

The Power Of Habit Summary

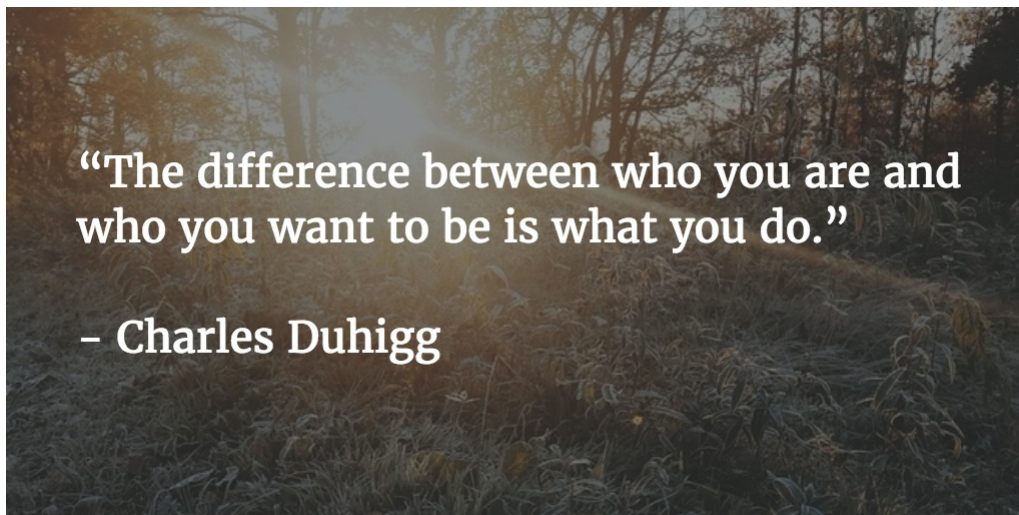


fourminutebooks.com/the-power-of-habit-summary/

1-Sentence-Summary: *The Power Of Habit* helps you understand why habits are at the core of everything you do, how you can change them, and what impact that will have on your life, your business and society.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



You can't possibly call yourself a habit junkie and not know this book. It's THE book about habits. Published in 2012 by Pulitzer-prize winning author Charles Duhigg, this gem has spent over 120 weeks on the various New York Times bestseller lists.

The book was sparked by Duhigg's fascination with the wit of a U.S. army major in Kufa in Iraq, who nipped riots in the bud by persuading the small town's mayor to keep food vendors out of large and growing gatherings – when people couldn't fuel their anger and energy with kebabs, as they usually did, they just left. Tons of research and 8 years later, Duhigg published the go-to book about habits.

Here are your 3 must-takeaways:

1. Habits work in 3-step loops: cue, routine, reward.
2. You can change your habits by substituting just one part of the loop, the routine.
3. Willpower is the most important habit, and you can strengthen it over time with 3 things.

Ready to science the heck out of your habits?

Let's go!

Lesson 1: Habits work in 3-step loops: cue, routine, reward.

Roughly 40% of what you do happens on autopilot

Habits are your brain's way of saving energy, so given you spend around 6 of your 16 waking hours doing things you're not aware of, it might be worth understanding what happens here.

Duhigg discovered that at the root of all habits, like drinking your coffee every morning, lies a simple 3-part loop.

The cue is what triggers you to do the habit, for example sitting down at your kitchen table to have breakfast every morning at 7 AM.

The routine is the behavior you then automatically engage in, which, for drinking coffee, might be to go over to your coffeemaker, turn it on, and press the "large cup" button.

Lastly, you'll receive a reward for completing the routine, such as the rich smell of your coffee, it's hearty taste and getting to watch the steam rise from the cup as it sits on your kitchen table in the sunlight (I really love coffee, can you tell?).

Note: My friend Sam Thomas Davies created an excellent blog post with a beautiful visualization of the loop.

Your brain's activity only spikes twice during this loop. At the beginning, to figure out which habit to engage in, and at the end, when the link between cue and routine is reinforced (here's a graphic from the book).

Wait, reinforced?

Aha!

That's how habits are built and the stronger this link gets, the harder it becomes to change them. But you can still do it.

Lesson 2: You can change your habits by substituting just one part of the loop, the routine.

Naturally, the more often you reinforce a habit, the more embedded in your brain it gets.

In case of the coffee, you might crave it the second you sit down at your kitchen table, and when you can't have it that day, because the machine broke, you'll probably get very grumpy and buy one later at work.

The trick to changing a habit then, is to switch the routine, and leave everything else in tact.

Duhigg calls this the golden rule.

If you're trying to get off caffeine, the tweak is incredibly simple: switch to decaf (like my "friend" Replacing Rick).

You'll still have the entire experience from A to Z, but instead of pressing a button you're now pouring hot water over decaf coffee powder, and voilà, you won't miss caffeine for even a single day.

Lesson 3: Your most important habit is willpower, and you can strengthen it over time in 3 ways.

Not all habits are created equal and Duhigg says willpower is by far one of the most important ones, as it helps us do better in all aspects of life.

Having been to the moon and back in terms of willpower research, I don't want to tell you to eat right, sleep enough and exercise regularly.

My friend Colin is much better at that

Instead, here are 3 uncommon ways in which you can grow your total willpower capacity over time:

1. Do something that requires a lot of discipline.

For example a tough wake-up regimen or strict diet will make you constantly practice delaying gratification and thus give you more willpower to exert throughout your day.

2. Plan ahead for worst-case scenarios.

Even just thinking about your boss yelling at you before it ever happens will help you not lose your cool when it does.

3. Preserve your autonomy.

Yesterday I learned that autonomy was a major part of living a passionate life.

Today I learned that if you take it away, your willpower also goes down the drain. When you're assigned tasks by someone else, which you must do, your willpower muscle tires much quicker.

My review of The Power of Habit

Duhigg has managed to combine the scientific research with his own ideas and personal experiences in such a way that the book tells many extremely compelling stories, while teaching you everything you need to know about habits. If I could have you read only one book this year, this would be it – although Duhigg has published a new book in 2016, Smarter Faster Better, hmmm. Nah, go with The Power Of Habit!

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why habits stick and how that changed the toothpaste industry
- How Alcoholics Anonymous has helped 10 million people kick the booze
- What a keystone habit is and how Paul O'Neill 5x-ed the value of an entire company with it
- Why no one cared to put out a fire in the London tube in 1987
- How Target helped a Dad find out his teenage daughter was pregnant
- The 3 factors from which big movements develop

- Why a gambling problem is always your own fault, but murdering your wife in your sleep might not be

Who would I recommend The Power Of Habit summary to?

The 9 year old, who always has a cookie after lunch, and might want to know why, the 28 year old, who struggles with sticking to her new diet, and anyone who has less willpower than they'd like to have. You can learn more about the author [here](#).