

Making an Ash of One's Self

By D. A. Sharpe

I was a pack-a-day smoker, and had been for about a decade. This story took place in New Orleans, Louisiana at my first post-college job, which began in 1962. About five or six years



later, there were four of us guys who had our desks pushed together to form a large surface work area, since we worked on common and related

tasks at a very high-tech national scope corporation. I was the only one of the four of us who professed overtly to be a Christian, or occasionally gave reference as to any known connection with a church. All of them were nice law-abiding citizens, and fun to be with, but just had a different orientation than did I on the question of faith. Another thing was my being





the only smoker in that crowd. None of them smoked. As my ash tray filled up, it sometimes gravitated onto one of their desk areas, and that irritated them.

One day, while at my desk early before work, puffing on a cigarette and drinking my coffee, one of the other guys was in early as well. Sergio Hernandez was a refugee who had recently escaped from Castro's Cuba, and was making his way here in America, about to achieve his U. S. citizenship. At one point, he sneered across the desks and said, "Sharpe, you're the only dogooder, church-goer in this crowd, and you don't have the will-power to stop that awful smoking habit we all hate!" My reply was, "Oh yes, I do!!!" I extinguished my cigarette at 8:00 AM, October 13, 1968, and have not touched one since then!

What was the motivation? Well, I had sooner never show up for work again than ever to smoke a cigarette in front of him again! Quickly, it was realized I needed to quit cold turkey, and that was that! I have forever been thankful to Sergio who had the courage enough to insult me, because, obviously, my several previous attempts to quit smoking had failed; I needed his insult to have the positive motivation required to quit smoking!





In retrospect, I recognize God's hand in my life again, working through my friend, Sergio. I now am blessed with a happy life, good health and I certainly do smell better! And that's my story about smoking and discontinuing making an ash of myself!



Dwight Albert (D. A.) Sharpe
805 Derting Road East
Aurora, TX 76078-3712

da@dasharpe.com

www.dasharpe.com
[Biographical Information](#)



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