TED - Breaking Bad Habits

**Expressions with habit**

*What do you think these expressions mean? Do they exist in your language?*

He’s been smoking since he was 15 years old and he just can’t **kick the habit.**

When my grandad retired he didn’t stop getting up at 6am and putting a suit on. **Old habits die hard.**

I could never go backpacking I’m too much of **a creature of habit**, I can’t stand changes to my routine.

I’ve always written my essays at the last minute and I normally get good marks. **Why break the habit of a lifetime?**

**TED Talk**

1. What bad habits does he mention?
2. What solution to these bad habits does he suggest?

**Discussion**

1. What do you think of the talk?
2. Do you have any of the bad habits he mentioned?
3. Do you think mindfulness would work for you?
4. Have you ever meditated? Would you consider it?

**Vocabulary Focus**

*Read the sentences from the transcript and discuss the words/expressions in bold with your partner.*

1. When I was first learning to meditate, the instruction was to simply pay attention to my breath, and when my **mind wandered**, to bring it back.
2. Why is it so hard to pay attention? Well, studies show that even when we're really trying to pay attention to something -- like maybe this talk -- at some point, about half of us will **drift off into a daydream**, or have this **urge to** check our Twitter feed.
3. Instead of this hunger signal coming from our stomach, this emotional signal -- feeling sad -- **triggers** that urge to eat.
4. Maybe in our teenage years, we were **a nerd** at school, and we see those rebel kids outside smoking and we think, "Hey, I want to be cool." So we start smoking. The Marlboro Man wasn't **a dork**, and that was no accident.
5. What if instead of fighting our brains, or trying to force ourselves to pay attention,we instead **tapped into** this natural, reward-based learning process?
6. She moved from **knowing in her head** that smoking was bad for her to **knowing it in her bones**, and the **spell** of smoking was **broken**. She started to become **disenchanted with** her behavior.
7. When the prefrontal cortex goes offline, we **fall back into** our **old habits**, which is why this disenchantment is so important.
8. And this is what mindfulness is all about: Seeing really clearly what we get when we **get caught up in** our behaviors.
9. We start to notice that **cravings** are simply made up of body sensations -- oh, there's tightness, there's tension, there's **restlessness**.
10. These are **bite-size pieces** of experiences that we can manage from moment to moment rather than **getting clobbered** by this huge, scary craving that we **choke on**.

**Sentence Completion**

*Complete the sentences with the expressions above.*

1. He was always so \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at school, he couldn’t sit still for a second.
2. I’m a bit weird, whenever I go near the edge of a cliff or a tall building I get the sudden \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ jump off!
3. Don’t worry, everything is going to be alright, I don’t know how but I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. I managed to stop biting my fingernails for 6 months but recently, because of all the stress at work, I have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Most voters are completely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ politics in general and extremist politicians like Donald Trump are simply \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the anger and resentment.
6. When my Mum was pregnant she had strong \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for avocado even though she normally hates them.
7. The earthquake \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a huge tsunami that hit the coast at 10am.
8. When I was at school I always used to get into trouble for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ during class.
9. 3 hours into the film I got a bit bored and my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to what I was going to have for dinner.
10. A man suddenly started to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a prawn and a fellow diner had to give him the heimlich maneuver.
11. I was definitely a bit of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at school but I certainly wasn’t a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
12. I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the excitement of the party that I didn’t realise I had missed the last train home.
13. He caught the rugby ball, turned around and was immediately \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by a huge opposition player.
14. I broke the carrots up into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ so that the children wouldn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ them.

**Discussion**

1. Were you restless at school? Did you use to drift off into a daydream?
2. Do you know the heimlich maneuver? Have you ever choked on anything?
3. Were you a nerd when you were at school?
4. Do you ever get so caught up in something that you lose all sense of time?
5. Do you ever get the urge to do something silly or outrageous in social situations?
6. Do you agree with sentence 5 above? What can we do to change the situation?