

How I Can Help Myself Abstain from Substances*: Outplaying the Hand I Have Been Dealt

Many memories of the positive experience of substance use

Fact.

Nothing to do but **accept**.

Few memories of the experience of negative consequences of substance use

Fact.

Nothing to do but **accept**.

Abstinence anhedonia

Fact. BUT research suggests I can have a direct impact on anhedonia and apathy by deliberating discovering and "dosing" myself with multiple, small, **anticipation-reward** experiences.

Autonomy vs. automaticity

Use of skills can effectively overpower automaticity.

- Attention management
- Emotion regulation
- Thought-sorting
- Outmaneuvering or avoiding environmental cues

Experience of substances and substance use outcompetes life

I must honor my preferences and **collect** an adequate number of ways which, enough of the time, together, have more value than the value offered by substances.

(synergy = whole greater than sum of parts)

Experience of substances outcompetes relief of inner experience

I must keep experimenting with **other ways** to experience relief and increase my ability to tolerate distress.

*Deprivation effect ↑:
Feelings of panic or rage*

I must find what I can, and add what I can, to have enough experiences enough of the time to help my life **feel enriched** enough, not impoverished by scarcity.

*Deprivation effect ↓:
Feelings of hopeless despair*

I have to find what I can, and add what I can, to have enough experiences enough of the time which help me **feel reassured and encouraged** enough.

Mysterious brain changes

Fact.

Nothing to do but **accept**.