

The Hypnosis Examiner



Great American Smokeout 2019

Great American Smokeout takes place on November 21, 2019. The Great American Smokeout is an annual social engineering event on the third Thursday of November by the American Cancer Society. The event encourages Americans to stop tobacco smoking. The event challenges people to stop smoking cigarettes for 24 hours, hoping their decision not to smoke will last forever.

-The Editor



Feature Article: “HABITS: Part 4 - Changing Habits”



Thus far this year, we’ve looked at the definition of “habits” as well as explored the advantages and disadvantages of “bad” and “good” habits. We’ve discovered that a “habit” is neither good nor bad but our intentions in developing these habits creates a “good or bad” response in our lives.

So, how do we change the “bad - undesirable/socially unacceptable” responses to “good - desirable/socially acceptable” responses?

The best way to change your habits is to directly replace them with new ones. When you create a habit, your brain creates new neurological pathways allowing you to more easily use those habits.

But why do people return to their old habits so often? It’s because the neural pathways established as a result of the habits we develop never get deleted. Those pathways are always there for us in case we need to go back and use those same routes again. Of course, this helps us in the many simple and automatic daily tasks we carry out such as walking, talking, running, and eating. We don’t need to stop and think about how to walk before we get up and do it! (*Of course, this applies to the majority of us who are blessed and lucky enough to be able to do so easily*). Since those existing pathways never get erased, the best way to change existing habits is to replace them with new ones. *(See page 2, Habits)*

HABITS *(from front page)*

So if you have habits you want to break, here are some steps to get you started:

Define the concrete behavior you want to change or develop: Getting more exercise or treating your girl/boyfriend better may sound great but they give you little to grasp onto. You need to prime the habit-breaking process by thinking in terms of specific, doable behaviors — like not dumping your shoes in the living room but putting them in your closet; not eating in front of the TV but at the dining room table; going for a half-hour run five days a week; sending your girl/boyfriend a complimentary text once a day, rather than sending her/him nothing or negative ones. Drill down on the concrete.

Identify the triggers: The refrigerator may be enough of a trigger to have you go for the beer once you hit the door, just as seeing the junk food on the counter will when you get bored. Or it may be that spark of social anxiety that cranks up the drinking when you think of an upcoming event with more than three people. By identifying your triggers, you have a way of pushing back and not having that autopilot kick in. But some people have a difficult time doing this. If this is true for you, that you have a difficult time knowing what emotionally triggers you, you can work backwards. For example, when you are craving a drink or biting your nails, slow down and use your awareness of these behaviors as signals to ask yourself: What is going on emotionally?

Deal with the triggers: Because we're wanting to break patterns, you now want to do something about the triggers themselves. Here you proactively get the junk food or beer out the house, or when you realize, while driving home, that you are stressed, and you deliberately sit in the car and listen to music that you like while sitting in the driveway, or do a few minutes of deep breathing to relax, rather than automatically marching into the danger-zone of the kitchen.

Develop a substitute plan: Breaking habits isn't about stopping but substituting. Here is where you come up with a plan for managing the party without drinking — getting a mocktail and hanging close by your good friend, rather than grabbing a drink and being stuck with a bunch of strangers.

Or if you are concerned about your binge-eating at night, plan to bring two cookies up to your bedroom at 10 o' clock and resolve not to go back downstairs for the rest of the evening to keep you from finding yourself wandering around the kitchen all evening and veering towards the kitchen.

Or in order to avoid the temptation of internet porn, plan to unplug your computer when you get home and stay away from electronics, and instead settle in with that new book you got for your birthday, or call your mom, all to avoid falling into your set routine. The key here is mapping this out before that triggers have a chance to kick in.

Change the larger pattern: Here we are widening the context that surrounds the habit-pattern. Here you go to the gym during your lunch break because you know going after work is too hard when you are so tired. Or you realize you don't sit at the dining room table for dinner because it is so loaded down with papers and such, and so you need to start by both keeping the table clear and setting the table for dinner before you leave for work.

By looking at and changing the larger pattern, you are actually not only making it easier to tackle the core habit, but are practicing exercising your willpower on smaller, easier pattern-breaking behaviors. This can add to your sense of empowerment.

Use prompts: These are reminders to help you break the pattern by creating positive triggers and alerts to keep you on track: Putting your running shoes at the side of your bed so you see them first thing in the morning, or putting an alert on your phone to leave for the gym, or checking in with yourself and gauging your stress level on the way home before it gets too high and out of your control.

Fear of Failure: Fear of failure is the most common and most harmful of the obstacles seen in working with athletes. The reality is that failure isn't worth fearing; the most successful people in all walks of life fail frequently and monumentally on the way to success. The fear of failure comes from the meaning that you attach to failure (e.g., "My parents won't love me," "I will be a failure in everything I do."). Young people get this fear of failure from their parents and from our hyper-achievement culture in which being labeled a failure is worse than death. This fear can become so great that you become more focused on avoiding failure than pursuing success. In doing so, you become unwilling to take risks (yes, perfectionists have a profound fear of failure) and even sabotage your efforts to succeed to protect you against the possibility of failure even when the chances of failure are small.

Get Supports: Get a running buddy, or a party buddy, or someone you can call, or an online forum you can tap into when you those cravings start to kick in and you are struggling.

Talk to you friends about going to get a quick cup of coffee together rather than standing *(cont. page 6)*

Sports Page

“OBSTACLES TO SPORTS SUCCESS”



Mental obstacles are any psychological or emotional issues that interfere with your ability to perform your best consistently in the biggest competitions of your life. All of the mental tools in the world that you use in practice and competitions won't help you achieve your athletic goals if you don't have the attitudes in place that prepare you for success and you have removed the obstacles that set you up for failure. It's one thing to have the capabilities to move forward, physically, technically, tactically, and mentally. It's an entirely different thing to have psychological and emotional anchors that weigh you down and keep you from moving forward with confidence and determination.

Here are just a few obstacles that can hold you back the most in sports efforts.

Over-investment: You, of course, want to be invested in your sport. You want to care a lot about our sport and it should be an important part of your life. With this deep commitment, you will give your best effort, respond positively to setbacks, and persevere in the face of the inevitable challenges of pursuing your own personal greatness as an athlete.

But that investment crosses over into the 'too zone' in your sport when you care too much, it is too important to you, and your sport becomes too much a part of who you are. The result is that you aren't

going to see the returns you would like on that investment. In fact, your over-investment may actually cost you psychologically and emotionally.

This over-investment in your sport results in every competition becoming a life-or-death situation where your physical life isn't threatened, but rather you are putting your self-identity, self-esteem, and goals on the line. This over-investment causes a preoccupation with results (especially failure!), expectations, and pressure that lead to doubt, worry, anxiety, and fear. The endgame is that you perform tentatively and cautiously.

Your goal is to care just enough so that you give it everything you have. You accomplish this goal by having balance in your life, meaning sport is a part of your life, not life itself. You have other sources of meaning and satisfaction in your life outside of sport. And you recognize that, even if you don't achieve your sport goals, you will be okay (e.g., still loved by your family, liked by your friends, and able to find success in some other parts of your life).

Perfectionism: Our culture reveres perfectionists. On the surface, who wouldn't want to be one? They hold themselves to incredibly high standards, drive themselves relentlessly in pursuit of perfection, and usually find quite a bit of success. Yet, there is a dark side to perfectionism that you may not be aware of. The goals they set for themselves are often unattainable, resulting in almost-guaranteed failure (at least in their own eyes). Perfectionists make their self-esteem dependent on how they perform and the results they produce. They berate themselves unmercifully for failing to live up to those unreachable goals. Perfectionists often fear failure more than they are want success. They are also unwilling to take reasonable risks because, by definition, they may lead to failure. Finally, I have never met a truly happy perfectionist because how can they be happy if they aren't perfect (which, as human beings, is impossible).

An antidote to perfection is excellence which takes all of the good things that perfectionism has to offer. Excellence for example, still sets the bar very high and excellence is attainable, but also rejects all the bad stuff related to perfectionism. Excellence allows for the mistakes and failure that inevitably occur in its pursuit. It also encourages risk taking because failure isn't threatening and is actually relished because it means you are pushing yourself to your limits. Finally, excellence makes chasing your goals fun and exciting rather than anxiety provoking (thus leading to, rather than detracting from, happiness).
(see *OBSTACLES* page 7)



THE INTUITIVE THINKER

“The only real valuable thing is intuition.” – Albert Einstein

Most people have experienced “knowing” that they are in danger, that someone is lying, that someone they’ve met will be the love of their life, or that they should turn left at the next stop light to get to where they are going.

They also “know” a situation will work out okay or that they shouldn’t accept a proposal. All without being able to explain the logic of their decision or the reasons they “know.”

You “know” things. You don’t even know how you know them. Yet you have a sense of certainty. Intuitive thinking, which used to be discounted as hocus pocus, is now recognized by scientists as the mind working in ways we aren’t aware of and often don’t understand.

Marsha Linehan, the creator of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, includes intuitive thinking as part of “wise mind.” Emotionally sensitive people are believed to be more aware of their intuition than those who are not emotionally sensitive.

We’re beginning to understand a little more about intuitive thinking. The more we understand, the better we can know when to count on it as reliable.

If there’s someone in your life that you love, think about them for a few moments. Picture them with you, imagine the experiences you’ve shared. If there isn’t a person right now, maybe there’s a pet. Picturing the pet will work. Or even a favorite dish. Maybe you could eat ice cream all day if you’d let yourself.

In fifteen words or less, can you explain what it is about that person, pet, or food that you love?

The problem is that when pushed to explain our intuition, we often come up with meaningless explanations, perhaps because we don’t really know the reasons.

In the book “You Are Not so Smart,” McRaney discusses a study completed by Tim Wilson at UVA.

Dr. Wilson showed a group of students a series of posters and paintings. The students were told they could take any one they wanted as a gift. He told another the same thing, but this group had to explain why they wanted the poster before they picked.

After six months passed, he asked both groups what they thought of their choices. The first group were still happy with their choices. This was the group who didn’t have to explain their choices. The second group, the ones who had to write out why, hated theirs. The people in the first group usually picked a lovely painting. The second group, the ones who had to explain their choice, usually picked an inspirational poster with a cat clinging to a rope.

When you ask people for an explanation of what they like, they turn to logical thinking. But we often can’t explain our likes from a logical point of view. Emotions may interfere as well, such as worry or concern about what your explanation says about you to other people. We tend to know what we like intuitively.

According to McRaney, most people truly preferred the painting over the poster, but they took the poster because it was easier to write reasons for that choice.

McRaney describes other research studies that suggest when we are asked to explain choices we have made intuitively, we tend to make up explanations. Creating explanations can even change our attitudes and choices. Apparently, having to explain the choice leads to believing the explanation that we created, at least in certain situations. We become certain of why we made a choice when it may not have been the reason at all.

Emotions can also interfere with accurate intuition in other ways. For example, anxious people can be particularly attune to negative feelings and thoughts that a spouse may be having, but they often miss the positive. Only being attuned to the negative, of course, gives a distorted picture of the relationship.

Though certainly there is much research to be done, it appears the information we get intuitively or through our “adaptive unconscious” can be skewed by pushing ourselves to have logical explanations or by emotions that filter the information we receive. In certain cases, such as picking stocks, logical thinking is the best choice. But in daily living, intuition may help us follow what is right for us.

Learning to listen to our intuitive knowing and being aware when we are accessing that deep knowing, can lead to more effective decisions in many situations.

The Blog Post

“WHY HYPNOSIS IS SO EFFECTIVE AT BREAKING THE SMOKING HABIT”

Posted on August 14, 2017

This Blog Post is a contribution by Ara Trembly, a Board Certified Hypnotherapist and Licensed Professional Counselor based in St. Marys, GA. He maintains a web site at www.10-10hypnosis.com and a blog at www.10-10hypnosis.com/blog.



For readers of this blog, it is certainly no secret that hypnotherapy is a highly effective tool for changing lives, enhancing health, and breaking bad habits. That goes especially for the odious habit of smoking cigarettes.

In fact, when it comes to methods for stopping smoking, a study of 6,000 smokers found hypnosis to be the method with the highest success rate, according to an article in the *Mirror*, a British publication. But why is hypnotherapy more effective than nicotine gum or patches or drugs?

The key to answering this question lies in the idea that while many refer to smoking as an “addiction,” it is actually a habit. According to the American Psychiatric Association, “People with addiction (severe substance use disorder) have an intense focus on using a certain substance(s), such as alcohol or drugs, to the point that it takes over their life.” Smokers may certainly feel like their lives are ruled by a need for cigarettes at a certain time or in a certain situation, but the problem is not nearly as severe as for those who are truly addicted to alcohol, for example, which is known to cause delirium, tremors, hallucinations, liver disease, and possibly death.

On the other hand, a habit, in psychology, is “any regularly repeated behavior that requires little or no thought and is learned rather than innate. A habit—which can be part of any activity, ranging from eating and sleeping to thinking and reacting—is developed through reinforcement and repetition,” says the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. This certainly better describes what happens to smokers.

Consider some of the feedback I have gotten from literally hundreds of smokers with whom I have worked over the years. Almost no one—even among long-term smokers—says they smoke because it “tastes good.” Instead, they (mistakenly) believe that it will help reduce stress—while in fact it may actually aggravate such stress. Most smokers will habitually reach for a cigarette at a particular time (in the morning, or after a meal), in a particular place (visiting a bar is often a trigger), or in a particular situation (at work, or while reading or having a glass of wine, for example).

These habits become ingrained to the point where there is a psychological need, especially if the smoker thinks having a cigarette is beneficial. While some claim there is a physical addiction to nicotine taking place, others—including E-Cigarette Politics, point out that “No clinical trial specifically to examine the potential of nicotine to create dependence in people who have never consumed tobacco has ever been published.”

The truth is that hypnosis is highly effective for smoking cessation because it is highly effective in helping people to change their habits—or to substitute a new habit for the old one. A number of my patients have substituted drinking a bottle of water for having a cigarette, for example. One patient I worked with just wanted to have a cigarette burning next to him in the ash tray as he worked. He rarely bothered to even take a drag. Some are satisfied just to have a pencil between their fingers instead of a cigarette.

Hypnosis is also very effective at psychologically linking smoking to something the patient finds disgusting or distasteful, such as dog food or a “plate of hair.” Obviously, this aversion is helpful in avoiding cigarettes.

Do you or does someone you know have a problem with the deadly habit of smoking? If so, we invite you to try hypnotherapy.

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CHANGING HABITS (from page 2)

outside with your cigarettes. Go to AA meetings.

Support and reward yourself: At some point in your efforts to break a habit, you reach a point where you think: Why am I bothering to struggle with this? You feel discouraged, you feel you are emotionally making your life seemingly harder and that there is little payoff.

This is normal, the low point in the process, and you need to keep your eyes on the prize. But you also need to make sure you build in a payoff. This is where you deliberately pat yourself on the back for having dinner at the table rather than the couch, even though you won't immediately feel better. You take the money you would be spending on alcohol or drugs or cigarettes and save it up to buy something else you've always wanted—a new outfit, a high-end mini-vacation. Again, you sink into having folks around you to cheer you on and help you realize that you are making progress and are on the right path.

Be persistent and patient: That's the name of the game, of course: realizing that it will take time for the new brain connections to kick in, for the old brain-firings to calm down, for new patterns to replace the old. Don't beat yourself up for slip-ups or use them as rationales for quitting. Take it one day at the time.

Consider getting professional help: If you've done the best you can and you are still struggling, consider seeking professional support. This may be a doctor who can prescribe meds for the underlying anxiety and depression, a hypnotherapist who cannot only help you unravel the sources and drivers of your habits, but also provide some steady support and accountability.

While all habits are not created equally, the overarching goal is the same, namely you taking more charge of your life, being proactive rather than reactive, deliberate rather than routinized.

Each habit is complex and unique. And there is another factor which plays a huge role in whether or not we can succeed at changing a habit and in whether or not the habits that we do change last.

This factor is belief! More specifically, it appears to be belief in something bigger than oneself.

Belief is the key to understanding how to succeed in creating the habits we do want, changing the habits that we do not want and why some new habits fail completely at critical moments.

Ready to take on the challenge?

This concludes our feature article on "Habits" for this year. We hope that you've enjoyed and learned something

new about HABITS and yourself! We look forward to bringing you a new feature article in T.H.E. Newsletter for the year 2020!



A WORD ABOUT PATIENCE

Patience is known as a virtue for a reason. According to the dictionary it is, "The capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset." It isn't easy to be patient and anyone who's ever had to exercise patience knows that very well. Patience might be even more difficult to practice in our digital age where everything seems to be instant. This is why there has never been a greater need for it in our lives. The good news is that something can be learned and improved upon with time and effort.

Settle down: Take a deep breath and ease yourself into your emotions. Try to relax every muscle in your body. Relax your shoulders and your jaw. Continue to take deep breaths until your reason takes over and you can examine yourself. Imagine your frustration melting away.

Acknowledge your feelings and address them:

When feelings of impatience start to creep up, you must acknowledge where they are coming from. Pin point exactly what it is that is making you worried, anxious, or upset. Ask yourself why you are having these feelings. Impatience is often a byproduct of unchecked emotions. Acknowledge why those feelings exist and know that you can overcome them. Nobody else can make you feel anything but you. The knowledge that you and you alone are in control of your feelings is liberating. Consider this an exercise in mental strength.

Write it down: If it all seems too much, put it on paper. Writing down feelings helps to de-clutter the mind and gives you an outlet to vent. (see page 7)

OBSTACLES *(from page 3)*

The only way to achieve success is to accept that you might fail and that's okay. Bode Miller, the Olympic skiing champion, exemplified this attitude because he never cared about failing. All he cared about was giving it everything he had and performing as fast as he could. If Bode did that, he was satisfied, regardless of his result. If you don't give it your all, you have zero chance of success. If you do, your chances aren't 100%, but they are far higher than zero. If you can let go of your fear of failure, you free yourself to throw yourself into your sport with reckless abandon.

Expectations: Expectations are a kiss of death in sport, in other words, if you enter a competition focused on expecting a certain result, you are pretty much assured of not getting that result. Expectations are so harmful because they put you in a mindset in which you have to meet your expectations because, well, it is expected of you. To not meet the expectation would be perceived as a major fail. Directly connected to fear of failure, expectations always conclude with a threat; for example, "I expect to win today"...or else. The "or else" may be: people will think I suck, I won't be able to compete for a Division I college, my dreams of being a pro will be over, or some other scenario that you think is equally catastrophic. The weight you place on fulfilling these expectations results in immense pressure which, in turn, produces doubt, worry, and anxiety, all of which will make meeting those expectations very unlikely.

Your goal is to let go of the necessity of expectations and embrace the possibility of goals. The goal of "I want to win" is much different than the expectation "I need to podium." With the former, you naturally want to move toward your goal with determination and excitement. With the latter, you want to avoid the expectation like the plague.

Negativity: The four obstacles I have just described create a unscalable wall of negativity that basically ensures both failure and the complete absence of enjoyment in your sport. You have no confidence and are filled with doubt. You perform with a sense of impending doom. You experience tremendous anxiety and tension so you're physically incapable of performing your best. You are your own worst enemy on game day. Your opponents want to be beat you on game day. If you are your own worst enemy, then you have no chance of performing your best and achieving your goals.

The removal of these obstacles is a priority because, with them in place, the chances of success are very low. Your goal is to shift from this position of weakness, grounded in over-investment, perfectionism, fear of failure, expectations, and negativity, to one of strength that includes a healthy investment in your sport, the pursuit of excellence, striving for high goals, and having a positive attitude.

Of course, this change is easier said than done, but it begins with awareness of the obstacles you or others have placed in your path toward your athletic dreams. The commitment to change also involves the realization that the road you are on just isn't going to get you to your destination. After that, you must understand how the obstacles have come into being, why they hurt you, and then do the work necessary to tear them down. Only then will you have the opportunity to perform your best and achieve your sports goals.

PATIENCE *(from page 6)*

If you are consistent in writing down every time you get impatient it will help you identify and understand the triggers that tend to cause these feelings. In time they will become easier to deal with.

Remind yourself that things worthwhile take time: Although you might want instant gratification, know that sometimes the best things come to those who wait. Impatience can come in the way of building something really great. We all know the saying "Rome wasn't built in a day". It's a cliché but true, good things take time to grow and to develop.

Distract yourself with something productive: Instead of just waiting around for whatever is going to happen, distract yourself a little by doing something productive. Try going for a workout. Not only will it improve your body and health, it also gets your mind off the situation and relieves frustration. The added bonus is the endorphin rush you get from working out. Other activities you can try include organizing your closet, writing down a list of tasks you'd like to have completed, or washing your car.

Train yourself: The key to having excellent patience is practice. How, you may ask? Practice exercising patience in short term situations such as waiting in traffic, waiting in line at the grocery store, or waiting for someone to call you back. If you can take control of your emotions in small-scale situations, it will get easier to control your emotions in more complex situations.

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COMEDY CORNER

This little corner is designated for helping you get through your day with a bit of a smile.

Quasimodo goes to the doctor for his annual checkup. “I think something is wrong with your back,” the doctor says. “What makes you say that?” Quasimodo asks. “Oh,” the doctor replies. “It’s just a hunch.”

A boy was bagging groceries one day when the store manager installed an orange juice squeezing machine. The boy asked if he could be allowed to work the machine. The store manager said, “Sorry kid, but baggers can’t be juicers!”



NUDOPHOBIA

Nudophobia, also known as Gymnophobia, is the abnormal, extreme, and persistent fear of nudity, both of being naked and of seeing others naked.

In extreme cases, Nudophobia can lead to a total fear of one's own nudity or body image and can lead to avoidance of showering, changing clothes, etc.

The term originates from the Latin word 'nudo' meaning 'naked' and the word 'phobia' comes from the Greek word 'phóbos' meaning 'fear.'

Nudophobia is a social anxiety disorder. Social phobias result in avoidance of social situations due to fear of being embarrassed in public and affect men and women equally. Extreme social anxieties often start in childhood or adolescence and may be accompanied by other anxiety disorders or depression.

Nudophobia, like most phobias, stems from a subconscious overprotection mechanism, and as with many phobias can also be rooted in an unresolved emotional conflict.

This fear may arise from deformities, scars, birth marks, or other physical aspects of one's body image. Nudophobics may simply believe their body is inferior to others. The fear of nudity may also arise from fears regarding sex, intimacy, or religious or cultural fixations about sex or relationships.

T.H.E. BACK ISSUES

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Feature: Hypno-Reiki

April 2018 - Vol. 7 #2

Feature: Understanding Sleep

July 2018 - Vol. 7 #3

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T.H.E. Editor

8th Year of Publication



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