

Common Double Binds



A double bind is when you have two choices and both are hard and unappealing so you remain stuck. The angst of the double bind drives you down the FASTER scale until it is resolved. Double Binds often take the form of: procrastination vs. productivity, reaching out vs. isolation, ignoring the pain vs. facing the pain, the easy way out vs. doing the right/hard thing. The following are real examples of Double Binds:

- Either I stop procrastinating the work I know I need to get done and press into the pain of fear of failure on this assignment OR I continue to procrastinate by surfing ESPN, YouTube, News etc... and feel good but then later face the consequence of being behind and become even more stressed.
- Either I stop and address these feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy with my scriptural promises OR I continue to feed off the shame of feeling like trash and alone and worthless until I eventually relapse.
- Either I can fight to press into my relationships and reach out to the men around me and seek to connect with them (which can be hard) OR I continue to isolate and eventually the loneliness and isolation will lead to relapse.
- Either I take the time to slow down and be present by filling out the FASTER scale/reflecting on where I am by checking in with someone in my group OR I continue to speed up and try to outrun my current emotional pain until I eventually relapse.
- Either I have the hard conversation that I need to have but don't want to OR I try to numb the anxiety with a media binge.
- Either I ask for help in getting organized and dealing with my scattered life style OR I continue to limp along with my unmanaged life which causes more stress and anxiety.
- Either I reach out and ask for help before I go home or to another place with a history of relapsing and come up with a game plan OR I wait until I get there and see how it goes. I'm afraid of looking weak to others so I go it alone and don't reach out resulting in relapse.
- Either I make a call and check in and confess being weak and exhausted (but I fear being vulnerable and sounding weak) and get it out in the open OR I can try to speed up or just ignore it and just see how it ends up playing out
- Either I confess my relapse and risk the condemnation of others. Reinforcing the fear that if people really knew me, they would not like me. OR I hide the relapse to avoid potential condemnation. However, the guilt will eat me up and

I'll be isolated, and I will most likely relapse again soon.

The core belief here is that I am afraid of being rejected if I'm honest about my struggle but I need to remind myself through the scripture that I am significant in Christ versus depending on others opinions for my significance.

Questions to ask to help identify the source of the double bind

- Why do I fear failure, rejection or other? When did I start fearing failure or rejection or other? What lie am I believing about myself, life or God when I allow this fear to control me?
- Why are you stressed this week? Ex: I have a test. Why are you so stressed because of the test? Because I get a lot of my significance from my performance and if I don't do well it's going to reflect on my worth. You can still be stressed b/c of a test even if it isn't related to your identity but connecting the stress back to the root often shows wrong thinking making a stressful situation even more stressful. That is why the questions on the FASTER scale are important to answer and process with your group each week in check-in.
- What truth from God's word helps address this lie?

Taking the time to ask the questions of the double bind helps you determine the true source of the issue so you can address it and return to restoration.

Steps in resolving the double bind

- Reach out to your accountability and share how you feel.
- Explore why you feel that way.
- Is there a lie you believe that is contributing to you feeling this way?
- What truth from God's word do you need to remember?
- Often times facing the pain leads to you admitting that you believed a lie.

Real life example: A team leader got feedback from his team on his annual review and they had a lot of suggestions for the company and team to improve. The leader at first believed that he was doing a bad job and that his team thinks he is a bad leader. His double bind was to either ignore and excuse the emotions OR examine them honestly and address the issue. He realized that the negative emotion left unchecked often led to relapse since this leader struggled with thinking he was a failure because of his dad. Recognizing the negative emotions and the lies he believed that fed them enabled him to face the issue with the truth. This helped him resolve the issue and move back to restoration but it started with identifying the double bind.