Controlling our environment ("Stimulus Control")
Posted by MenachemGYE - 26 Jan 2020 16:26

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One of the ways to deal with urges is by avoiding things that can trigger urges, or by my making it physically difficult to act on an urge. This is also referred to as *avoidance* or *stimulus control*. 12-step programs refer talk about avoiding "people, places and things" that can be triggering.

Although stimulus control can never cover all situations, it sill can be tremendously helpful. If we're are bombarded with triggers and and urges all day, we can get tired and burnout from dealing with them. So to make things easier for ourselves, it's smart to minimize triggers as much as possible. We'll still have plenty of opportunities to use our urge management skills.

The most obvious type of stimulus control is to block our access to porn as much as possible. You can do this by going to your local TAG office, or by filling out GYE's Protect My Devices form. Or you can go connect directly with good filter companies like Netspark, Gentech, Techloq , Netfree etc. There are also some nice image filters that you can install for Chrome (see here and here).

Aside from filters, we can delete any inappropriate material we have saved anywhere, delete email accounts or social media accounts that have been used for shmutz. Same goes for contacts, bookmarks etc.

Another area of focus is to avoid *situations* that lead to triggers. They can be times of the day, certain emotions, or even thought patterns.

For example, if you always masturbate at night when going to bed, that situation might be a trigger. You can then plan how to change the situation a bit to weaken the trigger. For example, you can take an MP3 player and listen to something interesting until you fall asleep.

12-steps programs talk about **H.A.L.T.** which means "Don't become too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired." SMART Recovery also talks about **B.A.D.S.** (Boredom, Anxiety, Depression, Stress). Do you find your urges are more common when you have one of these feelings? If yes, you might want to update your plan to include strategies of how to deal with it.

If you have trouble identifying you triggers, the SMART handbook recommends keeping an urge log. An urge log is a table with the following columns:

- Date / time
- Strength of urge (1-10)
- Length of urge
- What triggered my urge
- Where/who was I with
- How I copied and my feelings about coping
- Alternative activities/substitute behaviors.

By keeping such a log for a few days, you can start identifying your triggers, and update your plan as needed.

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Re: Controlling our environment ("Stimulus Control")
Posted by DavidT - 05 Feb 2020 21:28
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[MenachemGYE wrote on 26 Jan 2020 16:26](#)**:**

If you have trouble identifying you triggers, the SMART handbook recommends keeping an urge log. An urge log is a table with the following columns:

- Date / time
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By keeping such a log for a few days, you can start identifying your triggers, and update your plan as needed.

Here is a printable "urge log" for your convenience.

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