

Interview with Amber Peebles

Interviewed by Dave Gibson

What's up Amber, welcome to the cave of Dave.

It's nice to be in the cave of Dave.

Would you tell us how you define your smoking status?

Non smoker.

Never smoked?

Well I've tried it but non smoker and then occasionally passive smoker.

Speaking of passive smoking, is smoking as common around the traps these days as it used to be?

I don't think so. I think the sex appeal has been taken out of it. A lot of girls now don't want to go near a guy with an ashy mouth, you know club pashing that kind of thing. I think there's a very small group of people that still may think it's cool but it's just really not and it's kind of annoying because we now know the effects and we're reminded, like every cigarette packet that you pick up. It's just dumbass. It's stupid so it's not very attractive any more.

The romance is totally gone?

Yeah the romance of smoking cigarettes has completely been stripped away. It just ain't hot anymore. It's stinky and you have to go stand outside at your club and you can't hang out with your friends and you're kind of poor and it makes your skin look ugly after time and what else does it do? There's nothing good that comes from it. There is nothing. I don't get it.

It's quite a bizarre habit when nothing good comes from it aye?

Yeah it's amazing, like I don't understand why someone would. It's like standing in front of a fire and just breathing in that smoke, awesome, good one.

But paying for it?

But paying for it, and that's another thing that Jay said, he mentioned he didn't like being controlled by cigarettes. And a lot of kids start because they're kind of like, 'fuck you, you don't control me', but then eventually you become addicted to the cigarettes and the cigarette controls you and then the corporations control you cause you are paying money to the man.

Have you got friends and family who smoke?

Yeah most of my family. At one stage I think I was the only person in my family that didn't smoke.

And have any of them quit?

Yeah actually a lot of them, gosh yes, probably about sort of 40%, 50% of them have quit which is pretty cool.

For those people and for the rest of your family that are thinking about quitting, how can others support those people trying to quit?

I think if you're a smoker, be aware if someone else is trying to quit you know? I am not quite sure how it works because I've never been a smoker so I don't understand the temptation but from the looks of it, if you're a smoker, then when you are talking about smoking, quite often you are tempting that person to light up with you so I guess just being a little bit delicate in that sense. And just realising that it takes a few goes you know, give them a chance.

Do you think using help like Quitline and nicotine replacement products like the patches means you're too weak to quit by yourself?

If it's moving you towards quitting and it works go ahead you know? Wean yourself off it cold turkey, whatever works for you. Quitting takes balls. I don't care how you quit.

All about the balls?

It's all about the balls. I don't care how you quit, just quit.

Do you think it's uncool to refuse a cigarette?

No. I did when I was growing up.

So being smokefree, what has that meant to you? You have obviously got beautiful lovely skin.

Thanks babe. I mean I think smoking definitely hurts the skin, hair, nails department and that's a big thing in this industry you know? You've got to look the part. Smoking tarnishes you. It takes you away from your work cause you are outside smoking, you smell, your nails go all kind of yellowy and skanky, your hair, I mean it's poison, it can't be good for you, you know?

It's so weird isn't it? I mean you've got to expect some type of, something to happen if you just poison yourself.

That's right. Either that or you drop dead of cancer and that's not good for work either.

Would you consider quitting smoking a real achievement?

I think quitting smoking is a huge achievement. When you're addicted to something - that word means something; you are addicted to it - so I think quitting is fantastic. Even for those so called 'social smokers', it's still quitting because social smoking is still smoking? People are starting to understand that it's gross and it's yuck and so they hide behind their addiction by saying, 'Oh no, no it's not gross because I'm just a social smoker' so that kind of adds a little bit of glam to it right? It doesn't, it's gross. So what would you like me to say?

Some of the other things that we could do to reduce smoking in New Zealand is to increase the taxes, get rid of tobacco or we could ban displays etc. Do you have any thoughts on those efforts?

Yeah, I mean they've been doing all that for a while now. I actually think it should be illegal to smoke with a child in the car full stop because trapping someone in the car with you while you are filling it with toxins should be illegal.

It's like child abuse?

It's completely child abuse.

Why did you choose to be smokefree?

To be honest, I just didn't get it, I don't get the whole point of smoking and never have so I've just never really been interested in it.

Have you ever been tempted start smoking?

I've probably been tempted maybe twice or three times growing up but it's so, it's gross, it's really gross. I can't find anything likeable about it. It leaves your mouth tasting like ass, it's expensive, it's time consuming.