

Interview with Krysta Neve

Interview by Dave Gibson

Krysta welcome, welcome to Auckland.

Thanks.

When you were at school, did your friends smoke?

Yeah, all of them.

Wow, so tell us a little bit about what it's like to be in a situation where you are completely surrounded by smokers all the time?

I guess for me it was mostly embarrassing because I got made to go and check if the teachers are coming, so I was like the little informant. But yeah, it really sucked, I didn't like it. I really wanted to smoke and 'be cool' but my body wouldn't physically let me do it, like I just can't smoke. It would make me throw up or whatever.

As soon as I realised that it wasn't cool, it was so easy to say no. People respected me because I didn't want to do it. I was like no and they were like cool, your decision, sweet.

Were you surprised that once you actually said no the reaction was pretty positive?

Yeah because then I think they realised not long after they had started smoking that it wasn't cool and they wanted to stop but they were like good on you, you're not smoking, we want to quit and we can't kind of thing. So I guess it showed that they were weak and I wasn't in a way.

Would you say that your friends have respected your decision to be smokefree?

Yeah. And even some of them come to me for help these days because they know that I don't smoke. I think that someone that does smoke needs a good friend to help them get through it if they are quitting.

What do you think is making it not so socially acceptable anymore?

It's been banned from being done in public, which is obviously not a cool thing in the first place if it's been banned and I guess the younger generation is just kind of looking at these people that don't smoke and probably the ads, the Smokefree ads are helping as well seeing cool role models not smoking themselves so that's probably part of it.

Would you say that people would tend to have a higher chance of becoming a smoker if they have a family that smokes?

Yeah, if it's accepted in their family I think they definitely would have a higher chance of smoking.

Does anybody smoke in your family?

Yeah.

Who smokes in your family?

My sisters, I've got four sisters, one of them quit when she had a baby a couple of years ago, but the rest of them smoke and even like my 15 year old sister smokes. My dad quit when maybe ten years ago or something and his dad smoked. The only person who didn't was me and my grandma.

Do you have smokefree homes, like do your sisters have smokefree homes or cars?

I don't think so, no I don't think there are any kind of no-smoking protocols or anything, it's pretty bad really. Like their friends will come round and the baby will be you know hanging out doing her thing or whatever and people smoking and I'm just like oh that's wrong. Take her out or get them outside, I don't like that, it's not cool.

Yeah, I don't like that either, people smoke around my kids or my nieces and that it really gets my goat.

So a lot of your circle of friends are smokers, how do you stay strong to turn it down?

I find that if I am friends with people they should accept me for who I am and not try and force anything on me because I don't want to be someone's friend who does that. So yeah, I wouldn't be their friend in the first place if they were people like that. I have no problem refusing anything and they don't even offer so it's fine.

Do you ever find yourself getting tempted?

Yeah, if I have a couple of beers or something and get in that kind of mode and get tempted but then I just say no, that's disgusting, what am I thinking, I'm not doing it.

In your opinion what is the worst thing about smoking?

Probably that it's one of the most selfish things that someone can do because you're not only harming yourself but you're harming people around you like walking down the street having a cigarette, at a park with kids around or at home say at a family dinner or something, you are always harming other people, so yeah, it's never cool.

In what way can someone support a friend or family member who is wanting to quit?

I think the most important thing is not to judge, because if they are wanting to quit then they are already doing something to help themselves. Now they are asking for your support to help them, so I think it's really important that there is no judging going on, you just do everything you can to help them out. Whether it's ring the Quitline or go on the internet look some stuff up or whatever, get some facts about it, anything you can. If someone is trying to quit, don't judge, just support them.

Ka pai. Would you consider quitting smoking a real achievement?

Yeah, I think it's a massive achievement. By quitting you are helping yourself and you've got your whole life ahead of you now, no worries about ever getting sick from it, it's good for your family as well I guess as well, any young children that might be in your family.

It's not a legacy you want to pass on to your kids.

No, no way, you don't want to show that smoking is ever good for young children.

So obviously the tobacco industry is massive, you know all those friends of yours buy cigarettes, it's a billion dollar industry, it markets you know markets quite heavily to young people, it kills one in two smokers. Do you have an opinion about the tobacco industry?

I think it is really, really horrible and I think they should all feel really bad because they are advertising something that can kill you and be very potentially dangerous to a lot of people and I'm sure it can't be good for the environment either. So I think it's really terrible what they are doing.