

Conclusion

The Secret to Results That Last

THERE IS AN ancient Greek parable known as the Sorites Paradox,^{*} which talks about the effect one small action can have when repeated enough times. One formulation of the paradox goes as follows: Can one coin make a person rich? If you give a person a pile of ten coins, you wouldn't claim that he or she is rich. But what if you add another? And another? And another? At some point, you will have to admit that no one can be rich unless one coin can make him or her so.

We can say the same about atomic habits. Can one tiny change transform your life? It's unlikely you would say so. But what if you made another? And another? And another? At some point, you will have to admit that your life was transformed by one small change.

The holy grail of habit change is not a single 1 percent improvement, but a thousand of them. It's a bunch of atomic habits stacking up, each one a fundamental unit of the overall system.

In the beginning, small improvements can often seem meaningless because they get washed away by the weight of the system. Just as one coin won't make you rich, one positive change like meditating for one minute or reading one page each day is unlikely to deliver a noticeable difference.

Gradually, though, as you continue to layer small changes on top of one another, the scales of life start to move. Each improvement is like adding a grain of sand to the positive side of the scale, slowly tilting things in your favor. Eventually, if you stick with it, you hit a tipping point. Suddenly, it feels easier to stick with good habits. The weight of the system is working for you rather than against you.

Over the course of this book, we've looked at dozens of stories about top performers. We've heard about Olympic gold medalists, award-winning artists, business leaders, lifesaving physicians, and star comedians who have all used the science of small habits to master their craft and vault to the top of their field. Each of the people, teams, and companies we have covered has faced different circumstances, but ultimately progressed in the same way: through a commitment to tiny, sustainable, unrelenting improvements.

Success is not a goal to reach or a finish line to cross. It is a system to improve, an endless process to refine. In Chapter 1, I said, "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."

As this book draws to a close, I hope the opposite is true. With the Four Laws of Behavior Change, you have a set of tools and strategies that you can use to build better systems and shape better habits. Sometimes a habit will be hard to remember and you'll need to *make it obvious*. Other times you won't feel like starting and you'll need to *make it attractive*. In many cases, you may find that a habit will be too difficult and you'll need to *make it easy*. And sometimes, you won't feel like sticking with it and you'll need to *make it satisfying*.

Behaviors are effortless here.

Obvious

Attractive

Easy

Satisfying

Behaviors are difficult here.

Invisible

Unattractive

Hard

Unsatisfying

You want to push your good habits toward the left side of the spectrum by making them obvious, attractive, easy, and satisfying. Meanwhile, you want to cluster your bad habits toward the right side by making them invisible, unattractive, hard, and unsatisfying.

This is a continuous process. There is no finish line. There is no permanent solution. Whenever you're looking to improve, you can rotate through the Four Laws of Behavior Change until you find the next bottleneck. *Make it obvious. Make it attractive. Make it easy. Make it satisfying.* Round and round. Always looking for the next way to get 1 percent better.

The secret to getting results that last is to never stop making improvements. It's remarkable what you can build if you just don't stop. It's remarkable the business you can build if you don't stop working. It's remarkable the body you can build if you don't stop training. It's remarkable the knowledge you can build if you don't stop learning. It's remarkable the fortune you can build if you don't stop saving. It's remarkable the friendships you can build if you don't stop caring. Small habits don't add up. They compound.

That's the power of atomic habits. Tiny changes. Remarkable results.