

Motivational Interviewing “Soccer Mike”

William Miller: So fill me in a little bit, what is it that brings you here today?

Soccer Mike: Well, actually I am doing a favor for a friend of mine and he told me about a study you guys are doing. So I figured that I'd participate in it. He told me you were a... basically an addiction counselor and he thought I might be an interesting subject.

William Miller: Okay, well tell me about where you are now with the addictions that you've been...

Soccer Mike: Well, what do you want to know in particular?

William Miller: Are you in recovery now?

Soccer Mike: No I'm not.

William Miller: Okay, Alright. So what are the drugs or what is it you struggle with?

Soccer Mike: Well, actually cigarettes... that's the biggest. Alcohol to a degree, but I think I've had more of a problem with that two or three years ago, it seems to have gone down to a degree and probably simply because of the environment.

William Miller: So that's kind of settled down.

Soccer Mike: Well...not all that much, okay, but enough...you know...it's gone down simply because I am getting too old to do this stuff anymore. If that makes any sense to you.

William Miller: It does, you can't keep up with it anymore.

Soccer Mike: I don't think I can, I really don't think I can.

William Miller: And then the cigarettes are still a real addiction for you.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, I really do. I think they're worse. In the past I have done cocaine. I've even done crack cocaine; I've heard that's one of the most addictive drugs around, quite frankly. From my own personal experience I don't find it addictive at all.

William Miller: Yeah, it's interesting how it is different for different people.

Soccer Mike: Yeah.

William Miller: Except for you it is tobacco and alcohol

Soccer Mike: Yeah. Yeah, and coffee, I mean if you want to get that specific. I mean how do you want to go? I got a lady that's supposedly addicted to chap stick.

William Miller: It gets used for almost anything these days (the word addiction). Well how would you like things to be different? I guess that's a good place to start.

Soccer Mike: Well basically...I don't... see, that's my problem. I don't think I'm really all that committed to making things all that different because I am not seeing that much harmful benefits. I was told you are not able to slow down, it's progressive, you're gonna get worse and worse and worse and worse. And that just doesn't seem to be the case with me. Okay. I think certain things in my lifestyle just preclude me not using. And smoking has become a problem because I am starting to play soccer.

William Miller: So you can't breathe.

Soccer Mike: So I can't breathe. The kids are younger and younger. They're half my age, twice my size. I am having a problem with it.

William Miller: You're noticing.

Soccer Mike: Yeah.

William Miller: Alright, so the message that you shouldn't use at all is like is somebody out there telling you that, but that doesn't fit your experience.

Soccer Mike: I don't know. "Use at all", what does that mean? What do you mean by that?

William Miller: Oh, I guess I misunderstood you. I thought you were saying people tell you that you can't use or you shouldn't use or whatever.

Soccer Mike: Okay, yeah, yeah they've told me that before. You know, I've been through... I guess you know nothing about me, do you?

William Miller: Nothing at all.

Soccer Mike: (laughs) Oh, okay, I'm sorry about that. I thought at least I filled you in on something. Okay, no problem.

William Miller: No, I asked not to be.

Soccer Mike: Okay, well, no, here's what happened. I got a DUI a while back; I think it was back in '93. And I had one prior to that in '85, and went through some counseling. It was mandatory, state driven. Basically you go through the counseling and after you successfully complete it, you're "rehabbed". Then you get your driving privileges back. I guess what I am trying to say is that I had some bad experiences. Not bad experiences with the counselors, but I found them to be...not less than professional...but just very rigid in their approach.

William Miller: Okay, and that didn't work for you; that didn't fit.

Soccer Mike: It fit at the time, and at the time I don't think I was really all that committed to quitting. And then I was... at another time, but the other time was because I was earning forty dollars an hour and I was working ten hours a day, five days a week. So, guess what? You're not supposed to be able to quit, you see. That's what those counselors told me. It was really strange that I was, wasn't it? So, I mean, I guess what I'm saying is that I do have a rather negative attitude about some of the things I've been through as far as a state program is concerned. I don't know how I could explain that more, if you have any...

William Miller: Well, I think I've got it. It sounds like your experience doesn't match what you were being told. They're telling you "this is how you are" and you look at yourself and you say "no".

Soccer Mike: Yeah that's not necessarily true. Then too, you were supposed to say "Well I'm an alcoholic, and I've always had problems, and I have to quit, and I can't ever drink again", this, that, and everything else. And you had to really say that, you see, or else you weren't fitting in the role they wanted you to play, and without fitting in the role they wanted you to play you couldn't get your license back. So, I played the game basically. And I went AA, and I also found that to be just a little bit on the, a... you know... it didn't work for me. It's bumper sticker therapy. Fake it until you make it. Wow, how profound (sarcastic)! Man, you guys are deep, aren't ya (sarcastic)?! You know? And, you know, I mean, seriously! I've been with these guys who didn't do anything all day, but they did what was right that day. You know, I would rather, let's say lift weights, maybe build patio furniture, maybe program (undecipherable) and then - drink. Instead of just not drink & do nothing else (laughing). I found that there were certain aspects about it I liked. I think you have to have a deep-seated religious belief in order for it to work for you.

William Miller: Well, and it sounds like you want to have an active life in a way. Not drinking is not doing something, it's doing nothing.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, it's doing nothing.

William Miller: So, for you the question is what am I gonna be doing? How do I spend my time? Playing soccer and...

Soccer Mike: Yeah, and that's good. And actually I was thinking, myself, the way I can best quit smoking. It's not by quitting smoking, but playing soccer three times a week, okay? Now, I'm going *for* something, okay? And then all

of a sudden I'm having a problem breathing, okay? So guess what? You're *gonna* quit smoking. You're not gonna say "I gotta quit smoking, I gotta quit smoking". You know? To me that doesn't... that doesn't work for me.

William Miller: It might even... less than not work, it might make it less likely.

Soccer Mike: I think it is less likely. And I quit smoking before for about four months. Then I blew out my knee. And, a, you know. I went down... and, boom! Right back to it. I would say the same thing with drinking. I would say I was actually more, how should I say? I seemed to have more of a craving when I was going through counseling.

William Miller: Right.

Soccer Mike: And then when I wasn't (laughs), okay, so it's like reverse effect. "Guys, you really are helping me a lot" (sarcastically), you know?

William Miller: I wonder if it isn't the being told "you can't", or... it's like being in prison in a way.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, and it could just be immaturity on my part, you know? If they tell me I can't do something, I'm gonna do something. Maybe what they should say is "you better drink every day, (expletive). I want you to drink a fifth before noontime. Then maybe I'd say aw, "screw you guys", I don't know. Maybe there is something about my personality that's like that. So... you know... what shall I say... one size doesn't fit all.

William Miller: Yeah, exactly.

Soccer Mike: One size doesn't fit all.

William Miller: And for you what matters is having something that you're going toward.

Soccer Mike: Right.

William Miller: Not something you run away from.

Soccer Mike: Right.

William Miller: And one of those things is soccer.

Soccer Mike: Yeah.

William Miller: What else.

Soccer Mike: Well, tennis, how about backpacking, how about just waking up clear-headed?

William Miller: Yes, that's nice.

Soccer Mike: I mean don't you think that's kind of...

William Miller: That's great.

Soccer Mike: ...pleasurable sometimes, you know.

William Miller: So just getting up in the morning and being able to think and...clearly.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, but... I'm telling you one thing right now...you know...sometimes...I won't drink four, five, six days. If I smoke two packs of cigarettes, I wake up with a hang over. I thought it was the booze, but it isn't.

William Miller: Uh-huh. Even without the booze.

Soccer Mike: Oh yeah. It's carbon monoxide, man. You got no oxygen in your system. So, I guess that's my real problem right now is the cigarettes (laughing).

William Miller: Uh-huh. It sounds like your not that worried about the alcohol, really.

Soccer Mike: No it's bad, but it's not as bad.

William Miller: Not causing you problems?

Soccer Mike: Well, it is. It will cause anyone problems.

William Miller: How so?

Soccer Mike: Have a six pack of beer, wake up, try to program a computer.

William Miller: Okay.

Soccer Mike: Have a six pack of beer, wake up, find out how alert you are for the first two hours of the day.

William Miller: Right.

Soccer Mike: It's gonna cause anyone problems. Uh... have a six pack, have a twelve pack, try to play soccer the next day.

William Miller: Right. It's the amount and the after effects of that.

Soccer Mike: Right. And I think my tolerance is up so high that it takes too much to get the same buzz, and unfortunately the recovery... it's getting to the point where it's just not worth it.

William Miller: ...not worth it (echoes), yeah.

Soccer Mike: If I could get, like, a twelve pack high on three beers, then I only have three ounces I gotta process. If it's taken me twelve to get the same what I got three on, now I got twelve to process, you see.

William Miller: Yep.

Soccer Mike: So were at a balance point where were getting diminishing returns on ever expanding, how shall I say...quantities.

William Miller: Like the slot machine doesn't pay off so much anymore.

Soccer Mike: Well, you know, it's addiction, so you're stupid, so you keep on playing it. You know?

William Miller: It is amazing how long you keep going. But with alcohol, you're kind of hitting a point where "this isn't worth it anymore."

Soccer Mike: Yeah, yeah. But it's not because anyone's telling me from the outside. It's not because I am being forced to do that. It's just because I gotta wake up in the morning, and I know how I feel, *period*, okay? And I think what has happened is that before I used to drink, drink, drink all the time and I was always drinking. Then I stopped and I found out how good I felt. Okay? Now I have a compare and contrast; where as before I never had a compare and contrast.

William Miller: Now you know.

Soccer Mike: Now you know (echoes). Yeah, now you know, hey wait, wasn't I a lot better when I was clear-headed then when I was, you know. And to me then it does become a problem because now you at least you have something you can relate to. You can say "this is how I am without it; this is how I am with it. This is my performance without it; this is my performance with it." You know.

William Miller: It's only when it's a problem for you really that it matters.

Soccer Mike: Right, right.

William Miller: If somebody else is telling you...

Soccer Mike: Yeah, it doesn't work.

William Miller: Or worse. More likely you back away from it, you know?

Soccer Mike: Yeah, but why is the approach the opposite? That's what I...I...I don't mean to be belligerent toward addiction counseling, but I can't help but *be*. Sometimes I wonder if these people do more bad than good.

William Miller: It doesn't make any sense to me. It's human nature to push against something when they push against you.

Soccer Mike: Well, you know, I always heard in AA...the dumbest thing I ever heard...Some of the comment I heard that were just so god-awful stupid. And these people were just complete idiots. "We alcoholics don't like to be told what to do". I'm thinking "wait, we alcoholics? What are you some special breed of people?" *No one* likes to be told what to do.

William Miller: That's human nature.

Soccer Mike: And, you know, I really got tired of that kind of like "we're special because we have this disease," or, "come feel sorry for us because we have a disease." And quite frankly, the more I read about alcoholism; no one knows what the hell it is.

William Miller: Uh-huh.

Soccer Mike: So I'm not even gonna say I am because until there's a definitive area that we can agree on, you know. I can say alcohol dependent, now that makes sense. It's a bit more clinical...

William Miller: That you can understand.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, it's understandable. But that's one thing I didn't like about AA is they wore it like a badge. And it's nothing to proud of, but there's nothing to be ashamed of. But you certainly don't do some reverse pride on it, and, you know, "we're special because of this; we're different." I didn't see any difference between those people and normal people.

William Miller: So it seems to work for some people, but that's not gonna help you.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, and who do you think it would work for? Highly religious people that believe in higher powers and miracles, and some deity is going to come down and save them any time they have problems; I'm not that type of person.

William Miller: That's not you (affirming).

Soccer Mike: Nope.

William Miller: And for you it has to be some reason that you see that persuades you, "okay, it's time."

Soccer Mike: Yeah, a little bit...(sarcastically laughing)

William Miller: A little bit.

Soccer Mike: A little bit more realistic, okay? No nonsense, no bumper sticker stuff.

William Miller: And not being able to breathe on the soccer field is no nonsense...

Soccer Mike: I think that's kind of ...I don't know if you could get much more gutted than that. So, I mean, that's what it is.

William Miller: So having something to pursue; having something to live for, really.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, yeah, that's it in a nut shell. You know I've read a couple of books, and the one thing I really did enjoy was a book I read Positive Addiction. Having been a runner before, being cross country, I could see exactly how that worked. Basically this guy was saying what happened is he was under the suspicion that a lot of people running actually had drinking problems and ran themselves out of those. And I think that is actually true, because after I run I have about this much desire to drink, and I have about that much desire to smoke. You got endorphins, you feel good, you're alert. Why would you want to pollute yourself?

William Miller: Makes sense to me.

Soccer Mike: So I mean, that's my deal on that. That's my read on who I am. But am I committed? No. Total abstinence? No, not at all.

William Miller: Oh, to total abstinence, okay. Because I'm hearing a lot of commitment in what you're saying. That it's worth it to me in order to breathe on the soccer field to do something about the cigarettes; to quit smoking even.

Soccer Mike: Yeah.

William Miller: So there I was hearing commitment.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, I think there...there is. But see, when I quit smoking I quit drinking too, you know?

William Miller: Is that right?

Soccer Mike: Well, yeah, you have to. Well, I mean, at least I have to.

William Miller: Uh-huh.

Soccer Mike: Cause I can't like drink, because when I drink I have a cigarette.

William Miller: Okay, they're that tied together. You do them together so many...tens of thousands of times. Yeah.

Soccer Mike: Well, even coffee. You know. Coffee, cigarettes, coffee, cigarettes; just association. And I think like when you drink your judgment, your will power goes down. I don't know if you call it will power, I think it's just judgment.

William Miller: Whatever it is, yeah.

Soccer Mike: You're going "yeah, a cigarette sure would taste good right now". Okay, alright.

William Miller: That happens with cocaine too. Drinking is the most common reason why people go back to using cocaine when they really want to stay away from it.

Soccer Mike: Oh, really?

William Miller: So it's exactly what you're talking about.

Soccer Mike: There's such an association between the two, huh?

William Miller: Well, whatever it is. Or it just kind of dulls down your judgment enough that you say "oh yeah, well that'd feel nice," yeah.

Soccer Mike: Should I ask if you drink? (Laughing)

William Miller: Yeas, I do.

Soccer Mike: Well, you know how the judgment goes. Let's face it, it goes. It goes on anyone, you know. They always say "we alcoholics are different." No, no, no, no. You feed someone six beers and they're judgment is gonna go down.

William Miller: It gonna have that effect

Soccer Mike: It's a physiological reaction to a toxic drug. Let's face it.

William Miller: It is. So, you really would be talking about stopping cigarettes and alcohol then (statement) in order to breathe.

Soccer Mike: Well, yeah, but I don't want to think about it.

William Miller: Oh.

Soccer Mike: I don't want to think about that.

William Miller: Meaning you just want to do it and not think about it? Or you don't want to consider it?

Soccer Mike: Well, I would rather do it; not think about it.

William Miller: Yep, not much point in thinking about it.

Soccer Mike: Well, I mean is there?

William Miller: No. No.

Soccer Mike: Do I think about working out every day? Do I think about brushing my teeth? If I did, I wouldn't want to brush my teeth. You know "I gotta brush my teeth tomorrow." You know? "That's gonna be pretty bad." You know that, you know? You know what I'm saying?

William Miller: I do.

Soccer Mike: I think that's what happens when people do that. And I see more procrastination, because it's worse to think about having to go to the gym, and workout. And, "my God, it's gonna hurt when I do those curls, and my biceps are gonna kill me." And, oh, "then I have to wake up and brush my teeth." I think that when you think about stuff like that, I think that it is more counterproductive then just saying "oh, screw it, just do it." You know?

William Miller: Like thinking about going to sleep. As long as you are doing that you are not going to go to sleep.

Soccer Mike: You're not gonna sleep, yeah. I hope that makes sense to you.

William Miller: It does. It wasn't what I meant, if I think about it. But I see exactly what you mean; that if you're thinking about something, or like trying is another word, if you're *trying* to do it then you're not doing it. You either do it or you don't do it, but, you know, *try* to do it, you know, *try* to go to sleep, you know. You just go to sleep.

Soccer Mike: You just go to sleep. Yeah.

William Miller: So what would be great is if it was just natural; you're not thinking about it, it's just natural to do it.

Soccer Mike: Well, I mean, what do you think? I'm thinking basically the thing I could best do is just start running again, and just start really substituting habits. I don't think...I think substitution of habit and making habits so counterproductive, or so...contradictory, I should say.

William Miller: Not worth it.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, you just replace one habit with another habit; rather then just try to get rid of one habit. I think it comes up to a vacuum state. Now what do I do. I got rid of this habit, now what do I replace it with? You know?

William Miller: Well, you're clearly telling me that's what works for you. That's what's gonna do it.

Soccer Mike: Well, that's what's done in the past, you know. That's what's done in the past. Actually, I gotta join another soccer team. I gotta play with even better people, you see? And that way I'll get really pissed off at myself, you know.

William Miller: If it's worked for you before, it's a good indication.

Soccer Mike: Yeah. What hasn't worked for me is drug addiction counselors (laughing). Sorry.

William Miller: Yeah, yeah. No, your reaction to that was...

Soccer Mike: You have realize...first off, most of the people there are...and I'm not trying to be an apologist for them; but in a way I am. They were good people. Most the people there were forced to be there. They weren't there on their own free will, so of course they're gonna be resistant. And, a, most of the people there...you have to talk a certain way, behave a certain way, do certain things so they think you are quote "whatever", "rehabbed", okay? So you learn real quickly how to play the game. What are you looking for, what's this counselor looking for, what's this

person want me to say? Okay. I'm supposed to feel this way about something because that's the way she's been told that we defy this addiction. So what I'll do is just play in her bullshit even though it isn't true. And as long as I can do it in a convincing way and fool her, boom, I got it, I got my license back. And you know that's a game I was playing the whole time. And actually I kind of lost respect for people because they were so easy to fool. All I did was read the addiction counseling books, I found out what they were looking for, what the traits were...

William Miller: Played the game

Soccer Mike: ...played the game, found out what they wanted to hear. And to me that's just counterproductive. If anything, it's a waste of time, and it might even be more harmful than it is helpful.

William Miller: It sounds like it was for you.

Soccer Mike: Yeah. Does anyone quit anything if they are not committed to it?

William Miller: My own sense is that internal reason that really makes the difference. Instead of there being someone out there telling you...what's telling you is something inside of you; your lungs, or whatever it is.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, and this time it's my body. My brain is saying "hey, I'm stupid, but your liver doesn't like you too much. Your lungs are a little pissed." You know.

William Miller: So what gets in the way of your sticking with that, or what gets in the way of...running?

Soccer Mike: You know, I don't know. I think it might be a fear of failure. I really do. Could be that, could be just be the amount of effort. Like I say, it's been going down, going down, going down, but I seem to really have a problem with totally committing to just, "okay, this is DA, man, let's do it."

William Miller: Yeah, well it is pretty total. I mean that's what I was picking up earlier that, at least the way you're thinking about it, it means: stop on cigarettes, *and* stop on drinking.

Soccer Mike: Well, you know, it used to be a fear of withdrawal with drinking. Then I when I quit I found out...

William Miller: It's no big deal...

Soccer Mike: It's not. That's another thing; don't tell anyone about DTs because, quite frankly, that doesn't happen all that often.

William Miller: It's pretty rare.

Soccer Mike: I mean what do you get? You get maybe higher energy level and that's it. You feel better, okay? You know, you feel better. Everybody's like "oh, you're gonna get DTs, oh you're gonna go through withdrawals, oh your gonna have to have doctor supervision. Why tell someone that? You're just gonna scare the ___ out of them, excuse my French, but that's what you're doing.

William Miller: It's something that happens to some people, but not very many.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, yeah. But I'm worried about the smoking because I remember last time I got just violent, I mean, I was bad to be around for five days. I mean really bad. I was just blowing up on everything. *Every little thing*. Every thing was just ticking me off. And after five days I was pretty cool, and after two weeks I was real cool. Yeah, but I'm thinking my god, "what if a client calls me up?"

William Miller: Uh-huh. Like five days in a mountain hut somewhere (laughs).

Soccer Mike: I was thinking of that (laughing); a kayak trip. Just throw me out on a kayak trip; no cigarettes, no booze. That's it (still laughing).

William Miller: Yeah... Grand Canyon; or something like that.

Soccer Mike: Yeah see, that would be very good.

William Miller: It would.

Soccer Mike: I mean...that's what I was thinking of doing...

William Miller: Something physical.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, do something like that.

William Miller: You get in the river, you're committed.

Soccer Mike: Backpacking...one hundred miles from nowhere, you know? And maybe I could reward myself with a cigarette by the time I get there. By the *time* I get there it will be ten days and I won't want one.

William Miller: Right. Well, and the trip itself sounds like it would be a reward.

Soccer Mike: Oh, yeah.

William Miller: Just doing it would be fun. It might be a way to get through those five days.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, you know... how should I say...I am teetering on the edge of where I've cut down, I've cut down, and I know how it feels to at least not drink that much. But now finding out it's not the drinking that's giving me a hangover; it's the cigarettes. And the drinking only compounds it, because when I drink I smoke like a son-of-a-_____. I think that I am cutting down on my drinking now, not because I am cutting down on my drinking, but because I don't want to smoke that many cigarettes. Which is weird, and you're *not supposed to be that way*. Not by the definition of drug addiction.

William Miller: Well, you're breaking all the rules.

Soccer Mike: I know!

William Miller: Laughs

Soccer Mike: I mean I wish they wouldn't tell me rules. I mean, if there not true; I don't wanna hear 'em. You know, I think a lot of this crap is self-fulfilling prophecy. You're given people false information, and there taking this false information to heart because these experts in the field, these so-called experts...and it's really funny how many definitions of alcoholism we have; all of them almost contradictory. And you get some poor slob that says "well, so and so says this, and they've been a leader in their field for the last twenty years. Therefore, since they say this, I have to be this way." Instead of defining themselves as individuals, they go in to this stupid pattern, or whatever type of behavior that is supposed to be attached to them. And they assume that behavior as theirs. And that's why I don't like...

William Miller: It won't work for you.

Soccer Mike: It doesn't work, and I don't think it ever will. Do you agree with me, or am I...

William Miller: Well, you know more about you than I do, obviously. I *believe* you.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, but I mean, how many people have you counseled in your lifetime? I mean you've had to see certain things work for certain people. And certain things work for other people. And it's not gonna be one size fits all.

William Miller: No it isn't, no. I've worked with people who have done really well, and I've worked with people who have said, "aw, it's not for me, it's not my cup of tea."

Soccer Mike: And I'm not trashing 'em. If it works for ya, fine.

William Miller: There you go.

Soccer Mike: And I've seen it help a lot of people. I know the type of person it's gonna work for. It's not gonna work for me.

William Miller: So tell me about this "teetering on the edge" business.

Soccer Mike: Don't know. I think it's fear of failure. I think on my part it's fear of failure. And it's also the fear of withdrawal, especially from nicotine; cause I know how I get. Cause I'm committed, and then I'm not. It's just this ambivalent feeling. And that's where I'm stuck. I'm stuck on that ambivalence. Which I guess is a good thing in a way. It's better than just being not committed at all.

William Miller: That's exactly right, it's a step forward.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, it's a step forward, but it's still...

William Miller: Becoming ambivalent is the first step toward change.

Soccer Mike: The ambivalence I want to get over, but I can't seem to just say, "okay, today is the day, this is it." So maybe...I don't know. See, I don't even know what to do, quite frankly.

William Miller: Well, you mentioned a couple things.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, see I'm thinking I can cut down slowly...if I quit the cigarettes the drinking is gonna go, it's gonna have to go. So then that's it, that's out. See that I know isn't that hard.

William Miller: Right. You've done that.

Soccer Mike: But the nicotine...whew...that's a scary thing for me man.

William Miller: And you've done that before also.

Soccer Mike: I was playing with two games a week. Now I would have to start running every day; an hour a day, five days a week. I'd have to gradually cut down. Then I'd have to set a date, and I would have to go on the patch. And I would have to stay away from anyone who wants to have a beer with me, cause if I have one beer...boom! I'm right back to smoking. No I'm telling you what happened with smoking...what was it? Four months? Whatever it was...blew out the knee. As soon as I started again I was back up to two packs *within a day*, man! *Within a day!* It wasn't like it's gradual, "oh, I'll just have one." It was just like, boom, and I was right back in there. And then I felt the lungs...I guess a fear of failure, I don't know. Maybe it's fear of...I don't know what it is. Maybe it's fear of failure, I don't know.

William Miller: How confident are you that you can do it?

Soccer Mike: That's the problem, I don't know.

William Miller: You're not sure?

Soccer Mike: I'm not too sure. I'm really not too sure.

William Miller: So it's not so much the wanting to do it, as "I don't know if I could if I really made the decision."

Soccer Mike: Right, right.

William Miller: Oh, okay

Soccer Mike: It's confidence probably.

William Miller: Well, that's what would help; something that you could really be confident in. Like, you know, the way you lit up when we talked about the Grand Canyon, or something. Like, "well, I could get through five days that way, I could do that."

Soccer Mike: I suppose if I spent maybe a year out there (laughs).

William Miller: I'm just using that example, you know?

Soccer Mike: Wait a second, if I made a lot of money; that would be a good excuse.

William Miller: How long would it be? Well, the first five days are the tough ones.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, the first five, yeah they're tough. But really what it is, is stop hanging around Chris because Chris will come over, you'll want a beer. I don't care if he has a beer, but if I have a beer, boom, I'm gonna light up. I'm gonna have to stay away from Bogden; it's another guy on my soccer team. It would have to be really staying away from a lot of people I know. You know, maybe I am just making excuses for myself. I don't know; I don't know. I would have to do that and then I would really, I would have to watch myself and not let myself talk to any clients for five days. Cause I know how I get

William Miller: Oh, that five day period.

Soccer Mike: I don't know. I don't know. I am still ambivalent.

William Miller: Well and that clearly is where you are, and you're right that is a normal place people pass through. You're saying "let's get through." It's an unpleasant place to be. You either want to go back to where...

Soccer Mike: Which is more comfortable, let's face it. Which is more comfortable; and I'll tell you that right now. It's a hell of a lot more comfortable saying "aw, I'm not gonna..." *it's more comfortable.*

William Miller: Either side is more comfortable.

Soccer Mike: Either side is more comfortable than the ambivalence; the ambivalence is the hell, that's the hell. Because, "well, I know I know I shouldn't, but I will, and I don't know if I should." Here's what it is: it's knowing that you're taking a known carcinogen, a known carcinogen and you're putting it in your lungs. You know that's upping your blood pressure, you know it's increasing your chance of lung cancer, you know it's really screwing up your... It's doing that, that's pissing me off. It's knowing your taking a poison, a *poison*, called alcohol. And know your second drink your judgment is going to go to hell...

William Miller: "Why am I *doing* this?"

Soccer Mike: ...and, "why am I doing this?" Let's just bang that head against that brick wall until it bleeds. And that's what pisses me off. I mean, if I was stupid, I could forgive myself. If I define myself as an addict, and I think a lot of people do, then they could forgive themselves for it. But...no.

William Miller: That doesn't work.

Soccer Mike: No. That out doesn't work. That's a cop out. I mean, that's a cop out. I wish I was stupid then I could just say I didn't know any better.

William Miller: And you could sit back here and be comfortable.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, right.

William Miller: Yeah, the place where you are is real uncomfortable, and moving either way from it is more comfortable.

Soccer Mike: Of course; moving up or back.

William Miller: Yeah, but staying in the ambiv...cause you're conscious of it; you're conscious of taking in the poison or the carcinogen, or whatever. Boy.

Soccer Mike: That is, "what are you doing this for", you know, "what are you doing this for?"

William Miller: And that's the teetering then; "which way am I going to move off this? Cause I don't want to stay here."

Soccer Mike: And not only that. You know the guys on the soccer team, there always killing me, "oh you're smoking out again, oh yeah, your stupid man." So I go a little peer pressure there.

William Miller: So they're no all into pulling into drinking and smoking then?

Soccer Mike: No, no, well, well it all depends. This is the Polish soccer team. Most of these guys are right off the boat, okay. And they do drink a lot.

William Miller: They just give you a hard time about smoking.

Soccer Mike: Right; and they don't smoke. And I say, "if you want me to quit smoking, I'm gonna have to quit drinking." "Oh, no you could..." "No I can't, it just doesn't work that way for me." And then having never done it they don't know. So if I do this I'm gonna have to stay away from them, at least long enough to establish some type of, you know...

William Miller: There you got it. People who make it through change usually do what you're saying, which is: for a while, avoid 'the valley the shadow of death', the difficult place. And then it gets more okay. You gotta not rush too quick back in there, but it gets to be okay. You don't have to stay away from...after a while. So it's not forever and ever. But for a while you're probably right. Or get 'em to... say "help me out guys." You know, I mean... If they won't do it, then you're right.

Soccer Mike: No, it's not like they're bad guys; they just don't know. I think if you don't smoke cigarettes, you don't know. You're not gonna know. And how could they possibly help me?

William Miller: Well, I only mean if they could get it in there heads that what you're saying is right, then...

Soccer Mike: Yeah, right.

William Miller: ...that if they want to help you stop smoking, then they've gotta also not encourage to drink.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, don't come over with a twelve pack, you know. Come on!

William Miller: So if you could ask them to do that to help you out that much, then...

Soccer Mike: They're guys, they're guys, you see. I'm single; if I was married I could blame it on my wife. In fact I am thinking of getting married (well I'm just kidding), but I'm thinking of a rental wife situation. See, you rent a wife and you tell all your guy friends, "well, I'm married, man. My wife will kill me if you guys come over." Then get them the hell out of your place. If they're a bachelor and trying to get rid of their wives, guess who they come over and hang around with? You. And guess what, that excuse doesn't work. Okay, some _____ lady with a skirt. Okay? Then you can clear 'em out of the place. Otherwise you can't clear 'em out, man. Then you have no excuse then to do what they want to do. That's the way guys are; at least the guys I know are that way.

William Miller: So you're right; so you'd have to stay away from them for a while.

Soccer Mike: Right. I hope I'm not babbling here.

William Miller: No, no!

Soccer Mike: I seem to be all over the place here.

William Miller: You seem to be giving me a good sense for who you are. I mean, I love to read a book to the end and I'd love to see which way you are going to go from this place.

Soccer Mike: I would like to know myself; I don't even know. And like I say, I am still at the ambivalent stage and it's getting to the point where I am going to have to make one...

William Miller: It's just too uncomfortable.

Soccer Mike: Well, yeah, but I mean what do you want to go back? Where's back gonna take ya?

William Miller: But if that 'can I do it' obstacle...

Soccer Mike: Well, it's a confidence problem.

William Miller: So *something* that would help you be more confident. To look at it and be able to say, "I could do that. I can see myself doing that."

Soccer Mike: Well, yeah, but what's that gonna be?

William Miller: I'm not sure.

Soccer Mike: It's gonna have to be internal if it's gonna work for me. It can't be anything external. I can't deal with cheerleaders. I can't deal with, "you can do it, you can do it." Hey, come on. I'm a little too old.

William Miller: That's certainly no way of pushing you.

Soccer Mike: I have to figure out a way to do it myself, or it's just not going to be able to get done. And that's what it's gonna take.

William Miller: That's the bottom line.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, I think for a person like me that is the bottom line. And it has to be important enough, but I think it is important enough now, or else I wouldn't even be thinking about this in the first place.

William Miller: That's how it sounds.

Soccer Mike: As far as I'm concerned, I don't care if I die tomorrow. It's not about my health. If I am not the fastest guy out there, I have an identity crisis, okay? It's my arrogance, okay? It's my conceit, my pride, okay? So I am using all of the negative stuff you're never supposed to have in AA to help me... (Laughing)

William Miller: That's what will get you through.

Soccer Mike: That's what gets me through (still laughing). Yeah, just sheer, if anything arrogance, really, and anything pride. That's all that it is. And it really has nothing to do with health, it really doesn't. I hate to admit it, but as far as longevity and life, I don't really care about it. Everyone dies. Everyone makes such a big God _____ deal about it. I am getting so God _____ tired of these people going, "oh, I eat this healthy food, and I do this, and I don't go out in the sun, and..." Yeah, yeah, your four hundred pounds and you don't work out...yeah don't give me this...you live forever, but live what?

William Miller: We're all gonna die anyhow.

Soccer Mike: We're all gonna die anyhow. What are you gonna do? Just never go out in the sun?

William Miller: But while you're here, you want to be the best.

Soccer Mike: Well, I mean, it would kind of be nice to wake up healthy and be able to do what you like to do.

William Miller: It is.

Soccer Mike: Well, yeah if you do what you like to do forever, hey, I would like to do that. But I know that's not gonna happen, and I accept that. And to me it's not so much a longevity issue as a quality of life issue. So that's the deal.

William Miller: The funny thing is it sounds like you have made up your mind.

Soccer Mike: Possibly.

William Miller: Maybe.

Soccer Mike: Yeah. I think I'm swaying.

William Miller: A little lean...

Soccer Mike: Swaying, swaying...

William Miller: "I don't know though, it's kind of nice back there."

Soccer Mike: Yeah, back there is more comfortable; at least it's *known*. It's known.

William Miller: It's predictable.

Soccer Mike: That's all it is; it's known.

William Miller: It *is* predictable.

Soccer Mike: That's *all it is*; it's known. Yeah, someone told me, it made a lot of sense, "bang your head against a brick wall; you start missing that brick wall when you quit banging your head against it." I think that's what everything is. Not just smoking, not just drinking, not just doing cocaine or anything else. I think bad relationships are like that. You know? I think bad jobs are like that. I think living in bad areas of town are like that. It's familiar; because it's familiar it's predictable. You're comfortable with it. It's not that terrible change that's a scary thing. And, you know, maybe that's what it is.

William Miller: Yeah, what if you stopped smoking, drinking, and still couldn't keep up with the young guys.

Soccer Mike: Oh, I don't think that's gonna be a problem, I already can. It's just that I'm getting older and this is not going to last forever. I put a lot in a bank account, I had a marathon scholarship, and I went to college, which I didn't take. Ran a 4:32 mile; always been fast. But I always had a bank account, and I always put a lot in that bank account, cardiovascular bank account. Well, I've been drawing off that bank account for a long time.

William Miller: Balance is getting low.

Soccer Mike: Balance is getting low, so I just have to kind of start filling it up again. And I think that's exactly what's going on. You can only start doing this stuff for so long before you're gonna start feeling the effects. I'm starting to feel the effects. Or maybe I always was but I was too stupid to realize it. I'm not too sure.

William Miller: You don't want to go into debt.

Soccer Mike: No, I don't want to go into debt.

William Miller: Makes sense to me. Well, I'd love to know how the story comes out.

Soccer Mike: Well, should we do a follow-up (laughing)? You know, if I do this it's not going to be for two to three weeks, you know? Everyone says, "oh, do it tomorrow." You know what? No, no!

William Miller: You're gonna set a date out there somewhere.

Soccer Mike: Well, yeah.

William Miller: Not tomorrow.

Soccer Mike: Not tomorrow, not tomorrow. Not today, not right now. I'm just not going to do that, you know. It's gonna be a... Here's what happens to me. When I start doing ____ that's contradictory to bad habits, bad habits start disappearing almost naturally. And I start getting on a roll.

William Miller: Beautiful.

Soccer Mike: And I start getting to the point where I want to continue this good habit...if I really think about it, "they're starting to go away"...so I want to kind of steam roll this turkey.

William Miller: Oh, yeah.

Soccer Mike: And as soon as I got that steam roll thing going and, you know, I got this thing on the run, it's "okay, baby. Now we're going to get ya. Now you're vulnerable. Now you're gonna die."

William Miller: That's the plan that works for you.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, yeah. Does that work for anyone else? Am I strange?

William Miller: No, no. People are real different in terms of the way they (undecipherable). It's kind of your personality and what grabs you? What's the thing that finally tips the seesaw for you?

Soccer Mike: I was told that doesn't work. I was told "oh, no, no. One size fits all. This is how we have to do it; this is the only way we do it." You know, that's what I was always told. It made no sense to me, and I really lost respect for anyone in the industry. Do you have any intuition? Do you ever listen to your clients? Have you ever thought that

there could be something called individuals out there? “Hey, bell-shaped curve guys, hey, you know what it is? Guess what; different IQ levels, different personality traits...

William Miller: People know something about themselves.

Soccer Mike: Yeah. (Laughs) But I never got that from a... course like I said it was state run and it was a little bit different.

William Miller: Well, I wish you well. And I’d like to know how the story comes out.

Soccer Mike: You want to follow-up with me?

William Miller: Well at least let your friend here know, and he can let me know.

Soccer Mike: Yeah, I’ll let John know. I’ll let John know, and we can just take it from there then.

William Miller: Good luck to you.

Soccer Mike: Thank a lot.

**This script is not a word for word account. Several words such as “uh huh” “okay” and “um” were left out in order to make the dialogue more clear and more understandable.