

STOP IDOLS

FOR hundreds of thousands of smokers their New Year resolution to quit will by now have failed. Despite the British Heart Foundation's shock "Give up before you clog up" advertising campaign most of those who started 2004 with such good intentions are already lighting up again.

Giving up smoking is one of the most popular New Year

resolutions - three million people in Britain try each year - and also one of the toughest to keep. Of those who wanted to kick the habit in 2003, a quarter lasted just a few hours...and half only a couple of days.

More than 20 per cent of all male deaths and 11 per cent of all female deaths are due to smoking. One in two regular smokers will die from their habit, half of them before the age of 65. The Sunday Mirror tried to help three smoking

celebrities to give up cigarettes using different methods. Actress Danniella Westbrook attended Allen Carr's Easy Way to Stop Smoking Course, Emmerdale's Nicola Wheeler tried a method known as Thought Field Therapy, and Family Affairs star Nicola Duffett had a go at kicking the habit by using nicotine patches.

Here the three women talk about their experiences and reveal whether they have finally given up the killer weed...

By STEVEN SMITH

Danniella: I

will break the habit for my son's sake

DETERMINED: Danniella failed this time but is determined to give up smoking

Picture: NICHOLAS BOWMAN



ALLEN CARR'S EASY WAY

DANNIELLA Westbrook's drug addiction was painful and public. Her cocaine habit destroyed her youthful beauty and brought her to the brink of death.

Pictures of her damaged nose were so horrific they were used on posters to warn children about the dangers of drugs.

At one point she was given just two weeks to live unless she gave up cocaine.

But Danniella, 30, stepped back from the brink and, after cosmetic reconstruction to her nose and a second breast augmentation, she has never looked better.

She has been clean of drugs for three years now - but her one remaining vice is her up to 30-a-day cigarette habit.

As she gets ready to head off to her Allen Carr session she says this is about to change. Carr - once a 100-a-day smoker himself - claims he has cured tens of thousands of people and has a 95 per cent success rate. Using a mixture of psychotherapy and hypnotherapy, he makes smokers focus on the reasons why they smoke rather than why they shouldn't.

Danniella said: "When I was in rehab I wanted to give up smoking, but my therapist said it would be too much, I gave up for a month using patches because my cosmetic surgeon wouldn't operate unless I gave up. Smoking thins the blood and the healing process takes longer. But as soon as I was OK I went straight back on them."

Danniella admits she is more nervous about the course than her trip to the jungle for I'm A Celebrity. Get Me Out Of Here. "I won't walk out like I did in the jungle," she says, adding: "I'm doing this for my kids. Kal, my seven-year-old son, looked at me this morning and said, 'If you didn't smoke any more mum, it would be the best present I could have'. My heart could have broken."

When Danniella - who started smoking at 11 - arrives at the centre she stops outside for a final fag. "It's like saying goodbye to a friend," she says.

Once inside, to her surprise, she is allowed to smoke. In fact the receptionist tells her that she will be actively encouraged to smoke during the course.

She joins



WINNER: Danniella managed to kick coke

six other smokers in the room. Everyone lights up and it is a friendly atmosphere. Our therapist, Colleen Dwyer, 29, joins us. She had been a client herself at the centre, where she quit a 60-a-day habit.

One-and-a-half hours into the course and Danniella is pessimistic. "There have been no clever card tricks or potions - just explanations why people smoke. I was expecting at least a picture of a tar-stained lung." She is also a little perturbed by the constant reference to Allen Carr as if he was some cult leader. "I keep waiting for a group hug," she says.

After a break, Colleen suggests everyone should ring the sales department of a tobacco company, then say they are 21-years-olds about to start smoking and ask them what the benefits are. Colleen guarantees none of the sales people will have an answer. Finally, the group are asked to come up one by one and throw their cigarettes and lighters on to

6 I thought it was all one big brainwash 9

a ceremonial pile. Danniella whispers: "I'm glad I haven't brought a gold lighter."

Following a hypnosis session, Colleen says if anyone needs a top-up session, they can go back for one - free of charge.

A spokesman for the clinic says: "Most smokers require just one five-hour group session. There is also a second and third session, both lasting about three hours, for the minority of clients who require them. If having attended all three sessions the client is still smoking, we refund their fee in full."

When I contact Danniella two days later she is straight and to the point: "Darling, sorry but it didn't work, I had a cigarette that night. The whole thing was one big brainwash. But I'm going to give Kal his wish and I will try something else. By the time I move to Florida in June I will be off the cigs."

Having joined Danniella on the course, I also smoked three cigarettes while writing this...

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FAILED!