

# Dr. Jud Brewer – Speaking Topics

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## A SIMPLE WAY TO BREAK A BAD HABIT

Can we break bad habits by being more curious about them? Psychiatrist Judson Brewer studies the relationship between mindfulness and addiction — from smoking to overeating to all those other things we do even though we know they're bad for us. Learn more about the mechanism of habit development and discover a simple but profound tactic that might help you beat your next urge to smoke, snack or check a text while driving.

We are all vulnerable to craving. Whether it's a compulsion to constantly check social media, binge eat, smoke, excessively drink, or any other behavior, we may find ourselves uncontrollably repeating. Why are bad habits so hard to overcome? In 2014 Time magazine declared a "mindful revolution" due to its growing popularity and growing body of research suggesting that mindfulness may help to treat a number of health-related problems from smoking to stress eating to anxiety. However, little is known about the underlying psychological mechanisms and related brain processes. Dr. Brewer will discuss recent evidence that helps to unravel these mysteries drawing from both clinical studies and brain imaging research, and how these insights might apply to our own lives.

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## CRAVING

We are all vulnerable to craving. Whether it's a compulsion to constantly check social media, overeat, smoke, excessively drink, or any other behavior, we may find ourselves uncontrollably repeating. Why are bad habits so hard to overcome? Can we learn how our minds work, and even tap into this very process to find a key to conquer the cravings we know are unhealthy for us and foster our natural capacities for awareness and kindness?

Drawing on his clinical work, research studies and development of next-generation therapeutics for habit change, Dr. Brewer will discuss the underlying behavioral and neurobiological mechanisms of why habits are formed and how mindfulness can paradoxically tap into these very processes to uproot them. He will also discuss how we can apply these insights to our own lives.

## HABIT

How do habits form, and why are they so hard to break? In 2014 Time magazine declared a "mindful revolution" due to its growing popularity and research suggesting that mindfulness may help to treat a number of health-related problems from anxiety to addiction. However, little is known about how (and how well) it works. In this talk, Dr. Brewer, a world-

renowned expert in behavior change, will map how our minds form habits, and how we can use mindfulness training to hack this same learning process to break out of unhealthy habits ranging from emotional eating to anxiety. He will highlight the scientific research underlying behavior change using examples from clinical studies of app-based mindfulness training for smoking (Craving to Quit), eating (Eat Right Now) and anxiety (Unwinding Anxiety), as well as brain imaging studies from his lab. He will also show how we can tap into our reward-based learning systems to build our natural capacities of awareness, kindness, and curiosity.

## **RESILIENCE**

Resilience seems to be a buzzword today –yes we all want to be better at bouncing back from adversity. In the medical field, this can be especially relevant due to high rates of empathy fatigue and physician burnout. Yet, how can we learn to become more resilient? Judson Brewer MD PhD is a thought leader in the “science of self-mastery,” having combined over 20 years of experience with mindfulness training with his scientific research therein. He has developed digital therapeutics for anxiety ([www.unwindinganxiety.com](http://www.unwindinganxiety.com)) that in clinical trials have show significant reduction in physician anxiety in burnout. In this seminar you will learn the science underlying how we trip ourselves up, and how we can regain our balance more quickly. You will also get pragmatic tips and practices that you can use to become more resilient in your everyday life - both professionally and personally.

## **HOW THE MIND WORKS**

How does the mind work? Debate and research ranges from philosophical to practical, yet from a pragmatic perspective, we are all creatures of habit. Whether it's a compulsion to constantly check social media, binge eat, smoke, excessively drink, or any other behavior, we may find ourselves habitually repeating. Why are bad habits so hard to overcome? Can we learn how our minds work, and even tap into this very process to find a key to conquer the habits we know are unhealthy for us and open our natural capacities to learn and grow? Can these insights be used to overcome self-generated or self-imposed hurdles that prevent us from being authentic agents of change (coaches, teachers, clinicians etc)? Dr. Brewer, a world-renowned expert in behavior change, will map how our minds form habits, and how we can use mindfulness training to hack this same learning process to break out of unhealthy habits ranging from emotional eating to anxiety. He will explore recent evidence that helps to unravel these mysteries drawing from his clinical experience, translational studies, and more basic neuroimaging research. By helping us map our own minds, he will describe why habits form and simple ways that we can break unhealthy ones ranging from smartphones to stress eating and even anxiety. He will also show how we can use these to build our natural capacities of awareness, kindness, and curiosity.

## **PERFORMANCE**

For decades athletes have pursued the elusive “flow state,” in which performance is at a peak and self-conscious performance anxiety is non-existent. Yet, surprisingly little is known about what flow is, how to tap into it consistently, and what gets in the way. Dr. Brewer, a world-renowned expert in behavior change, will map how our minds form habits that get in the way (e.g. anxiety), and how we can use mindfulness training to hack this same learning process to break out of unhealthy habits and move toward flow. He will explore recent evidence that helps to unravel these mysteries drawing

from his clinical experience, translational studies and more basic neuroscience research. He will also show how we can use these to build our natural capacities of awareness, kindness, and curiosity.

## **EATING**

Stress emotional and mindless eating play a heavy role in setting up and perpetuating unhealthy eating habits. Why? These may be tapping into the same reward-based learning processes that evolved to help us remember where food is - and in modern day are hijacked by both chemical and behavioral addictions (including eating). My lab has studied the addictive process, and how mindfulness targets key links in reward-based learning to help people change their relationships to their vices, including smoking and eating. In this seminar, I will unpack how addictive behavior is formed, how mindfulness specifically helps us change eating habits, and the research we are currently undertaking to study the efficacy and mechanism of digital therapeutic platforms for stress and emotional eating.

## **HACK YOUR MIND FOR BETTER HEALTH**

We are creatures of habit. We often find ourselves repeating habits uncontrollably, whether constantly worrying, checking social media, stress eating, or getting caught up in other self-defeating behaviors that lead to burnout and disconnect us from ourselves and others.

Why are bad habits so hard to overcome? When and how does willpower fail? Are there a key to conquering the cravings we know are unhealthy for us? Can we hack our brain's learning circuitry to break bad habits, and cultivate behaviors and mindstates that support our health and happiness? Join us for a unique experiential workshop on the science of habit change taught by Judson Brewer MD PhD, psychiatrist and neuroscientist, and mindfulness teacher. Through a combination of conceptual learning and direct experiential exercises, this workshop will teach practical tools for anyone looking to bring together a deep understanding of how their mind works with tangible tools for habit change.