



Lost causes are only really lost when you stop fighting for them

Bởi:

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“Lost causes are the ones most worth fighting for because they tend to be the most important, most humane ones. They require us to live up to the best that is in us, to perfect ourselves and our world. Lost causes cannot be won, but because they are so crucial to us, we nevertheless must try.”

Richard Farson: *Management of the Absurd*

In 1986 I was working fulltime as executive director of STAT (Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco), a nonprofit organization I’d founded to fight against unethical tobacco industry marketing practices, particularly those intended to influence children to become addicted to a product that would kill many of them.

I was on a cross-country flight working on the next edition of our *Tobacco Free Youth Reporter* when the person next to me lit a cigarette. I politely asked if he would wait until the plane landed to smoke – he took a long drag, blew it in my face, and said no. He smoked continuously for the rest of the flight – as did a significant number of other passengers. I was sick as a dog by the time we landed – as were a significant number of other passengers. And I almost gave up the fight. If people were allowed to poison the air in the tightly-confined space of an airplane, what chance did we have for preventing the white collar drug pushers at cigarette companies from addicting successive generations of replacement smokers for those they’d killed off?

When later that year Dr. C. Everett Koop (a true American hero) called for a smoke-free society, many people wondered what he’d been smoking. It truly did appear to be a lost cause.

The changes that came about in succeeding decades were nothing short of miraculous. Almost all public spaces are smoke-free, even in the heart of tobacco land; cigarette vending machines have been outlawed and tobacco products must be kept behind the

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counter; cigarette advertising has been banned from television, movies, and billboards, and the white collar drug pushers can no longer use characters like Camel Joe and the Marlboro Man to make smoking appear glamorous.

There are still far too many people smoking (almost all of whom eventually wish they could quit), far too many young people starting (many of whom will sicken and die as a result), and the tobacco industry has, in what can only be termed corporate evil at its worst, targeted third world countries as an expansion market. It is still in some sense a lost cause – there is no hope that tobacco addiction will somehow just go away, or that tobacco industrialists will see the evil of their ways and stop, in the words of author Thomas Whiteside, selling death. But it is still and always will be a cause worth fighting for.

When your world turns upside down, one of the first casualties is often the dreams you had for your future. Dreams of going back to school, of writing your first novel or starting a business doing work you love to do, dreams of traveling the world or retiring to a cabin in the north woods. Those dreams now seem like lost causes.

They might be – which is all the more reason why you should hang onto them tenaciously and fight for them ferociously.