

No smoking is fine, says Jack Bleiler. No really, he hardly thinks about it.

Addicted to mints: barely worth it

Almost any action you take will have positive and negative consequences. From the moment you wake up til the moment you pass out in a sleazy hotel room with your arm around an okapi, pretty much everything you do is preceded by a cost-benefit analysis. Your interpretation of the available data decides the course of your day and, ultimately, your life.

Should you get out of bed? Well, that would put you one step closer to the frozen waffles, but you might be tired and cranky if you get up now. Under these circumstances, obviously you will stay in bed, and revisit the "getting up" option at a later time.

Should you go to work today, or call in sick, claiming to be stricken with a tropical tree fungus, and see if anyone notices? Or cares?

Hey, who are you kidding? You got braces and dance lessons to pay for. On the other hand, you could always drive right past the office this morning, drain the savings account, and disappear in Borneo. No braces to pay for in Borneo. But what the hell do you know about Borneo? Is it even a country still? Was it ever one? Perhaps you

should just go to the bathroom in your boss's briefcase.

And so on.

Without this kind of internal dialogue to govern our behaviour, we would end up doing a lot of things that are not in our best interest. It allows us to maintain some kind of balance in our lives; the impulsive devil, and the compulsive angel, refereed by reason.

The danger is we can also talk ourselves out of doing things that might be very good for us, particularly if reason is muzzled by a more powerful force—such as addiction.

Whenever I discussed the possibility of quitting smoking with myself, reason was generally bound and gagged and nursing a minor concussion in the hall closet. Impulse won, every time. The overwhelming, insistent need.

At best, quitting was going to be unpleasant. Sure, there were unavoidable benefits — and lots of 'em! — but they could never measure up to the instant, profound gratification of inhaling burning weeds.

How did reason finally win? With many smokers, it takes cancer or a heart attack. Sometimes, even that won't do it. For me, it was a simple matter of economics. The government finally jacked up cigarette taxes to the point where I had to either quit smok-

ing or vaporize the parliament buildings with a Soviet-army-surplus nuclear warhead. Since they didn't have anything in their catalogue I could afford, I decided to quit.

I've got to admit, the benefits of quitting smoking are everything that I had anticipated. More time, more lung capacity, more money—every argument in favour of quitting proved to be right on the money.

Unfortunately, so did the arguments against. The anticipated costs — weight gain, sleeplessness, homicidal rage — were compounded by some unforeseen results, specifically a series of nicotine patch pucker marks all over my upper body, creating a look I like to call "Captain Nemo Successfully Mates with the Giant Squid", and a serious addiction to mints.

I buy in bulk; there is nothing subtle about this addiction. I consume pounds of scotch mints and hard candies each week. I will die, I am sure, of some terrible mint-related illness, riddled with zits and possessing maybe 30 percent of my original teeth.

For those of you who may be considering quitting smoking, I offer these encouraging words. In spite of all the difficulties, it was worth it. Just barely. After adding up the positives, and subtracting the negatives, I can say with pride that I am left with this small net gain on my personal balance sheet: for most of the day, my breath is fantastic.



Jack Bleiler

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The Dahlia comes in such a wide range of color and size that you can always find one to fit your needs.

The smaller varieties make beautiful container plants and the larger types can add stunning color to the garden all summer long as well as make beautiful cut flowers. Dahlias can be grown from seed or bought as bedding plants but they are most commonly and successfully grown from tubers that can be bought and planted indoors now to get a head start.

To start your dahlia you should plant it in a pot that fits the tuber comfortably

Blooming Good News

using a well-drained potting soil. I like to hold the tuber right side up in the pot and fill in the dirt around it leaving the top of the tuber even with the soil. Water the tuber in and place it in a warm sunny location such as a well-lit windowsill. Water the tuber when the soil becomes slightly dry but you do not want the soil to remain too wet as this may rot the tuber. When new growth appears you can fertilize it with a starting fertilizer 10-52-10 first and then fertilize later with an all-purpose fertilizer such as 20-20-20. To increase the bushiness of the plant pinch out the tips of the main plants when they first start growing. To transplant outdoors you should

harden off the plant by setting it outdoors during the day and bringing it in, in the evening for a few days before planting the plant outdoors after all risk of frost has passed. (Dahlias have very poor frost tolerance). When planting outdoors plant dahlias in a sunny location using rich fertile well drained soil.

There are many different varieties to choose from and three new varieties that are worth mentioning are the Kenora Superbe, Kenora Macob and Zingaro. Both the Kenora Superbe, and the Kenora Macob come from the large dinnerplate classification meaning that the plant grows 40

inches in height and the flowers are 10 inches in diameter making them an excellent cut flower. The Kenora Superbe is yellow with orange tips and the Kenora Macob is deep velvet red. The Zingaro is perfect for growing in a container as it only grows 20 inches in height and the flowers (pink, with a darker center) have a shorter stem making the plant compact. If you have never grown dahlias before you should try it as it is well worth the effort.

Happy Gardening! Jos!

If you have any other gardening questions you can phone me at 963-7676, or 562-1711 or 964-6056

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