



KNOW THYSELF

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PART V

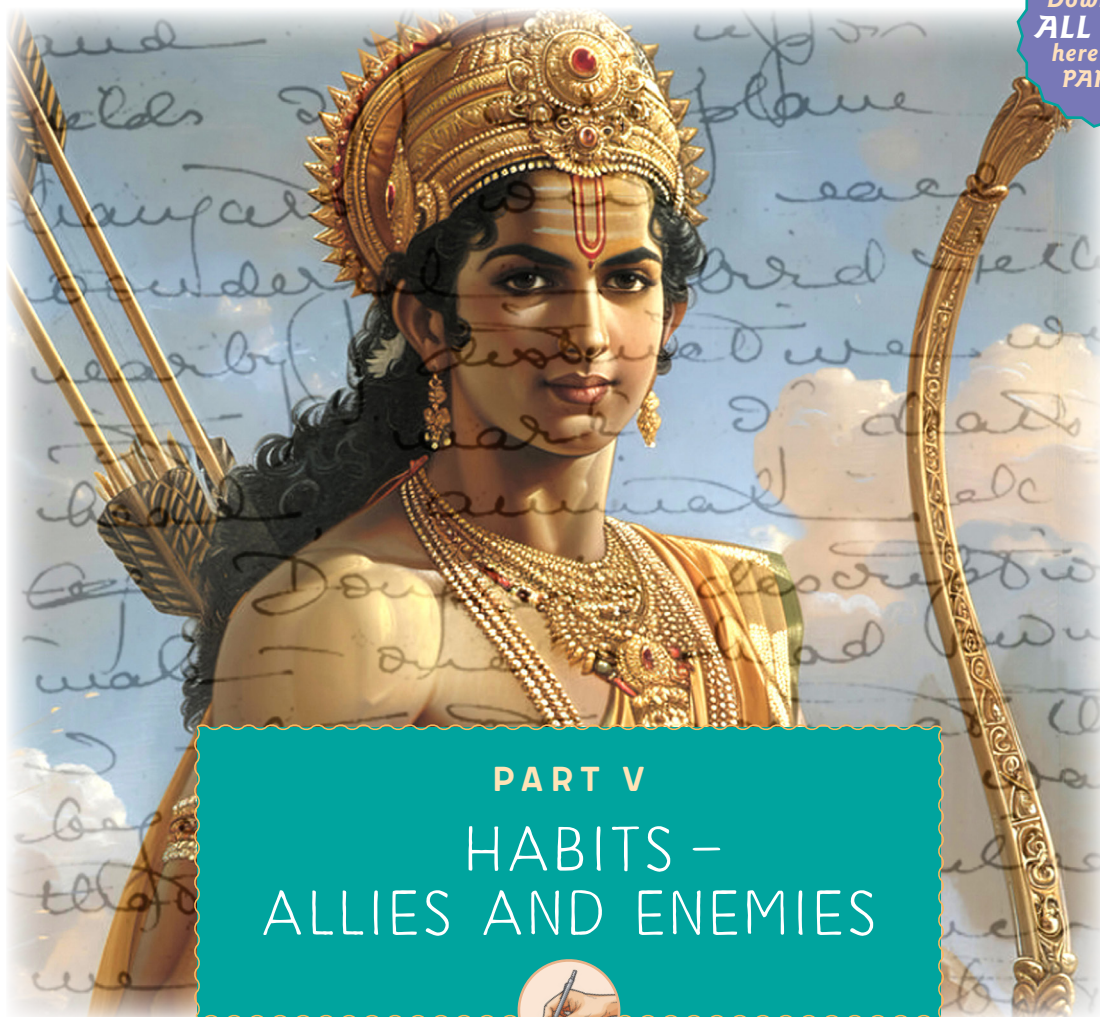


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PROCRASTINATION SABOTEURS

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Worksheet 1

This exercise is meant to help you discover when and to what extent the procrastination habit saboteurs are lurking.



What tasks do I regularly avoid?

Review your daily activities, from waking to bedtime. Which recurring tasks do you tend to delay or avoid?



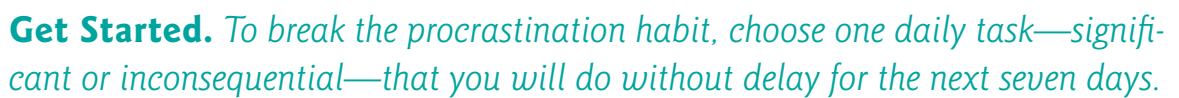
What thoughts usually arise as I consider whether to do or postpone each task?

Is there strong resistance, hesitation, uncertainty, or do other thoughts come up at that moment?



How do I usually justify avoidance?

What rationale or explanation do you use for avoiding each of the tasks?



Once you've gained traction with one task, apply your will to others. Let each success add momentum as you free yourself from procrastination's grip.

SHIVANI'S FAVORITE ALLY: EXAMPLE WORKSHEET

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Worksheet 2



What is one of my most trusted good habits?

I get outdoors three to five times a week—walking or running.

Indoors, I do a daily energizing routine and an occasional online strength workout.



What needs does it fulfill?

To stay physically strong and mentally alert.



The short- and long-term benefits

Boosts my energy and keeps my muscles toned

Brings a burst of vitality to my body

Strengthens my heart and lungs

Gives my mind a break from the day's tasks

Clears my head, sparking fresh ideas



What thoughts set the habit in motion?

"My body is stiff. It needs to move."

"Time for a little break to recharge body and mind."

"It's a good time to get outside and breathe in some fresh air."

If I'm indoors, I tell myself, "It's a quick workout—let's get it done right now."



What actions constitute the habit pattern?

I pause what I'm doing.

I get dressed in my workout clothes.

I take a moment to energize before I start.

I do a few warm-up stretches.

I decide on my route for the day.

I set my smartwatch to track my progress.

Whether it's running, walking, or an indoor routine, I dive in.

I use this time to repeat a mantra or affirmation.

I ask for inspiration on any project I'm working on.

I dictate ideas into my smartwatch.

I cool down and freshen up.

I jot down the ideas that came up during the session.



My support network

My husband: We walk together regularly and remind each other to get moving.

My friend: We often go for long walks together.

An online trainer who leads the "Ten-Minute Senior Strength Workout."

MY FAVORITE ALLY

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Worksheet 3

The best way to understand the value of a good habit is to reflect on one of your own, especially one that benefits your physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual well-being. It could relate to meditation or prayer, your health practices, your approach to work, the way you communicate with and relate to others, or something else entirely.



What is one of my most trusted good habits?

Think about a habit that has become second nature, something you do willingly and that positively impacts your life.



What needs does it fulfill?

Habits are formed in response to specific needs or desires. What motivates you to engage in this habit?



What are the benefits?

Consider both the immediate rewards and the long-term positive effects.



What thoughts set the habit in motion?

Every action has its inception in thought. What thoughts typically trigger this habit?



What specific actions constitute this habit pattern?

Habits become embedded in our minds when a series of actions is repeated. Recognizing these steps helps you understand the mechanics of the habit. Break down the sequence: What starts the habit, and how does it flow from step to step?



What helps me stay motivated?

Consider people, environments, and resources that help you sustain this habit.

MY LOYAL ALLIES

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Worksheet 4

Unless we pause to notice them, our positive habits often go unrecognized. Yet they form the foundation of daily life. Just as a gardener nurtures a plant, we too must tend to the habits we wish to grow—recognizing them, appreciating them, and reinforcing them through intentional action. ● This exercise will help you recognize and strengthen your alliance with the habits that serve you.



What are my daily cleanliness rituals?

What do you do regularly to keep your body, home, and workspace clean and orderly?



Which of my habits support my physical health?

Think about exercise, diet, rest, and other routines that keep your body strong and resilient.



Which practices help me stay calm and centered, even in challenging moments?

Perhaps you use meditation or prayer; physical activity or sports; gardening or walking in nature; talking with a trusted friend or counselor. Any practice that steadies the emotions belongs here.



Which of my habits help me stay focused and creative in my work?

Consider habits that support productivity, concentration, and inspiration. Which practices help you get into the zone for work or creative projects?



Which habits enable me to use my time effectively and stay organized?

Reflect on time-management or organizational habits such as planning, scheduling, or prioritizing tasks. How do they help you stay on track?



Which of my habits contribute to my financial stability and long-term security?

Think about habits related to managing money, budgeting, investing, or sharing resources wisely.



How do my habits nurture my relationships with others?

Identify habits that strengthen your relationships with friends, family, or coworkers. Do you make time for meaningful conversations, shared experiences, or acts of kindness?



What habits help me maintain a dynamic and fulfilling inner life?

Reflect on the routines and choices that make room for spiritual practice and inner growth.

∞ INTERLUDE ∞



APPRECIATION

Before moving on, pause for a moment to appreciate your battalion of trusted allies. Let yourself feel the steadiness and support they bring to daily life. Rest with them for a while and acknowledge the strength they give you. These allies have your back as you prepare, in the next chapter, to come face-to-face with the habits that thwart your progress.

A PAST CONQUEST

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Worksheet 5

Close your eyes and recall a time when you freed yourself from a harmful habit. Remember it as vividly as you can.



What habit did I overcome?

Recall the habit that once held you back or caused repeated trouble.



What motivated me to make this change?

Reflect on the reason or turning point that moved you to act.



Was it a sudden breakthrough, or a gradual process?

Did the habit's mesmerizing grip suddenly loosen, or did it take steady effort over time to break free from it?



What steps did I take to break free from this habit?

List the key actions that led to the breakthrough.



How did I feel once I freed myself from it?

Describe the emotions you experienced when you finally succeeded.



How has this change affected my life since then?

Reflect on how your life has changed since releasing this habit.

As you rejoice again in this victory, let it remind you that freedom from habits is always possible. If you could overcome that habit, you already possess the strength to face others that may still hold you back.

MY HABIT ENEMIES

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Worksheet 6

The questions that follow will help you bring the habits that have been stealthily working against your highest good onto the field of your awareness.



Personal Cleanliness

In what ways do you neglect basic routines of cleanliness and order—for your body and your personal environments (home, workspace, car, and outdoor areas)?



Health

What habitual behaviors are harmful to your physical health, such as unhealthy food or beverage choices, lack of exercise, overwork, or irregular sleep routines?



Addictions

Have certain substances or behaviors crossed the line into addiction? To what extent are they controlling your life?



Digital Habits

Are there patterns in the digital content you consume—news, social media, videos, or games—that disturb your peace of mind, dull your awareness, or sap your energy?



Mental Obsessions

Are there habitual thought patterns—such as worry, fear, criticism, insecurity, or overthinking—that cloud your clarity?



Emotional Reactions

Do certain emotional reactions habitually overpower you—such as anger, which harms others and you as well; fear, which paralyzes your will; or worry, which drains your energy? Identify the ones that seize you most often.



Time Management

Are you struggling with over-scheduling, poor planning, or always feeling behind?



Work

Which habits are undermining your productivity—procrastination, lack of focus, frequent distraction, multitasking, or others?



Financial Habits

Consider any financial habits that may be contributing to stress, insecurity, or missed opportunities. Are you overspending or neglecting to keep a budget?



Relationships

Which of your behaviors create tension or misunderstanding in your relationships—impatience, judgment, avoidance, or others?



Spiritual and Personal Growth Practices

What habits are blocking your progress or diminishing the depth and vitality of your practices? Have any become mechanical, done without enthusiasm or real attention?

∞ INTERLUDE ∞



LET THE INSIGHTS SETTLE

Recognizing your habit enemies is itself a victory. Each one you've named has already begun to lose its hidden power over you. Once operating unseen, these enemies are now in the open, where you can face them directly.

Before you decide which battles to wage first, take a moment to breathe and let these insights settle. Feel the inner strength that comes from seeing things clearly. Give yourself time—even a few days if needed—to view these enemies with detachment and recognize that although they affect you, they do not define you.

When you feel settled and ready to face them, continue to the next chapter. Not every enemy needs to be faced right now. Like a seasoned warrior, you want to choose your battles wisely.

CHOOSING MY BATTLES

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Worksheet 7

This worksheet helps you identify three habits to change—starting with the easiest and progressing to the most deeply ingrained—each victory strengthening your confidence for the next. As you move through this list, take a moment to pause before writing your answers. Imagine each habit you are struggling with. Picture it clearly—feel how it drains your energy and weakens your resolve, and then affirm your desire to be free from its hold.

Yes, I can!

Begin with a habit you feel confident you can overcome within about six months—something not too serious but likely to give you an early win and boost your confidence. For instance, you could think of cutting out sugary drinks, ending late-night snacking, or letting go of a small but recurring negative thought—such as criticizing a coworker. These are only illustrations to spark reflection; choose whatever habit feels most ready for change in your own life.

Raising the Bar

Now choose a habit that has a stronger effect on your life — perhaps a recurring attitude like complaining when things don't go your way, procrastinating on important tasks, or letting social media distract you from your work time, or overscheduling and being unable to honor all of your commitments. These are simply illustrations to help you find a troublesome habit.

A Formidable Foe

Finally, choose a habit that has woven itself deeply into your life and begun to control your behavior. By now, you're an experienced soldier, ready to face a major adversary. It might be a long-standing dependence on caffeine or late-night eating, a recurring pattern of self-criticism or flares of anger, or an ingrained drive to overwork that drains vitality and strains relationships. Choose a habit that has long held you in its grip—the one whose defeat would bring the greatest freedom and joy.

∞ INTERLUDE ∞



REFLECT ON YOUR CHOICES

Before moving on, take a moment to reflect on the habits you've chosen. Naming them is a powerful first step in the process of change. Pause here if you wish, and let this be the close of your session for today. When you are ready, return to the battlefield.

CONQUERING MY HABIT ENEMY

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Worksheet 8

Before doing this exercise, calmly reflect on the three habits you identified in the previous exercise and the one you are most inclined to eliminate at this time.

UNDERSTANDING THE HABIT



What habit do I want to eliminate?

Name the specific behavior or thought pattern you have decided to change.



What rewards or satisfaction did this habit initially provide?

Reflect on what this habit offered you when you first began it—perhaps a sense of pleasure, escape, or relief from pressure.



What, if anything, does this habit still provide?

Identify any real benefits this habit still offers.



What are the unhealthy side effects of this habit?

Consider how this habit undermines your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual wellbeing.



What thoughts set this habit in motion?

Every action begins with a thought or feeling. Which ones tend to trigger this habit for you?



In what circumstances or environments does this behavior arise most often?

Which places, situations, or emotional states make this pattern more likely to surface?



What excuses do you find yourself making?

What do you tell yourself to justify slipping into this habit pattern?



How do you feel when this habit overtakes you?

Describe the thoughts and emotions that arise when the habit takes hold.



Who in your life encourages, enables, or shares this habit?

Think of family, friends, or colleagues whose attitudes or companionship make it easier for you to keep the habit.

YOUR RESOLVE TO CHANGE



Why do I want to eliminate this habit now?

What motivates you to want to break free at this moment in your life?



Which behaviors am I willing to give up?

Identify specific actions you are ready to stop in order to break this habit. Be clear about what you are willing to let go of.



What environments am I willing to avoid?

Which places, people, or situations are you ready to avoid while you work to overcome this habit?

∞ INTERLUDE ∞



YOU ARE FREE!

Take a moment now — and again at the start of each day — to visualize yourself living without this compulsion. Feel what it's like to be free.

A heavy burden has been lifted.
You feel a lightness in your body —
your chest open and proud,
your heart unencumbered.

That weight is gone. Gone forever.
You move forward with lightened steps,
each movement full of grace and ease.

OVERCOMING A HABIT: DAILY LOG

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Worksheet 9

Change is built one day at a time. Use the Daily Log for at least one month to track your progress. Be honest yet gentle with yourself. Each day is an opportunity to learn, adjust, and move forward.

Date: _____

The habit I am committed to eliminating:

Did I resist the habit today?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

● **What helped me resist or weaken this habit?**

● **What thoughts, moods, or circumstances triggered the habit?**

● **How did I respond to those provocations?**

● **What victory or progress did I achieve today in my efforts to overcome this habit?**

● **What patterns or situations will I watch for tomorrow to stay on course?**

● **What victory do I hope to achieve tomorrow?**

OVERCOMING A HABIT WEEKLY REVIEW

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Worksheet 10

At the close of each week, take a moment to step back and gain a clear view of your week's endeavors. This is your opportunity to recognize progress, learn from experience, and move forward with deeper insight and renewed intention.



To what extent am I satisfied with my efforts this week?

Where do you see progress, and where is there still room to grow?



What benefits have I experienced?

What benefits have emerged this week—both in your inner state and in your daily interactions?



In what ways did I have difficulty this week?

Which challenges showed up more than once? Noticing these recurring patterns will help you respond more effectively next time.



What adjustments did I make during the week?

What changes to your approach helped improve your consistency?



What changes or new strategies will I try for next week?

Based on what you've learned, how will you refine your approach?

∞ INTERLUDE ∞



RELEASE

Unmasking one or more pernicious habits may have been difficult, even humbling. It's important to remember: We are not defined by our habits. As Yogananda recounts in his autobiography, his guru Swami Sri Yukteswar said, "What we have done, we can undo."

Give yourself some time now—even a few days if needed—to release any lingering identification with the habits you've examined. When you feel ready, take up your sword again and set out on a new path, one illumined by positive habits that redirect your energy toward inner freedom.

EXAMPLE SHIVANI'S NEW HABIT WORKSHEET

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Worksheet 11

To help guide you through the process of building a new positive habit, here is example from start to finish. I'll use a simple habit of drinking more hydrating beverages—one I myself am working to establish. By showing how I apply each of the steps to this process, you'll gain a clearer understanding of how to use these prompts effectively for your own habit creation. With this example in hand, you'll be better equipped to shape your own new habits with confidence and resolve.

1. Intention

HABIT: I will drink at least one and a half liters of water and other hydrating beverages each day.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: This habit is essential for my physical health, energy levels, and mental clarity.

2. Benefits

TANGIBLE REWARDS: Improved digestion, elimination, liver and kidney function, skin tone, and brain clarity.

EMOTIONAL REWARDS: I expect to feel more energized and enthusiastic.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS: This habit will foster a healthier, more energetic lifestyle that positively impacts my meditation, work, and overall well-being.

3. Visualizing Success

- Both of my water bottles are empty by the end of the day.
- My skin is glowing, my cells are awash with vitality;
- the neurons in my brain are joyfully leaping across the synapses.

4. Create a Daily Affirmation

- "I love to drink water; it's what my body and brain need."

5. Thought triggers

- Water before caffeine
- Small sips constantly
- Keep the small bottle with me

6. Action Plan

- I start drinking early in the morning.
- I fill the two large bottles with filtered drinking water.
- I take small sips throughout the day until about 5 p.m.
- I refill the bottle when it is empty.
- When my watch tells me to stand up every hour, I will drink.
- When my Water Reminder app notifies me every 30 minutes, I will listen and take a sip.
- I take my smaller bottle to class when I teach, attend a class, or go shopping.

7. Confront Inner Resistance

ANTICIPATED THOUGHT: "I don't like to drink water."

COUNTER-THOUGHT: "It tastes better when it is warm with a little lemon juice."

ANTICIPATED THOUGHT: "When I drink a lot, I have to go to the bathroom often."

COUNTER-STATEMENTS: "That is how my body flushes toxins. It's a good thing."

8. Tools and Resources

- I buy water bottles that mark my progress—one for my office, one for my dining room, and a smaller one for traveling.
- I put my name on the bottles.
- I download a water reminder app from the App Store.
- I have lemons on hand.
- I Carry a bottle with me everywhere.

9. Stepping Stones

- Begin with one liter. Finish one bottle, then gradually increase to 1.5 liters, then eventually to 2 liters

10. Supportive Environments

- Refill my water bottle whenever possible.

11. Network of Friends

- Whenever I see someone drink from their bottle, I drink from mine.
- I will find others who also want to drink more water, and together, we can support and remind each other.

12. Setbacks

SETBACK: Leaving the water bottle somewhere.

SOLUTION: Put my name on each bottle.

SETBACK: On low-water days.

SOLUTION: Start earlier in the morning; frontload the day.

SETBACK: Travel days with fewer bathroom options.

SOLUTIONS: Scope out bathrooms beforehand; go right before leaving; plan to pass known bathrooms at regular intervals.

13. First Steps

- Purchase two beautiful water bottles that keep me on track.
- Download the Water Reminder App.

*Take a moment to reflect on this example.
What habit do you feel inwardly ready to develop?
Turn now to the “New Habit” worksheet and
begin crafting your own.*

MY NEW HABIT ALLY

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Worksheet 12

Good habits are your best helpers; preserve their force by stimulating them with good actions. —Paramhansa Yogananda

1. Define Your Intention

The first step in developing a positive habit is to clearly define your intention. Be specific about the habit you want to create and why it matters to you. A fixed timeframe isn't essential, though setting one may help you stay focused and motivated.

2. Identify the Benefits

What practical benefits and deeper satisfactions will you gain from this new habit? Consider how it will enhance your life both in the short and long term — outwardly in your daily activities and inwardly, through a deeper sense of wellbeing.

3. Visualize success

Imagine yourself with this new habit fully integrated into your routine. What positive changes do you notice in your appearance, health, mindset, and overall well-being? How do you feel about yourself?

4. Create an Affirmation

Create an affirmation that embodies your intention. Keep it short, positive, and in the present tense. Repeat it aloud and mentally with conviction. As you do, visualize what you are affirming as already true — see it, feel it, live it. This combination of affirmation and visualization accelerates the formation of new mental pathways and gives your new habit life and momentum.

5. Identify the Thought Triggers

Every action starts with a thought. For example, the thought “I’m hungry” triggers a sequence that leads to eating. What thoughts will trigger your new habit and set the behavior in motion? Take time to think this through carefully and be as specific as possible.

6. Develop an Action Plan

A habit becomes established when a recurring set of actions is followed. What specific sequence of actions will help you establish this pattern in your daily life?

7. Confront Inner Resistance

Old thought patterns such as “I’ve failed before” or “This won’t work” can weaken your motivation. Bring these discouraging inner voices into the light by naming them clearly. What negative thoughts do you anticipate as you form this new habit? Write them down, and then note how you will respond when those thoughts arise.

8. Gather Your Tools and Resources

Effective change begins with the right supports in place. What tools and resources do you need to establish this new habit? Identify any practical aids (such as equipment, books, courses, instructors, or online materials) that will support your commitment and help you stay on track.

9. Stepping Stones

Stay motivated by setting smaller, achievable goals that mark your progress along the way. Each time you acknowledge one of these victories, you strengthen your confidence, reinforce your resolve, and build momentum.

10. Seek Encouraging Environments

What environments and situations — both real and virtual — will support you in maintaining your resolve?

11. Build Supportive Networks

Surround yourself with people who embody the habit you want to develop. Name the individuals who can inspire and support you as you develop this habit. In addition to human support, you may wish to draw on a deeper source of help — experienced as divine guidance, higher intelligence, or inner wisdom — by inwardly asking for support and remaining receptive to how it may appear.

12. Anticipate Setbacks

Not every day will go as planned. Unexpected disruptions, fatigue, or changing circumstances may interfere with your new habit. These moments are not failures — they're part of the learning process. What kinds of setbacks might you encounter? How will you respond constructively, adapt your plan, and renew your commitment?

13. Take the First Steps

The most crucial thing now is getting started. What first steps can you take today to begin this change?

NEW HABIT DAILY PROGRESS JOURNAL

PART V



Worksheet 13

Date: _____

The habit I am establishing:

My daily goal is

● **What went well today?**

● **What challenges did I face, and how did I respond?**

● **What did I learn about this habit today?**

● **What did I learn about myself today?**

● **What adjustments to my thoughts or routine would help?**

● **What is my goal for tomorrow?**

NEW HABIT WEEKLY REVIEW

PART V



Worksheet 14

*At week's end, take time to step back and gain a clear view of your efforts.
This is your opportunity to recognize progress, learn from experience,
and move forward with deeper insight and renewed intention.*

- **To what extent am I satisfied with my efforts this week?**

- **What struggles did I face, and how did I respond?**

- **What adjustments to my thoughts and routines did I make during the week? Which were most effective?**

- **What changes or new strategies will I try next week?**
