

## YOUTH DEPARTMENT

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### Temperance and Self-esteem

There is a saying that goes thus: "*Too much of anything is bad.*" I dare to add that too much of any good thing is equally bad. I guess it is another way of saying moderation is required even for good things.

Temperance is commonly described as moderation or practising self-control. When viewed in this light, it is as good as saying it is the opposite of gluttony. Temperance is more than just the opposite of gluttony, more than moderate use of anything harmful; rather it is practising self-control even in the use of everything good and completely shunning what is harmful.

Certain issues and objects, which are not necessarily human, are defined along the line of gender. For instance, a ship is connoted as feminine, often referred to as a 'she,' as is earth referred 'mother earth.' A close look at these feminine connotations is not along the line of weakness, but in portrayal of these largely feminine qualities - resilience, endurance, patience, or ability to reproduce, to mention a few.

Temperance, on the other hand, is ascribed masculinity – a manly virtue. I suppose this emanates from the idea that men are strong, and strength is a manly quality. While our talk is not about the appropriateness of manly ascription to temperance, there is no denying the fact that temperance is a virtue that connotes strength. How temperance comes to be seen as a virtue in nature is obvious when it is considered as accepting to live by all that is good and shunning all this apparently bad.

If all vices are shunned and voice is not given to sayings such as; "*...moderation in practising of vices*", "*Who cares? A person has to die of something some day*", we will definitely have a different self-view. The question is, how do you view yourself? Your self-perception determines how you will 'use' yourself.

If we choose to be temperate there is a greater chance of ageing gracefully and longevity. Forget about statements like; "*any vice we have in our lives should be done in moderation*", "*at least we will have to die of something some day*". The over - mode should be taken out completely from any activity – whether it be a good thing, a traditional vice or something less apparent such as working. Even workaholics also have to practice temperance to know when to relax and play.

To be temperate is to have better health: A lot of how you view yourself is tied to body weight and your perception of what the right body size should be. Without necessarily supporting obesity and at the same time, acknowledging God's love for diversity in all spheres and areas of life, I strongly believe that if God wanted everyone to be slim or fat He would have structured and coded the human gene to fit permanently either way. I believe He has coded an appropriate body size and weight for our well-being, for all manner of shapes and sizes. So there is an appropriate body size, which helps ensure each individual to stay in good health.

Being overweight only makes you sick and low in spirit all the time. When you're sick you have to be on medication. Excessive use of medication and frequent visits to the doctor, including specialists – chiropractor or psychotherapist – means parting with substantial amounts of money as a result of social problems created by addictions or over-indulgences.

Temperance (defined as moderation in healthful things and total abstinence from harmful things) could lead to much better health. It could lead to improved self-esteem, desire for exercise, mental stability, married life, family relationships, etc. Having better health is also MUCH better for your wallet.

Taking a decision to adopt into your lifestyle moderation, self-control, self-discipline, and temperance all lead to a more frugal lifestyle. It is not going to cost you any money, or induce economic loss.

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Take a look at some empirical evidence from some of the experts at:

The Simple Dollar: <http://www.thesimpledollar.com/2007/11/21/the-expenses-of-a-soda-pop-addiction-and-how-to-defeat-it/>

### The Expenses of a Soda Pop Addiction - And How to Defeat It

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Bookmarks: del.icio.us, reddit

My wife and I have both been addicted to soda for many years. On an average day, I would drink six cans of soda and my wife would drink four cans, meaning we would go through ten cans a day at our house.

#### The Direct Costs

We would typically buy soda by the case from Sam's Club, where we would pay about \$5 for a package of 24 cans. At a rate of ten cans a day, that means we'd blow through a case in about 2.4 days, meaning our cost for our soda pop addiction was about \$2 a day.

But that's not all. Probably twice a week, we would buy a soda from another source, costing roughly \$1.50 each. That's another \$6 a week on top of the \$15 a week we would spend on the canned soda. This adds up to a **total cost of almost exactly \$3 a day for our soda habit.**

That doesn't seem like much at first, but let's stretch that out to a year. Over 365 days, that \$3 a day turns into \$1,095 – almost an extra house payment. If I make that extra house payment each year instead of buying the soda, we could actually pay off our house eight years earlier.

#### The Indirect Costs

There are a number of indirect costs to consider as well. Each of these effects adds up to a number of costs, either directly financial or indirectly via negative social effects. While it's difficult to calculate costs of these, the costs are real and should be considered.

**Obesity** Soda essentially adds calories to water, meaning that you're consuming more calories by drinking soda than by drinking equivalent amounts of water. Unless you're burning those calories, they're going to contribute directly to weight gain (or at least difficulty in weight loss).

**Tooth decay** Soda contributes to tooth decay, even if you're extremely diligent with tooth care. If you value personal appearance, know that later in life, your consumption now will likely have very negative effects on your teeth later.

**Bone weakening** Phosphorus, a common ingredient in soda, contributes to bone weakening by depleting bones of calcium. Early in life, this isn't much of an issue; late in life, however, you'll regret all of those sodas.

**Caffeine dependence** If you're a regular user of a caffeinated beverage, you know quite well about the negative effects of withdrawal: headaches and lethargy, for starters. Your body begins to assume that a certain level of caffeine is "normal" and thus doesn't react well when there is no caffeine.

#### Killing the Addiction

As a result of this information, several months ago I made a sincere effort to kick the soda addiction – and it worked. (I might drink one a week now – far, far better than the ten a day I was drinking. Here are some powerful tips for kicking the habit.)

**Try starting the habit kicking on a Friday.** For me, the second and third days were the hardest, as I had a deep headache and wanted to sleep a lot. Thus, it was very nice to have those pains on a weekend where I *could* sleep a lot.

**Whenever you crave a pop, drink a big glass of water.** I came to discover that my cravings for pop were actually cravings for caffeine and for hydration. By drinking water, I was taking care of that hydration demand. However, for the first few days, I drank a *lot* of water – more than a gallon each day.

**Try adding fruits to your water.** I found that slicing a lime or a lemon and putting slices of those in the water made it much more palatable to me, especially since my deepest soda addiction was to Mountain Dew.

**Get some support.** My wife helped quite a bit with this, doing far more than her fair share of the housework and child care for a few days so I could sleep and be miserable and have someone to complain to. She did it with charm and aplomb (as she usually does). Any time you take on a major personal challenge, good support makes all the difference.

The best time to get started on the difficult task of kicking an addiction is right now. If you're addicted to soda, take a serious look at what it's costing you and think about making a change for your own good.

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### CONTENTMENT

Practising temperance goes hand in hand with contentment. Having contentment enables one to say “no” when faced with the same temptations that others readily accede.

There is nothing wrong with being described as a strong-willed person especially, if you are known for being a stickler for the right things. Showing restraint, moderation and **contentment** when all others are giving into temptations to splurge is a plus for you. It is actually a clear message to all around you that you are a person with convictions. You know what is best for you and your body, and you will not yield on any ground. With the consequences of intemperance on your body, you are the only one to bear the brunt; no one can share the consequences with you. Of course, friends and family may partially share in the economic and social consequences by empathizing with you but you feel the full effect alone.

If you exercise temperance in the never-ending temptations that present themselves on a daily basis, others will see the results.

One of the best character traits any human being can have and be known for is humility. Being able to show humility in whatever success you have attained on your own given platform is a great show of maturity, a great sense of value and respect for others around you as well as yourself.

Your ability to control your celebration in victory or your mourning in defeat is considered a wonderful show of temperance. (Joseph, Gen. 39 - 48)

Modesty is also a key virtue, which is also described as having great humility. (Moses, Exodus 4)

Are you a parent? Are you planning to be a parent? I guess I don't have to ask, it is taken that such a dream is in the pipeline. Then if you cannot restrain yourself for your own sake, if you cannot live right for your own sake; do it for the sake of others, like your children (children to be), for the legacy that you'll be bequeathing them and the society at large, or for the people who love you. Kids are like sponges, they see parents as best examples of those who know and show the right way of doing things. If you were not showing self-discipline and self-control how would you expect your children to?

**Temperance** is probably the only word that bears heavily on self in a positive way in the interest of self as well as others at the same time.

Doug McManaman describes **temperance** as *'the first virtue that perfects man's ability to act well with one's self from within one's self'*. It is about self-control, self-discipline and the mastery you'll like to gain. Exclusion of temperance is an evidence of low self-esteem, as it is a sign of weakness not to be able to say no and therefore give in because others are in.

Making temperance a part and parcel of one's life includes the following;

1. Having a self-value that allows you to:
  - ☐ Analyse your life to identify areas which need self-control or discipline.
  - ☐ Set goals that can be easily accomplished based on your understanding of yourself, not based on comparing yourself with others.
  - ☐ Tirelessly try to achieve your goals and even if you slip admit it and do not condemn yourself to failure as a result of that. Rather admit it, take responsibility by identifying the cause of weakness as well as the solution for staying on course.
2. Be accountable to yourself as a mark of respect for yourself.
3. Deny/discipline yourself of what are your temptations.

Remember the greatest need of the world yesterday, today, and in the future is to have individuals who in their inner most souls cannot be bought or sold, who are true and honest to God and others as well as themselves, who do not fear to call wrong by its right name, and whose consciences are as true as the needle is to the pole and would stand firmly for the right even if the heavens fall.

You can join this league of extraordinary people who are true to themselves as well as others by adopting temperance as a way of life.