

## Jack...

Jack is my 45 year old brother-in-law. Even though he is a politician (state senator no less) we get along just fine on most things. We even periodically get together to play golf.

But Jack is a three-pack-a-day smoker and I'm very concerned about his health — not only as he is married to my sister, but as he has three great kids that need a long-term father.

This year some of my worst fears were realized when Jack was diagnosed with lung cancer. What I found very educating was listening to his various friends' and acquaintances' response to what could be the end-of-the-world for Jack. Surprisingly, there were actually *three* quite different schools of thought as to what he should do.

One faction advocated doing **nothing at all different**. They said things like: "Well it's too bad Jack, but we are all going to die from something", or "The most important thing is to enjoy the life you have, so if smoking is what you like, then go for it."

A second group (including me and my sister) said that some **serious steps were called for right away**. We wanted Jack to not only give up smoking entirely, but to rebuild his worn down body by getting more exercise, adding worthwhile nutritional supplements, etc.

But Jack actually chose a third path, advocated by some other buds. He claimed that he understood that this was a serious matter and that he needed to do *something*. After giving this some thought, he decided to switch to filtered cigarettes and take some vitamin C.

At first my sister and I thought he was joking, but no, he was quite serious. To him this change was significant since he didn't like the taste or smoking experience as much using filters, so this was a "sacrifice" to him. And, he argued, the whole idea behind filters was to screen out some harmful inhalants, so he certainly would be "improving" his health.

When we said that the amount filtered out was trivial, he laughed at that idea. He said "Gee, big companies like R. J. Reynolds wouldn't be wasting their time and money on a product that didn't really do anything consequential, now would they?"

Then he told us his ace-in-the-hole: a good friend of his was going to go on a *sympathy* diet and exercise program, dedicating it to my brother-in-law. Jack said that the reasoning was that they both bought into the theory that "everything averages out."

No matter how he tried to explain this, it just didn't make sense to my sister or me: how do one person's actions amount to a "credit" for another person who isn't doing anything?

This is exactly the situation we have today with Global Warming. There are three choices: **1) do nothing, 2) make meaningful consequential changes, or 3) make token, superficial alterations.** *Which camp are you in?*

In case you're not quite sure, here's a hint: if you support wind power, you are squarely in the third group. Wind power is a trivial "solution" to Global Warming, much the same as Jack's switch to filtered cigarettes is not really going to really improve his health. This group also supports other inutile ideas like carbon credit exchanges.

On the other hand you are in the second group if you favor **meaningful and immediate conservation efforts, and you support legitimate renewable power sources** like hydroelectric, nuclear, and geothermal. It's your choice — *do you know Jack?*