

COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

Many teens who struggle with compulsive, addictive, or unwanted behaviors don't realize they have the ability to change their behaviors. They need a strong tool and realistic examples to help them identify the behaviors that are hurting them, or the people around them, and proactive steps to create change.

The Commitment to Change helps teens identify an area that could be distressing, creating shame, or interfering with other responsibilities. A good way to raise awareness of these behaviors is to ask, "Is this behavior pushing you toward relationship with God and others, or pulling you away from relationship with God and others?"

Each week, they will choose a Commitment to Change to work on. Some behaviors will take longer than others to create change. This is okay. They should keep working at it until they see significant change. As they gain traction in one area, they will choose a new Commitment to Change to work on.

Keep in mind, the Commitment to Change is intended to equip and empower teens to take healthy control of their lives. It gives them the opportunity to proactively change behaviors: removing the behaviors that contribute to unhealth and replacing them with new behaviors that lead to health and wholeness.

1. What area do you need to change or what challenge are you facing next week?

This question helps teens identify an area they would like to change or address a challenge they're facing.

For example:

- Using pornography, fantasy, and/or masturbation
- Spending hours scrolling social media
- Engaging in sexting, chat rooms, hookups, and other sexual behaviors
- Getting lost in video games, romance novels, or online shopping
- Smoking, vaping, drinking, or partying

- Engaging in unhealthy relationships
- Struggling to maintain passing grades in school

2. What will it cost you emotionally if you do change? What fear will you have to face?

Change always costs us something. If we change, we're likely giving up a behavior that helped us cope with stress in our lives. For many teens, their unhealthy coping behavior stems from fear and a core message they believe about themselves.

For example:

- If people really knew me, they wouldn't like me.
- I'll never find a boyfriend/girlfriend who loves me.
- I can't get close to people because they'll leave me like my dad did.
- I'm not attractive enough to have a lasting relationship.
- I have sex with strangers because I don't think I deserve anything better.
- After being raped, I'm damaged goods, so it doesn't matter if I sleep around.
- I have to be the best at everything. This will prove I'm not a loser like my dad.

3. What will it cost you if you don't change?

If we don't change, we run the risk of losing something: a job, a scholarship, an opportunity, a relationship, ourselves, and more. Many teens don't recognize they have a choice, but they do.

For example:

- If I don't give up social media, I'll continue to compare myself to others and struggle with low self-esteem.
- If I don't give up porn and masturbation, I'll miss out on a real relationship.
- If I don't give up gaming, I'll stay isolated and won't be able to create healthy relationships.
- If I don't give up sleeping around, I won't be able to heal from the trauma I experienced from being raped.

4. What is your plan to maintain restoration regarding these changes?

This question is used in conjunction with the RETRAIN Tool to clarify the behaviors that reflect living in restoration. It helps teens identify behaviors that support their Commitment to Change. (The RETRAIN Tool can be found within the Youth Leader Library.)

For example:

- I will not take my phone into my bedroom at nighttime.
- I will limit my time on social media to one hour per day.
- I will only use my computer in common areas of my home.
- I will reach out to my accountability partner when tempted to look at porn.
- I will limit my time gaming to one hour per day.
- I will make time for God, family, and friends.
- I will be open and honest with safe friends.
- I will honor my commitments to parents, coaches, and teachers.

5. Who will keep you accountable to this commitment?

This is where teens identify at least three people they can contact, day or night, who will help keep them accountable to their commitment.

Safe people who they trust completely and who know everything about them make for the best accountability partners. This could include parents, friends, family, youth leaders, teachers, mentors; anyone who they think is safe and trustworthy.

Name _____ Day _____

Name _____ Day _____

Name _____ Day _____

6. What are the details of your commitment for the week that you'll share with your accountability partners?

This is where teens will describe the details of their commitment and what they plan to share with their accountability partner.

For example:

My Commitment to Change: I'm not going to look at porn this week.

To minimize my temptation, I will only use my computer in common areas of my home and leave my phone/computer on the kitchen counter to charge overnight. I will not have any devices in my bedroom at night.

If I feel tempted to look at porn, I will put down my phone and walk away. I will call at least one of my accountability partners right away, until I talk with one of them.

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3. What will it cost you if you don't change?

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