

No More Excuses!

Getting More Done Tool

Instructions: Are you getting in your own way? Are you making excuses for not taking action? It takes courage and honesty to admit we make excuses, even though we ALL do it... While making excuses can be a good thing, it also undermines our confidence in ourselves - and life itself. Remember awareness is power. Simply use the worksheet below to identify your excuses, understand the underlying fear/consequences, and commit to do things differently.

- **Start by writing out the goal or outcome you're looking for** in the space below, then complete the table for each excuse.
- **Next pick 3-5 excuses you make on a regular basis.** Put pen to paper and write - and no judgement please! Whatever pops up, write it down. (*Eg. I'm too busy, It's too cold, I don't have..., I was too tired etc.*)

Now for each excuse, answer the following questions:

1. ***What's the underlying thought or fear?***
Take a deep breath, pause and notice what thought or feeling pops up. Then whatever it is, write it out below.
2. ***What's the impact of this excuse?***
How are your excuses affecting you? Your life? Your relationship with self/others? What opportunities have you missed?
3. ***What could I say instead?***
Think about the goal you want to achieve and why. One idea is to acknowledge your fears/feelings - and then commit to take one step towards your goal, no matter how small.
4. ***What will I do with this information?***
With this knowledge, what steps will you take to address your fear/s, lack of resources, motivation, self-belief etc.?

The Goal/ Outcome I want is

Why I want this

<p>List your excuses.</p> <p>What are the excuses you're making? Look for words like "can't", "don't have" "didn't", "Sorry, but" or "because".</p>	<p>What's the underlying thought or fear?</p> <p>What's really going on? Write whatever thought or feeling comes to mind, however silly it may seem.</p>	<p>What's the cost/ impact of this excuse?</p> <p>How specifically does this excuse affect you, your life, relationships?</p>	<p>What could I say instead?</p> <p>What would you like to hear yourself say instead? How could you be kind to yourself and still move towards your goal?</p>	<p>What will I do with this information?</p> <p>What will you do to address your excuse making? Write your actions below:</p>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

APPENDIX

Helpful Background on Excuse Making

Why We Make Excuses:

- We make excuses when we're simply not motivated enough. We tend to be more motivated to avoid or move away from pain and discomfort than towards goals and pleasure, hence our human response of making excuses.
- Making excuses is a self-protection mechanism - by making an excuse we protect ourselves from feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety, embarrassment, fear and discomfort.
- Excuses help us shift the focus from something deeply personal, to something more general eg: It's easier to say, "I was too tired" or "I changed my mind" than acknowledge our deep fear of failure.

Some Common Reasons We Make Excuses:

- **Fear;** of failure, success, embarrassment or ridicule, uncertainty or change, making a mistake, responsibility, upsetting others or a general fear of the feelings evoked when we think about our goal!
- **Limiting beliefs;** a lack of belief in your ability to follow through or complete, that things will not work out.
- **Uncertainty;** a lack of clarity about the outcomes - or what might be involved in making the change.
- **Lack of readiness;** we may lack information, time, energy or some other resource to make the change.
- **It's not really our goal;** the goal may be a "should" or we're doing it to please someone else.
- **Avoiding discomfort;** of making change or how others will react to what we want to do.
- **Complications;** we start the process and find it's harder or more involved than we first thought, and are now uncertain if we want to proceed.
- **Inertia;** It's much easier to stay where we are and not do something than take a risk and make the effort to change.

When Making Excuses Is Helpful:

- Excuses can be helpful when they 1) Preserve the original goal and 2) are made with compassion and understanding. This kind of excuse making preserves our self-esteem and helps us feel good about giving it another go.

The Impact of Excuse-Making:

- When we regularly make excuses rather than take action towards our goals it damages our self-esteem. We reinforce unchallenged fears and limiting beliefs, block our creativity and disappoint others - and ourselves.
- In addition, when we make excuses to others we can damage how others perceive us.
- Ultimately, making habitual excuses can lead to a more negative view of life, carrying around regrets and generally leading a less satisfying life.

The Answer to Excuse Making:

- The answer is not to stop making excuses - but to raise our awareness and be honest with ourselves. And it's essential to be kind too. If we're harsh with ourselves, it's not going to inspire us to make change and step outside our comfort zones.
- Instead we need to change what we say - and what we do when we feel the familiar excuse coming on.

Making Change:

- Research shows that while it can become a habit to make excuses, even a short pause can be enough to catch ourselves, focus on the outcomes we want instead of avoiding our fears and discomfort.
- Changing our excuses can be challenging, as it involves facing our deepest selves. Often when we look at the underlying reasons for our excuses we judge ourselves. We know we could do something, we're "just" afraid or are "lazy" and don't want to face the discomfort.
- No-one performs better when feeling judged and under scrutiny - and this is why kindness is key.
- The purpose of this exercise is to raise your awareness around the excuses you commonly make, so that you can be kinder to yourself and make more conscious choices.