

Monday, 23 Jan 06

Had a strange dream last night in which I was a psychic (as opposed to my more usual mental state of “psycho”).

I was at the house of a very tall, unshaven man and he seduced me (such a pushover! such fun!). The smooching was great until a weird tunnel of moving images, like the view through a periscope, appeared in my mind. Naturally(?) this made me realise that we was just using me to channel the info from my mind shown in the images for some nefarious purpose. I suppose to locate hidden contraband or something.

I broke off from the kiss and he started heavying me, so I ran. He cornered me and I threw a baseball bat at him which hit him on the head with a “clunk”, but he barely flinched. I took advantage of his momentary disorientation to run around a corner and then I woke up, with him running past my cunning detour.

Freudians, do your best! It was all really vivid, like a “patches dream”, but I’m still on gums and lozenges. I woke up from it feeling washed out.

Back to reality, the sweet young guy who works in the cafe next door told me he’d given up cold turkey three months ago after he and his uncle made a \$300 bet. The first to crack has to cough up, so to speak. So far no-one’s been forced to pay.

Even though he had only been smoking for five years he said he was very edgy for the first week. No wonder I struggle, having smoked for over six times as long as he has!

He said the only reason he managed to ride out the storm was because he couldn’t afford to pay up if he lost. He stopped drinking, gave up coffee, ate lots of lollies and stopped seeing his friends for a month. The very worst of his withdrawals, however, started settling down after about a week or so.

My former smoking pal in IT, Hightowers, is planning to give up next Monday after he returns from a three-day party/binge out in the country that ends on Sunday. This will be his third attempt. He says he gets pretty cranky when he gives up, so he’s going to use the patches, as he did last time.

He had a tip for saving money on NRT. He cuts up the patches because lower strength patches cost the same as the high strength ones (go figure). So when he reaches the stage where he can start using low strength patches, he cuts the strong ones.

He cracked in his last attempt because he started using the lower strength patches too early. This time he’s going to follow the program. He will deal with the 14mg and 7mg patch phases by cutting the 21mg patches into 2/3 and 1/3 pieces respectively.

This means that he will need to stick them on with tape. Last time he quit he used gaffa tape to hold the patches on (musos use gaffa tape for everything).

I suggested that he should use Leukoplast to keep the patches in place so he doesn't end up with large spots of sticky gum on his skin that, well, stick around and collect dirt.

Mr Groin told me that the bottom edge of the patch is the most important part to keep stuck on because much of the nicotine settles down there after a while.

The fellow who owns the cafe where I buy my chai lattes (a different cafe to the one I mentioned earlier) said, "It's all about willpower". I said no, it's about desire—really *wanting* to give up". That's how it has been for me, anyway. The only willpower I've shown has been in persisting through all the relapses before I finally stopped properly.

I doubt that most people who are severely addicted to anything can rely on willpower alone; they need strong motivation. To really, really WANT to give up. Perhaps the line between willpower and motivation is blurred?

I guess, now that I have stopped, maybe it will take willpower to stay clean when my recently-acquired hatred of cigarettes starts to subside?

