

# BACKWARD CHAINING

## WORKSHEET

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**Purpose:** Solve problems by working backward.

1. Define the goal.
  2. What needs to happen right before achieving it?
  3. Continue backward until you reach the present.
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What is the end goal/objective?

How did I get there?

How did I get there?

How did I get there?

How did I get there?

How did I get there?

How did I get there?

Action I will take to get there starting today?



# HOW TO USE (PRO TIPS)

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## **Goal Clarity:**

- Clearly define your ultimate goal at the top of a worksheet. Then list prerequisites or conditions that must be met to reach that goal.
- Ensure that each backward step is specific, measurable, and time-bound.

## **Sequential Mapping:**

- Create a flowchart that maps out each step in reverse order.
- Identify dependencies and decision points.
- Validate each step by asking, "If I had this in place, would it logically lead to the next required step?"

## **Identify Gaps and Bottlenecks:**

- Use the process to uncover hidden obstacles or missing resources.
- Brainstorm alternative routes or contingencies if a particular step proves problematic.

## **Iterative Refinement:**

- Review the entire chain with stakeholders to ensure feasibility and alignment with broader objectives.
  - Update the chain as circumstances change, maintaining flexibility in planning.
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# QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

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## **Defining the Ultimate Goal:**

- What is your final, most important goal (e.g., achieving financial independence, launching a successful project, maintaining work-life balance)?
- How would you know, in concrete terms, that you've achieved this goal?

## **Mapping the Steps in Reverse:**

- What is the immediate step right before reaching your goal?
- What conditions or milestones need to be met at each preceding stage to ensure the next step is possible?

## **Identifying Dependencies and Obstacles:**

- For each step, what resources, information, or support do you need?
- What potential obstacles could derail a particular step, and how might you mitigate them?

## **Ensuring Alignment with Long-Term Vision:**

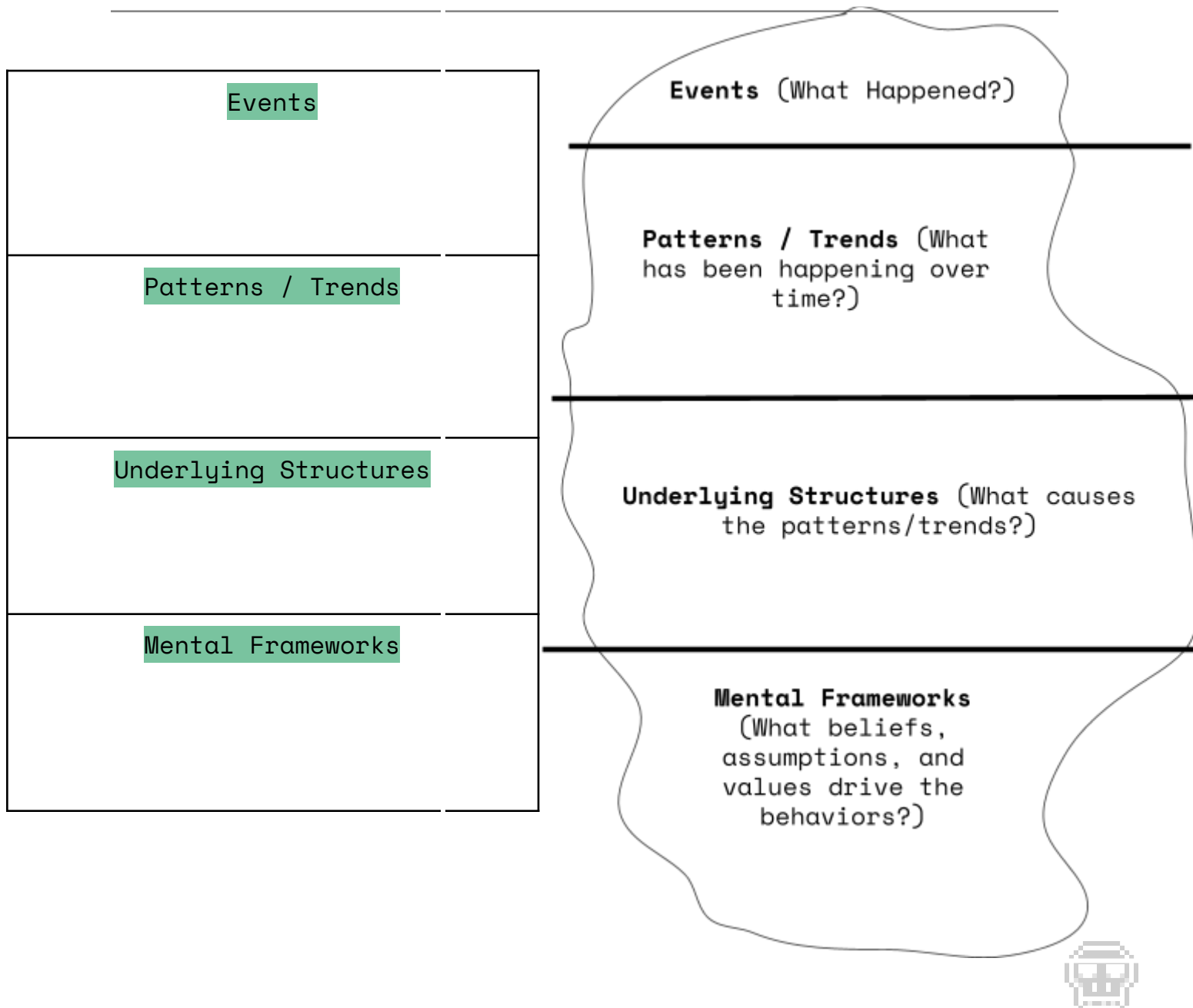
- How does each backward step align with your overall values and priorities?
  - In what ways can you adjust your current practices to better support these critical steps?
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# ICEBERG MODEL WORKSHEET

**Purpose:** Analyze surface-level vs. deeper underlying issues.

1. What's the visible problem? (Tip of the iceberg)
2. What deeper causes might be driving this? (Underwater section)
3. What beliefs, emotions, or systems contribute to the issue?



# HOW TO USE (PRO TIPS)

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## **Think Below the Surface:**

→ Most problems aren't about what's visible. The root cause is below the surface.

## **Apply the 3 Layers of Depth:**

→ **Event (What happened?)** → "Sales dropped this quarter."

→ **Pattern (What trends exist?)** → "Sales drop every Q3."

→ **Structure (What's causing it?)** → "Seasonality + weak marketing."

## **Use for Personal Development:**

→ If you struggle with productivity, the surface issue may be procrastination—but the deeper cause may be fear of failure.

## **Don't Fix Symptoms, Solve Root Problems:**

→ **Keep asking:** "What's beneath this?"

→ **Example:** If employee morale is low, don't just add perks—fix underlying leadership and communication issues.

## **Pro Tip:**

→ Whenever you see a problem, ask: "What's deeper than this?" three times.

→ If solving a recurring issue, focus on patterns, not one-time events.

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# QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

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## **Seeing Beyond the Surface:**

- What are the visible symptoms in your current challenge, and what deeper cultural, psychological, or systemic factors might be driving them?
- How might your immediate reactions be influenced by unseen beliefs or values embedded in your organization or personal habits?

## **Connecting Disparate Layers:**

- In a financial or operational context, how do underlying policies, unspoken assumptions, or historical trends create the “submerged” part of the iceberg?
- How can you map the relationship between these underlying factors and the surface issues to design more sustainable interventions?

## **Challenging Long-Standing Norms:**

- What elements of your current environment have remained unchanged despite recurring issues, and what does that suggest about entrenched systems or mindsets?
  - How can you use the iceberg perspective to disrupt complacency and foster a culture of deep, systemic change?
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# IMPACT EFFORT MATRIX

## WORKSHEET

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**Purpose:** Prioritize tasks based on effort vs. impact.

1. List all tasks/projects.
2. Plot them in the matrix.
3. Decide what to focus on first.

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My tasks/projects:

High-Impact Low-Effort (Do)

High-Impact High-Effort (Decide)

Low-Impact Low-Effort (Delegate)

Low-Impact High-Effort (Delete)



# HOW TO USE (PRO TIPS)

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## **Avoid the "High-Effort, Low-Impact" Trap:**

- Many people over-focus on tasks that feel important but don't move the needle.
- Before committing to work, ask: "Is this truly necessary?"

## **Prioritize "Quick Wins" and "Strategic Bets":**

- **Quick Wins:** Low-effort, high-impact tasks (immediate results).
- **Strategic Bets:** High-effort, high-impact tasks (long-term gains).

## **Set an "Effort Budget":**

- If a task is high-effort, ask, "How can I reduce the effort without sacrificing impact?"
- Can you delegate, automate, or simplify it?

## **Reverse Engineer Big Goals:**

- If something seems high-effort, break it down into smaller, manageable low-effort steps.

## **Pro Tip:**

- Before starting a task, plot it on the Impact-Effort Matrix.
  - If something is low-impact AND high-effort, eliminate it immediately.
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# QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

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## **Beyond Quantification:**

- How do you define “impact” in qualitative terms—such as emotional, strategic, or long-term benefits—beyond immediate measurable outcomes?
- Reflect on a task that seemed low-effort yet yielded surprisingly transformative results. What factors contributed to that success?

## **Uncovering Hidden Opportunities:**

- Are there tasks you initially dismissed as high effort that might be broken down further to reveal a high-impact core?
- How might personal biases in estimating effort or impact be skewing your prioritization, and what objective data can help recalibrate your judgments?

## **Strategic Resource Allocation:**

- In what ways can you reassign resources from tasks that are “effort sinks” to those with exponential returns, even if they seem less obvious at first glance?
  - How can you build in flexibility to reassess tasks as conditions evolve, ensuring that your matrix remains dynamic and reflective of real-world shifts?
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# INVERSION WORKSHEET

**Purpose:** Solve problems by flipping them (e.g., "How can I fail at this?").

1. What's your goal?

2. What are all the ways you could fail at achieving this?

3. How can you prevent those failures?

Desired outcomes?

What would cause failure?



# HOW TO USE (PRO TIPS)

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## **Ask: "How Can I Fail?" Instead of "How Can I Succeed?"**

- If your goal is getting fit, list ways to fail: "Eat junk, avoid exercise, ignore sleep."
- Now, do the opposite to succeed.

## **Use for Problem-Solving in Business & Life:**

- Sales Strategy: Instead of "How do I sell more?" ask, "How do I lose customers?" (e.g., bad service, slow response).
- Productivity: Instead of "How do I focus?" ask, "How do I destroy focus?" (e.g., notifications, multitasking). Remove distractions.

## **Use "Elimination Thinking" to Improve Performance:**

- Instead of adding solutions, remove problems.
- Example: Instead of "What can I do to be healthier?" ask, "What am I doing that's unhealthy?"

## **Think in Worst-Case Scenarios & Stress-Test Your Plan:**

- If launching a project, ask: "What could go horribly wrong?"
- Use that list to prevent failure.

## **Combine with 80/20 Rule:**

- Instead of finding the top 20% that works, identify the bottom 20% that ruins progress—and eliminate it.

## **Pro Tip:**

- Use inversion to challenge assumptions. Instead of asking, "How do I succeed?" ask, "How do I guarantee failure?"
  - Sometimes, removing the bad is more powerful than adding the good.
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# QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON

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## **Flipping Assumptions:**

- What would a plan look like if you set out to guarantee failure rather than success? Which critical elements become glaringly obvious as you reverse-engineer the worst-case scenario?
- How do your current assumptions about success blind you to potential risks, and how might inversion reveal hidden vulnerabilities?

## **Designing for Failure:**

- Imagine you deliberately designed your strategy to fail—what would you do differently, and how could that inform a more robust, resilient approach?
- What “anti-best practices” emerge when you ask, “How can I ensure this project fails?” and how can those insights be used to safeguard against those pitfalls?

## **Uncovering Radical Insights:**

- How might thinking in reverse help you identify opportunities that a standard, forward-thinking approach would miss?
  - Reflect on a past decision—what if you had inverted your thinking? What alternative strategies might have emerged, and how could they have improved the outcome?
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