

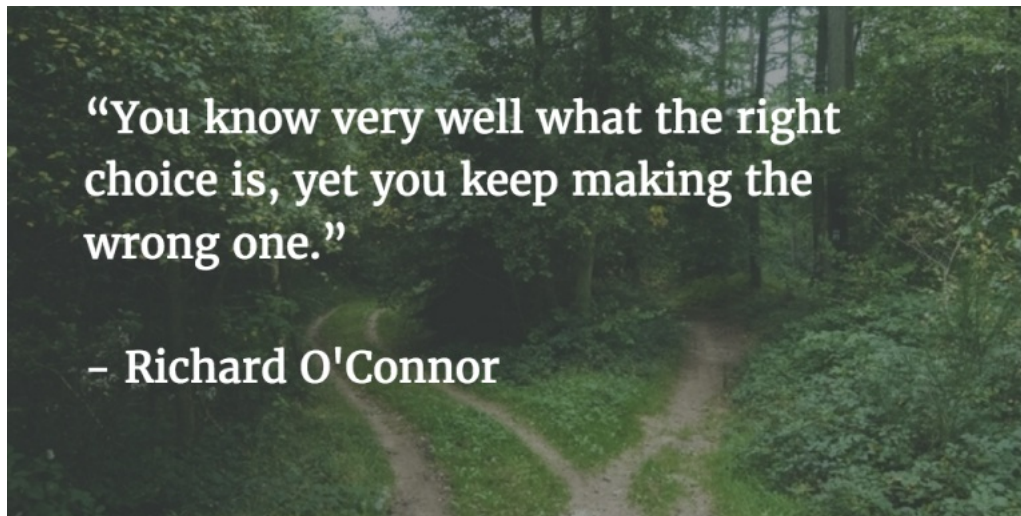
Rewire Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/rewire-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *Rewire explains why we keep engaging in addictive and self-destructive behavior, how our brains justify it and where you can get started on breaking your bad habits by becoming more mindful and disciplined.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Dr. Richard O'Connor is a psychotherapist, who spent over 20 years working in the fields of addiction, depression and mental illness.

He believes his own struggles with depression, both in his 40s and his 20s – his mother committed suicide when he was 15 – give him a unique and strong perspective on it, which he shares in this book.

Explaining plenty of reasons for why we engage in self-destructive behavior, *Rewire* also gives you valuable starting points to get better, so if you want to finally stop smoking, quit munching chips in front of the TV and not kick yourself so much if you fail, this is for you.

Here are 3 great lessons from the book:

1. You have two selves that influence your actions – a conscious one and an automatic one.
2. Repressing your emotions can cause you to become self-destructive.
3. You can start breaking your bad habits by faking it and training mindfulness.

Have a bad habit you want to kick? Let's do it!

Lesson 1: You have two selves that influence your actions – a conscious one and an automatic one.

Which one is it going to be after work – gym or TV?

The moment I ask you that question you know which answer is the right one.

Yet, we've all faced this or similar decision countless times, but still ended up on the couch with a bag of chips.

Why?

Dr. O'Connor says it's because **we have two selves, a conscious one and an automatic one.**

The conscious self relies a lot on rational arguments, it's when you reason yourself into doing things, for example going to the library early to get a good spot, because it'll be crowded later on.

The automatic self is in charge when you eat your entire popcorn before the movie starts. Your conscious self isn't there to think about the consequences and only when it reactivates again later do you regret your actions.

Whenever you perform a bad habit, your automatic self is running the show, after all you'd never choose to do a bad habit consciously.

There are two ways then, to break bad habits:

1. **Strengthening your conscious self, so it becomes the dominant force.**
2. **Training your automatic self to just stop slipping up.**

Both work, but in the long run, training your automatic self is a lot less effort, because once the neural pathways have been established, they work on autopilot.

Lesson 2: Repressing your emotions can cause you to become self-destructive.

Have you ever wished to yell at someone at the top of your lungs, because they really pissed you off?

Chances are more often than not, when you wanted to, you didn't.

Dr. O'Connor says you should have.

Emotions are chemical reactions in your body. They build up over time and eventually break, which is when we have to let them out.

Like water in an overflowing bathtub, **they'll find a way.**

You not yelling when someone harasses you in the morning might lead you to eat a whole pie by yourself in the afternoon, just because you bottled up those feelings.

Emotions are never right or wrong, it's not for you to judge, they're feelings and therefore not even meant to be based on reason and common sense.

When you're trying to rationally pick your feelings, you'll create a communication gap between your conscious and your automatic self.

Your automatic self really tells you to yell at your co-worker for deleting all that data, but your rational you steps in and says you shouldn't cause a scene in the office.

Eventually, this conflicting advice might lead you to engage in self-destructive behavior, like drinking way too much coffee, so listen to your gut.

Lesson 3: You can start breaking your bad habits by faking it and training mindfulness.

Rewiring your brain is never easy, but it's easy to get started.

Alcoholics Anonymous use the saying "Fake it till you make it" a lot, and it helps a lot of recovering addicts get started.

It focuses on being dedicated to getting better, and giving it your best, even when you end up caving and having a drink after a week or two.

If you constantly beat yourself up every time you have another drink, you'll keep sabotaging yourself, because you're repressing those emotions, remember?

Instead, focus on continuing your efforts and "fake it" until you eventually make not drinking a habit – **it'll get easier to control yourself over time.**

Note: Speaking of not drinking, check out what my friends Ruari and Andy are doing over at One Year No Beer – a tremendous program!

Another great starting point is training your mindfulness through meditation.

Just by sitting down for 30 minutes every day and focusing and re-focusing your attention on your breath, you can substantially increase your awareness for when you're about to do a bad habit.

Don't worry about being perfect, it's normal to have other thoughts as you meditate. Gently push them aside and re-focus your attention.

That's what meditation is all about, but, you know, fake it till you make it

Rewire Review

The summary of *Rewire* on Blinkist reminded me a bit of *The Upside Of Your Dark Side*. It shows you not all unwanted behaviors are bad and really digs into why you're engaging in them in the first place.

I think we all break bad habits differently at different times (I've even created a quiz to show you which type you are for what situation), but it's important to know the roots and basics, so you don't slide down a slippery slope into addiction.

Very good summary, short, but packed with information – highly recommend you check it out on Blinkist!

Note: I recently published a very practical 3-step guide to breaking bad habits, along with a mini course, which will also be a good starting point to get going today.

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

[Get the book on Amazon](#)

[Learn more about the author](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why we think we earned the raise at work but are “just human” when we eat bad food
- How doing something your conscious self might not agree with can save your life
- When self-destructive behavior is really just a cry for help
- Why some people are truly defeated and what they can do to get back up
- What undertow is, how it can ruin you right before you're about to succeed, and how to avoid it

Who would I recommend the Rewire summary to?

The 25 year old who often gets bullied for being a little shy or different, but doesn't defend herself a lot, the 33 year old, who's frustrated with his exercise habits, because he keeps trying, but ends up making the wrong choices, and anyone who's struggled with a particular bad habit for over a year.