

Your Total Behavior Check

Printable worksheet · the interactive version lives at omnipsyche.org/therapyhomework



Name (optional)

Date

The four-wheeled car

Choice theory pictures every behavior as a car with four wheels:

Front wheels: acting and thinking. These steer. You have direct control over what you do and, with practice, real influence over what you think.

Back wheels: feeling and physiology. These follow. You cannot grab a feeling and rotate it, and you cannot order your heart rate around. The back wheels go wherever the front wheels steer.

Most of us try to drive with the back wheels: "I need to feel motivated first," "I will go when the anxiety stops." That car does not move. This exercise teaches you to drive with the front wheels.

THE SITUATION

1 Pick one situation in your life that keeps going badly. What is it?

One specific, recurring thing. An argument you keep having, a habit you keep repeating, a task you keep avoiding, a relationship that keeps stalling.

2 In that situation, what do you actually want?

Not what you want the other person to do. What YOU want: the outcome, the relationship, the feeling of your own conduct. Be specific enough that you would recognize getting it.

3 Wheel one, acting. When this situation happens, what do you actually do?

Observable actions only, as if a camera were recording. Raise your voice? Go silent? Leave? Pour a drink? Pick up the phone? Say yes when you mean no?

4 Wheel two, thinking. What is running through your head in that moment?

The self-talk, word for word if you can. "This always happens." "They do not respect me." "I cannot handle this." "One will not hurt."

5 Wheel three, feeling. What emotions show up?

Name them plainly: angry, hurt, ashamed, scared, resentful, numb. More than one is normal.

6 Wheel four, physiology. What does your body do?

Tight chest, hot face, clenched jaw, racing heart, exhaustion, stomach knots, restless legs. The body is always part of the behavior.

7 Here is the question. Is what you are doing getting you what you want?

Look at your acting and thinking wheels, then at what you said you want. How well is the current approach actually working?

1

2

3

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5

6

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9

10

Not at all

Completely

8 What is the current approach costing you?

In the relationship, in self-respect, in time, in energy. This is not self-punishment; it is pricing. You cannot decide if something is worth keeping until you know what it costs.

STEERING

9 Front wheel one. Next time the situation starts, what could you DO differently?

One doable action, within your control, that points toward what you want. Lower the bar until you would actually do it: leave the room for ten minutes, ask one question before defending, put the phone in another room.

10 Front wheel two. What could you THINK on purpose in that moment?

A sentence that is true and useful. Not fake positivity. Something like: "I can want this without demanding it." "This feeling is a back wheel; it will follow." "I am someone who keeps his word to himself."

Bring this to your next session. What you wrote here is exactly the kind of material good sessions are made of. Repeat the exercise whenever it is useful; the value compounds.

Michael C. Shedrick, M.S., PLPC, NCC. This exercise is for educational and informational purposes only. It is not therapy, not a substitute for professional diagnosis or treatment, and completing it does not create a counselor-client relationship. If it was assigned by your treatment provider, bring it to them. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). Free mental health education and tools: omnipsyche.org