

Neurochemical Loop Audit Worksheet

A practical tool for identifying destructive loops and replacing them with rhythms that support human flourishing.

How to Use This Worksheet

This is not a self-judgment exercise. It is a **pattern-recognition exercise**. You are identifying how your nervous system is currently regulating stress, identity, and meaning. The goal is not perfection, the goal is clarity. Work through this worksheet slowly. Write honestly. Short answers are fine, but avoid vague language.

Part 1: Identify the Loop

Step 1: Name the Behavior

List one behavior at a time. Focus on behaviors that feel *compelling*, *hard to stop*, or *emotionally regulating*.

Behavior #1: _____

- How often does this show up? _____
- When does it usually occur? (time of day, emotional state, environment)

Step 2: What Does This Behavior Give You?

Answer honestly. This is about *function*, not justification.

Check all that apply and add notes.

- ☐ Novelty or excitement
- ☐ Sense of control or competence
- ☐ Escape or relief from pressure
- ☐ Feeling wanted, admired, or validated
- ☐ Belonging or connection
- ☐ Focus or intensity

What problem does this behavior solve for you, even temporarily?

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Part 2: Decode the Neurochemical Pattern

For each chemical, note whether this behavior strongly activates it.

Dopamine: The Pursuit Chemical

- What are you *chasing* here?
- What anticipation or promise keeps you coming back?

Norepinephrine: The Edge Chemical

- Where is the risk, pressure, or urgency?
- What would feel different if this behavior were fully safe or exposed?

Endorphins: The Relief Chemical

- What discomfort does this behavior numb?
- What happens in your body after the behavior ends?

Oxytocin: The Bonding Chemical

- What or who are you bonding to through this behavior?
- Does this create loyalty, secrecy, or identity reinforcement?

Part 3: Identify the Missing Rhythm

Every destructive loop points to a *missing healthy rhythm*.

Answer the following:

If this behavior disappeared tomorrow, what discomfort would surface first?

Check any rhythms that may be underdeveloped:

- ☐ Physical exertion and recovery
- ☐ Meaningful work with resistance
- ☐ Honest rest without stimulation
- ☐ Deep friendship or brotherhood
- ☐ Creative output or skill mastery
- ☐ Spiritual grounding or reflection

Which one stands out as most neglected? Why?

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Part 4: Design a Replacement Loop

You are not removing intensity. You are **redirecting** it.

Step 1: Choose One Replacement Activity

This should be:

- Effortful
- Bounded by time or rules
- Slightly uncomfortable
- Aligned with your values

Replacement Activity: _____

Step 2: Map the New Loop

Complete each line clearly.

- **Dopamine (What will I pursue or build?):**
- **Norepinephrine (Where is the healthy challenge or resistance?):**
- **Endorphins (What effort or strain will precede relief?):**
- **Oxytocin (Who or what will this connect me to?):**

Part 5: Boundaries and Containers

Healthy loops require limits.

Answer the following:

- What boundary protects this new loop from distraction?
- What boundary limits the old destructive loop?
- What consequence or accountability keeps this real?

Part 6: Reflection and Integration

Use these questions weekly for review.

- What behaviors felt intense but left me emptier?
- What efforts felt demanding but left me steadier?
- Where did I confuse stimulation with meaning this week?
- What slower rhythm actually restored me?

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One sentence insight from this exercise:

Closing Reminder

You do not eliminate loops. You *choose* them.

The question is not whether your life contains intensity, but whether that intensity is **shaping you toward strength or fragmentation**.

Return to this worksheet whenever a behavior begins to feel urgent, secretive, or necessary.