Filling in your behaviour chain and understanding your behaviour

Follow the steps below and fill in the empty chain links (see page 165) to work out your own behaviour chain:

a. Start with your chosen problem behaviour again, in the My Problem Behaviour Example.

b. If your mind tells you that you do not want to look at this, say, 'Thanks, Mind,' and bring your thoughts back to this task using mindfulness.

c. In the vulnerability cloud write anything you can think of that might have increased your vulnerability to doing your problem behaviour. Things like lack of sleep, having a hangover, lack of exercise, getting bullied at work, etc.

d. Now look for a trigger – the thing that set you off doing the behaviour. This could be in the 'What Was Happening Before' column. Put the trigger in the first link of the chain as an Event (this can be an outside event or an inside event like a naughty puppy thought or hearing a voice).

e. Use your My Problem Behaviour Example entry and your Wheels of Experience to fill in the chain links. Just go round and round the Wheels of Experience to string out the chain of your thoughts, feelings, behaviour (including urges to behave) and body sensations. You

are trying to tell the story of the behaviour by describing the chain. Unpack this into the chain links. You can use:

E for events (these can happen in the middle of the chain too)

F for feelings

T for thoughts

B for behaviour (including urges to do things which you might act on or you might resist)

BS for body sensations

f. Continue the chain until you get to the problem behaviour itself.
g. Once you get to the behaviour, try to think of the immediate short-term benefit, which may be good feelings or relief (*escape*) or both.
h. Continue the chain to the long-term effects (e.g. *despair* and *shame* in the Tom example we did earlier).

My behaviour chain

Follow the instructions in (a) to (h) above to fill in your links. You do not have to fill in all of the links, or you may even want to add one or two more.

My Vulnerability Cloud

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_____

Trigger Event

Problem Behaviour

There may be some
short-term gains here

There may be some
long-term consequences
at the end