

Why Do I Do Things I Know Aren't Good for Me?

Understanding Your Choices & Building Better Habits

□ PART 1: THE BRAIN SCIENCE BEHIND OUR CHOICES

Did You Know? Your brain has different parts that sometimes disagree with each other:

- **Your "Feel Good Now" Brain** (Limbic System): Wants immediate rewards and good feelings
- **Your "Think It Through" Brain** (Prefrontal Cortex): Plans ahead and considers consequences
- **Your "Habit Loop" Brain** (Basal Ganglia): Runs automatic behaviors without much thought

ACTIVITY 1: BRAIN BATTLE!

Draw a line down the middle of the space below. On one side, write what your "Feel Good Now" brain might say about these situations. On the other side, write what your "Think It Through" brain would say.

- Staying up late playing games when you have a test tomorrow
 - Saying something mean when you're angry
 - Skipping homework to hang out with friends
 - Trying something risky because friends are doing it
-

□ PART 2: WHAT'S REALLY DRIVING YOUR CHOICES?

Sometimes we make choices that don't seem to make sense, but there's always a reason.

ACTIVITY 2: DETECTIVE WORK

Think about something you've done recently that you knew wasn't good for you. Answer these questions:

1. What was the behavior or choice? _____
2. What need were you trying to meet? Circle all that apply:
 - Feel accepted by others
 - Escape uncomfortable feelings

- Feel excitement or avoid boredom
 - Feel in control of something
 - Avoid dealing with a problem
 - Other: _____
3. On a scale of 1-10, how well did this choice actually meet that need? _____
4. What might be a better way to meet this same need?

-

✂ PART 3: TRIGGERS & PATTERNS

We all have "triggers" - situations, feelings, people, or places that make us more likely to make choices we later regret.

ACTIVITY 3: MY TRIGGER MAP

Draw a map of your triggers:

- In the center, write or draw yourself
- Around you, draw or write the different things that sometimes trigger you to make choices you know aren't good
- Connect each trigger to yourself with a line
- On each line, write one strategy you could use when you encounter this trigger

Example triggers: feeling stressed, certain friends, being bored, feeling left out, specific locations, etc.

□ PART 4: THE CHOICE POINT

Every decision has a moment - the "choice point" - where you can pause and choose differently.

ACTIVITY 4: PAUSE PRACTICE

The next time you feel pulled toward a choice you know isn't good for you:

1. Take 3 deep breaths
2. Ask yourself: "What do I really need right now?"
3. Consider: "Will this choice help me or hurt me in the long run?"
4. Think of one alternative action you could take

Practice now by filling in this plan:

A situation where I often make choices I regret: _____

My pause plan:

- What I'll say to myself: _____
 - What I'll do instead: _____
 - Who could help support me: _____
-

□ PART 5: BUILDING BETTER HABITS

It's easier to replace a habit than to just stop one.

ACTIVITY 5: HABIT SWAP

Complete this chart:

Habit I want to change	What need it meets	Healthier alternative

My top habit swap to focus on this week:

How I'll remind myself:

How I'll track my progress:

PART 6: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When have you made a choice you knew wasn't good for you, but felt like you couldn't help it?
 2. What's the difference between how you feel right after making a bad choice versus how you feel an hour later?
 3. What's one thing you've learned about yourself from this worksheet?
 4. Who are the people in your life who help you make better choices?
 5. What's one thing you could do differently tomorrow based on what you've learned?
-

COMMITMENT CORNER

This week, I commit to:

1. Notice when I'm about to do something I know isn't good for me
2. Practice my pause plan at least _____ times
3. Try my new habit swap instead of my old habit
4. Talk to someone I trust about what I'm learning

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

REMEMBER

- Everyone makes choices they regret sometimes
 - Understanding why you do what you do is the first step to making different choices
 - Small changes can lead to big differences over time
 - You have the power to pause and choose differently
 - It gets easier with practice!
-

*Created by Aspire Impact Network | www.aspireimpactnetwork.com #AspireImpact
#EmpowerWithAspire #RecoveryMatters*