Psych 502

Spring 2013

Alex Saves Me from Cigarettes

by Anonymous

After smoking cigarettes for ten years I was up to a pack a day, my teeth were so yellowed I was embarrassed to smile, and my skin was wrinkled and dull.

I had attempted to quit but had always failed. And now my boyfriend Alex was threatening to leave me because of my smoking. He thought smoking was "ugly" and "foolish."

We constantly argued about my smoking. He could not stand kissing me because I smelled of tobacco. But his arguing and pestering did not stop my smoking. I hated the physical effects of smoking but I kept on smoking and our fights worsened. After he discovered that I had resumed smoking after having promised to stop, we even broke up for a few days.

Alex, a native Russian, told me that in Russia it was said, "Если бы люди могли предвидеть будущее, они все равно ведут себя, как они делают сейчас." This means, "If men could foresee the future, they would still behave as they do now." Yes, I had thought about prematurely looking old and a future filled with heart disease and cancer but I was not quitting.

Then Alex devised a plan. Each day I did not smoke, Alex would give me $20. Additionally, he would finance a gym membership contingent upon my not smoking.

This was music to my ears! But if I smoked, the deal was off. No money, no membership, no Alex!

So for an hour a day, I worked out at the gym which curbed my craving for nicotine and Alex continued to pay me $20 daily which helped me quit. For a month, I did not smoke. My shortness of breath subsided when running, my skin regained its color and texture, and Alex had paid me $600.

Not buying cigarettes saves me around $200 monthly and we no longer argue about smoking. Alex has stopped the payments, but he continues to pay for my gym membership if I continue to abstain. We now spend extra time together since he also has begun to workout at the gym.

I look forward to being a non-smoker and exercising. I'm grateful that I found somebody who has enhanced my life.