



Differential Habit Management William C. Patterson, Ph.D.



Special Terms & Acronyms

Differential Habit Management (DHM) • Incremental Epoch (IE) • Unit of Indifference (UI)
Zone of Indifference (ZI) • Action Space (AS) • Habit Unit (HU) • Triangle of Trouble (TT)
Pile of Patience (PP) • Constructive Replacement Habit (CRH)

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians:10.13

Differential Habit Management (DHM) is a methodical approach to breaking bad habits intended to complement Spiritual ways of purification (sanctification) found in the Holy Bible. The latter puts God into the picture as motive power for goodness, healing, relief. By positioning for positive change in the power of love, success can be assured.

All power is given unto me (Jesus Christ) in heaven and in earth. Matthew 28.18

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,
ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. John:15.7*

The DHM protocol is designed to make habit change incremental, that is, give the Holy Spirit a more gradual path or “hill” to negotiate. God is all powerful, but He metes out energy (and thought) to Sons in right and appropriate human units. Accordingly, it takes time to overcome an offending habit. But God also is rich in both patience and discipline you can draw upon if you keep Him intimately involved with the process of relief, of purification, or deliverance.

It is my opinion that any habit locked in the body will surrender to Spiritual DHM. Having some understanding of the Spiritual precursor of change, the DHM methodology can now be more fully elaborated. Grasping the process is easier if a few destructive habit examples common in American life are given, instead of speaking in habit generalities.

Beating the Smoking Habit



Over several decades, Americans have become educated about the unhealthy consequences of smoking. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S.A. Medical community research has linked smoking directly to lung cancer fatalities, and identified it as an indirect accelerator of several other fatal diseases. The Surgeon General issues the warning of ill health on every pack of cigarettes. If print alone could save you from this habit, there already is enough in print to raise awareness and sway the population away from smoking.

Government and businesses have outlawed smoking on the premises due to medical research that acknowledges a link between passive smoking (inhaling cigarette smoke exhaled by others) and disease or death. Understanding even these subtleties has not spared all from hazards of the smoking habit. About 1 in every 100 deaths worldwide is from second-hand smoke.

I was never a smoker, but several times appealed to friends, especially Christian friends, to abandon smoking out of love for their spouse and family. My reasoning was that your choice to smoke will rob those you love most in this world from your presence, from your love, if you die early through this insidious habit. I credit the power of love (God is love. 1 John:4.8) for turning many to smoke-free, longer-life living. Even without DHM, love power can make the vital difference.

As I already mentioned, DHM affords the opportunity to free yourself from the habit of smoking on a gradual basis. Heavy smokers might consume 1 or 2 packs of cigarettes a day. Let's say the habit is 1 pack a day, and a pack contains 30 cigarettes. Your goal isn't to stop "cold turkey" all at once. DHM philosophy invites you to wean away from the habit by smoking only 1 or 2 less cigarettes at first. Key to the process is finding the Unit of Indifference (UI): an increment of habit reduction that your body is unable to detect. So, you might take the pack you would normally consume and remove 1 cigarette from it at the beginning of the day. Throw the UI away, and forget about it. As you smoke the DHM pack over the course of the day, you are not likely to notice that it held one less cigarette. Neither will your craving body notice that it smoked 1 less. Your physiology is not precise enough to sense a difference between smoking 29 or 30 cigarettes over the course of a day. It cannot detect so small a change in habit (3%). A margin of one cigarette might be regarded as within the Zone of Indifference (ZI). You may not know what your total ZI is. Perhaps you could drop 2 cigarettes from the daily habit (7% change), and the body won't miss it. Maybe as many as 3 cigarettes a day (10% change) defines the true ZI. You don't have to find the ZI limits, just remain at or below the limit. The key is to succeed at reducing the habit, not necessarily reducing it most efficiently or rapidly.

Invoking patience, you might stay at the 29-cigarettes-a-day habit for several days. You can fool the flesh on a *sustained* basis if the magnitude of change is not too great. After a week or two at 29 cigarettes, when your body has accommodated the habit reduction, you might re-set the daily pack to 28 cigarettes. Again, your body likely won't notice the 3% difference that day, or for several days. It will again adjust gradually and rather painlessly to the 28-cigarettes-a-day appetite. Patiently stay with the 28-cigarette packs for a week or two or longer, until the body is completely comfortable with the reduced intake. For the Third Incremental Epoch (E3), remove 3 cigarettes from the daily pack in the morning, and gradually let your physiology begin to adjust to the 27-cigarette level of nicotine (the habit forming ingredient).

These few iterations within DHM allow you to see the emerging gentle *weaning pattern*, so I don't need to continue ratcheting down the DHM pack to clarify the process. We can now define a general DHM model for reducing or eliminating cigarette smoking:

Existing Habit (H1)	Zone of Indifference (ZI)	Unit of Indifference (UI)	Incremental Epoch (IE)	Steady-State Goal (H2)
H1 = 30 cigarettes/day	ZI = 3 cigarettes <i>Maximum Imperceptible Change (10%)</i>	UI = 1 cigarette <i>Convenient Imperceptible Change (3%) w/in ZI</i>	E = 1-2 weeks <i>Physio-Adaptation Time After Each Habit Decrement</i>	H2 = 0-2 cigarettes/day <i>Replacement Habit</i> Busy hands w/ cell phone if smoking urge recurs

Beating the Alcohol Habit



For several decades, it has become understood that hard drinking (imbibing alcohol-bearing beverages) is bad for your health. Medical research has linked drinking directly to cirrhosis of the liver (10%-20% of all cirrhosis cases) and alcoholic hepatitis (35% of all hepatitis cases), and indirectly to 1/3 of all automobile fatalities. Operating a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol level above 0.08% is illegal, and can cost your license to drive. A drunken mind is dangerous, especially behind the wheel of a car.

Alcoholism can remove you from gainful employment, drain your wealth, cost you family life, and put you on skid row. Alcoholics Anonymous, a Christian program of rehabilitation, has had greatest success in relieving alcoholism. Of greatest benefit to society, families, and individuals is to *never start* the drinking habit. There must be a zillion non-alcoholic beverages available today. Best advice is to develop a taste for something non-alcoholic, and choose those at the refreshment bar. Your better drinking habit just might keep you from entering the doorway of hard drink that can close behind you and never let you back out.

I was never much of a drinker, so I have not had to deal with alcohol addiction. You might say that I have the freedom to drink anything I want, since I do not indulge to a lapse of self-control:

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in **drink**, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Colossians:2.16*

In my circle of friends, associates, fellow believers, family, public strangers, and countless witnesses, there certainly are some who struggle with an alcohol habit or a genetic propensity for alcoholism. For these *vulnerable brothers*, setting a purer example regarding alcohol is a loving gesture that might save their life, liberty, and happiness. Christianity generally counsels abstention as an act of love:

*It is good neither to eat [meat], nor to drink wine, nor **any thing** whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Romans:14.21*

For those with a drinking habit, and wanting to reduce or eliminate it, DHM might help. Like victory over smoking, the drinking habit is easier beat gradually. Instead of individual cigarettes, the *Habit Unit* might be an ounce of alcohol. Of course there are variations on this: bottles of beer, glasses of wine, shots of whiskey, etc. For our example here, let us assume that the person needing relief is consuming 100 proof whiskey (50% alcohol) in three 1.5 ounce shots every day, each with a 6-ounce water chaser. Further assume they want to completely eliminate the habit.

One easy way to increment out of the habit without shocking the body might be to progressively dilute the shot glass portion. A 1.5 oz shot registers a volume of about 43 milliliters (abbreviated ML). Let's suppose that the Zone of Indifference is 2 ML, that is, the body cannot tell the difference between consuming 43 ML of 100 proof whiskey or 41 ML of 100 proof whiskey (5% change) diluted with 2 ML of plain water. For day one in the DHM protocol, use a measuring cup graduated in ML to pour yourself exactly 41 ML of 100 proof whiskey. Add 2 ML of water to it.

Have 3 of those throughout the day, with chaser, and the body should not even notice the loss of 6 ML of 100 Proof alcohol from the daily habit. Stay with that protocol for a week or so, then cut back to 39 ML of liquor + 4 ML of water for Incremental Epoch 2. Stay with that awhile, letting the body grow accustomed to that chemistry during the second change epoch. Some bars “water down” their drinks in small ways like this, and customers seldom detect the difference.

Once again, you can see the pattern of DHM emerging, so I don’t need to continue ratcheting down the DHM drink potency to clarify the process. We can now generalize a DHM model for weaning away from hard alcohol:

Existing Habit (H1)	Zone of Indifference (ZI)	Unit of Indifference (UI)	Incremental Epoch (IE)	Steady-State Goal (H2)
H1 = 4.5 oz/day of whiskey <i>3 episodes of 1.5 oz (43 ML) shots + chaser</i>	ZI = 5 ML whiskey <i>Maximum Imperceptible Change (12%)</i>	UI = 2 ML whiskey <i>Convenient Imperceptible Change (5%) w/in ZI</i>	E = 1-2 weeks <i>Physio-Adaptation Time @ After Each Habit Decrement</i>	H2 = 0 oz/day whiskey <i>Replacement Habit</i> Gradually transition to a tasty non-alcoholic drink.

Other Habit Challenges Potentially Responsive to DHM



Arguing
Cell Phone Over-Use
Cheating
Commercial Sex
Consumer Card Debt
Deceiving
Gambling
Hyper-Activity
Hyper-Sexual Activity
Lying
Over-Eating
Over-Talking
Painkiller Drugs
Screen Watching
Sedentary Living
Speeding
Staying Up/Out Late
Street Drugs

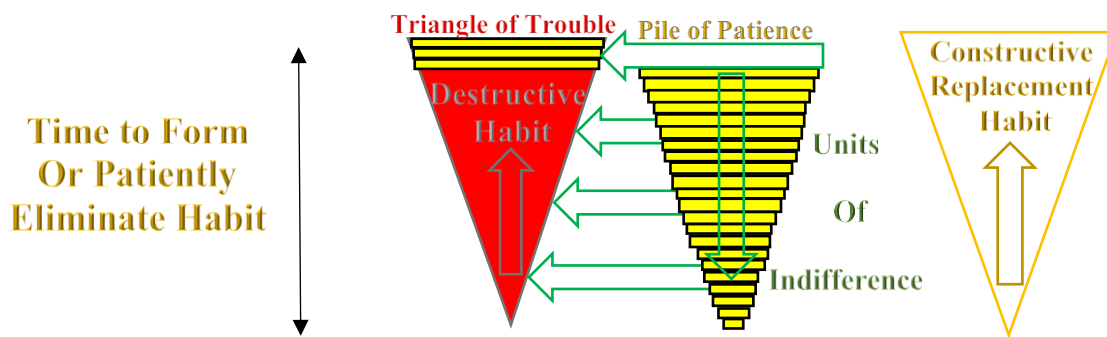


Closing Reflections . . .

Habits that overcome us often characterize as “lust” or “passion.” Ideas may sway the mind, get us to think a certain way. But hormones, drugs, foods, drinks, and other substances set the body in motion inwardly with miry passion. You might think of this mind-body contrast as a parallel between moving air and moving water (latter is nearly 800 time more dense and forceful). Air in motion can certainly push our fragile human bodies around. But water in motion is ever so much more forceful, and can do much more damage. When we can lick our temptations in the mind (our heaven, our airspace), before they lock into the body in passionate, compelling habits, we can live a more victorious, problem-free life. When faulty ideas move unopposed from the mind into body behavior, into daily habits, they stir us like whirlpools of massive water, like tsunami waves crashing on our shore. They are tougher to withstand, tougher to deter, tougher to calm.

If you live close to the Lord in your thought life, you will master the temptations while they are yet small, light, low velocity winds of change. God furnishes moment-by-moment preventive maintenance. Abandon Him, go it alone, and you let yourself fall prey to increasing whirlwinds of error and enticing words of deceptive misleading. The mind’s defeat becomes the body’s inherited heavy burden. God ever and always has power to save, to forgive, to heal. But damage control is so much easier if you live with vigilance that God lovingly provides. Read, pray, sing, and meditate often in His Name, and you will walk securely on streets of gold threading the happy side of life.

Modern times are richer, easier times. Frontier dreams are now daily realities that frequently occasion overdoing. You might say today’s temptations to over-indulge are all around us. Accordingly, managing habits easily begun, but soon demanding abandonment, defines a new frontier, new theater of challenge, new testing ground for modern living. If you do get blind-sided and fall into something overburdening, the DHM philosophy suggests making corrective moves in small steps, patiently, progressively. Change within the Zone of Indifference can be painless, easy, regret-free. DHM is a protocol that keeps the mind in charge of the body, compensating for its inertia by composing tiny steps of recovery little felt and unopposed by the flesh.



The above summary graphic depicts the unwanted habit as an inverted red triangle. Bad habits usually start small and grow (upward) into a widening *Triangle of Trouble*. DHM starts its incremental habit reduction at the troubled top maxima, working down. Yellow differential slices are the *Units of Indifference* incrementally applied through time to cut down the habit. Snapshot of progress is after 3 *Incremental Epochs*, 22 more UIs and IEs waiting in the whole *Pile of Patience* on the right. Habits fill our *Action Space* of life. When you remove a destructive habit, it is wise to refill the void incrementally with a *Constructive Replacement Habit*.

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