

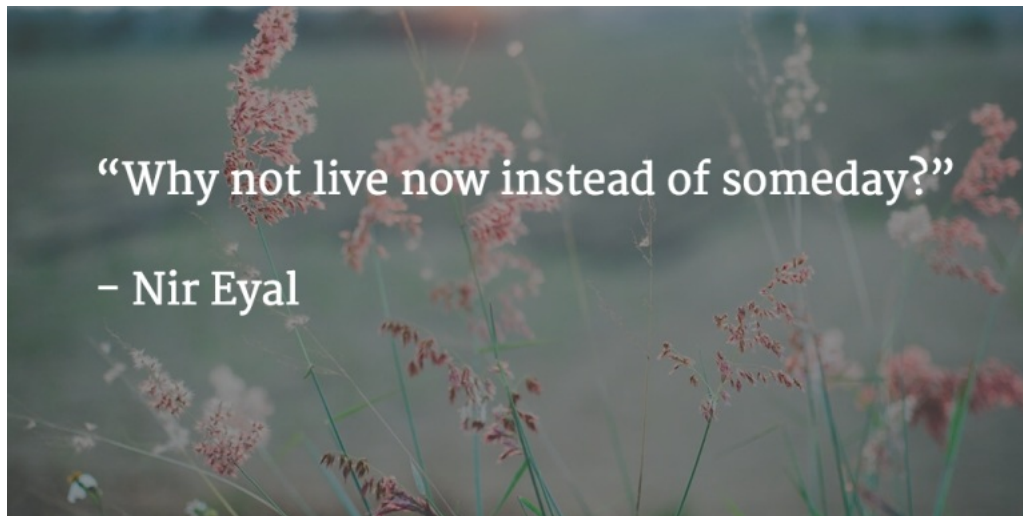
Hooked Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/hooked-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Hooked shows you how some of the world's most successful products, like smartphones, make us form habits around them and why that's crucial to their success, before teaching you the 4-step framework that lies behind them.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



It's been a while since I read the summary of this book on Blinkist, after originally reading about it on Noah Kagan's blog. I came across the author's blog again yesterday, and decided it was time for a re-run.

After creating, building, and successfully selling 2 startups (this took him 10+ years, let's not make it sound so easy), Nir Eyal is now focused on writing. He's a regular contributor on Forbes and TechCrunch, and his book about the psychology of technology products, *Hooked*, was published in December 2013.

Here are my takeaways:

1. The most successful products in the world make us form habits around them.
2. One of the key ingredients of a habit-forming product is having variable rewards.
3. You should ask yourself 2 questions to find out whether your product should be habit-forming in the first place.

Let's take a look at those findings!

Lesson 1: The most successful products in the world make us form habits around them.

What makes the iPhone the most profitable product in the history of the world? How come 1 out of every 7 humans on this planet is on Facebook? What makes these products so much more successful than others?

The answer, Eyal says, is that **they make us form habits**. We don't just view these products as tools we sometimes use, they have quickly become an integral part of our day. We use them multiple times a day and feel like we can't live without them.

Sure you might say, I get that. Habits are powerful and hard to break, we know that, but how does that power translate to products? Nir mentions 3 things:

1. Because habits are tough to break, we usually become **very loyal and long-time customers** of the companies that sell habit-forming products. I got my first iPhone in 2010. I haven't had another kind of phone since. Nuff' said.
2. Habit-forming products also gain an **advantage over the competition**, because in order to replace the habit they create, a competitor's product would have to be a lot better to make us break our habit and replace it with a new one.
3. Lastly, customers of habit-forming products are **not very sensitive to price changes**, because of 1 and 2, which means the creators can charge a premium and increase prices as they go, without losing a lot of business.

Think about these points for some of the things you're using on a daily basis, and you'll see that's the way these products got you hooked.

Lesson 2: Variable rewards are a key component of habit-forming products.

I'm not going to reveal Nir's entire 4-step model here, but I do want to highlight one point that stood out for me. Your product will in some way reward the user, for example a Dropbox user is less worried about losing her data.

However, **these rewards must change over time**, in order to remain effective. Studies with mice have shown that the mice were most eager to get the reward every single time when the reward itself changed – even if it meant there was no reward sometimes.

That's why the Facebook newsfeed is so addictive (here's a great way to remove it, by the way). You keep on scrolling down, because there might be something great in there. **Might**. You don't know, and sometimes you end up scrolling for 10 minutes, without finding anything that gives you that little dopamine hit. But sometimes you find the funniest video of all time. That's what keeps it exciting.

To pull off various rewards, don't rely on a single one, but on **a mix of great rewards**. To stick with Facebook: The newsfeed is not the only thing that makes you excited. So is getting notifications, friend requests, being given virtual currency in a game you play, seeing your post

get lots of likes, etc.

So to create a product that people love, make sure they get a lot of different rewards, which keep changing, from using it.

Lesson 3: Ask yourself these 2 questions to know whether your product should be a habit-forming one.

Eyal also addresses the moral issues that come with his model. Getting people hooked on a product already sounds kinda illegal, so in order to prevent people from becoming high-level product “drug dealers”, he suggests only creating a habit-forming product when 2 conditions are met.

The truth is **not all products need to have habit-forming qualities**, especially products we only need once or rarely in our lives (like cars, or your life insurance policy). Ask yourself these two things:

1. **Does the product make the life of the user better?**
2. **Would I use the product?**

For example, porn doesn’t make people’s lives better . It’s associated with addiction, abuse, violence against women, and plenty of other crimes and problems – but sadly, it’s still a habit-forming product.

A smartphone, on the other hand, which allows you to do plenty of things with one tool, for which you needed different devices before (like math, browsing the web, making phone calls, texting, etc.) can simplify and significantly improve the quality of people’s lives.

Chances are you would use it yourself as well, and that’s when you know you can safely make it a habit-forming product.

Hooked Review

It’s rare to read something twice and think it’s even better the second time you read it. In this case, this is what happened. I highlighted a lot on my first run through the summary, and now I’ve even taken notes on a few ideas I had while reading.

It was even more interesting to me than *Built To Last*, maybe because as a solo entrepreneur I think more about products and less about companies, but it might just be due to the mix of self-improvement and business.

Entrepreneur or not, this summary is highly recommended, because it helps you learn about the way you use products and spot these habit-forming ones. Meanwhile, I’m *Hooked* on this book

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why it's so difficult to change our habits
- What kind of products work even if they don't form a habit
- All 4 stages of the Hooked model
- Which part of the model needs to change in order for it to work
- How the loop of the model keeps people going through it over and over again
- What you need to know to successfully use the model in the first place

Learn more about the author

Read the full book summary on Blinkist

Get the book on Amazon

Who would I recommend the Hooked summary to?

The 17 year old hobby entrepreneur, who's building apps, side projects, and other things to sell in his spare time, the 39 year old Mum, who wonders when she started enjoying Facebook so much, and anyone who owns a smartphone.