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## CLEAR THINKING

from Uncommon Knowledge

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Psychology for success, health and happiness  
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Hi

By the time you read this, a major change will have taken place in England. It's already happened in Scotland. And Wales. And Northern Ireland. Bringing up the rear, now England gets a taste of what it's like when non-smokers' rights take precedence over smokers' rights.

An unmitigated good thing?

Many people think so, but, like every other change that has ever been introduced by human beings, the smoking ban will be subject to the immutable law of unintended consequences.

No matter how carefully you plan to do 'good', with inquiries, and research, and consultations, and proposals, and green papers, and white papers, and schedules, and compensation packages, and public education and all the rest of it - there will still be effects that you have failed to foresee. And a certain proportion of these will be effects that you really won't want to see.

Our lead article on smoking in this issue explores an 'unintended consequence' that perhaps might have been foreseen by the more thoughtful. Would thinking about it have prevented a ban? Probably not. But this consequence will certainly have to be dealt with.

And speaking of smoking, our featured Teaching Tale this month is a delightful metaphorical take on the challenge of breaking through the grip of an addictive habit like smoking. With a little tweaking, you could adapt it to many another compulsive behaviour.

After all, we wouldn't want you to end up feeling guilty, now would we?

Enjoy Clear Thinking!

Roger Elliott & Mark Tyrrell  
Uncommon Knowledge Ltd

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1: Article - Smoking is going to stop. Or is it?

So July 1st will see smoking banned in all public places in the United Kingdom. No doubt some smokers will see this as good motivation to finally quit. Non-smokers will have access (at last) to breathable air in pubs, clubs and restaurants. Committed smokers will have more cause and rebellion attached to their smoking – a combustible and irresistible mix. Deny somebody something they think they a) want and b) need, and you have a sure-fire recipe for making that ‘something’ more attractive – at least to a certain type of smoker. I refer, of course, to the rebellious smoker.

The rebellious smoker usually started smoking as an adolescent behaviour in their early teens. It was a form of rebelling or revolting against parents, teachers, society, whatever. The rebellious association for these smokers has persisted into adulthood, so telling them they should quit is like telling an infatuated teenage girl she should stop seeing that enigmatic edgy guy –she’ll want him even more. Encourage her to see him – even insist – and she’ll see through him quick enough. It’s the same for the rebellious smoker.

If you force yourself (or I try to force you) to deny yourself something you are emotionally attracted to, you build an inner tension. That tension grows.

Telling that teenage girl not to see that guy she is infatuated with is likely to just increase her desire to see him. You pull her one way and she becomes more attracted to going the other way. It’s just like a rubber band you’ve stretched too far – it springs back.

Telling people they shouldn’t smoke when so much of smoking is about rebellion against advice and ‘orders’ can actually encourage more smoking, especially if the smoker in question has never discarded their adolescent associations to the habit.

Read the rest of this article online at

<http://www.uncommon-knowledge.co.uk/articles/smoking.html>

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## 2: Teaching Tale: Sailing to freedom

If metaphor is a stand-in for another pattern in life, then we can see people's addictive behaviours as metaphors. So the alcohol may be a metaphor for a friend who is there in time of need to the drinker, the fix may be a stand in for an exciting lover to the junkie and so on. The addictive substance or activity acts as a stand in for what the person really needs in their life – it's always a poor substitute in the end though.

Here's a tale I sometimes tell to smokers who wish to be free.

There was once a man who was lucky enough to be able to retire at a young age. He had a passion for sailing and boat building. Over a period of time he built himself a beautiful sailing boat. It was a work of art. The sails were purest white, the deck gleamed and the cabin and sleeping quarters were most comfortable.

He began to travel the seas. He sailed around wonderful tropical islands and got to know different people in different harbours and ports. One day this man dropped anchor at a particular port and decided to have some fun. He went into a bar and fell into conversation with some local men who seemed like great fun. They drank together and laughed and seemed to get on marvellously. Then one of the men, after hearing about his boat, suggested that they could all work together. They could come and live on the boat and be paid as crew members. They could do all the work and the owner could pay their wages and just relax. What fun that would be! The man readily agreed and the next morning – somewhat hung over – they all set sail together.

And so life continued and all seemed great at first. But, bit by bit, the man began to notice that his boat didn't quite look the same any more. In fact, these men (whom he was paying to be there) were sloppy and grubby. The sails started to look a little shredded and grey, and seemed not catch the air the way they used to. The deck always seemed to be dirty and smelled bad, and other parts of the boat seemed to be rusting at an alarming rate. What's more, he no longer

found the men to be enjoyable company. And in fact they had started to order him around, telling him when he should eat and sleep, and always wanting more money.

Eventually he decided enough was enough – he wanted his beautiful boat back the way it was and the way it should be. He called them together and politely told them that he no longer wanted them around, pointing to the disrepair of his boat. But they just sneered at him and refused to go! He suddenly began to fear he had a mutiny on his hands. Were they going to take over and destroy the whole boat? He felt he had lost control of his life at this point, and really did not know what to do.

But bit by bit and little by little a cunning plan started to grow in the back of his mind.

One day he called his by now more or less ‘captors’ together and said: “You know, there’s a certain port I know not too far from here that has a really thriving night life. The pleasures of that place are indescribable; let’s all go there and have a wonderful time!” The parasitical men were excited by this prospect – after all, is self-indulgent pleasure not the sole purpose of living? So they set their course for this delightful place.

Eventually, with the boat even more tattered and threadbare, they sailed into the harbour of this lively community, full of distractions and delights. The men in their greed for a good time almost threw themselves out of the boat in their haste to sample the delights of the sea port. In their haste they didn’t notice that the owner had stayed on board. As soon as they were out of sight, he upped anchor and steered his boat to open waters, thrilled with his successful offloading of those poisonous charmers who had so threatened his well-being.

And astoundingly, with very little work on his part, as he sailed out into the fresh clear air of the open seas, he noticed that the sails were white once more and caught the air powerfully as they used to, driving his boat forward, while his deck and cabin gleamed and shone. As he sailed onwards with high heart, he thought with satisfaction how wonderfully his boat would now survive the years and travels ahead as those destructive men became an increasingly distant memory.



