

Leeds Older People's Forum

Leeds
Community
Foundation



MODULE 6: WHAT HOLDS ME BACK?

Understanding the
Thoughts and Habits
That Keep Me Circling

- The Stories I Keep Telling Myself
- Familiar Beliefs That May Be Limiting Me
- How True Is This Really?
- More Useful Thoughts To Stand On
- Small Risks I Am Willing To Take

By this point, you may have a clearer sense of what matters. You may have identified areas of life that feel underused. You may even have a stronger idea of what you want more of.

And yet...

clarity does not automatically create movement.

This can be frustrating.

Because it is tempting to assume:

“If I know what would help, why am I still not doing it?”

The answer is usually not laziness.

And it is usually not a lack of intelligence.

More often, it is the quiet power of familiar thoughts, familiar habits, and familiar postponements.

Humans are very good at staying inside known patterns — even patterns that no longer serve them particularly well.

We delay.

We rationalise.

We tell ourselves there is time.

We wait for motivation.

We make things seem bigger than they are.

We return to what is familiar.

This module is about noticing those loops more clearly.

Because until resistance becomes visible, it tends to keep running the show.

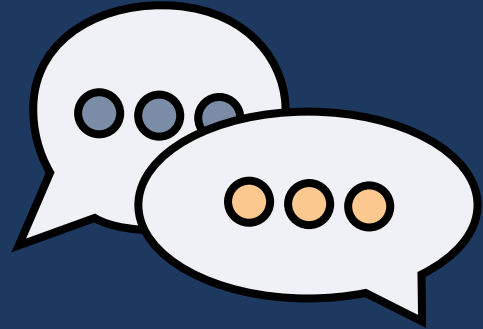


Exercise 6.1 The Stories I Keep Telling Myself

Most of us carry a set of repeated internal explanations for why we are not moving.

Often they sound reasonable.

- I'll start when I feel more like it
- It's probably too late now
- I should have sorted this earlier
- I'm not really the kind of person who does that
- I'm too out of the habit
- It won't make much difference anyway



These thoughts can feel factual.

But repeated thoughts are not always accurate thoughts.

Sometimes they are simply familiar thoughts.

And familiarity makes them persuasive.

This exercise is about identifying your own common delaying narratives.

Workbook Exercise

Write down the recurring reasons or excuses your mind gives for not beginning, changing, reaching out, or committing.

1

2

3

4

Exercise 6.2 Familiar Beliefs That May Be Limiting Me

Underneath everyday excuses there are often broader beliefs.

Beliefs such as:

- I have left it too late
- I am too set in my ways
- other people cope without this much effort
- I should not need help
- if I cannot do it properly, there is no point
- change should feel easier than this

These beliefs are powerful because they shape what feels possible before we even try.

They narrow behaviour quietly.

They make certain actions feel unnecessary, embarrassing or futile.

The first step is not instantly replacing every belief.

It is simply seeing which ones have been running for years.



Reflection Prompt

Which limiting beliefs feel most familiar to me?

Where do I think I learned them?

Exercise 6.3 How True Is This Really?

Once a limiting thought is visible, the next useful step is to test it.

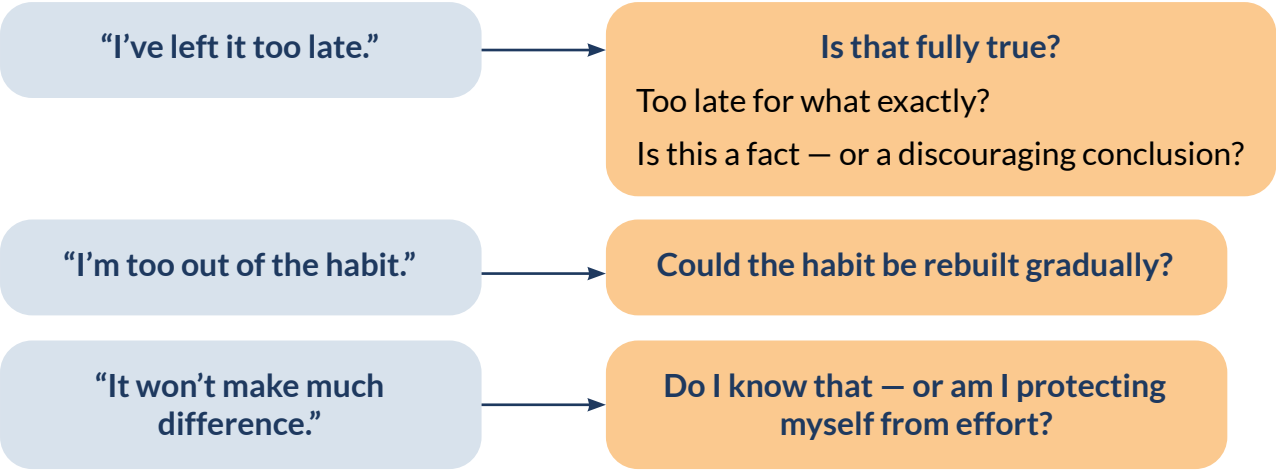
Not aggressively.

Not with forced positivity.

Just with honest curiosity.

Take one repeated thought.

For example:



This is not about arguing with yourself endlessly.

It is about loosening the certainty of thoughts that have gone unquestioned.

Workbook Exercise

Choose one limiting thought and examine:

- evidence for it
- evidence against it
- a more balanced version

Evidence for	Evidence against	Balanced version

Exercise 6.4 More Useful Thoughts To Stand On

Once we loosen an old limiting belief, it helps to replace it with something more useful.

Not a slogan.

A working thought.

For example:

"I've left it too late."

"There is still enough time for smaller changes to matter."

"I need to feel motivated first."

"Action may need to come before motivation."

"This should not be so hard."

"This may simply need more repetition than I expected."

Useful thoughts are thoughts that create room.

They create possibility instead of closure.

Reflection Prompt

What steadier, more useful thoughts would help me move more than the ones I currently default to?



Exercise 6.5 Small Risks I Am Willing To Take

One reason change gets postponed is that we imagine it too globally.

Get fitter.

Become more social.

Find purpose.

Completely change routine.

These sound heavy.

And heavy things invite delay.

Real movement usually begins much smaller.

A phone call.

A walk.

Signing up.

Asking.

Trying.

Scheduling.

Repeating.

Small risks matter because they interrupt the old agreement to stay where things are familiar.

They prove movement is possible before confidence fully arrives.



Workbook Exercise

List five small risks or actions I am willing to take over the next month.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Then circle the easiest one to begin this week.

Closing Reflection For Module 6

What do I suspect has been holding me in place more than I usually admit?

And what feels small enough to challenge now?