TRIGGERS: Smoking

“Do not be misled, bad associations spoil useful habits”

A trigger is something that precedes an urge to use. It places you at risk by stimulating either a conscious or unconscious desire to use a substance, (such as cigarettes)

Triggers can be INTERNAL or EXTERNAL:

External Triggers: These are much easier to identify because they are OUTSIDE of you. They can be people, places, or events. They best way to deal with EXTERNAL triggers is to simply AVOID THEM. However, this is not always possible to do, therefore, you need to develop a plan of action for these triggers BEFORE you encounter them, otherwise you may be too late.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIGGER</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(i.e friends, coworkers)</td>
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Places:
(i.e restaurants, bars)

Things:
(i.e commercials, lighters)

Events:
(i.e parties, crisis)
**Internal Triggers:** These are much more difficult to identify because they come from within. We may have a tendency to deny they even exist so it is important to be aware of our THOUGHTS and FEELINGS as well as HABITS and CONDITIONS:

<table>
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<th>TRIGGER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thoughts:</td>
<td>(i.e. I am never going to be able to do this!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings:</td>
<td>(STRESS, anger, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Habits:</td>
<td>(i.e. Going to convenience store to buy lottery ticket – and cigs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions:</td>
<td>(i.e. Pre-existing medical or psychological condition, HALT: Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)</td>
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SMOKING TRIGGERS and STRESS

STRESS is a twofold problem when quitting smoking for two reasons: First it is a major TRIGGER for smoking. Second, it will almost definitely INCREASE as a direct result of NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL. THIS emphasizes the importance of NRT as well as effective coping skills for stressful situations. Failure to effectively cope with stress leads to more stress, which may eventually lead to relapse.

POOR COPING MECHANISMS (Do not work in the long run):

- Drug/alcohol use
- Suppression
- Passivity (Simply waiting for others to help you)
- Acting Out (Revenge, Abuse, Destruction of Property)
- Blaming/Complaining

EFFECTIVE COPING MECHANISMS:

1. Know your stressors and avoid UNECESSARY STRESS if possible (i.e traffic, long lines, certain people, etc.)
   
   - RECOGNIZE – Are you aware of when you are getting stressed out? Do you know the warning signs?
   - Know your limits (time, money, etc.)
   - Set goals
   - Be ASSERTIVE – Know when to say “NO!!”
   - Avoid procrastination
   - Seek help/support
   - Simplify – Can you simplify your life to reduce stress?
   - Re-organize – Can you rearrange your life to make it less stressful?
   - Re-prioritize - Are you putting first things first?

2. RELAXATION:

   - Counting
   - Deep Breaths
   - Stress Ball
   - Relaxation Audio/Video
   - Scheduled relaxing activities: bath, walk, hobbies, etc. (“Me” time)
   - Learn to take one minute vacations
   - Visual Imagery (i.e beach)
   - HUMOR
   - COMMUNICATE
3. POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE (PMA)

- Be GRATEFUL for what you have
- Enjoy your achievements
- Plan good things for your future
- ACCEPTANCE – Accept the things you cannot change
- Put things in perspective – COGNITIVE REFraming – (Is it really that bad?)
- POSITIVE SELF TALK
- Resolve Cognitive Dissonance – (Do you need to clear your conscience?)
- Conflict Resolution/Letting go – Holding on to resentments is STRESSFUL
- Anger management

4. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Balance work, recreation, and rest
- Diet
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Avoid Caffeine and Substance Abuse

5. Other? What else works for you?

WHICH OF THE ABOVE ARE YOU GOING TO WORK ON?