Objective #1: To understand how to use the Pain/Gain Decision-Making Model as a tool to fully evaluate situations where a decision is required.

What you will need: Blank sheet of paper and a pencil.

Hello! And welcome to our training on the Pain/Gain Decision-Making Model.

Some decisions are harder to make than others. Deciding where to go out to eat tonight and making the decision to get married require different levels of thinking and analysis. In situations where you want to make a significant and difficult change in your life, like to stop smoking, it is helpful to have a tool that will fully bring to light all of the issues surrounding the current behavior (smoking) so that you can work with your Belief System to create the new behavior (stop smoking).

In this training, we will examine a great tool for helping you to fully explore the decision that you are about to make, and hopefully make the process less painful.

So let’s get started!

Understanding the Pain/Gain Decision-Making Model

On the next page, you will see a graphic that explains the model. Basically, we will be looking at the Pain and Gain of both your current situation and a potential future situation (which is what you will have after you have made your decision and have taken action).

I find that you will develop a much stronger understanding of how to use this tool if you can walk through its completion with me, using one of your own situations. So, think of a decision that you need to make, or something in your life that needs to change, and grab a blank sheet of paper and a pencil for the exercise.
Now, let’s look at the components of the matrix, along with an example to make it clear:

### Current Pain
In this quadrant, you will capture the details of your current situation and why it is not working for you, what is motivating you to make the decision/change, etc. It is important to articulate your FEELINGS surrounding your motivation and desire to change. As we have learned about our Belief System in other trainings, your feelings are significant drivers in the change process. There may be other people affected by this decision, and if so, be sure to capture your thoughts/feelings around how this decision/change will impact them.

Our example will be someone who desires to quit smoking. In the Current Pain box, you would list things like poor health, possibility of cancer or other disease, high cost, smelly clothes, negative perceptions of others, impact on your children’s health from second-hand smoke, etc. Your desire might be to eliminate these negative things in your life so that you can be healthier and live longer.

### Future Gain
Typically, what ends up in this quadrant is the exact OPPOSITE of what you have articulated in the Current Pain box. And it makes sense, since you expect to relieve your Current Pain when making the decision/change! In this quadrant, capture the benefits that will come from the change and why this is important to you.

Using our example, stopping smoking would improve your health, reduce risk to you and others, save LOTS of money, and make you feel better about yourself. These things may just be important.
to you at this time in your life. Perhaps you are thinking of starting a family, and want to be healthier and provide a clean environment for your children.

**Current Gain**
This quadrant and level of thinking is most often overlooked in the decision-making process. Most of us do not think of what we GAIN by engaging in our current behaviors and situations. As NEGATIVE as the behavior or situation might be, there is SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT that we are gaining by doing it, OR WE WOULD NOT BE DOING IT. It might take some time for you to fill out this quadrant; as I said, it is a different way of looking at your situation. It is critical to capture the details of this quadrant, because all of the things that you gain from your current situation will be impacted by your decision!

Let’s look at our smoking example. What does a smoker gain from smoking? The most obvious answer is the buzz from the nicotine. This will certainly go away when smoking stops, and because this involves a very real and physical addiction in the body, this is the most challenging aspect of quitting. But what else might the person be gaining by smoking? What about the social aspect of smoking? Smokers may hang out with friends and family who smoke. They may take smoke breaks at lunch time or go out with friends after work and smoke. So what will happen to these relationships if the person stops smoking? The social aspect of smoking can be quite a barrier to change; if your friends and family continue to smoke, it may be challenging to be around them, and you may need to change your habits here if you are going to remain smoke-free. Aside from the addiction, the social aspect of smoking is one of the biggest reasons that smokers either can’t stop or later resume smoking.

**Future Pain**
As you contemplate making your decision/change, there will be effort required to get you to the future state. In this quadrant, you can capture what will be required to put the decision/change into effect. There may be personal sacrifices, impact on family or friends, etc. But I think it is reasonable to expect that any significant decision is not going to be easy. Fleshing out the details in this quadrant will help you get mentally prepared for what you must do.

For our smoker, the most significant pain will be overcoming the physical addiction. Other “pains” to consider include changing daily/weekly routines, finding something to do with your hands, the impact on social life, and increased hunger and concern about weight gain.

The beauty of this tool is that if you use it fully, capture all the details in each quadrant, and leave nothing out (maybe by kidding yourself?), then you will have in front of you all of the information that you need to make a well-informed and sound decision. You will fully understand your motivation, what you will gain, and the effort it will take to follow through.

I hope that you have been able to work through this tool by using your own situation in which you are struggling to make a decision. GOOD LUCK, and reach out to me if I can be of help to you!

All the best, Tia