

## **Dr Dan *for* Today**

### **12 Ways to Reduce Impulsiveness**

Impulsiveness is a big problem in all area of life and at all ages. An impulsive person may be hasty in making decisions, vacillate, have a poor ability to plan, tend to take chances, has an inability to break bad habits, jumps from one thing to another, indicate poor control and may not be persistent in sticking with activities or programs that could help themselves.

There are many reasons why people are impulsive. Some have never learned how to plan their activities or lives either being too dependent upon others or just because it was easier and less of a struggle not to follow through with plans. Often this person is gives into immature desires and drives and has not learned how to postpone fulfillment of their immediate needs. These people often live for the moment and because of this, infringe upon the needs and feelings of others.

It is important to understand and realize that a person who is impulsive brings this impulsiveness with them even when they are trying to improve in this area. This means that it will be difficult for them to stick to any program or plan to change. Here are some suggestions for improving in the area of impulsiveness.

1. Make a complete list of the areas of your life or the goals of your life where you would like to see improvement or achievement. Stick with making the list until you have finished it. Sit down and do this and do not let anything take you away from completing this assignment.
2. Next, list two or three suggestions for each item as to how you could improve each area of your life that you have listed.
3. Pick one of the simpler tasks or areas of improvement and make a specific step by step plan for accomplishing the improvement. Make it simple and realistic but commit yourself to follow this until completed.
4. Before you make any decision be sure to think it through. Do not make any decision on the spur of the moment. Make a list of pros and cons. Avoid snap judgments.
5. Plan your days work in advance. Do not try to do too much and what you plan should be realistic and within reach. Tackle the hardest job first and eliminate it. This way your day should get easier and easier. Stop at different intervals during the day and evaluate how you are doing.
6. When you have a difficult task facing you don't skirt around the edges of it but plunge into it.

7. If you find that at the end of a day or week that you have continued to jump around and you are not following through, then you need to make a chart or a time schedule keeping track of how you spend your time, what you did that got you off the task at hand, and why you chose to leave what you were doing originally.
8. In bringing yourself around to becoming a more disciplined person do not become discouraged by set backs. Learn to profit from these and do not repeat the same mistake.
9. If you fall back into your old patterns ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Is this what I really want?
  - b. What will this accomplish?
  - c. Why did I go back to the old pattern?
  - d. How soon can I get back to my new way or new program of being more disciplined?
  - e. What can I do this time to help keep me from reverting back again?
10. Make a list of the ways in which you are efficient and a list of the ways in which you are inefficient. Begin making necessary changes.
11. Look at all the activities of your life and decide if you have a proper balance between work, exercise, recreation, self-improvement and rest.
12. Take a hard look at the reasons why you were impulsive in the past. Were any justifiable? Are there any present situations which bring you embarrassment or discomfort because of your impulsive behavior?

Impulsiveness is an issue for some who are reading this article. It is a poor pattern that can only be overcome with a new perspective, a plan, and persistence. Impulsiveness may not be eliminated by different habits, but it can be reduced by following these 12 suggestions.

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