

Worser and Worser and Worser

Alcohol works. For a while, it makes things easier and funner. If I had a buzz going when I walked into a room full of strangers, that debilitating shyness I seemed to have been born with disappeared. Early on in my drinking career, I was dancing at a party and a woman commented on how well I could dance. That remark astounded me! She said, “I wish I could dance like that.” I said, “It helps a whole lot to get drunk.” She said she didn’t want to do that. I thought, “That’s too bad.” Really. I thought it was a shame that she couldn’t use such a wonderful tool.

But, the good part doesn’t last for the alcoholic. For some alcoholics, it gets bad fast. For others it takes a while. For the active alcoholic, though, the movement is always down, down, down. A recovering alcoholic I know talks about how life gets worser and worser and worser when we keep drinking. That’s another way of saying the disease, or condition, or whatever you want to call alcoholism, is progressive. Progressively worse, that is. I’ve never heard of a recovering alcoholic who drank again and said it was better. It’s always worse. And here’s the insidious thing—the alcoholism continues to progress even when we stop drinking. I’ve heard it over and over again from alcoholics who relapsed. If they were drinking nightly when they first quit, a relapse five years later moved quickly to drinking all day. Even though the drunk stopped drinking alcohol, the progression continued.

That doesn’t mean we can’t get better in some areas in our lives while alcohol makes other areas worse. That’s what happens to most functional alcoholics like me. In fact, a year after my first drink, I had the most powerful personal growth experience of my life. But before I could get there, I had my first awful experience with daily drinking.

During my first year at West Georgia College, before I’d had my first drink of that sloe gin, I was in an English class taught in an auditorium. A classmate from my high school sat next to me. I didn’t know him well. He had been among the high school elite—the envy of all of us regular guys. Now, during the year after graduation, he reeked of alcohol every morning in that English class. I felt sorry for him.

Two years later during the winter of 1971, I was sitting in agony in a chemistry class taught in an auditorium at the University of Georgia. My bladder was about to burst, as it was every morning at that time. The class began at ten and by 10:30, I was squirming. It was the Old Grand-Dad. One hundred proof Old Grand-Dad. I sat in that auditorium class every morning reeking of alcohol. No doubt, somebody in there was feeling sorry for me. I was progressing quickly.

I’d had a chemistry class for non-science majors the previous year at West Georgia. Now, I had to take the second course, a requirement for my degree, at UGA. I knew I was in trouble during the first day in class. The instructor showed us a list of concepts and said we should already be familiar them. Not me. Not at all. The two courses, the first at West Georgia and the second at the University of Georgia, were supposed to be the same. Somebody clearly forgot to tell the instructors. My stomach knotted and I knew I was in trouble. I did what I’d learned to do to deal with the anxiety—drink alcohol.

My preparation for class each morning included the Old Grand-Dad before leaving the apartment. Every day, half way through the class, I’d be in pain and promise myself to skip the whiskey tomorrow.

And each tomorrow I’d break my promise and do it again.

Somehow, I got a C in that class. It's a shame Georgia didn't have a state lottery back then because I surely would have won. My ability to multiple guess on the tests was miraculous. However, I earned an A on the prototypical alcoholic sequence: Regret – Promise - Renege - Hurt – Regret – Promise – Renege – Hurt. Day after day after day after day.

During that time, I played badminton nearly every day with Alan, my apartment mate, and our neighbors, Jim and Chuck. We had a net just outside our apartments on a small spit of grass and dirt. I was pretty much undefeated, a circumstance that drove Jim totally batty. He couldn't stand to lose. There was a tree next to the net and it wasn't unusual for somebody to have to climb the tree to retrieve the racket from where Jim had thrown it.

One morning I was in Jim's apartment and he told me about a new thing he'd done. It was called an encounter group. He said he'd done it because he received extra points in his psychology class for participating. He was excited about the experience. He was with a group of people who spent the weekend sitting around talking to each other about how they felt. He called it a "marathon encounter group." He thought I ought to try it.

My depression was deep. I was ready to try anything if it might provide some relief. Anything but quit drinking alcohol, that is. I called Dr. Phillip Lewis and after an interview, he allowed me to be in a group. The form I signed made it clear participants had to be sober and clean during the group sessions. That terrified me. But, I was desperate. In fact, knowing I couldn't arrive with a buzz, I never would have done it, but Jim said you didn't have to say anything if you didn't want to. I figured I would just sit and listen.

The group started at six on Friday evening. Something like twelve of us sat in a small room in chairs in a circle. Dr. Lewis asked us to say our names then told us a few rules. We were expected to participate all weekend. We'd go home at ten Friday and Saturday evenings. We were expected to arrive Saturday and Sunday mornings at eight. We would finish at six on Sunday. After he explained all that, we sat.

Just sat and looked at each other, the floor, and the walls.

I don't remember what happened to get us started, but before too long people were talking about what they were afraid of and explaining what they thought about those fears and about each other. Eventually, I spoke. I said, "People say things to me like, 'Those are nice shoes,' and I don't know what to say. I didn't have anything to do with making those shoes. I didn't design them. I just paid money for them."

Somebody said, "Just say 'Thank you.'"

I replied, "Then I'm taking credit for them. I shouldn't do that."

The consensus seemed to be that I was a nutcase for that, but they said it in a supportive way. It went like that for a long time. By Sunday, people were crying, laughing, supporting, attacking, and it was all very real and wonderful to me. Real powerful stuff. For many years, I described that experience as my rebirth. It was my first motivation for my selecting my ultimate profession—counseling.

And that Monday morning I drank my Old Granddad and spent another bladder bursting hour in chemistry. That's the insanity of it.

Three years later, I was back at West Georgia College working on a master's degree in psychology. I supported myself first by being a program director WLBB radio. After a year, I began teaching English to sixth, seventh, and ninth graders at a private school. The

psychology department at West Georgia was part of the humanistic psychology movement that had spawned encounter groups. To be in the program, students had to commit to working on their own personal growth. That's what I wanted. And it was great. Experiences in the program helped me begin to increase my sense of positive self-esteem. I remained shy and uneasy around people, but I was getting better. Did my obsession with alcohol get better? Maybe a little, until I caught a cold.

During the winter of 1975, I developed a cold. I used Nyquil to treat my symptoms and discovered the neatest thing. With Nyquil's alcohol content, I had a way to have a legitimate buzz while I taught and went to class – an alcoholic's dream come true. My personal growth toward becoming a more whole and effective person fostered by West Georgia College's psychology program didn't matter a whit when it came to my addiction to alcohol. Eventually, one of Nyquil's side effects kicked in. Instead of relaxing me, it turned to speed. I started whacking out and had to quit using it to function. My alcohol consumption slowed down again.

That's the way it was for the first ten years after my first drink of alcohol. I'd go through short periods of daily drinking, and then go back to party drinking. Now, to be sure the party drinking was alcoholic drinking, too. From my first drink, I was never satisfied with one or two. Never. And the daily drinking bouts lasted longer and longer—the progression of the disease at work. And, I was working hard at working on my emotional growth. I was getting better in one part, worse in another.

That stop-and-go pattern of drinking alcohol ended for good in the fall of 1978; shortly I married my wife, Pat. I'd begun my doctoral program in counseling. I had a teaching assistantship that paid a \$5000 stipend. Pat was finishing her degree in social work and was working as a data entry clerk for an education program. Money was tight. To help in the transition, I took only one class that fall to save tuition costs and I would substitute teach on occasion.

The teaching assistantship was for a human relations course that all teacher candidates had to take. I was scheduled to teach three classes. Each was supposed to meet once a week for an hour. I talked two department heads into allowing me to hold a weekend seminar and get all the hours done at once. I suggested that the marathon, weekend setting would add a dimension to the emotional growth of the students that wasn't possible in ten, one-hour weekly sessions. That was true. However, another primary motivation was to get my semester's worth of work done in one weekend.

The class I was taking for my doctoral program was not terribly challenging. Because of the weekend marathons, I only taught one class a week for an hour. Every now and then, I spent a day substitute teaching, but that wasn't often. I had a desk in a room shared by other doctoral students with assistantships. I sat at my desk as long as I could each day, doing very little. I arrived home at 3:00 each afternoon, just in time to watch reruns of the M*A*S*H television show.

The surgeons on that show drank alcohol—a lot of alcohol. It was a constant thing. As I sat there, every afternoon, bored out of my gourd, the alcohol beckoned me. We didn't have much money, so I'd given up my scotch and drank vodka instead. I arrived home each day, made a drink of vodka and water, and watched M*A*S*H. Soon, to save even more money, I began buying half-gallons. I left the bottle on the kitchen counter, next to the flour, sugar, and coffee canisters. After a while, the drinks began to stretch beyond M*A*S*H and go into the evening.

Sometime that fall, Pat commented on my drinking. She mentioned the vodka bottle on the counter and said it seemed like I was drinking a lot. I listened carefully to her concern, took her comments seriously, and immediately did something about it. I moved the bottle of vodka off the counter and out of sight to a spot in a bottom cabinet, way back in the corner behind the stuff we never used. That way she couldn't monitor how much I was drinking.

Problem solved

That's the kind of thing active alcoholics do. I began my secret life of daily drinking that day. It lasted for 24 years. I had to be more circumspect in how I went about drinking all night long after that, but I went about drinking all night long just the same.

Some people progress to the really bad stuff much faster than I did. It took me 24 years to hit my bottom of bottoms that led to sobriety. Some alcoholics begin having blackouts right away and wake up in a strange bed and have no memory of who they are with or how they got there. Some get blasted into oblivion every time they drink. They lose jobs and can't manage relationships. Some end up with long prison stretches. That wasn't me, but that doesn't matter and doesn't make me any less of an alcoholic. My progression was steady and slow, instead of being precipitous and fast. But, I progressed just the same, and it got worse and worse and worse.

Paradox

In the popular consciousness, alcoholics are grungy toothless guys who live in cardboard boxes under bridges. I've heard many alcoholics say that was a major player in their denying their problem. They can't be an alcoholic. They aren't losers. They have jobs. In fact, many are quite successful professionals. They live lives full of paradoxes—quite successful in one area, pitiful failures in others. And, in sobriety, they recognize the cognitive dissonance they lived with for so many years. I am one of those guys. We lived a life that was far different from who we are at our cores. Paradoxes flourished in our lives.

I've already told you about one paradox I lived with. Talking to people face-to-face without alcohol was excruciating for me. Talking to thousands when I was alone in a studio in front of a radio station microphone was easy. The power of that paradox was demonstrated to me shortly after I transferred to the University of Georgia in the fall of 1970. My neighbor, Jim – the friend who told me about the encounter groups—and his girlfriend arranged a date for me with a friend of theirs named Kathy. I took her to dinner and as we talked, she seemed interested in my radio work. I'd gotten a job at a station in Athens, and I asked her if she wanted to visit the station. She did. When we arrived, the announcer on duty said he was glad to see me. He said he wasn't feeling well and needed to go to the bathroom badly, but a newsbreak was coming up. Would I do it for him? My guess is he did all that so I could be on the air with the girl there. And, I didn't mind at all.

After I did the news and got some music going, Kathy said, "Wow, you have a personality."

Really. I'm not kidding. That's what she said. "Wow, you have a personality."

I have no memory of the rest of the evening, and we never went out again. I was too afraid of being rejected to ask her, and I presume that was appropriate because my friends who arranged the date never said anything else about it. I never forgot that statement and the surprise in her voice. Alone, by myself with a microphone, I was at ease and I had a personality. Face to face, in person, I was terrified and there just wasn't one. Alcohol narrowed the gap between those two parts of me. It helped me deal with that paradox.

Employers loved me. When I went to work at the radio station in Carrollton at the beginning of my sophomore year at West Georgia College, another guy was hired at the same time. We were both part timers with equal experience in radio and would both be working weekends. His father owned a radio station in Atlanta. I suppose that's why he was given the best shifts with the highest ratings. I was relegated to the Sunday morning dreg shift and running the board during ball games. Three months later the roles were reversed. I showed up for every shift on time, took pride in my work, and worked at getting better. The other guy wasn't like that. Before long, I was given the prime time morning weekday shift.

But, when we had a station party, which we did often, I had to get drunk to survive it.

When I was in the Teacher Corps, the fall after my summer with Arch when I learned to smoke cigarettes, I was assigned to a middle school in the inner city of Atlanta. The teachers we worked with, called senior teachers, were an uninspiring lot. I was excited about trying to help these kids who'd reached sixth and seventh grades without being able to read a lick. Surely we could do something. The senior teachers lacked enthusiasm. We were required to have team meetings once a day. Teachers were supposed to plan team teaching activities during those sessions. That never happened. Mostly, the senior teachers sat around gossiping and griping. To survive without going crazy, I began reading during the meetings. That caused a Teacher Corps administrator to ask me to meet with him.

When we met, the administrator told me a senior teacher had complained that I was being disrespectful to them. I was flabbergasted. I was raised to be polite and couldn't imagine what he was talking about. "Disrespectful?" I said. "How?"

"One of the teachers says you've been reading a book during the team meetings."

"That's true." I admitted, puzzled. "Most of the time the meetings are a waste of time. They don't do any planning. When they do, I pay attention. That doesn't happen much, though. I never say anything negative. How is that being disrespectful?"

He hesitated. "It's not so much that you're reading a book that's she's concerned about. She doesn't like the kind of book you're reading."

"The kind of book?"

"Yes. She says you're reading a love book. She thinks that's not appropriate."

"A love book?" I had no clue what he was talking about.

"That's what she said. 'A love book'."

I thought hard. Then it hit me. I laughed. "I can't believe it."

The administrator raised his eyebrows.

I leaned forward. "Yes sir. I was reading a 'love book.' *The Art of Loving*, written by Erich Fromm—the world-renowned psychologist and philosopher. It was published in 1956." I laughed again. "It is about love--the nature of love: Motherly love, brotherly love, Godly love . . . and, I have to admit, he does give a nod to erotic love from time to time."

And the administrator laughed heartily. We had camaraderie after that, which always happened with my employers. My fellow interns at the school elected me to be their representative in the intern council. Most of them knew I wasn't reading a love book during our meetings. They respected me.

So how did a guy who was respected by his employers, supervisors, and classmates end up at Effies?

What's Effies? you ask. Let me tell you.

It was shortly after my date with Kathy when she discovered that I had a personality – the year before I moved to Atlanta to be in the Teacher Corps. Once again I was alone on a Friday night. Alan, my apartment mate, was on a date. I could hear neighbors Jim and Chuck next door with their girlfriends through the paper thin apartment walls. I sat and drank Old-Granddad and Coca-Cola. My depression was refilled with each refill of my glass. At some point, I thought of Effies.

Effies was among the most well known landmarks in Athens. I didn't know exactly where it was, but Alan had told me about it. Effies was a house of prostitution that had served University of Georgia students for years. In the fall, during fraternity rush, Alan had participated with other pledges in a scavenger hunt. One of the items they were required to obtain was a breast print in a cream pie from Effies.

I sat and drank Old-Granddad and thought about Effies. Finally, I said aloud, "What the hell."

Problem was, how was I going to find out where Effies was? It's nine o'clock in the evening. I could hardly go next door and ask Jim, Chuck, and their girlfriends, "Oh, by the way, do you know where Effies is?" Now, I was going crazy. I'd made this decision to do this thing that was a very big deal – losing my virginity—and couldn't do it because I didn't have directions.

The answer came—one of those answers that seems like a great idea when you're half way into a bottle of 100 proof liquor. I drove to the radio station and entered the studio.

"Hey, Tom, I need to find out something."

Tom was the announcer on duty. "What's that?"

"Uh . . . I'm doing a news story on Effies. You know about Effies?"

"Yeah."

"I don't know where it is. Do you?"

Some things, even when they're experienced in the midst of a heavy drunk, never leave your mind. I'll never forget the self-satisfied smirk on Tom's face when I asked that. Even though my job at the station was in the news department, I don't think he believed my story. He took me to a map and showed me where it was.

Even as drunk as I was, I knew he knew what I was doing. I was massively embarrassed as I left the station, but that didn't stop me. The liquor was still in charge. I needed some cash. I didn't know if Effies took checks, but in any event I couldn't imagine writing one to "Effie's Whorehouse." In those days, ATMs didn't exist. The Golden Pantry convenience stores and at the Varsity hamburger place cashed checks. The Golden Pantry stores had a five-dollar limit. I didn't know how much it cost at Effies, but I was afraid it might be more than five bucks. The Varsity would cash checks for twenty dollars. Twenty dollars would wipe out my checking account. Didn't matter. Alcohol doesn't care a whit about your checking account.

After cashing a check, I followed Tom's directions. I found three wood frame houses sitting together where he said I'd find Effies. They were the only structures in the area and were next to a bridge crossed the Oconee River. I parked on the other side of the river, walked across the bridge to the houses, and stood in the street looking at them.

Which one? If Tom had told me, I couldn't remember.

A dim streetlight barely illuminated the houses. Each had a front porch and sat on two-foot high concrete block pillars. There were no neon signs announcing Effies as a place of business. Effies was well known and obviously allowed to exist by the authorities, but prostitution was, after all, illegal.

I could feel the alcohol beginning to wear off. That was a major problem I had with alcohol. The effect never lasted. I really wanted to do this thing and if I lost the buzz, I might not do it. Probably wouldn't. I needed to act.

I picked the house on the left, moved to the porch and knocked on the door. A woman with that hard country look and dressed in a well-worn bathrobe answered the door. "Yes?" she said.

"Uh . . ."

"What do you want?" Her voice was sharp. Irritated.

How do you ask the question I need to ask? The door wasn't opened enough for me to see inside. I had no clue to go on as to whether this was a house of prostitution of some grandmother's house.

She stared at me hard.

"I'm looking for . . . Is this the place where you come to . . ."

"No! Get away from here!" She slammed the door.

Grandmother's house. I was horrified and embarrassed beyond measure as I hurried off the porch and retreated to the street. But, that didn't mean I was ready to give up. Her reaction told me I was in the right neighborhood. Why else would she get so mad before I'd even completed my sentence? She obviously knew what I was trying to find.

Two houses were left. The odds were fifty-fifty. Not good enough. I didn't want to go through all that again. Surely, there was some way to figure it out. I moved down the street, looking all around the houses.

There is was.

The house on the right had a wide, swinging, chain link gate. It was in the shadows, so I hadn't noticed it before. It seemed incongruous in the setting. I walked to it and looked in the back. There was paved parking lot. Not a driveway – a parking lot. What kind of house had a paved parking lot?

I'd found Effies.

I knocked on the door. Another country-hard woman answered. But, this one was wearing a leopard spotted leotard.

Ah hah.

This lady was irritated, too. She opened the door wider and said, "Get in here. Why'd you come to the front door?"

Once again, I was embarrassed at my lack of knowledge. A couple of poodles ran to my feet. The living room was velvet. Velvet couch, velvet chair, velvet wall hanging. Another guy was sitting on the couch reading a magazine. The woman said to sit down. Somebody would be there shortly. She disappeared through another door.

I sat. A poodle jumped up beside me. I patted its head. I didn't want to. I'm not a poodle person, but it seemed a prudent thing to do.

The woman reappeared and signaled for me to follow her.

I entered a small alcove with several doors. All were closed except for one leading down a hallway. Three women were standing there—all in flats and lingerie of some sort. The hall was dimly lit, hiding the details. The older woman told me to pick one.

What? Pick one? I looked at the three women. How could I pick one? Each stood there expectantly. I was lost. I didn't want to hurt any of any of their feelings.

"Well, hurry up."

I indicated the one on the left because she was the first one on the left. I had no other reason. The one in the middle said, "Shit, I'm never gonna get laid tonight."

I think that's what she said. Maybe she said "paid." Either way, I was very sorry about that. Guilt coursed through me.

"Come on." The one I had chosen took my hand and led me through the door to the hallway and into another barely lit room. I remember a twin bed on the right side of the room. To my left was a small table holding a basin and a lamp with a weak bulb. She said her name was Debbie. "What do you want?"

That was what the woman in the first house had said and I had no better answer for this one. I said, "Uhhhh . . ."

She continued, "Five dollars for a straight shot, ten for a half and half, twenty for around the world."

I had a twenty-dollar bill from the Varsity. I hated to spend it all. My checking account was empty. But, I didn't want to be embarrassed again. Did they give change? I didn't know and was trying to avoid appearing to be stupid yet again. I said, "Around the world."

She held out her hand. I shook it. She looked irritated and amused at the same time. "The money?"

"Oh . . ." I dug in my pocket and gave her the wadded up bill.

She straightened it out and put the bill in a drawer, and then turned to the basin. "Drop your pants."

I did.

She pulled a stool in front of me and sat. "What's your name?"

"Eddie." As soon as I said it, I regretted it. I should have made one up.

She dipped a cloth in water in the basin, and lathered it with soap. "Are you a student?"

"Yes." My voice was choked. She had started washing me.

"I am too, I'm majoring in psychology."

Now, she was squeezing my penis.

"Got to make sure you're all clean. Checking for bad stuff."

AIDS wasn't around then. Hepatitis wasn't a problem . . . that we knew of anyway. The big deals were gonorrhea and syphilis. I guess you oozed or something if you had one of those.

She asked, "Have you ever done this before?"

"No m'am."

"OK, take your clothes off, Eddie."

I did and she did.

She said, “You only get once chance, Eddie. When you’re done, you’re done.” She gave directions and I followed them. Apparently, I lasted longer than she anticipated. Obviously, the alcohol was inhibiting my performance. At one point, she said in exasperation, “Are you sure you haven’t done this before?”

“Yes m’am.”

A few minutes later, I was back in my car. The effects of the alcohol were about gone. Now came the bad part – the cognitive dissonance. Who was that guy that just went to Effies? Couldn’t be me. Absent alcohol, there is no way that would happen.

Always living with paradox.

During my freshman year in college, the professor of my Western Civilization class walked in the classroom and before calling roll, said, “Isn’t Eddie Wyrick in this class?” My stomach flipped. What had I done? I raised my hand. He said, “I saw your letter in the newspaper. That’s the first intelligent thing I’ve read in that paper.” I breathed easy and thanked him. At the time, the song Dixie was controversial. In the south, people stood when Dixie was played. It was played at ball games and social events. With integration, many people said Dixie shouldn’t be played. Others reacted strongly to that. There wasn’t anything racial about the song, they insisted. I wrote a letter to the college newspaper discussing symbols and that the same thing can be a symbol for one person, and be a totally different symbol for others. To black Americans, Dixie was a symbol of the old South representing slavery and subservience. Why would anyone want to hurt people? Giving up Dixie to be kind to a group of people who had suffered so much seemed to be the right thing to do to me. The professor, for whom I held enormous respect, had praised my letter highly. I was proud.

At my core, I was the guy who’d written that letter about the song Dixie that was noted by my professor. I was the guy who was elected to the intern council. I was the guy reading philosophy books. The alcohol produced another guy who I didn’t like, but kept going back to. I just couldn’t stop going to that other place.

And that paradox went on for years and years. Fifteen years after I’d begun drinking alcohol nightly, in the early nineties, the principal at our kids’ elementary school asked if I would be the school’s representative to the Parent Advisory Council. I didn’t want to do that. When I had my own school activities, or activities involving the kids, I had to postpone my nightly drinking. Those nights were awful and I didn’t want to add to their number. But, my inner core didn’t want to admit that even to myself. Reluctantly, I agreed.

I went to the first two meetings stone, cold sober. As I sat at home waiting for it to be time to go to the third meeting, I decided having a couple of drinks wouldn’t hurt anything. I had a little of my vodka and tried to clean up so it wouldn’t be detected. That went just fine. The next month, I drank as I usually did when I got home. After that, I’d have a little extra to last me until the meeting was over. Of course, the vodka removed my shyness, and I participated more and more in meetings.

After two years, I decided that I’d done my duty and I could tell the school to ask somebody else to do it. Mainly, I was tired of doing the very hard work of being in an altered state of consciousness and acting as though I was not. I was also tired of feeling like a scumbag at every meeting. By then, I’d learned that all the soap and mouthwash in the world couldn’t eradicate the smell of alcohol. I figured they’d be happy to be shed of me.

So, I'm sitting in my last meeting, feeling relieved because I wouldn't have to fight the battle anymore. The "New Business" portion of the agenda begins with a report from the nominating committee. The chairperson of the committee says, "We haven't had an opportunity to talk to him yet, but we nominate Ed Wyrick to be president of the PAC next year."

Huh?

I was dumbfounded. So dumbfounded. . . and drunk . . . I had no defense. With all of my insides screaming, "No! No!" I agreed to do it and struggled with it for another year. Long after my last drink of alcohol, I finally figured it out what must have happened. No doubt the nominating committee couldn't get anyone to agree to be president. I envisioned one of them saying in frustration, "Hey, let's get the drunk guy to do it. He won't know any better."

It would have been a blessing to be ignorant of my paradoxes. It seems like some people are. I wasn't. I wanted to quit drinking alcohol. I wanted to quit smoking cigarettes. I wanted to quit having all these paradoxes. Problem was, I didn't have a clue as to how to go about doing that.