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Foreword

The work demanded in finding and challenging the reasons for our self-defeating behaviors and negative emotions can take time. Occasionally, this is a luxury we don't have. Still, what can we do when the habit springs up?

This book introduces a small selection of short-term strategies. I have to accentuate that they're best used together. If used just by themselves, some of these can lead to repression, and force rudimentary causes to express themselves in another way.

You'll as well find that not all of these are applicable to all behaviors. Dabble with them, and discover which works for you as an individual, and for your certain issue.

Immediate Gratification For Breaking Bad Habits

Banish Bad Behaviors

Chapter 1:

Using Breathing

Synopsis

We will discuss how simply being well aware – mindful – of what is happening inside you is the beginning step to catching your habits as they come up. The more you do this, the earlier you'll catch yourself in the cycle. And then: Breathe.

Stop, Recognize and Breath

Changing your breathing immediately changes your mental, physical and emotional state!

For instance sitting quietly and letting your breathing become more tranquil, slower and shallower can produce a calmer state within a couple of minutes.

So being able to change your breathing - to temporarily move from 'automatic' to 'manual' control puts you more in the drivers seat of your own emotions and the general rule is:

Deep breathing leans towards producing more excitement.

Shallow and slow breathing brings forth calmness.

Getting skilled at altering your state through changing your breathing boosts your self-confidence in your state-management power so that unwished moods become just that - unwelcome. Not fearful, or endangering, nor in some way suggestive of personal weakness or inadequacy.

Having the breathing skills to change such unwished-for moods puts you in charge of yourself.

By the way, while you are able to really quickly alter your state using breathing methods you as well need to change your thinking patterns to see to it that the change of state carries on. If you only change your breathing but go forward with the same old thoughts the unwished-for moods will quickly return.

Watch your breath, a lot of teachers say. And what was so automatic, so unconscious, becomes a means for us to center ourselves and recover control. It doesn't matter where in the habit cycle you are. Maybe you watched yourself reaching for the bottle of whiskey. Perhaps you've already drank your first glass. Perhaps you're already vomiting. It doesn't matter. Just take a couple of breaths – and be as aware as you are able to of them.

Experience them. What does the air feel like as it goes into your nostrils, your mouth? What does it feel like moving down your airways into your lungs? Experience it, be mindful of it – and you'll discover that your breathing gets naturally deeper. Just hesitate, and breathe for as long as you need. In doing so, you break up and weaken the mental-emotional patterns that underlie your behaviors, without the need to examine them.

By itself, this was adequate for me to arrest many unwanted behaviors. If I felt the habit energies come up, I'd simply hesitate, and breathe mindfully till the urge disappeared.

The Sigh Breath is a really easy breathing method for releasing tension in your chest, diaphragm and neck areas. It can be an excellent way of managing the symptoms of anxiousness or panic.

It's a moderate (instead of very deep) inhale through the nose accompanied by a fairly prolonged and slow exhale through the nose or mouth - as a prelude to letting your breathing become slower and shallower.

How to apply the Sigh Breath

1. Mentally think or state to yourself Stop!

2. Now inhale through nose slowly and equally. Hesitating for just a second, let the air out rather slowly through your nose. Remember that the inhale is a moderate, instead of very deep, in-breath. The outbreath is the key to the technique. Make certain to prolong it. Lengthen your exhale. (This helps hold carbon dioxide - your 'innate tranquilizer'.)

3. As you let the air escape release! Loosen your muscles - release as much tension as you are able to. Pay special attention to the muscles in your

➤ Face & jaw

➤ Shoulders

➤ Abdomen

4. Pay attention to the innate pause that occurs at the end of the exhale. No need to think of breathing in - this will occur naturally after a second or two. Merely savor this moment of stillness between breathing cycles.

5. When the in-breath starts direct your attention outside yourself to what is occurring in the outside world - 'See distinctly' and 'Hear distinctly'. Silently pay attention to what you are able to see and hear. Without listing or naming them.

While the method involves 5 steps the whole cycle of inbreath - brief pause - outbreath takes only a couple of seconds.

The Sigh Breath is a way of disrupting the buildup of physical stress and tension instead of a breathing technique to do again and again. Initially one or two Sigh Breaths every 30 minutes or so may be suitable. Then aim to cut down the need to do it except for really tense periods.

Chapter 2:

What's The Payoff

Synopsis

The next strategy to try would be to ask yourself: What would I have after I changes a particular behavior? Take a couple of moments and analyze the habit you're working on.

What Are You Getting

Occasionally, the answer would be something external – a relaxed body; respect from my peers; a more euphoric household. Then ask yourself the same question once again. What would I have when I have that? It may take several rounds of inquiring, but you'll find that you're ultimately seeking a feeling.

And isn't that beneficial news? Some things we can't acquire – but a feeling, we forever can. It may take some practice, but merely give yourself the feeling you're searching for.

If you're having troubles with this, try to recall the last time you indulged, and how you felt later on. Try to hold that feeling, that memory in mind, and attempt to relive the feeling without indulging in the conduct.

Visualization puts your intention of what you wish to work. The more specific the purpose, the more specific the final result. Remember whatever you believe is what your body will do. So when you're thinking about your intention make certain it is:

- Well-defined
- Particular
- Accomplishable
- You feel, know and trust it's being achieved

Trying to accomplish visualization without taking responsibility will prove to be vain experience. To achieve what you want you must take action and responsibility. Visualization commonly takes about six

weeks to work. It's done once in the morning and prior to bedtime. A few individuals do see or feel results the very first time but remember everyone's body and mind are unlike and so is the way they treat information so have patience. Responsibility is:

- Be accountable to and for yourself
- Make a commitment
- Do visualization on a regular basis
- Be relentless and patient
- Keep confident

A relaxed state permits you direct access to your subconscious. Here are a few steps to help you decompress:

- Discover a quiet place. Relax in a preferred chair or lie down.
- Become comfortable and undo clothing
- Uncross your arms and legs
- Get centered by focusing on the breath and breathing (this sparks the vagus nerve which is the major quieting nerve in the body)
- Completely relax your body and mind

Visualization for healing is a easy process. Once you're relaxed the next step is to actualize your visualization.

- Have in mind or speak your intention aloud.
- Close your eyes and conceive of yourself in the healing process or as you want to be.
- Watch as your body cures you
- Feel the healing happening

- Know the healing is being achieved

If you have trouble you may prefer to try one or more of these techniques:

- Apply creative imagery like seeing the cells in your body mending you; your immune system driving back invaders; your pain being removed by healing mud
- Conceive of yourself in a very beautiful place whole, fit and happy
- Try out reading scripts from a visualization or self-hypnosis book
- Try out making your own tape in your own voice

Visualization does work to help boost your body back to health. Don't just work on the body; add the mind to maximize your healing process with visualization.

This example will work for whatever your goal... not just healing the body.

Chapter 3:

Consider A Different Behavior

Synopsis

This is a variation of the former strategy. Is there a healthier option? If you drink to de-stress after a long day of work, and want to get sober, what other actions could you try? Build a list, and see which ones appear best. For instance, it's often advised for smokers to try chewing gum as an alternative.

Do Something Different

This strategy sounds like common sense, and is standard advice for those stopping a bad behavior, but when you consider that what you want is internal; your list of options becomes a lot greater.

For a somewhat extreme example of this, a man may have a habit of yelling and punching walls in the fallacy that it gained him the respect of other people (maybe mistaking fear for respect). May he be better served by acquiring some assertiveness skills? Wouldn't that be a far sounder way of reaching for what he desired?

An intriguing alternative behavior is to journal – what were you feeling at the time? What are the rewards and disadvantages of your behavior?

When you journal, you're no longer identifying with your habit. No longer does it command you, no longer is it you. Now you're viewing it like a scientist would, cold-eyed and distinct, and that removes the power it has. It will as well help in breaking down and finding the fundamental causes.

There are a few introductory skills when learning how to journal, some of them are:

- Make the time and space to do it on a steady basis. Whether you're keeping a dream journal, a garden journal, a baby journal, travel journal or a personal journal of any sort, this one step will make or break your experience. If you have to go so far as to create a 'date' with yourself - do it. At the very least, spend some time once a week to look through your calendar or diary

and put down the highlights or low lights of your week. Even after a lot of years, I'm an unpredictable writer in my journal, but when I do write and communicate with my wonderful companion, the value I get from this is huge. It's always well worth the effort.

- Start with something you're passionate about. This makes it so much easier to write on a regular basis, the words and ideas can appear to flow without effort and you'll enjoy reading back through the pages of your journal entries. I have more than one journal as I like to keep my gardening knowledge (successes and failures) apart from my personal and spiritual growth conversations. I'm sure you'll formulate a process and style that works for you.

- Apply materials that inspire and motivate you: My journals are forever beautiful to look at and to use. I have a taste for a certain type of pen, a particular color and a particular texture to the paper, This adds greatly to my enjoyment of the writing method and when reviewing I can remember what it was about that certain book or pen that attracted me. Layers of enjoyment will form a strong relationship to your journaling process. Discover what you like, try out different things till you find the right combination of factors for you.

- Learn from other people: So many times at the start of my journaling adventure I yearned to peek inside the pages of others journals. What did they do? How did they do it? I was fortunate that a few of my friends were willing to share some of their pages with me and I was introduced to the thought of

drawing and painting and collage and colour and scribbles in addition to the words which I was writing. This right away reminded me of the newspaper clippings, pressed flowers and pictures I have always discovered inside the pages of old books and this thought of adding such visual texture to my journal was so alluring I started immediately.

There are a lot of reasons to keep a journal. There are a lot of ways to keep a journal. If you truly are concerned that you don't know how to journal, there are a lot of sources of inspiration and motivation if only you'll open your eyes and your heart to them. Use these resources if you feel stuck or missing inspiration and I'm sure it won't be very long before you're savoring keeping a journal of your days, alternate behaviors and successes and triumphs.

Chapter 4:

Bad Behaviors Only Satisfy Temporarily

Synopsis

Following, remind yourself that many of your behaviors are induced by underlying desires and attachments.

Where Do These Behaviors Come From?

The behaviors don't satisfy these painful cravings for long – they're merely a temporary cover-up. Soon after you indulge, they'll come out again.

So seize that – hold it in mind, as much as you are able to. Remember the last time you indulged, and how long the gratification lasted before the craving came up again. Remember how you felt when you recognized the painful craving was still there, that it never went away.

As well, is there a price you're paying? Did you alienate your loved ones, is your body aching, did you spend a bit much money? All the temporary pleasure you acquired is a memory, but the price you're paying is right now. And right now is all we could ever have. Memories are delicate, prone to vanishing, and – to be honest – are not worth much if we look at it. What price are you willing to pay for a memory?

I recall when I was downhearted. Occasionally I'd go out and spend all the money I had on alcohol and cigarettes. I would be driving home a couple of hours after, lungs aching, head banging, totally broke – and suddenly I'd recognize the pleasure I thought I had was simply a memory. And to make it tougher, I knew the next morning, all the same old anger and sorrow would still be there.

Even worse were the behaviors which are not gratifying at all. I have a strong disposition to hold a grudge. Periodically the urge to contact the individuals I resent for another argument arise. Occasionally I give in. Do I feel good later on? No. Not only do I not feel a “release”, I frequently feel guilty and even worse later on. Comprehending is the

first step to change. Armed with this knowledge, you may begin to see where your own attachments are. Please try the following:

Analyze everything you indulge in – positive or negative. What does your mate mean to you? What do all the significant individuals in your life represent? Who are you averse to, or attached to? What are you averse to, or attached to?

What do all your cravings, and delights, mean to you? What do you spend much your time doing? Maybe you're addicted to chocolate, sexuality, or even the Net. What do you fantasize about a great deal – happy or unhappy? What demands most of your mental space? Do you spend a lot of time on your appearance, your vocation, or your auto? Add awareness to all these, write them down for yourself.

What are the behaviors that you'd like to alter? Do you say yes when you think no? Do you smile to acquire approval? Are you addicted to anything? Do you holler and rage? Do you spend a bit much time watching TV, or feeling bad for yourself?

You'll find that these questions start to lead into the mundane – following celebrity gossip, watching TV, or taking pride in your appearance, for example. There's nothing wrong with any of that – However for some, the thrusts behind these behaviors reveal something much more painful.

Discontent with your own life, for example, can lead to an compulsion with a glamorous Hollywood life-style, living vicariously through the deeds of the stars. Viewing how a celebrity has ruined his or her life can provide a temporary relief for how much we detest our own. Obsession with appearance can come from a low self-regard, thinking

that our looks are the only things we can offer the world. It may come from an attachment to being regarded handsome. And on the list goes. Be acute with your inquiry – the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it.

This is a crucial first step in altering your behaviors and comprehending the root of our suffering.

Chapter 5:

Examine Feelings

Synopsis

Emotions and thought processes are interconnected. All the same, when it comes to evolving consciousness and creating a fresh reality, which comes first -- thoughts or feelings?

True Feelings?

Leaders of the self-improvement industry have helped 1000s of individuals develop their potential and personally grow by centering on the power of changing their thought patterns to reflect what they want.

If there's an internal conflict between how you feel and what you affirm though, the energy that you subconsciously transmit will reflect that dichotomy and block you from advancing.

You must at first validate your emotions. Whether you consider your emotions to be "negative" or "positive," feelings are feelings, which are the keys to acknowledging your deeper needs and wants.

Thinking your way into abundance or love or health may not synch with how you're feeling inside. Once you've distinguished how you feel, for instance sad, happy or stressed out, you are able to then progress from a less questionable state.

Distinguish how you feel, comprehend where the emotions originate, and develop awareness to release the emotional burdens that are not yours to carry.

When you've emotionally validated your inner self, you are able to process life events in a more honest way.

Inner child work is important to examine internal motives and reflexive emotional reactions.

Self-awareness and greater self-care emerge through relationship, and occasionally individuals need help from other people to know how to distinguish their feelings and nurture themselves.

The power to nurture your childlike self, explore your inner nature, and transform what no longer serves a purpose into what you now want is a process that can help you evidence an authentic reality with a foundation based on passion, joy, and self-love.

When affirming to the universe and creating an intention, try digging into your feeling reality first of all.

If you're not in a good emotional space to carry the intention, direct those feelings to conscious awareness, learn to relinquish the carried shame that isn't reflective of your true present self, and then tap into a regenerated self-acceptance to lay the framework for a more desirable life.

What are you feeling?

This is a odd one. I'm not sure if it will work for you, but attempt it. The next time you're thirsty, rather than going to get a drink, hesitate. Examine intimately the sensations you're feeling. Can you be perfectly sure that its thirst you're feeling?

Is it possible it's just a sensation? You automatically label the sensation as thirst, and with that labeling comes the impulse to drink some water. But what if it isn't? What if it's just a sensation and you don't have to do anything with it? Let the sensations be, and before long they'll disappear.

Then carry this inquiry across to the habit pushes around your certain behavior.

Chapter 6:

More Strategies For Acquiring New Behaviors

Synopsis

Complex behaviors are developed out of multiple simple behaviors that get threaded together into chains of connected behaviors. It isn't possible to learn a complex behavior all of a sudden. Rather, they must be developed over time out of smaller parts.

More Techniques

A baby doesn't learn to walk in one day, but rather, spends time first learning to flex muscles, later to crawl, then at last to walk. Scrutiny of a baby's procedure of learning to walk discloses an ongoing process of sequential ideas. As time and learning go on, the target behavior is increasingly closely estimated, until it's achieved.

When learning is fresh, it's often hard. A baby must consider the process of standing, for instance. It takes concentration to accomplish. There are errors and stumbles. A lot of falling happens. Repeating is key to the baby's ultimate success. The procedure of practicing time and again makes the fresh behavior more familiar and finally something that can be just performed without thinking or effort. Repeated practice trains the child's brain to be able to execute the behavior unconsciously. Once the ability to stand has been controlled, the child is free to go after the more ambitious and complex task of walking, which requires a fresh level of effort and new challenges to practice and control until it too becomes just another unconscious, casual behavior.

- **Practice Makes Perfect.** A strategy can be commented at this point, which is that practice makes perfect. Any new behavior you try to learn (or unlearn) will at first be hard to achieve. Your body and mind are not used to executing things in the new way and will need repeated practice of these new means of doing things before they become second nature. With practice, what is initially effortful becomes effortless.

- **Shaping.** Another precept can be broken out now also. New behaviors you prefer to learn are likely complex in nature, calling for effort and practice to achieve. It isn't possible to learn complex behaviors all of a sudden. Rather, you must use the principles of successive estimation and over learning in order to step by step master your goal.

Let's say that you would like to learn to golf. Successful golfing calls for mastery of the golf swing, a composite and somewhat unnatural-feeling motion involving the total body. Without command of the swing, it's hard to even hit the ball precisely initially, much less gain the distance you require to play at or under par . In this scenario, practice, and feedback and advice from knowledgeable golfers are the ingredients essential to gain ability. Rehearsing your swing is necessary to make it become less of a consciously driven action, but practice alone won't insure that you learn suitable technique. You need knowledgeable people to watch you practice your swing, review it, and then give you feedback on what you're doing incorrectly. With each bit of feedback, you have the chance to make a correction to your swing; a successive estimation or shaping of what your swing will finally become. You must be open to the feedback and do your best to profit from it, or your swing won't benefit.

- **Chaining.** Shaping is the process of choice when you're attempting to learn a single isolated behavior. A complementary strategy, chaining, is useful for spots when you're interested in learning a complex sequence of behaviors. Chaining and shaping approaches might be used concurrently when you're faced with learning a complex behavior that can be broken into a series of littler sub-behaviors.

Take the golf swing once again. A golf swing can be seen as a single composite behavior, or, instead, as a series of littler behaviors that are performed in succession. Seen in this latter way, a golf swing begins with a particular way of standing. This initial behavior gets followed by a certain way of holding the club, which is accompanied by a particular way of eyeing the ball, then elevating the club in preparation for the swing, and so forth. An knowledgeable trainer might try to teach the golf swing by teaching each of its components in order. As each component is mastered, the trainer builds out the chain of events that becomes the golf swing by having the pupil add new elements to the end of known behaviors. When all the factors are known and can be carried out seamlessly, the trainer may switch to a shaping mode of training, where the pupil receives critical feedback concerning his raw swing which he can use to make additional successive estimations of the perfect swing.

Chapter 7:

Self Monitoring For Unlearning Behaviors

Synopsis

Self-Monitoring involves learning to pay deliberate and systematic attention to your trouble behaviors and habits, and to the inputs that trigger them into action.

Check Yourself

There are 2 types of self-monitoring we can describe: qualitative monitoring, and quantitative monitoring. Qualitative monitoring calls for paying attention to the quality of matters that are going on (how they make you feel, what they look like, and so forth.). Quantitative monitoring, on the other hand, calls for calculating things.

Though both kinds of monitoring are significant, self-monitoring works best when you set about it in a primarily measured way: deciding what behaviors and habits you'll monitor, working out a reasonable way to calculate or measure the occurrence of each behavior or habit, then actually calculating the occurrence of each and every behavior using your measuring system. When self-monitoring is set about in this formal quantitative manner, you gain, occasionally for the first time ever, precise measurements of how you're really behaving, and how typically various triggering inputs occur that set your bad habits or behaviors in motion. You might have previously had a faint idea of the extent of your problem, but now you have an precise measurement which you are able to use as a baseline against which to measure advancement. You can, naturally, self-monitor in a less quantitative way, but doing so neglects to give you a much more exact picture of your trouble than you previously had, and so is commonly not worth the effort.

You need to have a system in place to self-monitor advantageously. Your system should distinguish what you'll monitor (behaviors, triggers), how often you'll monitor, and how you'll record your observations. Let's say that you would like to monitor your smoking habit. The obvious measurement that has meaning for your smoking habit is how many butts you smoke in a given day, so you may decide

to record every time you smoke a cigarette. You may also prefer to record triggering events that lead to your smoking. Recording this information doesn't have to be complicated. You can merely write down an entry in a little notebook you carry with you every time you fire up. As you put down the cigarette lighting event, you may also jot down your sense of what led you to fire up at that moment.

Altho recording an event every time it happens is best from an accuracy viewpoint, it isn't always practical to do so. You can instead decide to count events on a regular basis after some amount of time has past (every 3 hours, say), or in the evening when you arrive home from work. You can set an alarm to prompt you to make your recordings.

Occasionally the behaviors you prefer to count occur too quickly to make recording in real time pragmatic, and too typically to make retrospective recording precise. Say, for example, you were interested in counting the number of times you said "er" during a speech you were making. It would be hard to give the speech if you were stopping every minute to make a record, and too hard to keep a good count for retrospective recording also. In this kind of case, make a recording of your speech, then listen to it afterwards, recording the "er" as you listen.

Its simple to count events, but occasionally you want to acquire more data than just that an event happened. You may want to record how intensely you were feeling the need to have a cigarette before firing up, also as the fact that you did fire up, for instance. When this is the case, you need to choose a scale for measuring the vividness of your smoking urge before you begin monitoring, then use that scale systematically throughout the recording period.

The concluding part of a self-monitoring effort involves making sense out of your information. It's difficult to make sense out of a list of rows in your logbook. Patterns in your observations will be much easier to discern if you represent them in the form of a chart. One sort of useful chart for representing easy data counts is called a Histogram.

To make a histogram, simply add up the number of times you smoked on daily, then draw a bar that many units off the horizontal axis of your graph over a column representing every day.

Once you have collected the data you can see when, where and how the bad behaviors occur and put change into place.

Chapter 8:

Get Some Willpower And Self Discipline

Synopsis

The truth is that everybody can reach high levels of will power and self-control through a practical method of training. These inner power are not reserved for a couple of special individuals.

Help Yourself Be Stronger

Most individuals admire and respect strong individuals, who have won great success by manifesting will power and self-control. They admire individuals, who with sheer will power, self-control and ambition, have improved their life, learned new skills, defeated difficulties and hardships, trimmed their weight, rose high in their chosen field or advanced on the spiritual path.

Will power and self-control are two of the most of import and useful inner powers in everybody's life, and have always been considered as crucial tools for success in all areas of life. They can be learned and formulated like any other skill, yet, despite this, only few take any steps to develop and strengthen them in a orderly way.

What is will power?

It's the inner strength to make a decision, take action, and address and execute any aim or task until it's achieved, regardless of inner and outer resistance, discomfort or troubles.

It adds the ability to overcome laziness, temptations and negative habits, and to accomplish actions, even if they require effort, are obnoxious and tedious or are different than one's habits.

What is self-control?

It's the rejection of instant gratification in favor of something better. It's the giving up of split second pleasure and satisfaction for a higher and finer goal.

It evidences as the ability to stick to actions, thoughts and behavior, which lead to betterment and success. Self-discipline is self-

discipline, and it manifests in spiritual, mental, emotional and physical discipline.

The purpose of self-discipline isn't living a limiting or a restrictive lifestyle. It doesn't mean being narrow minded or living like a fakir. It's among the pillars of success and power. It adds the inner strength to focus all your energy on your goal, and persevere until it's achieved.

Both of these abilities are demanded for daily actions and decisions, and as well for making major decisions and attaining major success. They're required for doing a beneficial job, for studying, building a business, slimming down, bodybuilding and physical exertion, maintaining beneficial relationships, changing habits, self improvement, meditation, spiritual growth, keeping and following through with promises and for virtually everything else.

Among the most simple and effective methods to formulate will power and self-control is by refusing to satisfy insignificant and unneeded desires. Everybody is constantly faced and tempted by an endless stream of desires and enticements, many of which are not truly crucial or suitable. By learning to refuse to satisfy every one of them, you get stronger.

Declining and rejecting worthless, harmful or unneeded desires and actions, and by choice acting different than your habits, sharpen and strengthen your inner strength. By unceasing practice your inner power grows, just like exercising your muscles at a gym step-ups your physical strength. In both cases, when you need inner might or physical strength, they're available at your disposal.

- Here are a few exercises:
- Don't read the paper for a day or 2.
- Drink water when thirsty, despite your desire to have a soda.
- Walk up and down the stairs, rather than taking the elevator.
- Leave the bus one station before or after your destination, and walk the rest of the way.
- For one week, turn in one hour earlier than usual.
- If you like ice cream, don't have any, for a day or 2.

These are only a couple of illustrations to show how you can formulate your will power and self-control. You might think that practicing such exercises is being tough on yourself, maybe a bit, but they add so much to the storehouse of your inner strength. By following an orderly method of training you are able to reach far, have more control over yourself and your life, accomplish your goals, and better your life, and gain gratification and peace.

Show and prove to yourself that you're strong and in control, and practice the above exercises for a little while, before passing any assessment on them.

Chapter 9:

Banish The Bad With The Good

Synopsis

This is difficult on 2 parts. First is training your mental muscles. Your mind has been running around without your dominance for most of your life, and you're going to need a lot of mental force to hold it down. How do you build up this muscle then? Meditation.

Deal With It

Beat out the bad

Next comes beating out the bad. Here are a couple of techniques from cognitive psychology:

1. The Howitzer Mantra. Basically, every time you catch any thoughts you don't want, disturb it with a prepared mantra. The howitzer portion of the name means that your mantra has to be forceful.

Discover a mantra that feels right for you. Here are a couple of suggestions – “Stop!”, “Enough!”, “Silence!”, or “Shut the F*** UP!”

Many texts say there's nothing wrong with cursing, although I believe being violent towards your thoughts is just being violent against yourself. But, the truth is different for everybody, and I urge you to find your own style. If swearing works, then swear all you want.

2. The elastic band. Wear one around your wrist, and every time you catch yourself with a thought you don't desire, snap it. It stings a bit, and you're conditioning yourself with (mild) punishment to quit thinking negatively.

Satisfying the gap

Now that you've ended the thoughts, there's a gap in your thinking. If you're not careful, the negative thoughts will come rushing back in to the gap.

So what can you cause?

1. Blowing up the gap. A good thing to do is to merely center on the gap, the brief space after the thoughts have subsided. Given time, this gap will increase and you'll slowly free yourself from driven thought.

2. Positive affirmations. I'm not a fan of most types of affirmation out there, but if it works for you give it a shot. Please make certain it isn't repression or denial, and make certain you're not lying to yourself. Affirm something that you know is true.

For instance, let's say you think you're a bad father, and you condemn yourself continually for it. Maybe your proof is that your two children fight and quarrel daily. If you center on this proof and yet affirm "I'm the best father in the world", a part of you feels like you're lying to yourself and that in reality makes things worse.

What to do then? Find grounds to the contrary – something that you do correct as a father. Maybe you take your youngsters out to the movies whenever you are able to, and listen whenever they're upset. Affirm the truth then – "I'm doing my best as a father, and can only get better." Note that this is way more truthful than the first affirmation. Refer to your adverse evidence as proof so you don't feel like you're lying to yourself.

3. Anything pleasant. Another choice is to merely fill that gap with pleasantries, but this time it doesn't have to be anything to do with your state of affairs. A nice island retreat, perhaps.

4. Senses. Lastly, you are able to merely focus your attention on something else. In Buddhism, this is plainly called arriving where you are. What do I mean? Be wholly where you are.

Experience the wind on your face. Experience the clothes as they weigh on your skin. Experience the chair on your butt as you sit on it. Pop a breath mint in your mouth and taste the taste totally. Pretend you've never had a mint earlier that you've never been in the wind earlier that you've never sat on a chair earlier.

Be warned, however, that this technique is slow and can drive you nuts. Many estimates place the number of sentiments we have per day at 40 to 60 thousand, and most of these are repetitive and negative. In certain conditions the percentage can be even higher. Depressed individuals, for instance, often engage in rumination – which refers to the ceaseless and compulsive reflecting of painful thoughts and memories.

Chapter 10:

Affirmations To Change Behavior

Synopsis

Can automatic sub conscious behavior be altered by practicing affirmations for new behavior, even if the sub conscious behavior is fear based & seemingly automatic without conscious control?

Positive Affirmations

You may be able to alter some of your subconscious behavior through affirmations, depending on how engrained the behavior is, but by itself, affirmations won't be the most effective solution.

Unwanted behavior that's driven by the subconscious is typically rooted in our shadow self and is based upon old hurts and emotional wounds. To thoroughly change those behaviors, it's necessary to heal those traumas by bringing awareness to those subconscious levels directly. Affirmations engage the conscious mind, and therefore don't reach and heal those deeper levels. There might be some trickle-down effect, but it is not the most effective way to heal.

When affirmations are used in conjunction with meditation or other healing techniques that do reach those deep levels of conditioning, then it can be a useful assistant to help reset behavior to a more adaptive pattern once the maladaptive one has been discharged.

The idea behind these techniques is pretty simple. Most of grow up learning to put ourselves down for any real or imagined error. We grow up believing certain things about ourselves or comparing ourselves negatively to others. The exercise of positive affirmations is a strategy to change that negative self-talk into something more positive.

Since we've spent many years on the negative image I think it's silly to expect an instant effect from affirmations, but if we stick to it for a couple of days, with honesty, trust, and belief, then results will start to happen. Here are just a few:

Affirmations for General Welfare

- My life is a beautiful, enriching experience, and I'm filled with wonder and awe at life's grandeur.
- Everything I need and desire for a pleasant life comes easily and by nature to me.

Affirmations for Abundance

- Life's wealth comes to me as I require or desire it and my life is marvelously abundant.
- Money comes easily and abundantly to me enabling my life to be pleasant, secure, and filled with plenty.

Affirmations for Fine Health

- I'm mentally and physically fit; well being is my natural state.
- My mind and body are fit; my fit, strong immune system keeps me safe.

Affirmations for Great Relationships

- My perfect match is nearby and will soon be with me.
- I'm surrounded by individuals who love and cherish me.

Affirmations for Love

- My soul mate is pulled to me and is on the path toward me.
- I unconditionally love all beings, human, animal, and plant.

Affirmations for Happiness

- I decide to feel as good as possible at every moment of my life; even in hard times, I stay positive, optimistic, and hopeful.
- The hard times in my life are brief, quickly replaced by good times and happy moments.

Wrapping Up

Even good change jeopardizes our sense of security. When you're used to something, the idea of losing it can cause you to panic and get stuck where you are, regardless how much you have to gain by changing.

Your capability to shift your focus from the past to the present is the key to breaking bad habits. You can't make a decision to change as long as you're still centered on the past.

Learning that you are able to choose your own feelings, words, and actions makes you a free person and a powerful person...

When you win the battle in your mind, it's only a matter of time before you win the war against bad habits.

The secret is to make change your first priority. You can't win the war until freeing yourself from the habit becomes your highest priority.

The answer is to accept responsibility for yourself, to realize that you are able to decide to take charge of your life.

Hopefully this book has given you the tools to have a different look at changing bad behaviors.