

“How do I avoid falling back into old habits such as swearing?”

Habits are powerful and can be a good thing if they're positive. For example, it's great to develop the habit of smiling, praying daily, and exercising regularly. But, as you know, habits are harmful when they involve negative behaviors.

To avoid falling back into old habits, replace them with positive ones. That will take a lot of faith, effort, and conscious thought. To help you, use reminders, prayer, and the support of others. Plus, you'll need to change your thoughts.

“As you learn to control your thoughts, you can overcome habits, even degrading personal habits.” That was the counsel of President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in the April 2008 issue of the *New Era*. He recommended the influence of good music, especially hymns, to help you control your thoughts. If you memorize a hymn, he said, you can think of its words and music when you need a worthy place for your thoughts to go.

In your efforts to change your habits, don't forget the Savior's promise: “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20). With the Lord's help, you can change. **NE**



Make a Goal to Stop

To overcome a bad habit such as swearing, make a goal to stop. Write this goal in your journal or somewhere you can see it daily. As soon as you catch yourself falling back into your habit, stop immediately. Realize that the devil wants you to continue your bad habit. Invite the Spirit by reading your scriptures and praying to Heavenly Father for guidance.

Kayla P., 14, Arizona



Four Things That Have Helped Me

Pray. Tell your Father in Heaven you want to avoid falling back into old habits. Second, have faith. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ only want the best for you. Have faith that They will help you. Third, search and ponder. Read your scriptures, *For the Strength of Youth*, and your patriarchal blessing, for they will help you and guide you. Last, take action. Choose friends who use clean language, who support you in avoiding old habits. Heed the guidance of the prophets and apostles, for they will not lead you astray. I know this is true, mainly because I have had to fix my old habits as well. I don't regret that I heeded this counsel. It has truly helped me.

Allison H., 17, Arizona



Be Around the Right People

Hang out with people who don't have the habit you're trying to break.

Then you may not even think about it because you're around people who don't do it. If it's swearing, sometimes there's social pressure to use inappropriate language. The solution: don't hang out with people who swear! Not only will you no longer find a use for it, but you will feel spiritually uplifted.

Gates K., 17, New Jersey

Use Incentives

I have found that incentives really worked when I have tried to quit old habits. You can start out by going a week or a month without doing whatever it is you are quitting. At the end of that time, do a little something you enjoy. You can even get a friend to help you. You and your friend can work on quitting something together. It's much easier to overcome a habit because you have someone checking up on you and encouraging you. At the end of the month, do something with each other like a party.

Theresa D., 17, New Mexico

Get Others to Help You

One way that works well is to have others help you, such as friends and family. Determine who you usually swear around. Then, with help from the Lord, build up enough courage to let those people know that you're trying to stop swearing. Tell them that you want them to catch you when you swear. If you feel you cannot ask those people, put your confidence in a close friend or family member who is often at your side. Most importantly, don't

forget to thank your friends, family, and especially the Lord for helping you once you've overcome your bad habit.

Jessie T., 18, British Columbia



Apologize and Repent

Whenever you feel like swearing, try to not say anything at that time, or say something good. If a

swear word accidentally slips out, then repent, apologize to the people you were around, and apologize to yourself.

Sheleyse K., 13, Utah

The Wonderful Feeling of Doing What's Right

If you're afraid you might go back to old habits, stay close to the Church. Read your scriptures, pray daily, love your parents, go to church, and always smile. Hang out with friends who would always support you. There are times when I feel like going back to my old habits, but when I remember all the wonderful feelings of doing what's right, I know I don't want to go back. We don't have to be afraid as long as we're doing what's right. Remember, even if you're alone, there are thousands of youth in the world who are supporting you.

Marla O., 20, Micronesia

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I get to know people who are not Church members, be a good example to them, and invite them to church when I can't spend time with them because they hang out at places I shouldn't go?"

Send your answer by June 15, 2009, to:

New Era, Q&A, 6/09

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:

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STAKE (OR DISTRICT)

I grant permission to print response and photo:

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PARENT'S SIGNATURE (IF YOU ARE UNDER 18)



HOW TO CORRECT A HABIT

To anyone who has followed the practice of using profanity or vulgarity and would like to correct the habit, could I offer this suggestion?

"1. Make the commitment to erase such words from your vocabulary.

"2. If you slip and say a swear word or a substitute word, mentally reconstruct the sentence without the vulgarity or substitute word.

"3. Repeat the new sentence aloud.

"Eventually you will develop a nonvulgar speech habit."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Thy Speech Reveals Thee," New Era, July 2007, 5.