

BuiLD
An urge – what might help?

SOBER:

S is for “Stop” where I am and “Step Back”.

O “Observe” how I’m feeling—what are my physical sensations and cravings, if any?

B “Breathe.” I take a deep breath; then another breath; and centre my attention in my breath.

E “Expand” my awareness so that I have a larger sense of what would happen if I did choose to use. How would I feel? What would I put at risk? Lose? Sacrifice? How will I feel when I stay true to my values?

R I “Respond” **mindfully** to the situation proactively, rather than reactively. I note that I have several choices in front of me and I have no requirement to take the first choice that comes to my mind out of habit.

DEADS:

D=Delay

It is a fact that the mind cannot hold a single thought for any length of time. Try to meditate on my navel for 20 minutes. Think of NOTHING else. Don't think of that ticking clock I hear, don't think of my foot that itches, and don't think about how much time is left before I might get up and make dinner. Just my navel, period! Hmmm, pretty hard to do. **I might use this fact to crowd out an urge by postponing it** for a later time. Set my phone timer for 7 minutes and go do something else. A walk or walking on the spot for a minute would be great. Phone a mate. Review my BCM and MVL with EMOTION. Seven minutes later, the urge may not seem as urgent as it did when it first appeared. Wait that nasty, unhelpful thought out and it might dissipate or disappear. What have I got to lose, except, my urge?

E=Escape the situation

I might not ALWAYS be able to manipulate a situation - OFTEN I CAN. If I have chosen to go to a party, and an urge is looking 'irresistible', I might do myself a favour and perhaps get the heck out of there. Maybe mark a party off my list for several months. If a certain friend seems to 'make me want to drink', possibly put them on the back burner for a while. If driving past my favourite bar puts a yearning in my stomach, maybe drive home a new way for a while. Several months down the road I might experiment with dealing with a tempting situation - why do it in the first sensitive week or two? There is plenty of time later. Perhaps give myself a break! Why start training for a marathon, by running a marathon?

A=Avoid

Make my list up now of an 'Invitation To Act' that I feel tempts me and avoid it as better I can. Avoid it for good, or just for a while. This is my list and my choice. Putting it on paper NOW, rather than finding myself in a sticky situation later, makes good sense. Spotting ITA's as I progress is seen as helpful.

D=Distract

Distraction or diversion is something that might be pretty helpful. Having a list of things to do, in advance, is insurance for when the only thing I might think of to do is drink. I might pull out that list and pick an activity - and just do it, whether it feels like something I want to do or not. I have found that at first, I would say 'Heck, I don't want to do that' - after making myself do it, it became fun. **My favourite motto of late: 'My motivation follows my action.'** I said earlier that it is hard for me to hold one thought in my mind for any length of time, just think how hard it is to hold TWO thoughts at once! This distraction technique utilizes this principle.

S=Substitution

I might substitute an unhelpful belief with a **helpful belief**.

I might substitute an unhelpful addictive behaviour with a **healthy, constructive behaviour**.

I might substitute beer with **cranberry juice**.

I might substitute coffee with **herbal tea**.

I might substitute eating chocolate cake with **walking or jogging at a park**.

I might substitute feeling sorry for myself with **coming to an online meeting or reading about a balanced life**.

The possibilities are endless.

For an urge: Identify my CRITICAL TIME and my VITAL BEHAVIOUR to help drive a bigger wedge between my thinking and my doing.

Urge management technique:

Playing the Tape or Movie to the End

I have an urge or I've been triggered by something. **I think about this - I imagine it in my head.** I picture the scenes as they relate to me.

Those first few drinks/uses are great. The first one goes down so well. It tastes good. It reminds me of that lovely high or release I get at drink three. Drink two gives me that tingle. Drink three (or four or five) gets me right there. Things are humming. I'm relaxed. I'm funny. My repartee is sparkling. I can dance, I can sing and I can talk to strangers. Drink four and five and I'm buzzing. I'm invincible. My bad feelings have gone. I'm chill. I'm there.

Drink six and seven I start to feel quite happily drunk. I can still keep it together although possibly a bit close to losing it. (Insert my own experience here.)

Now I'm drunk and starting to stumble and slur words. The next drink gets me completely smashed. I start to feel a bit maudlin (that tearful stage of drunkenness) and maybe I make some telephone calls, emails, SMSs, I hadn't planned on; or I'm very rude to someone; or I become aggressive. I might even drive the car to go get some more booze. I might have to crawl to my bedroom sobbing. I create a huge mess somewhere.

(Continue on here with my own experiences until I'm stumbling, passing out/blacking out, vomiting, falling over and hurting myself, cooking, swimming in the harbour, deciding I can juggle the chainsaw, going for the "doofus of the year award" - insert my own risk taking and unhelpful behaviour.

Am I thinking about suicide again? It's all so hopeless. Here I are again. "What is WRONG with me?"

Now imagine waking up the next day. Remember how my head felt. Can I roll over without my head feeling like it's still moving? Is there a hammer in my head or ears? Am I thirsty? Am I vomiting before I clean my teeth - during or after? Am I vomiting bile or am I just dry retching?

Can I remember what I said to anybody last night? Who did I call? How many of those sleeping pills did I take? What else did I do? Who might I have alienated this time? Remember that feeling of searching my memory – then my phone, SMS, email accounts – maybe tentatively ringing friends to see what happened. Where on earth did these cuts and bruises come from? What damage/videos/hurt is out there? **Oh no! Not again!**

Can I walk straight or do I lose my balance? Am I still drunk? Is it safe to drive or don't I care? Am I thinking about having another drink to take the edge off things? Can I eat without having to rush to the toilet with diarrhoea or vomiting? **How much of that disturbing loss of control of my life am I feeling this morning?**

Remember not being able to concentrate at work - making stupid mistakes - looking like shit - disguising those burst veins in my face with make-up – bruises - black eyes - band aids - calling in sick – lying - screaming at the dogs/cats – impatience with friends, family, strangers. **Remember that feeling of hopelessness and lack of meaning?**

Remember to keep going playing this tape to the very end.

Spend as much time recalling the aftermath of those first 3-5 drinks/uses.

In what way was the brief time I was 'nicely' inebriated worth the feelings of despair the next day?

How much enjoyment might I get from that loss of control over outcomes and the loss of my personal effectiveness?

How much would I REALLY like to break free of the disappointment and problem I am causing myself?

There's side B (Beneficial Life Side) of the tape too:

**What good thing might happen when I choose not to drink/use/act out
Life Fuller, Richer, and Lived?**

**What helpful thing I might do instead THAT DAY or the next day – a life
well lived?**

In what way might I live my values?

Where might my opportunity be to grow and develop - build on now?

What new thing might I try or explore?

How might this choice have been helpful to me (I WON one here 😊)?!

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Urge record solution sheet:

date	time	intensity	duration	who with	where	my mood	Vital behaviour

My VITAL behaviour:		
Critical Moment (Trigger):	Risk: 1-10	Vital Behaviour (Helpful Action/Solution):