

# **STOP SELF- SABOTAGE**



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**Six Steps to Unlock Your  
True Motivation, Harness  
Your Willpower, and Get  
Out of Your Own Way**

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**JUDY HO, PHD, ABPP**

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## Exercise: Which Part of L.I.F.E. Dominates Your Self-Sabotage Behaviors?

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Which of the following are sometimes or mostly true for you? Be honest—no one else has to read your answers! Put a check mark in the True column for all those statements that apply to you.

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>True?</b>
A	The way you feel about yourself on a given day depends largely on situational factors (e.g., what others say to you, how others respond to you, or what your weight is on the scale).	
A	Your self-worth is primarily dictated by your accomplishments or the services that you are providing to others.	
A	Quick! List 5 things you love about yourself. Mark True if this a tough exercise for you, and/ or if you have trouble doing this in less than thirty seconds.	
A	There are times in your adult life when you questioned your identity, who you are, or what you stand for.	
A	When you hear the awesome things that other people achieve, you secretly wonder if you have what it takes to do the same.	
B	When you were a child, you were told or shown that the world is a scary place and that it is dangerous to take risks.	
B	When you were a child, an important adult in your life (e.g., a parent, a teacher) seemed to be overly nervous or anxious about different things (e.g., job, home life, natural disasters).	
B	When you were a child, more often than not an important adult in your life seemed to have struggles meeting their own goals and/or appeared discouraged about their own progress.	

	<b>Statement</b>	<b>True?</b>
B	When you were a child, an important adult in your life was overcritical of you and/or held you to extremely high standards.	
B	Looking back on your life, you can honestly say that you did not have at least one role model for the major accomplishments of your life. You had to find your own way.	
C	You highly prefer structure and familiarity, and become irate at people or situations that throw you off your usual routine.	
C	When recounting periods of significant change in your life (e.g., moving, getting married, starting a new job, attending a new school), you remember more of the nervousness and discomfort rather than the excitement.	
C	You feel very nervous when you don't know what to expect in a situation.	
C	Once you decide on an important goal for yourself, one of the primary concerns you have is, "What if I fail?"	
C	You have had at least one experience in taking a chance on something new that blew up in your face and led you to feel much more nervous about trying new things later.	
D	Someone in your life has called you a "control freak" at some point.	
D	You often try to have the last word or to win an argument.	
D	You find that you are often a harsh critic of not only yourself, but also others.	
D	You have a tendency to correct others when they are wrong, even if it is about somewhat inconsequential things.	
D	Be honest! You have a very tough time admitting you are wrong.	

Count up the number of check marks that are associated with each letter (A, B, C, D). The one for which you have the most check marks is your primary L.I.F.E. obstacle. If you have a tie, this would suggest that you have more than one dominant L.I.F.E. obstacle and each one might be contributing somewhat equally to self-sabotage. If you have one letter that has the least check marks, that's great! This shows a strength in your L.I.F.E. profile—one you can lean on as you work on skills to overcome the other obstacles. If you have an area of identified strength, you can rest easy knowing that this element isn't causing self-sabotage—it is a factor that does not cause you to overestimate threat. After tallying up your results, go back to the sections above that describe each of your dominant L.I.F.E. obstacles for a quick review. I would also suggest that you transfer this information to your journal for easy reference later as we work through different exercises that will ask you to revisit these L.I.F.E. obstacles so we can discuss how to overcome them.

Mostly As = Low/Shaky Self-Concept \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mostly Bs = Internalized Beliefs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mostly Cs = Fear of Change/Unknown \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mostly Ds = Excessive Need for Control \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you've had some time to reflect on each of the elements of L.I.F.E., try completing the chart below.

<b>When I think about my goal, my L.I.F.E. looks like . . .</b>	
Low or Shaky Self-Concept	
Internalized Beliefs	
Fear of Change or the Unknown	
Excessive Need for Control	

Here's what Beth's chart looks like.

<b>When I think about my goal, my L.I.F.E. looks like . . .</b>	
Low or Shaky Self-Concept	Low self-esteem related to weight
Internalized Beliefs	Observing Mom never having success with weight loss
Fear of Change or the Unknown	Doesn't apply to me!
Excessive Need for Control	Dislike being out of routine and being surprised

## **Exercise: Identifying Self-Sabotage Triggers**

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Read through all of the following scenarios. Write a check mark in the column if you can relate to them. If any scenario in a category sounds like you, then put a check in the “relatable” column. Once you’ve done this, we will explore the triggers more specifically.

<b>WHAT'S YOUR TRIGGER?</b>	
<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Relatable?</b>
<p>A You were doing great on your diet, and then ate too much at Thanksgiving dinner. You decide you've messed it all up and you'll just enjoy the upcoming holidays and start over in January.</p> <p>You were dating someone for a couple of months, and it had been going pretty well, but things took a turn and you broke up. You feel dejected and resign yourself to being single for the long haul and fear that you will never find a good partner.</p> <p>Your boss offers some critique of your presentation, which you worked hard to prepare. His/her comments put you in a state of panic, and you believe you might be demoted, or worse, fired.</p>	
<p>B After a long search, you finally land a great job! You pull several late nights in a row at the office because you feel you should show everyone how dedicated you are, although your supervisor has told you he is quite pleased with your work so far. You're exhausted and cranky, but insist on continuing to work extended hours to "prove" your prowess.</p> <p>Spin class is super popular at your gym. Although you don't enjoy riding a bike, you feel you should take several classes per week because you want to get in shape and figure this is the best way to do it.</p> <p>You're feeling down and reach out to your best friend to make plans that day. But she is busy and can't get together on short notice. You become upset with her because she should know that a great friend would do whatever it takes to be there for someone when they are struggling.</p>	
<p>C You go out on a blind date, and after twenty minutes, decide you have to get out of there because they are at least twenty pounds overweight and that is just not acceptable to you in a mate.</p> <p>After a few tough tennis matches where you lose, you decide you must be terrible at the sport so you might as well quit.</p> <p>During your review at work, your boss compliments your efforts but also gives you some goals to work toward. You walk out feeling like a failure because you didn't get a "perfect" review.</p>	



D	<p>A friend you haven't seen in years is thirty minutes late to lunch. You seethe over the entire meal because you feel it was a sign of disrespect toward you and that obviously she does not care about your time.</p> <p>Your partner asks what you want to do for your birthday. You say, "Oh, nothing," when you really want a celebration. When there isn't a party you become angry and pick a fight with your partner, because they should know what you really want without you having to say it out loud.</p> <p>You see your neighbor at the grocery store and wave. He does not respond, so you assume that he is snubbing you because he doesn't like you or you did something to make him upset.</p>	
E	<p>You take a chance on a stock of an up-and-coming company that you have read about and researched extensively. When you make significant gains on the stock, you are momentarily pleased but then think it was probably luck, discounting the time and effort you put into building your portfolio.</p> <p>You complete your first marathon and when someone compliments you on the achievement you balk, saying it was nothing because you didn't run it very fast, clocking in at a twelve-minute mile on average.</p> <p>At work, you land a new client but get uncomfortable when your coworkers make a big deal out of it because you think it was only a fluky break. When your colleagues congratulate you, you tell them that you didn't do anything remarkable and instead begin complimenting them on their achievements.</p>	
F	<p>Following a very stressful week at the office, your partner is in a cranky mood and has been irritable and short with you all day. You think it must be your fault somewhat, and bend over backward trying to find out what it is that you did that made them upset with you.</p> <p>The server at the restaurant gives you a dirty glass. You find yourself thinking that they are messing with you on purpose because they don't like you.</p> <p>Your child burns his hand on the stove while at home with the babysitter. You blame yourself for this accident, thinking, <i>If I didn't leave him with the babysitter to go out with my friends then he would not have hurt himself.</i></p>	

Now look at the letters associated with the scenarios you made a check mark next to, and compare it to the list below. These are common triggers for your self-sabotaging behaviors.

- A. Overgeneralizing/Catastrophizing
- B. “Shoulds”
- C. Black-and-White Thinking
- D. Mind Reading
- E. Discounting the Positive
- F. Personalization

<b>Self-Sabotage Trigger</b>	<b>Common L.I.F.E. Elements</b>	<b>Rules</b>	<b>Causes</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
Overgeneralizing/ Catastrophizing p.51	Internalized Beliefs, Excessive Need for Control	Broad conclusions based on one incident, mulling over what-ifs	Fear of "not seeing what's coming"	Increasingly restricted life, believing worst outcomes, low or no goal pursuit
"Shoulds" p. 54	Low or Shaky Self-Concept, Excessive Need for Control	Inflexible rules about how you and others should act	Perfectionism, fear of criticism	Constant pressure on self and others about doing things right, feeling like you never measure up
Black-and-White Thinking p. 56	Fear of Change or the Unknown, Excessive Need for Control	No shades of gray, either/or decisions	Discomfort with ambiguity, easily overwhelmed by decisions	Harsh judgment of self and others, oversimplification of complex situations
Mind Reading p. 58	Low or Shaky Self-Concept, Internalized Beliefs	Assumptions about how others feel and think	Fear of rejection, embarrassment, or "putting yourself out there" for rejection or danger cues	Hypervigilance to social cues that might threaten a somewhat fragile or unstable self-esteem, increased conflicts with others due to misunderstandings
Discounting the Positive p. 60	Low or Shaky Self-Concept, Internalized Beliefs	Dismissing things that may be important to consider, glossing over important details	Low self-esteem, perfectionistic qualities	An unbalanced view toward people and situations, not seeing the whole picture, and acting rashly
Personalization p. 62	Low or Shaky Self-Concept, Fear of Change or the Unknown	Excessive comparisons of self with others	Shaky sense of self-worth that is externally driven	Jealousy, consistent feelings of "not measuring up," nervousness about "being found out"

## Exercise: Thought Record

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<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Situation/ Event</b>	<b>Automatic Thoughts</b>	<b>Feelings</b>	<b>What You Want to Do/ Did</b>
	What observable event or thoughts, ideas, or mental images led to the negative feelings?	<p>What thoughts or mental images (e.g., self-sabotage triggers) went through your mind?</p> <p>How much did you believe each one at the time on a scale of 1–10?</p>	<p>What emotions or physiological reactions did you feel at the time?</p> <p>How intense were the emotions and/or physiological reactions on a scale of 1–10?</p>	What do your feelings make you want to do (whether you actually did it or not)?

Feeling overwhelmed by negative emotions such as anxiety and sadness is often a signal that it's time to look back at the thought process that came before the emotions. For Alice, completing a Thought Record helped to paint a vivid picture of how not getting a response from Elliott impacted her, and highlighted the sequence from event, to thought, to feeling, to behavior:

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Situation/ Event</b>	<b>Automatic Thoughts</b>	<b>Feelings</b>	<b>What You Want to Do/ Did</b>
	What observable event or thoughts, ideas, or mental images led to the negative feelings?	What thoughts or mental images (e.g., self-sabotage triggers) went through your mind?  How much did you believe each one at the time on a scale of 1-10?	What emotions or physiological reactions did you feel at the time?  How intense were the emotions and/or physiological reactions on a scale of 1-10?	What do your feelings make you want to do (whether you actually did it or not)?
<i>August 15 @ 3 pm</i>	<i>Called boyfriend twice and texted once, no response.</i>	<i>He must be doing something terrible, like cheating on me. (7.5)</i>  <i>Maybe I did something wrong and now he doesn't like me anymore. (9)</i>	<i>Anxious 9.5</i> <i>Sad 8</i> <i>Angry 6</i>	<i>Call him until he picks up.</i>  <i>When he picks up, demand to know where he's been and what he's doing.</i>

## Exercise: Opposite Action

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<b>Feelings</b>	<b>What You Want to Do/or Did</b>	<b>What You Will Do Instead Using Opposite Action</b>	<b>Feeling Re-Rate</b>
<p>What emotions or physiological reactions did you feel at the time?</p> <p>How intense were the emotions and/or physiological reactions on a scale of 1–10?</p>	<p>What do your feelings make you want to do (whether you actually did it or not)?</p>	<p>What is something that is opposite of your action urge that you can do now?</p>	<p>Write the emotions and physiological reactions down again and rate the feeling(s) intensity after doing Opposite Action.</p>

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Situation/ Event</b>	<b>Automatic Thoughts</b>	<b>Primary L.I.F.E. factor activated</b>	<b>Feelings</b>	<b>What You Want to Do</b>	<b>What You Did Instead</b>	<b>Feelings After</b>
	<p>What observable event or thoughts, ideas, or mental images led to the negative feelings?</p>	<p>What thoughts or mental images (e.g., self-sabotage triggers) went through your mind?</p> <p>How much did you believe each one at the time on a scale of 1-10?</p> <p>Write down the category of self-sabotage trigger if one or more apply.</p>	<p>What L.I.F.E. factor or factors are the automatic thoughts linked to?</p> <p>Low or Shaky Self-Concept</p> <p>Internalized Beliefs</p> <p>Fear of Change or the Unknown</p> <p>Excessive Need for Control</p>	<p>What emotions or physiological reactions did you feel at the time?</p> <p>How intense were the emotions and/or physiological reactions on a scale of 1-10?</p>	<p>What do your feelings make you want to do (whether you actually did it or not)?</p>	<p>Jot down the technique(s) you used</p>	<p>Write down the same feelings again and rate them from 1-10 after using the techniques.</p>

Date and Time	Situation/ Event	Automatic Thoughts	Primary L.I.F.E. factor activated	Feelings	What You Want to Do	What You Did Instead	Feelings After
	<p>What observable event or thoughts, ideas, or mental images led to the negative feelings?</p>	<p>What thoughts or mental images (e.g., self-sabotage triggers) went through your mind?</p> <p>How much did you believe each one at the time on a scale of 1–10?</p> <p>Write down the category of self-sabotage trigger if one or more apply.</p>	<p>What L.I.F.E. factor or factors are the automatic thoughts linked to?</p> <p>Low or Shaky Self-Concept</p> <p>Internalized Beliefs</p> <p>Fear of Change or the Unknown</p> <p>Excessive Need for Control</p>	<p>What emotions or physiological reactions did you feel at the time?</p> <p>How intense were the emotions and/or physiological reactions on a scale of 1–10?</p>	<p>What do your feelings make you want to do (whether you actually did it or not)?</p>	<p>Jot down the technique(s) you used</p>	<p>Write down the same feelings again and rate them from 1–10 after using the techniques.</p>
<p>March 10</p>	<p><i>My boyfriend has been really involved with work, which led me to feel alone and ignored.</i></p>	<p><i>He doesn't care about me at all (Black-and-White Thinking). Our relationship is basically over (Catastrophizing).</i></p>	<p><i>Excessive Need for Control</i></p>	<p><i>Insecure: 6 Sad: 5 Angry: 4.5</i></p>	<p><i>I picked a fight with him to see what he would do, if he would show up at my door to make up with me or make some grand gesture so I could feel assured that I am important to him.</i></p>	<p><i>Distancing (I notice that . . . I'm having the thought that . . . he doesn't care about me at all). Playing Devil's Advocate (I wrote down all of the objective evidence that he does care about me in 5 minutes). Opposite Action (I acted compassionate toward him even though I felt angry—I offered to bring him dinner when he was working late).</i></p>	<p><i>Insecure: 2 Sad: 2 Angry: 0</i></p>



## **Exercise: Desirable and Undesirable Behaviors under Stimulus Control**

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As discussed earlier in this step, many ABC chains are productive and lead to desired outcomes. Identifying how stimulus control can work to produce desired behaviors first will make it a little easier to identify which problematic behaviors are under stimulus control. Complete the following exercise by using simple, everyday behaviors that lead to desired outcomes (like being productive, managing your home or office well, and having good hygiene). Think about some actions that you do daily that are under stimulus control (a specific antecedent that leads to a specific behavior) and also try to assess if they are distal or proximal. You can copy this chart into your journal:

<b>Antecedent</b>	<b>Distal or Proximal?</b>	<b>Desired Behavior</b>

When I asked Janie to think about some actions that she engages in daily that are under stimulus control and to try to distinguish

whether they are distal or proximal, she was able to identify a number of activities that she performed daily or near-daily that were controlled by stimuli that appeared before she performed the desired behavior, that consisted of a mix of distal and proximal antecedents. Here is her completed chart:

<b>Antecedent</b>	<b>Distal or Proximal?</b>	<b>Desired Behavior</b>
The alarm clock rings in the morning	Proximal	Getting out of bed
The trash in the trash can is filled to the brim	Proximal	Take out the trash
Body is sweaty after a run outside	Proximal	Take a shower
Eating a huge dinner the night before	Distal	Having an extra-long workout the next morning
In the morning being told by a friend you look especially great	Distal	Approaching a potential romantic interest at a party that night
Being complimented by a coworker on my most recent work product last week	Distal	Finishing another work product earlier than the set deadline this week

Once you can identify the link between a stimulus and a behavior, think about some behaviors that you engage in that are under stimulus control but lead to *undesired* outcomes. You can copy this chart into your journal:

<b>Antecedent</b>	<b>Distal or Proximal?</b>	<b>Undesired Behavior</b>

As she started to fill in the chart, Janie saw that she was constantly throwing up roadblocks to her getting work done on time. Some activities were more obvious procrastination than others, but in all cases they were getting in the way of her goal of completing the project well and on time, which ultimately led to self-sabotage of her work overall.

<b>Antecedent</b>	<b>Distal or Proximal?</b>	<b>Undesired Behavior</b>
Arriving home and seeing dishes in the sink.	Proximal	Begin to wash dishes (instead of work on report).
Earlier in the day, having the thought, <i>I won't be able to finish the entire report tonight.</i>	Distal	Not beginning work on the report at all (since I believe I won't finish it anyway and it's not worth just starting on it).
After dinner, sitting on the couch (with the thought, <i>I will be more comfortable here working on the report</i> ).	Distal	Lying down eventually and stopping work on the report (because sitting on the couch made me feel more tired).
Having the thought, <i>This is too hard.</i>	Proximal	Doing other mundane and easy but unrelated tasks instead (like organizing my desk drawer).
Taking a break to watch an episode of my favorite TV show.	Proximal	Binge watching several episodes in a row (resulting in not returning to the report at all that evening).
Feeling bored by the report.	Proximal	Doing anything else that seems more interesting (calling a friend, online shopping) that results in not returning to work on the report.

## Exercise: Defining Your Positive Reinforcers and Aversive Stimuli

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A repetitive self-sabotaging behavior often provides both positive reinforcers and provides escape from aversive stimuli. It's no wonder why these behaviors have become a pattern!

Take a few minutes now to identify an unwanted behavior that you have engaged in from time to time. Are there any specific scenarios that seem to precede some of these unwanted behaviors? Some of the earlier exercises you did (ET-Squared, p. 69, and the Thought Record and Expanded Thought Record, p. 83 and p. 120) may help you with identifying specific scenarios that prompted unwanted or unproductive behaviors for you. Be as detailed as possible when describing the scenarios. Then describe what types of reinforcers each of these unwanted behaviors produced. For each unwanted behavior, you may not experience both types of reinforcers, but I'll bet that you will have some behaviors that result in both. You can copy this chart into your journal.

**Unwanted Behavior:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Scenario and Behaviors</b>	<b>Positive Reinforcers</b> (Positive Reinforcement)	<b>Aversive Stimuli</b> (Negative Reinforcement)

***Unwanted Behavior: Procrastination***

<b>Scenario and Behaviors</b>	<b>Positive Reinforcers</b>	<b>Escape from Aversive Stimuli</b>
Watching Netflix instead of working	Elevates mood (increases happiness and enjoyment)	Reduces boredom and nervousness about work stress
Make to-do lists instead of working	Belief that I am being somewhat productive, which leads to feeling good about myself	Avoids having to do hard work until later
Going out with friends instead of working	I have fun; I can connect with my friends, which is important	Reduces anxiety; avoid feeling mentally taxed

**My Old ABCs**

<b>Antecedent</b>	<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Feeling worried and anxious that my report/project won't be well received	Watch Netflix to distract myself from feeling worried and anxious	Feeling less worried and anxious

**My EOs and AOs**

<b>Antecedent</b>	<b>Consequence Becomes More Rewarding</b> (Establishing Operations)	<b>Consequence Becomes Less Rewarding</b> (Abolishing Operations)
<b>Environments/Places/Locations</b>		
<i>At home (where there are lots of distractions)</i>	X	
<i>At a coffee shop (and attempting to do work there)</i>		X
<b>People (presence/absence, behaviors they do)</b>		
<i>Supervisor criticizing previous work</i>	X	
<i>Working with a colleague</i>		X
<b>Lifestyle Routines (sleep, exercise, diet)</b>		
<i>Lack of sleep</i>	X	
<i>Ran 5 miles in the morning</i>		X
<b>Sensory Inputs (smells, sights, sounds, touch, taste)</b>		
None		
<b>Feelings (emotions, physiological reactions, and sensations)</b>		
<i>Feeling physically jittery and amped up</i>	X	
<i>Feeling too full from a recent meal</i>	X	
<i>Feeling not hungry or too full</i>		X
<b>Thoughts (including self-sabotage triggers)</b>		
<i>I'll never be able to finish it on time and it won't be any good anyway (Overgeneralizing/Catastrophizing)</i>	X	

<b>Time of Day</b>		
<i>Starting the project late at night</i>	X	
<i>Starting the project early on a weekend</i>		X
<b>Objective/Observable Events (e.g., argument with partner, getting reprimanded at work, being evicted)</b>		
<i>Argument with partner</i>	X	
<i>Had an encouraging chat with work mentor</i>		X

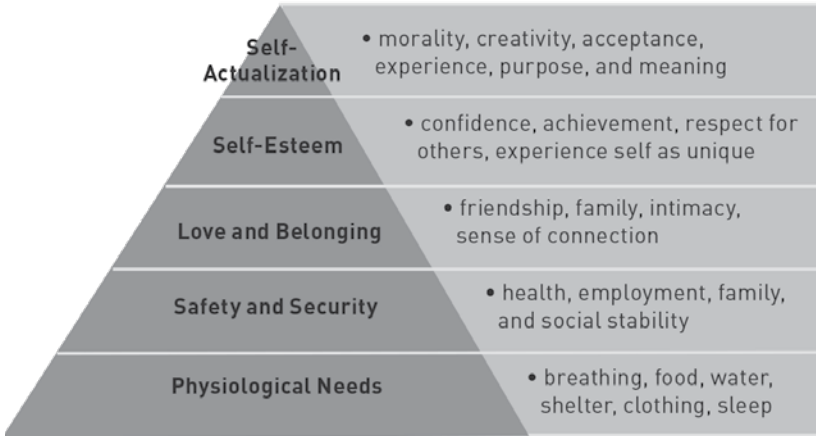


<b>EO#1</b> _____	<b>EO#2</b> _____	<b>EO#3</b> _____
<b>Reduction/ Removal Strategies</b>	<b>Reduction/ Removal Strategies</b>	<b>Reduction/ Removal Strategies</b>

When Janie tackled her EOs and highlighted the antidotes to them, this is what her chart looks like:

<b>EO#1</b> Lack of Sleep	<b>EO#2</b> Feeling physically jittery and amped up	<b>EO#3</b> Self-sabotage trigger: I'll never be able to finish . . .
<b>Reduction/ Removal Strategies</b>	<b>Reduction/ Removal Strategies</b>	<b>Reduction/ Removal Strategies</b>
Go to bed no later than 11 p.m.	Take 10 deep breaths	Do Examine the Evidence technique (p. 89)
Don't take naps (because when I do I end up going to sleep later because I'm not tired)	Take a 20-minute walk around the neighborhood (or if dark outside, do a brief yoga video)	Play Devil's Advocate (p. 95)
Do a short meditation before bed (to encourage better sleep)	Smell lavender oil	Do Distancing Exercise (p. 101)

### Maslow Hierarchy of Needs



Toby's values sort is represented below. As you can see, many of his values seem to dovetail with the values that were touched upon in his peak experience, with seven of his top eleven values being nurtured in this recalled memory—Intimacy, Community, Acceptance, Contribution, Respect, Self-Esteem, and Caring (denoted with an \*). It is also clear that his top values relate to being deeply connected with others and developing a more stable and positive self-concept.

<b>Most Important</b>	<b>Moderately Important</b>	<b>Least Important</b>
INTIMACY*	HUMILITY	PERSISTENCE
COMMUNITY*	VIRTUE	HUMOR
HONESTY	FAITHFULNESS	CHALLENGE
ACCEPTANCE*	JUSTICE	COURAGE
CONTRIBUTION*	CURIOSITY	MASTERY
RESPECT*	AESTHETICS	ORDER
SELF-ESTEEM *	SELF-CONTROL	LEISURE
CARING*	DILIGENCE	SPIRITUALITY
INDEPENDENCE	HEALTH	POWER
TRUST	ASSERTIVENESS	ADVENTURE
KNOWLEDGE	AUTHENTICITY	WEALTH

## ***The Long Assignment: Developing Values-Based Goals (Over the Next Week)***

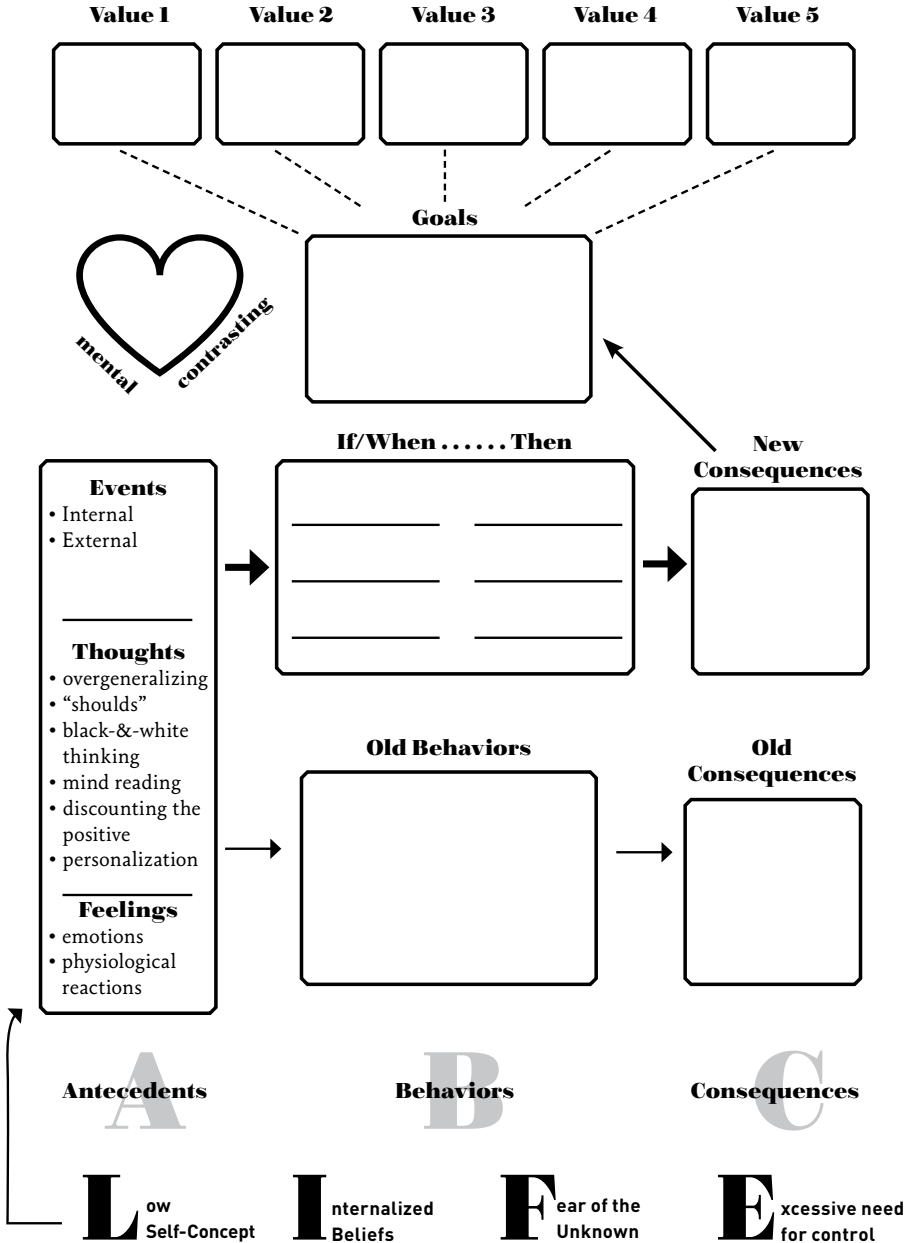
**THIS EXERCISE** helps you get into the habit of creating goals that are rooted in your values, which will serve as an inoculation against slipping into experiential avoidance, and strengthen your self-regulation skills, especially motivation and willpower. Over the next seven days, spend each day focusing on one of your top seven values and writing a goal that is associated with this value that you will accomplish that day. This gets you into the practice of leading with your values, so that you don't end up committing to a goal that isn't tied to a value (and therefore much more likely for you to experience waning or inconsistent motivation as you attempt to achieve it or lead to feelings of emptiness or postgoal blues).

When Alice completed this exercise, she laid out her top seven values and wrote a goal that she could accomplish in the next twenty-four hours that would help her work toward her big-picture goal of attaining a fulfilling relationship. She made sure that when she wrote each of her goals, they felt nurturing or respectful of the value that was listed alongside it.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Completed?</b>
1	<i>Intimacy</i>	<i>Make a dinner date with a friend to nurture non-romantic relationships</i>	<i>Yes, made a dinner date with a college friend whom I haven't hung out with in a few months</i>
2	<i>Curiosity</i>	<i>Accept a second date from the person I initially wrote off after the first date</i>	<i>Yes, agreed to another coffee date with a guy I met last week</i>
3	<i>Adventure</i>	<i>Put up a new profile on a dating site today</i>	<i>Yes</i>
4	<i>Acceptance</i>	<i>Tell my friend whom I frequently disagree with politically that I accept our differences</i>	<i>Not yet—but plan to do next time I see him when the topic comes up</i>
5	<i>Community</i>	<i>Attend the hike hosted by the local environmental group to meet like-minded people</i>	<i>Yes, and exchanged numbers with two other group members to get together for another hike</i>
6	<i>Self-Esteem</i>	<i>Use positive affirmations in my mindfulness activity today</i>	<i>Yes, did this morning</i>
7	<i>Health</i>	<i>Go to the yoga class I've been meaning to try</i>	<i>Yes, went yesterday, and it was a good experience</i>

# APPENDIX I

## Blueprint for Change



# APPENDIX II

## Self-Sabotage Busters

In this section you'll find use-in-case-of-emergency techniques that are especially effective when you are about to commit a self-sabotaging act and want to stop it immediately. Each one can be employed in ten minutes or less to stop or avert self-sabotage. This list contains summaries of fast and furious exercises that you've worked through in the program and also a few new bonus exercises for you to check out. So that you can use these easily when you need to, I recommend that you rehearse each of these beforehand. Try selecting one of these techniques a week and practicing it a couple of times so you can have your favorite Self-Sabotage Busters at the ready when you need it most.

### **Exercise: ET-Squared**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Noticing your self-sabotage triggers as they occur in the moment.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** If you notice you are feeling sadness, disappointment, anger, frustration, or other negative emotions, name the Emotion to yourself out loud or in your head (and write it down in your journal). Then do a mental rewind to see if you can identify the Thought(s) that preceded the emotion. Then rewind once more to the moments right before the thought—what was happening? Go ahead and jot down some details about the Event in your journal. Finally, return your attention to the Thought(s), try to categorize them into one or more Triggers, and write those down.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 69.

## **Exercise: Thought Clouds**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Noticing thoughts as mere mental events and not something you necessarily need to act on or be reactionary toward.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Take a few deep breaths and notice the sensations of your breathing in and out. Be attentive to the thoughts that come into your mind, and observe them. As you notice your thoughts coming and going, try not to interpret, judge, or react to them. Don't try to resist having a particular thought either. Instead, adopt an attitude of curiosity. Examine each thought as though you were watching a play. You are paying attention, but you are not intricately involved with the performance as it unfolds. After a few minutes of setting your thoughts adrift, to bring yourself out of the meditation, count backward from 5 to 1, and gently bring your attention to your breathing. With each count, remember that your thoughts are like clouds in the sky. Each of them exists in their specific shape for a moment in time before they shift and become something different. Just like you can't hold on to clouds, neither should you try to hold on to your thoughts, especially those that are negative and trigger self-sabotaging patterns.

## **Exercise: Yes, But**

**TIME FRAME:** 5 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Creating a modified thought that takes into account what's difficult about a situation but also recognizes the positives amid a challenging time.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Whenever you notice a self-sabotage trigger, argue against that thought by creating an alternate thought. To do



this, drum up a sentence that includes filling in the blank after the word “yes” (something that relates to the self-sabotage trigger and acknowledges the current stress) and then filling in the blank after the word “but” (something that acknowledges that you can do something to change it around or that you have been doing a great job).

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 97.

## **Exercise: Labeling Your Thoughts**

**TIME FRAME:** 1 Minute

**HELPFUL FOR:** Remembering that the thought is not in control—you are, and you are separate from your thoughts and don’t need to react to every single one of them.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** The next time you notice a negative thought, try adding the phrase “I’m having the thought that” in front of it. For example, *I will never be able to get another job*, becomes *I am having the thought that . . . I will never get another job*.

Notice what adding the simple phrase “I am having the thought that” does to the original thought. By adding this phrase in front of the thought, does it help to cement the idea that you are separate from the thoughts that you have? And does this separation help to lessen the impact of the original thought ever so slightly? You can take this exercise a step further by adding another short phrase: “I notice that.” Now the thought becomes: *I notice that . . . I’m having the thought that . . . I will never get another job*. This additional simple phrase brings to the forefront that you are the active agent doing the noticing of your thoughts. You are the one who is spotting a negative thought, and then labeling it as just that—a mental event and nothing more.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 100.

## **Exercise: Navy SEAL Box Breathing**

**TIME FRAME:** 1 Minute

**HELPFUL FOR:** Slowing you down and bringing calm and relaxation in a short amount of time.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Breathe in for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 4, exhale for a count of 4, stay empty (hold the exhale) for a count of 4. Repeat the sequence, if necessary, for as many times as you'd like to achieve a state of calm.

## **Exercise: Physicalize the Emotion**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Regaining control and feeling mastery over your circumstances when you experience intense and negative feelings.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Think of the emotion that is bothering you. Take a few deep breaths and get into a comfortable position. Then imagine reaching into your body for a physical representation of the emotion, gently pulling it out, and placing it in front of you. Next I want you to examine this thought/emotion with your five senses by responding to these questions. How does it look, how does it feel, what sound does it make, does it have a scent, does it have a taste? After examining the emotion in this way, imagine taking hold of this object—this physical representation of your emotion—with both of your hands. Then visualize being able to change its size, shape, weight, color, and so on by shaping and molding it. Make it smaller and more manageable. Push and squeeze it so that it shrinks down to about the size of a little pea. It's still that same emotion, but now it's tiny and compressed! Once you've transformed it, imagine putting this pea-sized emotion in your pocket, wallet, or purse. It

is safe to keep with you now as a reminder of how you can take a large and amorphous, troublesome thought and make it tangible and contained.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 109.

## **Exercise: Opposite Action**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Decreasing the intensity of a negative emotion so that you don't react in self-sabotaging ways.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Identify the feeling that is bothering you and give it a rating (from 1–10, with increasing numbers representing escalating intensity). Now think of something you can do that would be associated with the opposite of your current feeling. Do it, and then re-rate the feeling you identified. You should find that the intensity of the feeling has decreased.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 112.

## **Exercise: Increasing Positive Emotions**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Increasing positive feelings and improving mood in the moment in order to reset your emotions and prevent you from committing self-sabotaging acts.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Rate your current mood on a scale of 1–10 (with 10 being the most positive). Pick an activity (for ideas, see the list on p. 115), do the activity, then re-rate your mood again. You should find that your mood has increased.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 114.

## **Exercise: Actually Phone a Friend**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Bringing your negative thoughts out into the open and inviting a different perspective that might help you to question or modify your thinking.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick up your phone and call a friend or loved one whom you trust, and tell them your current thought and the situation or event that brought it on. Ask them if they feel like the thought accurately captures what's truly going on and invite them to share with you what you might be missing in your self-assessment. Getting an outside perspective will help to distinguish thoughts that are reasonable from those that represent self-sabotage triggers and offer a different vantage point on an ingrained pattern of negative thinking that may not be serving you in your goal pursuits.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 116.

## **Exercise: Write Out My ABCs**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Quickly identifying what isn't working with your current ABCs and coming up with one way to unchain this unhelpful sequence of events.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Identify a problematic behavior that leads to self-sabotage, and in your journal write out your ABCs clearly so you can see the chain for yourself. Then think about at least one way you can change this sequence of events by writing down a new behavioral chain, a new set of ABCs. Sometimes you can't change the antecedent directly, but you can try doing a different behavior that will lead to a different consequence.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 156.

## **Exercise: A Quick Visualization and “If/When . . . Then . . .”**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Stopping self-sabotage when you are on the verge of doing something that will take you away from your objectives.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Think of a wish. Now, for a few moments, imagine the wish coming true. Let your mind wander and drift, experiencing what it is like for this wish to come to fruition.

Then shift gears. Spend a few moments imagining specific obstacles that stand in the way of realizing your wish. Let your mind take in exactly what’s getting in the way.

Now get out a pen and paper and write down a specific implementation intention: an “If/When . . . Then . . .” statement that directly addresses at least one of the obstacles that stands in the way of you realizing your wish.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 185.

## **Exercise: Keeping Your Values Handy**

**TIME FRAME:** 10 Minutes

**HELPFUL FOR:** Keeping your values active on a daily basis and building your motivation for living by important principles.

**QUICK INSTRUCTIONS:** Take a look at your current list of top eleven values and zero in on your top three. Then create a sensory-based reminder for each of them (for ideas, see p. 225). Make contact with these reminders by viewing them throughout the day or having them nearby, such as on your desk or in your notebook.

**FOR MORE DETAILS:** see p. 225.

# **APPENDIX III**

## **Pleasant Activities List**

1. Listen to a favorite song
2. Lie in the sun
3. Read a brief article in a magazine or online
4. Doodle, draw, or paint
5. Do a few yoga poses
6. Do some jumping jacks or jog in place
7. Sing a song
8. Arrange flowers or care for plants
9. Do arts and crafts
10. Write a poem
11. Take care of plants
12. Cuddle with your pet or a blanket
13. Have coffee or tea
14. Make a to-do list
15. Do a quick chore around the home
16. Straighten a small area in your home
17. Look at photos
18. Dance to a song
19. Take deep breaths
20. Meditate
21. Solve a riddle or brain teaser
22. Do a crossword puzzle
23. Work on a jigsaw puzzle
24. Play solitaire
25. Put on a nice outfit
26. Smell a candle or essential oils
27. Say “I love you” to someone
28. Write a letter or email to someone you care about

29. Hug someone
30. Take a shower
31. Lie down on a couch
32. Use cologne or perfume
33. Look up a food recipe to try
34. Browse the Internet for vacation ideas
35. Window-shop (or online window-shop)
36. Take a walk
37. Read a few jokes
38. Send a text message to someone you care about
39. Play a quick game on your smartphone
40. Play with a stress ball
41. Do something nice for someone you care about
42. Admire a piece of art (even a photo of an art piece will work)
43. Trim your nails
44. Take 10 deep breaths
45. Put clean sheets on your bed
46. Put lotion on your body
47. Brush your hair
48. Give yourself a hand massage
49. Make a small donation to an organization online
50. Smile (even if you don't feel like it)<sup>1</sup>

# APPENDIX IV

## Assess Your Motivating Operations Chart

Antecedent	Consequence Becomes More Rewarding (EO)	Consequence Becomes Less Rewarding (AO)
<b>Environments/Places/Locations</b>		
<b>People (presence/absence, behaviors they do)</b>		
<b>Lifestyle Routines (sleep, exercise, diet)</b>		
<b>Sensory Inputs (smells, sights, sounds, touch, taste)</b>		
<b>Feelings (emotions, physiological reactions and sensations)</b>		
<b>Thoughts (self-sabotage triggers)</b>		
<b>Time of Day</b>		
<b>Objective/Observable Events (e.g., argument with partner, getting reprimanded at work, being evicted)</b>		



# APPENDIX V

## Values Cards

<b>MOST IMPORTANT</b> (Place 11 cards under- neath this card below)	<b>MODERATELY IMPORTANT</b> (Place 11 cards under- neath this card below)	<b>LEAST IMPORTANT</b> (Place 11 cards under- neath this card below)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACCEPTANCE</b></p> <p>To be open and accepting of myself, others, and life events</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADVENTURE</b></p> <p>To actively seek, create, or explore novel experiences</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AESTHETICS</b></p> <p>To appreciate, create, nurture, and enjoy the arts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ASSERTIVENESS</b></p> <p>To stand up for my rights and proactively and respectfully request what I want</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AUTHENTICITY</b></p> <p>To act in ways that are consistent with my beliefs and desires despite external pressures</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CARING</b></p> <p>To be caring toward myself, others, and the environment</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHALLENGE</b></p> <p>To take on difficult tasks and problems and keep encouraging myself to grow, learn, and improve</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNITY</b></p> <p>To take part in social or citizen groups and be part of something bigger than myself</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTRIBUTION</b></p> <p>To help, assist, or make lasting positive differences to others or myself</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COURAGE</b></p> <p>To be brave and to persist in the face of fear, threat, or difficulty</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CURIOSITY</b></p> <p>To be open-minded and interested in discovering and learning new things</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DILIGENCE</b></p> <p>To be thorough and conscientious in what I do</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAITHFULNESS</b></p> <p>To be loyal and true in my relationships with people and/or a higher power</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HEALTH</b></p> <p>To maintain or improve the fitness and condition of my body and mind</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HONESTY</b></p> <p>To be truthful and sincere with others and to have integrity in all my actions</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HUMOR</b></p> <p>To see and appreciate the humorous side of life</p>

<p><b>HUMILITY</b> To be humble, modest, and unassuming</p>	<p><b>INDEPENDENCE</b> To be self-supportive and autonomous, and to be able to choose my own way of doing things</p>
<p><b>INTIMACY</b> To open up, reveal, and share myself emotionally and physically in my close personal relationships</p>	<p><b>JUSTICE</b> To uphold fairness and righteousness for all.</p>
<p><b>KNOWLEDGE</b> To learn, use, share, and contribute valuable knowledge.</p>	<p><b>LEISURE</b> To take time to pursue and enjoy various aspects of life.</p>
<p><b>MASTERY</b> To be competent in my everyday activities and pursuits.</p>	<p><b>ORDER</b> To live a life that is planned and organized.</p>
<p><b>PERSISTENCE</b> To continue resolutely despite difficulties and challenges</p>	<p><b>POWER</b> To strongly influence or wield authority over others and projects.</p>
<p><b>RESPECT</b> To treat others politely and considerately, and to be tolerant of those who differ from me</p>	<p><b>SELF-CONTROL</b> To exercise discipline over my behaviors for a higher good.</p>
<p><b>SELF-ESTEEM</b> To feel good about my identity and to believe in my own worth</p>	<p><b>SPIRITUALITY</b> To be connected with things bigger than myself and grow and mature in the understanding of higher power(s)</p>
<p><b>TRUST</b> To be loyal, sincere, and reliable</p>	<p><b>VIRTUE</b> To live a morally pure and honorable life</p>
<p><b>WEALTH</b> To accumulate and possess financial prosperity</p>	

## FURTHER READING

*The Happiness Trap: How to Stop Struggling and Start Living* by Russ Harris

*Get Out of Your Mind & Into Your Life: The New Acceptance & Commitment Therapy* by Steven C. Hayes, PhD, and Spencer Smith

*Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Second Edition: Basics and Beyond* by Judith S. Beck (Foreword by Aaron T. Beck)

*Behavior Modification: Principles & Procedures* by Raymond G. Miltenberger

*DBT Principles in Action: Acceptance, Change, and Dialectics* by Charles R. Swenson (Foreword by Marsha M. Linehan)

*Emotion Regulation in Psychotherapy: A Practitioner's Guide* by Robert L. Leahy, Dennis Tirch, and Lisa A. Napolitano

*The Psychology of Thinking about the Future*, edited by Gabriele Oettingen, A. Timur Sevincer, and Peter M. Gollwitzer

*Self-Regulation and Ego Control*, edited by Edward R. Hirt, Joshua J. Clarkson, and Lile Jia

*Self-Esteem: A Proven Program of Cognitive Techniques for Assessing, Improving & Maintaining Your Self-Esteem* by Matthew McKay, PhD, and Patrick Fanning

*10-Minute Mindfulness: 71 Simple Habits for Living in the Present Moment* by S. J. Scott and Barrie Davenport