



# Habits & Patterns

Build Awareness to Shift Behavior

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## Invitation to Reflect

We all have habits and patterns—some that we’re aware of, and many that operate **beneath our conscious awareness**.

This exercise invites you to slow down and **observe your behaviors**, identify their roots, and explore how they influence your day-to-day life.

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## Understanding Hidden Patterns

Sometimes, a simple daily action holds deeper meaning or triggers a cascade of behaviors without us realizing it.

### Example:

You wake up and make your usual morning tea or coffee. This seemingly innocent act actually serves as a **trigger**—a mental cue that *work is next*. But work isn’t something you enjoy. In fact, the idea of it brings on anxiety, stress, or even physical discomfort.

As a result, your behavior changes. You delay getting ready, get distracted, or create tension with a partner—anything to avoid facing the day. Ultimately, you leave the house late, already overwhelmed before the day begins.

And yet, there's a **reward** in all this: avoidance. You temporarily delay something uncomfortable.

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The example, though dramatized, is common. Our behaviors are often **automatic**, and even unhelpful ones may provide a payoff—comfort, distraction, control, etc.

**Reference:** [Judson Brewer's TED Talk on Habit Loops](#)

*(Consider watching this to deepen your understanding of habit formation and reward cycles.)*

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## The Habit Loop: A Framework

Behavioral patterns tend to follow a cycle:

**Trigger → Behavior → Result → Reward**

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## Habit Exploration Exercise

### Step 1: Identify the Opportunity

What are some **unhealthy or unhelpful habits or patterns** you engage in?

Examples: Procrastination, overthinking, snapping at your partner, staying up too late, doomscrolling, etc.

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### Step 2: Discover the Reward

Ask yourself: *What do I gain from this behavior?*

Even “bad” habits give us something—comfort, distraction, relief, control, escape, attention, etc.

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### Step 3: Define a New Intention

How do you want to **show up differently** in these moments?

What would feel healthier, more aligned, or more empowering?

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### Step 4: Map the Pattern

Use this framework to write out a specific behavior loop:

- **The trigger is:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **My behavior is:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **The result is:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **The reward is:** \_\_\_\_\_

Repeat this for multiple patterns if needed.

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### Step 5: Disrupt the Loop

Brainstorm new ways to respond to your triggers. Ask:

- What small change could I try next time this shows up?
- What could I do instead that’s still rewarding but healthier?
- How might I reframe the situation?

This is your chance to **test and learn** what helps you shift from reaction to intention.

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## Final Thought: Practice with Patience

Change doesn't happen overnight. Behavior shifts are built over time, with practice, patience, and compassion.

- **Practice** — Treat each trigger as a chance to learn.
  - **Patience** — Growth takes time. Don't expect perfection.
  - **Compassion** — Be kind to yourself. Slip-ups are part of the process.
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Every opportunity to notice and adjust your behavior is a step toward the version of you that you want to become.

