



Healthy Habits



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Healthy Habits

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Healthy Habits

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

This educational program is designed to help empower participants to overcome unwanted habitual patterns of behaviour and develop new healthy and desirable habits. This program draws from the best of empirical research and theological insights, to help participants exercise self-discipline, overcome cravings and temptations, and achieve personal goals.

BACKGROUND

The Healthy Habits program has been developed by a team of experts in Clinical Psychology from a Biblical worldview (combining the best of science and scripture). Whether your goal is to overcome unwanted habits or sustainably develop new healthy ones, the strategies presented in this program are based on clinical, behavioural, and neuroscientific research and underpinned by a Christian worldview.

GETTING STARTED

The Healthy Habits program is designed to be completed by individuals. However, research has shown sustainable change is consolidated by community support. As such, you may wish to complete this program together with trusted friends or family members, or in a more formal small group setting. Start each session by watching the relevant video. Feel free to pause the video at any time to reflect on, or discuss, key points. Activity worksheets provide a summary of key points and serve to reinforce lessons on transforming habitual patterns of behaviour.

DISCLAIMER

Any information, assessment or activity presented in the Healthy Habits program is intended for educational purposes only and has been specifically designed for a Christian audience. While the Healthy Habits program may provide you with practical tools that will empower your behavioural well-being journey, please be aware, this program DOES NOT constitute therapy or counselling. Instead, the aim of this program is (i) to equip you with practical knowledge, skills and resources, and (ii) empower you with life-changing strategies to overcome unwanted habitual patterns of behaviour and develop new healthy habits. Content is provided in good faith as to its accuracy and reflects the research, observations, opinions, views and understanding of the authors at one point in time.



NOTE: PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

If you have a habitual pattern of behaviour that impacts upon your capacity to function and fulfil personal or work responsibilities, interferes with your relationships, or impacts upon your physical, mental or emotional health, seek assistance from a qualified medical or mental health professional.

Dial up Your Discipline

ACTIVITY SHEET



When it comes to self-discipline, at times it may appear easier for us to ‘conquer a city’ than ‘conquer ourselves’. But just because it may seem hard to break bad habits and difficult to form new healthy ones, both science and scripture not only indicate that it’s possible, they also highlight how. This Healthy Habits program will help you consider ways to get ready for change, set meaningful goals, foster the right kind of motivation, learn to effectively manage triggers, tame temptations, neutralise cravings, and explore what it practically means to ‘renew your mind’, so as to bring about sustainable transformation.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

**This Healthy Habits program
is designed to help you:**

- (a)** understand the nature of behaviour patterns (how habits are developed, maintained and changed)
- (b)** overcome unwanted habits and establish a relapse prevention plan
- (c)** develop and implement strategies for behavioural success

Do your habits hinder or help you?



What areas of your life do you think you could have a healthier attitude towards? ✓

Gambling		Viewing pornography		Working	
Alcohol consumption		Drug taking		Social media	
Washing/cleaning		Computer games		Cola consumption	
Stealing		Shopping		SMS/e-mail	
Excessive eating		Sexual promiscuity		Perfectionism	
Binging/purging		Compulsive exercise		Arguing/conflict	
Tattoos/piercing		Sugar/chocolate		Cosmetic surgery	
Intrusive thoughts		Smoking		Laziness	
Coffee consumption		Co-dependency		Hoarding	
Pain medication		Watching TV/movies		Anger/temper	
Self-injury		Smartphone use		Swearing/cursing	
Lying/cheating		Masturbating		Other	



Identify any new helpful and/or healthy habits you'd like to develop: ✓

Financial responsibility		Considerate of others		Be more organised	
Going to bed earlier		Learn an instrument		Thoughtful words	
Eat healthier		Stable relationships		Learn a new language	
Think optimistically		Work-life balance		Exercise more	
Regular self-care		Relaxation/sabbath		Conscientious/diligent	
Character development		Better hygiene		Help/support others	
Punctual/reliable		Read/learn more		Wake up earlier	
Assertiveness		Get 7-9 hours sleep		Spend time with God	
Time management		Tithe/budget		Be more clean/tidy	
Drink more water		Be more focused		Emotional management	
Slow down		Be a person of my word		Absolute honesty	
Be more social		Learn a new skill		Other	

**CHRIST HAS TRULY SET
US FREE. NOW MAKE
SURE THAT YOU STAY
FREE, AND DON'T GET
TIED UP AGAIN...**

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)



A Vision for Freedom

Being stuck in a pattern of unwanted behaviour can feel like being held captive. If we break down the daily ritual of a prisoner, we see that they repeat the same process day in, day out, within the confines of the penitentiary. This is a great metaphor for unwanted habitual patterns of behaviour, because being stuck in a cyclic pattern (habit) that you can't seem to break free from, is like being in bondage. In fact, the routine of being imprisoned becomes so well engrained that if or when freedom is granted, it can become too much to handle. While everyone may want freedom, not everyone knows how to handle freedom.



Q: If nothing changed in your life, in a few years from now, what would be the state of your:

PHYSICAL HEALTH

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

FINANCIAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH



Q: If you overcame unwanted habits and/or developed new healthy habits, in a few years from now, what would be the state of your:

PHYSICAL HEALTH

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

FINANCIAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH



Freedom...

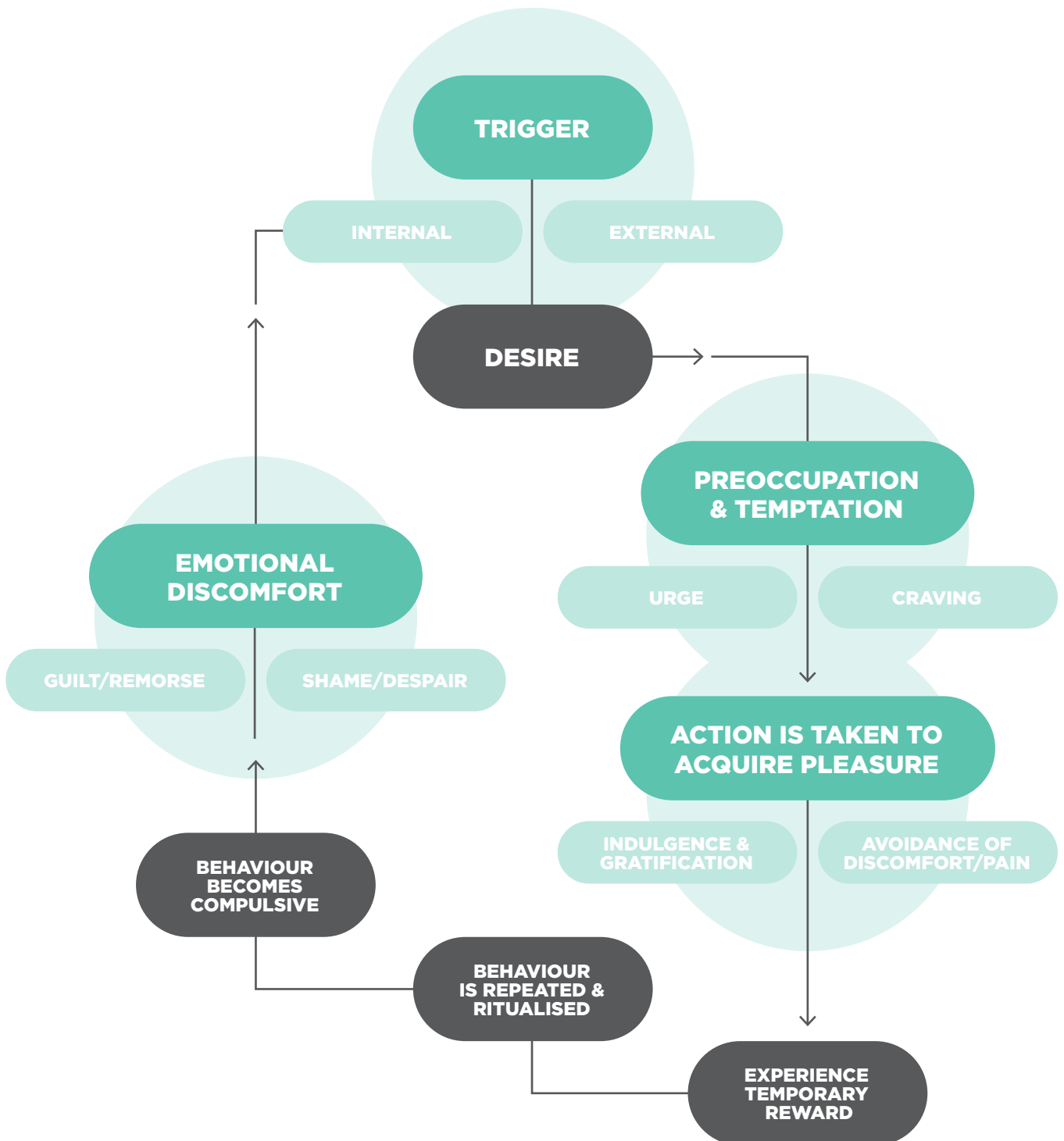
...IS NOT BEING ABLE TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT; RATHER IT'S BEING ABLE TO GO WITHOUT WHAT YOU WANT AND STILL BE OKAY WITH IT.



“EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE, BUT NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL...”
1 Corinthians 10:23 (BSB)

The Set Up

To develop a constructive plan and vision for freedom, you need to understand the nature of habits. Before habits are formed there's a SET UP that serves to predispose our behaviour. This usually occurs in the form of a trigger. Triggers can be internal (e.g., thought or feeling) or external (e.g., location, an atmosphere, circumstance). The trigger is like the spark that lights the flame of desire. This is where temptation and cravings come in to play. It may be a desire for indulgence and gratification, or the desire to eradicate discomfort and pain. Either way, pleasure is the central tenant that demands behavioural 'action' to bring about a reward or relief.



Dare to become Aware



Q: In relation to unwanted, unhelpful or unhealthy habits you may want to be FREE FROM, which of the two options (from each category) relate most to you:

INTERNAL Thoughts and/or Feelings	←	TRIGGER TO ENGAGE HABIT	→	EXTERNAL Situations/ Circumstances
CRAVING A strong or intense internal desire or longing		PREOCCUPATION & TEMPTATION		URGE A strong or intense externally prompted desire
AVOID DISCOMFORT Circumventing pain		ACTION TO GET PLEASURE		INDULGENCE Gratifying carnal desires
GUILT/REMORSE Feeling bad for what you've done		EMOTIONAL RESPONSE		SHAME/DESPAIR Feeling bad for who you've become

Q: If you have (at times) given in to temptation and taken action to obtain pleasure:

What was the temporary reward you experienced?

Q: If you have (at times) found yourself repeating this behaviour:

What internal/external trigger preceded the action you took?

True Freedom...

The benefits that accompany freedom go beyond being free from something. Real liberation is also being set free for, or to something.



What areas of your life would you like to be **FREE FROM**, **FREE FOR** or **FREE TO**: ✓

FREEDOM FROM	✓	FREEDOM FOR	✓	FREEDOM TO	✓
Unwanted habits		The benefit of others		Love	
Unhealthy habits		God's purpose to reign		Dream again	
Immoral habits		Setting an example		Glorify God	
Things that hinder growth		Healthy living		Engage a relationship	
Toxic relationships		Making an impact		Hold down a job	
Insecurities		Independence		Make a living	
Hurts and hang-ups		Helping those in need		Live well	
Addictions		The pursuit of justice		Make the most of life	

Q: What's the No.1 habit you want to be **FREE FROM** and why?

Q: What's the No.1 thing you'd like to experience **FREEDOM FOR** and why?

Q: What's the No.1 new healthy habit you wish to be **FREE TO** develop and why?