



## BABY "BUTT"

I started smoking cigarettes at a very young age. At sixteen years, everything was confusion, and I can't remember if I started because of peer pressure, the need to, or both. They tasted terrible and made me choke, but I kept on puffing. For some unknown reason it was important that I smoked. As time passed, I smoked more and more, and twenty years later when I decided to quit and I couldn't, I realized that I was a nicotine addict.

The feeling of being an addict is hard to describe to someone who has never experienced addiction. Thoughts and actions defy logic. The addiction is like a separate entity manifesting itself in the form of a craving every fifteen minutes. It's like a newborn baby who cries to be fed and stops when fulfilled. When the baby wakes up at night hungry, he doesn't care if you're sleeping, sick, or dying. He cries to be fed and doesn't stop until the situation is remedied. This is the craving for nicotine that an addict feels. The addiction has no regard for time or circumstance, and the only thing it knows is, it wants to stop that gnawing feeling deep within.

Craving, and smoking to relieve the craving, are not the only aspects of nicotine addiction. Smoking is a very messy habit. As cigarettes are consumed, the debris piles up. Empty packages, ashes, and butts accumulate and have to be discarded. Tables, floors, and ashtrays are cleaned and readied to be dirtied again. Clothing, furniture, and other items are occasionally damaged and need to be repaired or replaced. Like addiction, the baby consumes food and piles up debris. Diapers, floors, and anything else close to him needs cleaning or replacement after he spits, vomits, or relieves himself.

An addict takes care of his addiction like a mother takes care of her baby. When going camping for the weekend, the addict makes sure he has more than enough cigarettes and a dry, secure way to light them. He is terrified by the thought of running out. He will smoke butts from ashtrays, beg for money, and even steal to feed the addiction that doesn't understand right from wrong. When leaving on a trip, mother makes sure that baby has plenty of warm clothes, toys, and treats to eat. She will do anything to protect and care for the baby including beg or steal. The baby screams and cries in response to pain, hunger, or cold and doesn't understand poverty, right or wrong.

There is rarely any way to convince an addict to give up his addiction. He will continue to smoke even when doctors diagnose cancer or emphysema. Numerous episodes of burned clothes, money spent on smokes rather than food, and health problems can't convince him of the need to quit. A mother has the same tenacity when it comes to giving to her child. She will go to any lengths to keep her baby with no regard for her own life or limb. Like a mother loving and caring for her child, the addict nourished and cares for his baby: addiction.  
by Steve Taccogna

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## MOTHER

You saved me 'cause you touched my soul.  
It happened fast.  
Too much time, you must go slow.

Years and years of hidden guilt.  
Buried deep within ourselves.  
The need to get it off our chests.  
Burning, aching desire to love.  
Soar with eagles, glide with dove.

I feel the pain now in my throat.  
Teardrops fall and fill the moat.  
The castle walls are very high.  
You first must to learn to fly.

by Chris Dobson

Demon machine, nuclear metal dragon monster  
to drive down the final highway.  
Laser ocean beam  
Silent mouthless scream  
Watch me move  
in a fantasy machine a hundred miles per  
Lady of mercy, ride by my side on the  
highway of fog.  
We'll stop at the Apocalypse Cafe to watch  
the Wizard spill his coffee and lost souls  
wait for cheeseburgers.  
Lady of mercy, ride with me  
ride with me  
with me  
Come on, ride!

by Alan Scally

## Happy Birthday, Brian James

by Cheri Peccia

Congratulations were heard all over that morning. Gary and I had just been blessed with a brand new baby boy. The feelings of happiness were indescribable. The pain from the last 32 hours was long since forgotten. Brian James and I spent very special days together. We were friends from the moment we laid eyes on each other.

Soon Brian was diagnosed with a severe brain disorder. His prognosis was not good. The brain surgeon and neurology pediatrician explained to my husband and me that our son was mentally retarded and would not ever be able to walk. My stomach hurt like I had never known. I saw black and my mouth was so dry from breathing so rapidly.

We wrote down all the information that was given us and were told to return in one year to see the specialist. They explained that there wasn't anything anyone could do for cases like these.

Gary and I still sarcastically

mimic that phrase that was told to us in early fall of 1985.

When he was three weeks old we began. Brian got involved in the Crippled Children's Division, Shriners' Hospital and we never missed an opportunity that was available. We traveled all over Oregon. Brian attended tri-weekly physical therapies, occupational therapies, and at the age of two began bi-weekly speech therapy. I contacted the Oregon Mental Health Division which set us up with an early intervention program. He attended toddler school and play group twice a week.

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Gary and I had a parent trainer who came to our home and helped us with projects.

Brian learned to walk at the age of two. It was the most outstanding and special event that I had ever experienced. After spending four months of his first year in the hospital, he was now strong and walking. Brian just kept growing up and everything slowly seemed to come together.

Today, September 29, is Brian James' third birthday. This morning he got out of his twin bed, turned on his light, and picked out his favorite Mickey Mouse shirt for school.

Yes, at 8:40 a.m., with backpack snug to his back and Sesame Street lunch pail in hand, Brian boarded the little yellow bus to

pre-school. I gave the bus driver twelve cupcakes for his birthday party. He turned to me at the top of the big, bulky stairs and said, "Happy Birthday, Mommie."

At that instant I was the luckiest and proudest mommie anywhere.

Our Brian walked on that bus this morning and turned to me and talked. Once again I mimicked the doctors' phrase, but this time I softly answered as the bus faded away, "You're right," there was nothing you could have done for this little boy.

He did it all! He endured every therapy and every structured assignment, and he had all our love. I know it wouldn't have mattered, either; he knows we'd love him no matter what.

I am trying to learn to be more like Brian James. He is so patient and so kind, and he's learning. He's almost always happy and always has a smile or a squeeze if needed. He is best described as simply "outstanding."

