

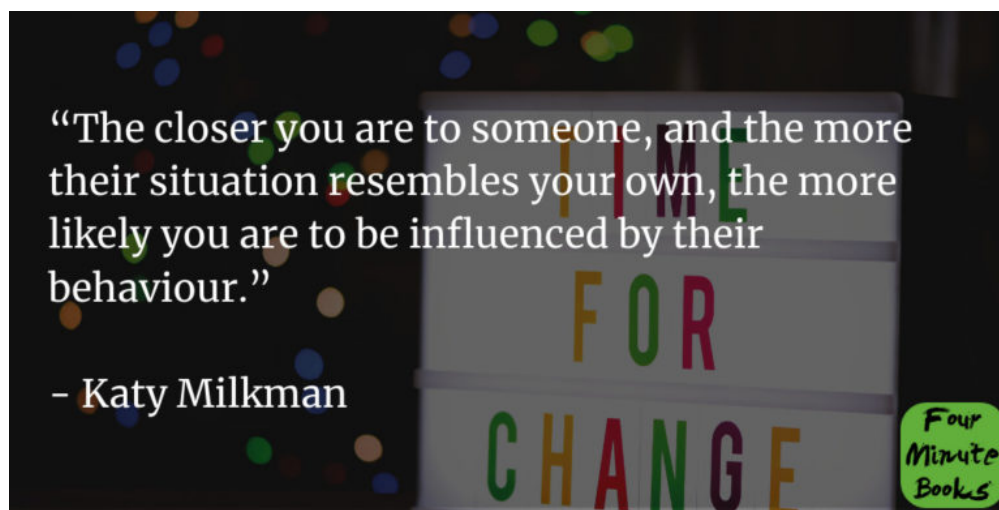
# How To Change Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *How To Change* by Katy Milkman identifies the stumbling blocks that are in your way of reaching your goals and improving yourself and the research-backed ways to get over them, including how to beat some of the worst productivity and life problems like procrastination, laziness, and much more.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



By now, you've probably heard enough self-help advice to know that if you want to achieve anything worthwhile in life, you need to set some big goals. Maybe you're doing everything you can, like using a daily journal or writing to-do lists, but still, your goals elude you. You might wonder how you'll ever change if the tools you're using don't seem to be working.

In *How to Change: The Science of Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*, author Katy Milkman offers a simple guide to overcoming the obstacles that keep you from achieving your goals. Using current research, she will help you work through many common problems you may be facing, like laziness, impulsivity, or procrastination.

So if you've lost confidence that you can *really* change, Milkman is here to prove you wrong and get you back on track for good.

Let's see how much we can discover in just 3 lessons

1. Fresh starts are a great time to start changing.
2. Beat impulsivity and procrastination with a few easy strategies.
3. Reaching your goals will be easier if you choose your acquaintances wisely.

Let's dive right in and discover How to Change!

## Lesson 1: Using a fresh start can make changing easier.

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Have you ever made a New Year's resolution? Some people might joke about how many people use the New Year as a time to make drastic changes. Why would a new year suddenly make goals more attainable?

But actually, there is some benefit to starting in the new year. It is not because the month of January is different from other months but because of what it represents- a fresh start. Other fresh starts could be a birthday, a new semester, or even a Monday.

The author discovered this when she and her colleagues examined data from college campus fitness centers. So what about a fresh start is so special?

A fresh start gives you a new perspective. **It places a distance between the previous goals you didn't reach and the new ones you aspire to.**

However, fresh starts aren't always a miracle for change. Two studies that looked at college students' gym activity during the school year found that breaks caused a significant disruption in students' new, healthy routines. The breaks could definitely be seen as a fresh start, just not a positive one for goals.

The author says to be on the lookout for new fresh starts if you want to start changing and make sure they don't have a disruptive effect on your progress.

## Lesson 2: There are some simple strategies you can employ to fight off impulsivity and procrastination.

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So say you have started your goals with a fresh start and are eager to change, but soon enough, you're finding it hard to fight off impulses. Instead of reaching for an apple, you're reaching for chips, or you're consumed with social media rather than studying.

Another word for impulsivity is present bias. Acting impulsively places instant gratification over long-term goals. It leads you to look for immediate pleasures and forget about the rewards you would have down the line if you stuck to your goals.

One of the strategies the author has for fighting impulsivity is to use what she calls temptation bundling. This is where you pair a pleasurable activity with a challenging one to make it more appealing. An example of this would be watching your favorite show while running on a treadmill.

**Another technique is gamification, where you make real-world tasks seem more fun by adding elements of a game to them, like keeping score or adding rewards.** An example of this is using a step counter that gives you badges to reward you for reaching a

walking goal.

Another common issue that might plague your goal-achieving is procrastination. All of us do it. But it can be overcome. One of the things you can do is have a commitment device. This is a system that restricts your freedom to help you deal with temptation. An example of this would be blocking distracting apps on your phone during work hours.

Another tried and true strategy is to make a public pledge. This is when you tell your friends, family, or anyone about what you are aiming for, and it's very effective at helping you reach a goal. After all, who wants others to see them fail at something they publicly said they would do?

### **Lesson 3: Be mindful of who you spend time with.**

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There are certain people you spend time with who can make it harder to achieve your goals, but there are also people who can help you. This is why it's best to be on the lookout for a friend group that will help you.

Peers have such a strong influence over us because we humans are very susceptible to social pressure. Many times, people see this as a negative thing. Remember the talks about peer pressure when you were younger?

However, it can also help you. When economist Scott Carnell was enrolled in the US Air Force Academy, he was surprised that his twin brother seemed to be doing much better than him academically. In high school, Scott had better grades.

He began to suspect it might be the hardworking group of peers he had become friends with at the Academy. So he decided to crunch the numbers of cadets in the academy and looked at over 3,000 cadets' academic performance.

He discovered that for every 100 point increase in average verbal SAT score for a squadron, the cadet's own GPA was higher by 0.4. That can be the difference between straight Bs and straight As.

**So whether you realize it or not, your peers can have a huge influence on your success, which is why you should make sure you surround yourself with good influences.** If you find someone you would like to emulate, ask them how they got to where they are and try their techniques. Soon enough, you'll start improving your own life.

### **How To Change Review**

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I feel like personal growth books are either pure motivation and no science or all science. How To Change is definitely in the all science category, and it's cool! As one who reads a lot of books like this, I really enjoyed this one and think you will too.

## Who would I recommend the How To Change summary to?

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The 64-year-old that wants to do a lot of projects but can't stop procrastinating, the ambitious 17-year-old who'd like to build good habits, and anyone that doesn't believe they can change.