

# Avoidance Traps

In Video Three of Christine Hassler’s training series, you will learn about what she calls your “Avoidance Trap”. Use this worksheet in addition to the video to understand, identify, and escape your avoidance trap.

## What is an Avoidance Trap?

As a coach for well over a decade now, I have noticed that people spend a lot of time talking about what they want, but they invest a lot more time and energy avoiding what they do NOT want.

Any choice you make or action you take is either moving you toward something you want or away from something you don’t want. My guess is that you are making more choices that you believe help you avoid what most scares you. Consequently you are falling into an avoidance trap.

Avoidance traps happen because most of us do not like to experience things like rejection, uncertainty, abandonment, and failure so we will do whatever it takes to avoid experiencing any of those things. Often doing what it takes to avoid what we fear stops us from doing the things that get us what we truly desire. That is why I call it a “trap.”

Our biggest or main avoidance trap is connected to the most difficult experiences of our life. For example I shared in the video that I was bullied and felt rejected by my peers so my avoidance trap is rejection. Because it was such a painful experience in the past, I did whatever it took to try to protect myself from it.

Other common avoidance traps include fear of:

- Failure
- Abandonment
- Vulnerability or intimacy
- Disappointing others
- Feeling out of control
- Uncertainty
- Judgment

**Remember this:** you think you are keeping yourself safe and avoiding pain, but avoidance traps become just that — traps! They keep you from moving toward the feelings and experiences you actually do want.

# Exercise:

Think of this process as a rescue ladder out of your avoidance trap. As you move through the following steps, answer each question in your journal and capture any insights that arise.

- ① Based on painful or difficult experiences from your past, what feeling or situation do you most fear?

- ② What will you do almost anything to avoid?

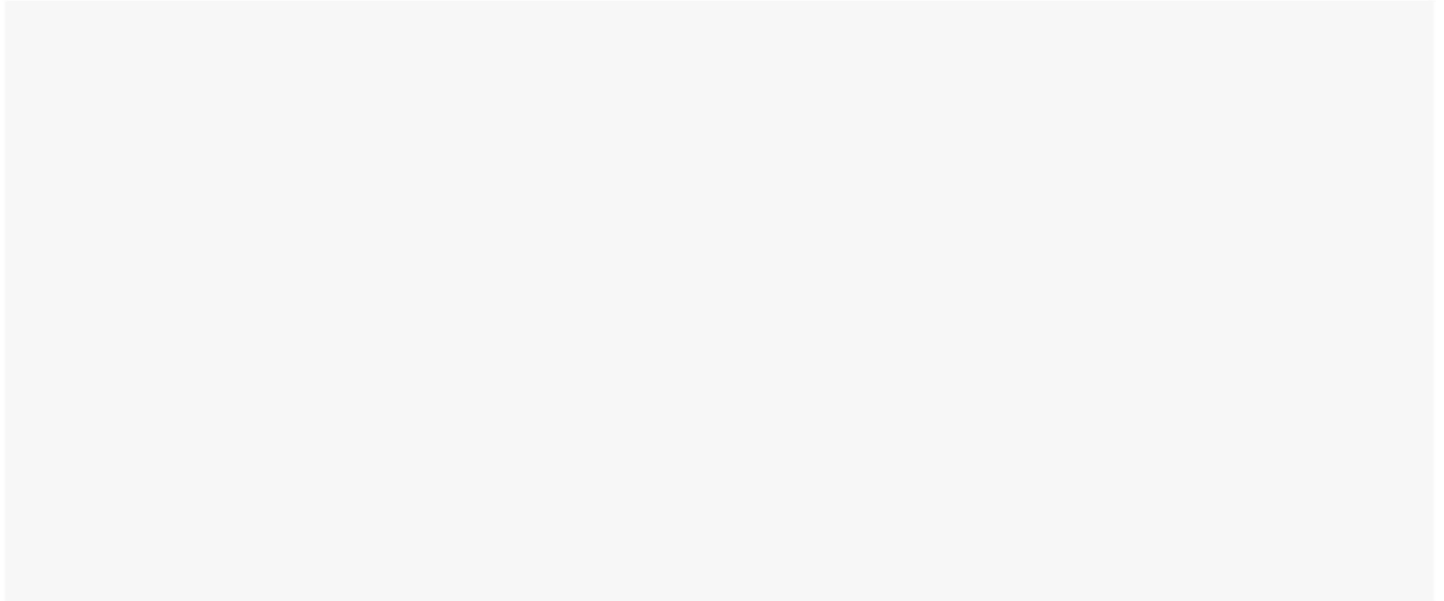
- ③ Based on your answer to the above two questions, Determine what your particular avoidance trap is:

- ④ What has been the payoff of your avoidance trap? (hint: how has it kept you safe and protected you from what you dread)

- ⑤ What has been the cost of your trap up until now? Identify what you are missing out on when you're avoiding the thing you fear. In other words, what is your avoidance trap preventing you from doing? How is it limiting you?

- ⑥ Is the payoff of the avoidance trap greater than its cost? Consider this: Is avoiding disappointing someone else a better investment than speaking your truth? Is avoiding uncertainty worth not pursuing your greatest dreams? The answer should be a crystal-clear no. Realize the absurdity of your avoidance trap so you are inspired to get out of it.

**Take a baby step.** Once you realize what your avoidance trap is and what it is costing you, take action. Don't just think of what you want; take an action step toward it. Write down what you are committing to and when you will start moving toward it. Choose something you would not have done in the past because you were too busy trying to avoid something. For example, apply for a job you want. Ask your crush out on a date. And remember, this does not have to be a big, dramatic step — just one baby step at a time will eventually lead to larger leaps of faith.



**Acknowledge yourself!** Seriously! Write down how proud you are of yourself because it takes serious courage and self-honesty to escape your avoidance trap!

