



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 selfish 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. You have to stop these negative thoughts in their tracks!

A WINDOW TO ESCAPE: In that moment or two when you have done something to be 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 momentarily derailed. It is at this time you must add replacement behaviour to further strengthen you to walk away from acting out. These are called **STABILIZERS**. The following activities are designed as first steps to break the downward spiraling of negative lustful thoughts and to keep your body away from destructive behavior.

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. You’ve got to know your triggers. It will take genuine commitment to apply these helpful activities. But by using these and other similar responses, your brain has the chance to refocus on something else – 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: Use These to 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 in your small group even in minor temptations. Don't let triggers go unchecked. Keep accountable. Have 5 people you can call 24/7 and they, you.

3. **Make it Hurt.** Have an elastic band on your wrist all the time. When triggered, pull and snap hard. The sting reminds you that temptation is wrong and your actions are hurting yourself and others.



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 scents that goes directly to your brain.



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 or WhatsApp Check-In.** Break the silence. Check the triggered box in R-Tribe. Admit you need support on WhatsApp. One of your wingmen will reach out. Look for support rolling in.



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

9. **Move toward people.** Go public. Go to a coffee shop, a mall or a park. Go to a friend. Don't remain alone. The opposite of Addiction is CONNECTION.

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. Get sweating and get moving. Hit the gym. Go for a walk, a jog or a ride.
11. **Suck it up.** Pop in a sour candy. Eat a lemon. The bitter tastes will prevent bitter steps.
12. **Yell "STOP!"** Don't scare those around you but fully break the silence. This audible assault to your silent secret can help break the mental fixation to act out.



STABILIZERS: Use These to ANCHOR your life to better habits!

1. **Report in to a friend** for accountability ahead of time to protect yourself anytime you know you are going to be home alone or in a tempting situation.
2. **Text a friend for help.** Admit that you have been triggered with a sexual temptation. Send a ReGroup text on WhatsApp. Ask for support, prayer or a phone call to the people in the group.
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. Re-Watch a ReGroup Video on the DFR website.
6. **Create a personalized inner convincer.** This symbol, object or photo reminds you of what you are fighting for. Replay what you stand to lose with a relapse.
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 addiction 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. Journal your journey.
9. **Write a love letter** to your spouse or future spouse. Focus on your appreciation about them.
10. **Journal the truth.** Write out the temptation, understanding the triggers, the spiral and the attacks of the enemy. Learn all you can about your temptation cycle.
11. **Journal the Hope.** Write out a prayer to God. Write a poem, a song or your story of freedom.
12. **Celebrate your Victories.** Track the many times you fought off the temptation and WON! Keep record of them and reread to be encouraged to keep in the fight.
13. **Create a Personalized Visualization:** Picture what's important to you. If married, imagine a great moment with your wife and family. If single, focus on the details of your Wedding Day.

