Part 1. How much of a creature of habit are you? Count how many of these are true for you, check your score, then talk about the one you'd find hardest to give up.

- I order the same thing at my favourite café or restaurant.
- I have "my" seat: on the bus, at work or at the dinner table.
- I eat more or less the same breakfast every day.
- I take the same route to work or the shops without thinking.
- I rewatch the same films or series rather than trying new ones.
- I go back to the same holiday places again and again.
- I still mostly listen to the music I loved in my early twenties.
- My mornings run like clockwork, in exactly the same order.

Your score

0–2: A free spirit. You'd rather wing it.

3–5: Comfortably predictable, with the odd surprise.

6–8: A true creature of habit. You could set your watch by you.

Part 2. Describe one small ritual you'd hate to give up. When and where does it happen, how long have you done it, and what does it give you?

For example: the first coffee of the day, a Sunday walk, reading before bed, a weekly call with family, a Friday takeaway, making your bed.

Part 3. Discuss the questions.

- Where do your habits come from: your family, your culture, your personality or just convenience?
- Do people get more set in their ways as they get older? Have you?
- How do you feel when your routine is thrown off, for example on holiday or when you're ill?
- Are there rituals in your family or culture that you still keep, even if you're not sure why?
- Who's the biggest creature of habit you know? What gives them away?

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Part 4. Which would you choose? Choose one in each pair and explain why.

Your favourite restaurant	*or*	a place you've never tried
A holiday somewhere you love	*or*	somewhere completely new
Rewatching an old favourite	*or*	starting a new series
A fixed daily routine	*or*	every day a little different
A job with a clear routine	*or*	a job where no two days are the same

Part 5. Comforting ritual or stuck in a rut? Tick one column for each, then explain the ones that depend on the person.

	Comfort	*Rut*	*It depends*
Eating the same lunch at your desk every day			
A Friday night takeaway and a film			
Going to the same holiday resort for 15 years			
Calling your parents every Sunday at six			
Checking the news first thing every morning			
Wearing the same style of clothes since your twenties			
Meeting the same friends in the same place every week			

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Part 6. What would you do? Choose an option or come up with a better one. Be honest about what you'd actually do.

The café where you've had the same coffee every morning for five years suddenly closes down.

1. *Find a new café and start a new ritual straight away.*
2. *Start making the same coffee at home.*
3. *Feel genuinely lost for a week or two.*
4. *Take it as a sign to try somewhere different every day.*

Your partner or a close friend suggests somewhere completely new for this year's holiday instead of "your" usual place.

1. *Agree straight away. It's about time.*
2. *Agree, as long as you can keep one tradition from the usual trip.*
3. *Suggest splitting it: half new, half familiar.*
4. *Dig your heels in. Why change something that works?*

A new colleague keeps sitting in "your" seat in meetings. It's a small thing, but it's starting to bother you.

1. *Say nothing and find another seat.*
2. *Start arriving earlier to win it back.*
3. *Make a light-hearted joke about it.*
4. *Ask them, politely, if they'd mind swapping.*

Part 7. Read the two views. Which is closer to your own? When did a routine last help you, and when did one hold you back?

Viewpoint A	**Viewpoint B**
Routines are what hold a busy life together. If I don't have to think about breakfast or the route to work, I've got more energy for the things that matter. My little rituals are how I look after myself.	*Routine is comfortable, but comfortable isn't the same as happy. The days blur into one, and years go by without anything new. Every so often you need to shake things up, or life simply passes you by.*

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Part 8. Do you agree, disagree or partly agree? Explain why.

- The older you get, the more set in your ways you become.
- Successful people are almost always creatures of habit.
- Too much routine kills creativity.
- "A change is as good as a rest."
- Rituals are more about comfort than about the activity itself.
- Breaking your routine now and then is good for your mental health.

Part 9. Tell the story of a time your routine was turned upside down, for example by a move, a new job, a new baby or a long trip, and how you found your rhythm again.

Think about:

- What changed, and how quickly
- What you missed most about your old routine
- What new habits or rituals you picked up
- Whether you'd go back to how things were

Reflection

Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. The ritual that means the most to me is…
2. I know I'm stuck in a rut when…
3. One small thing I'm going to do differently is…

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