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HOW TO BREAK BAD HABITS

&

BEATING CRAVINGS

By

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In Practice since 1996.

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(This book was written for smokers; however the basic principles will work for almost all bad habits.)

Congratulations, You Have a Bad Habit!

Congratulations because you are in the minority: YOU accept that you have a bad habit, & you actually want to do something about it. The vast majority do not get this far, so well done.

A lot of people will deny that they have a problem & can become aggressive if confronted. They will most likely know that the habit is bad generally, but THEY are different; it's not a problem.

Like attracts like, so people tend to socialise with people with the same habits: cynics hang around cynics; obese people hang around other obese people, etc. This gives them a false sense of regularity. Although in most cases, people in this stage will be suffering some level of misery.

How many smokers do you hang out with?

Notice how many of them talk about quitting, but then come up with excuses:

- ❖ I enjoy it too much.
- ❖ I've got too much going on at the moment.
- ❖ We've all got to die one day.
- ❖ I still feel fit & healthy.
- ❖ I know someone who lived to be over 100 & they smoked 40 a day.
- ❖ I'll stop when they cost over £6 a pack.
- ❖ I don't have the will power.
- ❖ Blah, blah, blah!!

****Here's an important point: ALL EXCUSES are attempts to lay the blame for your own actions on something external.****

“A Journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step”

(Quote from the Tao Te Ching)

So the first step in “Breaking a Bad Habit” is to take responsibility for everything that you do, & I mean EVERYTHING.

No one & no event can make you “stressed out”, you can only allow yourself to become a certain emotional state, and it is entirely subjective.

As Ghandi said: “Nobody can hurt me without my permission.”

Second point: It took willpower to start smoking in the first place.

Smoking is not a normal natural behaviour & it took willpower to form your habit.

REMEMBER that first drag you took on a cigarette? Odds are that you turned green, felt sick & coughed your guts up. Your body didn't like it, & it let you know, but you still persisted didn't you? That's WILLPOWER!!



Feeling Powerless?

So you are aware of your bad habit & that's good. You're probably feeling powerless to do anything about it.

Maybe you've tried patches, cold turkey or N.R.T. & had a short term success, but at some point you had a minor lapse.

Due to this lapse you felt like a failure & what was initially just a minor setback became a total relapse.

It probably went something like this:

- ❖ You encountered some sort of pressure. (Stressful situation, peer pressure, etc.)
- ❖ You asked another smoker for a drag on their cigarette.
- ❖ They either obliged or more likely said "just have one."
- ❖ It felt good (although it may not have tasted nice.)
- ❖ You started "bumming" the odd cigarette.
- ❖ You started feeling guilty for not buying your own.
- ❖ You bought a pack of 10 & gave back some of what you owed.
- ❖ Oh no! There's still a few left, I may as well smoke them.
- ❖ "I'll just smoke the ones I enjoy most, like after a meal."
- ❖ A couple of weeks later you were back to full swing in your old habit?

Been there, seen it, and got the DVD set & entire wardrobe.

Not just the T-Shirt!

There is **NOTHING** you do (that is not a natural body process) on a regular basis more than smoke a cigarette.

Your mind learns through repetition.

YOU TAUGHT YOURSELF TO SMOKE.

It's not easy to unlearn something that you've done that regularly.

Imagine trying to unlearn how to ride a bike. It may seem impossible, but fortunately **YOU CAN LEARN A NEW PATTERN OF BEHAVIOUR.**

A New Habit

This can take time if you do it all by yourself, but it is achievable.

A new pattern or habit will take approximately 4 weeks to become a permanent habit.

It won't be easy after the first few days either. The unconscious does not like change. Change involves risk & uncertainty, so your mind will do its utmost to keep you safe in your old lifestyle.

Hold steadfast; ignore the inner voice that begs you to give in & eventually you will form that NEW habit/pattern.

REMEMBER: A lapse is not a relapse.



If you slip up, you can just CHALLENGE YOURSELF to do better.

However long you lasted before this lapse was a SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT.

You did it once, so YOU CAN DO IT AGAIN.

“I love it when a plan comes together!”

Remember the “A-Team”? Then you recognise the quote.

There was always some circumstance that ended up with them in a perilous situation. Did they panic?

No, they thought things through, came up with a plan, executed it & came out triumphant (even if no one ever actually got a bullet in them); every single time.

So the important lesson we can take from this example is:

COME UP WITH A PLAN.

****THIS REALLY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP. ****

When you **BREAK** your **BAD HABIT**, your life is going to be completely different. As a non-smoker you will have more money, a better sense of taste & smell, more energy & that’s just for starters.

So what you need to do is sit down & **WRITE** out a game plan:

- ❖ What are you going to do at the times you used to smoke?
- ❖ How’s your social circle going to change?
- ❖ What impact will the change have on friends/family?
- ❖ Are you going to implement an exercise plan?
- ❖ Are you going to start any new hobbies?
- ❖ What are you going to do with the **EXTRA MONEY**?
- ❖ When is the action plan going to commence?
- ❖ Is there anyone you can have as a progress/accountability buddy?
- ❖ How can you gain leverage on yourself?
- ❖ List **ALL** the benefits of breaking your bad habit.

Take your time in writing out your plan & put in as much detail as possible. I suggest you spend an hour a day reviewing & editing your plan over a 7 day period. Once you implement the plan you should review the list of benefits daily.

Leverage

If you are absolutely, positively determined to break your bad habit; how about getting leverage on yourself?



Try this: tell everyone you know that if they see you smoking (or exhibiting the bad habit) you will give them £100!

Sounds like a lot of money doesn't it?

**Well if you are serious you've got nothing to worry about have you?
Why not make it £1000!!**

Perhaps write out a cheque for a large sum of money, give it to someone you trust, & instruct them that if they hear of you breaking your plan they are to give the cheque to charity.

Action Stations

So you've taken your time planning your lifestyle change, so it's time to put it into action.

As mentioned earlier in this book, this is going to be the intense part. You will have good days & bad days.

Sorry to tell you this, but I won't sugar-coat this fact.

Positive & permanent behaviour change is not easy when you do it by yourself.

No matter what anyone may claim - there are NO MAGIC BULLETS.

There are NO MIRACLE PILLS, that don't come without risks.



Cheer up love, there is some Good News!

(Quote from the movie "Funny Man")

Even with all my experience, skills & qualifications, I cannot make anyone change. (Nor can anyone else; except maybe the C.I.A.!)

However I CAN HELP YOU to change if you want to have UNSHAKEABLE CONFIDENCE & SELF BELIEF in your life & in your abilities.

Later in this book I will give you some tips to BEAT CRAVINGS.

As you work on your plan you are going to have to really monitor your thoughts, & this can only be done in the present.

If you start worrying (future thinking) or experiencing feelings of guilt (past thinking), you are likely to slip up. So be mindful of what you are thinking.



The vast majority of EX-SMOKERS are stuck in this stage.

If you ask most of them; the honest ones will tell you that they are still tempted occasionally to have a cigarette.

The ones that deny this (THE LIARS) are quite often the biggest antismoking campaigners.

Is this because; if no one can smoke anywhere near them they won't feel tempted?

I'll leave that for you to decide!

If we could produce a healthy cigarette that tasted just like your normal cigarette, how many EX-SMOKERS would take up the habit again?

Substitution

Another thing you may notice with EX-SMOKERS is that they have only substituted one habit for another; they have not overcome the negative behaviour pattern.



Some start eating more & then blame their weight gain on a change in their metabolism since quitting smoking.

I find this interesting since I have NEVER had a client that I've helped to become a NON-SMOKER report any significant weight gain.

****IMPORTANT POINT: Most EX-SMOKERS never take the time to plan their lifestyle change, or at best only do so in their heads; they forget to put it in writing.****

When your inner voice says to you “Go on, one won't hurt”, you need to remind yourself that **IT ONLY TAKES ONE CIGARETTE TO GIVE YOU CANCER.** It could be your first, your thousandth or your millionth.

IS THIS ONE GOING TO BE THE COFFIN NAIL?

You've Arrived!

When you have no temptations whatsoever in any situation you have arrived. When there is absolutely no way you would give into social pressure, & you are comfortable with your new lifestyle (it's just who you are); you have cracked it.

At this point, YOU WILL HAVE BROKEN YOUR BAD HABIT.

This will only be achieved if you BELIEVE it is possible.

Some people BELIEVE that they are beyond hope, that it's too late, it's IMPOSSIBLE, etc.

If this is what you BELIEVE, then you are right.

However if you take a moment & look at that word again: IMPOSSIBLE.

Let's look at this word differently: IM POSSIBLE, or better still I'M POSSIBLE.

All YOUR BELIEFS are just information that you have absorbed from external sources & can cause you to engender a strong emotion.

It is said that "all experience is subjective", or as is said in N.L.P. "the map is not the territory".

Physicists since Einstein have been looking for an objective reality, but as yet have not found it. So, it is quite safe to say based on some of the branches of Physics, Psychology & even Theology that YOU CREATE YOUR OWN REALITY.

Therefore, if your belief about reality is pessimistic, lugubrious & iniquitous then you are very unlikely to beat your bad habit or have a fulfilling & enjoyable life.

On the other hand, if you are optimistic, & see a benevolent world full of limitless possibilities, then YOU CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING YOUR HEART DESIRES.

Framing

An event does not create a reaction-YOU DO!

**If it was the event, then why doesn't everyone suffer from road rage?
Why are some people able to queue for over an hour, whilst others become irritable after only a few minutes?**

Why do some people laugh when someone trips over, & others rush to their aid?

Why does one guy become devastated when his advance to a beautiful young woman is rejected & another just smiles & goes about his business not giving it a second thought?

There are deeper answers to these questions which I don't have time to go into in this book, but one part of the answer is how we frame a situation.

You can frame the situation to be about you personally, or you can frame it as "one of those things".

You can frame it as an arduous chore or as an exciting new experience.

THE CHOICE IS ALWAYS YOURS.



How to Overcome Cravings

This section is aimed specifically at smokers, but some of the methods can be adapted for other BAD HABITS.

- ❖ Avoid smoking temptation areas & ask friends who do smoke not to smoke in front of you.
- ❖ Drink plenty of water, which will flush toxins out of your system.
- ❖ Keep busy; if you distract your attention the cravings will disappear within about 5 minutes.
- ❖ Remove yourself from stressful situations, & take some deep diaphragmatic breaths of fresh air. (REMEMBER: nicotine is a stimulant, it does not calm you.)



- ❖ Chew sugar-free gum or suck sugar-free sweets.
- ❖ Drink about 50ml of vitamin C pure fruit juice.
- ❖ Take some exercise, or go for a walk, as this will lift your mood.
- ❖ Telephone a friend & enjoy a mood enhancing chat.
- ❖ Write a list of reasons for QUITTING SMOKING & review it regularly as a reminder.
- ❖ Rinse your mouth out with mouthwash; cigarettes apparently taste vile if you do this.
- ❖ Keep your hands busy. As part of your plan, you may have decided to take up a new hobby such as painting or needlework. If not, try doing crossword or Sudoku puzzles.

Reward Yourself

I recommend that you purchase a transparent money box & place it in a prominent position where you will see it often.



Every day that you do not exhibit your bad behaviour, put some money into your piggy bank. This can be anything from a few pence to the full amount you would have spent on cigarettes (or cake, alcohol, drugs, etc).

Every time you walk past the money box, spend a couple of seconds looking at the money contained inside & then say to yourself something like “I’m becoming healthier & wealthier, more & more, each & every day”.

At the end of your first week take some of the money & reward yourself. Depending how much you have saved, you could purchase a CD or DVD, or a new item of clothing.

It doesn’t really matter, provided that it is a treat JUST FOR YOU.

Then do the same thing at the end of 1 month, 3 months, 6 months & finally a year. At this point, you really should be over your OLD HABIT.



E.F.T. for Overcoming Cravings

E.F.T. (Emotional Freedom Techniques) is a fantastic tool to help you to overcome cravings, & not just for smoking.

E.F.T. was developed in the 1990s by Gary Craig.

I personally became trained in this Therapy in April 2009, & was blown away by how quickly & consistently it gets results. The great thing about E.F.T. is you do not have to believe in it, for it to work.

I have included one of the shortcut techniques for you to use when your cravings are becoming bothersome.

The following instructions will refer to points on the subsequent images.

To start with you need to gently tap with two fingers on the “Karate Chop (K.C.)” point (see picture 1) whilst repeating the following “affirmation”: “Even though I crave a cigarette, I deeply & completely accept myself” (or “other than that I’m fine” if you do not accept yourself). Repeat this three times.

****NOTE: The affirmation can be altered to fit your particular craving, i.e. “desire this chocolate, etc”. It works particularly well if you have the item you’re craving in front of you.****

Next tap on the following points about seven times whilst repeating the following “reminder phrase”: “Crave a cigarette” (substitute with any item you are craving).

- ❖ (See picture 2) Point 1: Under the Eye. You need to tap gently with one or two fingers on the bone of your eye socket. If you were looking straight ahead, this point would be in a line straight down from your pupil.

- ❖ **Point 2: Collarbone.** If you are new to E.F.T., I suggest you use three or four fingers when tapping on this point to be certain of finding it. If you follow your collarbone to the centre (where it dips down into the “V” bit). Now move back out about an inch to the side & tap in that area.
- ❖ **Point 3: Under Arm.** Once again if you are new to E.F.T. use a few fingers. For men; imagine a line running horizontal from your nipple to under your arm. For women; this point is along your bra strap (if you wear one) about 3 or 4 inches down from your armpit.

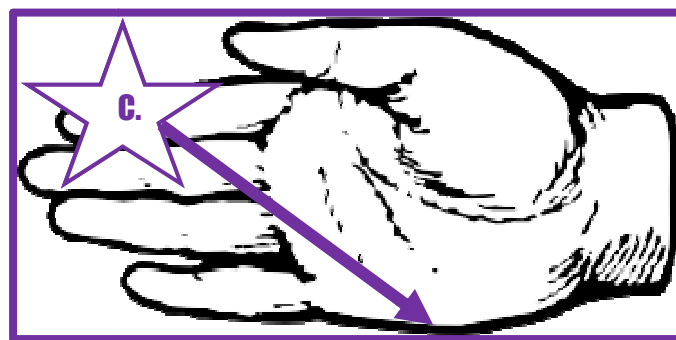
Tap on each of these points in turn a couple of times & then gauge how much your cravings have reduced by.

If you have some remaining cravings go through the entire sequence again, but change the “affirmation” & “reminder phrase” to something like “Even though I still crave a cigarette/ have some cravings left/ have a little craving, etc”.

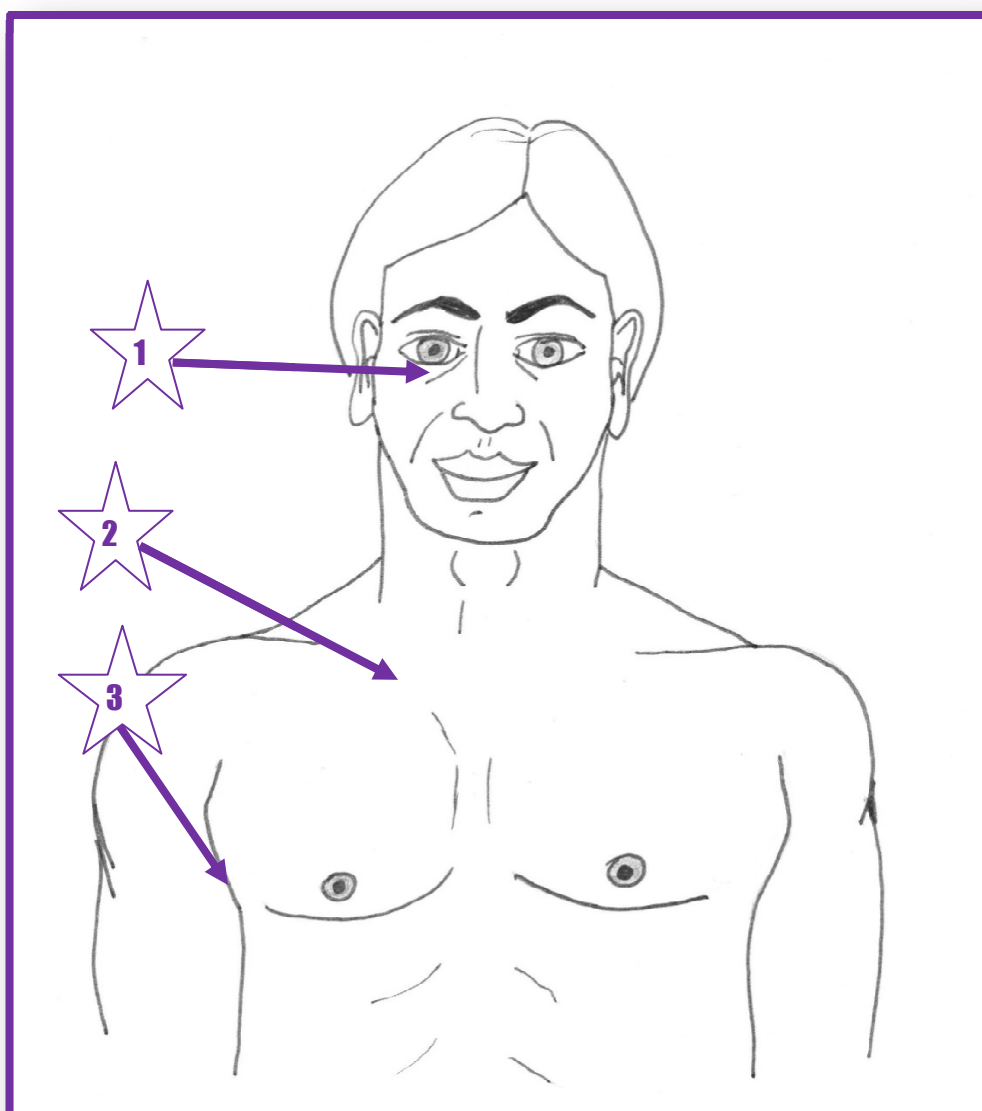
Within a few rounds of tapping your cravings will have completely disappeared.

TRY IT; YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE & EVERYTHING TO GAIN.

Picture 1



Picture 2



Still Need More Help?

As mentioned earlier; smoking is a habit, it is not an addiction. There may be addictive chemicals in a cigarette, but it is the habit that is the difficult bit to get over.

If you use the tips & techniques in this book, there is no reason why you shouldn't be able to beat almost any bad habit. However if you are still struggling, don't panic; help is available.

I have been in practice since 1996 & have continued to study many of the branches of psychology.

I attend many workshops & conferences each year.

I also glean many unique insights from the clients I help each week.

I have helped hundreds of people to overcome a wide variety of BAD HABITS, including smoking, comfort eating, temper tantrums, etc.

I keep up to date with the latest techniques, & I am constantly making positive additions to my Smoking Cessation programs.

What this means for YOU is that you are GUARANTEED to have THE BEST TREATMENT I can offer.

It is always PERSONALISED to YOUR specific circumstances.

I have a variety of packages available to suit almost any BUDGET.

After Treatment I offer ONGOING SUPPORT should you require it, I don't just leave you to face the change alone.

****2nd Edition Update****

As I no longer offer one to one treatment I will leave you with the following advice on finding a suitable Therapist:

- 1. Look for one who treats you like an individual, rather than the next patient.**
- 2. Look for Testimonials from Past Clients on their website.**
- 3. Make sure you can speak to the Therapist after treatment should you need to.**
- 4. Anyone can set up a "Guild" or "Association", so don't make a decision based solely on what "Body" someone belongs to.**
- 5. The best Therapist will be one that someone you know recommends to you.**

Good Luck in All Your Endeavours.