

Interview with PNC

Interview by Lewis Whaitiri

How would you describe your smoking status?

I'm a non-smoker, na never smoked. I've tried smoking but I've never been a smoker. I've never bought a pack of smokes or anything.

So you know people who have tried to quit?

Yeah. For a lot of people where I come from, they get into it at a young age and it just sticks with them you know and they find it hard to quit.

A lot of people have quit for a short time or for a long time and most of them have gone back to it. Like family members that have been told by doctors you know, 'you've got to quit or you'll be in serious trouble healthwise' and they've gone back to smoking not long after that.

What do you think would be the best thing to say to someone trying to quit?

I've gotta be honest, I've never really told someone to stop smoking. It's one of those things, it's always just been around me so I haven't really thought about it. I know a lot of people that smoke and I don't know anybody that's happy they started smoking. That would be the main thing I'd say for people who haven't smoked: I don't anybody that says they're proud to smoke nicotine cigarettes and for the people that are smoking now, it's going to catch-up with them later.

So why do you think some young people especially take up smoking?

I think there's an element of a cool thing to do when you're young and it's kind of a naughty thing to do as a young kid and you know you're always trying to be a bit of a rebel when you're young. I think it's kind of got that dangerous element to it that people try to emulate and they just kind of get trapped into it and they can't stop. A lot of it is just people around you trying to be like your friends you know just trying to be one of the boys and the girls and have a smoke so peer pressure and pressure from things we see on TV.

So for you growing up in a smoking environment, how did you combat it?

The main thing was I never got the buzz. I never understood the law of it. It never made sense to me. Like I've tried it various times over the years and I just never understood it. I never understood why people smoked, like I get that it's addictive but I don't get the pay off so personally it never appealed to me.

It doesn't appeal to me whatsoever on any level and I know a lot of people that have smoked and they've had a lot of problems with it so I guess that's kind of been ingrained in me and that's sort of the same thing as an alcoholic father...you're probably not going to drink or you're not going to want to drink or anything like that

if you grew up being abused. It's the same sort of thing. I just don't want to start smoking and I don't think I ever will.

Is it socially acceptable to refuse a cigarette?

When I was a kid, like I said, [smokers] were just trying to be part of the group you know and all, 'Let's have a smoke behind the bike sheds' or whatever and people would go, 'Oh ok' and I've done it before aswell but I think it would have been a lot cooler to just be my own man and be my own person and just have said, 'Na I don't do that stuff'. I think it's a lot cooler because you're standing up for yourself and standing on your own two feet. I think there's respect in refusing a cigarette.

What do you think smoking says about a person?

Um...I guess it shows that you can give in to a temptation or an addiction or something.

What do you think is the worst thing about smoking?

Two things; the main one is the health one, how it affects your health in such a bad way. I mean I've seen people you know really sick from smoking. And just the smell of it and how it affects people around you. I didn't really know until I was in a household where nobody smoked and I'd always been in households where people smoked and then when I went back to places where people had been smoking, it really affected me. Like I'd get short of breath and my clothes would just smell really bad of smoke, so yeah I guess it's not an attractive look you know.

So do you have a smokefree home?

Yeah, when people come over there's no way they're smoking in the house and that's what I mean it stinks for me and I don't like it and I cough and I can't breathe properly. I've been around smoking my whole life but I think it's not until you get away from it for a long time that you realise how much it affects you.

As a performer, how do you think smoking would affect you?

It would affect me terribly. Like I'm not the fittest person in the world so if I smoked aswell I'd do a couple of songs and I wouldn't be able to keep going and yeah I know people that have been real fat and they've smoked and it just ruins them but especially in music because it's all about your voice and your stamina with your voice and smoking will just kill and you try to yell in the mic or something and you'll just start coughing and that's not going to look good on anyone. Smoking just doesn't help and my producer P-Money produces my stuff and if I started smoking he'd be gutted yeah.

Would you go out with a smoker?

I don't think I could now. I go out with a non-smoker and I've been in a smokefree environment for the last about five years, so I don't think I could go out with a smoker or if I did you know and if I was into that person I'd try and convince them to stop. It's also the money, it's ridiculous, like the amount of money you can spend on something that gives you just a little bit of stress relief or something you know...

Do you think you can tell a smoker from a non-smoker?

If I met them I think I can cos the smell or like, if I meet a smoker I can tell because it's in their clothes and usually if they're coughing I can pretty much work out if they smoke or not.

Do you think that quitting is a big achievement?

Oh yeah it's a massive achievement. I know people that have quit before and they came off so proud like it was a great achievement in their life and I think a lot of people blow it off as in, 'Oh you can just stop when you feel like it' but it's a really hard thing for people and cigarettes become a part of their life. I was proud of my friends when they actually quit.

What advice would you give someone who has just started smoking?

I guess the most simple advice that you can give them is: stop smoking. That sounds stupid but that's like it, there's no pay off for this. What are you trying to achieve by smoking you know? I would just try and talk to them and try and understand why they smoke and what's the reason. It's going to catch up with them in the end and any type of addiction is not good for people, so I would just try and convince them to get help as early as they can yeah.

And for people who are trying to quit?

Stick in there because I know a lot of people that have quit themselves and it can be done so just stick at it.

What else do you think we can do to try and increase the number of people who become smokefree?

I think like they talked a lot about raising the tax on it. I think that can help but then in some ways it might not...It feels like a lot of role models are showing it in a negative aspect and that's going to help to show the repercussions of smoking and how it can affect people in a bad way. Things like campaigns can pull it you know?

What are the benefits of being smokefree?

I think I have a lot more stamina and I can perform easy, like one of my friends stopped smoking and she woke up one morning and she was just like gasping for air and didn't know what was happening and the doctor told her it was cos she smoked

and she was only 22 years old. So I was just glad I never sort of had to have any of that you know. I'm not reliant on something that has no pay off for me so man there's a lot of the benefits.

Do you have any views on the tobacco industry?

I don't have really strong views because I'm not educated enough to be putting strong views out there about it but it seems like there's a lot of dudes making a lot of money off something that is not good for you. Like people getting rich, like billions of dollars getting thrown around for something that causes disease and like I guess it's something that in this day and age this type of thing shouldn't really be happening yeah.

Do you know anyone that has quit successfully using Quitline or patches or anything like that?

Na. I know heaps of people that have quit reading the Allen Carr book. My flatmate quit reading that book. That's the only way I know people have stopped smoking.

How do you feel when people smoke around you?

I wouldn't be enjoying it. If I'm at a club or something and people blow smoke in my face, that happens all the time, and it's not pleasant and I don't enjoy it um but I you know personally I wouldn't say anything to their face. If it was eating or something I'd definitely say something. I'd just tell them to um stop blowing it in my face or put it out or leave. Don't want to be too ruckus.