

Interview with Scribe

Interview by Dave Gibson

Just to get things started how would you describe your current smoking status?

Heavy smoker.

Heavy ass smoker?

Heavy like you were back in the days.

See everyone knows I smoked.

Yeah well it's true, if Dave Gibson can give up smoking anyone can.

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

Definitely not, no. I think, I don't know, education has changed, back when I was at school it was cool to smoke, everyone was doing it. My parents smoked in the car with the windows up with us in the back, it was just socially acceptable and now it's not, it's totally uncool. I think being a smoker, you have to go outside and there are not big crowds like there used to be when smoking inside got banned.

Obviously the stats of smoking are going down but there are still some young people picking it up you know, despite the education.

I think a lot of it has to do with your parents, cause like my grandparents and my parents all smoked heavily around us and so I think we just grew up thinking that was something natural. I guess if your parents smoke you will probably, I don't know if this is scientifically correct, but you probably have more chances of picking it up just because it's there. Like I used to steal cigarettes of my mum. All my friends who smoke, whatever brand they smoke it's what their parents smoked cause that's who they used to steal their cigarettes off.

Do your mum and dad still smoke?

Yes. Like hard out. My uncle died of cancer recently, like a week before he died you know he couldn't smoke but he would still cough the shit out., It was so sad to see it in that form, like it was killing him and he still couldn't stop right to the end, you know.

Being a smoker and then seeing someone that you love being a smoker, still trapped or addicted and not being able to get away, must be weird?

You think it would be the wake up call for me to give up, but I don't know, it just really feels like a helpless cause when you are a hard out smoker. Cause I will be like that you know in

the future if I carry on the way I smoke now. You definitely feel like a slave to it. I envy people that don't smoke you know, they smell all good and they don't have yellow fingernails and shit. So it's kind of like I definitely feel like a hopeless smoker. If I could give up I would.

What do you think is your biggest barrier for you not to quit?

I guess just because it's always been the crutch that I've used, like anything can trigger my cigarette. Seeing someone light one up or if I feel angry or if I feel happy, if I have a drink, if I finish my food, when I wake up you know, when I go toilet, when I'm bored, when I'm excited, it's just I don't know, that's what really frustrates me about it. It makes me feel like such an idiot because it's definitely the dumbest thing I have ever done. The dumbest thing I have ever done was start smoking.

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

Yes definitely, definitely by like rings around the eyes, you know you can tell someone who smokes, teeth, it definitely affects teeth, like the tobacco stains, and just like smell, yeah. Like every time I go to the dentist yeah my dentist is like 'You need to stop smoking'. I am like 'How did you know that? I just brushed my teeth and didn't have a cigarette on purpose.'

How is it dealing with the kind of guilt of being a smoker?

Yeah even when I'm smoking I am still like 'man I hate this.' And I am going to give this up one day, not today, not tomorrow but one day, I know I am going to magically wake up, but the thing is that day never comes you know? Because there is no future, it's all about the now. I think it's up to the individual and they have to get to the point themselves you know. It's a big trigger for me when people light up.

As a musician, what are your thoughts on smoking and how it affects your performance?

It definitely affects my breathing and I've noticed that recently, I definitely find it harder, cause you know I'm a rapper so breath control is everything with what I do, and I definitely feel like smoking is starting to affect that just with my breathing.

You're well known in New Zealand and Aussie, you are a role model to a lot of people, does it concern you that you might be seen to be promoting something even though you're not meaning to?

I am definitely conscious about where and when I smoke. I am aware that I'm kind of a role model so I'm definitely not out there just smoking willy nilly in front of schools. I am definitely conscious of where and when I smoke and make sure that like, if I do a show at a school, to make sure I'm not smoking.

I am picking you are not wanting to encourage them so what would you be saying to those kids who want to give smoking a go or try it for that first time?

I guess I would just say ‘don’t, like don’t even bother, don’t even try it, it sucks.’ I would definitely try and deter a first time smoker, cause it’s so addictive. I didn’t even know I was addicted when I was smoking, me and my friends would do it for some cheap thrill and then next thing I know, I was buying packets. Even singles you know, you could buy singles, 20 cents and that, just because we could spend our lunch money buying cigarettes. It kind of just crept up on me and I always thought I would quit when I hit 20, then 21, yeah still saying that.

Dave’s going to send you the Alan Carr book.

Do you have a smokefree home?

Yeah definitely. I am really paranoid about smoking around the kids and always washing my hands and you know making sure they don’t see me cause I don’t want them you know to think that that is alright.

Your 13-year-old hasn’t tried it?

No no, hell no, I would kick his arse.

Does he know that you do?

Yeah he knows, he knows that I do, yeah, the oldest definitely, my two babies they don’t know. Even when my son was a bit younger I’ve always referred to ‘oh dad’s going for a yukky smoke’, you know? I’ve always put it in a negative light, like it’s not something cool but yeah still feel like an idiot for doing it.

Have you read the Alan Carr book?

I had the book and I actually read it right up to the bit where he said ‘well now you are going to try and not finish this book because you are scared that, the inner smoker in you is scared of quitting ra de ra’. Yeah but in the course of reading that book I cut down, I was on like one cigarette a day while reading the book.

Most people don’t realise that using nicontine replacement patches or gum in actual fact doubles your chance of quitting successfully. Do you think if people knew that then more of them would try and use those tools to try quit?

Yeah well I didn’t, I never knew that nicotine relpacement products made it twice as easy to quit. I thought it actually made it harder and was just more of a prolonging process. I have always been the type that thinks if you want to quit smoking stop putting them in your mouth. That approach never really worked for me cause I can’t stop.

Do you think the people who do use Quitline or patches or whatever, do you think that means that they are weak cause they're not doing it by themselves?

Nah, definitely not a sign of weakness, probably more strength in that they don't have any problems with asking for help and admitting that they have a problem.

What do you think about the tobacco companies?

It's just definitely a big money making thing. It is definitely evil that you know people can get away with that. I definitely think like 30 years from now the generations are going to look back and be like 'look at these idiots, how could they?' It's quite shameful when you think about it.

What do you think about the cigarette displays in dairies?

The tobacco companies are definitely very clever because people are still buying the product. Like you know when I grew up I wanted to be a rugby league star and the name of the cup was the Winfield Cup. Now that's all been banned, they aren't allowed to advertise with sports and all that but still somehow the message is getting across and I don't know how it's getting across.

What would you do about it if you were the Prime Minister?

I would just abolish it because if I grew up and there was no cigarettes we wouldn't be smoking, wouldn't have a problem and it's so stupid. It shouldn't even be allowed, it's a drug you know. The only reason it's there is because the money, because they make money off it. Yeah if I was the prime minister I would ban smoking full stop, take it out of the shops.

What is the best thing about smoking?

Ah.....there isn't a best thing about smoking, not for me. I really do hate it, even though I smoke, I am a heavy smoker, can't stop, I really don't like it at all.

What's the worst thing about smoking for you?

I really hate the smell, knowing that I stink of smoke, especially having a partner who doesn't smoke and she is always like 'ew, you know you stink.'

Do you ever stop to think 'shit how much money do I spend on smokes'?

Definitely, that's one of the worst things about it. Like it's killing you which should be enough but it's also killing you financially. I smoke at least like one and a half packets a day, or I can make one packet last if I am like broke, but I definitely have to have a packet a day and so that's like almost \$100 a week which annually is friggen heaps.

How long have you been smoking?

Since I was 14. I'm 30 now. 16 years.

That's....over \$50,000. You could have bought a lot with that.

Shit, probably the mean car that I want to buy right now. A big deposit on a house. If I added up all the money I have spent on smoking to this day I could actually go out and buy a Porsche, cause you could buy a Porsche for like \$80,000.

Is there anything else you wanted to say?

If I could go back and do it again I wouldn't have even picked up that first one. I wouldn't have even picked up that first cigarette, it's not my future. Yeah well I definitely don't intend on smoking forever. I want to quit, and Dave you're going to help me.

Damn straight, together.