



PYT Weekly Training & Support

Lesson #59 **Fixing Your Mistakes**

by Jim Katsoulis

Welcome to this week's lesson. No matter how much you program your mind or no matter how focused or motivated you are, sometimes, you're going to screw up and you're going to make the wrong decision. And this isn't just when it comes to food; this is really in all areas of your life. You're going to screw up and you're going to make mistakes. That's a given.

The secret is – what do we do after that? What do we do after we've made a mistake? Now, with working with so many people, the thing I've noticed even with myself is that we can be so hard on ourselves, and we can keep replaying the mistake over and over and over again in our minds. And when we do that, we not only make ourselves feel bad in the moment, but we also reinforce that behavior for the next time.

This can sound counterintuitive but if you think about a time when maybe you went out to a restaurant and you overate; and then, after, you say, “Oh, why did I do it?” and you keep thinking about yourself overeating and making a bad decision and having no willpower and being horrible when you go out to restaurants and not being able to control yourself, if you keep telling yourself these things and you keep dwelling on it, it makes it more likely that the next time you walk in that restaurant, you'd go into that behavior again because you've been rehearsing it in your mind.

If we take the good or bad out of it, if you keep thinking about what you did badly and you keep thinking about yourself overeating and making the wrong decisions, you keep focusing on it. You keep reinforcing it.

So, what we want to do is to recognize that making a mistake is not the problem; that's unavoidable. We're always going to make mistakes in our lives. What you have control over, though, is what you do about it afterwards.

And, primarily, what I'm talking about right here is how you think about it; and what I want to do is take you through a process. It's very simple and very easy. And the more you can do this to yourself and do this new process, you're going to find amazing changes within yourself. It's a sense of freedom because you're going to begin training your brain to do the things you wanted to do. You're going to give it better suggestions, better instructions; and you're going to reinforce these new behaviors that you want to have.

So, if you think about a time in the past week or two where you've done something that you didn't want to do ... think about some behavior you did where after you were done, you were upset that you did it – some mistake you made or a lapse of judgment.

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And if you think about that thing, what I want you to do is notice that in your mind, you've made a movie of it. There's kind of a beginning to it somewhere and you think about it; and then, there's an end to it – maybe when you're done eating or an hour after you're done eating, whenever.

So, we always do this, and in our minds, we think in movies – pictures, sounds, and we get feelings from it. So, what we're looking to do is to change that up because what you want to take into account now is what you are aware of now and what you know now.

So, the phrase you want to put into your mind here is “knowing what I know now, if I can go back in time, how would I have done things differently? If I could go back in time knowing what I know now, what would I have done differently?” And then, let it play out again differently the way you would like it to.

Now, let me make a quick note here. When you do this, you want to be honest with yourself. So, I'm going to give you an example. An example I like to use is going out to restaurants. That's a common one; but, again, you can use this for everything.

But, say, you went out to a restaurant and you walked in, sat down, ordered the fattening foods that you didn't want to eat, and you ate all of them, and you left feeling completely stuffed, full, guilty, depressed, and upset your yourself.

So, if we look at that, we've now got a movie of that. Maybe you imagine yourself kind of driving to the restaurant, sitting down, eating, and talking with people; and at the end of it, feeling bad and going home. So, that's the movie you've got.

So, what we want to do is play that movie through in our mind. And, ideally, you want to do this with your eyes closed; it'll be easier. We play that movie through in our mind and instead of always feeling bad about it, what we're going to do is stop it at the end and we're going to rewind the whole movie.

And while we rewind it, we want to feel everything going backwards. So, as you imagine watching yourself and hearing yourself ... things going backwards and if you've ever heard movies going backwards that make that weird sound, and you want the feelings going backwards. So, you want to feel the food coming out of your body, the food coming down to the plate.

Just kind of play it around it. If you can't visualize crystal clearly, that's fine; if you can't hear crystal clearly, that's fine. And we want to go into the feelings, though. We want to put all those things together and the movie is going backwards. Then, we get to the beginning of the movie where we haven't eaten anything yet.

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And at this point, this is where we want to make a change. We want to say to ourselves, “What would I do differently now? How would I like to feel differently and what actions would I take differently?”

So, I'd like to start with the feelings because that's usually where you can make the biggest shift and change. So, if you think about it, maybe when you went to the restaurant, you just weren't focused. Maybe you were distracted thinking about the day or you were tired or depressed, frustrated or whatever – celebrating and you weren't thinking about what food you were going to eat.

So, maybe the first thing you need to do if you go back in time is to make yourself a little more aware and focused of how you want to eat and why. Then, maybe you want to bring some energy and some confidence into yourself – a sense of control.

For example, if you felt in control, how would you sit? How would you stand? How would you breathe? My chest kind of goes out a little bit more, my shoulders are back, and my posture straightens when I think of myself as being more in control.

So, I imagine myself at the beginning of this movie now feeling more in control and feeling more focused. So, maybe that's a shift from the initial way that it actually happened. Now, I'm going to say, “What can I do to get myself the best chance of eating well?”

And so, maybe I hadn't eaten for a few hours before then; and as I was going to the restaurant, I was just starving. So, I'd back it up a little bit more and right before I left the house or work, I would drink a glass of water. Maybe, I'd eat an apple or something just so that by the time I get to the restaurant, I wasn't ravenously starving.

So, again, these are just options and ideas.

So, now, I've got two ideas that I think are going to help me out. I've got these feelings that I want to have and maybe I'd drink a glass of water when I imagine that. So, I'd close my eyes and imagine this movie playing through now – that I had this glass of water; I'm feeling more in control and focused on how I want to eat and having fun – going out to a restaurant and having a good time while I stay in control of my eating.

So, now, what I do is I imagine myself driving to the restaurant, walking in, sitting down, and looking at the menu, finding the things that are going to support me, and kind of going through that whole process again but with this new personality and these new feelings – bringing the food out and maybe I'll imagine myself eating a little bit slower. And you kind of go through this whole thing and bring it right to the end when you leave the restaurant.

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And this is where you want to measure it. When you play it through in this new way, with these new resources and these new qualities within yourself, did it change the way you think you would act?

And you test this against reality. Ask yourself, “In reality, if I went out tonight to that same restaurant but I did these new things, I kind of focused on how I felt, I'd drink that glass of water before I went there, would it change how I ate at the restaurant?”

If the answer is yes, great! You've taught yourself something new. If the answer is now, let's add some more things to it. What are some other things I can do to give me more control when I go to a restaurant so that I act the way that I want?

Now, a quick note here, too. This isn't about “how can I just eat perfectly and have a miserable time?” This is about “how can I eat well, how can I have a great time? How can I have fun with my friends or my family or whoever I'm going out to eat with? How can I kick back and relax, unwind, forget about the day and stay in control relatively?”

So, we want to take all these things into account. Now, again, you may or may not have the answers right away, but this is how you train yourself to begin acting in a new way. You need to take the time afterwards.

When you screw up is a great opportunity for you to reprogram your mind. So, instead of reinforcing all the bad behavior, we want to take a step back from it and see ourselves acting in a new way and feeling a new way – feeling that we're more controlled and more focused and we're more confident that we can control how we're eating and have a great time.

Now, finally, when you play this movie through and you say, “Okay, yeah, that's what I would do. I would have drunk some water. I would have gotten myself more focused and energized.” Then, what you do is you imagine yourself doing it 10 or 20 times and you just kind of loop it through.

So, you close your eyes and you imagine yourself driving to the restaurant and doing all those things. When you walk into the restaurant, you're kind of feeling proud and feeling confident that you're in control. This is your new physiological trigger as soon as you walk in a restaurant.

I love going to restaurants – new food and new flavors – and I don't have to do any of the work and I'm staying in control. Maybe I'll just eat half of it; maybe I'll order the healthier thing; maybe I'll eat slower and take smaller bites – whatever it is for you.

And play that through in your mind and just let it loop through. Imagine 10 to 20 times that you went out to this restaurant and you felt in control, and you were able to do and act exactly the way that you wanted to.

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Now, what if you do this and you go out to the restaurant and none of it worked? That's okay, too, because it's guaranteed that something is going to be different if you do this. Something will be different. It may not be right up to your liking, but if that's the case, you go right back and figure out, "What are some other things I need to do?"

I mentioned this in previous lessons and I did this with drinking beer. A lot of times, I'd go out and I would just drink more beer than I wanted to even though I said I don't want to drink a lot of beer. And it wasn't until I brought this process through in my mind and I realized that if I calmed down and relaxed, I could have more fun, the less beer I drink, and I took smaller sips. And that was a big change for me – the smaller sips. For whatever reason, that was a big trigger.

So, once I realized that that's where I could exert my control on the situation, it made it much simpler; and, now, I feel in control and I don't over drink anymore.

So, I hope this helps you. Again, as you bring this through in your mind and you imagine yourself going to a restaurant eating with more confidence and more relaxed and more in control, feel how you eat. Notice if you chew differently, if you put more or less food on your fork, if you smell the food. Notice how your behaviors change when you feel this new way because that's what's going to teach your brain how to act in a new way consistently and congruently.

And do this, please, because, again, beating yourself up is so ineffective and so harmful. And this is your alternative. People like this because this isn't saying like "Oh, I didn't do anything bad; it's okay." It's not saying that. It's saying, "I did something I don't want to do. Let me learn something new to do. Let me learn a better way to be." And that's what this is all about.

"Let me focus on what I want to do, how I want to feel, and how I want to act." And that's what you want to focus on. That's where your brain's got to be, and that's when the changes happen.

So, use this and catch yourself. The first step in this, again, is catching yourself when you're beating yourself up and when you're just assuming that you act negatively or harmfully. When you're thinking that way, shift over and do this exercise for yourself.

You're going to do it forever. I do it all the time because I was always [inaudible] **11:57** when I shift and change in myself. The more you do it, the quicker you can do it; the more you do it, the better you get at it. And the better you get at it, the more you want to do it.

So, it becomes exciting the more practice you get with it. So, I hope this is helpful to you and I'll talk to you next week.

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