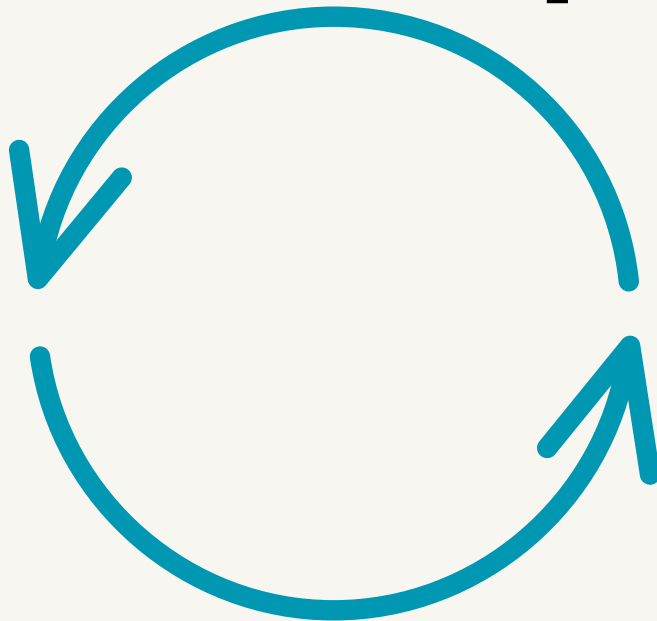




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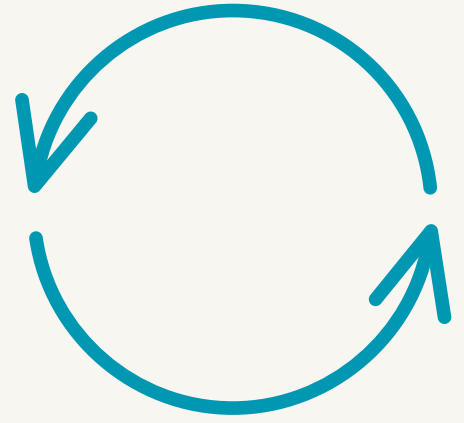
TALKING THERAPY SERVICES

# Breaking The Loops



By Abi Perryman

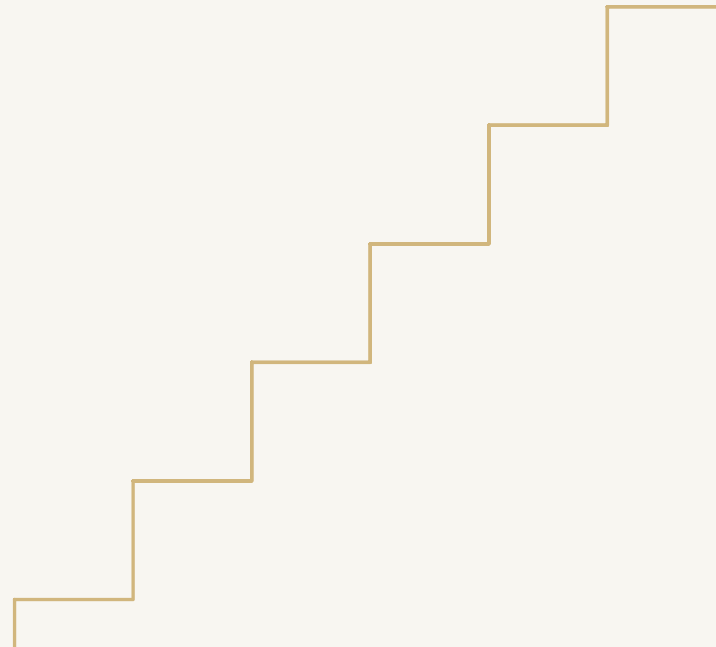
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# The Author



## HELLO THERE! I'M ABI.

I'm a trauma counsellor, EMDR practitioner, and creative educator based in the United Kingdom. I have dedicated my career to helping individuals and communities navigate life's most challenging experiences, with a focus on attachment, trauma recovery, and nervous system regulation.

Drawing on my experience of clinical work, I create resources that translate complex psychological concepts into accessible, relatable language. My style combines gentle honesty with practical tools, often using metaphors, illustrations, and creative exercises to help my clients and readers make sense of their inner world.

When not in the therapy room, I channel her passion for healing into writing, visual storytelling, and community projects. Whether through workbooks, children's stories, or group workshops, my aim is always the same, to create spaces where people feel safe, seen, and supported as they reconnect with themselves.



# Introduction

We all have ways of thinking, feeling, and responding that seem to play out on repeat.

You might notice the same arguments, the same frustrations, or the same stuck feelings coming back, even when your life circumstances change.

At The Bloom Room here in Milton Keynes, I've seen how these cycles can quietly shape our lives.

I call them **LOOPS**, because they run like hidden programmes in the background of our minds, influencing our choices, relationships, and sense of self without us even realising.

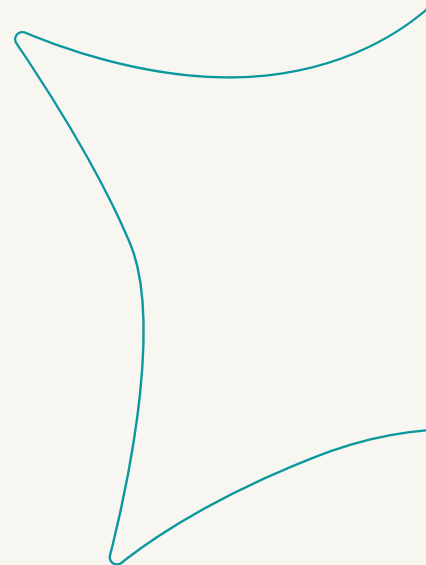
The good news? LOOPS can be spotted, understood, and changed.

This guide will help you:

- Understand how LOOPS form and why they're so persistent.
- Map your own LOOPS so you can see them clearly.
- Learn practical tools to interrupt and rewrite them.
- Test your new "code" so change becomes lasting.

You don't have to break every LOOP in one day, the smallest change (even 1%) to the code can open up a whole new way of living.

Let's begin.



# 1. Understanding LOOPS

A LOOP is a self-running programme in your mind. It's not something you consciously set up, it's something your early experiences "coded" into you. Once created, it quietly runs in the background, influencing how you think, feel, and behave.

Unlike a habit you can easily notice and change, a LOOP is subtle. You may only become aware of it because you keep ending up in similar situations, even when you try to do things differently.

## WHY I USE THE WORD LOOP INSTEAD OF PATTERN

The word pattern can be helpful, but it usually describes something you see after the fact "Oh, I've done that before."

A LOOP feels different. It's more like software in a computer:

- It repeats without you actively deciding to run it.
- It's triggered by certain "conditions" or inputs.
- It keeps going until something interrupts or rewrites it.

In programming, a loop repeats until the code tells it to stop. In human experience, a LOOP repeats until awareness changes the conditions.

## HOW LOOPS ARE FORMED

LOOPS are usually created early in life, shaped by:

- Family dynamics: How love, safety, and attention were given or withheld.
- Attachment experiences: Whether your needs were met reliably, inconsistently, or not at all.
- Survival strategies: How you learned to stay safe, get approval, or avoid harm.

Over time, your nervous system stores these as "rules" about how the world works and how you must behave in it.

# 1. Understanding LOOPS

## THE STRUCTURE OF A LOOP

Every LOOP has four parts:

1. Inputs: **The trigger**. Something happens (a facial expression, a tone of voice, a delay in response).
2. Rule: **The unspoken belief** that translates the input into meaning.  
Example: If people don't respond quickly, I'm unimportant.
3. Outputs: The emotional or behavioural **response** you act on.
4. Reinforcement: The **reaction** you get back reinforces the rule, strengthening the LOOP.

## WHY LOOPS CAN BE HARD TO SEE

- They're familiar: you've lived with them for years.
- They can show up in multiple areas of life, making them feel like "just who I am."
- They often run faster than conscious thought, meaning you feel the result before you can think about it.

## WHY THIS MATTERS FOR HEALING

If you've ever wondered why you keep ending up in the same argument, the same kind of relationship, or the same emotional rut, you've likely been caught in a LOOP.

The good news? Once you can see it, you can change it.

# 2. Mapping Your LOOPS

## WHY MAPPING MATTERS

You can't change a LOOP you can't see.

The act of mapping brings the LOOP from the shadows into the light. Once you can name its steps. From the first trigger to the final outcome, you start to gain choice over it.

Think of it like debugging a programme. You need to see the code before you can rewrite it.

## THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF A LOOP

When mapping a LOOP, we break it into four parts:

### 1. Inputs

- The trigger event — big or small — that starts the LOOP running.
- Examples: Someone's tone of voice, a delay in reply, a facial expression, a missed invitation.

### 2. Rules

- The hidden belief that makes sense of the input.
- Often an "If X happens, then Y is true" statement.
- Examples: If people are quiet, they must be annoyed with me. If I make a mistake, people will reject me.

### 3. Outputs

- The emotional and behavioural reaction the rule creates.
- Examples: Withdrawal, people-pleasing, anger, self-criticism.

### 4. Reinforcement

- The way the outcome "proves" the rule is correct.
- This keeps the LOOP strong and ready to run again.

# 2. Mapping Your LOOPs

## WORKSHEET: MY LOOP MAP

Use the space below to map one LOOP you notice in your life.

### Trigger / Input

(What happened? What started the reaction?)

### Rule / Belief

(What did I tell myself this meant?)

### Output / Response

(What feelings, thoughts, or actions followed?)

### Reinforcement

(What happened afterwards that made the belief feel true?)

### Tip for Completing Your Map

Don't worry if your first attempts feel messy or uncertain. LOOPS are often layered, and sometimes the "real" rule isn't obvious until you've worked through a few examples.

If you feel stuck, try noticing:

- What emotion arrived first?
- What body sensation came with it?
- What story about yourself or others followed?



# 3. Breaking the LOOP

## FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

By now, you've started noticing your LOOPS and mapping their steps. That's the essential first stage.

But awareness alone doesn't stop a LOOP, you need tools to interrupt it and write something new.

Think of this chapter as learning how to step out of the programme and into the role of the coder.

## THREE WAYS TO INTERRUPT A LOOP

### 1. The Pause Button

LOOPS run fast. The moment you notice an input or trigger, try pausing before the rule kicks in.

- Take three slow breaths.
- Drop your shoulders and soften your jaw.
- Name what's happening: "This is my LOOP starting to run."

This pause button acts as a Rip Cord and creates space between trigger and reaction — a space where choice lives.

### 2. Somatic Grounding

LOOPS are stored in the nervous system, so working with the body helps.

- Place a hand on your chest and one on your stomach.
- Feel your feet on the floor.
- Count five things you can see, four you can touch, three you can hear.

Grounding signals safety to your system, making it easier to respond rather than react.

# 3. Breaking the LOOP

## 3. The If/Then Rewrite

LOOP rules are written like code. If **X** happens, then **Y** is true.  
We can replace them with healthier, more accurate versions.

Example:

Old Rule: If people are quiet, they must be annoyed with me.

New Rule: If people are quiet, it might mean they're tired or busy.  
It's not automatically about me.

### Worksheet: My If/Then Rewrite

**Choose one LOOP you've mapped and rewrite its rule.**

**Old Rule:**

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---

**New Rule:**

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**How will I test this new rule in real life?**

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# 3. Breaking the LOOP

## Small Experiments

The best way to prove to your nervous system that a LOOP can change is through action.

- If your LOOP says “If I ask for help, people will think I’m weak,” test asking for a small, low-stakes favour.
- If your LOOP says “If I rest, I’ll fall behind,” test taking a short break and noticing what actually happens.

# 4. Testing the New Code

## WHY TESTING MATTERS

Breaking a LOOP isn't just an intellectual exercise, your nervous system needs proof that the new code is safe.

If you've been running the same LOOP for years, your body and brain will default to it under stress.

Testing is how you build evidence for the alternative.

### STEP 1: CHOOSE A SINGLE LOOP TO TEST

You may have mapped several LOOPS by now. Start with one that:

- Shows up often in daily life.
- Has a rule you've already rewritten.
- Feels challenging, but not overwhelming to work on first.

### STEP 2: PLAN SMALL, SAFE EXPERIMENTS

Your experiments should be low-risk but high-learning.

Think of them as gentle nudges to your comfort zone rather than big leaps.

Example:

- Old LOOP: If I say no, people will reject me.
- New Rule: If I say no, healthy people will respect my boundaries.
- Experiment: Decline a minor request (e.g., "I can't make that meeting, but I'm happy to review notes after").

### STEP 3: NOTICE WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS

Your LOOP will expect the old outcome, but reality might surprise you.

- Did anyone react the way your old rule predicted?
- Were there neutral or even positive responses?
- How did you feel after doing it?

### STEP 4: TRACK THE EVIDENCE

Evidence builds trust in your new rule.

The more you see real-world proof, the weaker the old LOOP becomes.

# 4. Testing the New Code

## WORKSHEET: LOOP CHANGE TRACKER

Old Rule:

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New Rule:

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Experiment I Tried:

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What Happened:

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What I Learned:

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## STEP 5: REPEAT

One successful test won't erase a LOOP overnight, but it will start loosening it.

Keep running small experiments until your new rule feels natural, not forced.

# 5. Living without the LOOP

## LIFE AFTER THE PROGRAMME

Breaking a LOOP isn't about becoming a "perfect" version of yourself. It's about living with more freedom, more choice, and more authenticity.

Without the LOOP running on autopilot, you'll start noticing:

- More space between trigger and response.
- Less emotional intensity when old situations arise.
- New behaviours and thoughts appearing without as much effort.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Even after you've broken a LOOP, it can sometimes try to restart itself. This doesn't mean you've failed, it's simply your nervous system falling back to an old pathway under stress.

You might notice:

- **Ghost thoughts** - old rules popping up quietly in your mind.
- **Muscle memory** - your body starting the old reaction before you catch it.
- **Environmental cues** - certain people, places, or events triggering old code.

## HOW TO KEEP THE LOOP OFFLINE

1. **Stay Aware** Keep noticing inputs, rules, and outputs, even if they're faint.
2. **Revisit Your Rewrite** Repeat your new If/Then statement when under pressure.
3. **Ground Often** Use somatic tools to signal safety to your system.
4. **Track Wins** Keep a log of times you handled a situation differently.
5. **Ask for Support** Share your progress with a trusted person or therapist.

# 4. Living without the LOOP

## FUTURE ME WITHOUT THIS LOOP

Visualisation is a powerful tool for embedding change.  
Close your eyes and picture your life 6 months, 1 year, 5 years  
from now with this LOOP truly gone.

- How do you carry yourself?
- How do you speak to yourself and others?
- What choices do you make differently?
- What's possible now that wasn't before?

## WORKSHEET: MY LOOP-FREE FUTURE

In my relationships, I...

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In my work or daily life, I...

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With myself, I...

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The opportunities I can see now are...


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# 4. Living without the LOOP

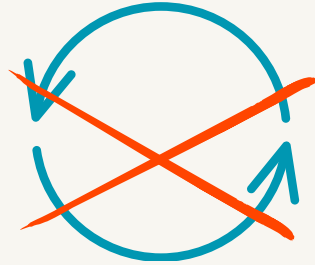
## YOUR MAINTENANCE PLAN

A LOOP is most vulnerable to reactivation during stress, transition, or exhaustion. Have a plan ready:

- **Ground first** before reacting.
  - **Review your LOOP Map** if you feel old patterns returning.
  - **Return to your Change Tracker** for a reminder of your progress.
  - **Seek a tune-up session with your therapist** if needed.
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# Outro – Your Next Step



By now, you've learned how to identify a LOOP, map its parts, and begin rewriting the rules it runs on.

You've also explored how to test these changes in real life and maintain them over time.


Remember, LOOP-breaking is not about perfection, it's about creating freedom.


The more you practise, the more natural it will feel to respond in ways that serve who you are now, not who you had to be back then.

If you'd like more support with your LOOPS, or any other patterns that feel hard to break, I'd love to help you explore them in a safe, supportive space.

At The Bloom Room in Milton Keynes, I offer counselling that blends compassion with practical strategies, so you can feel understood while building tools for real change.

You can get in touch at:

 [www.bloom-room.co.uk](http://www.bloom-room.co.uk)

 [info@bloom-room.co.uk](mailto:info@bloom-room.co.uk)

You've already taken the first step by opening this guide. The next one is yours to choose.

