Shrink Your Danger Window

Most of the results in our lives come from our habits, and more “success” usually comes from having more success-oriented habits. In this exercise, we want to recognize one critical point about our habits: they live at a particular time and place in our lives! Many people tend to imagine that they have 24-hour/day types of problems or bad habits. You will often hear people say, “I just lack self-discipline” or similar statements when they describe their difficulties with creating change. When you think about it, “I lack self discipline” is a 24-hour/day problem, when in reality most people mean something like, “I have a really difficult time turning down ice cream in the evening when the kids are having it.” Understanding the difference is CRITICAL! In this exercise we want to explore and SHRINK your danger windows to gain a more realistic view of exactly when you struggle with doing the things that you want to do. This is an extremely powerful exercise!

**Step 1**: Write down a habit you are currently challenged by:

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**Step 2:** On the timeline below circle the hour or hours during the day when you are most challenged:

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5 am 7 am 9 am 11 am 1 pm 3 pm 5 pm 7 pm 9 pm 11 pm

**STEP 3**: Is the challenge more difficult on weekdays or weekends? (Circle one or both)

Weekends Weekdays

**STEP 4**: Now that you’ve identified your problem time periods, add the hours together and write down how large your problem ACTUALLY is:

Total hours/DAY: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Total hours/WEEK: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 5**: Identify the TRIGGER events or CUES that begin your habit loop:

1.

2.

3.

**STEP 6**: Look 1-4 hours earlier on the timeline to see if there are easy-to-implement changes you can make that would drastically improve your ability to stick to your desired behavior. What did you learn?

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