



Addiction: the Road to Nowhere

Positive Emotions – “ I Feel Good ! “

The more we experience positive emotions, the more we seek them....

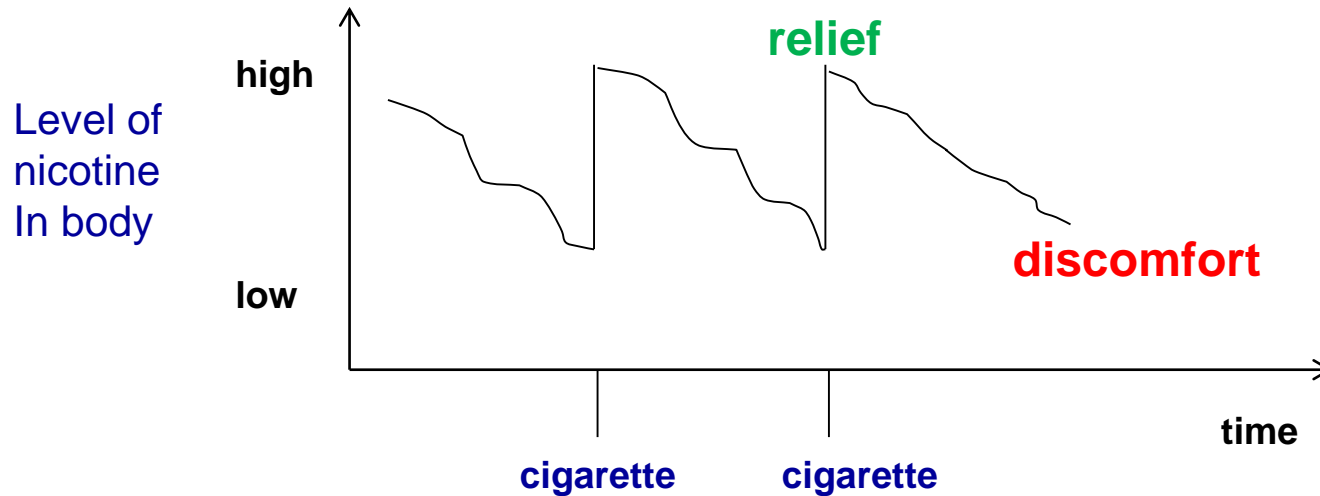
When it is **positive** emotion via healthy habits, eg. giving, volunteering, laughing, exercise, work... etc, the more helpful, adaptive is the outcome. There are minimal adverse consequences.

However, with addictive stimuli such as **drugs, gambling, comfort eating** and **sexual infidelity**, the absence of these stimuli creates negative emotions, and so

We become **addicted** to the reversal of negative emotions and experience this as pleasure, not happiness. See smoking example (next slide).

Effectively, we become addicted to the pursuit of pleasure (hedonism).

The Myth of Enjoyment. Addiction Cycle. Example: Smoking Cigarettes



As nicotine levels reduce in the body, stress builds up (craving / withdrawal). This creates discomfort. A person then smokes to relieve this discomfort. Nicotine levels rise and the person feels 'normal'. The person experiences relief and this is interpreted as pleasure. Hence the *myth* of enjoyment, as smoking is the cause of stress or discomfort in the first place. And so it becomes addictive. The new normal. To *avoid* our discomfort by continuing to smoke. The same cycle applies to other addictive behaviours eg. gambling, comfort eating, alcoholism, drugs.