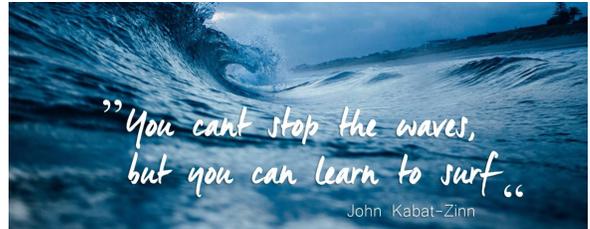


URGE SURFING

IMPORTANT POINTS:

- What is an urge? A strong desire or impulse.
Examples: the impulse to...
 - ...itch your body, swallow your saliva, blink your eyes, sneeze, cough, speak, stand, leave, yell, drink, eat, use drugs, smoke, lash out, quit, laugh, sleep
- Urges peak between 20 – 30 minutes, if we do not fight them. If we notice the urge without battling it, then it will go away.
- If we go to battle with our urges (e.g., “I can’t stand this! I have to get rid of this feeling right now!”), the urge will take longer to go away.
- Giving in to urges makes them stronger, and more difficult to stop in the long run.



HOW TO SURF AN URGE:

- Sit in a quiet place, and close or relax your eyes.
- Think about the urge that you want to surf. You can only surf one urge at a time.
- Mentally scan your body. Figure out where you feel the urge most strongly (for example, your mouth waters when you are experiencing an urge to drink).
- Imagine that your urge is like an ocean wave.
 - Waves are small when they start, grow big, and then break up.
 - Watch the waves rise and fall over and over again as the intensity of your urge gets stronger and weaker.
 - Pay attention to your breath. Use the breath as a surfboard until the urge passes. No matter how big the wave gets or how much you feel as if the wave will swallow you, use your breath to ride each wave that comes.
 - As you’re riding the wave, you may find it helpful to silently describe the sensations in a neutral way (e.g., I notice my hand itches. The urge to itch is getting stronger. I want to use my other hand to itch it. With each breath, the itch is getting weaker.)
- Practice surfing the urge waves for 1 minute. Add 1 minute each time you practice.

WHEN TO URGE SURF:

- When you notice urges to go back to an old habit that you are trying to stop.
- When you notice yourself having a strong impulse.
- Practice daily, that way you can urge surf when you feel very strong urges or impulses.
- People find that listening to an audio recording of the technique is useful at first (<http://depts.washington.edu/abrc/mbrp/recordings/Urge%20Surfing.mp3>).

With practice, urges will become easier to ride out. You will be able to stick to your goals, instead of being controlled by your urges.