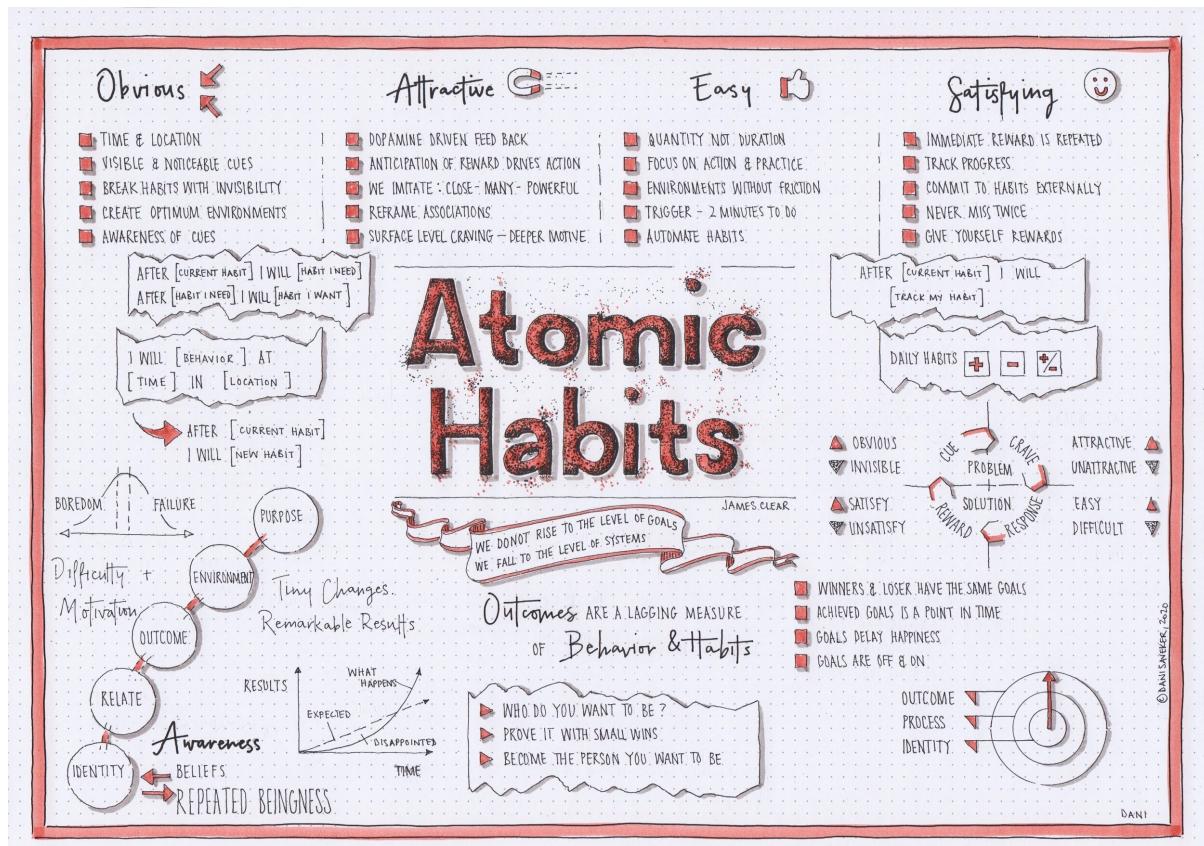


60

Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones

Author	James Clear
Category	Self-Development
Date Completed	@September 17, 2020
Date Started	@September 12, 2020
Image	
Rating	6



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeqalYchAl0>

What this book is about?

From Chapter 1, Section: A SYSTEM OF ATOMIC HABITS

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.

Focusing on the overall system, rather than a single goal, is one of the core themes of this book. It is also one of the deeper meanings behind the word atomic. By now, you've probably realized that an atomic habit refers to a tiny change, a marginal gain, a 1 percent improvement. But atomic habits are not just any old habits, however small. They are little habits that are part of a larger system. Just as atoms are the building blocks of molecules, atomic habits are the building blocks of remarkable results.

Habits are like the atoms of our lives. Each one is a fundamental unit that contributes to your overall improvement. At first, these tiny routines seem insignificant, but soon they build on each other and fuel bigger wins that multiply to a degree that far outweighs the cost of their initial investment. They are both small and mighty.

a·tom·ic

ətämik

1. an extremely small amount of a thing; the single irreducible unit of a larger system.
2. the source of immense energy or power.

hab·it

'habët

1. a routine or practice performed regularly; an automatic response to a specific situation.

Notes

Introduction: My Story

- Changes that seem small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you're willing to stick with them for years. We all deal with setbacks but in the long run, the quality of our lives often depends on the quality of our habits. With the same habits, you'll end up with the same results. But with better habits, anything is possible.
- The entrepreneur and investor Naval Ravikant has said, "To write a great book, you must first become the book."

The Fundamentals: Why Tiny Changes Make a Big Difference

Chapter 1: The Surprising Power of Atomic Habits

1% BETTER EVERY DAY

1% worse every day for one year. $0.99^{365} = 0.03$
1% better every day for one year. $1.01^{365} = 37.78$

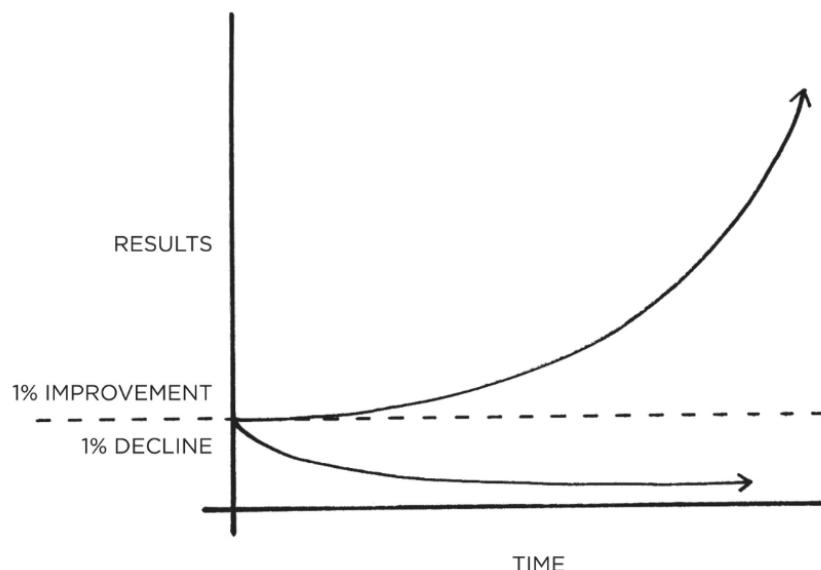


FIGURE 1: The effects of small habits compound over time. For example, if you can get just 1 percent better each day, you'll end up with results that are nearly 37 times better after one year.

- **Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement.** The same way that money multiplies through compound interest, the effects of your habits multiply as you repeat them. They seem to make little difference on any given day and yet the impact they deliver over the months and years can be enormous. It is only when looking back two, five, or perhaps ten years later that the value of good habits and the cost of bad ones becomes strikingly apparent.
- When we repeat 1 percent errors, day after day, by replicating poor decisions, duplicating tiny mistakes, and rationalizing little excuses, our small choices compound into toxic results. It's the accumulation of many missteps—a 1 percent decline here and there—that eventually leads to a problem.
- Making a choice that is 1 percent better or 1 percent worse seems insignificant in the moment, but over the span of moments that make up a lifetime these choices determine the difference between who you are and who you could be. Success is the product of daily habits—not once-in-a-lifetime transformations.
- **Your outcomes are a lagging measure of your habits.** Your net worth is a lagging measure of your financial habits. Your weight is a lagging measure of your eating habits. Your knowledge is a lagging measure of your learning habits. Your clutter is a lagging measure of your cleaning habits. You get what you repeat. If you want to predict where you'll end up in life, all you have to do is follow the curve of tiny gains or tiny losses, and see how your daily choices will compound ten or twenty years down the line.
- **Time magnifies the margin between success and failure.** It will multiply whatever you feed it. Good habits make time your ally. Bad habits make time your enemy.
- Breakthrough moments are often the result of many previous actions, which build up the potential required to unleash a major change.
- If it doesn't feel like you are going anywhere., it's a hallmark of any compounding process: **the most powerful outcomes are delayed.** This is one of the core reasons why it is so hard to build habits that last. People make a few small changes, fail to see a tangible result and decide to stop. In order to make a meaningful difference, habits need to persist long enough to break through this plateau—what I call the Plateau of Latent Potential. When you finally break through the Plateau of Latent Potential, people will

call it an overnight success. The outside world only sees the most dramatic event rather than all that preceded it.

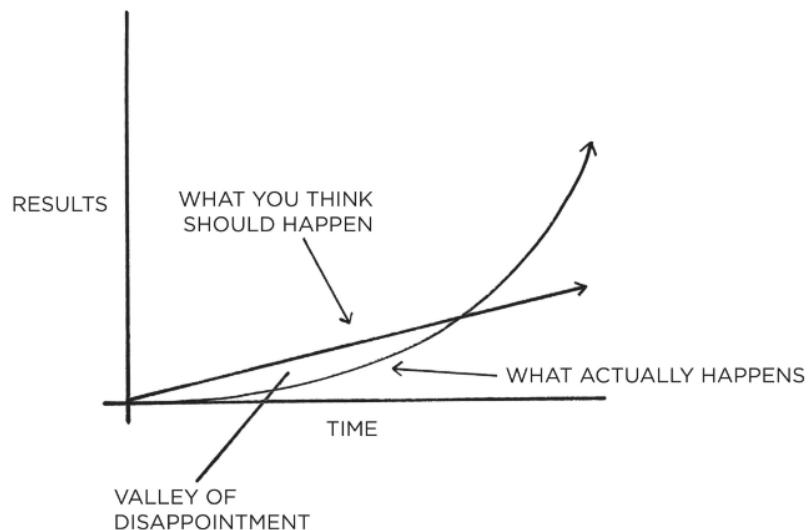


FIGURE 2: We often expect progress to be linear. At the very least, we hope it will come quickly. In reality, the results of our efforts are often delayed. It is not until months or years later that we realize the true value of the previous work we have done. This can result in a “valley of disappointment” where people feel discouraged after putting in weeks or months of hard work without experiencing any results. However, this work was not wasted. It was simply being stored. It is not until much later that the full value of previous efforts is revealed.

- Mastery requires patience.

“When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that last blow that did it—but all that had gone before.” - Jacob Riis

- The task of breaking a bad habit is like uprooting a powerful oak within us. And the task of building a good habit is like cultivating a delicate flower one day at a time.
- **Forget about goals, focus on systems instead.** Goals are about the results you want to achieve. Systems are about the processes that lead to those

results. Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress. A handful of problems arise when you spend too much time thinking about your goals and not enough time designing your systems.

- If successful and unsuccessful people share the same goals, then the goal cannot be what differentiates the winners from the losers... The goal had always been there. It was only when they implemented a system of continuous small improvements that they achieved a different outcome.
- **Achieving a goal only changes your life for the moment.** That's the counterintuitive thing about improvement. We think we need to change our results, but the results are not the problem. What we really need to change are the systems that cause those results. When you solve problems at the results level, you only solve them temporarily. In order to improve for good, you need to solve problems at the systems level. Fix the inputs and the outputs will fix themselves.
- When you fall in love with the process rather than the product, you don't have to wait to give yourself permission to be happy.
- 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. It is about the cycle of endless refinement and continuous improvement. Ultimately, it is your commitment to the process that will determine your progress.
- Atomic Habits thus refer to 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.

Chapter 2: How Your Habits Shape Your Identity (and Vice Versa)

- Changing our habits is challenging for two reasons: (1) we try to change the wrong thing and (2) we try to change our habits in the wrong way.
- Three layers of behaviour change:

THREE LAYERS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

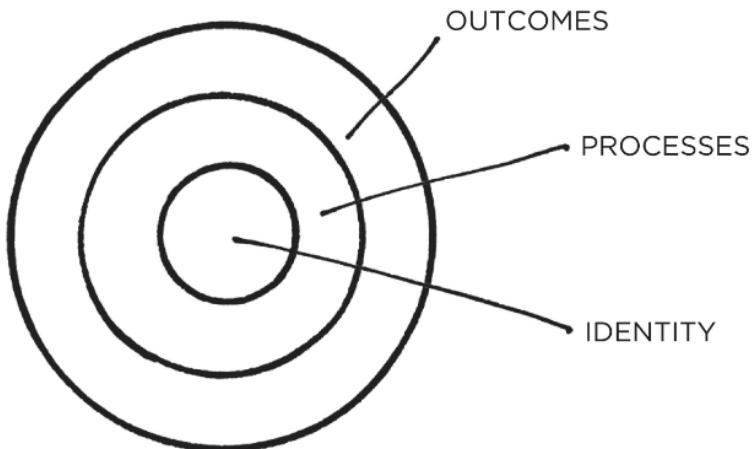
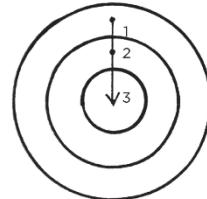


FIGURE 3: There are three layers of behavior change: a change in your outcomes, a change in your processes, or a change in your identity.

- The first layer is changing your outcomes. This level is concerned with changing your results: losing weight, publishing a book, winning a championship. Most of the goals you set are associated with this level of change.
- The second layer is changing your process. This level is concerned with changing your habits and systems: implementing a new routine at the gym, decluttering your desk for better workflow, developing a meditation practice. Most of the habits you build are associated with this level.
- The third and deepest layer is changing your identity. This level is concerned with changing your beliefs: your worldview, your self-image, your judgments about yourself and others. Most of the beliefs, assumptions, and biases you hold are associated with this level.
- Outcomes are about what you get. Processes are about what you do. Identity is about what you believe. When it comes to building habits that last—when it comes to building a system of 1 percent improvements—the problem is not that one level is “better” or “worse” than another. All levels of change are useful in their own way. The problem is the direction of change. Many people begin the process of changing their habits by focusing on what they want to achieve. This leads us to outcome-based habits. The

alternative is to build identity-based habits. With this approach, we start by focusing on who we wish to become.

OUTCOME-BASED HABITS



IDENTITY-BASED HABITS

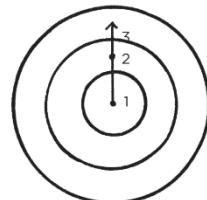


FIGURE 4: With outcome-based habits, the focus is on what you want to achieve. With identity-based habits, the focus is on who you wish to become.

- Behind every system of actions are a system of beliefs.... There are a set of beliefs and assumptions that shape the system, an identity behind the habits.

eg: Two people resisting a cigarette. The first person says, "No thanks. I'm trying to quit." He still believes he is a smoker. The second person declines by saying, "No thanks. I'm not a smoker." Smoking was part of his former life, not his current one.

- The ultimate form of intrinsic motivation is when a habit becomes part of your identity. It's one thing to say I'm the type of person who **wants this**. It's something very different to say I'm the type of person **who is this**.
- The goal is not to read a book, the goal is to become a reader.
- True behavior change is identity change. You might start a habit because of motivation, but the only reason you'll stick with one is that it becomes part of your identity....Improvements are only temporary until they become part of who you are....

- Your behaviors are usually a reflection of your identity. What you do is an indication of the type of person you believe that you are—either consciously or unconsciously.
- The biggest barrier to positive change at any level—individual, team, society—is identity conflict. Good habits can make rational sense, but if they conflict with your identity, you will fail to put them into action.
- On any given day, you may struggle with your habits because you're too busy or too tired or too overwhelmed or hundreds of other reasons. Over the long run, however, the real reason you fail to stick with habits is that your self-image gets in the way. This is why you can't get too attached to one version of your identity. Progress requires unlearning. Becoming the best version of yourself requires you to continuously edit your beliefs, and to upgrade and expand your identity.
- Whatever your identity is right now, you only believe it because you have proof of it. If you go to church every Sunday for twenty years, you have evidence that you are religious.... Of course, your habits are not the only actions that influence your identity, but by virtue of their frequency, they are usually the most important ones.
- We do not change by snapping our fingers and deciding to be someone entirely new. We change bit by bit, day by day, habit by habit. We are continually undergoing microevolutions of the self.
- Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become. No single instance will transform your beliefs, but as the votes build up, so does the evidence of your new identity. This is one reason why meaningful change does not require radical change. Small habits can make a meaningful difference by providing evidence of a new identity. And if a change is meaningful, it actually is big. That's the paradox of making small improvements. Putting this all together, you can see that habits are the path to changing your identity. The most practical way to change who you are is to change what you do. eg: Each time you write a page, you are a writer.
- The two-step process to changing your identity:
 - Decide the type of person you want to be.
 - Prove it to yourself with small wins.

eg: "Who is the type of person who could write a book?" It's probably someone who is consistent and reliable. Now your focus shifts from writing

a book (outcome-based) to being the type of person who is consistent and reliable (identity-based). Now, you can begin taking small steps to reinforce your desired identity.

- Habits are fundamentally not about having something. They are about becoming someone.

Chapter 3: How to Build Better Habits in 4 Simple Steps

- In 1898, a psychologist named Edward Thorndike conducted an experiment that would lay the foundation for our understanding of how habits form and the rules that guide our behavior. From his studies, Thorndike described the learning process by stating, “behaviors followed by satisfying consequences tend to be repeated and those that produce unpleasant consequences are less likely to be repeated.”
- Why does our brain build habits? Because habits are, simply, reliable solutions to recurring problems in our environment. Habits are mental shortcuts learned from experience. Habits reduce cognitive load and free up mental capacity, so you can allocate your attention to other tasks.
- The process of building a habit can be divided into four simple steps: cue, craving, response, and reward.

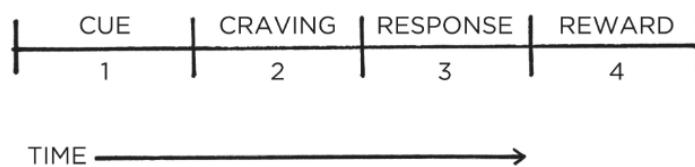


FIGURE 5: All habits proceed through four stages in the same order: cue, craving, response, and reward.

- First, there is the cue. The cue triggers your brain to initiate a behavior. It is a bit of information that predicts a reward. Cravings are the second step, and they are the motivational force behind every habit. Without some level of motivation or desire—without craving a change—we have no reason to act. What you crave is not the habit itself but the change in state it delivers. Cues are meaningless until they are interpreted. The thoughts, feelings, and emotions of the observer are what transform a cue into a craving.
- The third step is the response. The response is the actual habit you perform, which can take the form of a thought or an action. Whether a response occurs depends on how motivated you are and how much friction

is associated with the behavior. If a particular action requires more physical or mental effort than you are willing to expend, then you won't do it. Your response also depends on your ability. It sounds simple, but a habit can occur only if you are capable of doing it.

- Finally, the response delivers a reward. Rewards are the end goal of every habit. The cue is about noticing the reward. The craving is about wanting the reward. The response is about obtaining the reward. We chase rewards because they serve two purposes: (1) they satisfy us (craving) and (2) they teach us.
- Rewards close the feedback loop and complete the habit cycle. If a behaviour is insufficient in any of the four stages, it will not become a habit.

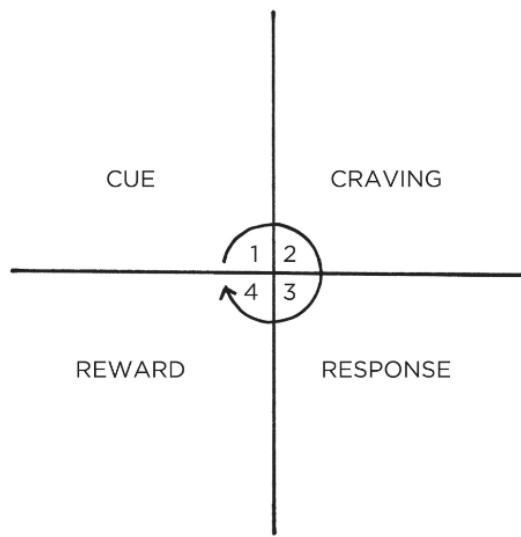


FIGURE 6: The four stages of habit are best described as a feedback loop. They form an endless cycle that is running every moment you are alive. This “habit loop” is continually scanning the environment, predicting what will happen next, trying out different responses, and learning from the results.*

- We can split these four steps into two phases: the problem phase and the solution phase. The problem phase includes the cue and the craving, and it is when you realize that something needs to change. The solution phase includes the response and the reward, and it is when you take action and achieve the change you desire.

Problem phase
1. Cue: Your phone buzzes with a new text message.
2. Craving: You want to learn the contents of the message.
Solution phase
3. Response: You grab your phone and read the text.
4. Reward: You satisfy your craving to read the message. Grabbing your phone becomes associated with your phone buzzing.

- We can transform these four steps into a practical framework that we can use to design good habits and eliminate bad ones. The Four Laws of Behavior Change provides a simple set of rules for creating good habits and breaking bad ones.

How to Create a Good Habit
The 1st law (Cue): Make it obvious.
The 2nd law (Craving): Make it attractive.
The 3rd law (Response): Make it easy.
The 4th law (Reward): Make it satisfying.

We can invert these laws to learn how to break a bad habit.

How to Break a Bad Habit
Inversion of the 1st law (Cue): Make it invisible.
Inversion of the 2nd law (Craving): Make it unattractive.
Inversion of the 3rd law (Response): Make it difficult.
Inversion of the 4th law (Reward): Make it unsatisfying.

The First Law: Make It Obvious

Chapter 4: The Man Who Didn't Look Right

- With enough practice, you can pick up on the cues that predict certain outcomes without consciously thinking about it. Automatically, your brain encodes the lessons learned through experience. We can't always explain what it is we are learning, but learning is happening all along the way, and your ability to notice the relevant cues in a given situation is the foundation for every habit you have.

- This is one of the most surprising insights about our habits: you don't need to be aware of the cue for a habit to begin. You can notice an opportunity and take action without dedicating conscious attention to it. This is what makes habits useful. It's also what makes them dangerous. As habits form, your actions come under the direction of your automatic and nonconscious mind. You fall into old patterns before you realize what's happening.
- One of our greatest challenges in changing habits is maintaining awareness of what we are actually doing. How to be aware of your behavior? There are two methods.
 - Habit Scorecard: Make a list of your habits. Look at each behavior, and ask yourself, "Is this a good habit, a bad habit, or a neutral habit?" If it is a good habit, write "+" next to it. If it is a bad habit, write "-". If it is a neutral habit, write "=".

- Wake up =
- Turn off alarm =
- Check my phone –
- Go to the bathroom =
- Weigh myself +
- Take a shower +
- Brush my teeth +
- Floss my teeth +
- Put on deodorant +
- Hang up towel to dry =
- Get dressed =
- Make a cup of tea +

- Pointing-and-Calling raises your level of awareness from a nonconscious habit to a more conscious level by verbalizing your actions. Calling out the most essential items on the packing list before going out on a trip, "I've got my keys. I've got my wallet. I've got my glasses. I've got my husband." Hearing your bad habits spoken aloud makes the consequences seem more real. It adds weight to the action rather than letting yourself mindlessly slip into an old routine
- Scoring your habits can be a bit more complex for another reason as well. The labels "good habit" and "bad habit" are slightly inaccurate. There are no good habits or bad habits. There are only effective habits. That is, effective at solving problems. All habits serve you in some way—even the bad ones—which is why you repeat them.... Generally speaking, good habits will have net positive outcomes. Bad habits have net negative outcomes.

- Habits that reinforce your desired identity are usually good. Habits that conflict with your desired identity is usually bad.

Chapter 5: The Best Way to Start a New Habit

- An **implementation intention** is a plan you make beforehand about when and where to act. That is, how you intend to implement a particular habit... Broadly speaking, the format for creating an implementation intention is: "When situation X arises, I will perform response Y." Hundreds of studies have shown that implementation intentions are effective for sticking to our goals
- 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. It is not always obvious when and where to take action.
- The simple way to apply this strategy to your habits is to fill out this sentence: I will [BEHAVIOR] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]. eg: I will meditate for one minute at 7 a.m. in my kitchen.
- There is another benefit to implementation intentions. Being specific about what you want and how you will achieve it helps you say no to things that derail progress, distract your attention, and pull you off course.
- Give your habits a time and a space to live in the world. The goal is to make the time and location so obvious that, with enough repetition, you get an urge to do the right thing at the right time, even if you can't say why.
- When it comes to building new habits, you can use the connectedness of behavior to your advantage. One of the best ways to build a new habit is to identify a current habit you already do each day and then stack your new behavior on top. This is called habit stacking. The habit stacking formula is: "After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT]." eg: After I pour my cup of coffee each morning, I will meditate for one minute.

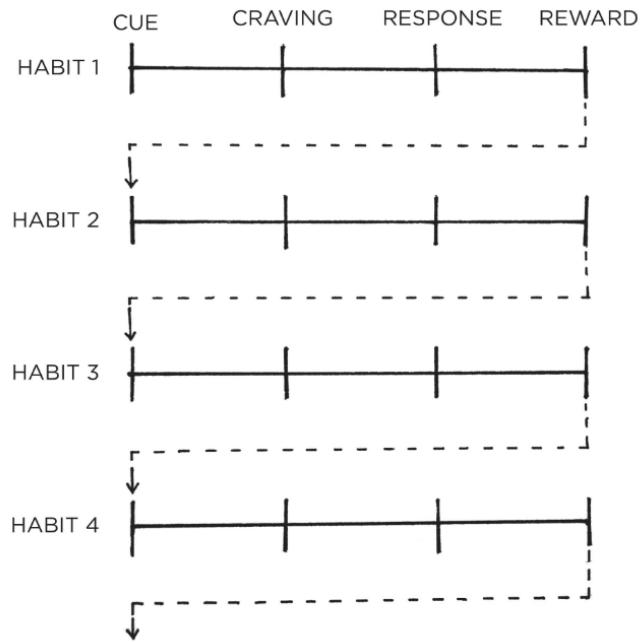


FIGURE 7: Habit stacking increases the likelihood that you'll stick with a habit by stacking your new behavior on top of an old one. This process can be repeated to chain numerous habits together, each one acting as the cue for the next.

- 1. After I pour my morning cup of coffee, I will meditate for sixty seconds.
- 2. After I meditate for sixty seconds, I will write my to-do list for the day.
- 3. After I write my to-do list for the day, I will immediately begin my first task.

- You can also insert new behaviors into the middle of your current routines. Wake up > Make my bed > Place a book on my pillow (new behavior) > Take a shower. Now, when you climb into bed each night, a book will be sitting there waiting for you to enjoy. One way to find the right trigger for your habit stack is by brainstorming a list of your current habits. You can use your Habits Scorecard from the last chapter as a starting point.
- The 1st Law of Behavior Change is to make it obvious. Strategies like implementation intentions and habit stacking are among the most practical ways to create obvious cues for your habits and design a clear plan for when and where to take action.

Chapter 6: Motivation Is Overrated; Environment Often Matters More

- In 1936, psychologist Kurt Lewin wrote a simple equation that makes a powerful statement: Behavior is a function of the Person in their Environment, or $B = f(P, E)$.
- We are more dependent on vision than on any other sense, it should come as no surprise that visual cues are the greatest catalyst of our behavior. For this reason, a small change in what you see can lead to a big shift in what you do.
- If you want to make a habit a big part of your life, make the cue a big part of your environment. The most persistent behaviors usually have multiple cues. eg: If you want to practice guitar more frequently, place your guitar stand in the middle of the living room.
- Environment design is powerful not only because it influences how we engage with the world but also because we rarely do it. Most people live in a world others have created for them. But you can alter the spaces where you live and work to increase your exposure to positive cues and reduce your exposure to negative ones. Environment design allows you to take back control and become the architect of your life. Be the designer of your world and not merely the consumer of it.
- The cues that trigger a habit can start out very specific, but over time your habits become associated not with a single trigger but with the entire context surrounding the behavior. eg: many people drink more in social situations than they would ever drink alone.
- Our behavior is not defined by the objects in the environment but by our relationship to them. For one person, her couch is the place where she reads for an hour each night. For someone else, the couch is where he watches television and eats a bowl of ice cream after work.
- The power of context also reveals an important strategy: habits can be easier to change in a new environment. It helps to escape the subtle triggers and cues that nudge you toward your current habits. Go to a new place—a different coffee shop, a bench in the park, a corner of your room you seldom use—and create a new routine there. It is easier to associate a new habit with a new context than to build a new habit in the face of competing cues.
- A stable environment where everything has a place and a purpose is an environment where habits can easily form.

Chapter 7:

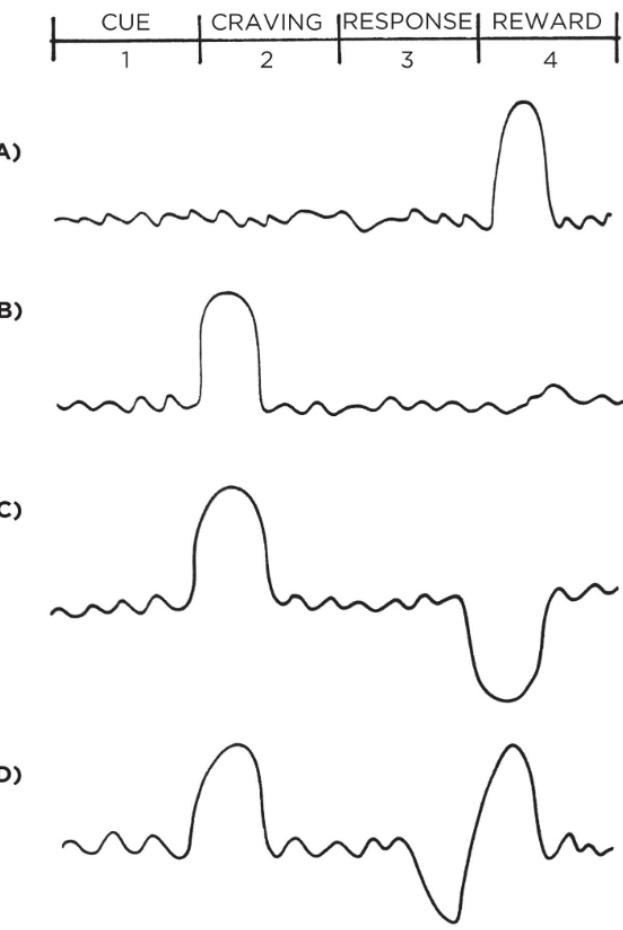
- The idea that a little bit of discipline would solve all our problems is deeply embedded in our culture. Recent research, however, shows something different. When scientists analyze people who appear to have tremendous self-control, it turns out those individuals aren't all that different from those who are struggling. Instead, "disciplined" people are better at structuring their lives in a way that does not require heroic willpower and self-control. In other words, they spend less time in tempting situations.
- The people with the best self-control are typically the ones who need to use it the least. It's easier to practice self-restraint when you don't have to use it very often. So, yes, perseverance, grit, and willpower are essential to success, but the way to improve these qualities is not by wishing you were a more disciplined person, but by creating a more disciplined environment.
- Bad habits are autocatalytic: the process feeds itself. They foster the feelings they try to numb... Cue-induced wanting: an external trigger causes a compulsive craving to repeat a bad habit.
- It is hard to maintain a Zen attitude in a life filled with interruptions. It takes too much energy. In the short-run, you can choose to overpower temptation. In the long-run, we become a product of the environment that we live in.
- A more reliable approach is to cut bad habits off at the source. One of the most practical ways to eliminate a bad habit is to reduce exposure to the cue that causes it. eg: If you can't seem to get any work done, leave your phone in another room for a few hours. This practice is an inversion of the 1st Law of Behavior Change. Rather than make it obvious, you can make it invisible.

The Second Law: Make It Attractive

How to Make a Habit Irresistible

- A supernormal stimulus is a heightened version of reality and it elicits a stronger response than usual. Humans are also prone to fall for exaggerated versions of reality. eg: Junk food.... Society is filled with highly engineered versions of reality that are more attractive than the world our ancestors evolved in. eg: online porn, beauty advertisements etc.

- Throughout our discussion of the 2nd Law, our goal is to learn how to make our habits irresistible. To do this, we must start by understanding what a craving is and how it works. We begin by examining a biological signature that all habits share—the dopamine spike.
- For years, scientists assumed dopamine was all about pleasure, but now we know it plays a central role in many neurological processes, including motivation, learning and memory, punishment and aversion, and voluntary movement. When it comes to habits, the key takeaway is this: dopamine is released not only when you experience pleasure, but also when you anticipate it.... It is the anticipation of a reward—not the fulfillment of it—that gets us to take action. Interestingly, the reward system that is activated in the brain when you receive a reward is the same system that is activated when you anticipate a reward. This is one reason the anticipation of an experience can often feel better than the attainment of it.



Before a habit is learned (A), dopamine is released when the reward is experienced for the first time. The next time around (B), dopamine rises before taking action, immediately after a cue is recognized. This spike leads to a feeling of desire and a craving to take action whenever the cue is spotted. Once a habit is learned, dopamine will not rise when a reward is experienced because you already expect the reward. However, if you see a cue and expect a reward, but do not get one, then dopamine will drop in disappointment (C). The sensitivity of the dopamine response can clearly be seen when a reward is provided late (D). First, the cue is identified and dopamine rises as a craving builds. Next, a response is taken but the reward does not come as quickly as expected and dopamine begins to drop. Finally, when the reward comes a little later than you had hoped, dopamine spikes again. It is as if the brain is saying, "See! I knew I was right. Don't forget to repeat this action next time."

- Your brain has far more neural circuitry allocated for wanting rewards than for liking them. The wanting centers in the brain are large: the brain stem, the nucleus accumbens, the ventral tegmental area, the dorsal striatum, the amygdala, and portions of the prefrontal cortex. By comparison, the liking centers of the brain are much smaller. They are often referred to as "hedonic hot spots" and are distributed like tiny islands throughout the brain.... Desire is the engine that drives behavior. Every action is taken

because of the anticipation that precedes it. It is the craving that leads to the response. We need to make our habits attractive because it is the expectation of a rewarding experience that motivates us to act in the first place. This is where a strategy known as temptation bundling comes into play.

- Temptation bundling is one way to apply a psychology theory known as Premack's Principle. Named after the work of professor David Premack, the principle states that "more probable behaviors will reinforce less probable behaviors."
- The habit stacking + temptation bundling formula is:

After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [HABIT I NEED].

After [HABIT I NEED], I will [HABIT I WANT]. eg: If you want to read the news, but you need to express more gratitude: After I get my morning coffee, I will say one thing I'm grateful for that happened yesterday (need). After I say one thing I'm grateful for, I will read the news (want).

Chapter 9: The Role of Family and Friends in Shaping Your Habits

- Whatever habits are normal in your culture are among the most attractive behaviors you'll find.
- We don't choose our earliest habits, we imitate them. We follow the script handed down by our friends and family, our church or school, our local community and society at large. Each of these cultures and groups comes with its own set of expectations and standards.... Often, you follow the habits of your culture without thinking, without questioning, and sometimes without remembering.
- We imitate the habits of three groups in particular:
 1. The close.
 2. The many.
 3. The powerful.

Each group offers an opportunity to leverage the 2nd Law of Behavior Change and make our habits more attractive.

- Imitating the Close: 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. New habits seem achievable when you see others doing them every day. If you are surrounded by fit people, you're more likely to consider working out to be a common habit.

- To make your habits even more attractive, you can take this strategy one step further. Join a culture where (1) your desired behavior is the normal behavior and (2) you already have something in common with the group. eg: Nerd Fitness. Nothing sustains motivation better than belonging to the tribe. It transforms a personal quest into a shared one. When you join a book club or a band or a cycling group, your identity becomes linked to those around you.
- Imitating the Many: The normal behavior of the tribe often overpowers the desired behavior of the individual.... There is tremendous internal pressure to comply with the norms of the group. The reward of being accepted is often greater than the reward of winning an argument, looking smart, or finding truth. 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.

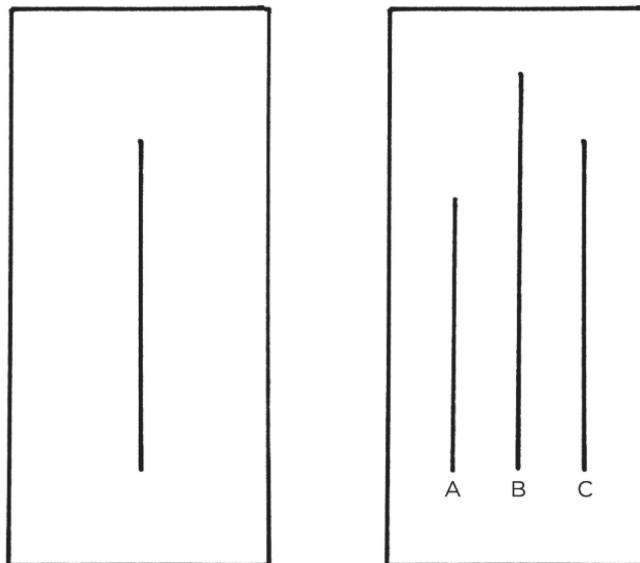


FIGURE 10: This is a representation of two cards used by Solomon Asch in his famous social conformity experiments. The length of the line on the first card (left) is obviously the same as line C, but when a group of actors claimed it was a different length the research subjects would often change their minds and go with the crowd rather than believe their own eyes.

- Imitating the Powerful: Humans are drawn to behaviors that earn us respect, approval, admiration, and status. High-status people enjoy the approval, respect, and praise of others. And that means if a behavior can get us approval, respect, and praise, we find it attractive.

Chapter 10: