

# AM I IN CONTROL OF MY CHOICES—OR JUST REACTING?

## Youth Self-Awareness Worksheet

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### INTRODUCTION: THE CHOICE-REACTION SCALE

Every day, you make hundreds of decisions. But how many are actual **choices** versus automatic **reactions**?

**REACTIONS** happen when:

- You act without thinking
- Your emotions take control
- You follow what others are doing
- You're on "autopilot"

**CHOICES** happen when:

- You pause before acting
  - You consider consequences
  - You stay true to your values
  - You think about what YOU really want
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### ACTIVITY 1: MY REACTION TRIGGERS

**Instructions:** In the boxes below, write down situations that often trigger automatic reactions from you.

TRIGGER SITUATION	MY TYPICAL REACTION	IMPACT ON ME	IMPACT ON OTHERS
Example: Being told "no"	Getting angry, arguing back	Feel frustrated, might get in trouble	Others see me as difficult

## ACTIVITY 2: THE 5-SECOND PAUSE CHALLENGE

The next time you feel triggered to react:

1. Take a deep breath
2. Count to 5 slowly
3. Ask yourself: "What do I really want in this situation?"
4. Choose your response

**Practice scenarios:** Write how you could use the 5-second pause in these situations:

1. A friend posts something embarrassing about you online: \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Your parent/guardian won't let you go to an event: \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Someone cuts in line ahead of you: \_\_\_\_\_
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## ACTIVITY 3: REACTION VS. CHOICE THERMOMETER

**Instructions:** For each scenario below, mark on the thermometer how much choice vs. reaction is involved (1 = Pure Reaction, 10 = Pure Choice)

**Scenario 1:** Your friend asks you to skip class.

IREACTION 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10 CHOICE

**Scenario 2:** You feel like quitting something when it gets hard.

IREACTION 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10 CHOICE

**Scenario 3:** You check your phone as soon as it buzzes.

IREACTION 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10 CHOICE

**Scenario 4:** You decide to save money instead of buying something immediately.

IREACTION 1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10 CHOICE

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## ACTIVITY 4: MY CHOICE ZONES

**Instructions:** In the boxes below, identify areas of your life where you want more choice-based decisions.

AREA OF	CURRENT LEVEL OF	WHAT I WANT TO	ONE STEP I CAN
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LIFE	CHOICE	CHANGE	TAKE
Friends			
School			
Family			
Social Media			
Free Time			

### ACTIVITY 5: CHOICE CHAMPIONS IN MY LIFE

**Instructions:** Think about people you know who seem to make choices rather than just react.

1. Who is someone you admire for their ability to make thoughtful choices?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. What specific behaviors show they're choosing rather than reacting?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. What could you learn from them? \_\_\_\_\_
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### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you made a real choice instead of just reacting? How did it feel?
  2. What's one situation where you typically react without thinking that you'd like to change?
  3. What makes it hard for you to pause before reacting?
  4. How might your life be different if you made more choices and had fewer reactions?
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### MY CHOICE COMMITMENT

This week, I commit to turning one of my common reactions into a thoughtful choice.

The reaction I want to change is: \_\_\_\_\_

Instead, I will try to: \_\_\_\_\_

I'll know I'm successful when: \_\_\_\_\_

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**REMEMBER:**

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response." — Viktor Frankl

**You always have more choice than you think!**

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