

Swearing-off caffeine has only led to one thing: more swearing

BY NED HICKSON
News Media Corporation

Today, like every day since the start of the New Year, I've abstained from my morning cups of coffee — a decision I reached during a moment of weakness, sometime around midnight on New Year's Eve. That's when I vowed (after several glasses of champagne) to take better care of myself in 2015. While this decision has certainly made me a healthier person, it has also made me a crankier one.

This is due in large part to the decaffeination process itself, which can cause headaches, drowsiness, constipation, Tourette's syndrome and, in the

case of Lizzy Borden, involuntary manslaughter.

After doing some research, I realized that there was more to beating this thing than just dealing with the physical craving which, for someone who drinks coffee all day, is similar to the craving one might have for, say...

Breathable air.

I also had to take into account the mental aspect of my addiction — which is really about me having an excuse to leave my desk. On a good day, between coffee refills and trips to the bathroom, I can spend as little as eight minutes actually working at my desk. Because of this, it was clear that conquering my physical addiction wouldn't be

enough.

I needed a replacement beverage.

While I briefly entertained the idea of decaffeinated tea, I decided against it. Mostly because I can never figure out what to do with the tea bag once it's done steeping.

Do I throw it out? Save it? Put one over each eye and take a nap?

The truth of the matter is, men are not "steepers." A man wants to wake up, fill his mug with something close to 8,000 degrees Fahrenheit and immediately drink it. A man doesn't have time for steeping. In fact, he hardly has time to get to the hospital after drinking his 8,000-degree beverage.

This left me with three viable alternatives:

- 1) Hot chocolate
- 2) Some kind of soy drink that, according to the label, can be consumed either hot, cold or as a grilled patty, or
- 3) "Postum."

After reading the label on the hot chocolate canister, I realized that, based on my average daily hot-beverage consumption, replacing coffee with hot chocolate would result in an estimated weight gain of just under 600 pounds in five weeks. This, of course, would defeat having an excuse to leave my desk since I would no longer be able to fit through the door of my house.

I considered the soy-drink-patty-thing, but couldn't get

passed the idea of consuming something that can be referred to as the soy-drink-patty-thing.

This left me with "Postum" as my morning beverage of choice. For those who are unfamiliar with this product, it is a coffee alternative that is completely caffeine free because it is made from "all natural" ingredients like wheat, corn, sea weed, yarn, tree bark, bone meal and simulated wood paneling, all of which is then ground up and allowed to "steep" before it is eventually freeze-dried to resemble Taster's Choice.

I've been drinking it for a little over a week now, and it's not all that bad. Still, I'm not convinced that Postum's claim to be "The Truly Soothing Hot

Beverage" is true.

In fact, I'd kill for a coffee-drink-patty-thing right about now.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

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