

Resolutions

by Vesperae

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Welcome to 2013. At least we managed to survive the Mayan Apocalypse.

And at least we have our innate fascination with dates and numbers to pin our hopes for a better future on. Such distinctions are of course ultimately arbitrary, but why not indulge them, and why not shoot for the stars? (The older I get, the more I find myself clinging to optimism, because the alternative has always proven to be a destructive dead-end for me over and over again.)

Which brings me to Resolutions of the sort that we tend to set for ourselves at this time of year. And of course, none more infamous than the passing to obsessive contemplation of quitting smoking.

As regular readers of this column or my forum know, I've never entertained thoughts of quitting smoking at this time of year – or at any time of year for that matter – for the simple reason that it would be the equivalent of entertaining the thought of giving up sex. Given the nature of my Fetish, smoking *is* "Vapor Sex" (thanks again to my friend and smoking model Amber Stephens for the *perfect* description), and the thought of giving up this singular sensual and psychological erotic pleasure is, well...simply unthinkable.

However, I'd like to state for the record, once again, that I am 100% in favor of anyone quitting smoking who wants to do so, including any smoking model, or any girlfriend I've ever had, who's driven me wild with the pleasure she's taken in filling her lungs with cigarette smoke. I've always felt this way for two reasons – first, because my sense of ethics always tempers my Fetish, and second, because any woman who does not take complete pleasure in her smoking simply does not turn me on. I only find attractive, truly *willing* smokers to be erotic, and given the vast amount of content available to indulge my SF, it's easy to satisfy both my sense of ethics and my sexual tastes.

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"Quit smoking" Resolutions inevitably fail, and many (most?) seem to believe that this is due almost exclusively to the "overwhelming" addictiveness of nicotine. This deeply ingrained belief has understandably lead to a very vocal segment of the DS SF Community who take great sadistic pleasure in the thought of smokers as weak submissive slaves to their cigarettes. Which isn't surprising, since it's just another manifestation of the whole BDSM Trip that smoking represents in one way or another, especially to those who find DS SF content to be erotic. And this widely held belief has also spawned what amounts to a very profitable tobacco halo industry that just deepens and perpetuates the myth. Consider this TV ad, in heavy rotation on most US cable and satellite outlets in December 2012, directed at all of the inevitable "quit smoking" Resolutions among smokers in the viewing audience anticipating the new year:

[Nicorette Gum: Quit One Cigarette at a Time](#)

The spot features a cover of the 1971 classic rock radio track ["I Just Want to Celebrate" by Rare Earth](#), with the lyrics changed from:

"I just want to celebrate another day of livin' / I just want to celebrate another day of life"

to:

"I just want to celebrate another day of quittin' / I just want to celebrate..."

I guess the implication being that the original lyrics might be a little too starkly confrontational in context, but would almost certainly be recalled subconsciously by the viewer as she responded to the commercial, since this is one of those super catchy songs that just about anyone who was ever near a radio in the 70s or later wouldn't have heard at some point over and over again. The subtle take away? "Quitting = Living," set to a not-too-serious familiar good time party jam. Chew on Girl!

What's interesting to me about this commercial is that it at least acknowledges the power of the

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social component of smoking, even though the success of the product ultimately depends on focusing on just the nicotine dependency aspect of smoking. The commercial tells us that the woman stuck in traffic who sees the man in the next car over about to light up only needs a dose of nicotine to calm her nerves, because that's all that smoking a cigarette really is to a smoker – a dose of nicotine, and if she can get it another way, the urge to light up and repeatedly fill her lungs with cigarette smoke and exhale it will somehow just go away.

At the very end of December, another TV commercial began airing on US cable and satellite outlets for a new eCigarette (featuring a male model, but definitely worth viewing for context):

[NJOY King TV Commercial](#)

I've only seen this spot "live" a few times, and something tells me that it won't last very long on TV, if it hasn't been completely pulled already. I'm sure that anti-smoking forces will see it as being too provocative, glamorous (at least in the gender-neutral sense of the term), and easily confused with actual cigarette smoking, which I have to believe is almost certainly what the manufacturer intended. It also features another even more popular and recognizable 70s classic rock song (apparently a lot of smokers dig classic rock), and used to much better effect in my opinion than the Nicorette spot – ["Feels Like The First Time" by Foreigner](#). Despite the fact that it was a male model, seeing such a well shot thick french inhale, deep inhale, and thick exhale set to the crescendoing riff chorus of a song about losing your virginity (!) on live TV was a jaw-dropping experience for me, and probably was for you if you happened to catch it unexpectedly, as I did.

Unfortunately, I'm still left to imagine what the Virginia Slims-esqe version of an NJOY TV spot would look like, but Mike (our Publisher and Host) passed this link on to me this last summer, and I posted it at my forum. In case you missed it, here's another web-based spot for a different line of eCigarettes, this one designed specifically for women:

[All About Vapor Couture](#)

Like the Nicorette spot, the timing of the NJOY TV spot capitalizes on those entertaining a "quit smoking" New Year's Resolution. The presumption would seem to be that if you offer smokers a product that removes tar from the experience, but still delivers a dose of nicotine and the

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sensations of inhaling it, that the desire for the real thing will go away. It goes a step farther than what Nicorette gum delivers, and while I freely admit to never having tried either product – nicotine gum or eCigarettes – it would seem reasonable to conclude that eCigarettes are probably somewhere on the continuum between using nicotine replacement "therapies" like gum or patches and actually continuing to smoke cigarettes, because of the added visual and sensual elements that mimic smoking an actual cigarette. eCigarettes strike me as not quite smoking, but certainly not quite quitting either. (For more on my take on eCigs, please see [Darker Desires March–April 2011 / "The Joy of Tar"](#).)

eCigarettes are obviously a potentially huge part of the tobacco halo industry, in that they offer a "cleaner" delivery system of nicotine, which is all that smoking is supposedly really about. Smokers are just junkies, and they just need another fix of nicotine. Nothing more to see here...it's OK, it's just nicotine laced vapor...move along.

But therein lies the trap for anyone who's decided to quit smoking. If you believe that the only reason that you smoke is to feed your nicotine habit, you're probably doomed from any chance of ever quitting, because you've completely blinded yourself to the real reasons you smoke. I believe that if a smoker wants to quit, she actually has to come to grips with the reality of the fact that smoking gives her this "Filthy Little Dirty Thrill." Then she has to weigh what she gets out of that vs. why she wants to quit, and see which way the scales tilt. If "Filthy Little Dirty Thrill" wins, at least she'll know that smoking is what makes her the happiest. Smoke up Baby! (My favorite sort of woman to watch smoke a cigarette.)

There have been several occasions over the past few years that involved situations where I was unable to smoke, or to smoke only occasionally, and totally on the sly, for several days at a time. Normally, I smoke a pack a day. And what I've found every time is that my experience of nicotine withdrawal is almost exactly like my experience of caffeine withdrawal. Normally, I drink about 5 or 6 cups of Kona blend a day. It was unpleasant...but not really so bad that I couldn't deal with it and function. A little headache, a little lethargy, a little achey...but manageable. I would be so focused on whatever situation I was in that I really didn't think that much about smoking...that is until I was alone. Then it's all I thought about.

I wrote [this in August 2007 at my forum](#) , years before my more recent direct "field" experiences:

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"I'm wondering if anyone else has given any thought to the idea of the power of the psychological addiction to the physiological experience of the addiction to nicotine.

"Physiological addiction to nicotine is about periodically introducing a chemical into your system that it has grown accustomed to functioning with so that you don't feel physically lousy.

"Psychological addiction to the experience of having and responding to that physical craving is about anticipation, and finding both comfort and stimulation in the cycle of a steadily mounting urge that you know you will be able to satisfy, and can have the pleasure of looking forward to satisfying, and especially, that you know that you can satisfy in a very sensual and physically intimate way.

"I think that what I'm talking about is very much analogous to sex in the sense that the urge to engage in sexual contact with others is a basic, primitive, evolutionarily programmed instinct that rewards us with endorphins when we follow the urge to orgasm, but we create love and romance and courting rituals and sexy clothing and make up and grooming tools and fetishes and erotica (and even compulsions and addictions for some) around this instinct, because we take great psychological pleasure in relating to the experience of our sexual urges, and in thinking about and creatively enhancing and addressing them.

"So on a basic level, there is physiology, but it seems to me that how we think and feel about our physiological urges can ultimately be much more powerful and compelling than the motivation of physiology and 'need reduction' alone. In fact, I tend to believe that psychological addiction can easily transcend physiological addiction and actually become much more important than the pharmacology that it is build upon."

Nicotine addiction is just one little part of the bigger picture. My recent forced non-smoking situations absolutely confirmed this, at least for me.

In my opinion, the key to understanding why we smoke lies in a smoker's First Resolution about smoking. The Resolution she made to herself when she wanted to start smoking regularly. The Resolution she made to herself when she wanted to overcome the natural defenses in her lungs so that she could fill them with cigarette smoke regularly. The Resolution she made to herself when she took a drag, inhaled it, and coughed and coughed, but then took

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another drag and tried to inhale it *even more deeply* into her body.

Those first moments as a smoker transforms her body inside and conquers it – those are the moments that set the whole Head Trip of smoking in motion. Every dangerous cancer-laden drag rushing deep into her chest is a reminder of her Ego's conquest of her Flesh. Vapor Sex Baby. The Risk Orgasm sounds like an Alarm going off in her head.

Gum and vapor stick manufacturers will be happy to continue to profit from those moments when a cigarette smoker can't indulge her "Filthy Little Dirty Thrill" completely, I'm sure. But that doesn't mean that she won't indulge it again eventually, and repeatedly...until the scale tips the other way for her, she confronts her Demons, and Resolves to walk away.

Please wish her well on her smoke-free path, as I do.

It's another New Year...with so many First Resolutions about smoking happening right now...and in the days and weeks and months to come.

So many Demons...so many Lungs...so many Egos...so many Willing Embraces.

[Email Vesperae](#)

Vesperae's discussion and DS multimedia forum:

[The Sublime Desire of Cigarette Smoking](#)