

# RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING; Can it be done?



**P**eanut butter spreads. The HIV virus spreads. A bed spreads. The swine flu epidemic spreads.

Gambling problems and all that come with it is spreading too, at an alarming rate.

Weeks and weeks of cynical articles, this columnist has written, but this week we have something different.

I read the numbers. I read the stories. I hear the torture gamblers and their families are living and I am sick to my stomach and beyond upset. There are people out there that are living double-lives, horrible lives,



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The Winning Hand  
Times

and in some instances, lives that people are thinking about ending.

Though gambling IS SUPPOSED to be a fun-filled activity, often, too often, it

gets out of hand, and disaster takes over; thoughts of suicide, heavy financial burdens to many (banks, lines of credits, credit cards, family and friends, loan sharks, etc.) It all becomes completely and utterly overwhelming. The gambler is swimming with worries that are spiralling out of control with no game plan to get back on course.

The word pathological simply means the act of doing something knowing full well it has its consequences and is not good for you, but you cannot stop. You just cannot stop.

Education. Education. Education.

It's more than arithmetic, English and history.

As I have stated many a time before, the world of gambling and casinos are not going anywhere soon, so, we, as a society and a community, must learn to deal with all that comes with gambling;

the good, the bad and the ugly. And so much UGLY there is.

This is where my frustration comes in. This is when I start wondering who is in denial? Who really are the bad folks? Who is really behind this big machine here in Quebec at Loto Québec?

Why don't our schools teach kids about THE REAL world they are living in?

Teach them about manners, about how to live on your own, about how to properly take care of finances for a teenager or young adolescent, to learn how to pay bills, about how gambling can get you into a pile of trouble, about what owing money on credit cards means. These topics ARE important. Yes, it's great to learn about Montcalm and Wolfe. It is wonderful to know who won The Battle of Hastings. It is delightful to know what year Beethoven wrote his 5th symphony. But really, what about learning how and when and why to open the car door for someone or give up your seat on a bus for the elderly. How to spend your \$900 a month you take home as a student and spend the money wisely, learning that rent

and money for food comes first, not money for the "Texas Hold 'em" game at a friends house Friday night.

Planet earth in the year 2009 IS a wonderful place to live, but we have much to learn. We haven't kept up with the rules, as the game of life is forever changing.

Let's teach Quebecers HOW to gamble, WHY to gamble, WHEN to gamble and all that comes with it. Putting a 2 inch by 2 inch sticker on a machine with a phone number to call if you are feeling bad just doesn't cut it. Good for the sticker manufacturer, but useless in the real world. That's like calling Air Canada to complain about the flight as the plane is going down!

Gambling. The random act of doing something without any control of the outcome. Sort of like getting married, predicting the weather or guessing what comes out of George W. Bushes mouth. It's gambling, no matter how you look at it.

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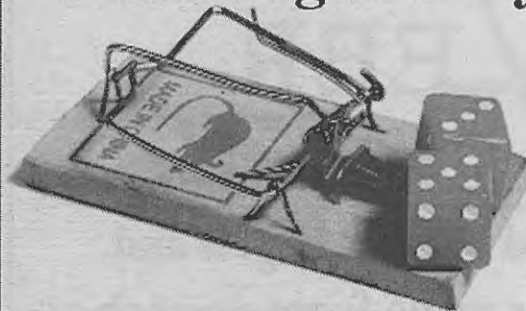
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## Gambling... Are you trapped?



When you gamble, you are not only gambling with your money, but with your friends, family, job and home.

**Are you prepared to lose it all?**

**For HELP call**

**Howard P. Riback 514-659-5621**

He has been there and has come out on the winning side

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