



Leveling Your Behavior: Establishing Your Bottom Line

Goals: By the end of this activity you will have defined your bottom line behaviors, list your relapse and slip behaviors, and know the trigger behaviors to watch for.

Sit for a few minutes in a quiet place.... Close your eyes and focus on this question:

In order to live the life I want to be living – what sexual and/or relational behaviors do I need to stop?

What sexual and/or relational behavior do you want to stop?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Most of us know what needs to stop. We know what needs to change. These behaviors are what we call our bottom line. This is the bottom line, the boundary, we will not cross if we are going to live in recovery and change our lives. Crossing this bottom line constitutes a relapse. We reset our sobriety date and try again.

Bottom line behaviors need to be both well-defined and flexible. That sounds contradictory but it is not. We establish clear, well-defined bottom lines and we remain open to the idea that it might need to change over time. We commit to our bottom line behaviors in 6 month increments. It is essential to get sober. That usually happens in an environment free from obsession. We commit to 6 months at a time so we can gain some freedom from obsession. We remained flexible and revisit our boundaries with consultation on a regular basis.

What is harder to define are the events, feelings, and actions that lead to a relapse. Acting out doesn't happen spontaneously without warning or cause. Our goal is to bring awareness to the process that leads to relapse. When we can identify the events, feelings, and actions that lead up to relapse, we have a much greater chance of preventing the relapse.

Study the chart below with the goal to understand what each level of behavior means. Then complete the second chart adding in your own behaviors.

It is most important to understand your bottom line and slip behaviors first. The others will come as you go along. Start filling in the worksheet from the bottom up.

Bottom Line Behavior Worksheet

Level 1: TRIGGER EVENTS:

Triggers are events that happen in our lives that cause us some emotional discomfort. You may have some events that you know cause clear emotional discomfort. As you become more and more aware of these events, add them to your trigger list.

Examples: Dreams, fights with significant others, financial distress,

Level 2: TRIGGER FEELINGS act as indicators for our lives.

When we process and handle the emotions as they surface in our lives, we are able to find meaning and growth. When we don't, we can choose behaviors to act out our emotions. List emotions that come from trigger events and lead to slip behaviors.

Examples: Loneliness, anxiety, rejection, sadness, and feeling controlled.

Level 3: SLIP BEHAVIOR:

Slips are behaviors that don't cross the bottom line, but are still incredibly dangerous. They typically lead to the bottom line behavior. List at least three slip behaviors that lead to crossing your bottom line.

**Examples:
Going to lunch alone with
a male co-worker.**

Level 4: BOTTOM LINE BEHAVIORS are things that we will not do. Any participation in these behaviors counts as a relapse and we commit to resetting our sobriety date.

**Examples: I will not have sex of any kind with anyone outside of my marriage.
I will not stalk my Ex on social media.**

YOUR TURN

TRIGGER EVENTS:

TRIGGER FEELINGS:

SLIP BEHAVIORS:

BOTTOM LINE BEHAVIORS: