

Interview with Liam Fuggle

Interview by Dave Gibson

Would you say you're a smoker, ex-smoker, non smoker, what's your smoking status?

Ex-smoker, but I do find it hard when I drink, just cause you're weak when you drink, it's real hard aye.

Is that temptation from your addiction to cigarettes or its cos of your mates?

Na it's more addiction of um I was used to doing it, yeah. I do find it hard but I can do it.

Do you think it's more of, like addiction or the social elements and those kinds of things that you miss?

I'm used to smoking but if I don't do it like some nights I don't need to, but sometimes I'm just used to it as an everyday thing, and every time you drink you smoke. I decided not to and I don't need it, it's really just a trick on your mind aye, just to get you out of it.

Is there anything like techniques that you used to stop smoking?

Um...just the first couple of weeks were hard, but on the weekends you've just got to think you don't need it. You've got to picture in the morning and the more you stink you get a double hangover with smoking and it's horrible you wake up and you just stink and it gives you a headache, you get the dries and it's just not worth it.

You mentioned you'd lost your grandparents to smoking...

Yeah, yeah. It's probably like 10 years ago and they just smoked all the time, they both smoked and they both died probably 5 years between each other and they were only 68, 65 so it wasn't that old for an old person aye.

Do you think that those events affected your opinion on smoking now because they died so young?

Yeah, and same as my parents they don't smoke because they see, like my dad hates it and as soon as my sister started smoking he just went nuts he didn't like it, just because both his parents died of it and he doesn't want to see his daughter have the same damage.

How old were you when you first tried a cigarette?

I was third form so what's that I was 13, yeah that was the first time I tried and that was just more of an image kind of thing my mates smoked so I just kind of tried it and then ever since it was probably a year ago that I stopped and I was just used to smoking but it was hard to stop it.

How much do you think you were spending on cigarettes?

Oh I'd only buy a packet a week so it wasn't alot but when you add it up it's like \$500 or something a year when you could have a mad shopping day or something. I like to have that extra money in my pocket.

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

Na, I don't, I've got a group of mates, there's about 10 of us close mates and um there's only two of them that smoke and they try and give up and all that and that doesn't work but yeah it's not really a social thing as you think it would be, as it used to be.

I reckon it's the law when you can't smoke in a pub, you have to go outside and you have to stand out in the rain and it's like do you want to smoke and get wet, or do you just not want to get wet and not smoke.

The stats are coming down, but why do you think young people are still starting?

Oh just a growing thing, you know it's people just want to try, and then just get pressured into it, and your mates do it and that. Then you say oh I'll do it. Quite alot of my mates didn't like it you know, weren't influenced or anything. It was more another group of my mates that were doing it and they thought it was cool and you find out five years later you're still doing it but you're not hanging out with those mates.

Generally people are smoking for a lot longer than what they expected. How long were you smoking for?

Yeah would have been about 7 years and that was just casual drinking and smoking and I used to say I could give up when I wanted, but I didn't, and like I did want to give up but I just couldn't. When I was drinking I'd get weaker and I'd smoke.

When you're in town and you see someone of your age with a cigarette, what do you think of that person?

It's ruining their life. They're so young, and they need to be taught not to smoke. Like why are they doing it, it doesn't feel good you don't get anything from it so why are they doing it. You see them they're like 11 years old walking down the street smoking and it just doesn't look cool at all. It looks gross.

In your opinion what is the worst thing about smoking?

The money you spend, and probably when you're older, the looks. Yeah I find the looks aye, you don't want to be old and wrinkly or wrinklier you know and be all smoky because it just destroys you and you can tell by the skin. I used to work with a smoker and a lot of tradesman did it and they just look horrible you know.

What trade are you in?

Plumbing, yeah, there's a few smokers aye it's probably 50/50 that do it. It's still around but it's more they're trying to give up but they can't. Like my workmate he's probably tried 6 times in the last two years.

They've done some research on quitting and it can take up to fourteen attempts for someone to quit so six is almost halfway there. What advice would you give to someone who's trying to quit like your mate who's tried 6 times already.

He got advice from his son who said "Isn't that killing you dad," you know like his son was 5 and he was like yeah this is actually killing me and he actually tried that time to give up and he was hiding the smokes from the son so his son didn't see him smoke cos he felt so bad.

What about the employers, is it ever an issue stopping work every 15 minutes to have a cigarette?

Some companies do push it, they don't hire smokers. One of the dudes calculated how many times he stopped and um he calculated for the year and how much it's costing the company because he's smoking. You'd be looking at quite a long time aye, at least 4 or 5 hours a week your downtime and that, when you're work it throughout the whole day it's a fair bit.

Do you think it would be hard to date a smoker because it might influence your temptation to smoke?

Na I wouldn't, I wouldn't attempt to smoke, I just wouldn't want to go out you know with her on a date and she's just outside smoking and you're standing inside it's not really sociable.

The smell is quite a big one aye?

Yeah it stinks as well especially when you don't smoke, you can smell it right away especially if you go into someone's house, you can smell that smoke in their house and you can see it on their walls and stuff cause they're all yellow. You know if they smoke inside it's a real potent smell.

Would you consider quitting smoking to be a real achievement?

Yeah I would. You'd save alot of money and you'd have more toys to play with you know like motorbikes and all that cos you wouldn't have to pace it out and buy smokes you'd have all these cool toys because there'll end up more money at the end of the day.

Do you think using help like the Quitline service or the patches or the gum that means you are too weak to quit by yourself?

No, some people need help, another person on their case. You know a little bit of pushing to help them get through.

When you started smoking how many years had you been smoking for before you actually quit?

Seven years, yeah.

So what year was that?

What year did I start, I wouldn't have a clue. It soon caught up to me aye and I thought about it, like you think, oh I only did it with my mates and that aye, but it's been like 7 years. You wouldn't see much of a future with it but it catches up aye.