



Sober Buddha
—Counseling—
(949) 212-4149 | www.soberbuddha.com

THINKING IT THROUGH

THE LEARNING BENEFIT:

The biggest disaster for any addict is giving in to irresistible cravings and ending up drunk, high, incarcerated, injured or even causing your own death or someone else's. You can prevent these disasters by carefully imagining what would likely happen if you get high. With enough repetition, this technique can make the desire to avoid the disaster more powerful than the craving itself.

THE FACTS:

Craving sends an unconscious automatic signal to the nervous system that a drug or drink is needed immediately in order for the body to function properly. The frontal cortex is entirely bypassed when this craving message is activated. That is why drinkers and drug users so often go into a binge without thinking sensibly about it. It has become an instinctive behavior to them, not a conscious cognitive choice.

Active the Cortex

You can bring the frontal cortex into the craving scenario and counteract the craving phenomenon by inserting an imaginative script into your thinking. You do this when you are sober, and with enough repetition, the cognitive and emotional impact of the negative scenario produces neuronal connections in your brain that counter the instinctive desire to drink or use drugs.

THE WRITING EXERCISE:

Write a step-by-step imaginary script of the worst that could happen if you relapse. Start with the situation that triggers your desire to drink or use drugs. Examples are provided at the beginning, middle and end to stimulate your thinking. Make your story as unpleasant as you can. The worse it seems, the more likely it is to work for you.

EXAMPLE: Triggering situation - (My boss tells me I did not get the promotion I have been hoping for since last year.)

- 1.
- 2.



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3.

4.

5. *(I'm already drunk and angry at dinner and scream at my kids.)*

6.

7.

8.

9.

10. *(At 9:30 p.m. my wife calls 911 and I get arrested for spousal assault and battery. The next day I don't even remember it.)*