

# **Interview with Honor Dillon**

## **Interview by Dave Gibson**

**How would you describe your smoking status?**

Non-smoker but I have tried when I was a teenager.

**Do you think smoking is as common now as it used to be?**

I think it is less common now. I think people are becoming more health conscious and more aware of the effects that smoking can have.

**Do you think it's socially acceptable to smoke nowadays?**

No, I think it is less acceptable. It's not seen as cool anymore.

**Why do you think young people still take up smoking?**

There are a lot of pressures as a teenager and for me, I always wanted to fit in because my friends were smoking and it was slightly rebellious you know? So yeah, I think young people see celebrities smoking or their parents might smoke or a lot of friends smoke and they take up smoking as a result.

**So you think a lot of it has to do with the influences around them?**

Yeah, I think so.

**Had you been smoking for long?**

No, I was always a social smoker. It was sort of when I was 13, 14, I gave it a go but it was just because my friends were doing it so I thought it was cool. Luckily I was involved in hockey so I started getting selected for representative hockey and that is what stopped me because it was affecting my performance and for others they probably continued through school.

**As an athlete, what are your thoughts on smoking and how it affects your performance?**

It definitely affects your performance because you can't breathe properly, your throat feels awful the next day, it slows you down and affects your fitness.

**So you think it is a cool thing to refuse a cigarette now?**

Yeah, a lot of my friends back at school didn't smoke and I respected them for that. I had no problems with it but now that I look back on what I did I think, 'Oh you know, it's hideous.'

**So when you stopped smoking, you were happy and secure with yourself?**

I think I just matured and looked back and yeah, I don't feel like I need to fit in with people anymore. I can make my own decisions and be happy.

**In your own opinion, what do you think is the worst thing about smoking?**

The health effects that it has on you. It's just so awful for your body and makes you feel awful as well.

**In terms of your reputation, a lot of young hockey players especially young girls look up to you – does this influence your decision not to smoke?**

I personally want to be a role model for the younger teenagers today and I just don't think it's a good look when I see other people smoking. I don't really like it because it's so bad for you.

**Would you go out with a smoker?**

No I wouldn't. I can't stand the smell of it and I don't like the taste of it, anything, it's not attractive.

**Do you think you would be able to tell a smoker from a non-smoker?**

Depends how long they have been smoking for but you can definitely smell it and if they have been smoking for a while you can see the yellow stains on their teeth and they sort of have a gaunt look about them so you can definitely tell from looks.

**Do you know of any friends or family that have quit smoking or have tried to quit smoking?**

Luckily none of my family have smoked but I have had friends that have smoked for quite a long time and quit successfully.

**Did you support them in their quit attempt?**

A little bit but not I wasn't one of their close circle to be honest.

**In what ways do you think you could help someone who was wanting to quit?**

Just by being there to support them, talking them through it, and going out doing different activities to take their mind off it.

**Do you have any advice for young people who are currently smoking?**

I think when you are young it is important to recognise your talents or your interests and you should take up those interests and do something about them. Join a sports club, a team, any sort of club and it will keep you out of trouble and hopefully take your mind off it.

**What else do you think we could do to promote smokefree in New Zealand?**

I think you're doing a good job. I think it's important for people to continually know the health effects that it has on you because I think that is the scariest thing.

**Now that all our bars are smokefree, what is your view on that?**

I think it's great. I hated going out and I would come home and I smelt like a smoker and yeah, I think it's terrible for the people who have to be passive smokers without a choice.

**What would you say to me if we were out at a nightclub and I puffed smoke in your face?**

I would tell you to piss off. I hate it. I would tell them to please smoke at another time because you know I should have a choice whether I want to be a smoker or have to breathe in their smoke.

**Do you have a view on the tobacco industry?**

I work in marketing so I know how marketing spin can influence people and suck them in and I do think the tobacco industry has been pretty cheeky in their advertising. You hear stories where they donate \$100,000 to a charity yet they are making hundreds of millions of dollars from people they have sucked into smoking and they haven't advised them of the health concerns.

**How do you feel about tobacco product placement in movies?**

I do think it's pretty terrible when the teenagers of today look up to those celebrities and if their family smokes and they have friends that smoke and then they flick through a magazine or a movie and see their favourite movie star smoking as well then it can definitely influence them.

**What are your thoughts on the financial side of smoking?**

I think if you quit smoking you can save thousands of dollars a year so if it was me who was a smoker I would definitely consider that.

**Do you think using services like Quitline is a good thing or does it show a sign of weakness?**

Definitely not. I think those services are there to be used. You can have the support of Quitline or your doctor or your family or friends so it's definitely advised. If you're trying to give up then use all the services available to you.

**What are the benefits to you of being smokefree?**

The benefits for me are that it makes me feel fitter, it makes me feel better in the morning. It affects your appearance as well. You don't have yellow stains on your teeth, you're healthier, you're a better weight, you don't look gaunt. When you are smokefree you just look healthier.

**So what would you say to young girls that have this perception that smoking makes you skinny?**

I don't really know why they think that. Why do they think that? If you think smoking kills your appetite then you've really got to think what it's actually going to kill.