

CRASH SITE ANALYSIS FOR TEENS

When I was in college (Nick), I once slid on a patch of black ice while driving on the interstate and slammed my car into a police cruiser parked at another accident! By God's grace, my passenger and I were both largely uninjured. But an analysis of the situation by the highway patrol determined that I had ignored some warning signs and had been the cause of the accident, even though black ice was involved. My failure to understand the road conditions and respond accordingly almost had a devastating impact that night.

In order to stop the insanity of continual relapsing, we need training in how to do a thorough investigation of the crash site in our lives. A relapse can look and feel a lot like a car accident. At first observation it seems like there are no clues as to what might have happened. It can feel like part of you has died. There is a pungent smell of shame in the air, and you can feel hopeless.

Yet, if you start carefully analyzing the wreckage, it will tell a very clear story of cause and effect. The crash and the relapse didn't just happen. There were decisions made, attitudes embraced, boundaries violated, and thoughts tolerated that were in place long before you slammed into the ground. There is also a cause for the relapse, and if you examine the crash site, you will see a very strong underlying pattern driving the downward spiral.

If we return to the place we promised not to go back to, we have an opportunity to learn from our mistakes. We can analyze the conditions that led to our crash, learn from them, and respond better next time.

Spend some time answering the following questions and then process them with a friend or mentor:

- 01.** Describe the last relapse you experienced and describe the crash site in vivid detail. (What was the relapse? When did the relapse happen? Where did the relapse happen?)

02. What did the start of the downward spiral look and feel like?

- List the last five to seven days of your RETRAIN Tool results. (The RETRAIN Tool can be found within the Youth Leader Library.) What was the lowest level you reached each day prior to No Return (relapse)?

- In detail, describe any places where you were procrastinating or trying to ignore a difficult decision, action, or conversation:

- Why do you think you never faced this situation so you could return to Restoration?

03. What accelerated the downward plunge? (Answer 2-3 that seem most relevant to you.)

- How would you describe your emotional, physical, and spiritual health in the last week?
- What were your Commitments to Change during the last week? (The Commitment to Change can be found within the Youth Leader Library.)
- Why did you give up on the Commitment to Change that could have pulled you out of the downward spiral?
- How many calls to group members or accountability partners had you committed to make each week?
- Why didn't you call a group member for help when you were headed into the ground?
- What were the triggers that set you up?
- What boundaries, or middle circle (Three Circles Tool) issues, did you ignore or willfully violate? (The Three Circles Tool can be found within the Youth Leader Library.)

04. What lessons did you learn from this relapse?

05. If you experienced multiple relapses, what is the common pattern in your relapses?

06. What new guidelines do you need to put into place with respect to:

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Anger
- Being alone and the need for an Escape Plan when you find yourself alone (The Escape Plan can be found within the Youth Leader Library.)
- Dealing with family issues
- Media usage
- Dealing with conflict
- Your tendency to isolate
- Your eating habits

07. What is your plan for the next time you find yourself in that familiar pattern of relapse?
Describe in detail how you are going to pull out of an approaching crash.