

ATOMIC HABITS

Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results

Summary eBook



This is a summary of the book Atomic Habits by James Clear

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The Fundamentals

Chapter 1: Surprising Power Of Atomic Habits

Small habits make a big difference because they are part of the grand formation of your life. If you're having trouble changing your habits, the problem isn't you. The problem is the structure of your system. Bad habits repeat over and over again because you have the wrong system for change. Because of this we can even want to change bad habits yet continue to fail. It's important to note you don't 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 Atomic Habits book summary. It's 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 one percent improvement. But atomic habits are not just any old habits, 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 truly significant results. This is where the word Atomic in the title of this book comes from. Think of habits as being 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. This is the meaning of the phrase atomic habits—a regular practice or routine that is not only small and easy to do but also the source of incredible power. These tiny habits are a component of the system of compound growth.

Chapter 2: How Your Habits Shape Your Identity

THE TWO-STEP PROCESS TO CHANGING YOUR IDENTITY

1. Decide the type of person you want to be. Decide who you want to be.
2. Prove it to yourself with small wins by doing tasks that support that identity.

So the process is simply deciding what we want, realize who we need to become to get what we want (a photographer, a writer, etc.), and then do the tasks. The part that makes us realize the outcome of what we want is the doing the tasks part. Here is where the rubber meets the road. It comes down to realizing in our mind who we want to become and then do - be - have. By doing the action and developing it into a consistently completed task, we become that someone in reality. Like a writer, for instance. It's not like putting a spell on ourselves and saying we are a writer. We decide in our mind that we want to become a writer and then write. We habitually write consistently. Then we become a writer. The last phase is having what a writer has. Whether we are an excellent writer is a matter of another subject and connects to things like who we choose as our mentors.



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Chapter 3: How To Build Better Habits In Four Simple Steps

All habits proceed through four stages in the same order: cue, craving, response, and reward. Your brain runs through these steps in the same order each time. What are habits, really? Habits are mental shortcuts learned from experience. A habit is just a memory of the steps you previously followed to solve a problem in the past. The conscious mind likes to pawn off tasks to the nonconscious mind to do automatically. This is precisely what happens when a habit is formed. Habits reduce cognitive load and free up mental capacity, so you can allocate your attention to other tasks.

THE FOUR LAWS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE

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.

The 1st Law: Make It Obvious

Chapter 4: The Man Who Didn't Look Right

As the psychologist Carl Jung said, "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."

We need a "point-and-call" system for our personal lives. That's the origin of the Habits Scorecard, which is a simple exercise you can use to become more aware of your behavior. To create one, make a list of your daily habits from how you wake up. Once you have a full list, 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 "=". The marks you give to a particular habit will depend on your situation and your goals. For someone who is trying to lose weight, eating a bagel with peanut butter every morning might be a bad habit. For someone who is trying to bulk up and add muscle, the same behavior might be a good habit. It all depends on what you're working toward. The process of behavior change always starts with awareness. Strategies like Pointing-and-Calling and the Habits Scorecard focuses you on recognizing your habits and acknowledging the cues that trigger them, which makes it possible to respond in a way that benefits you.

With enough practice, your brain will pick up on the cues that predict certain outcomes without consciously thinking about it. Once our habits become automatic, we stop paying attention to what we are doing. The process of behavior change always starts with awareness. You need to be aware of your habits before you can change them. Pointing-and-Calling raises your level of awareness from a nonconscious habit to a more conscious level by verbalizing your actions. The Habits Scorecard is a simple exercise you can use to become more aware of your behavior. [See full article here.](#)

Chapter 5: The Best Way To Start A New Habit

You simply need to fill out a sentence called an implementation intention. This is a plan you make beforehand about when and where to act. That is how you intend to implement a particular habit. Broadly, the format for creating an implementation intention is: “When situation X arises, I will perform response Y.” They increase the odds that people will stick with habits like recycling, studying, going to sleep early, and stopping smoking. People who make a specific plan for when and where they will perform a new habit are more likely to follow through.

Download a free copy of the [Atomic Habits Cheatsheet](#) that is a quick step-by-step system of starting a new habit and how to break a bad habit.

HABIT STACKING A KEY TO GETTING THINGS DONE

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. We call this habit stacking. Habit stacking is a special form of an implementation intention. Rather than pairing your new habit with a particular time and location, you pair it with a current habit.

Chapter 6: Motivation Is Overrated

Environment often means more than motivation. 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. That’s why it’s a good idea to completely remodel our homes from time to time.

The cues that trigger a habit can start out specifically, but over time, your habits become associated not with a single trigger but with the entire context surrounding the behavior. For example, many people drink more in social situations than they would ever drink alone. The trigger is rarely a single cue, but the whole situation: watching your friend’s order drinks, hearing the music at the bar, seeing the beers on tap. We mentally assign our habits to the locations in which they occur: the home, the office, the gym.

Chapter 7: The Secret To Self Control

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.



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The 2nd Law: Make It Attractive

Chapter 8: How To Make A Habit Irresistible

The craving for something comes from a neurotransmitter body chemical known as dopamine. It's a feedback loop. Without dopamine, we would die because we would lose the desire to complete basic survival functions like eating and drinking. 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. Dopamine is released not only when you experience pleasure but also when you expect it. Gambling addicts have a dopamine spike right before they place a bet, not after they win.

What this key point means is it's the anticipation of a reward—not the fulfillment of it—that gets us to take action.

Use a technique called temptation bundling which links an action you want to do with an action you need to do. If you want to check Facebook, but you need to exercise more, say these steps to yourself:

1. After I pull out my phone, I will do ten burpees (need).
2. After I do ten burpees, I will check Facebook (want).

Chapter 9: The Role Of Family & Friends In Habits

Humans are herd animals with the need to fit in, to bond with others, and to earn the respect and approval of our peers. Such inclinations are essential to our survival. We imitate the habits of three groups in particular and by ensuring we take part with these three groups in order to pull us along in our habit forming. These 3 groups are: (1) Imitating those Close To Us—Family, (2) Imitating the Many, (3) Imitating the Powerful.

This powerful influence is also called the power of association. Who you associate with makes up habits and beliefs. One of the most effective things you can do to build better habits is to join a culture where (1) your desired behavior is the normal behavior and (2) you already have something in common with the group.

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Chapter 10: Find & Fix The Cause Of Your Bad Habits

The way to do this is by systematically reframing each cue associated with the unpleasant habit and give it a new meaning. The cue leads to the craving. You do this by saying things like: you think you are quitting (something), but you're not quitting anything because the bad habit does nothing for you.

You think your bad habit is something you need to do to be social, or any other reason, but it's not. You can be social, or whatever reason you are using for the bad habit, without doing your bad habit at all.



You think your bad habit is about relieving stress, or for another reason, but it's not.

Your bad habit does not relieve your nerves, it destroys them.

*Get this next statement clearly in your mind... By fixing your bad habit you are losing nothing and you are making marvelous positive gains not only in health, energy, and money but also in confidence, self-respect, freedom and, most important of all, in the length and quality of your future life.

When you get this clearly in your mind, you will think your bad habit seems like the most ridiculous thing in the world to do. And if you no longer expect your bad habit to bring you any benefits, you have no reason to do the bad habit. It is an inversion of the 2nd Law of Behavior Change. Again, the 2nd law is Craving and to Make It Attractive.

Where do cravings come from? A craving is the sense that something is missing. It is the desire to change your internal state. As you already know, any craving is super powerful and a key to good and bad habit formation. This gap between your current state and your desired state provides a reason to act. What you really want is to feel different.

Every behavior has a surface level craving and a deeper, underlying motive. Some basic underlying motives are: conserve energy, get food and water, find love and reproduce, connect and bond with others, win social acceptance and approval, reduce uncertainty and anxiety, and achieve status and prestige.

Look at nearly any product that is habit forming and you'll notice that it doesn't create a new motivation. It latches onto the underlying motives of human nature. This is a key point to remember.

You can make hard habits more attractive if you can learn to associate them with a positive experience.

We do this by changing just one word: You don't "have" to. You "get" to do the task. Whether it's waking up early to go to work, or sweeping the kitchen, this simple slight mind-set shift works.

By simply changing one word, you shift the way you view each event. You transition from seeing these behaviors as burdens. You now have turned them into opportunities.



The 3RD LAW: Make It Easy (Response)

Chapter 11 Walk Slowly, But Never Backward

"The best is the enemy of the good." – Voltaire

This quote refers to striving for perfectionism to the point that nothing gets done. Some call it analysis paralysis.

It's easy to get bogged down trying to find the perfect plan for change. Focusing on the fastest and single best way to lose weight, the best program for bodybuilding, the perfect idea for a home business blog. In other words, we can get so focused on figuring out the best approach that we never get around to taking action. We also called this analysis paralysis. Being in motion is not action. If I outline ten ideas for articles I want to write, that's motion.

If I actually sit down and write one article, that's action, and it's even further action to get it published. If I search for a better diet plan and read a few articles on diets, that's motion. If I actually eat a healthy meal, then that's action. Motion allows us to feel like we're making progress without risking failure. Most of us dislike criticism. It doesn't feel good to fail or to be judged publicly, so we avoid situations where that might happen. This is the biggest reason you get caught in motion rather than taking action. You want to delay failure and it's easy to be in motion and feel good by convincing yourself that you're still making progress.

By being in motion, you're simply preparing to get something done. When preparation becomes a form of procrastination, something needs to change.

Chapter 12: The Law Of Least Effort

Energy is of high value and the brain is wired to conserve energy whenever possible. It is human nature to follow the Law of Least Effort. People will naturally gravitate toward the option that requires the least amount of work and we are taught to work smart instead of hard. Habits like scrolling on our phones, checking email, and watching television steal so much of our time because they can be performed almost without effort.

They are very convenient. Look at it this way, every habit is just an obstacle to getting what you truly want. It is the outer structure of an inner core want, which is a feeling. Dieting is an obstacle to looking better and getting healthier, thus feeling confident and attractive. Meditation is an obstacle to the feeling calm. Journaling is an obstacle to clear thinking, which is a feeling of security and control. You don't really want the habit by itself.

You really want the outcome the habit allows you to get. It's usually a feeling provided by a shot of the body chemical dopamine. It is crucial to make your habits so easy that you'll do them even when you don't feel like it.

Therefore, it's super critical to make your good habits more convenient. This way, you'll be more likely to follow through on them. The idea here is not to do the easy things, but on the tough days, it's crucial to have as many things working in your favor as possible.

Chapter 13: How to Stop Procrastinating by Using the Two-Minute Rule

Every day, there are a handful of moments that deliver an outsized impact. I refer to these little choices as decisive moments.

If we can get into the act of doing something the same way each time we make it habitual. This also makes it repeatable, easy to do, and instinctive. It reduces the chance that you would skip it or do it differently. It is one more item to put in your arsenal of routines, and one less thing to think about. The key to getting this routine started is adhering to decisive moments.

We limit ourselves to where our habits lead us. Therefore, mastering the decisive moments throughout your day is so important. Each day comprises many moments, and your habitual choices determine the path you take. These little choices stack up, each one setting the course for how you spend the next block of time. So what is the two-minute rule? It says when you start a new habit, it should take less than two minutes to complete. You'll find that almost any habit is scalable into a two-minute version.

The idea is to make your habits as easy as possible to begin. Anyone can meditate for one minute, read one page, or put one rack of clean dishes in the dishwasher away. This is a powerful method because once you've started doing the right thing, it is much easier to continue doing it. A new habit shouldn't feel like a challenge. The actions that follow may seem challenging, but you need to make the first two minutes easy.

What you want is a "gateway habit" that leads you naturally down a more productive path. To find your gateway habit, simply map out your goals from easiest to most difficult. Your goal might be to run a 10 mile marathon, but your gateway habit is to put your running shoes on, which implements the two-minute rule.

The point is to master the habit of just showing up. We must establish a habit before we can ever improve it. This makes the art of showing up the first two minutes, and it simply becomes a ritual and gateway to the beginning of your larger routine. If the Two-Minute Rule feels forced and like you are manipulating yourself, then try this. Do it for two minutes and stop. Then go on to something else.

Forget about it being a strategy for starting and make it the whole thing. One hundred and twenty seconds and that's the rule. After a few weeks, you will look around and think about how you're always getting going with it, anyway. You might as well stay in the activity a little longer. In a few months, you will realize your new habit is embedded into your physiology and even begin seeing results!

Another method to put into your arsenal of routines is to employ the secret to always stay below the point where it feels like work. Do less than you feel like on purpose. Ernest Hemingway said about the path to great writing, "The best way is to always stop when you are going good." This strategy works for another other reason too. It's forming your new identity.

Master the habit of losing weight. Did you know there is a program that will challenge you and pay you to lose weight? [Take a look here.](#)

Chapter 14: How to Make Good Habits Inevitable and Bad Habits Impossible

Sometimes success is less about making good habits easy and more about making bad habits hard. This takes the 3rd Law of Behavior Change, which is making it easy, and inverts it into: make it difficult. You can make your bad habits more difficult by creating what psychologists call a commitment device.

A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that controls your actions in the future. It is a way to lock in future behavior, bind you to good habits, and restrict you from bad ones. Commitment devices work because they enable you to take advantage of good intentions before you fall victim to temptation. The key is to change the task such that it requires more work to get out of the good habit than to get started on it. Increase the odds that you'll do the right thing in the future by making bad habits difficult in the present using commitment devices. We can do even better. We can make good habits inevitable and bad habits impossible.

Did you ever think about automating a habit so you never think of it ever again? The best way to break a bad habit is to increase the friction until you don't even have the option to act. Here are a few examples of onetime actions that lock in good habits, ranging from productivity to health.

Use smaller plates to reduce caloric intake. Remove your TV from your bedroom. Unsubscribe from emails. Turn off notifications and mute group chats. Set your phone to silent. Delete games and social media apps on your phone. Move to a friendly, social neighborhood. Buy good shoes to avoid back pain. Buy a supportive chair or standing desk. Cut your cable service.

Alfred North Whitehead wrote, "Civilization advances by extending the number of operations we can perform without thinking about them." The downside of automation and technology is that we can find ourselves jumping from easy task to easy task without making time for more difficult and more rewarding work.

The constant tug of "just one more minute" can prevent you from doing anything of consequence. The average person spends over two hours per day on social media. What could you do with an extra six hundred hours per year? After removing the mental candy from your environment, it will become much easier to eat the healthy stuff.

THE 4TH LAW: Make It Satisfying (Reward)

Chapter 15: The Cardinal Rule of Behavior Change

If an experience is satisfying, we want to repeat it and conversely, if it's not satisfying, we have little reason to repeat it. What is rewarded is repeated. What is punished is avoided. Positive emotions cultivate habits, negative emotions destroy them. Our 4th law of behavior change, make it satisfying, increases the odds that we will repeat a behavior in the future, thus closing the habit loop. One thing to know about us humans is we aren't designed to use the principle of delayed gratification well. It's got to be learned. Proof of this is of researching our ancestors. It may take days to secure a meal and it was a must to be on the constant lookout for predators that would devour us.

There was little time to think and plan for the future. After thousands of generations in an immediate-return environment, our brains evolved to prefer quick payoffs to long-term ones. A reward that is certain right now is typically worth more than one that is possible in the future.

The immediate payoff of the nicotine fix wins over the long-term realization it can cause lung cancer. Why would we overeat when we know obesity comes with many long-term problems? The consequences of bad habits are delayed in our mind while the rewards are immediate. Every habit produces multiple outcomes over time. There is a misalignment between good and bad habits.

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. Put another way, the price you pay for your good habits is in the present. The price you pay for your bad habits is in the future. When the moment of decision arrives, instant gratification usually wins.

This brings us to the Cardinal Rule of Behavior Change: What is immediately rewarded is repeated. What is immediately punished is avoided. Thankfully, it's possible to train yourself to practice delayed gratification. The key is you need to work with the grain of human nature, not against it like most people do. The best way to do this is to add a small amount of immediate pleasure to the habits that pay off in the long run and a bit of immediate pain to ones that don't.

HOW TO TURN INSTANT GRATIFICATION TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

The most important thing in getting a habit to embed itself is to feel successful about the task. To feel success even if it's in a small way. The feeling of success is a signal that your habit paid off and that the work was worth the effort.

Immediate rewards are essential. They keep you excited while the delayed rewards accumulate in the background. You want the ending of your habit to be satisfying. The best approach is to use reinforcement, which refers to the process of using an immediate reward to increase the rate of a behavior.

Reinforcement ties your habit to an immediate reward, which makes it satisfying when you finish. Immediate reinforcement can be especially helpful when dealing with habits of avoidance, like resisting temptations to behaviors you want to stop doing. Change is easy when it's enjoyable.

Chapter 16: How to Stick with Good Habits Every Day

Using a habit tracker is a wonderful way to keep habits moving and reinforcing their permanent existence in our lives. Old-fashioned methods like moving one marble from one jar to another still work today.

Benjamin Franklin is the most famous habit tracker. Habit tracking is powerful because it leverages multiple laws of behavior change. It simultaneously makes a behavior obvious, attractive, and satisfying. Making habit tracking obvious naturally builds a series of visual cues like the streak of X's on your calendar or the list of meals in your food log. When you look at the calendar and see your streak, you'll be reminded to act again. Making habit tracking attractive because each small win feeds your desire and can have an addictive effect on motivation.

HOW TO RECOVER QUICKLY WHEN YOUR HABITS BREAK DOWN

No matter how consistent you are with your habits, inevitably, life will interrupt you at some point. Perfection is not possible. When this happens, remind yourself of a simple rule: never miss twice.

How do I know when and when not to track a habit? We simply employ Goodhart's Law. Named after the economist Charles Goodhart, the principle states, "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure." To sum up how to stick with good habits everyday just remember; one of the most satisfying feelings is the feeling of making progress.

Chapter 17: How an Accountability Partner Can Change Everything

The more immediate the pain, the less likely the behavior. If you want to prevent bad habits and eliminate unhealthy behaviors, then adding an instant cost to the action is a great way to reduce their odds.

We repeat bad habits because they serve us and that makes them hard to avoid. It's key to increase the speed of the punishment associated with the behavior so that there can't be a gap between the action and the consequences.

Customers pay their bills on time when they are charged a late fee. Students show up to class when their grade is linked to their attendance record. There is a straightforward way to add an immediate cost to any bad habit, and it's to create what's called a habit contract. A habit contract is a 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.

Then you find one or two people to act as your accountability partners and sign off on the contract with you. Knowing that someone is watching can be a powerful motivator. You are less likely to procrastinate or give up because there is an immediate cost. If you don't follow through, perhaps they'll see you as untrustworthy or lazy. Also, signing the contract shows seriousness as well as commitment.

ADVANCED TACTICS: How to Go from Being Merely Good to Being Truly Great

Chapter 18: The Truth About Talent (When Genes Matter and When They Don't)

If you want to dunk a basketball, then being seven feet tall is a glorious thing. If you want to be a gymnast, being seven feet tall can be a great hindrance. Our environment determines the suitability of our genes and the utility of our natural talents. When our environment changes, so do the qualities that determine success.

*Have you downloaded the Atomic Habits Cheatsheet yet? If not you can access it [HERE](#)

Genes don't determine your destiny, they determine your areas of opportunity. You may ask, how do I find the opportunities and habits that are right for me? The first place we will look for an answer is by understanding your personality.

We know the most proven scientific analysis of personality traits as the "Big Five," which breaks them down into five spectrums of behavior. 1. Openness to experience: from curious and inventive on one end to cautious and consistent on the other. 2. Conscientiousness: organized and efficient to easygoing and spontaneous. 3. Extroversion: outgoing and energetic to solitary and reserved (you likely know them as extroverts vs. introverts). 4. Agreeableness: friendly and compassionate to challenging and detached. 5. Neuroticism: anxious and sensitive to confident, calm, and stable.

A good example would be to consider neuroticism. It is a personality trait all people possess to various degrees. People who are high in neuroticism tend to be anxious and worry more than others. This trait has been linked to hypersensitivity of the amygdala, the portion of the brain responsible for noticing threats.

People who are more sensitive to negative cues in their environment are more likely to score high in neuroticism. Our habits are not solely determined by our personalities, but our genes push us in a certain direction. The way to look at your personality and certain genetic characteristics in your makeup as it correlates to habits is that you should build habits that work for your personality.

You don't need to feel obligated to build the habits everyone tells you to build. Choose the habit that best suits you, not the one that is most popular. There is a version of every habit that can bring you joy and be satisfying to you.

Habits need to be enjoyable if they are going to stay with you long term. This is the core idea behind the 4th Law of make the reward satisfying. Tailoring your habits to your personality is a good start. Let's turn our attention to finding and designing situations where you're at a natural advantage and stack the odds in your favor. By doing this, you can stay motivated and maintain a feeling of success and not dreaded failure.

How do we pick the right habit? We use the explore/exploit trade-of. Ask yourself questions like: What feels like fun to me, but work for others? What makes me lose track of time? Where do I get greater returns than the average person? What comes naturally to me? When you can't win by being better, you can win by being different.

A good player works hard to win the game everyone else is playing. A great player creates a new game that favors their strengths and avoids their weaknesses. Focus on whether you are fulfilling your own potential than comparing yourself to someone else.

Our genes do not eliminate the need for hard work. Once we realize our strengths, we know where to spend our time and energy. We know which types of opportunities to look for and which types of challenges to avoid. In summary, one of the best ways to ensure your habits remain satisfying over the long-run is to pick behaviors that align with your personality and skills. Work hard on the things that come easy.



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Chapter 19: The Goldilocks Rule: How to Stay Motivated in Life and Work

Why is it that some people stick with their habits while most of us struggle to stay motivated? The way to maintain motivation and achieve peak levels of desire is to work on tasks of just manageable difficulty.

Our brain loves a challenge, but only if it is within an optimal zone of difficulty. Maximum motivation happens when we face a challenge of just manageable difficulty. In psychology research, we know this as the Yerkes–Dodson law, which describes the optimal level of arousal as the midpoint between boredom and anxiety.

This is also known as the **Goldilocks Zone**. Once a habit has been established, it's important to continue advancing in small ways. These minor improvements and new challenges keep you engaged. And if you hit the Goldilocks Zone just right, you can achieve a flow state where you feel you're in the zone. Scientists have found that to achieve a state of flow, a task must be roughly 4 percent beyond your current ability.

Improvement requires a delicate balance. You need to continually search for challenges that push you to your edge, while continuing to make enough progress to stay motivated and keeping the activities novel. This allows them to be both satisfying and motivating. Without variety, we get bored. Sadly, boredom is one of the greatest villains on the journey toward self-improvement. How do we stay focused working on our goals when we get bored?

Many of us get depressed when we lose focus or motivation because we think that successful people have some bottomless reserve of passion. In reality, what separates very successful people from those that have almost identical genetics and goals is at some point, it comes down to who can handle the boredom of training every day and doing the same routines over and over. As Machiavelli wrote, "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." Maybe this is why many of the most habit-forming products are those that provide continuous forms of novelty and offer continual elements of surprise experiences.

Video games are an outstanding example of this, as are slot machines. Psychologists call this variable-reward. This variance leads to the greatest spike of dopamine, enhances memory recall, and speeds up habit formation. Variable rewards won't create a craving, but they are a powerful way to amplify the cravings we already experience because they reduce boredom.

This may not excite you, but variable rewards or not, no habit will stay interesting forever. Somewhere along the line, everyone faces the same challenge on the journey of self-improvement: you have to fall in love with boredom.

When pursuing our goals and dreams, if you only do the work when it's convenient or exciting, then you'll never be consistent enough to achieve remarkable results. Stepping up when it's annoying or painful or draining to do so is what makes the difference between a professional and an amateur.

We can either be like a pro and work toward it with purpose or be like the amateurs and get pulled off course by the urgencies of life.

Chapter 20: The Downside of Creating Good Habits

At first, each repetition of a new habit develops fluency, speed, and skill. But then, as a habit becomes automatic, you become less sensitive to feedback. You fall into mindless repetition. It becomes easier to let mistakes slide. The upside of habits is that we can do things without thinking.

The downside of habits is that you get used to doing things a certain way and stop paying attention to slight errors. Some research has shown that once a skill has been mastered, there is usually a slight decline in performance. What you need is a combination of automatic habits and deliberate practice. Habits + Deliberate Practice = Mastery. To become great, certain skills do need to become automatic.

They need to become so automatic that they are like basic instinct. The process of mastery requires that you progressively layer improvements on top of one another, each habit building upon the last until a new level of performance has been reached and a higher range of skills has been embedded internally.

Therefore, it's important to establish a system for reflection and review. The way to do this is to improve your output by at least 1 percent over the course of one year. This career best effort procedure is not merely about points, statistics, or production, but about giving your best effort spiritually, mentally, and physically. This approach helps you get the most out of what you have and makes sure your habits improve rather than decline. It's very important to employ reflection and review. It enables the long-term improvement of all habits because it makes you aware of your mistakes and helps you consider possible paths for improvement.

It's a super critical process for determining whether we are performing better or worse compared to yesterday. Another thing to consider in habit growth is the tighter we cling to an identity, the harder it becomes to grow beyond it. The more you let a single belief define you, the less capable you are of adapting when life challenges you.

This doesn't mean give up good habits either. It's just a reminder to be a little flexible so you don't limit yourself from growth to the next level. If your identity is wrapped up in a belief like "I'm an outstanding soldier," what happens when your period of service ends? Transform "I'm an outstanding soldier" into "I'm the type of person who is disciplined, reliable, and great on a team." Everything is impermanent. Life is constantly changing, and therefore we all need to periodically check in to see if our old habits and beliefs are still serving us. A lack of self-awareness is a type of cancer. Reflection and review are the solution.

Conclusion

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 one slight change transformed your life.

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.



Getting that first habit embedded into your routine and physiology is so very important and establishes the pattern to use for stacking more habits.

Gradually, as you continue to layer slight changes on top of one another, the scales of life start to move. 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. Small habits don't add up. They compound.

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

Resources

To learn more about habits and specifically the book Atomic Habits visit the Guiding Cents website [HERE](#).

To download the Atomic Habits cheatsheet click [HERE](#).

To begin the habit of making money from home go [HERE](#).

To begin the habit of losing weight and get paid to lose weight go [HERE](#).



To learn the habit of becoming a paid freelancer and learning how to help business grow with your talents and get paid handsomely for it go [HERE](#).

To learn more about habits and to read the review of the bestseller The Power Of Habit you can visit the book review page [HERE](#).

Now you can learn the habit of becoming a high paid online business owner using the power of affiliate marketing. Learn more [HERE](#).

If fears and anxiety is overwhelming your life and keeping you from implementing the habits to make money and live a healthier life learn how to break these limitations [HERE](#).

Thank You



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