

IF YOU FALL OFF THE WAGON AND GETTING BACK ON IT!

When I counsel smokers, I give them a list of about 150 alternative behaviors to replace their urge to smoke with. I tell them to choose at least 5 new behaviors that they'll do to substitute for each smoking situation. As with any lifestyle program, I first have them conduct an examination of their smoking behavior. They need to identify where and when they smoke and what need(s) they are attempting to satisfy.

For instance, if they smoke after meals and relate their habit to a need to do something with their hands and/or mouth, they should choose among 5 other substitute behaviors to do with their hands and/or mouth instead of smoking. And if that doesn't work, the 6th thing to do is to get more ideas from the list of substitute behaviors, search online or use their imagination for 5 more alternative behaviors. *Never say die! Just be persistent and you will eventually succeed!*



If you 'fail' and fall off the wagon, all is not lost. Look at it as a learning experience. If you have a cigarette, eat too many pistachios, have one drink too many, engage in road rage, or otherwise revert to a negative habit, put it into the right perspective.

Take responsibility. Acknowledge that you blew it. 'Hate the action, not the person!' Don't beat yourself up over this. Admit that you're human and that you will learn from the experience. Ask yourself what you learned about yourself, the situation, and others that will help prevent your falling off the wagon in a similar situation again.

Ask yourself questions that will help you be stronger next time. Are the people you chose to surround yourself with contributing to your problem? Was it an unusual situation that led to breaking your resolve? Did the alcohol 'make' you do it? Is there another problem you need to deal with first, before tackling the one you faltered on? Whatever the reason ...