

RULES OF RELAPSE



If you are serious about recovery, relapses can feel extremely frustrating because of the shame that comes along with it and reflecting on how much others are disappointed in you. We start beating ourselves up for our inability to change, feeling like we will always be stuck. But with a new look on relapse, we can begin to see them as valuable moments of learning wherein we can give insight regarding how to fortify weak areas. Here are 5 rules to follow each relapse to help you turn your relapses into valuable learning experiences.

RECORD IT. On a piece of paper--ideally in a journal, write down what happened. Remember the 4 S's:

- Surroundings: In what ways were my surroundings dangerous? Where were others when I was relapsing? Did I have filters or other guards in place?
- State: How was I feeling leading up to the relapse? How did I let this disconnect me from others?
- Self-talk: What was my self-talk leading up to the relapse? In what ways did I rationalize or justify my behavior? What role did shame play in how I spoke to myself?
- Scheming: How have I been prepping myself and planning to be able to look at porn?

REWRITE IT. If you could do the experience over, what should you have done differently? This isn't to shame you, but to help you learn from the process and to help you rewire how you think. As you see where you went wrong, it's important you identify what you need to do the next time so that you don't make the same mistake over and over.

REPORT IT. Within 24 hours, you need to share with your accountability partner what happened and how you intend to rewrite it next time. It imperative you stick to the 24-hour rule. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to not talk about it causing you to forget details and put off talking about it altogether. Technically, 24-hours is a very generous amount of time and the further you are in your recovery and repentance, the less and less time you should need to report it with the ultimate goal that you no longer have anything to report because you spoken with your accountability partner before anything could happen.

RELEASE IT. Don't beat yourself up about the experience time and time again. Yes, guilt is important to change, but constantly berating yourself for your mistake leads to shame which causes feelings of worthlessness and subsequent hopelessness. You made a mistake, but you are not the mistake. Glean the lessons you need from it so that it helps you to change, and then let it go.

RESUME. Continue on the path you started. Sometimes those who relapse discuss it as starting over as though all progress and growth up to that point had been lost. Yes, there needs to be some re-adjusting, but the key is to remember the progress you have made, the things you have learned, and to resume to course toward being whole.