

The Cost of Avoiding Your Problems

Many people deal with problems by trying to avoid painful thoughts, feelings, sensations, and memories. While avoiding these unpleasant inner experiences may help temporarily, this usually just works for a short period of time. Some people spend hours each day avoiding the things that could upset them instead of using this time to enjoy life. This worksheet is designed to help you examine how you are avoiding your problems, and how this keeps you from having a happier and more fulfilling life.

Begin by listing the inner experiences you are trying to avoid. These are the things that really upset you.

List three thoughts that upset you.

List three feelings that upset you.

List three sensations that upset you.

List three memories that upset you.

Now list the things you typically do to avoid these unpleasant inner experiences.

List the things you do to distract yourself from unpleasant inner experiences.

List the activities or events you avoid to keep from having painful inner experiences.

List the places you avoid to keep from having painful inner experiences.

List the people you avoid to keep from having painful inner experiences.

List substances you use (including alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, and food) to try and avoid unpleasant inner experiences.
