

# Understanding Internet Addiction and How an Ancient Meditation Can Help

By Roland Trujillo

I wish to make you aware of a subtle temptation. Remember how I said that things should not leave an impression on us? We should begin each new day clean and with fresh eyes. But things do leave an impression on most of us. We react to things, and that is how the impression is made and becomes imbedded. Especially ones that have some sort of negative suggestion.

In my other books and articles I point out the danger of resentment (and judgment), because of how the emotion of resentment supports negative memories. It lets them in and it sustains them.

It is resentment (often in response to cruelty and tease) that is most likely to leave indelible unhappy memories.

So you must learn to live life on a more even keel, mostly by learning to let go of resentment. The main tool to help you do this is the proper meditation.

But I wish to make you aware of just as dangerous a temptation, perhaps more so because of its subtlety.

Many of us get trapped by a suggestion that we observe or hear that contains an element of naughtiness. We are tempted to revisit it--in the mind, on the internet, or in the flesh--to toy with it.

A typical example is seeing something inappropriate on the internet. Then resenting having been tricked or seduced into seeing it, resenting having been caught off guard, or else being subtly intrigued by the naughty thing, we are tempted to linger or to revisit it. This, of course, is exactly the same as the well known kleptomaniac syndrome.

In the kleptomaniac syndrome a person starts stealing after they are stolen from. But another way the kleptomaniac syndrome begins is when a person is falsely accused of stealing.

Let's say that a person is accused of having stolen, even though she didn't. Then resenting the suggestion, she fights it resentfully, only to eventually give in and then begin stealing.

The suggestion takes hold because of the resentful resistance, which gives power to the suggestion. Such ineffectual resistance leads to the suggestion becoming hypnotic and compulsive. Then the person justifies their compulsion with the logic that "since I'm being accused of it anyway, might as well go ahead and do it."

When a person resents a negative suggestion and then fights it resentfully, he or she is unable to defeat it with resentment. The resentment only makes it stronger.

When you struggle with something resentfully, you are actually giving it power, and seeing your ineffectual resistance, you might throw in the towel and give in to it. That is exactly what the tempter wants.

Since the victims of this syndrome can't defeat the suggestion, they seek to get some benefit from it, even if it is stolen goods, the booby prize of judging others for having made them steal, or in the case of internet addiction, the temporary pleasure and escapism.

So if you accidentally see something inappropriate, don't resent it. Just dismiss it. Don't resent being tricked into seeing it. Don't resent yourself for being excited by it. Go away, do something else. The lingering image will diminish and go away, if you do not resent it, toy with it, or struggle with it. Just stand back mentally from the mental image and let it pass.

If you have resented images in the past or toyed with them, and have developed a little problem with them, overcoming this syndrome will require full awareness and understanding of what has happened. This involves observing the compulsion in the objective state (the proper meditation will help with this). Before, you undoubtedly tried to overcome the compulsion with struggle, but by resenting the compulsion and by struggling with it—the resentful resistance only gave it more power.

However, the technique of proper meditation makes it possible to mentally stand back and objectively observe the resentment, the compulsion, and the symptoms without adding any new resentment toward self, the symptoms, other's reactions, or the person who originally seeded it. Passive observation in the meditative state will permit the person to reject the false belief and dissolve the suggestions, also passively observing lingering symptoms and behaviors out of existence.

In order to avoid the syndrome getting a foothold in the first place, you must go through life as aware as possible. Never make anything too important. Learn to stand back from emotions. Watch out for resentment. If you accidentally see something you didn't want to see (like when you stumble on someone doing something naughty or accidentally see something inappropriate on the internet), don't resent it. Meditate for objectivity and passively observe lingering images or thoughts until they dissolve away or lose their power to distract you.

Beware of anything that feeds your pride—with some notion like "why don't you try it, just to prove that you are stronger than it." Or notions like "there is no harm in just trying it one time."

Many people try something (visiting an improper website or participating in a foolish act like reading Tarot cards, playing with a Ouija board, or taking a drug), out of resenting a dare or challenge. Then having done it, they are tripped up and become trapped into unfortunate further dalliances and even addiction by resentment toward the object or toward themselves.

Be aware that this syndrome can operate at a very subtle level. The internet, for example, is full of naughty pictures, gossip, lies, rude things, and enticing offers to buy things we don't need.

Remember—the way that improper appeals get to you is to capture your attention and then enlist you to struggle, try, or study. No sooner than something excites or angers you than it already has gotten your body to respond and rise to the challenge of it.

An unwholesome appeal can get to you via the resentment route. You can be tempted to struggle resentfully with some suggestion. You are thus rising to the challenge and voluntarily getting involved. But remember what happens: the lower external thing, through image or verbal appeal, holds your attention and begins to affect your mind and emotions. The connection is made, and through this emotional connection, the influence enters.

Do not rise to any challenge or dare lest you become trapped by trying or struggling.

What is also important to realize is that the assent (to improper things) is not often an overt giving over of one's will, it is more likely a subtle letting go and permitting something to have its way with you. It is like the hypnotic induction process but one in which evil itself is the hypnotist. Whenever we give into some indulgence, when we revisit an improper site, when we give in for peace, and when we give in to some dreamy fantasy, we are giving ourselves over to whatever stands behind the seduction and we are easing ourselves down another notch to less control and ultimate slavery.

It is also important to note that resentment and struggle are also a giving up of one's will. The logic is this: if someone dares you to do something, and you take up the dare, you are doing their will. Likewise if you resentfully struggle, you are giving your will to the struggle—a struggle you were tempted into.

Perhaps now you can see the critically important value of the skill of passive observation. This skill, which is learned with the proper meditation, permits you to stand back and observe the wrong without resentfully struggling with it on the one hand, nor giving in to it on the other.

Once a person gets caught up in something with which he has been toying, that temptation (whether an idea, image, or activity), becomes a subtle familiar friend. Feeling a vague sense of anxiety over our trivial pursuits (or guilt for our recent failings) makes the temptations even more enticing. Such things become a handy escape from the guilt (for using them in the first place). Escaping back into our images, gaming, texting or surfing temporarily takes away the anxiety—only to increase our guilt, which we feel as anxiety, setting us up for another round of escapism.

What we are really escaping from is conscience gently tapping on the door of our mind and calling us back to the innocence we once knew before we went whoring with our diversions. We are escaping from the discomfort of seeing the truth about ourselves. So each reaching and escape just adds another layer of guilt and more anxiety. Remember, I have always said that conscience is your closest link to God. If you no longer feel conscience as conscience, but just sense it as anxiety, it is a sign that you have dwelled in the imagination so much that now you are numbed to conscience. You are to that extent farther from God and His proper guidance and protection.

The guiltier we are and the lower we sink, the lower the tease we need to hold us apart from conscience. We sink to lower and lower thoughts, images and intrigues to save us from the pain of conscience.

If you sense that part of your life is out of control, now is the time to start to get a handle on it.

However you must know how to properly fight the subtle danger of suggestions and gateway experiences. If you fight with anger and resentment you will lose. If you think you can get away with toying with it in order to enjoy some so called safe benefit (as people toy with virtual images on the internet or in computer games) you will also be drawn in.

Paul said that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Your weapons, said Paul are "the whole armor of God--truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one."

You cannot give these to yourself, but they become available to the soul which realizes that, of itself, it can do nothing; and ceases its struggle and resentment. It is something like resignation, but of a much higher order. Resignation is throwing in the towel (often resentfully) upon seeing that one is losing. Whereas the patient soul realizes that it must stand back and let God deal with the issue as well as manipulative forces.

The soul which is willing to let go of resentful struggle and willfulness, but yet is unwilling to give in to what is not right, and the soul which regrets its defection from God, is qualified to receive grace. This attitude makes it possible for the soul to meditate properly.

You have at your disposal the meditation exercise, which permits you to stand back and observe objectively. The meditation gives you the mental distance you need to observe anything, including the suggestion or the fleeting mental image with the objective stance. From the neutral zone, you stare at it objectively, and in the gaze of objectivity, it loses its distractive power. You are given the power to say no to the improper experience. Staring at the improper temptation in the mind, it melts away.

Objectivity has the power to dissolve improper images. In the objective state you are given the power to stand back, to resist struggling, and to let God deal with what is troubling you. Objectivity also permits you to look at your own compulsions, to see how they came into being, and the power to let go of what you once were under a compulsion to struggle with and ultimately give in to.

Once you begin to discover the marvelous resolving power in the meditative state, which comes from your willingness to face the truth and your desire to have God enter your life, you must remain alert for new temptations that will assail you. Watch out for the temptation to think that "you have arrived," as well as a renewed temptation to visit or toy with something that is forbidden through some notion that you can pull back anytime you want.

Never make anything too important (other than what you know is right in your heart), lest your focusing on it and a hypnotic rapport which develops cause you to forget God and what is right long enough to commit some error while under the spell.

Then upon realizing what you did, there is a tendency to resent it, which of course causes complications. If this should occur, bear the consequences until they resolve. You may have to have this occur a few times or more if you are willful and are used to struggling with mental tease. The pain your error and the resent of it cause you will teach a lesson.

Resentment also opens the door to fears of loss of salvation and so on. Do you see how you open the door to these things through your improper intent, through making things too important, and through not remaining aware?

Should you fall, do not resent seeing your own faithlessness and lack of sincerity. See it and regret it. Realize that you are not good, nor are you above temptation, it is only by the grace of God that you are given the power to resist. Set free from bondage to compulsions and error, should your lack of pure intent and your foolishness result in another round of error, let it be a lesson to you.

Petition God for another chance and wait upon the Lord God Who, unlike you, is faithful. Watch out for foolish ideas such as notions that God is unfair for leading you on and now letting you fall. Do you see how these emanate from the invisible tempter? Stand back and observe these thoughts of doubt and faithlessness. They are not your thoughts. Don't struggle with them or give in to them. Just watch them.