

ARE YOUR HABITS HELPING OR HURTING YOU?

Now that you've completed the third module, you've greatly increased your awareness of how to develop a brain that knows how to be successful. You've learned a fair amount about habits, both good and bad. It's time to learn even more and take your knowledge to the next level.

A habit is described as something you do over and over again, automatically, without thinking about it. We're all profoundly affected by the habits in our lives. ***At times, we mindlessly repeat behaviors related to our home lives, work personas, and relationships.*** When a certain situation occurs, you do the familiar behavior.

Since your life is largely made up of habits, it makes sense those habits can be supportive of your personal wants, values, and relationships. They can also thwart your efforts to live the life of your dreams. Do your habits help or hurt you?

Ponder these points to determine whether your habits support or sabotage you:

1. **Link your habits to your goals.** When you establish ways of behaving that are aligned with your goals, then your habits are helpful.
 - For example, you floss daily and brush your teeth three times a day because your goal is to have the prettiest smile possible.
2. **Keep track of a new routine to help make it a habit.** For example, maybe you've decided you'd like to lose twenty pounds and have fitter body tone. So, you plan to walk thirty minutes five days a week and do twenty push-ups or twenty crunches three days a week. How can you keep track of your habits from day to day?
 - To ensure you're working on your fitness goals, write a "W" on your calendar when you walk and place an "X" on the days you do calisthenics. Then, once a week, weigh yourself and jot down your weight on the calendar.
 - ***Visuals help establish good habits.*** In this case, one glance at your calendar

keeps you up to date on your progress toward your goal.

3. **Figure out why you have certain habits.** Maybe you eat a doughnut or other high-fat snack when you're at work. You see the treat, pick it up, and eat it. You rarely pay attention to the motivation behind this habit.
 - Are you hungry? Maybe you skipped breakfast. Perhaps you're snacking simply because the co-worker you're taking a break with is snacking. Maybe it's because you rarely keep unhealthy snacks at home so when you see them, you grab one.
 - If one of your habits isn't doing anything positive for you, consider that it's sabotaging you in some way.
4. **Eliminate habits that are making you feel embarrassed or angry.** If feelings of negativity surround one of your habits, it's likely hurting you. To illustrate, consider the habit of smoking. As much as you're driven to do it, you recognize that it isn't positive or helpful.

- Do you feel ashamed and frustrated with yourself because you engage in the behavior? If this is the case, investigate your habit further. How do you really feel about it? Would you like to disengage from the behavior and stop it?
 - An automatic behavior that leaves you feeling negatively about yourself is interfering with your efforts to live a happy life.
5. **Replace one habit with another. *Remember, rather than trying to stop a negative habit, it may be easier to replace it with a positive habit.*** Ask yourself how you can change or replace the targeted behavior.
- Referring back to the smoking example, think about what else you could do instead. You could have a piece of sugarless gum or candy. Maybe you want to try nicotine patches to curb your desire to smoke.

When you become more conscious of your habits, you can decide whether they're helping you or keeping you from moving forward and living a

healthy, prosperous life. Make the decision to fill your life with as many positive habits as possible, so you can move closer to achieving the life you deserve.

There are negative habits that can completely smother your dreams. We'll tackle that crucial topic next.

GET STARTED ON THE TIPS IN THIS LESSON:

Which of your current habits embarrass you or make you feel angry? Why do they make you feel this way?

Bonus: Ask someone close to you to list your negative habits. Do you agree? Why or why not?