could tell they wanted a smoke, but what's five hours without one? You could tell they were really trying. That was quite out of it. They said, 'We're supporting you 'cause you really wanted to give up smoking, now that you're pregnant.' They hung in there for me.

'We had a smokefree gathering a couple of months ago for my birthday.'

My nine year old will ask me 'Do you want a smoke, Mum?' and it's like "Nah. It's bad enough watching your father and grandfather having one.' He's checking to see if I would break, that I'm still OK to be smokefree. He's really clued up that one, can't hide anything from him.

A lot of people think 'There's the Māoris again, all they do is smoke, hang out at the pubs". I hate being put down as another Māori like that. We're not all like that.

Antz's closing words

Be the one to start something. I'm starting something now so, hopefully, someone will follow. I pat myself on the back sometimes to say 'Wow! I came this far.' I reckon it's the children that will make you stop, or try to.

'Be the one to start something.'



Terry

Terry is the father of three children. A midwife's offer of support prompted him to become smokefree during his wife's third pregnancy.

My story started when our midwife mentioned Smokechange. Over the previous six months it felt like no matter how much I smoked, it wasn't satisfying the habit. I had two young kids and felt a bit guilty. I'd wake up in the morning, smoke a cigarette, then ten minutes later have another one. I was fairly rapidly turning into a chain smoker. I couldn't think why. It wasn't stress. Things hadn't all of a sudden become worse. Something about smoking changed despite no change around me.

So, I'd been thinking about giving up for a while. I had tried before, but my heart was never in it. Back then, it felt like I wasn't really ruled by smoking. I smoked twenty a day, fifteen years ago, but even then I never felt a slave to it or like an addict.

'I was smoking half a dozen within an hour of getting out of bed.'

When my wife, Rachel, was three months pregnant with our third child, I was smoking half a dozen within an hour of getting out of bed. I thought 'This is ridiculous' you know? It was just getting crazy. I don't think it was related to the pregnancy. I was looking forward to our third baby. That was a nice thing.

The midwife brought it up in conversation. She said 'I can refer you to these people' and I thought 'Oh good, I've been thinking about having a proper go at giving up smoking.' I'd looked at the patches and thought 'I can't afford it.' I had no real financial problem with smoking 'cause I was doing it on the cheap, getting duty-free bulk roll-ups. Looking at the price of patches, I thought 'Can I actually afford them? No.' So, I was glad when the midwife suggested Smokechange. I thought 'I can get patches for five dollars a month

and a phone call from someone once a week.' A weeks worth of patches was more than a weeks worth of smoking for me, then.

It helped that our midwife made the offer to me. As a father, I felt included in the thinkings of health professionals. And it was nice to talk to someone about what it's like, just to talk about smoking. Overriding both those things, patches and support, was the fact that I wanted to give up. That was the main thing. I was ready to give it up.

'As a father, I felt included in the thinkings of health professionals.'

My father-in-law died early, at fifty-nine, and my grandmother at sixty. Both smoked. Once you grow up a bit you think 'That's only about twenty years away for me if I keep on at this rate.' I think this third baby finally made me realise. I set myself a target - to be around for his fortieth birthday. By then I'd be seventy-six.

I did try to give up after our second child, three years ago. With our first one I was thinking 'This is such a bad time to stop.' But with the second one I did think it was a good time. And I got down to about six or seven a day, but it just creeps up. I think you either smoke or you don't.

Now with our third baby, I've just grown up a bit. I feel a bit older than I did when I was thirty-one. I'm more mature and realistic about my life. Before I know it I'll be fifty. All the things I've ever wanted are now clicking into place. I've got the family I wanted, two girls and a boy. I've emigrated to a beautiful country. I'm happy. Smoking was like a fly in the ointment. I was sick of it, sick of smoking. It was going against the grain.

'I'm more mature and realistic about my life.'

'I don't want to be one of these dads that pops out for a few puffs and comes back stinking of fags.'

I don't want to be one of these dads that pops out for a few puffs and comes back stinking of fags. When you're handling a baby you don't want to stink. It's pretty disgusting. I was tucking in one of my girls one night and she said 'Daddy you stink of fire'.

Smoking just doesn't do what you want it to do. At the end of the day, it doesn't do anything. All it does is stop you feeling grotty. There's no obvious benefit to nicotine. It just stops you being an irritable, sleep deprived maniac! That's not OK when you're the boss and you need to have some level of sanity. But take smoking out of your life and you feel like everybody else does - normal. Smoking never felt that relevant anyway.

'... take smoking out of your life and you feel like everybody else does - normal.'

Back in England most of my friends smoked. When you're down the pub, smoking naturally follows. Coming over here broke that lifestyle. Now I know lots of people who don't smoke, so that helps. It makes you feel a bit daft if you're at a barbecue or something and you're the only one smoking. I'd go for a smoke before people had finished eating. It was getting a bit embarrassing for Rachel.

How did I get to here - three months smokefree? Patches give you a big psychological crutch. Because you know you're getting the drugs, you've got that motivation. The first couple of weeks were not too hard, easy in fact, 'cause I was determined. I was getting bad nightmares though, 'cause I wasn't taking the patches off at night. I spoke to Vidya (from Smokechange) and stopped wearing strong ones through the night. Then I slept reasonably well.

With a newborn, there is major sleep loss anyway. In some ways

it is a good time to give up because you're focussed on other things - the baby. There are other people to worry about. You're not just worrying about yourself. My wife needs me to do things like helping with changing the baby.

With the two girls, I knew I shouldn't have even been cuddling them. For an hour or so after a smoke I wouldn't go near them. I was still smoking, but I was being careful about it, like if the baby had a 2 a.m. feed, I'd have a smoke at midnight. Which is just daft, isn't it?

I feel more determined, almost like separating myself, mentally splitting smoking off. I'm treating the addiction like a naughty child and saying 'You can moan about it as much as you like, but you're not getting it!' I'm treating it like something I *used* to do.

'There are other people to worry about. You're not just worrying about yourself.'

'I'm treating the addiction like a naughty child ...'

Terry's closing words

Don't think patches are a magic cure. You've got to want to be smokefree. And when you are, you get your taste buds back, have more time for your children and you're around more. If help is on offer, accept it. Why not? You can't really lose.

'If help is on offer, accept it. Why not? You can't really lose.'



Judi

Judi didn't think it would be possible to stop smoking, but she surprised herself and is now smokefree.

She helped me - my midwife. She asked me questions: if I smoked, if I'd like to try to stop. She said it's not good for me and baby. I said I knew that and, yes, I'd like to try. I didn't want to smoke, but because I had smoked for ten years I didn't think I could stop. So I was happy she asked me these questions. Then she helped me make an appointment for Smokechange.

Carly came to see me very quickly, only a few days later. She asked me some questions and let me try the chewing gum. The questions were about how you think about smoking. What's good or not. That helped me to decide what I wanted to do, that I had to stop right now.

Even though I thought that I couldn't stop, I tried. Carly came to visit me every week at the start. I was smoking maybe ten a day. We made a plan together: take one month to cut down by half and the next month to stop.

When you get started its not very hard. I was surprised for myself. In the first week when I thought 'I want to smoke' I would chew the gum. When I did chew the gum I still wanted to smoke, but when I did smoke, I didn't want all of it. I threw it away. I cut down by half in the first week. Then the next week I stopped all of them.

I couldn't believe I did that! I did better than the plan. After two weeks I didn't need the gum *or* smokes. It took two weeks to stop smoking then two weeks to stop thinking

'I couldn't believe I did that! I did better than the plan.'

about it.

It feels different now, very good. Everything does. Now I don't cough in the morning. The cough is all gone. You smoke, but you're not really happy. My body didn't feel well. In my heart I knew smoking was not good, but I didn't stop. I feel so good now. I can be close to my baby.

I'm so happy I stopped smoking. It's good for me and for my baby girl.

Other people like it, too. Because I don't smoke, I don't smell. And I save money. Forty dollars a week is two thousand dollars a year, that's a lot. I can buy clothes or something for my baby with that.

Thinking that my baby is important helps. If I smoke my baby smokes. Maybe if it was just for myself, I wouldn't want to stop. But what's good for me is good for my baby.

Also, because people came to help me, I had to do something. I liked Carly. She was very kind, friendly. I liked to see her. I didn't want to disappoint her because she helped me. If she wasn't coming then maybe I wouldn't stop. Carly kept in touch with me even after I stopped smoking.

People helping is important. If my midwife hadn't made the call to Smokechange, I wouldn't have made the call and I wouldn't have stopped. Why not? Because you're scared and you don't believe you can do it.

In Chinese culture it's the same thinking: smokefree is very important for everyone. It doesn't matter who you are you have to

'It took two weeks to stop smoking then two weeks to stop thinking about it.'

'... what's good for me is good for my baby.'

stop. It's not good for anyone.

Judi's closing words

I know you can do it - become smokefree. If you are like me, you may think its going to be hard and then you get a surprise. If you don't open up, people can't help you. Once I made the decision, it got easier. If you love your baby you'll never go back to smoking.

'Once I made the
decision, it got easier.'



Louana

Louana has been smokefree for nine months following a scare in her pregnancy.

My story started when I ended up in hospital. I had to stay for a week and couldn't move out of bed and couldn't smoke. I was haemorrhaging, with high risk of more if I kept smoking. I had my child five weeks early.

'I was haemorrhaging with high risk of more if I kept smoking.'

My baby was in SCBU for two weeks. So I got another two weeks in a smokefree area. That helped me stay smokefree. It was perfect not being around my husband at this time as he smokes. Temptation was really strong around him. There were still temptations after that, but I haven't smoked since then.

In those first days in hospital, my mind was focused on my baby and my body. At night time when all was quiet, I was really tempted to go down to have a ciggie. I had lots of chewing gum. Mainly, what stopped me was my baby. I felt that if I could do the time in hospital then I could carry on smokefree. I've smoked since I was thirteen.

'It was a big scare, the haemorrhaging. That was my baby.'

It was a big scare, the haemorrhaging. That was my baby. I thought 'This isn't on.' I was quite emotional in hospital. The nurses did give me the nicorette chewing gum, but it was horrible. They're pretty hard on smoking, totally against it. They pretty much said 'Don't go down for a smoke.'

I had a conversation with the nurses initially. They asked if I was a smoker. Then it was 'OK, we're ringing Smokechange for you.' It was pretty much 'This is what's going to happen. You don't have a choice.'

The Smokechange people were easier to talk to, very supportive. Robyn came up to the hospital to meet me. I could have turned her down when she turned up. I thought 'I've gone this far, so I might as well carry it on and see where it takes me.'

The first meeting was good, happy. She was perky, confident. She made me feel confident, the stories she told me. She would constantly ring me, making sure I was still on track. And I could ring her any time I wanted. I would have been fine without it, but that extra support in the background was really good.

Once home from hospital, when my husband wasn't there and with both kids under two that I couldn't even lift, I would stress out in a major way. My time out had been to have a ciggie. So I'd pull myself out of that stressing stage and say 'I've come this far. I *can* do it.'

I did find I had more time for my children. I wasn't always saying 'Mummy's going for a smoke.' My son's behaviour became better. I dedicated more of my time to him. He wasn't asking me to do things as much, so I wasn't constantly going outside. Things started running more smoothly in my household. Yet I had a premature baby and a son under two. That's crazy.

The amount of things you can do with your child when you don't have to smoke - it doubles your value time. You're not taking that time out. Instead, you're spending it with them. You're not holding off from something. You're dealing with it there and then.

We have a happier home. I love it. I'm enjoying time with my

'Things started running more smoothly in my household.'

kids. I'm nine months smokefree now. What keeps me going is watching my family change, the quality time I have, feeling more energetic, not being breathless. I can keep up with them. My boy is not screaming at me and me telling him 'Mummy is having a smoke, you have to wait.'

Other people notice I've become happier, more motivated, I don't sit still. The fright with the placenta praevia and all that haemorrhaging made me see 'Enough is enough.' I've been told it before, but to go through it, that's different. These are my kids. It was very hard, but I just had to do it. I had this little baby inside me. I feel really good being smokefree. I'm quite proud of myself.

'... I just had to do it. I had this little baby inside me.'

We have a much happier household to be in. My son listens to me a lot more because I spend more time with him. In the past, I have tried to quit, but didn't have the incentive. Now that I've actually done it, I can see that you *can* do it if that is what you really want.

Louana's closing words

I'd say give it a go and see what the outcome is. Whether it's for two weeks, a month, or for good, you'll notice the benefits. Be strong, be positive, do it. It's good for you, good for your family.

'Be strong, be positive, do it.'



Ngareta

Ngareta has been smokefree now for one year. Her two children were her motivation to change.

The start for me was my first baby. I found I was pregnant, was still smoking, got a midwife. She approached me about Smokechange. I gave it a go, lasted seven months smokefree, but went back to smoking three weeks after Levi was born.

Six weeks later, I fell pregnant again. My midwife encouraged me to see the Smokechange people again. I wasn't one hundred percent sure at first, but went home, thought about it and decided 'No, I'm going to give up for my baby and me.'

When the booklets arrived I read through them and went 'cold turkey' from there. The one that stood out was *What to do with your hands*. It got me into knitting, a lot of knitting, and gardening.

Before I had kids I thought I would never give up smoking. Everyone I know smokes. But when I fell pregnant I just thought of myself and my babies. It was hard, though, 'cause my partner smoked and everyone smoked around me. Every time I'd see them it was like 'I want that', you know, a puff. But then I'd take myself away from them. I got over that.

'... I don't want my kids watching me smoking anymore.'

At first I had terrible mood swings. My partner gave up for a while with me and that was a real big help. He went back to smoking after our baby was born 'cause he thought 'Oh well, since she's had baby she's going to smoke again.' But I thought, 'No, that's it. I don't want my kids watching me smoke anymore.'

I was thinking, if I want this it's going to be easy. No more

getting up in the morning and feeling croaky. No more feeling sick. I used to be so motivated in the morning and then after I had that cigarette I'd feel so lazy. I thought 'I don't want to be lazy and not healthy anymore.' I couldn't even run to the end of the driveway without huffing and puffing. Plus I've got asthma.

And my kids seeing me smoking, that's a big thing for me. I didn't want them thinking 'Yeah, that's OK, that's cool. If she does it, I'll do it'. I didn't want them smelling it on me, inhaling it. I just didn't want them to go through that and end up getting sick because of smoking.

I noticed that when I did give up smoking I became more confident. I wasn't as shy and deep. I didn't try to hide myself like when I was smoking. I noticed that I came out of my shell more, was more approachable to people and not just a shadow.

I don't want to go back to smoking because I don't want to go back to being down, and I don't want to lose the buzz that I'm on, the happiness I feel. It's been a year now and then it'll be two years, then three years.

This is where it's at. This is what's going to happen. I don't care if you smoke. When I first stopped smoking I was like 'Don't come around me if you smoke 'cause it'll make me smoke.' Now I can sit there with them smoking and it doesn't bother me.

It felt like being an old person to me, when I was smoking. It's like being locked in a smoky area and when you come out of it, it's like a big gush of fresh air. You just

'I noticed that when I did give up smoking I became more confident.'

'It felt like being an old person to me, when I was smoking.'

don't want to give that up.

I'm just real happy. That's my high. I'm happy that I've done it for my kids and I'm happy that my kids won't see me smoking anymore and that they'll look up to me.

'... when I was starting off down the smokefree road the strength was coming in to me.'

The way I see it, there's the bad line and the good line and I've taken the good line. At the end of that line are my kids and the more I go down that line the stronger I get within myself. I used to be not that strong in myself, but when I was starting off down the smokefree road the strength was coming in to me and now I'm strong.

My kids make me strong, thinking about them, about their lives. I don't want them to think 'Oh Mummy's not strong. She smokes, sits around the house. She's not motivated anymore, doesn't play with us anymore.' That's just boring, dumb and that's not positive. I want them to think 'Mummy's strong enough to come out and play with us, to be with us, to make us be strong.' That's what I want my kids to think. That's what strengthens me.

When you smoke and then you give it up, you think 'Oh wow! I can actually do that. I'm strong enough to overcome that person I was.' It makes you keep going and going and overcoming more things in life. I was a bad drinker and now I'm not a drinker because after smoking I thought 'If I can give up smoking then I can give up drinking.'

'I thought, if I can give up smoking then I can give up drinking.'

You can actually feel it, like inside your body or in your soul, that you're a stronger person. You're so happy with yourself. You just want to get rid of more and more things

that are bad in your life. It just feels really good when you do get those things out of your life.

If I didn't do Smokechange I think I would still be smoking. Smokechange was a really big thing for me. I like the way they think. Robyn showed me this picture. It was of a river and this side was the smoking side and the other was the no smoking side. It helped me learn about my good health and my bad health, and it made me want to go for my good health.

The river thing opened up my eyes and I thought 'Oh my God! If a lot of smokers looked at this and saw their negative stuff about smoking and then their good stuff about not smoking, maybe that could change their ways.' Everybody wants to go for the good things. That one was a real big one for me, you know, realising the good things I can get out of not smoking.

I felt Robyn really did care about me and my health and she was trying to help me. I really felt that connection with her. She was like the light that flickered to me. I would look back to her all the time if I thought about having a cigarette while I was pregnant. I would think about her and what she said to me and think 'No, she'll be there to support me and keep supporting me, no matter what, and I don't want to go back to that person I used to be.'

In the middle of it all you do want to go in two directions. You do want to smoke and you don't want to smoke. You do want to be happy and you don't want to be happy. In the middle of all that I felt really confused. To overcome that feeling I pictured my kids. It's like I'm in the middle and there are all these directions poking out

'In the middle of it all you do want to go in two directions.'

of me and in all those directions there's my kids.

I realised that my kids were at the end of all the lines. It was like a shining light - the good line. It became really obvious and then that was the road I took. It got real easy after that. You take that good line and then you feel good about yourself, you feel strong about yourself and that's how I became the person I am today.

Ngareta's closing words

Think about your kids. Think about their future. You don't want your kids to smoke. Definitely not. If you smoke, they'll think that's normal and they'll smoke.

Think about the person you want to be and the family you want to bring up, it's about yourself, who you want to be, not about other people, really.

'Think about the person you want to be and the family you want to bring up.'



Jade and Trent

For Jade and Trent, their two daughters were their inspiration to become free of all drugs, including tobacco.

Jade: We had both been addicts, with recreational drugs. Akala, our first baby, was my reason to give that all up. I couldn't cut everything, so I carried on smoking. I had heard from a doctor that it's more stressful for the baby if you give up smoking completely. I thought that was fantastic information! So, I smoked right through my pregnancy just doing that five smokes a day thing.

'I thought "I'm going to be a smoker for the rest of my life".'

Trent went to rehab and I kept smoking. When I fell pregnant again we both had numerous attempts at giving up smoking. I was getting really frustrated, was in absolute tears. I thought 'I'm going to be a smoker for the rest of my life.' My aunt had told me you may give up smoking, but you'll always go back to it. I thought 'What's the point then?'

My midwife at National Women's said 'I'm going to put you onto Smokechange.' and I thought 'Oh yeah, whatever. It's not going to work, nothing works. I've tried patches and I've tried gum.'

'At the start the idea of Vidya was annoying. I'd miss her calls ...'

But I spoke to Vidya, on the phone and she was just amazing. At first I thought 'Get out of my time', but it was the novelty of it that got to me. I did some tracking first. I love doing things like that. Then there was the turning your mind stuff around, like from 'this cigarette *stops* me stressing' to thinking 'this cigarette *makes* me stressed'. It became a competition with myself, seeing if I could smoke less and less. At the start, the idea of Vidya was annoying. I'd miss her calls, then think 'That's just so rude!'

The more I spoke to her the more encouraging I found her. She was really awesome.

A couple of months down the track, she said 'I think this is the time you said you wanted to be smokefree.' I thought 'Oh no! It can't be time yet.' But it was. Part of me wanted to do it, and then it didn't work. So I thought 'Right, I'm not going to give up on it. In seven more days I'll try again.' I did and that was the last time that I ever had a smoke. I sort of put a bit of it down to God. I don't think God did it just 'bang', but I think He put things in place to help me get through.

'I sort of put a bit of it down to God ... I think He put things in place to help me get through.'

I hated the smell of smoke on me. I was embarrassed about it. I sprayed with perfume, put moisturiser on my hands, would have half a pack of gum, but you knew that never masked it. You felt like 'Oh, now they know I'm trying to mask the smell.' It was horrible, I was ashamed to be smelly. It's self-respect, isn't it?

Some of my friends are still partying. I had to say 'catch you later' to some. I didn't want them around my children. Children take up so much time and they take up your heart as well. Lots of heart time. Smoking kept the real 'clean up' from happening. I've been this long clean, if I pick up one now I lose all of that time and have to go back to square one. It's pride, too. I'm really proud of myself. And the kids, I don't ever want them to have that image in their heads of us smoking. I want to be alive for them. Every time I had a cigarette I had to sit down because of the pain in my chest, it was getting really severe. I had to breathe

'Some of my friends are still partying. I had to say 'catch you later' to some.'

shallow. I don't want to die when I'm forty or fifty.

If the children hadn't been here, we wouldn't have had the same desire to quit. I probably still would have been using drugs and drinking. The girls were my intervention. At the start, I did struggle when Trent had a cigarette. Vidya said 'Do you want me to call him?' I said 'Please, that would be awesome.'

Trent: My tipping point was Jade wanting to change and my wanting to support her. Vidya called, sent me patches. I got off them, then got on the gum, but I only had it for about three weeks. I started to cut down, to a few a day, then two, then one. I didn't plan that. It was working - the nicotine, but I wasn't going forwards. Some days I didn't have any smokes then I'd realise when I got home and gasp 'Better have one.' It's weird. Vidya calling up was great.

I'm kind of like Jade, too, you know, with the whole God intervention. We were in a really bad way two years ago. I was in a dump. I was not a visible father. We had no food. We were living on Jade's benefit. I thought I took drugs to be cool, for the feelings, but I came to see it was to run from my feelings, from situations and emotions. Anxiety would kick in.

I'm not running anymore. Now freedom to me is to sit with myself. Today we've got cars, we've got a lovely home, I've got a job that I've had for over a year and a half. The kids have got clothes.

For me giving up cigarettes is about growing more as a man, 'cause

'My tipping point was Jade wanting to change and my wanting to support her.'

'Now freedom to me is to sit with myself.'

I'm not using anything to escape. This is huge 'cause, cleaning up is a whole new life. I'm twenty-nine, but I've been a drug addict and using narcotics since I was fourteen.

We've both stayed clean for two years. When I left rehab, I attended Narcotics Anonymous. I was still smoking and still claiming my 'clean time'. But I was really using cigarettes as my 'go to' to suppress my feelings. Nicotine is still really a drug. I got really aware, that every time I got sad or angry I'd smoke. Before, I thought it was boredom, but it wasn't.

Being a dad is huge. The TV ads affect me now. Before, I'd change the channel. It never used to sink in for me. Money was a big factor. Realising we were spending a hundred dollars a week and we were struggling. For me praying was huge, too. And talking with workmates, just voicing it. If you voice a problem it gets halved.

'For me giving up cigarettes is about growing more as a man, 'cause I'm not using anything to escape.'

'Being a dad is huge. The TV ads affect me now.'

Jade and Trent's closing words

We are not ashamed of anything. We've been through it and we've done it. You can come from nothing to having something, through perseverance, and if you believe in yourself.

Don't do it on your own, get support, find programmes, do whatever it takes and you will find freedom.

'Don't do it on your own, get support, find programmes, do whatever it takes ...'



Cathy

Cathy has four older children and a new born baby. She is seven months smokefree and loving it.

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hen I was twenty three years old I would smoke and drink alcohol. I didn't realise the risks. At thirty-eight, having my fifth child, my friends were saying I was aging and the baby may be born retarded or something. I felt like I was putting the baby at risk, by smoking. I was scared my baby might come out defective.

I was nearly four months pregnant when I went to see my midwife for the first time. I said I was smoking and she introduced Carly. Carly came here and tried to explain things. I tried to explain what I felt inside. I was stressed as I had just broken up with my boyfriend and I was working. Smoking helped me release stress.

Carly gave me patches and gum, but I didn't use those things. They made me vomit. Day by day I felt 'I need to stop.' With Carly coming over I was smoking less and less.

I didn't want my Filipino friends to see me smoking. Having our own kind around helped. I come from a place where women smoking doesn't look good. People are going to judge you. Only prostitutes smoke in my country. I didn't even like smoking around European women. I was trying to protect myself from them so they won't judge me.

I've been smokefree now for seven months. I feel different. At first I felt irritated, angry. I snapped just like that. Felt a bit dizzy. But now I feel healthy inside. Before I felt weak, lazy.

I don't want to smell when I breastfeed. Makes me feel angry

'People are going to judge you. Only prostitutes smoke in my country.'

inside when visitors smoke here, even if they do go outside. It's a little bit of being Filipino, but mainly the baby is the biggest issue. I just want everything to be smokefree.

I notice smells from cooking, the dog, the boys shoes! I have to wash the dog a lot. Now I'm thinking of giving the dog away because I cannot stand the smell! Yet I put up with it for years when I smoked.

After I got out of hospital I felt energetic, healthy inside. I can smell my hair now, if I have a shower. Before I couldn't even smell it, even though I used a nice shampoo. Before, when I'd have an asthma attack it was really bad. I'd be rushed to hospital for the nebuliser. Now I've even had the flu, but no asthma. Financially things have changed, too. I used to spend money on tobacco. Now I don't have to.

Being smokefree is good for inside and outside your body. When I was with my ex- boyfriend I didn't want to go out and socialise. But now, I can't wait for this (caesarean wound) to heal. I want to go out and have fun again. For three years I just stayed in the house doing house work. Now I feel like I want to be out there again and socialise.

I feel like I'm younger. I notice my skin doesn't look old anymore. My eyes, also, I don't have to use my driving glasses. I keep them by the door because my license says I should.

People who are smoking don't know what they are missing in life. I used to be very tired and didn't feel like talking to my kids and asking them about things. While I

'I don't want to smell when I breastfeed.'

'Now I've even had the flu, but no asthma.'

'People who are smoking don't know what they are missing in life.'

was doing the cooking I was smoking as well. Then I'd go to sleep. Now I'm energetic and I'm really enjoying it.

For the first four months of this pregnancy I was not really thinking. I was angry with my boyfriend. He is 23 and I'm 38. Drug addict, gambler, alcoholic, you don't expect these things to change. After he got out of rehab he came with me to antenatal visits. I was shocked when he said he wanted to be in hospital when the baby was born. He was there the whole time.

'My thinking and thoughts are also clearer now. I feel laid back now.'

Now the father of this baby is clean. He gave up drugs and alcohol. He's started studying now so he can support me. Being a father has changed him. We are not together anymore, but I want him to be part of my baby's life. Things are really different now. I prefer to be in my situation right now.

My thinking and thoughts are also clearer now. I feel laid back now. I've lost interest in smoking. It tastes yucky. You can put it in front of me now and even people smoking in front of me won't tempt me.

Cathy's closing words

Before when I was four months pregnant I did not expect all these things to happen. On my phone is my baby's photo. It stops me having a slip. One day when my baby son can talk I'll want to show him this booklet and say, 'All because of you it made your mummy change.' This baby really changed my life.

'This baby really changed my life.'



Luanne

Luanne became smokefree the day she learned that smoking took oxygen away from her baby.

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hen I found out I was pregnant I thought I would be able to stop straight away. It wasn't as easy as I thought. The more I cut down, the more I wanted one. In my head I was ready, but my body wanted more.

When I was pregnant I read a baby book that said that every time you had a smoke the baby would cough and splutter for five minutes inside the womb because he couldn't get oxygen.

I wanted this baby so much. Putting him under stress was too much for me. Shocking in fact. I stopped that day and I never looked back.

On the day I stopped I was five out of ten confident, but the next day was different. After getting through that first day and night I realised I didn't need smoking and felt even better. Each week I felt so excited. I've remained smokefree since 2nd February, 2008.

I had been thinking about stopping smoking for a long time. I would put it into the future, telling myself - the day I find out I am pregnant I will stop. So I was shocked that I couldn't. I was conscious every time of

what I was doing. I knew it was wrong.

I kept hoping that one day, surely something's going to happen that will make me stop. I'd think 'At least I don't drink or do drugs.' Excuses. Excuses.

I did stop for two and a half years, three and a half years ago. I

'I would put it into the future, telling myself - the day I find out I am pregnant I will stop.'

had a cold and was coughing. There was a lump in my throat, all this brown stuff. It looked like tobacco. I got a fright, panicked and stopped cold turkey.

I would never go back to it, now. Seeing the man dying on the TV ads is the most shocking ad I've ever seen. It's the best. Makes me see that this is horrendous. It's got to stop. I would never do that to myself again. The ads make you aware of what you are doing. They had a huge impact. Some ads are not as hitting. I ignore those ones.

I don't smell any more. I pick up my baby and I know he can't smell anything. Before, I would go for a walk and start to feel puffed. I am really into my fitness so that was scary. I'm feeling good now. My teeth are nice. My breath is nice. Kissing is better. A bottle of perfume will last now!

My other two children were quite small at birth. This baby was bigger than both of them. I really believe that smoking slows their growing. Had I kept smoking what might have happened to Luke?

My partner doesn't smoke. He never gave me a hard time. No nagging. I felt supported. My other two, they're seventeen and fourteen, They were upset, last time, that I had started again. Not impressed! And they would voice what they thought. They are rapt now. It's been six months.

Everyone is so happy in the family. It's so nice to feel clean,

'I kept hoping that one day, surely something is going to happen that will make me stop.'

'My teeth are nice. My breath is nice. Kissing is better. A bottle of perfume will last now!'

'I wonder to myself how nice they'd look if they didn't smoke.'

happy, healthy. I can really smell someone who smokes now and I want to say 'I wouldn't do that.' I wonder to myself how nice they'd look if they didn't smoke. And the money. Fifteen smokes a day adds up to sixty dollars a week you could spend on petrol. It's a huge money saver.

I hated those looks. I'd be in the car by myself at traffic lights and see people looking at me. That was huge for me.

On the footpath, people would walk around me. I'd feel uncomfortable. I feel socially acceptable now.

With patches and gum, I wonder do they really work or is it just another money thing? I can't say I believe a hundred per cent in patches and gum.

Usually when I make a decision, I do stick with it. Smoking was one thing I wasn't strong about. I have discipline in everything else in my life. Now I don't have to do that, smoke, any more. I can live my life without having a cigarette.

Luanne's closing words

I feel sorry for people who are still smoking. It smells. Gosh, I am so glad that's not me anymore. I wish the best for anyone trying to be smokefree. I'd say, keep going. Try and try and try. Don't kick yourself. It's worth it. Just keep at it. Something will happen. It *will* work for you.

'Just keep at it. Something will happen.'

Our daughter, Pyper, is nearly nine. We lost our second child five years ago. I'm diabetic and had to go into surgery at the time, four months pregnant. They sent someone up from Smokechange. I just passed it off.

'I wouldn't have made the call if she'd left it up to me.'

In this pregnancy, the midwife asked 'What about Smokechange?' Health-wise, financially and baby-wise, everything pointed to 'Yes.' But stress-wise I was like 'No!'. But I said 'OK.' I wasn't really into it. I wouldn't have made the call if she'd left it up to me. But I didn't feel pushed.

I had a gastric bypass last May. Then five months later I fell pregnant. I have to eat more protein. I thought 'Cheese and milk are more important than my cigarettes.' Yet my smokes were more important than a ticket on lotto and maybe winning a million dollars.

In the first three months of pregnancy my friends told me not to stop smoking, but to cut down. At the time I thought 'Oh cool, I'll just keep smoking.' I played on it. You use smoking as a crutch, like food. I felt food had been taken away with the by-pass. I felt smoking was going to be taken away, too. I feared losing another crutch. Within that three months I probably smoked more than I did before the pregnancy.

'I feared losing another crutch.'

Carly rang me and sent me out patches and gum. But they made me sick. I always thought you couldn't use these in pregnancy, but apparently you can. She'd send out information, so I'd have a cup of tea and read it. She'd ring up and say 'How's it going?' and I'd pick up the phone and think 'Oh no! Not you. I've just smoked more than I should have!' She was like a conscience. But I'd just say

'Oh, not that great.' or 'Good.' Even if I was still smoking she would say 'How do we get around this or that?' or 'What's going on in your life?' She wasn't like 'Oh, you bad girl!'

'I'd pick up the phone and think 'Oh no! Not you.'

To be honest, I didn't really want to give up. About a quarter of me did, but the rest didn't. She sent me lower dose patches and they made me sick as well. I thought 'This isn't working.' If I can sit down and do hours and hours of artwork without having a cigarette, then why couldn't I do this?

I started to have those inclinations to be smokefree, times where you think 'Oh give it away.' The crunch came one day. Carly had sent me some little patches, just the cutest little things. I had cut right down to two or three smokes a day.

'I started to have those inclinations to be smokefree ...'

Then, one day I put a little patch on. It went OK. I didn't have any cigarettes that day. The day before I said 'Right, I'm going to do this.' I gave Paul all the credit cards, money, everything. The dairy is just around the corner. I figured if I don't have the money I won't go and buy any more.

So I had no money, I didn't set a date, I just said 'Right this is it. I don't want to go buy cigarettes.' and I put a little patch on. My friend drew a smiley face on it. I started thinking the patch was my friend not the cigarettes. When I thought of smoking, I'd rub my arm, rub my patch. I knew it was there. At first that's all you can think about - having a smoke. I took myself away from people who smoked a lot. Paul and I told them I was giving up smoking.

'I started thinking the patch was my friend not the cigarettes.'

There were some cigarettes in the ash tray. I rolled one, (think they call it 'butt-rolling'). I've never done it in my life, I thought 'That's sick. Look at what I've become. That's revolting.' The little patch didn't make me sick. She'd sent me out a few days worth to see how I went on them. So I used as many as I had, but then I stopped using the patches and I haven't smoked since. That was four months ago.

Now, I smell fresher. I feel more likeable to my family. I go and do something else, even having a bath, that's my time now. I know

its doing me and the baby good. I'm not huffing and puffing all the time. Feels great being pregnant as well. All the little things, like Pyper not saying 'Oh, you smell.' If Pyper is stressing me out I won't rush out for a smoke. There are health benefits for my husband and daughter as well. Even the plants are growing better, from not putting out cigarettes in the pots!

Having Carly ring up was a good thing. There was someone there that was thinking of you and thinking 'I wonder how

Tania's going, with her no smoking?' I'd say 'Oh, I haven't even tried this month, this week or this fortnight.' I'd make a date to give up smoking, then I'd smoke more up to the date. The date came and

something would come up and all the excuses would come out.

I go into hospital so many times and smoking irritates my conditions. Anaesthetics are a big thing. After losing weight and having a by-pass, not smoking has made a difference. Previous times when I've been in

'Even the plants are growing better, from not putting out cigarettes in the pots!'

'I'd make a date to give up smoking, then I'd smoke more up to the date.'

hospital there's the way nurses look at you when you have to go out for a smoke. It's lovely not doing that. Now, when people who smoke come into the ward, I think 'Pooh! What's that smell?'

Walking into a dairy and having all the cigarettes on the back wall, yet not buying any, is a major accomplishment for me. I used to go to Countdown just because they don't have that.

Everyone around you impacts on you. You need good support. They have to understand it. You have to understand it. There's only so much they can take, though, 'cause you were the one who put your first cigarette to your mouth. It seems unnatural for me to do that now, to put a cigarette to my mouth.

I'd get into this thing 'Maybe I can be a part-time smoker. Go out. Only have one or two.' But I can't. If I have a puff it will lead to more. I don't want that because I've come so far. I am doing it for myself now. It was for the baby. When I have the baby, why the hell would I want to start up again?

It helped not being pressured into anything, just going through the process of *cut down* not *cut out*. This has helped me get to where I am now. There is more strength now than weakness. I feel that I can do it now. It's becoming natural.

'Walking into a dairy and having all the cigarettes on the back wall, yet not buying any, is a major accomplishment for me.'

'It helped ... just going through the process of *cut down* not *cut out*.'

Tania's closing words

I didn't think I'd be one of those people saying 'If I can do it,

you can do it.' I never thought I'd be doing this, sitting here telling my story! I never thought I could do it, but I did do it. No matter what's in your life, you can do it. It *can* be done no matter who you are.

'I didn't think I'd be one
of those people saying 'If
I can do it, you can do it.'



Luia

For Luia, feedback from her first scan made her determined to keep going and become smokefree.

I had just found out I was pregnant. My midwife asked me if I smoked and referred me to Smokechange. She explained how unhealthy it is for a pregnant person to be smoking. It's not safe for baby. She showed me a picture of how my baby can't breathe properly when I smoke. She was trying to show me that what I take in, baby takes in.

'...that was the first time a professional actually told me straight up.'

I'd heard it from other family members, but that was the first time a professional actually told me straight up. It was quite shocking, because it's my first baby and I wanted to make sure everything goes well.

She made the phone call for me which was helpful. She didn't pressure me at all. It was totally up to me. I did feel a little bit bad, not because of what she was saying to me. It was just how it made me feel.

I felt relieved to have Smokechange. I don't think that I could have done it on my own, because my whole household are smokers. That's six adults smoking and just two little ones that don't. It made it worse that they smoke in the car as well.

'... (support) was just on the phone, but I knew she cared.'

I'd never been through a program like that before, but because she showed me that she cared about me and my baby, that's what made me push myself to go through it and quit. It was just on the phone, but I knew she cared.

She was really supportive. Even now she still calls just to see how I'm doing. She wasn't really pushy or anything it was just like a normal conversation that I would have with

friends and family.

My mum and my sisters were supportive, too. They stopped smoking in the car. No-one smokes inside the house, but they don't ask me if I want to have a smoke, now. They just go straight out and sometimes they hide from me.

When I told them I was pregnant they told me I should quit, and, once I was referred to Smokechange, from then on they tried to help me. When they were smoking right in front of me I'd feel like having one, too. Usually we all smoked together, but I would put on the telly, keep myself busy, do cleaning and stuff. This is my first baby. I wanted to take care of it.

'This is my first baby. I wanted to take care of it.'

When the lady sent me the bubble gum and the patches she explained to me what the bubble gum and the patches do. Every time I wanted a smoke I'd grab the bubble gum. I cut down from there, sometimes just a smoke in the morning and one at night when I went to bed.

'Every time I wanted a smoke, I'd grab the bubble gum.'

The worst habit was after I ate. I usually always craved for a smoke, so for the first three weeks I was still going out for a smoke after meals. Then, I tried having the bubble gum, going straight to my room and closing the door. This habit took a week and a half to break. It was really hard, but it was just a habit, a bad habit!

I went from a whole packet a day to none, over four weeks. Then I kept on using the bubble gum. After a while I didn't really want it anymore and I couldn't stand the smell of the smoke either. I'm proud

that I'm smokefree! Everyone's happy.

'She explains to me that baby gets healthier every time I *don't* pick up a smoke.'

I also got support from my midwife. Every time I go for a check-up she's always checking on my smoking and everything. She explains to me that baby gets healthier every time I *don't* pick up a smoke.

At first I was a bit dodgy about doing the programme. I didn't think I could quit. But after the first week, I decided I had to. When I had my scan the placenta was low. The doctor said it can be caused by smoking and it can make baby be born premature. In that moment I was like 'Oh my gosh. I have to do this. I don't want any complications with my baby.' I was definitely more determined after that. Something clicked in my head.

My niece, she was 11 months. She just passed away from a blood disease. She came into my head as well. My sister was smoking during that pregnancy, but it wasn't all to do with smoking. Two months after that my grandmother passed away. I just thought that with my baby coming, it's a blessing to have a life inside me.

'When I had my scan the placenta was low. The doctor said it can be caused by smoking.'

I've been smokefree over a month now or even longer, that's no gum and no smokes. Feels great! I can smell better, breathe better. I can do a lot more things than I used to be able to do. I have heaps of energy. I'm not so lazy. Before, I'd take Mum to work, come home and go back to bed. Now I just start cleaning or doing chores around the house. I just have heaps more energy. Usually, I don't go for walks and now I'm going for walks.

Most of my friends and family do still smoke and they pressure me like 'How come you stopped smoking?' I don't hang out with those people anymore. The people that are really supportive of me see that I've changed a lot. I have someone else to think about other than myself now. I have the support of my family. They're the main ones to me. They say that now that I've stopped I'm not so grumpy towards them.

'... it's a blessing to have a life inside me.'

I think the future's going to be great because at the moment I'm trying to get my partner to be smokefree. He still has the sneaky one, but hopefully... Well, that's my goal - for him to stop smoking. When we get our own place, we'll all be smokefree and baby won't have to go through any of that.

I hope I don't start again. How come people start up again? I know that it's not safe even after baby's born because of second hand smoke.

I'm loving being smokefree. I used to smoke too much. I'm proud of myself now 'cause I can do things that I couldn't do before. I'm not so lazy anymore. I feel much happier that I'm not smoking, that I'm not spending my money on smokes. Oh my gosh! How much have I saved!

'I'm not so lazy anymore.'

Luia's closing words

I hope that after people read this they can say 'Oh my gosh. If she can do it, then so can I', especially those who are pregnant. They have to think about their baby, as well as themselves.

I hope they realise there's a life inside of them; that it's not just them they're hurting when they're smoking. It's baby as well. I hope they realise that it does harm your baby.

'I hope they realise that it does
harm your baby.'



Alica and Deon

Alica and Deon live with their four beautiful reasons for being smokefree. Fresh information helped with changing their mindsets.

Alica: With all my other children I smoked through pregnancy. For Hayley I cut down. With Jayden I was smoking like a train. Maddie was a bit of a shock and I didn't think twice about smoking. With Oliver, my fourth, I had a new trainee, not my usual midwife, and she talked about smoking. Things were probably fresh in her mind from her course.

'... she told me that every time I took a puff I was stopping my baby from breathing.'

She wasn't being awful. She'd been a smoker herself, but she told me that every time I took a puff I was stopping my baby from breathing. I took this in, thinking about how many times I was stopping my baby from taking in oxygen from my blood.

With the others I never actually thought that every time I inhaled, they were not breathing. I did quit for four months at some stage with Hayley, but my partner started again and so did I. What that midwife told me scared the heck out of me. Usually they tell you babies are born with a low birth weight if you smoke, but not in my experience. All mine have been big babies. But thinking every puff stopped oxygen, that made sense. It made the link for me.

'I was in shock with this information.'

I was in shock with this information. It was the words of the wise young lady that triggered me. I'd been offered support with the others, but had declined every time. Not this time. She said it's my decision and left it to me. I said 'Now could be the time'.

The thought of quitting was daunting, because having given up before I knew it was hard. I had the health issue of being pregnant,

but then there was the big picture of four children or keep smoking. I gave my partner the option 'Give up. or move down to the garage.'

Jeannie from Smokechange rang me and she was fabulous, positive. At first I thought 'Whatever.' I was scared about getting freaked out from withdrawals and what that would mean for the family. I knew I couldn't do it on my own, that I needed the patches.

I told Jeannie 'Give me the strong ones!' I was totally addicted. I know now it's psychological, but I felt 'I can't do this.' She sent me sample ones and some for Deon. We both wore a patch for three days then I thought 'That's it. I don't need it.' That is all it took, three days on patches.

Jeannie said to set a date, but I just wanted to do it as soon as humanly possible. I'd smoked more than twenty-five a day since I was sixteen years old, except for one four month gap. I was terrified at the thought of no smokes. She sent out a booklet with the patches. I had in my head it takes twelve days to break the habit. By then all nicotine will be out of my system. It was more about my mindset than patches in the end.

What options did we have? Four kids or keep smoking? The kids are a huge inspiration. We need to put food on the table, and its getting more expensive. We did this for all four of the children even though I wasn't smokefree during all their pregnancies. That was our main focus.

'That is all it took, three days on patches.'

'It was more about my mindset than patches in the end.'

'I got up super early and put that patch on and went back to bed.'

'Why had no-one told me this about stress before because it was so simple.'

I had the last cigarette before going to bed. I got up super early the next day and put that patch on and went back to bed. I had no craving for the cigarette which was amazing. Not like before.

Asking Jeannie to give me the strongest one showed my commitment. I was in control by saying 'Now!' not a few weeks down the track. That decision gave me confidence in the outcome, but there was some fear that the patches might not work.

Jeannie explained to me about stress, that I was actually more stressed when smoking from having to go for the nicotine when it started to deplete. Having the addiction was the stress. Now, I don't have the 'up and down' of nicotine stress as well as the stress of kids. I was bottoming out. That was an insight for me. I thought 'Oh

my God. Smoking is so not a stress relief.' I can see that now, because the stress is worse, so much worse when you smoke.

I've wanted to give up, but thought 'How do I do that? I have all these children.' Why had no-one told me this about stress before because it was so simple. Smoking doesn't fix anything or take the stress away. You just peak out on nicotine. I'd never ever thought about it like that.

The main reason I gave up was for the health of myself and my kids. To be there for them and their kids so we can support them. They were the four reasons why I had to do it. If I wanted to see them grow up, I did not have

'... the stress is worse, so much worse when you smoke.'

'The first two have been very sick because we smoked, and our third one had bronchiolitis.'

a choice. The first two have been very sick because we smoked, and our third one had bronchiolitis.

I've been smokefree for nine months now. It's just life now. We have more time to spend with the children. We don't get sick any more, either, like we used to.

Kids and smoking don't go together. Everything we do impacts on the kids. We're not going to teach them bad habits. And hopefully, we're not going to get cancer. We could see it before, but resisted. Two packs of rollies a week is one hundred dollars we can put towards food for our two babies. I've chosen motherhood as my career. So I'm not going to tempt fate.

Deon: If you're going to do it you might as well just do it and get it over and done with. We have a family chain of smokers and my grandfather died, so I'm not going down that same path.

It's definitely made us better people, being smokefree. I think a lot better, now. I notice at work that my problem solving is better. And I feel fitter, a better person.

Come to think of it, I use to be just one of the boys, but now the boss has given me a site to run. Maybe he's noticed the change.

Money is still really tight, but we can use that money wisely. The money we would have been spending on smokes is now on lay-by for a new table and chairs.

'Kids and smoking don't go together.'

'I used to be just one of the boys, but now the boss has given me a site to run.'

Alica and Deon's closing words

Kids and smoking don't go together. We've stepped up, put the kids ahead of smoking and that makes us better people. We're proud of that fact.

'We've stepped up, put the kids ahead of smoking.'

About Smokechange

Smokechange is a smokefree pregnancy service for people of all cultures that is funded by the Ministry of Health. It provides personalised, step-by-step support to change smoking, especially in pregnancy and where there are young children.

Support is offered in people's homes and / or by telephone, texting and email. Pregnant and breastfeeding women and their partners are the main participants. Support is also available for family members and close others as needed.

The programme was developed by Christchurch-based Change for our Children (formerly Education for Change). It has supported over ten thousand families in Auckland, Christchurch and Invercargill. A companion programme of smokefree education for midwives has involved more than two thousand participants across New Zealand.

Going forward, smokefree pregnancy services will be provided locally within each district health board region. This booklet is a celebration of all that has been learned during the development years. It is our way to appreciate those who have helped to bring this work into the mainstream.

Smokechange is now more than a programme. It is an independent organisation pursuing a single goal - a smokefree start to life for every child - through research, development and education as well as through personalised services to Canterbury families.

www.smokechange.co.nz

For support options in you area, talk with your midwife or doctor.

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