

Long-Term Relapse Prevention



Breathe,
Believe,
Balance

Stay Free Without Living in
Fear of Slipping

*With
Dennis & Becca*

PART III

LONG-TERM RELAPSE PREVENTION

Stay Free Without Living in Fear of Slipping

You've made it through the hard part.

You've detoxed. You've calmed the noise. You've seen what life feels like when you're not constantly chasing the next hit.

But now comes the real challenge:

Keeping it.

Because dopamine addiction isn't like a broken bone that heals once and stays healed—it's more like weeds in a garden. If you don't keep watch, they'll grow back fast. It's more like gravity. Always pulling. Always waiting. And if you're not careful, you'll slip—slowly, quietly—right back into the same loops you worked so hard to escape.

That doesn't make you weak. It makes you human. But the ones who stay free? They're not stronger. They're just more prepared.

Let's get you prepared.

1. Know Your Warning Signs

You don't relapse out of nowhere.

You slide. Slowly. Quietly. Then all at once.

So the first step in staying free is learning to catch the drift before it becomes a crash.



Watch for:

- You're checking your phone before you even realize it
- Your "rules" get blurry (e.g., "just one video" turns into three hours)
- You feel that low-level guilt again — but you keep doing it anyway
- You're hiding your habits from people who used to hold you accountable
- Silence feels uncomfortable again

If you wait until the spiral is full-blown, it's harder to pull out. But if you catch the first drift, you can interrupt it.

Create your own Red Flag List. Know what your early signs are.

Then decide now: what will you do when you spot them?

2. Build Rhythms, Not Rules

You don't need 20 strict habits.

You need a few non-negotiable rhythms that keep your dopamine baseline stable.

These should become as normal as brushing your teeth. Not impressive. Just... baked into your life.

Examples:

- 60–90 minutes of no screen time after waking
- Weekly digital Sabbath (1 day completely offline)
- No sugar on weekdays
- Phone stays out of the bedroom
- 15 minutes of silence every morning
- Weekly journal check-in: "Where am I slipping?"

Keep it simple. Keep it sustainable.

These aren't punishment. These are anchor points.

They protect your baseline without demanding perfection.

3. Create a Relapse Protocol

This part is crucial. Don't skip it.

You will slip at some point. Maybe not a full spiral. Maybe just a “*bad day*” where you fall into old habits. That's okay. The goal isn't never slipping. The goal is knowing exactly what to do next when it happens. Create a simple 3-step protocol you can follow the moment you catch yourself slipping.

Example:

Step 1: Shut it down immediately (close the app, dump the sugar, go for a walk — break the loop).

Step 2: Write down exactly what led to it (trigger, emotion, excuse, etc.)

Step 3: Re-anchor—do one grounding behavior right away (cold shower, journaling, phone in drawer, silence)

That's it. Don't spiral into shame. Don't negotiate. Don't wait until tomorrow. Just move. Quickly. On purpose.

4. Stay Connected to Accountability

Isolation is relapse fertilizer. When no one's checking in, no one's watching, no one's asking hard questions—it's easy to slip. Your brain knows when it can get away with stuff. So you have to create some form of connection that keeps you honest. This doesn't have to be a coach or a group (though it can be).

It can be:

- A weekly check-in with a trusted friend
- Using a physical tracker or journal
- Monthly “dopamine audit” with yourself
- Sharing your goals out loud with someone who knows your tendencies

Whatever it is, it has to be consistent and real. Not fake Instagram accountability. Actual support.

5. Rewire Your Relationship with Discomfort

Relapse isn't about willpower. It's usually about one thing: avoiding discomfort. Discomfort hits. You panic. You reach. You numb. It's not about the phone or the food. It's about your brain saying, *"I don't like this. Fix it now."*

But freedom lives on the other side of that discomfort. So the more you practice not fixing it immediately—just sitting in it—the more resilience you build.

Here's the mantra that helps:

"This is uncomfortable. But it's not dangerous. And I don't have to fix it right now."

That's how you learn to ride the craving instead of obeying it.

6. Make Peace With Simplicity

There's a point in every recovery process where the silence feels boring. Life feels... flat.

You miss the hits.

You miss the drama.

You miss the spike.

Don't panic. That's normal. That quiet space? That's your nervous system resetting. And it's not actually *"boring."* It's just unfamiliar.

Stay in it long enough, and it becomes peace. It becomes clarity. It becomes the place where your creativity, joy, and purpose start breathing again. But if you chase stimulation again just to escape the stillness...

You'll lose it.

So when life feels slow or quiet or ordinary—good.

You're healing.

7. Check In With a “Freedom Score” Every Month

Here’s a super simple tool to help you stay honest without overthinking it.

Once a month, rate yourself (1–10) on the following:

- Clarity – Is your mind mostly clear, or foggy and scattered?
- Control – Are you running your day, or are your urges?
- Presence – Are you actually showing up, or just reacting?
- Peace – Are you content without stimulation?
- Purpose – Are you moving toward something that matters?

If your score drops, don’t panic. Just adjust. Catch the drift. Recalibrate.

You’re not chasing perfection. You’re staying free. And that means paying attention – long after the reset ends.

You’re not here to live in fear of relapse. You’re here to walk in freedom with your eyes open. Your old loops are always one lazy moment away – but so is your recovery.

The difference is... now you know the way out. And better than that?

You know how to stay out.

