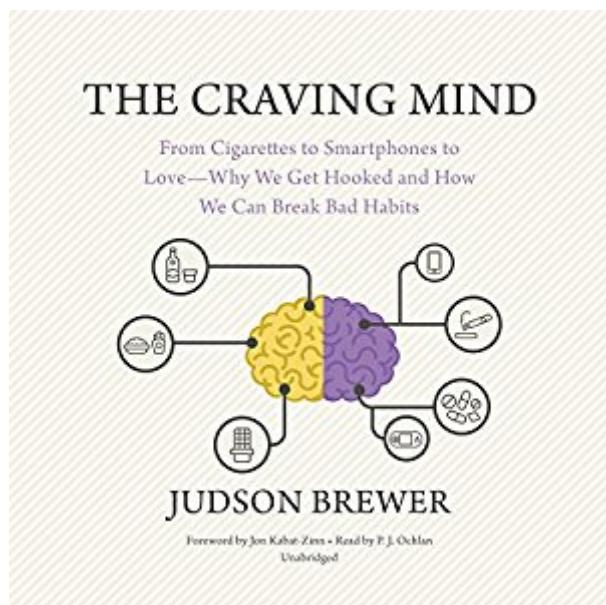


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The Craving Mind: From Cigarettes To Smartphones To Love – Why We Get Hooked And How We Can Break Bad Habits



Synopsis

We are all vulnerable to addiction. Whether it's a compulsion to constantly check social media, binge eating, smoking, excessive drinking, or any other behaviors, we may find ourselves uncontrollably repeating. Why are bad habits so hard to overcome? Is there a key to conquering the cravings we know are unhealthy for us? This book provides groundbreaking answers to the most important questions about addiction. Dr. Judson Brewer, a psychiatrist and neuroscientist who has studied the science of addictions for 20 years, reveals how we can tap into the very processes that encourage addictive behaviors in order to step out of them. He describes the mechanisms of habit and addiction formation, then explains how the practice of mindfulness can interrupt these habits. Weaving together patient stories, his own experience with mindfulness practice, and current scientific findings from his own lab and others, Dr. Brewer offers a path for moving beyond our cravings, reducing stress, and ultimately living a fuller life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As someone who has been overweight more often than not all my adult life, I'm one of the target markets for this book. It took me a while to get through, going about a chapter a day, but I found the effort well worthwhile. The book is an unusual mix of neuroscience (complete with MRI machines), Skinnerian behaviorism psychology, and Buddhist teachings. Since my father-in-law knew B.F. Skinner personally, and considered Skinner a nut case for starting out his daughters in glass cribs so he could experiment on them, I expected to disagree with some of the behaviorism. That part of

the book seemed based on Skinner's book *Walden Two*, which I haven't read. Even so, I found nothing objectionable in the behaviorist portions of this book - they pretty closely matched what I was taught 50 years ago while earning a minor in psychology about an hour from where Skinner lived. The Buddhist teachings were also familiar to me from a Philosophy of Religion course in seminary, and again, not objectionable. The neuroscience is out of my area of knowledge entirely, but seemed quite well documented and credible. And somehow, taken all together, it worked as a gestalt (the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.) What I liked best about the book is that it really helps "peel the onion" (as another teacher once called it) of WHY I eat when I'm not hungry, or more than I should, or foods I shouldn't eat. I'm not much for meditation, and certainly not for the hours on end kind the author likes, but have to agree with his suggestion of taking a moment to just breathe, and staying in that moment rather than focusing elsewhere as a way of noticing what's really going on when I feel an urge to eat. I also found hopeful his assertion that by just noticing and understanding such urges, they can pass away rather than having to be obeyed. For me, the most helpful aspect of the book in the long run may be that the author also has a matching free smartphone app (Eat Right Now), which leads its user through exercises based on the book, a TEDMED talk by the author, and more. I'm only one day into using it, but am impressed thus far at how well it adds a next step of doing to the understanding gained from the book. One other thing I particularly like about this book and app is that their approach can be seamlessly and painlessly added to any other diet or eating plan already in use. For those with other issues than overweight, the author also devotes chapters to several other addictive behaviors, including very hopeful scientific research on its effectiveness in helping people quit smoking. Overall, very good. I'll update in a few months to document whether or not it actually helped me lose any weight. Update 1/25/17: I just discovered the videos and community within the EatRightNow app are only free for the first four days, but the rest of the app still works fine thereafter, and those first days of videos are very well done and helpful. One pound down so far.

OK

Excellent!

Every parent, teacher and person who doesn't know why they fall into cravings and habits should buy this book. Cravings and addiction have reached new, epidemic heights and our youngest are the most vulnerable. Children are walking into traffic because they

can't disconnect from their smartphones. Parents are alienating their families and friends because their phones and facebook control them. And, distracted behavior (enabled through smartphones and social media) is the "new normal," not the exception. With this book, Dr. Brewer reviews the challenges many of us face, and then provides a clear roadmap that shows how to reduce craving, addiction and suffering (with ourselves, our children and families). He shows how mindfulness can easily short circuit destructive habits and addictions. Building on this, he discusses how to reduce distraction and increase focus so that we can better concentrate, learn, grow and be more complete human beings. He illuminates meditation techniques used 2500 years ago to deal with craving, and then he tests these techniques (and their effectiveness) with Western science and technology in neuroscience and clinical laboratories with fMRI machines. The scientific proof is in the book. This book can change your outlook, your behavior and your life. Dr. Brewer has provided us with a gift that can help us be better to ourselves, and more complete, focused and happier with our families and society. For me, I really loved the part of the book discussing states of effortless "flow" that can naturally make us more joyful, focused, content and integrated as human beings. This book is brilliant: powerful, simple, elegant and complex. I have never bought so many copies of a book to give to family and friends in my life. Read it.

Very well written and insightful. Definitely a must read.

Check out this book if you are interested in reducing the anguish of the many big and small challenges we all face. The book brings the elusive topics of mindfulness and Buddhism to the real world. Not really a 'self-help' book but, maybe, a path to stop buying the endless series of 'self-help' literature.

Phenomenally good book! What a great writer. Such ease in covering this topic. I would highly recommend to anyone.(reward)

This is not just yet another book about mindfulness. Brewer lines up the modern science of reward-based learning with the ancient teachings of dependent origination culminating in a comprehensive, accessible approach to understanding human behavior. And it's not just theory but supported by Brewer's research in the fields of neuroscience and addiction. His mindfulness-based treatment model was twice as effective as the gold standard

treatment for smoking cessation. The combination of scientific research and personal experiences presented in the book make the teaching clear and accessible. As a psychologist and meditation practitioner, I have to say this is the best book to date that integrates the science and the wisdom of mindfulness in a way that can be transformational to anyone who ever had a habit they wanted to change. Highly recommended.

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