



Responding to “FIVE-ALARM FIRES”

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RESPONDING TO FLASH FIRES: When it comes to temptations, “*Five-Alarm Fires*” are those strong, internal, sexual blazes that require immediate attention or certain destruction and loss of life occur. What safety steps work for one person don’t necessarily work for another. The goal is for you to determine a set of wise and effective responses to those fierce temptations to prevent you from acting out in any sexually inappropriate way.

SNAPPING OUT OF IT: Your brain – in the moment – gets fully fixated on any possible option to meet your unhealthy sexual urge. Though it may be momentary, it is seriously strong and often triggered suddenly. That’s why it’s called addiction! Strong triggers control you. Acting out by looking at porn and masturbating or some other unacceptable sexual activity seems to be the necessary outcome. When you get one of these *Five-Alarm Fire* temptations and your mind gets locked in, the goal needs to be **THOUGHT STOPPING**. This is when you take steps to disrupt the mental obsession – to break the stinking thinking – that is driving you relentlessly to sexually act out. We have to stop these negative thoughts in their tracks!

A WINDOW TO ESCAPE: In that moment or two when you have been mentally shocked or distracted back to reality - **THOUGHT STOPPING** - you have a small window of sanity or self-awareness in which to act. The addiction train is derailed. It is at this time you must add replacement behaviour to further strengthen you to walk away from acting out. The following activities are designed as first steps to break the downward spiraling of negative lustful thoughts - to **WAKE UP** - and to then keep your mind and body away from destructive behavior - to **WALK AWAY!**

CHANGE THE ROUTINE: Further, if your ‘acting out’ is a daily habit at a certain time and place, it is important that you stop any *ritual pathways* that lead to your sexual acting out. You have to learn to ride the wave of temptation called “*Urge Surfing*”. Sometimes these tempting times will be as short as 5 minutes or as long as 30, but you need to find ways to fight through these addictive bursts of sexual enticement.

BREAK THE CYCLE: Obsessive thoughts and compulsive actions have to be broken. This can happen, God says so. It will take time to become wise to your *Five-Alarm Fire* temptations. It will take commitment to apply these helpful activities. But by using these and other responses, your mind has the chance to refocus on something else and in so doing, you begin building new neurological pathways in your brain – something positive – something God-honoring. Get started today!

Try all of these Great Activities to respond to your five-alarm fires. See which ones help you the most. Some are SHOCKERS – *Thought Stopping Techniques*. Some are STABILIZERS – Life Anchoring Tools. Add more of your own:



SHOCKERS: These activities STOP your compulsive thinking!

1. **Pray out loud** immediately reaching out to God in earnest! Actually pray out loud, “Jesus, help me!” Renounce the trigger and lustful thought. Take your stand. Try taking a prayer walk.

2. **Make a phone call** to someone from your support group even in minor temptations. Don't let triggers go unchecked. Keep accountable. Have at least 5 people you can call 24/7 and they, you. If you haven't made many encouragement calls you likely won't when tempted either.

3. **Make it Hurt.** Wear an elastic all the time or the *Official Regroup Wristband*. When triggered, pull and snap hard. The sting reminds you that temptation is wrong and your actions are hurting yourself and others. Then, pray for them.



4. **Quote Scripture out loud.** Jesus did. To start with, here are 7 good ones to know by heart:

- *2 Corinthians 7:1- Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*
- *Job 31:1- "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman."*
- *2 Corinthians 4:16-18- ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*
- *James 4:7-10- Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.*
- *1 Peter 5:8-10- Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*
- *2 Cor. 10:3-5- For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God,*
- *1 John 2:15-16- Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.*



5. **Take a whiff.** Buy a box of ammonia inhalant capsules. When your sobriety is threatened, break one open and smell it deeply. It's one of the only gases that goes directly to your brain. It will give you a serious JOLT!



6. **Belt out Worship Music.** Sing your head off – yes, out loud. Create your own play list to anchor you. Choose a worship DVD to watch. Bookmark your favorite YouTube songs.

7. **R-TRIBE Check-In.** Break the silence. If your recovery group is using this great app, check the triggered box. Hopefully one of your wingmen will reach out. Look for their support rolling in.



8. **Take a Cold Shower.** It's the shock value you are after. It's not about punishment – it's about regaining awareness. If the shower is a tempting place, don't get distracted to act out. Cold water only or else chose another *shocker* to wake you up!

9. **Move toward people.** Go public. Go to a coffee shop, a mall or a park. Go to a friend. Don't remain alone. Reach out or get outside.

10. **Burn off Energy.** Try some fitness exercise to get a burn like wall sits, planks, push-ups or sit-ups. Push to your limit. Either get sweating or get moving. Go for a walk or jog. Hit the gym.
11. **Suck it up.** Pop in a sour candy. Eat a lemon. Suck a Fisherman's Friend.
12. **Yell "STOP!"** Don't scare those around you but fully break the silence especially when home alone. This audible assault to your silent secret can break the mental fixation to act out.



STABILIZERS: These activities ANCHOR your life to better habits!

1. **Report in to a friend** for accountability to protect yourself anytime you know you are in a tempting situation or going to be home alone.
2. **Text a friend for help.** Admit that you have been triggered with a sexual temptation. Send a WHAT'S APP group text to the people in the group asking for prayer or a phone call.
3. **Re-read your reasons** for wanting sexual freedom and victory over your addiction.
4. **Grab your Bible.** Read out loud and at least for 15 minutes. Determine 5 key chapters for these times. Here are some great ones: Psalm 25, Psalm 51, Proverbs 5, Isaiah 55, Matthew 5, Romans 8, 2 Corinthians 1, 2 Corinthians 4, 1 Peter 2 & James 1. Mark and go to your favorites.
5. **Absorb Good Stuff.** Read, watch or listen to some sexual recovery material that exposes the nature of your addiction. Start with the DFR Recovery Podcasts and Video Talks.
6. **Create a personalized inner convincer.** It could be a symbol, an object, a photo or an image.
7. **Talk in the mirror.** Visually look at yourself. Repeat the truth out loud about what God wants and what you want – FREEDOM! Challenge the enemy and deny the addictive lies.
8. **Review the Outcome.** Put on paper what happens when you act out – remember all the dark feelings, regrets, and lousy consequences. Keep this with you all the time.
9. **Write a love letter** or a card to your spouse or future spouse.
10. **Journal the truth.** Write out the temptation, understanding the triggers, the spiral and the attacks of the enemy. Expose it for what it is.
11. **Journal the Hope.** Write out a prayer to God. Write a poem, a song or your story of freedom.
12. **Celebrate your Victories.** Keep track of how many times you fought off the temptation.
13. **Create a Personalized Visualization:** Picture what's important to you. If married, think about your love for your wife and family. If single, focus on the details of your Wedding Day.