

**Quitting Made Real by NICORETTE®: Podcast Episode 5 Transcript: Tara Slone
(ENGLISH)**

Runtime: 17:24

SPEAKERS:

Tara Slone (Right), Cynthia Loyst (Left)

[We open on Cynthia Loyst, podcast host, wearing a blue shirt while sitting in a green chair. Behind her is a white spinnaker-shaped sign with "Quitting Made Real" in dark green, and a NICORETTE® logo in the top right. Plants are in the background, and NICORETTE® products are displayed on her left. A microphone sits in front of her.]

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Cynthia Loyst

Welcome to Quitting Made Real by Nicorette, the podcast bringing you real stories about breaking the smoking addiction. My name is Cynthia Loyst, and I will say that quitting smoking is one of the best things I ever did for myself. We have an incredible lineup of guests, and they're sharing their unique stories of how everyone affected by nicotine addiction can help make quitting real.

00:00:19:23 - 00:00:41:20_____

Cynthia Loyst

Tara Slone is a former musician turned broadcaster who will be a familiar face, especially to hockey fans across Canada. What people might not be as familiar with is the fact that she was also a smoker for 20 years. Tara, I feel like we have circled around the same arenas for a long time in our social lives and in this city.

00:00:42:10 - 00:00:52:19_____

Cynthia Loyst

You are a former musician turned broadcaster. I remember your music, and I can just picture us hanging out in similar bars during the 90s, everything was a smoke filled club.

00:00:52:20 - 00:00:56:08_____

Tara Slone

Oh my God. I can't believe it used to be that way.

00:00:56:08 - 00:01:06:14_____

Cynthia Loyst

Everywhere. And we just accepted it. You are living as a musician. I'm just curious. Like how much of your identity as a smoker was connected to your musical life?

00:01:06:16 - 00:01:27:07_____

Tara Slone

I think a lot. You know, it's not that I had this, like, concrete thought, like I'm cooler if I have a cigarette in my hand. But there's this culture. Like, first of all, smoking in bars is a thing, and you kind of tend to congregate. But also if you have to go outside for a cigarette, that's a social act in itself.

00:01:27:05 - 00:01:50:06

Tara Slone

But certainly in the music world, especially at that time, late 90s, early 2000s, it was just everywhere. You know, our tour bus, we smoked on our tour bus like it. And even the nonsmokers just seemed to be okay with, like, rolling with it and like, God bless them. But like, we all smelled disgusting. Yes. Right. So yeah, I just it was certainly part of the rock and roll identity.

00:01:51:01 - 00:02:07:18

Cynthia Loyst

Kind of. Yeah. Everywhere was everywhere. It was ubiquitous. Do you remember like for me, it was when I was, you know, a teenager. I was surrounded by a lot of smoking. My father smoked, and then eventually, I found myself just really curious about what this thing was. And I don't remember intentionally being like, oh, I'm going to look cool if I do this.

00:02:07:22 - 00:02:23:10

Cynthia Loyst

I just found myself sort of fixated on it. It was a feature in a lot of music videos as well, and movies at that time. And I remember the very first time I decided, okay, I'm going to try it. This is sort of like a rebellious act. Do you remember what sort of motivated or what the circumstances were when you first tried smoking?

00:02:23:11 - 00:02:42:23

Tara Slone

I really do, and it's I mean, it's kind of shocking to me because now I'm a parent of a teenager, and I was younger then than my daughter is now. When I first tried smoking ... like I was turning 14. Oh my God, I know. And like I was a baby. And I was actually at summer camp when I tried out for the first time.

00:02:42:23 - 00:03:12:13

Tara Slone

So there were some actual cooler kids, like, I do think, like kids that I thought were cooler than me. Yes. And I do think there is that kind of mystique. Or at least there was of, you know, the cool, the bad kids like the rebels smoke. Yeah. And it's kind of romanticized in that way. And so there was just like this clique and I wanted to hang out with them, and I tried smoking and I didn't like it at all.

00:03:13:01 - 00:03:16:07

Cynthia Loyst

That's the rub, right? The very first time it's oh, it's disgusting.

00:03:16:08 - 00:03:36:22

Tara Slone

It's disgusting. And I remember even the second and third time I didn't like it. And then all of a sudden I, I guess my taste buds kind of went, oh, this is all right. And obviously the nicotine takes hold and then the rest is history. Yeah I mean it really, it's insidious. And it's fast too.

00:03:37:00 - 00:03:54:06

Cynthia Loyst

Yeah. I never, it's hard to explain, my father found in a jacket pocket a pack of cigarettes. And I remember him bringing me into our living room. My mother had never smoked, but my dad was so angry with me. And he said to me, you know, I've been a smoker my whole life. I don't know how you could let this happen.

00:03:54:06 - 00:04:15:11

Cynthia Loyst

You had better education than me. And at the time, I was kind of like a sometime smoker. And so I thought, like, you know, what are you talking about? Like, I'm fine. I'm not even hooked yet. But it didn't matter the education. I still ended up getting hooked and and like, I don't think you can understand the concept of an addiction until you're in it.

00:04:15:11 - 00:04:34:03

Tara Slone

That's right. And you know, not everybody is as susceptible as others. And I remember, you know, my mom smoked. I remember going to the store for her when I was a kid and I, you know, I remember ripping up her cigarettes. I was disgusted by it. Yeah. And, you know, smoking in cars and on planes and buses.

00:04:34:03 - 00:04:41:22

Tara Slone

And it was nauseating to me. And so, yeah, sure, intellectually, I was like, I'm never going to do this, but it, it just it gets you.

00:04:42:05 - 00:04:57:07

Cynthia Loyst

Was there a turning point for you? Like for me, it was like subtly creeping up on me over the years as it went by. I would have moments where I was like, oh, this is disgusting. Or you look at an ashtray and just be like bleh, or you smell someone else when they came in from the cold and you just be like, oh, do I smell like that?

00:04:57:07 - 00:05:07:17

Cynthia Loyst

Oh well who cares? You'd have these moments of like, clarity and then you'd forget about them. Did you have either a wake up call or a health scare or anything like that that sort of led you on the path to decide you wanted to quit?

00:05:07:20 - 00:05:36:15

Tara Slone

I mean, I tried to quit multiple times. I don't know how many. I mean, gosh, I, I smoked for over two decades, which is mortifying to me. But I do remember that one of the catalysts that really led me to quitting for real. I was at a nice restaurant, having a nice dinner, and I remember not appreciating the company I was with, not appreciating the food I was eating.

00:05:37:04 - 00:06:02:14

Tara Slone

I just couldn't wait for it to be done so I could go outside and have a cigarette. And something clicked. I was like, this is not okay. I'm not letting myself live in the moment here. I am an actual like, I'm just beholden to this stick. So I think, you know, that really stayed in my mind as I was moving towards, like, quitting for real, real.

00:06:02:22 - 00:06:15:03

Cynthia Loyst

So did you have a, like a day? Did you do that thing where, okay, I'm going to quit on this day? And do you use willpower, or was it more like, I'm just going to cut down for a bit? Walk me through your mental process of how you were going to do this.

00:06:15:03 - 00:06:43:04

Tara Slone

I mean, I think I probably tried everything at various times. Cold turkey that did not work for me. I tried hypnotherapy and it worked a little bit, but you know, I gave in, felt a little guilty, then just fully gave in. But when I did it for real, I mean, sort of the other thing that was going on in my life is I had made a shift from being out on the road as a musician and moved into broadcasting.

00:06:43:04 - 00:07:09:04

Tara Slone

So I had a different social group. I was in an office all day, so that was like really glaring to go out for those smoke breaks. And I really felt it like I just sort of felt, ugh. This is not right. Yeah. But I also met who's now my ex-husband. He was not a smoker, so, you know, it gave me that extra motivation.

00:07:09:05 - 00:07:28:17

Tara Slone

And so I did it. I used nicotine patches. And it really, that was it. So, I mean, it was a level of obviously I was very committed at that point. And I do think, you know, trying to quit multiple times, just not giving up. That's really part of the trick.

00:07:28:22 - 00:07:41:14

Cynthia Loyst

So eventually, obviously it stuck. Right. You did something enough times to make it work. So do you remember what some of the toughest challenges were to sticking with it? Take me back to that feeling and how you worked through it.

00:07:41:16 - 00:08:01:11

Tara Slone

Well, I think for me, there were so many associations. I mean, coffee in the morning, right? That was like, my favorite. And, I mean, like, I can kind of feel it now, even though the idea repulses me. But I remember, you know, you wake up in the morning, just the taste of coffee and the taste of a cigarette.

00:08:01:19 - 00:08:24:23

Tara Slone

And that was a habit I really had to shift. Being out with friends, that, like I said, that act of, like, going outside, this group migration to the sidewalk, not being part of that, that was something else. After meals, you know, all of these sorts of times where you just usually have a cigarette.

00:08:25:02 - 00:08:28:15

Tara Slone

You kind of have to reframe that habit.

00:08:28:17 - 00:08:46:16

Cynthia Loyst

I remember that too. Like it was just like, okay, everybody's going out. It was a big part of my work culture as well. Like people would do meetings at that time. Like, thank goodness I feel like this has shifted in the culture now. But it was like everyone would go out and I thought, oh my God, I'm missing out on parts of conversations, not just with friends, but with potential colleagues.

00:08:46:18 - 00:08:54:21

Cynthia Loyst

And so it was almost like grieving certain parts of my life and certain parts of my identity that I felt like were being shed.

00:08:54:21 - 00:09:20:09

Tara Slone

I think so, too. And I think, you know, for me, it was actually part of that was shifting from Tara Slone, professional musician, to Tara Slone, broadcaster, which was hard for me because I had made a conscious decision to adjust my life. And part of it was lifestyle. Part of it was knowing that you know,

being on the road, not getting enough sleep, not eating well, smoking too many cigarettes.

00:09:20:09 - 00:09:37:08

Tara Slone

It was all part of, for me, wasn't going to be a sustainable lifestyle, but yes, you do. I think that's a good word, like you do kind of grieve the loss of this persona. But then, you know, I mean, I couldn't be happier.

00:09:37:17 - 00:09:49:21

Cynthia Loyst

Yes, same. So, Nicorette is the official quit smoking partner of the NHL. And discipline we know is so important when it comes to sports. So talk about the role that discipline played in your quit journey.

00:09:51:00 - 00:10:15:16

Tara Slone

I mean, it really is everything. Because when you have an addiction that is this powerful, it's really easy to fall back in it. And so you have to have this level of, constant consciousness and just rein yourself back in. And certainly, you know, I work I work with hockey players. And so I see how disciplined they are.

00:10:15:16 - 00:10:16:10

Tara Slone

And so ...

00:10:17:09 - 00:10:18:05

Cynthia Loyst

Was that an inspiration?

00:10:18:20 - 00:10:40:18

Tara Slone

No. I mean back then, no. I transitioned into hockey, thankfully, after my smoking days were over. But I've always been really intrigued by the discipline levels of elite athletes, even before I ended up working in the sports world. And yeah, I think it was also like, I didn't have that kind of discipline maybe coming up, it was discipline, work ethic.

00:10:40:18 - 00:10:50:17

Tara Slone

They were all things that I really learned when I was a little bit older. And so I was really proud of myself for actually practicing that level of discipline because I didn't always do that through my life.

00:10:50:19 - 00:11:08:20

Cynthia Loyst

Were there certain things that you would use? Like, I feel like, you know, you have to try different

methodologies to kind of work through that discomfort, because that's also ultimately what this is an exercise in. When you're quitting smoking, you have to sit with discomfort. Were there any tips and tricks that you discovered on your quick journey?

00:11:09:02 - 00:11:31:19

Tara Slone

Well, I think, you know, like that morning cigarette. You have to adjust your routine. I don't I don't think I really replaced it with, like, sweets or anything. I know people like, turn to candy and stuff like that. I did rely a little bit also on, a sort of self-help book. And I'm a lifelong meditator, so.

00:11:31:19 - 00:11:39:00

Tara Slone

I mean, I'm not saying that I'm good at it. It's a lifelong practice. But that's part of it.

00:11:39:01 - 00:11:39:21

Cynthia Loyst

You notice your thoughts.

00:11:39:21 - 00:11:57:14

Tara Slone

You notice your thoughts. And so I think a lot of it, when you are curbing an addiction, is just like you say, meditation is actually all about sitting with discomfort. So it's, having the awareness that this is happening, but also that it is transitional. It's going to pass.

00:11:57:15 - 00:12:15:22

Cynthia Loyst

That's right. Yeah. It's kind of like almost like and it's very meditation-oriented. It's like watching sort of like clouds go by it. It's never staying the same. And I do think that for me the patch and I used the Nicorette gum as well. Helped me at least kind of like detach myself from the habit of holding a cigarette.

00:12:16:05 - 00:12:39:15

Cynthia Loyst

And I needed to break that habit while also being able to make me adjust to a different level of nicotine. That transition I felt like made that more easeful for me and manageable. You're a parent now, as you mentioned, of a 16-year-old and even though smoking rates have gone down, we've seen this rise of these other forms of nicotine in the form of e-cigarettes and other things like that.

00:12:39:20 - 00:12:44:10

Cynthia Loyst

Like, how are you communicating with your daughter about the dangers of that?

00:12:44:11 - 00:13:04:13

Tara Slone

Oh my gosh. I mean, we talk about it all the time because it is everywhere. I mean, I just tell her straight up, I mean, you know, she and I, I'm really lucky. Like, we have really good communication. And I, you know, we have this mutual expectation of one another that we can be open and honest.

00:13:05:03 - 00:13:23:22

Tara Slone

And so I've told her, you know, like, I told her how young I was when I started smoking, and I told her how long I smoked for. I told her, you know, she knows about the dangers. So it's just about having communication. You know, to me, what's happening now is. Yeah, it's really shocking.

00:13:23:22 - 00:13:50:00

Cynthia Loyst

It's really concerning that it's everywhere. Would you say, like, we talked about this a little bit before, but, like, how did your identity as a smoker shape how you viewed quitting in the beginning? Like, I know for myself, I did for a while kind of associate a rebellious streak that I had others quite proud of. And even though it's funny because it was so ubiquitous at that time, so I wasn't really like, oh, look at me being an individual.

00:13:50:00 - 00:14:07:13

Tara Slone

No, you weren't a rebel and everybody smoked. No, but there was I mean, I do think like I was in the rock and roll business, like it was. I mean, you know, sex, drugs and rock and roll is a real thing. And not to give anybody any ideas like I, you know, I really wasn't that outrageous at all.

00:14:09:00 - 00:14:30:09

Tara Slone

But it was just kind of like, you know, you're in the studio, you're laying down a track and you smoke a butt. You know, or you're doing soundcheck and you're done soundcheck and you smoke a butt. Or you do your show and then you have a drink, and you smoke a butt, like, it's just it's so, at that time. I mean, I see musicians now and I really think that world has changed a lot.

00:14:31:19 - 00:14:42:15

Tara Slone

And when it comes to smoking and alcohol. But during my day in the late 90s, early 2000, it was just like, yeah, it was really part of the musician persona.

00:14:44:12 - 00:14:52:22

Cynthia Loyst

If somebody is listening right now and they are thinking of starting this journey, what advice would you

give to make those first steps?

00:14:53:13 - 00:15:18:18

Tara Slone

Just keep trying. You know I think that there are so many great, tools that we have now that can help. And I know, I mean, I can't tell you how many times I quit, many, you know, and I just think I didn't give up quitting. And ultimately it worked. And, you know, hopefully it saved my life, like, in a real and concrete way.

00:15:18:18 - 00:15:19:13

Cynthia Loyst

Yeah.

00:15:19:15 - 00:15:20:16

Cynthia Loyst

Or at least added years.

00:15:20:16 - 00:15:23:03

Tara Slone

Or at least added years. Well, I mean, yeah.

00:15:23:08 - 00:15:54:04

Cynthia Loyst

My dad actually quit, at 74 or 75 years of age. And I just think it's never too late to quit. And I never would have thought that he would have been able to do it. And the fact that he was able to, I think was a testament to aids, things that helped out, like Nicorette gum. He was able to kind of get over that hump and have at least enough distance from it to really then like, you know, get over the most challenging part, which is that early stages of things when you're we're breaking that connection to the cigarette itself.

00:15:54:05 - 00:16:14:19

Tara Slone

I think people shouldn't underestimate how the grip of cigarettes, like it's a really intense addiction. I mean, that's known. And so, you know, if you can't get it the first time, keep trying because and don't give yourself so much of a hard time, just say, okay, I'm going to do this again.

00:16:14:19 - 00:16:15:17

Cynthia Loyst

That's right. Begin again.

00:16:15:18 - 00:16:22:05

Tara Slone

But yes, it's you're not weak. Like most people who try to quit have to do it many times.

00:16:23:16 - 00:16:27:09

Cynthia Loyst

If you could write a letter to your smoking self. What would it say?

00:16:27:09 - 00:16:41:20

Tara Slone

God, don't start. I mean, it would just say, don't start. You will regret this. You will regret this. There is nothing about this. No optics, nothing socially. You will regret this.

00:16:42:00 - 00:16:51:15

Cynthia Loyst

I think if I was to write a letter to my smoking self, it would be like. Recognize that this is a liar. The cigarette is pretending. It's like an evil, horrible friend.

00:16:52:06 - 00:17:04:09

Cynthia Loyst

One of those toxic friends who you think is like helping you out in life, who you think is making you feel better, only to discover that they're actually slowly trying to, like, steal your life. Like it's really like ...

00:17:04:09 - 00:17:06:15

Tara Slone

No, that's a really. Yeah, that's a great way to frame it.

00:17:06:17 - 00:17:13:04

Cynthia Loyst

Don't. Yeah. Don't trust that. Tara, thank you so much for sharing your journey with us. It's been incredibly delightful to meet you.

00:17:13:06 - 00:17:13:18

Tara Slone

Thank you.

00:17:14:02 - 00:17:19:17

Cynthia Loyst

And thank you for listening to the Quitting Made Real podcast by Nicorette. And remember, if you're thinking about quitting, it is never too late to make quitting real.

00:17:19:18

[Against a green background, white text appears reading “Next Episode Coming November 2025”. Below are two website URLs; Nicorette.ca/quittingmadereal and Nicorette.ca/fr/ArreterPourDeBon. The NICORETTE® Quitting Made Real is across the bottom of the green background.]

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