

My Story

My personal experience with nicotine is a very complicated one. I've been taught since I was young that tobacco was a terrible thing, and to this day it has instilled a habit of avoiding the substance. Every child across America is given the same speeches against tobacco, yet you still are seeing it being sold in every gas station, supermarket, and mall across the world. These businesses are crawling with teenagers/young adults, and aren't too concerned about where their product is going. I am a teenager, and I do go to a public high school. I get to go into the bathroom and see guys hitting Juul's and other gas station e-cigarettes. And I've noticed that I see people with vaping devices and juices that are only sold in these large commercial stores. I have the unique advantage of being able to see the behind the scenes of my mother's business, and I can see that she puts effort into making sure that the products that she's responsible for don't get to illegal purchasers, and there are factors that are out of her control, but the teens seeking to gain these things aren't doing it for the flavors, they're doing it to get a nicotine high, and they're going to do it, with or without the flavors.

All the while you have parents scraping by, barely being able to feed their own children, taking the extra five, ten dollars out of their home to spend on cigarettes. My mom was one of these parents. I grew up in a home of seven kids. And while my parents always did their absolute best to care for all of us, sometimes she needed help. And for that, she went to my grandmother. My grandmother was like a second mom to me throughout my childhood. My brother and I would run around the house and get to listen to every story about my grandma's life adventures. She cared for us, she loved us, and most of all, she believed in us. Everything we wanted to do in life was achievable through hard work and dedication. My grandma Patty unwillingly and begrudgingly left this world on August 14th, 2012 from stage 4 lung cancer. And within a week of her death, my mother started experimenting with ways to quit smoking.

I pestered her to quit, threw away her cartons, and refused to let her smoke. Because I didn't want another person in my life to be taken away by tobacco. My mother spent the next year trying to substitute smoking with other nicotine alternatives, but would always find herself falling back onto cigarettes. That was until she found vaping. My mom started vaping in late January 2014 and had completely stopped smoking within a month. No more smelly clothes, no more anxiety from cigarettes. And while my mother made sure to educate me on the risks and negative consequences of vaping, I could not be more relieved to get the smell of death out of my home.

Within the year my mom had opened the first "Yogi's" planning on adopting the mission of getting as many people out of the habit she so desperately tried to break. And she has succeeded in getting every adult in my life to quit smoking, along with thousands of people that walk through the door every day. And she is just one of the

people standing here, in this movement, to stop you from making it any easier to allow that smell of death to permeate ANY Kansan household.