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# Returning to Form

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quality of life for those struggling with  
issues related to addiction, weight  
and self-esteem, among others

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profile

# Returning to FORM

DR. STEVEN ROSENBERG IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH ISSUES RELATED TO ADDICTION,  
WEIGHT, SELF-ESTEEM, SLEEP AND PHYSICAL PAIN

by **PHIL GIANFICARO**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROB HALL



**i** **N 1978, AS HIS FATHER** lay dying of emphysema brought on by decades of cigarette smoking, Steven Rosenberg leaned in close and whispered a promise.

"I vowed to him that I would stop smoking," Rosenberg recalls. "I was a three-packs-a-day smoker, Parliament filtered, and I could see what was going to happen to me if I didn't stop. I was smoking cigarettes, cigars, and had a collection of expensive pipes. I was addicted to tobacco and nicotine. What cigarettes did to my father woke me up."

Thirty-four years later, Dr. Steven Rosenberg, Ph.D., has not only kept that promise to this father, but he's devoted his life to helping others kick the habit.

Over the past 30 years from his office in Elkins Park, Dr. Rosenberg, a renowned psychotherapist dealing in behavioral therapy, has, through one-on-one and group sessions, his book, "Quit it Now and Forever," and self-help audiotapes and CDs, helped more than 40,000 patients stop smoking. From 1995 to 2008, he spearheaded The Great American Smoke Out in Philadelphia.



"Smoking is 10 times more addictive than heroin—and it's legal," says Dr. Rosenberg, a Philadelphia native who received his undergraduate degree from Temple University and doctorate from Southwest University. "Smoking causes 30 percent of all cancer deaths. But even though people know smoking is bad for them, they continue to smoke."

"What I do is erase that bad habit. I go through exercises that teach people how to get rid of the physical addiction through exercise, meditation, drinking fluids to clean the body and lessen the urge."

Dr. Rosenberg has also had great success in helping people stop smoking with a self-developed technique called aversiotherapy, a type of psychological treatment where a person is put into a state of altered consciousness, or a trance, and given subconscious triggers, such as thoughts or phrases, that help them quit.

"As for the mental side, I use aversiotherapy to make cigarettes seem nasty to people, to make the thought of smoking sickening," he says. "In my book, I associate the aftertaste of vomit to smoking. I make the thought of smoking objectionable. I have patients who've not smoked for 25 years after seeing me. The success rate is 90 percent. It works."

Diane Jackson is among Dr. Rosenberg's success stories. When the 48-year-old Roxborough resident first visited him in 2008, she smoked a pack of cigarettes a day. Despite using nicotine gum therapy and efforts to stop cold turkey, she couldn't break the habit.

"Finally, I was able to stop after Dr. Rosenberg put me in a hypnotic state and gave me suggestions about how to quit," she says. "He made a CD of our session and told me to listen to it once a day for a week, then once every other day. From that first day, I never smoked again."

Dr. Rosenberg's therapy was so effective that even when Jackson thought it was time to smoke, she didn't.

"I was driving to work and knew I couldn't smoke at work, so I thought about smoking in the car," Jackson says. "But even as I kept thinking I was going to light a cigarette, for some reason I didn't. I have 12 friends who, after seeing how effective his therapy was, went to see him and have stopped smoking."

Dr. Rosenberg also helps patients wanting to improve the quality of their lives by helping them with their weight, self esteem, sleep troubles and physical pain.

Through therapies presented in one-on-one sessions and from his book, "The 15/150 Secret to Simple Dieting," Dr. Rosenberg has compiled a 98 percent success rate helping people lose weight.

"I show them how to fine-tune their eating while never feeling deprived or like they're on a diet," he says. "The title of my book represents the best way to lose weight is by reading food labels. Don't eat more than 15 grams of fat or 150 grams of carbohydrates per day."

"After three months with me, my diabetic patients have their A1C levels (average blood sugar) as a non-

diabetic. A great way to eat is anti-inflammatory eating, foods like low saturated fats and low glycemic carbs. They help you lose weight."

Jason Klein of North Wales had been successful losing weight, but had little success keeping it off. He tried the Atkins Diet, the South Beach Diet, and even tried not eating at all. Nothing worked long term. At age 20, he stood 5 feet 4 inches and weighed nearly 200 pounds when he called Dr. Rosenberg.

"He helped me lose weight through hypnosis and through educating me on anti-inflammatory foods," says Klein, now 35 and weighing in at 150 pounds. "Until I saw him, I was basically eating the worst kinds of foods."

"Dr. Rosenberg works with you on positive reinforcement. I listen to his CD every day. I even have a friend who was 300 pounds and has lost 50 pounds since he started seeing Dr. Rosenberg in November."

Dr. Rosenberg has also been successful helping patients overcome low self-esteem. Patients benefit from office sessions and from his 1997 book, "I Hope the Hell I Win! Turning Hope Into Reality ... How Winners Win."

As the team psychotherapist for the Philadelphia Flyers in the mid-1980s, two of his patients were former defenseman and Hockey Hall of Famer Mark Howe, who, according to Dr. Rosenberg, had self-confidence issues despite being an All-Star player, and Vezina Trophy-winning goaltender, the late Pelle Lindbergh.

"I helped Mark with techniques I devised that had him visualize what he wanted to do on the ice," Dr. Rosenberg says. "I basically brainwashed him. We had him visualize what he wanted to do in practice and games, and wanted him thinking he would do nothing wrong. Pelle always had a monkey on his back when it came to beating New York teams. So we sat down in my office and visualized a shutout. The next night he shut out the [New York] Islanders."

"I also see golfers who use the same visualization techniques, many with putting problems. I had one pro golfer, George Forster, the pro at Radnor Valley Country Club, who used my services and won local PGA championships."

Dr. Rosenberg also has a high success rate of treating patients for sleep deprivation. He does so by

helping improve their sleep habits by providing therapies to help clear their mind in order to get a good, restful night of sleep. He also assists patients on methods such as muscle loosening and mental exercises to alleviate pain.

"I get no greater satisfaction than from seeing my patients' lives improved by the work I've done with them," Dr. Rosenberg says. "I'm very proud of the work I've done."

So, too, would his father. ■

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