

Submitted by WISEWOMAN participant Janet Kay Cole
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There's No Better Time than Right Now!

When I was in my thirties I was smoking about 1 ½ packs of cigarettes a day. One day my husband and I visited a family member who was receiving treatment for cancer. It was really shocking and very upsetting to see how the cancer was causing her to literally waste away. It was also very difficult on her family as they had to get her back and forth to treatment regularly. I knew I would not want to put my family through that. I decided that I really needed to quit smoking someday soon.

I was working at a factory and one day while taking a break I told a friend I was going to quit smoking that weekend. He told me “Kay, if you really wanted to quit smoking you’d quit today”. I knew my family history of cancer and the inconvenience that it put on the caregivers of someone with cancer, so I told him I would quit right now. I gave him my cigarettes, my cigarette case, my lighter and any matches I had.

That was in July of 1988 and I have not touched a cigarette since then. I have been smoke-free for 20 years! What really helped me was having a specific goal – to not get cancer. After watching my family member as she went through chemo and radiation, I was determined to do everything I could to not get cancer. I also wanted to make sure that I did not become a burden to my family by getting cancer.

My advice for people trying to quit smoking is to not turn to the refrigerator. Find something else to do with your hands. Or take a walk, exercise, clean the house or pick up a book or magazine. But whatever you do, don’t visit the refrigerator when a craving hits.

Janet Kay Cole