

INTERVIEW WITH TIM PHIN

Do you think people still see smoking as a cool thing to do?

I think that people like to try it. I don't know if it's cool any more but they just like to try it so they can say they've done it. I think in my peer group, there has definitely been a lot of people that have given up. The people who haven't given up really want to give up too so perceptions have changed.

Also people who smoke are now segregated from people who don't smoke so for that reason there's a stigma attached to it. They have to go outside into a dark corner and smoke, away from the fun and good times.

What about the perceptions towards non-smokers or ex-smokers?

It's cooler to be smokefree now because it shows they've had to go through a process that's harder than being a smoker. Ex-smokers are also respected by smokers because they've done the hard yards.

What was your first experience of smoking?

The first time I smelt it was my aunty, she used to smoke. My parents didn't smoke so she would smoke it and I would actually light the cigarette for her and I thought that was pretty cool. I was real young.

When did you first try smoking?

I can remember trying cigarettes when I was walking home from school once, a friend had a pack of cigarettes so I smoked as well, that was early high school days.

It never was a decision to start. I was always just kind of doing it. It was like 'oh I'll have one now, I'll have a puff now' and it just gets progressively more and more. It's not like something we choose to think about and when you do have your first cigarettes you're not thinking that you're going to be smoking lots and lots later on in life. You don't really think about the consequences, you don't really think about how you're going to be addicted within a few weeks even.

If you could go back in time to when you were first smoking, what would you say to yourself?

I'd say to myself 'don't do it', but I probably wouldn't listen either.

How long have you been quit for?

About three years.

So you must be feeling good now?

Yeah, I'll never smoke again.

What did you do to quit?

I remember two times when I gave up for more than a week. Actually, those times when I gave up I had the flu so I had to give up because I was sick and I couldn't smoke because it was so disgusting with the stuff going in my lungs. Most people give up smoking at that time when they get the flu so it shows that they can actually give up. When I was that sick the cravings left as well because it's your body saying that you shouldn't be doing it and it's overcoming the cravings

After that, I quit twice. The first time I was reading the books and realising how bad it was to smoke and understanding I didn't really want to do it and then I kind of got to hate the fact that I was smoking so I quit the first time. But then I actually started smoking other people's cigarettes instead of buying them myself so that way I got into it again because people were smoking in clubs. What really made me give up was when they stopped being able to smoke in clubs, I just really had no need to. So yeah, I gave up and I won't ever do it again. It was probably the best decision I've ever made to just give up smoking.

How did you stop the cravings?

The first time I had [patches](#) and the second time I got it into my head I was repulsed from smoking so I just didn't do it any more.

So what would your advice be to people out there trying to quit?

They just have to hit the nail on the head and do it. There's a lot of humming and haaing from people who want to give up smoking and they're saying that they're cutting back, 'I'm only smoking two packets of cigarettes a week now instead of five' but they're still smoking so they're always going to get back up to where they were before.

Did you have support along the way?

Not really, aye, you have to do it yourself.

What was the hardest thing about quitting?

The worst thing about quitting is your body not wanting to quit and fighting that. The mood swings, physical withdrawals.

And the benefits of quitting?

I gave up because I knew that the negatives way outweighed the positives. Once you're over your body withdrawing from it, you start to notice that you're healthier, you're feeling better, you're in a much more positive mood.

What was was one of the things you liked least when you were a smoker?

The number one thing I dislike about smoking is the health reasons, the feeling of just weakness and yuckness really. I remember when I first started doing it and it used to make me feel sick and I'd actually feel more sick the more I had, but you'll still keep on going even though you realise how bad it is. The thing that grossed me out was probably the coughing, the phlegm that you get from it, that feeling of unhealthiness.

How would you support a friend who was trying to quit?

We'd just keep on telling them to give up. It's harder said than done but you can offer them books and other different ways of doing it. **ANDY, CAN WE PLEASE ADD A LINK on 'different ways of doing it' TO OUR 'HOW TO QUIT' PAGE?**

What are the reasons for your friends wanting to quit?

They've seen the bad experiences, they've seen people, family and relatives who have died from it, who have had their lungs chopped out, and I think people nowadays want more of a quality of life, they want to live a long time, they want to feel good at this point in time as well.

Were you still a smoker when it was legal to smoke inside pubs and bars?

Yeah I was. For me, when I was DJing I used to smoke cigarettes just to keep myself occupied. I was bored, and also it was just something to do with your hands.

Do you think smoking affects performers in the music industry?

Yeah probably singers, girls that sing and smoke are definitely not sexy.

What do you think of the tobacco industry?

Well the tobacco industry has changed in the past ten years compared to what it was when they were sponsoring all the fashion things and now their hands are more and more tied really.