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## **Sexually Compulsive Thoughts Toolkit**

\*Items needed for this exercise: 1 Journal

### **Tool # 1**

#### **Self Control:**

The self control tool is made up of several items.

#### **The Category Box:**

“Category” are specific items you have identified as problems that you need to work on. There are two different categories:

- 1) Things you have identified and labeled that you want to have better control over
- 2) Things that have been sitting in front of you for a long time; that you have thought about and looked at but for whatever reason(s) have chosen not to do anything about at this point.  
This may be the case even though it has occurred to you that if you did them it would make a significant improvement in your life. You will be asked to specifically identify items in these two categories.

First you will identify and label all these thoughts, images and urges. Then, you will write them down and put them in your “category box”. The act of identifying and writing them down as things you mindfully choose to work on is a higher commitment than just thinking or talking about doing them. It is a form of mindfulness that will be much more productive for you.

a) Identify all the thoughts, images, and urges you struggle with regarding your sexually compulsive behaviors. (Example: Remembering a nude picture you saw that triggers the urge to act out)

b) Now, write each one in your category box, which will represent being mindful in choosing to work on them.

**Category Box:**

Items you want to have better control over:

1)

2)

3)

Items you need to work on and know would improve your life, but have chosen to put them off instead.

4)

5)

6)

So, what happens if you fail to act upon the items in your category box? It could be like drilling holes in the bottom of a bucket so it works more like a sieve than a strong box.

Write down the consequences that would happen if you fail to act upon your category items and include the impact on the important relationships in your life:

Success will depend on you doing all that you can to make it happen. One at a time, take an item out of your category box and commit to work on it. Make a list of behaviors you will commit to do for each one that will go towards conquering your sexually compulsive behaviors.

Be specific when listing your behaviors, for example: I will pick one behavior every morning to work on and then write/journal before the day is over on how I did.

**Item one:**

Specific behaviors I will work on for this item:

Writing in my journal how I did:

Morning:

Evening:

**Item two:**

Specific behaviors I will work on for this item:

Writing in my journal how I did:

Morning:

Evening:

**Item three:**

Specific behaviors I will work on for this item:

Writing in my journal how I did:

Morning:

Evening:

\*Notes: Write down what worked and what didn't. Evaluate what specifically you need to do differently.

## **Tool #2**

### Your Thought Shield:

A thought shield is a stop- thought technique and is used when you are having trouble controlling a thought or urge that could lead you to act out. Some of these thoughts and urges can be very powerful and overwhelming at times.

Often, someone will suggest to you “*Just think of something different,*” which you have undoubtedly tried and failed at doing. Its like looking at a picture of a pink elephant with a grenade launcher aimed at you and then trying not to think about it...the more you try not to think about it, the more you think about it!

First off, this tool requires you to identify what you want to stop (things you put in your category box that you want to have better control over). For example, remembering a nude picture that if dwelled on would likely cause you to act out. If you keep fantasizing about the picture you will be in trouble. Just trying to think about something else won't work either.

Being mindful here will require you to make a decision to stop the image of the nude picture first. Because the image is powerful sexually, once you make a choice to stop, the next step is to use a thought shield to stop it so you can move on without relapsing.

It will be important to design your own personal shield. I will give several examples of ideas to get you started.

Examples:



I've even heard of a guy who was going to school to become a mechanic use a wrench on his thought

shield.

The main function of your thought shield is to stop the thought, image or urge long enough for you to be mindful in taking back control. Remember, you are not just trying to think of something different, you are focusing on stopping the thoughts temporarily. The thought shield only temporarily puts the thought outside you shield. If you don't do something quickly, the thought will be back over your shield and in your mind again.

Begin drawing a picture of your thought shield. Don't be intimidated, you don't have to be an artist.

It is your shield.

### **Tool # 3**

#### **The Abstinence List:**

Abstain is a word that means to avoid or to do without. This tool ties very closely with the things you put into your category box, but you need to think about setting up boundaries around a list of things that if you do them, it will trigger you to watch porn. This requires you to be very mindful in identifying and then labeling thoughts, images and behaviors early enough that you will be able to stop before you relapse.

The earlier you identify the things you know trigger you, the easier it will be to stop before acting out. Making a list of these things by writing them down is a form of mindfulness and will strengthen your resolve to not do them.

Write a list of things you know trigger you and what behaviors you typically do once you act out.

**Abstinence list:**

Thoughts, or images that trigger  
you to act out

Typical ways you act out

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Writing down your abstinence is a way of beginning to think about boundaries.

What is a boundary?

A boundary sets limits and has the purpose of restricting where we can and cannot go. All healthy relationships have boundaries. In a similar sense, good boundaries make for good relationships



## Tool # 4

### The aim and maintain tool:

This tool supports your ability to identify and label thoughts or behaviors you want to work on while quitting porn.

You **aim** by identifying and labeling a thought, image or urge that you have have been trying to have better control over. This will require consistent, purposeful choosing on your part. It takes practice to be consistent in doing so. Think about learning how to shoot an arrow at a target. Your first few shots may be way off the target, but you can't let discouragement get in the way. With consistent practice, you will notice your aim will gradually get closer and closer to the center. The goal is too important to give up aiming and shooting at the target!



The goal of **maintaining** is once you are consistent in hitting the target closer to the center, to then maintain the consistency of doing so. Because your mind will wander from the focus on the center of the target, it will require you to gently, mindfully but firmly bring it back to the center of the target. The skill of focused concentration is the building block of mindful awareness.