

People's Behavior Is Litmus Test

"Dear Dr. Faulkner:

I work with a person who is always talking about how he goes to church. He is always telling people how much of a Christian he is. But, he is one of the worst, most dishonest, manipulative and unethical people I have ever met. He has made me lose respect for people who go around preaching the gospel, but do everything that they can to destroy your life. This is turning me against religion.

It all seems so phony." Ms. T., Indianapolis, Indiana



Coping

CHARLES FAULKNER

Dear Ms. T: There are obviously as many types of "Christians" as there are other groups of people. Everyone has met a person who goes to church regularly and follows the golden rule completely. We have also met people who attend church "religiously" but are among the most horrible people on this earth.

It is obviously unwise to put any group into any single category simply because the groups do the same thing. I know someone who is a church official and is an evil, abusive, manipulative individual.

My position is to judge people by their behavior. I also judge them by the way that they treat other people. I am not impressed by a person's affiliation. It is not necessary for a person to belong to church, or to any organization, in order to respect a fellow human being. Some people have never been to church, yet they are among the most respected (and respectful) people to exist. What exactly do people mean when they say that they are Christians? Does it mean that they go to church sometimes? Does it mean they respect other people? Or, does it mean that they are hiding their bad deeds behind the Bible?

Now, here is a question for you. Can you be successful applying the principles of Christianity in the tough world in which we now live? For instance, if you are competing for a job against a person who uses "dirty" tactics, see BEHAVIOR Page 8A



Beth Taylor (left) and Stella Redic follow new rules and take a smoke outside the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center. Photo/Clavin Ferguson

The Woes Of Smokers: They're Ordered Outside New County Policy Forces Some Employees To Change Lifestyle

By Cassandra Wynn
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Oh the woes of smokers! They have been waved out, asked out, and now outlawed out.

This week, a new policy which requires employees in most Mecklenburg County buildings to go outside to smoke took effect.

That cigarette lit after a meal, during a conversation, while trying to concentrate on important work is no longer something done as second nature. Now smokers have to get approval from co-workers, find smoking areas, or go outdoors to do what used to be thought of as a constitutional right.

The county policy is a change from one implemented in March 1988 that provided designated smoking areas. "The new policy is intended to reduce the enormous health consequences of smoking and provide a safe and healthy work environment for all county employees and client," according to the Mecklenburg County public service and information department.

The assault on smokers has affected the habits of Leon Givens, recruitment director for the county. He vows that he is not going to go outdoors just to smoke. "I've decided not to bring my cigarettes to work," Givens said. "I started preparing for this four months ago. With the designated smoking areas, I began making changes in my lifestyle. I'm not going to let any habit control me."

Givens said, "There were times I would want a cigarette after meals. Now after lunch, I don't even think about a cigarette."

Until this week, Givens would take a break four or five times a day to smoke, he said. A kind of camaraderie developed among smokers gathering in break areas to take a relaxing draw.

Now to go outdoors is just too much. "To go up and down the elevators is a waste of time and inconvenient," Givens said. "The policy is intended to make it difficult to smoke." Unlike Givens, some people see the new rules as a hindrance to productivity.

Smoking helps Delores Foster think. As a budget and resource management analyst for the county, she

spends hours poring over numbers.

"I like to smoke when I'm doing deep concentration, for accuracy," Foster said. "It's lighting up and holding the cigarette that helps. That enhances my concentration." She is willing to go outside for now. But the winter will be another story. "I know I won't go outside in the cold. My attitude is that, maybe, I'll stop smoking."

Although she feels that the new policy is unfair to smokers, Foster said she has "elected not to let it bother me. It should be just a designated place to smoke. There probably should be somewhere employees and the public could go. It's a real strange thing to happen in a state where tobacco is the main product. I'm finding fewer places that I can smoke. Maybe it does cause cancer. I don't know. I do respect non-smokers. If I go into someone's house and I don't see ashtrays, I go outside to smoke."

Foster said that she can empathize with non-smokers. "Sometimes it bothers me too. There are places that I go in that I have to leave because I don't want to be in all that smoke."

The rigid rules seem to

have an effect on how many cigarettes smokers consume a day.

"It reduces the amount of smoking I do," Foster said. "I don't smoke as much as I used to. That's to my advantage. I smoke about a half of a pack a day. I used to smoke three-fourths of a pack."

Givens' smoking habit has been cut considerably. At one time, he smoked a pack a day. "Now I smoke a pack every three, sometimes four days," he said.

Many smokers are apparently accepting that they may become extinct as a species. "I can understand people not wanting to smell any smoke," said Tony Hairston, a salesman at Southland Chevrolet. He smokes a pack to a pack and a half a day.

Hairston craves cigarettes after he eats, when he drives, after he talks to customers. "I can think of anytime to smoke. A lot of people in sales smoke. I try not to smoke around people who don't smoke. And I try not to smoke in front of my children. It's the worst habit that I have. Smoking is not as acceptable as it used to be. It's fair to me to have to go outside."

Blacks Affected Adversely By Tar And Nicotine

By Cassandra Wynn
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Even with the emphasis in America on healthier lifestyles, blacks are still not kicking the smoking habit fast enough, according to experts in the health field.

And health experts like Louis Sullivan, former secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have criticized tobacco companies because they have aimed their products too much at the black community.

"Cigarette companies advertise heavily in popular black magazines, and they also successfully target the African American community by sponsoring enter-

tainment, sporting and cultural events and political and literacy campaigns," according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health.

So concerned is CDC about the harmful effects of smoking that it will launch an anti-smoking campaign next month aimed at African Americans, according to Nowell Berreth of CDC.

The worry is that blacks are more likely to suffer and die from smoking-related diseases than whites.

Smoking rates are higher for black adults than those for whites, CDC found. "Black smokers are more likely to smoke higher tar

and nicotine brands than are white smokers; and smoking higher-tar brands is associated with higher lung cancer incidence and mortality rates," a CDC report said.

Blacks are more likely to smoke mentholated cigarettes. The most popular brands - Newport, Kool, and Salem - represent 55 percent of the market among blacks, according to CDC.

Not only is the death rate for blacks from smoking-related illnesses higher than whites, but the loss of years of productive life is greater.

CDC reports that "blacks tend to become ill from smoking at younger ages than do whites. In 1988, blacks lost an estimated 268, 37 years of potential

life to age 65 due to smoking," said CDC.

Studies show that the prevalence of smoking is related to occupation. "Smoking rates are generally higher in male and female blue-collar workers than in their white-collar counterparts. In 1987, 26.1 percent of white collar men and 26.6 percent of white collar women smoked cigarettes. Among blue-collar workers, 42.1 percent of men and 36.6 percent of women smoked during that year," according to CDC.

Socioeconomic categories also have a significant bearing on smoking and pregnancy. "In general, women in the lowest age and socioeconomic categories are most

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