

AN ADDICT'S STORY

By Cheryl Dudley

Facts and Stats

Average for May B+

According to Idaho Code 39-5701 the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare must inspect each business that sells tobacco to ensure that it does not sell tobacco to minors. For May, 2004:

- ❖ 200 Vendors were inspected.*
- ❖ 21 Vendors sold to the inspecting minor.
- ❖ The compliance rate for the month of May 2004 was 89.5%.

*Inspections where purchase attempts were made.

Prevent the Sale

Go to:

www.preventthesale.com/idaho

- Learn about the law
- Take the tobacco quiz
- See what the ID's look like
- Play the Game "Would You Sell to This Person?"

Jesse, a 22-year-old Moscow Idaho resident, recently shared with me that he had successfully quit smoking. His story intrigued me, particularly when he said that he had bought cigarettes over the counter at the age of 16. When I asked Jesse if I could interview him for this newsletter, he agreed, saying that after his struggle with tobacco addiction, he now feels compelled to share his story and to encourage retailers not to give in to minors.

Here is my interview with Jesse:

Q: How old were you when you became a "regular" smoker?

Jesse: I was 14

Q: Who influenced you to smoke?

Jesse: A friend of mine's parent smoked.

Q: How did you get cigarettes at 14?

Jesse: We either stole them from my friend's mom, or from the store. We'd ride our roller blades into the store and the clerks would tell us to take them off. That was before cigarettes were behind the counter, so we'd fill our roller blades with cigarettes. Sometimes we asked someone else to buy them for us, too.

Q: When did you buy cigarettes on your own?

Jesse: I was around 16.

Q: Were you asked for your ID?

Jesse: If I was, I'd say that I forgot it at home. Sometimes that worked, and sometimes it didn't. There were certain places we'd go where we knew we wouldn't get carded.

There were a couple of places where people knew we were under 18, and they'd still sell them. They asked us not to tell anyone.

Q: Were these clerks friends of yours?

Jesse: No

Q: Why do you think they sold cigarettes to you, knowing you were a minor?

Jesse: They probably didn't care. I have no idea. One store was going out of business, so maybe they were just trying to make money.

Q: After smoking regularly for eight years, from the time you were 14 until you were 21, how hard was it for you to quit?

Jesse: On a scale of 1-10, it was a 6 or 7. That was after trying to quit many times.

Q: When did you realize you were addicted?

Jesse: Not until I'd smoked for three or four years.

Q: How do you feel now that you've quit smoking?

Jesse: I can smell someone smoking from a mile away. I have my senses back. If you started smoking as young as I did, you lose your senses. I can taste things and smell things now. Cilantro, flowers,

A TEEN'S STORY *continued*

and other things. I also feel better. I can jog now without getting winded, and I just feel healthier.

Q: Do you have any tips for quitting?

Jesse: Chew gum and keep busy.

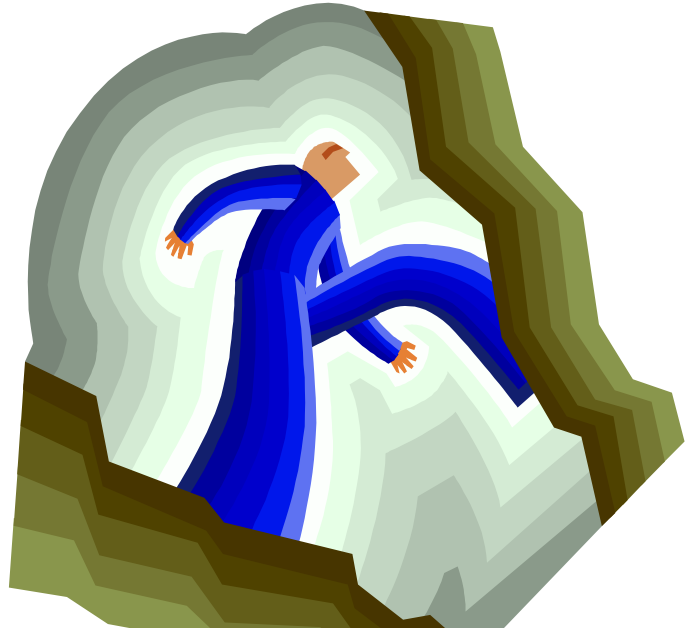
Q: What would you say to a clerk who is tempted to sell tobacco to minors?

Jesse: Don't do it. Even before I quit smoking, I wouldn't sell to a minor. I know it's not good for you, and I wouldn't want to be responsible or encourage someone to smoke.

Q: do you have any last words?

Jesse: Cigarettes don't even taste good. When I first started, I used to spit all the time, but then I got used to the taste. Quitting smoking was a big challenge, but I'm glad I did it. I just wish I had never started.

Idaho tobacco vendors and their employees can dramatically affect the lives of kids by refusing to sell tobacco products to them.



Step Up to the Challenge—Say No to the Sale of Tobacco to Minors

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**Prevent
the Sale!**

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Tobacco Retailers

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