

# "Never, never again": how to quit smoking for good



MARY K. NOLAN

Easy? That's an understatement. Brainless, idiot-proof, ridiculously simple? That's more like it.

They say that quitting smoking with the Allen Carr Easy Way cessation system is all that and less. The program, which was developed in England 20 years ago, spread into five continents, and came to Canada a year ago, involves no pharmaceuticals, medical intervention, psycho-babble, or the usual scary pictures of diseased lungs and ulcerated gums. It grew from Allen Carr's book of the same name, which has sold three million copies since its 1985 publication.

The good news for all you New Year's resolvers is that it's just plain easy.

"I am so done," says former tobacco addict Carolyn Molot. "Never, never, never again. I can't believe I ever smoked. I'd put a gun in my mouth as soon as I'd ever put a cigarette in my mouth again."

Molot was one of 21 area smokers who registered for Easy Way's first Hamilton-area seminars. Cessation programs usually measure their success against a 12-month period, but as of today, five-and-a-half months after the Hamilton courses, it's looking good. Of the original lot, two did not succeed and were refunded their money, six required a follow-up booster session, the rest quit smoking — Molot among them.

Extremely skeptical, but desperate to be free of a 25-year habit — and get her kids off her back — Molot showed

up at the Ramada Plaza Hotel on Aug. 20 after reading a Hamilton Spectator article about the program.

Five hours later — and \$399 lighter — she walked out a non-smoker.

"It was just so easy," she reiterates.

Starting Jan. 21, Easy Way is offering five more local seminars with the program's Canadian representative Damian O'Hara.

"If you are prepared to come with an open mind, you will walk out of there and never smoke again," he promises. "I just love doing (the course.) It is such a privilege. I love seeing the penny drop. Sometimes you can visibly see it happen, and when it happens, that's it (for smoking.)"

For the no-nonsense Molot, who loved smoking and challenged everything O'Hara said, the penny dropped even before he instructed his class to smoke their last cigarette. She'd already thrown out her pack.

"I absolutely knew from the moment I threw them out that I was finished," she swears. "Have I wanted a cigarette since? Sure, but I'd like to eat 20 pounds of chocolate, too. That doesn't mean I'm going to."

The Easy Way system is based on simple cognitive therapy, making smokers face the fallacies, illogic, and folly of what they think and feel about smoking. For example, how can it be a stimulant to kick start the morning but a relaxant after dinner? How can words like "fresh", "silky" and "smooth" be used to describe something that truly tastes awful? How can smoking be sophisticated when it makes people stink? And how is it that smokers, who say they are addicted to nicotine, can sleep through the night without their bodies waking them up in desperate need of a fix?

"It takes everything you know about smoking, everything you've ever believed, and flips it upside down on its ass," says Molot. "You realize how stupid it is, how stupid you are. I'm a 40-year-old woman who tries to take

good care of herself but I'd stand out there in a blizzard inhaling carcinogens from a four-inch cancer stick.

"You leave with jewels of learning, things you can hang on to. Every other method involves withdrawal — the patch, Zyban, Nicorette — you're always fighting against the addiction, the deprivation.

"Damian says 'Let's take everything you think you know about smoking and discuss it,'" says Molot. "He dispels myths through common sense, through education, through World Health Organization facts, through statistics. He gives us the inside track on all the ways smokers have been manipulated by the tobacco industry, advertisers, the government. Knowledge is empowerment."

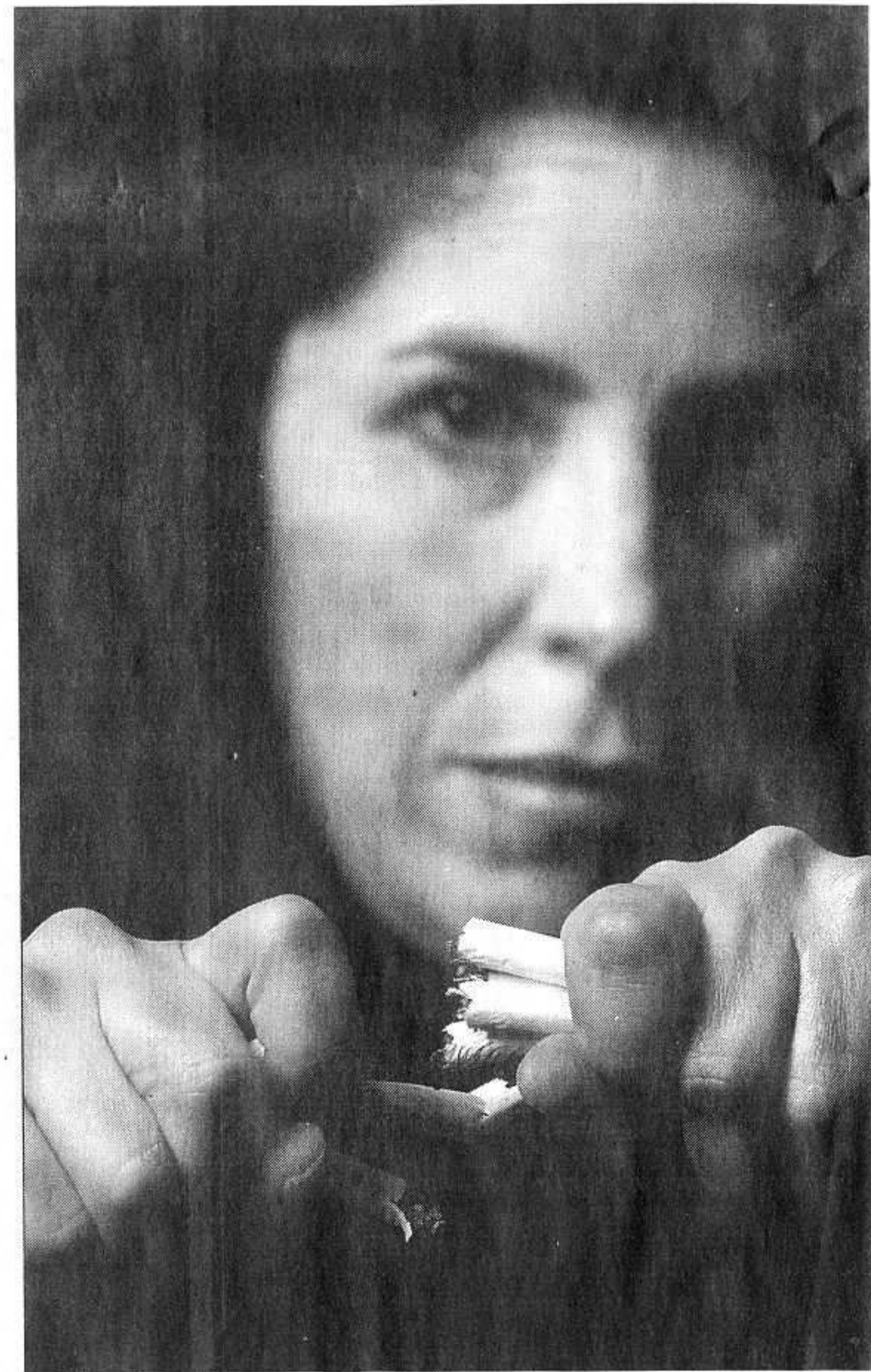
Easy Way quitters tend not to gain weight because they don't believe that they have lost anything that needs to be replaced by another stimulant or comforter. Molot jokes that the worst part of taking course was how dumb it made her feel.

"I'm not a typical reformed smoker. It doesn't bother me if people around me smoke. You don't walk out of there being judgmental. If anything, you walk out a little bit arrogant, but only after the humiliation wears off."

Call 1-866-666-4299 for information on the guaranteed Easy Way to Stop Smoking or log on to [www.allencarseasyway.com](http://www.allencarseasyway.com)

*Submissions to Milestones must be made in writing to Mary K. Nolan at The Hamilton Spectator, 44 Frid St., Hamilton, ON, L8N 3G3 or [mnolan@thespec.com](mailto:mnolan@thespec.com). They should include basic details of the story idea and the name and number of an individual to contact for more information. Due to volume, publication is not guaranteed.*

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BARRY GRAY, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

A smoker for 25 years, Carolyn Molot kicked the habit in August thanks to the Easy Way to Stop Smoking course. "You realize how stupid it is," she says.