



Use choice points to make decisions guided by your values

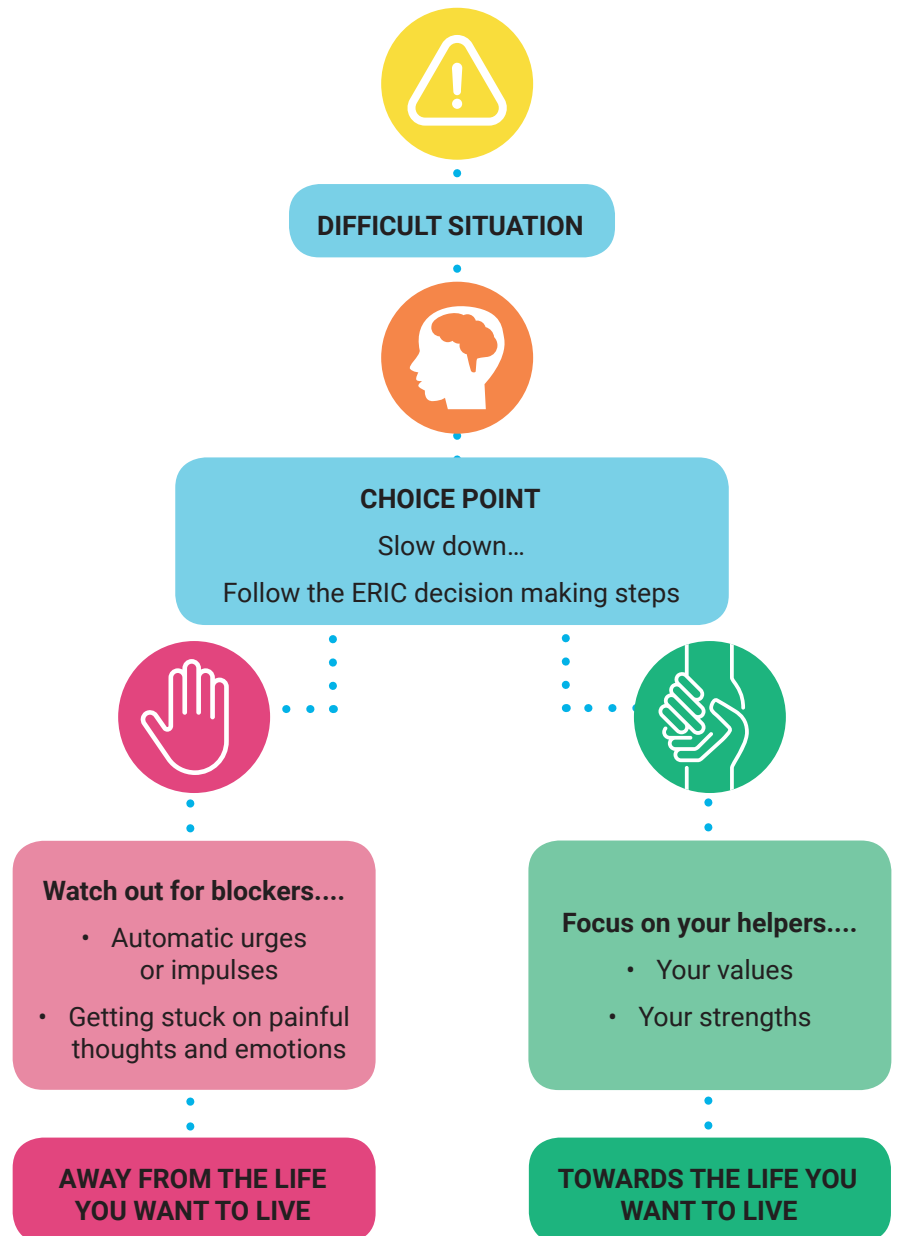
Slowing down and noticing your choice points is an important skill in managing urges and impulses that arise when we have strong feelings.

All decision making involves a choice point. A choice point is the tiny micro-break in your thoughts where you shift gears. You shift from imagining how you *might react* to deciding and planning how you *will respond* to a situation. Most of the time we may only notice our choice points in passing moments. But they are there. When we are experiencing strong emotions, our choice points pass by more quickly. It can even feel like our actions happened automatically or without us making a conscious decision. If we are intoxicated, we may not notice them at all.

Slowing down and noticing your choice points helps you manage urges and impulses.

SLOW DOWN AT YOUR CHOICE POINTS BEFORE YOU RESPOND

Once you start to notice choice points, use your strengths to help you make decisions that move you towards your values. Values are the things that matter most to you - the decisions that 'feel right' because they move you towards the kind of life you want to live.



Emotions typically last for about 90 seconds. We can stretch out strong emotions with rumination or by paying attention to the stories in our mind that trigger the emotion. But if we 'let it be' and breathe for a moment, emotions typically pass pretty quickly. Then we can choose how to respond.



6 STEPS TO HELP YOU NOTICE YOUR CHOICE POINTS

Follow these steps when you experience a strong emotion.

STEP 1

What's happening?

Gather basic information from your body and your mind. How do I feel? What are my body signals telling me?

What are the stories my mind is telling me?

STEP 2

Why is my decision important?

What's significant to me right now? What are my values in life that can give me a clue of how to decide?

I know that how I feel will pass. So how important is this?

STEP 3

Slow down you mind by counting backwards from 10.



STEP 4

What are my blockers?

Call out your blockers. Blockers are painful memories or negative thoughts that your mind has a habit of returning to when you experience strong emotions. Blockers interfere with helpful decision making.

STEP 5

How do I want to feel tomorrow about this decision?

Imagine that this situation has passed and picture how you want to feel about your decision tomorrow.

STEP 6

What's my decision?

Use your helpers - your strengths and values - to make your decision. What strengths do I have that can help me decide how to respond? How can my values and strengths guide my next steps?



PRACTICE & REFLECT

During the next week, practice noticing when you are facing a choice point. Make a commitment to try this once every day. Use the tips above to decide how to respond. Tick it off in the calendar when you have noticed your choice point.

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