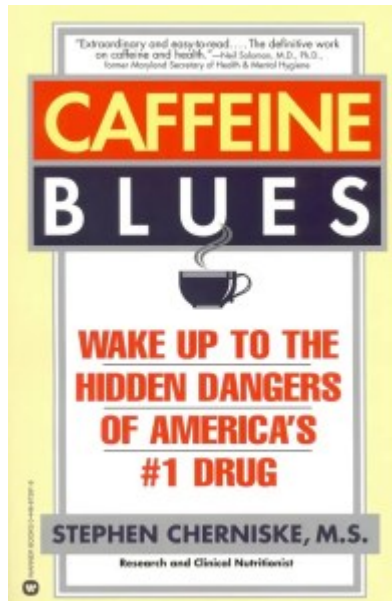


Caffeine Blues – the Health Benefits of Quitting Caffeinated Drinks



The downsides to your health of drinking coffee and caffeinated drinks.

Hitchhike Adventure to Aomori City and Kanto



On September 17th, 2016, I hitchhiked from the crossroads of Route 345 and Route 7 near Gatsugi Station in Murakami City in Niigata Prefecture all the way to Aomori City in a single car! This is a distance of about 400 kilometers or 250 miles. I am 66 years old at the time of this post.

The driver's name is Hiroshi who lives and works in France as a chef of French cuisine. He once was the chef of the Emperor and Empress of Japan and

actually met them! He bought me lunch and went way out of his way to take me exactly where I wanted to go, a 5 hour drive from his original destination. Unfortunately Hiroshi wouldn't let me take a photo of him.

Hiroshi needed to go to Yokote City to buy some exotic Japanese cuisine. Normally I would have refused to go with him to Yokote, but he promised me he would take me the rest of the way to Aomori afterwards and I believed him. Yokote is the longer route to Aomori.

The scenes are in Akita Prefecture. The red and white striped pole is to mark the edge of the road after heavy snowfalls, a frequent winter occurrence in this part of northern Japan.



Akita Prefecture, Ani



Two days later my destination is now Sayama city in Saitama Prefecture. Saitama is one of the prefectures in the Kanto Plain area of Japan. Aomori City is the northern city of Honshu, and Saitama is just north of Tokyo which means I needed to travel 600 kilometers or 400 miles that day in order to make it. I nearly didn't!

After waiting only 30 minutes, a couple going to Furukawa City in Miyagi picked me up. This was a good distance of 200 kilometers, a 1/3 of the distance I needed to go!



The couple who took-me over 200 kilometers-from Aomori City to Miyagi Prefecture

The second driver was on his way to Nagoya and would pass through Niigata. Normally I would have gone with him to Niigata which has been my home till date. But because today I'm going to Saitama, he took me to the Adatara Service Area in Fukushima Prefecture which is just before the Banetsu junction that goes to Niigata.



Masayuki who took me to Fukushima from Miyagi



The third car of my hitchhiking adventure from Aomori City to Sayama City in Saitama was a young couple I met at Adatara service area in Fukushima. They were on their way to Utsunomiya in Tochigi Prefecture and had also picked up

a university student who was also hitchhiking from Aomori City! He was on his way to Matsumoto in Nagano which is 3 times further than my destination in Saitama. The couple offered to take us both to the Sano Service Area in Tochigi.

By the time we arrived to Sano, it was dark and raining heavily to the low atmospheric pressure influence of the typhoon in Okinawa. Because it was a holiday, "Senior Citizens Day," the service area was crowded with vehicles and thronged with people. But from experience I knew that was not necessary a good thing. Too many people means the average Japanese thinks someone else will give the poor hitchhiker a ride!

I stood in front of the restrooms out of the rain and showed the paper sign of my destination to everyone. They all knew what I was doing but nearly everyone ignored me and avoided making eye contact. Often a person who makes eye contact is willing to help.

At the service area there were 3 other hitchhikers. One was the university student who came with me from Fukushima, and the other two were highschool students on their way to Hannyu city in Saitama. We were all in the same boat. Nobody was offering them rides either.

After about 45 minutes, a man approached me and gave me a can of hot coffee and a pet bottle of green tea! He couldn't help me but wanted to encourage me.

After an hour I decided to call it quits. I consigned myself to an uncomfortable night camping out in the service area rest facility. There were only hard chairs to lay down on.

I sat down at a crowded table in the midst of other travelers. After a few minutes a young lady sitting on my right started talking to me in English. She was interested in what I was doing but I could tell her male partner wasn't interested in helping me.

After she and her partner left a man sitting at my left started speaking to me in perfect English! He lived in Germany for 4 years and went to an international school in Frankfurt and all that time schooled in a total English environment. He was on his way with his family to an area in Saitama which is relatively close to my final destination! I told him I am facing an unpleasant night unless I can leave the service area and get to a train station and go by train where I needed to go, Sayama City. He talked to his family and they agreed to take me with them! And what a family! It was his parents, his wife and children, and his brother's and sister's spouses and children, at least 20 people in all! And because they all lived in Germany before, most of them speak English! They were traveling in the huge bus you see in the photo.



The bus that took me from Tochigi to Saitama.

In the beginning I spoke to them in English but later switched to Japanese as I shared my faith in the Creator God and true history from the Bible. They listened with interest and one of the men became my Facebook friend.

I am facing a crossroads in my life at this time. Rather than hitchhike several times a month to Aomori just to earn money, I am thinking and praying about moving there. Any financial help or encouragement you can send me is appreciated.

Overcoming caffeine addiction



✖ I read on a friend's blog that since she stopped drinking coffee, her energy level increased. I did a Google search with the words, "evils of coffee" and found: [Coffee: The Great Energy Sapper](#) By Frédéric Patenaude. I also found, Caffeine Blues: Ten Ways Caffeine Harms Your Health and How To Kick The Habit These two articles inspired me to stop drinking all caffeinated drinks cold turkey from Tuesday, April 23rd.

"The energy we get from caffeine is similar to the "energy" a horse gets when whipped. It is not energy gained but power spent responding to an injury."
Quote from <http://www.alivefoods.com/coffee.html>

In order to break a life long habit of drinking a cup of coffee the first thing after waking up in the morning, I used a method known as "behavior modification." I took the dog out on for a walk and enjoy some fresh air and scenes of God's beautiful creation (I live in the country). I hear behavior modification doesn't work in the long term for addictions that come from natural desires, but like drinking alcohol, the desire for caffeine is *not* natural. Both are addictive mood changing chemicals the body does better without.

I felt depressed and uninspired the first three days after putting an end to a daily caffeine intake which spanned decades, but from the fourth day, Friday, I felt much better and was inspired enough to write this post!

Yesterday during my bi-monthly Thursday evening English teaching class, a perfect opportunity presented itself to tell my students about the evils of caffeine: There wasn't any coffee on hand for the students as there usually is. In the two years I've been teaching this class, there has always been coffee available for the students and the teacher. I told the class that I quit drinking coffee and all drinks and substances that contain caffeine including black and green tea and even chocolate. "Why?" a lady asked. "Because," I replied, "caffeine is an addictive poisonous *drug* that does me no good whatsoever!" It's hard to describe their negative reaction to that statement. It was as if I told them **they were all drug addicts!** None of the 9 students present agreed with me about the benefits of stopping caffeine. But they thought it was interesting when I told them the "energy" we get from caffeine is the same energy as a horse feels when you *whip it!*

Did you know 80% of the world is addicted to caffeine? Did you know that coffee is the number one money making crop in the world? Did you know coffee companies have a vested interest in getting and keeping you addicted to caffeine? If you didn't know that, check out the book, [Caffeine Blues](#). I just ordered it myself from Amazon.

Somebody said, "*Change begins with knowledge.*" I certainly find that true in my life.

Caffeine consumption is dangerous for health

The following information is from the book, "Caffeine Blues" by Stephen Cherniske, M.S. and specifically from Chapter 5, "Specific Health Disorders: The Caffeine Connection" and chapter 6 "Caffeine and Women's Health"

Habitual caffeine intake is linked to:

- Cardiovascular disease (heart attacks, stroke)
- Gastrointestinal disease (Irritable Bowel Syndrome, ulcers, etc.)
- Migraine headache
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Anemia
- Premenstrual Syndrome
- Fibrocystic Breast Disease
- Breast cancer
- Birth defects
- Adrenal dysfunction disorders such as allergies, asthma, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and autoimmune disease
- Urinary and prostate problems
- Gout

"Compared to men, research shows that caffeine is much more damaging to women, producing adverse effects at lower intake." –
From Caffeine Blues Chapter 6 p. 225

Also see: http://www.naturalnews.com/012352_caffeine_coffee.html

May 7th update: It's been 2 weeks since I quit drinking coffee and all caffeine containing beverages. I feel better. I rejoice to face life without the caffeine drug. I feel I found a key to answers to my problems, something that has been eluding me for the past 3 decades!

Today I found a good resource that says the same things as [Caffeine Blues](#). It's concise and short:
http://www.hflsolutions.com/ne/free_articles/CaffeineProblems_Top10.pdf I printed it out to share with a Japanese friend, a 20 year old lady in medical school studying to be a doctor. I know she drinks coffee.

October 10 update: I'm still "off the bean" and feeling better than ever! The morning coffee habit is now a distant memory.

January 13, 2014 update: While hitchhiking back home standing at an expressway service area in Fukushima Prefecture, a driver offered me a can of strong black coffee, the kind I used to like to drink. It had been 9 months since I quit coffee. Because I was cold and the coffee was warm and because I thought to experiment to see what effect it would have on me, I drank it. Within a few minutes I felt that caffeine "high" I hadn't felt in a very long time, even when I was drinking coffee! But after about an hour when the high wore off, I was left with an uncomfortable and uneasily jittery type of feeling. Next time I'm offered coffee, I will not drink it.

[Picked up by two Nichiren ladies](#)



November 29, 2009: While hitchhiking to town I noticed a lady walking toward me from a distance with what appeared to be her car parked by the side of the road behind her. I correctly assumed she was going to offer me a ride. She had another lady friend with her who was the driver. They seemed a bit overly impressed to meet me which caused me to become suspicious.

I asked them, "Do you want to sell me something?"

"No!"

"Are you folks into some kind of religion?"

"No!"

They asked me if I had eaten lunch yet and invited me to a restaurant to talk. I accepted the invitation because I wasn't in any hurry and knew it would give me an opportunity to share my faith with them.

In the restaurant I offered to give them two Activated magazines. As soon as I pulled them out of my briefcase, they turned them down. The only kind of Japanese who refuses to accept literature from me are people into some type of religion, and sure enough, these two ladies turned out to be [Nichiren Buddhist](#) people, and their intent was to try to convert me!

Most Buddhists are very tolerant of other religions, and they have no problem toward Christians in general. The Nichiren sect is the **notifiable exception**. They will flatly tell you to forsake Jesus Christ and pray to their idol using their chant instead. Every time they chanted that horrible chant to me, I started to pray the "Our Father" prayer and told them that prayer works for me. To their credit, they did listen when I told them why Jesus died on the cross, and for what reason, to save all of mankind from sin.

Normally when a Japanese person invites me to a restaurant or coffee bar, they will pick up my tab. I fully expected this to happen but to my embarrassment I walked halfway out of the restaurant and was told I hadn't paid my bill yet! Next time I'll be more wary when a person seems overly interested in talking to me even though we just met. Either they want to convert you or sell you on some network marketing type of product. □