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January 16th

**NEVER DO ANYTHING OUT OF HABIT**

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“So in the majority of other things, we address circumstances not in accordance with the right assumptions, but mostly by following wretched habit. Since all that I’ve said is the case, the person in training must seek to rise above, so as to stop seeking out pleasure and steering away from pain; to stop clinging to living and abhorring death; and in the case of property and money, to stop valuing receiving over giving.”

—MUSONIUS RUFUS, *LECTURES*, 6.25.5–11

A worker is asked: “Why did you do it this way?” The answer, “Because that’s the way we’ve always done things.” The answer frustrates every good boss and sets the mouth of every entrepreneur watering. The worker has stopped thinking and is mindlessly operating out of habit. The business is ripe for disruption by a competitor, and the worker will probably get fired by any thinking boss.

We should apply the same ruthlessness to our own habits. In fact, we are studying philosophy precisely to break ourselves of rote behavior. Find what you do out of rote memory or routine. Ask yourself: *Is this really the best way to do it?* Know why you do what you do—do it for the right reasons.