

Atomic Habits

- What are Atomic Habits?
 - **atomic habits are the building blocks of remarkable results**
 - a regular practice or routine that is not only small and easy to do, but also the source of incredible power; a component of the system of compound growth
 - cultivating a delicate flower
 - uprooting a powerful oak
 - Your brain skips the process of trial and error and creates a mental rule: if this, then that.
- Why Do They Matter?
 - Compounding
 - changes that seem small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you're willing to stick with them for years
 - the aggregation of marginal gains/tiny margin of improvement
 - effects of your habits multiply as you repeat them

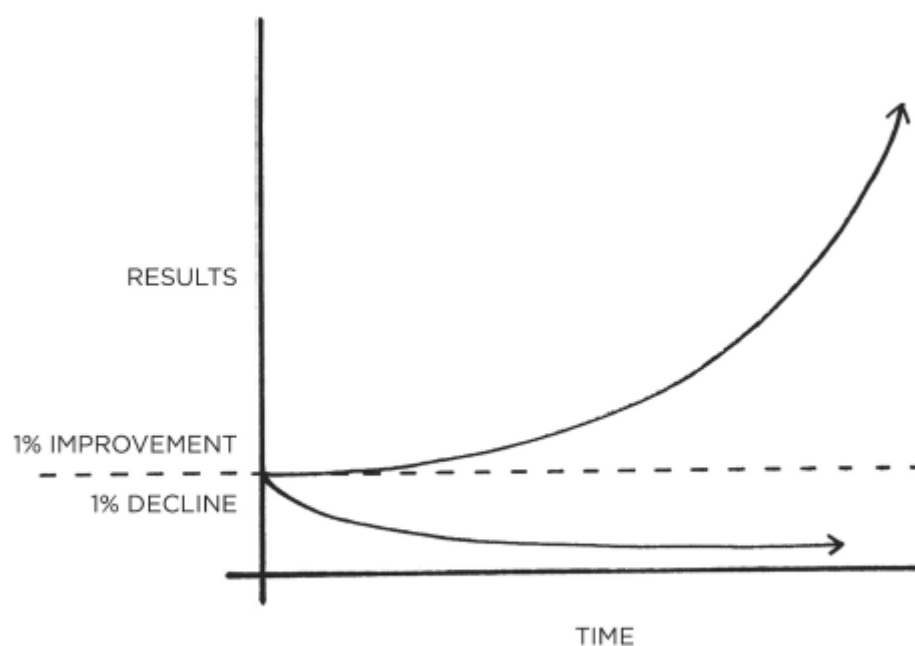
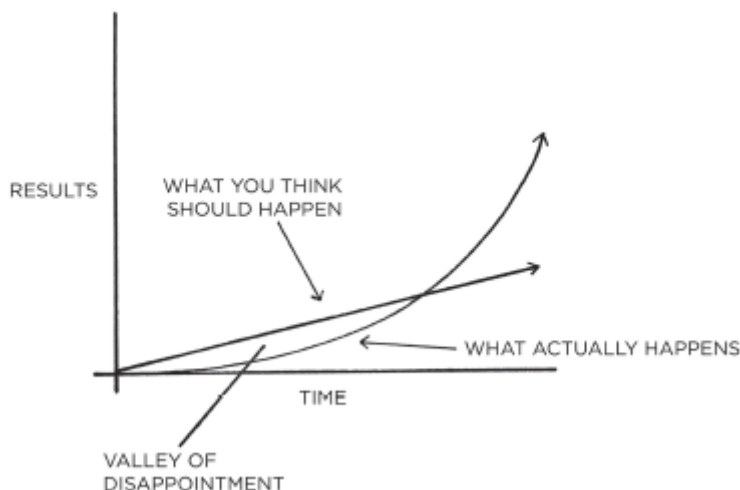


FIGURE 1: The effects of small habits compound over time. For example, if you can get just 1 percent better each day, you'll end up with results that are nearly 37 times better after one year.

- - Success is the product of daily habits
- **1 percent better every day**
- most powerful outcomes of any compounding process are delayed
 - Valley of Disappointment
 - Plateau of Latent Potential
 - Small changes often appear to make no difference until you cross a critical threshold



- Systems vs Goals

- **FORGET ABOUT GOALS, FOCUS ON SYSTEMS INSTEAD**
- spend too much time thinking about your goals and not enough time designing your systems.

Problems

- Problem #1: Winners and losers have the same goals.
- Problem #2: Achieving a goal is only a momentary change.
- Problem #3: Goals restrict your happiness.
- Problem #4: Goals are at odds with long-term progress.
- The purpose of setting goals is to win the game. The purpose of building systems is to continue playing the game. True long-term thinking is goal-less thinking. It's not about any single accomplishment.
- If you're having trouble changing your habits, the problem isn't you. The problem is your system. Bad habits repeat themselves again and again not because you don't want to change, but because you have the wrong system for change.
- **You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.**

- Behavior Change

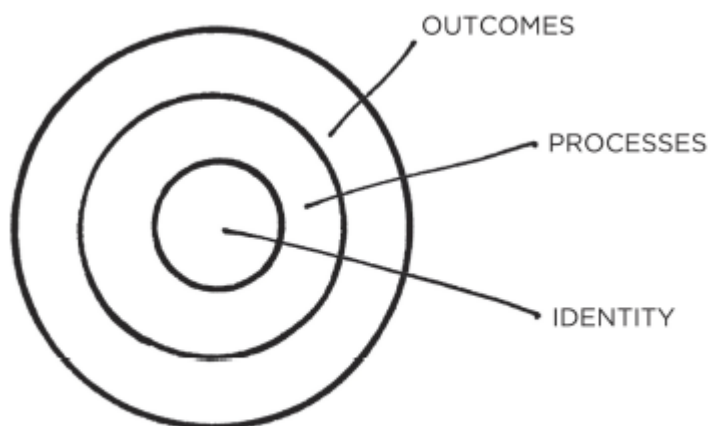


FIGURE 3: There are three layers of behavior change: a change in your outcomes, a change in your processes, or a change in your identity.

- outcome-based habits vs identity-based habits
- old identity can sabotage their new plans for change.
- The goal is not to read a book, the goal is to become a reader.

The goal is not to run a marathon, the goal is to become a runner. The goal is not to learn an instrument, the goal is to become a musician. - Progress requires unlearning.

Building a Habit

• Cue

- The cue triggers your brain to initiate a behavior.
- **The 1st law (Cue): Make it obvious.**
- ? Why do I say something is important but never seem to make time for it?
- As the psychologist Carl Jung said, "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."
 - **The first step to changing bad habits is to be on the lookout for them.**
- implementation intention
 - people who make a specific plan for when and where they will perform a new habit are more likely to follow through
- Many people think they lack motivation when what they really lack is clarity.

◦ Habit Stacking

- Diderot Effect
- You often decide what to do next based on what you have just finished doing
- When it comes to building new habits, you can use the connectedness of behavior to your advantage.
- **"After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT]."**

◦ Environment Design

- People often choose products not because of what they are, but because of where they are
- Environment is the invisible hand that shapes human behavior.
- many of the actions we take each day are shaped not by purposeful drive and choice but by the most obvious option.
- If you want to make a habit a big part of your life, make the cue a big part of your environment.

◦ Self Control

- It's easier to practice self-restraint when you don't have to use it very often
- Self-control is a short-term strategy, not a long-term one. You may be able to resist temptation once or twice, but it's unlikely you can muster the willpower to override your desires every time.
- **Instead of summoning a new dose of willpower whenever you want to do the right thing, your energy would be better spent optimizing your environment.**

- **Bad Habits**

- **Make it invisible**

- Bad habits are autocatalytic
 - One of the most practical ways to eliminate a bad habit is to reduce exposure to the cue that causes it.

- **Craving**

- motivational force behind every habit.
- **The 2nd law (Craving): Make it attractive.**
- If you want to increase the odds that a behavior will occur, then you need to make it attractive.
- Habits are a dopamine-driven feedback loop.
- Temptation bundling works by linking an action you want to do with an action you need to do.
 - **After [HABIT I NEED], I will [HABIT I WANT].**
- Premack's Principle.
- **Culture**
 - One of the most effective things you can do to build better habits is to join a culture where your desired behavior is the normal behavior.
 - Most days, we'd rather be wrong with the crowd than be right by ourselves.
 - When changing your habits means challenging the tribe, change is unattractive. When changing your habits means fitting in with the tribe, change is very attractive.
- **Perspective Shift**
 - Now, imagine changing just one word: You don't "have" to. You "get" to.
 - Reframing your habits to highlight their benefits rather than their drawbacks is a fast and lightweight way to reprogram your mind and make a habit seem more attractive.

- **Bad Habits**

- **Make it unattractive**
 - Highlight the benefits of avoiding a bad habit to make it seem unattractive.

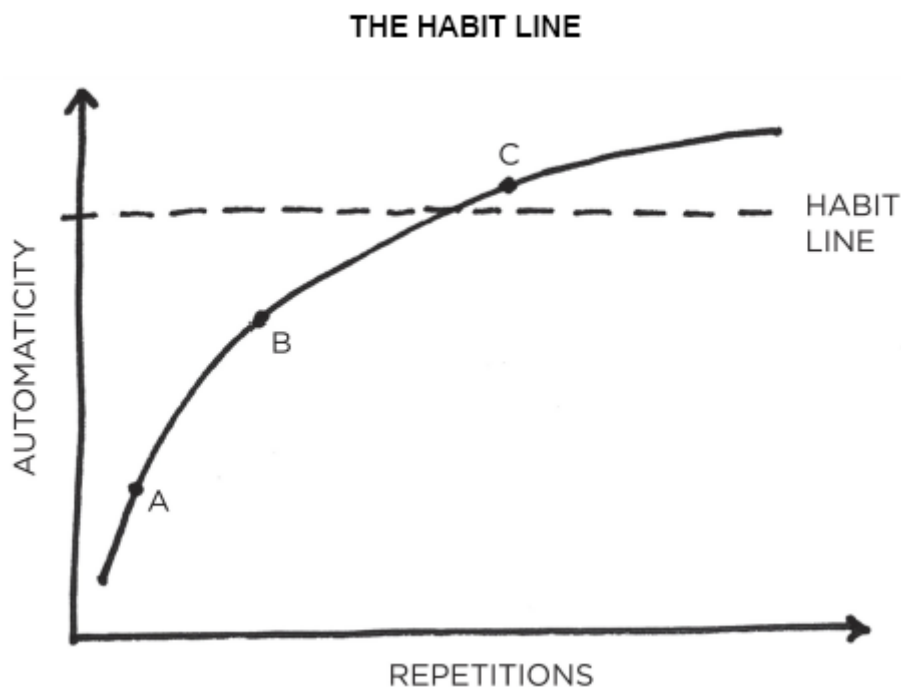
- **Response**

- The response is the actual habit you perform, which can take the form of a thought or an action.
- If a particular action requires more physical or mental effort than you are willing to expend, then you won't do it.
- **The 3rd law (Response): Make it easy.**
- **Progress > Perfection**
 - We are so focused on figuring out the best approach that we never get around to taking action...
 - As Voltaire once wrote, "The best is the enemy of the good."

- When you're in motion, you're planning and strategizing and learning
- Action, on the other hand, is the type of behavior that will deliver an outcome
- If you want to master a habit, the key is to start with repetition, not perfection.

○ **How Long to Build a Habit?**

- Neuroscientists call this long-term potentiation



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- There is nothing magical about time passing with regard to habit formation. It doesn't matter if it's been twenty-one days or thirty days or three hundred days.
- The amount of time you have been performing a habit is not as important as the number of times you have performed it.

○ **Motivation is not the key to habit change**

- Conventional wisdom holds that motivation is the key to habit change. Maybe if you really wanted it, you'd actually do it. But the truth is, our real motivation is to be lazy and to do what is convenient. And despite what the latest productivity best seller will tell you, this is a smart strategy, not a dumb one.
- The more energy required, the less likely it is to occur.
- The central idea is to create an environment where doing the right thing is as easy as possible
- Human behavior follows the **Law of Least Effort**. We will naturally gravitate toward the option that requires the least amount of work.

○ **Two-Minute Rule**

- Researchers estimate that 40 to 50 percent of our actions on any given day are done out of habit.

- Yes, a habit can be completed in just a few seconds, but it can also shape the actions that you take for minutes or hours afterward.
- decisive moments
- **If you can't learn the basic skill of showing up, then you have little hope of mastering the finer details.**
- One minute of guitar practice is better than none at all. One minute of reading is better than never picking up a book. It's better to do less than you hoped than to do nothing at all.
- Standardize before you optimize. You can't improve a habit that doesn't exist.

- **Bad habits**

- Make it difficult
- increase friction

- **Reward**

- Rewards are the end goal of every habit.
- **The 4th law (Reward): Make it satisfying.**
 - We are more likely to repeat a behavior when the experience is satisfying.
 - What is rewarded is repeated. What is punished is avoided.
 - Every habit produces multiple outcomes across time. Unfortunately, these outcomes are often misaligned. With our bad habits, the immediate outcome usually feels good, but the ultimate outcome feels bad. With good habits, it is the reverse: the immediate outcome is unenjoyable, but the ultimate outcome feels good...
- **Delayed Gratification**
 - **The road less traveled is the road of delayed gratification.**
 - At some point, success in nearly every field requires you to ignore an immediate reward in favor of a delayed reward.
 - Incentives can start a habit. Identity sustains a habit.
- **Building Consistency**
 - But perhaps the best way to measure your progress is with a habit tracker.
 - "Don't break the chain" is a powerful mantra.
 - The first mistake is never the one that ruins you. It is the spiral of repeated mistakes that follows. Missing once is an accident. Missing twice is the start of a new habit.
 - **never miss twice**
 - One of the most satisfying feelings is the feeling of making progress.
- **Accountability**
 - If a failure is painful, it gets fixed. If a failure is relatively painless, it gets ignored.
 - create a habit contract.

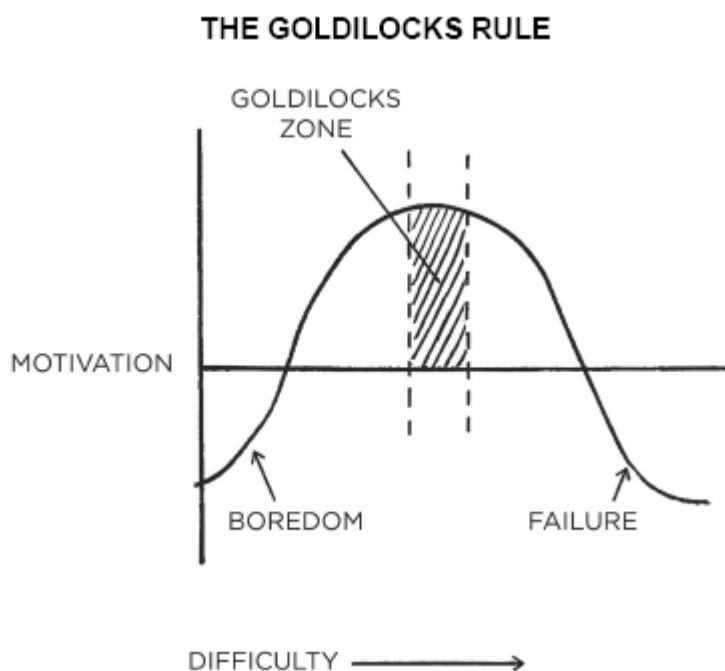
- verbal or written agreement in which you state your commitment to a particular habit and the punishment that will occur if you don't follow through.

- **Bad Habits**

- Make it unsatisfying

- **How to Stay Motivated in Life and Work**

- **Goldilocks Rule or Yerkes– Dodson law**



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- And if you hit the Goldilocks Zone just right, you can achieve a flow state
 - A flow state is the experience of being “in the zone” and fully immersed in an activity.
 - a task must be roughly 4 percent beyond your current ability
- **Boredom**
 - “At some point it comes down to who can handle the boredom of training every day, doing the same lifts over and over and over.”
 - But the more you practice something, the more boring and routine it becomes.
 - The greatest threat to success is not failure but boredom.
 - “Men desire novelty to such an extent that those who are doing well wish for a change as much as those who are doing badly.”
 - At some point, everyone faces the same challenge on the journey of self- improvement: you have to fall in love with boredom.
- **Situational**
 - David Cain- you don't want to be a fair-weather athlete or a fair-weather writer or a fair-weather anything.
 - The secret to getting results that last is to never stop making improvements.

HOW TO CREATE A GOOD HABIT

The 1st Law: Make It Obvious
1.1: Fill out the Habits Scorecard. Write down your current habits to become aware of them.
1.2: Use implementation intentions: "I will [BEHAVIOR] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]."
1.3: Use habit stacking: "After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT]."
1.4: Design your environment. Make the cues of good habits obvious and visible.
The 2nd Law: Make It Attractive
2.1: Use temptation bundling. Pair an action you <i>want</i> to do with an action you <i>need</i> to do.
2.2: Join a culture where your desired behavior is the normal behavior.
2.3: Create a motivation ritual. Do something you enjoy immediately before a difficult habit.
The 3rd Law: Make It Easy
3.1: Reduce friction. Decrease the number of steps between you and your good habits.
3.2: Prime the environment. Prepare your environment to make future actions easier.
3.3: Master the decisive moment. Optimize the small choices that deliver outsized impact.
3.4: Use the Two-Minute Rule. Downscale your habits until they can be done in two minutes or less.
3.5: Automate your habits. Invest in technology and onetime purchases that lock in future behavior.
The 4th Law: Make It Satisfying
4.1: Use reinforcement. Give yourself an immediate reward when you complete your habit.
4.2: Make "doing nothing" enjoyable. When avoiding a bad habit, design a way to see the benefits.
4.3: Use a habit tracker. Keep track of your habit streak and "don't break the chain."
4.4: Never miss twice. When you forget to do a habit, make sure you get back on track immediately.

HOW TO BREAK A BAD HABIT

Inversion of the 1st Law: Make It Invisible
1.5: Reduce exposure. Remove the cues of your bad habits from your environment.
Inversion of the 2nd Law: Make It Unattractive
2.4: Reframe your mind-set. Highlight the benefits of avoiding your bad habits.
Inversion of the 3rd Law: Make It Difficult
3.6: Increase friction. Increase the number of steps between you and your bad habits.
3.7: Use a commitment device. Restrict your future choices to the ones that benefit you.
Inversion of the 4th Law: Make It Unsatisfying
4.5: Get an accountability partner. Ask someone to watch your behavior.

4.6: Create a habit contract. Make the costs of your bad habits public and painful.

The cue is about noticing the reward. The craving is about wanting the reward. The response is about obtaining the reward.

People get so caught up in the fact that they have limits that they rarely exert the effort required to get close to them.