

# A POWER STRONGER THAN BAD HABITS

## VIDEO ONE

Humans are creatures of habit.

Some habits are great for us – whether that's leaving enough time for breakfast, exercising regularly or reading for pleasure.

But throughout our lives, we also develop behaviours and routines – bad habits that, if we're honest, we know don't do us good.

Unlike our good habits, bad habits prevent us from achieving our goals. They interrupt our lives and disrupt our relationships. They can threaten our health, and waste our time and energy.

Some of these bad habits are relatively small. We bite our nails when we're stressed; we grind our teeth; we get sucked into YouTube black holes; we pick our noses – at least, when we think we're not being watched.

Some habits are more harmful.

We drink too much and do things we later regret. We find ourselves pulling yet another all-nighter, even though we swore we never would. We talk over other people in conversation. We skimp on sleep. We keep looking to the wrong places for comfort.

*These* bad habits can come to dominate our lives.

We know these habits are harmful, yet all of us struggle with them. So why do we still do them? More importantly, can we do anything about them?

No habit we have – good or bad – is in our life by chance. At some level, whether conscious or not, we believe that our habits benefit us in some way, even if they are bad for us in other ways.

So, as much as we may hate a bad habit, it's still attractive to us.

Perhaps we don't like the feeling of being hungry or bored or stressed or jittery or unable to sleep. Perhaps we don't like feeling left out. Often our bad habits are the things we turn towards to help us cope. So we continue to turn to them, however harmful they are.

Take aimless scrolling through social media when you wake up. You might do it because, to a degree, it helps you feel connected and to escape life's pressures. You may also recognise that letting social media dictate the first thought of your day makes you feel more lonely and stressed. But as long as, deep down, you believe that scrolling will help you feel connected and at peace, you'll reach for your phone. Social media companies who know how to manipulate dopamine hits are only too happy to exploit your weakness.

Every bad habit claims to address a deep need or desires. A pornography habit claims to satisfy our longings for intimacy and excitement. Frequent gossiping makes us feel like we're influential and in the know. Each of our bad habits does just enough to persuade us that without it, a strong desire will remain unmet or unaddressed.

This is why we all find our bad habits so hard to break.

We worry that life *without* our bad habits will be even worse than life *with* them. And we will always choose our bad habits so long as we believe leaving them behind is choosing to be less happy.

So what can give us the power to break these habits? And what can keep us committed to the path, even if we experience discomfort and it makes life harder?