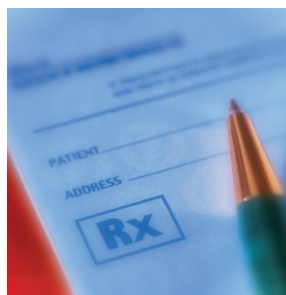


What Worked for Me

You know the saying “three times a charm”? Well I finally figured out a plan that worked for me! I switched from the gum to the patch. By using the patch, I was able to put it on once a day and not worry about it. The patch really helped me with my withdrawal. I used it for the entire eight weeks that the package recommended. I have now been smoke-free for nine months. It took a little time to find what worked for me, and I want to emphasize that what worked for me might not work for you. With so many options out there, the important thing is to never stop trying. If one method does not work for you, try something else.

The most important things I learned were:

1. Nicotine is what makes you addicted. It is not what kills you.
2. Nicotine medications are not usually addictive because the nicotine enters your body more slowly than cigarettes.
3. Even if you use the nicotine medications for a long time it is better than smoking because you would not get all of the bad chemicals in cigarettes and tobacco smoke.
4. Nicotine medications will help cut down your urges. They do not magically make all of your urges go away.
5. There are also non-nicotine drugs out there that seem to work for many smokers, but they require a prescription from your doctor.




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1 (877) 954-2548

Projectease@MOFFITT.org

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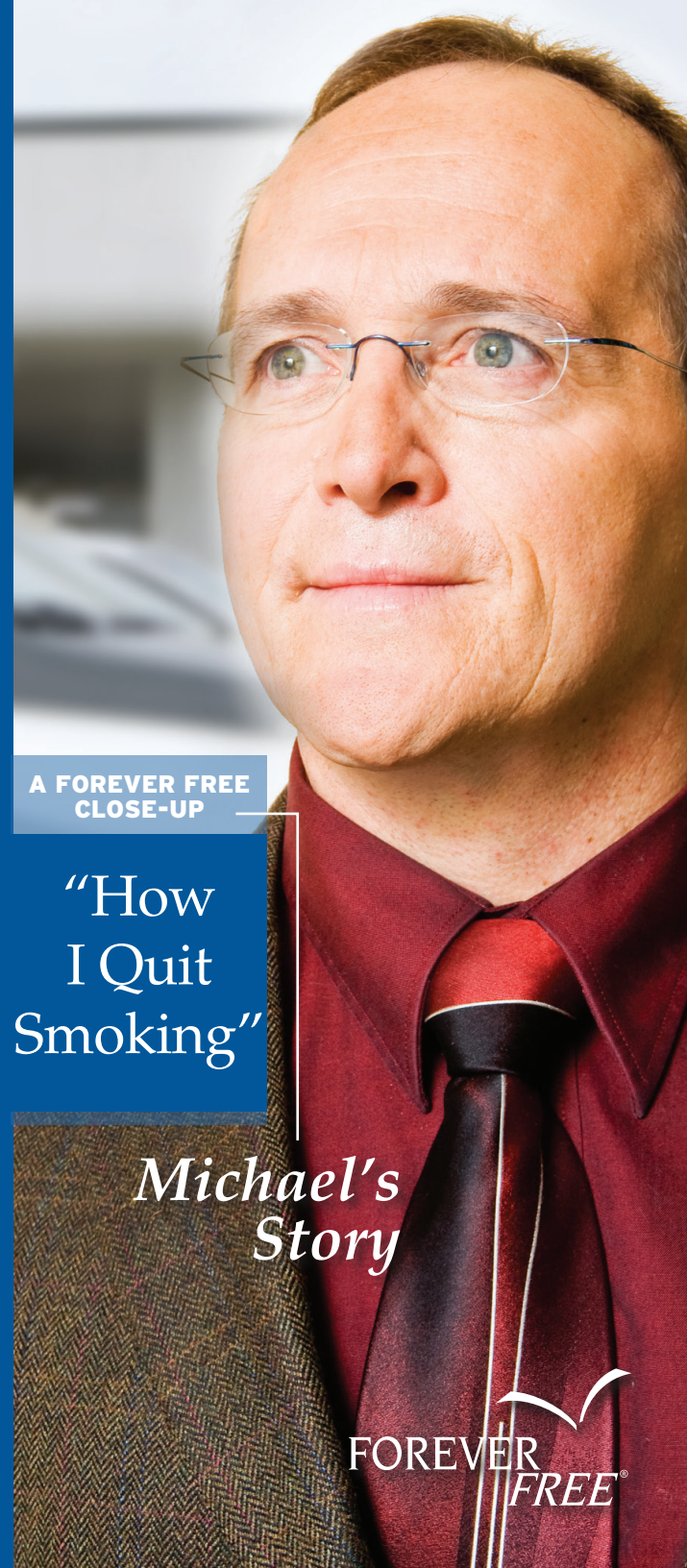
The people depicted in this series were inspired by real individuals,
but the particulars were changed to protect their privacy.

A FOREVER FREE
CLOSE-UP

“How
I Quit
Smoking”

*Michael's
Story*


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The Old Me

Hi, my name is Michael and I am a 51 year old salesman. I smoked a pack a day for 33 years. I can honestly say that cigarettes were a big part of my life. They were there during every big event in my life; graduation, wedding, my mom's funeral. I wanted to quit smoking but I had never really been able to. I could only go without smoking if I happened to be too sick to smoke.

I guess things changed for me when I got close to my 50th birthday. It was one of the "big ones" and I started to look at my life and wonder what was in store for the years ahead. Even though I wanted to quit smoking in the past, I think the feeling was much stronger this time.



My Attempts

My first attempt was cold turkey. I am a great salesman so I believed that when I put my mind to something I could do it. I nearly made it all day. After dealing with a nasty customer, I went straight to the corner store and bought a pack of cigarettes. Nasty customers are common in my line of work, so it really wasn't anything unusual. Normally though, I would just smoke to help deal with them. I'm sure it didn't help that I hadn't smoked that day. I was already on edge to begin with.

I realized it wasn't going to be easy to just throw away the cigarettes and depend on my willpower alone. That's when I began my search for the easy button, the magic bullet, the Holy Grail. I had friends who quit smoking, so I called some of them to see what worked for them. It really wasn't all that helpful. Some even said that it was easy and they were proud to say they quit cold turkey; that was annoying!

I looked for quit-smoking treatments on the Internet and came across different medications. I had no idea that there were so many options out there for smokers! I had heard of the nicotine patch and the nicotine gum. I didn't know about the nicotine lozenge, inhaler, and nasal spray. There are also two different kinds of pills (Zyban and Chantix) that you can take. Some of these you can get over the counter. Others require you to get a prescription. I liked the idea of nicotine gum because I could buy some at a nearby store. Also, it sounded good to have something in my



mouth other than cigarettes to chew on. I did have some concerns though. Part of me wondered "If I'm quitting nicotine, should I really put it in my body in another form?" I also wondered if I could get addicted to nicotine medications. After reading about different medications on the Internet, I talked with my doctor about quitting smoking.

After learning more about the medications, I decided to try the nicotine gum. I actually made it three days without smoking. It was the longest I had ever gone. By the third day the gum just wasn't working for me anymore. I was still having a lot of urges. I started to wonder if I was doing something wrong so I called my doctor. I found out I was not using the gum as often as I should have been for a pack a day smoker. I know it sounds crazy given the amount of money I have spent on cigarettes, but I was trying to save money by not using as many pieces as they recommended. By not using it correctly, I wasn't really giving the gum a chance to work.