

# The Habit Blueprint Summary

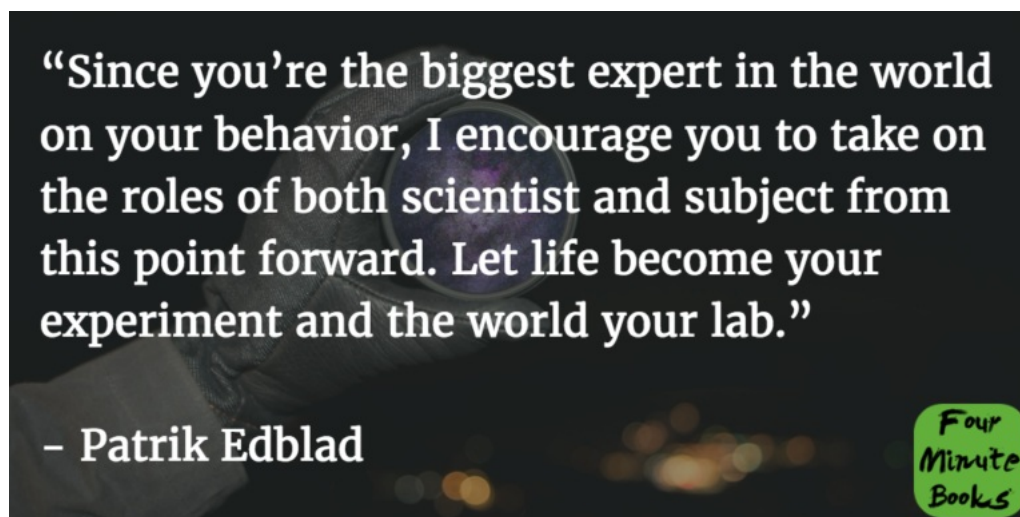
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 [fourminutebooks.com/the-habit-blueprint-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/the-habit-blueprint-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *The Habit Blueprint strips down behavior change to its very core, giving you the ultimate, research-backed recipe for cultivating the habits you desire, with plenty of backup steps you can take to maximize your chances of success.*

**Read in:** 8 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



**Note:** This is the second author collaboration on Four Minute Books. I worked directly with the author of the book, Patrik Edblad, creator of Selfication, in writing this summary.

I've never met Patrik Edblad in person (yet). But over the past two years, he's become one of my closest friends. Like me, he was among the very first coaches on coach.me, and he's coached a staggering 400+ clients around behavior change since.

Patrik lives in a small village in Sweden, called Östersund (I hear their Köttbullar – aka meatballs – are excellent!), with his long-term girlfriend Lisa. Bouncing from job to job dissatisfied for a while after finishing high school, he discovered he had a knack for poker. When he managed to turn \$2,000 into \$35,000 a couple years later, he went into poker full-time.

As much as he enjoyed the personal freedom and decent money of a professional poker player, he couldn't help the growing feeling of dissatisfaction about how he spent his days. Five years into his career, what had been a nag became a dramatic wake-up call. Within 48 hours of being diagnosed with a rare case of blood poisoning, his dad passed away.

A true Stoic at heart, Patrik did what few people would: he took his grief and turned it into a positive force for changing his life. In April 2013, he published this story and thus started his journey towards "Selfication," which he describes as *"the process of closing the gap between who you are and who you want to be."*

It would be the first of many (over 130 by now!) forays into the science of human psychology. The same year, he started a Bachelor's degree in behavioral science, which he completed in 2016, along with becoming a certified mental trainer. Recently, Patrik's years of research and efforts in studying human behavior have culminated in the publication of his first book: *The Habit Blueprint*.

I don't know anyone who's more passionate about the science of habit, which is why I'm extremely happy to share what I think to be the 3 most crucial out of Patrik's 15 steps you can take to transform your life:

1. Get a head start on your habit changes by picking a keystone habit first.
2. Avoid fluctuating willpower by starting ridiculously small.
3. Use the sunk cost fallacy to your advantage by building a chain of check-ins.

If you're looking for a recipe you can use over and over again to cultivate the habits you want, you've come to the right place! Let's design your own habit blueprint!

## Lesson 1: Make your habit changes as effective as possible by choosing a keystone habit first.

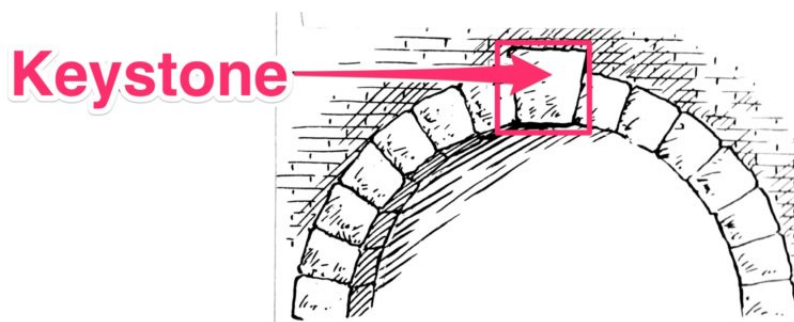
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Roughly 40% of what you do each day happens on autopilot. Take a second to let that sink in. According to a study by Duke University, you don't deliberately choose almost *half* of all the actions you perform on a daily basis. These automatic behaviors can be good or bad, depending on the habits you've acquired so far, which means they can drag you up or down quite fast.

That's both staggering and a little frightening, but it's no reason to despair. Because while you can't change your habits from one day to the next, over time, you can make sure what you do on autopilot makes you better not worse.

Consciously making your first habit change is always the hardest, but if you pick the right habit, it'll also be the most transformative.

You can achieve this by selecting a so-called keystone habit first. In architecture, a keystone is the stone at the very top center position of an arch. It's the stone that holds the entire arch together. Remove it, and it collapses. But if it's in place, it stabilizes the entire arch.



Transferred to habits, this means **some affect your life more positively than others, because they cause a ripple effect and support further, positive behaviors.**

For example, exercise is a big keystone habit for Pat. As long as he keeps a proper fitness regimen, he finds he naturally sleeps better, eats better, is more productive and enjoys life a lot more.

I'm sure you can almost immediately think of a habit that has that same effect for you. Common ones are sleep, exercise, and eating right, but it might be something else entirely.

Think about which habits have been keystone habits for you in the past, and pick the one you think will be the most impactful to focus on when you're just starting out.

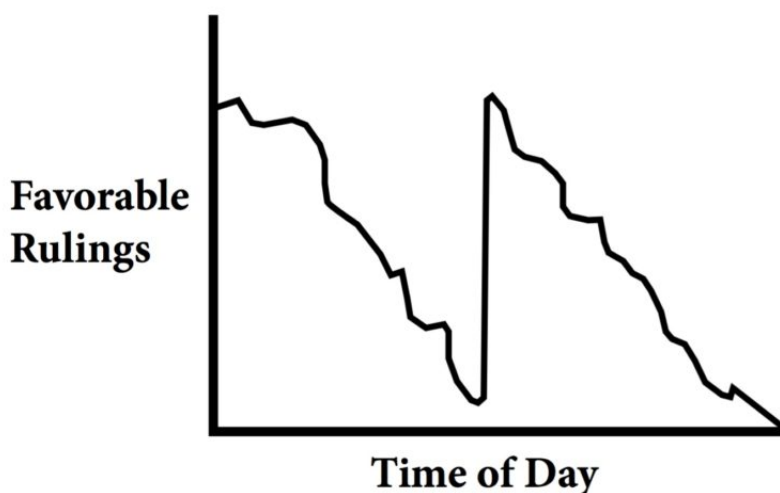
## Lesson 2: Eliminate the issue of willpower by making your first step laughably small.

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Speaking of starting out, try not to go from couch potato to marathon runner in a day, okay? Most of us have tried to make changes way too big, way too fast and have crashed and burned. The reason is as non-obvious as it is simple: your willpower fluctuates tremendously throughout your day.

I hope you'll never be in one, but in some situations this can make the difference between life and death. For example when you're standing in front of a jury of parole board judges, who have to decide whether you'll be set free or return right to your dimly lit cell.

When it's just before lunch time or late in the day, your chances of being approved for parole are almost zero. If it's early morning or right *after* lunch, you'll be granted freedom 2 out of 3 times.



(Image taken from the book)

How so?

**Well, just like you, parole board judges are tired after a long day of making tough decisions and hungry right before lunch.** At these times, their willpower, and thus their ability to judge your case objectively, will be significantly lower than early in the morning or after a meal, when their willpower battery has just been fully charged – so they err on the safe side and keep you locked up.

For your habit, this means you'd best do it at a time of high willpower during your day. But you can't always guarantee you will.

Instead, why not avoid the fickleness of willpower altogether, by making your habit so easy you'd be stupid *not* to do it? For example, you could set a goal of running just two minutes, eating a single carrot or reading just one page in your book.

**Starting so easy you're almost laughing at yourself has three advantages :**

1. Failure becomes highly unlikely.
2. It gets you over the biggest hurdle: starting.
3. You set yourself up for overachievement.

Think about it. *Anyone* can run for two minutes. It's easy to start such a short run. But it's unlikely you'll stop after you've run for two minutes. You'll just keep going.

And voilà, you're one step closer to becoming a regular runner.

### Lesson 3: Turn the sunk cost fallacy into an advantage by building a long chain of daily habit check-ins.

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You have the right habit. You got started. Now all you have to do is to *keep going*. Of course this part of the habit puzzle is just about as hard as the one before it. While there will be many mental biases at play, trying to prevent you from going on, there is one you can flip on its head and use to your advantage.

It's called the sunk cost fallacy and it describes the human tendency to overvalue the future benefits of objects, investments and experiences. Why do we do this? Because **our objective view is corrupted by how emotionally invested we are *already*, based on the time, energy and money we've spent on something.**

Some examples:

- "This movie is bad, but I've sat more than halfway through it, so I'll finish it."
- "We don't really want to go out to dinner today, but we've already made the reservation."
- "Our holiday sucks, but if we fly home early, we'll have to pay extra."

You get the gist. And you know you've done this before. Clearly, the sunk cost fallacy doesn't exactly help us when we've previously committed to the wrong course of action. But if it's the *right* choice you've made, it can actually work in your favor.

A famous example is Jerry Seinfeld's productivity hack, which involves taping a 365-day calendar to your wall and marking each day you succeed with a big, red X on it.



(Image source)

With each passing day, you'll see the chain get longer and want to take a day off less and less. **The more energy you invest into making your habit consistent, the more committed to it you'll get.**

There are two ways to implement this chain-system:

1. Get an actual, physical, 365-day wall calendar, like this one.
2. Sign up for a habit tracker, which allows you to check in daily and create a streak. Pat and my favorite is of course [coach.me](https://coach.me).

Then, simply check in immediately once you've completed your habit for the day. Motivated or not, with this system, you'll soon push through up days as much as down days. To create long-term change, that's all that counts.

## Fold-out bonus time!

This book will come to life for you a lot quicker than you might've thought...it's fold-out bonus time! As a gift with this summary, Patrik wants to hand you *The Habit Blueprint Workbook*, which is the companion guide that goes with the book. It's of course best if you use it in combination with the book itself, but by downloading it, you'll get a sneak peek at all 15 steps and can already start to take action today.

[Download >>](#)

## The Habit Blueprint Review

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It's no coincidence that the three steps I've chosen also happen to be the first three in Pat's book. Before even starting to think about habit loops, triggers and environmental design, it's crucial that you get a new habit – any good habit, really – up and running with the least effort. The rest is a downhill race, with all the remaining steps aiming to make your habit easier to do consistently.

At heart, habit change is quite a simple process. Patrik delivers a step-by-step process for just that, but then goes much further, giving you backups upon backups. Thanks to the many layers of extra security he provides, his book helps aspiring beginners and pro's in behavior change alike. You can take just the bare minimum of steps needed or add on more to increase your chances of success.

All in all, *The Habit Blueprint* is the most action-oriented habit book I've read so far, thanks to its simplicity and uncluttered-ness. It's a short, but powerful read. I can't imagine a better way of spending \$4.99.

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## What else can you learn from the book?

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- The habit loop that's at the core of all habits
- Three ways to build powerful triggers that'll prompt you to do your habit
- How the occasional fist pump will help you cement your new behavior
- What a token economy is and how you can use it
- The truth about how long it actually takes to form a habit
- Why you have to design your environment
- How to make failure unlikely by raising the activation energy of unwanted behaviors
- What impact other people's goals have on you and why that matters
- Who you need to talk to about your new habit
- Where you should put your commitment contract and what that is
- How a researcher stumbled across the concept of accountability in the 1950s
- Which mental loopholes to watch out for and how to avoid falling into them
- How the failure ex ante will help you get back up after setback
- Which other habit books Patrik recommends

## Who would I recommend The Habit Blueprint summary to?

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The 18 year-old student, who's about to finish high school and doesn't know what she wants to do, but knows what kind of person she wants to be, the 39 year old successful entrepreneur, who promised himself to lose weight two years ago and really wants to make it happen this year, and anyone who used to be good at habit change, but has had trouble switching their behavior in recent months and years.