

21 ideas from the book - Atomic Habits

- It is so easy to overestimate the importance of one defining moment and underestimate the value of making small improvements on a daily basis. Too often, we convince ourselves that massive success requires massive action. Meanwhile, improving by 1 percent isn't particularly notable—sometimes it isn't even noticeable—but it can be far more meaningful, especially in the long run. Here's how the math works out: if you can get 1 percent better each day for one year, you'll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you're done. Conversely, if you get 1 percent worse each day for one year, you'll decline nearly down to zero. What starts as a small win or a minor setback accumulates into something much more.
- Negative thoughts compound and so do positive thoughts. The more you think of yourself as worthless, stupid, or ugly, the more you condition yourself to interpret life that way. You get trapped in a thought loop. The same is true for how you think about others. Once you fall into the habit of seeing people as angry, unjust, or selfish, you see those kinds of people everywhere.
- If you want better results, then forget about setting goals. Focus on your system instead. Like if you're a coach, your goal might be to win a championship. Your system is the way you recruit players, manage your assistant coaches, and conduct practice.

- There are three levels of change: outcome change, process change, and identity change. The most effective way to change your habits is to focus not on what you want to achieve, but on who you wish to become.
- The most practical way to change who you are is to change what you do. Each habit not only gets results but also teaches you something far more important: to trust yourself.
 - Each time you write a page, you are a writer.
 - Each time you practice the violin, you are a musician.
 - Each time you start a workout, you are an athlete.
 - Each time you encourage your employees, you are a leader.
- New identities require new evidence. If you keep casting the same votes you've always cast, you're going to get the same results you've always had. If nothing changes, nothing is going to change. It is a simple two-step process:
 - Decide the type of person you want to be.
 - Prove it to yourself with small wins.
- The process of building a habit can be divided into four simple steps: **cue, craving, response, and reward**. For example, **Cue** is Your phone buzzes with a new text message while **Craving** is You want to learn the contents of the message.

- The Four Laws of Behavior Change are a simple set of rules we can use to build better habits. They are (1) make it obvious, (2) make it attractive, (3) make it easy, and (4) make it satisfying.
- **Make it obvious:-**The process of behavior change always starts with awareness. The first step to changing bad habits is to be on the lookout for them. Example: If you want to cut back on your junk food habit but notice yourself grabbing another cookie, say out loud, “I’m about to eat this cookie, but I don’t need it. Eating it will cause me to gain weight and hurt my health.”
- Starting a new habit: Creating an implementation intention to form a habit is a strategy you can use to pair a new habit with a specific time and location. The implementation intention formula is: I will [BEHAVIOR] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]. i.e I will meditate at 7:00 am in the hall. To use the implementation formula use Habit Stacking. Habit stacking is a strategy you can use to pair a new habit with a current habit. The habit stacking formula is: After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT].
- **Make it attractive:-** Habits are a dopamine-driven feedback loop. When dopamine rises, so does our motivation to act. It is the anticipation of a reward—not the fulfillment of it—that gets us to take action. The greater the anticipation, the greater the dopamine spike. Temptation bundling is one way to make your habits more attractive. The strategy is to pair 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:
After I pull out my phone, I will do ten burpees (need).
After I do ten burpees, I will check Facebook (want).
- 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. We can also make it attractive by imitating the powerful i.e people whom we admire.
- **How to reprogram the brain to enjoy hard habits:-** You can make hard habits more attractive if you can learn to associate them with a positive experience. It can be done by changing perspective. For example; Many people associate exercise with being a challenging task that drains energy and wears you down. You can just as easily view it as a way to develop skills and build yourself up. Instead of telling yourself “I need to go run in the morning,” say “It’s time to build endurance and get fast.” You can also create a motivation ritual. Say you want to feel happier in general. Find something that makes you truly happy—like petting your dog and then create a short routine that you perform every time before you do the thing you love. Maybe you take three deep breaths and smile. Three deep breaths. Smile. Pet the dog. Repeat. Eventually, you’ll begin to associate this breathe-and-smile routine with being in a good mood. It becomes a cue that means feeling happy. Once established, you can break it out anytime you need to change your emotional state. Stressed at work? Take three deep breaths and smile.

- **Make it easy:-** The most effective form of learning is practice, not planning. Human behavior follows the Law of Least Effort. We will naturally gravitate toward the option that requires the least amount of work. Create an environment where doing the right thing is as easy as possible. Want to draw more? Put your pencils, pens, notebooks, and drawing tools on top of your desk, within easy reach. Whenever possible, I leave my phone in a different room until lunch. When it's right next to me, I'll check it all morning for no reason at all. But when it is in another room, I rarely think about it. And the friction is high enough that I won't go get it without a reason. Thus when you increase the friction associated with bad behaviors, bad habits get difficult.
- 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. We can also make it attractive by imitating the powerful i.e people whom we admire. To make the bad habits impossible, try creating a commitment device. A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that controls your actions in the future. Example: You can reduce overeating by purchasing food in individual packages rather than in bulk size. You can voluntarily ask to be added to the banned list at casinos and online poker sites to prevent future gambling sprees.
- **Make it satisfying:-** We are more likely to repeat a behavior when the experience is satisfying. But there is a trick. We are not looking for just any type of satisfaction. We are looking for immediate satisfaction. The best approach is to use reinforcement, which refers to the process of using an immediate reward to increase the rate of a behavior.

- **How to stick with good habits every day:-** One of the ways is to follow the Paper Clip strategy. Another way is to maintain a habit tracker. To quickly recover from a habit breakdown is to make a rule to never miss twice.
- 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. We can also make it attractive by imitating the powerful i.e people whom we admire. To make the bad habits impossible, try creating a commitment device. A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that controls your actions in the future. Example: You can reduce overeating by purchasing food in individual packages rather than in bulk size. You can voluntarily ask to be added to the banned list at casinos and online poker sites to prevent future gambling sprees. Conversely, 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. i.e Customers pay their bills on time when they are charged a late fee.
- **The Goldilocks Rule** states that humans experience peak motivation when working on tasks that are right on the edge of their current abilities. Not too hard. Not too easy. Just right. Example: If you want to get fitter, it means finding workouts that challenge but don't exhaust you. The human brain needs some way to visualize our progress if we are to maintain motivation. We need to be able to see our wins.

- Mastery requires practice. But the more you practice something, the more boring and routine it becomes. I can guarantee that if you manage to start a habit and keep sticking to it, there will be days when you feel like quitting. But stepping up when it's annoying or painful or draining to do so, that's what makes the difference between a professional and an amateur. Professionals stick to the schedule; amateurs let life get in the way.
- **The downside of creating a good habit:**- 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 little errors. Habits are necessary, but not sufficient for mastery. What you need is a combination of automatic habits and deliberate practice. **Habits + Deliberate Practice = Mastery.** To do this, Establish a system for reflection and review. For example, gold medal swimmer Katie Ledecky records her wellness on a scale of 1 to 10 and includes notes on her nutrition and how well she slept. She also records the times posted by other swimmers. At the end of each week, her coach goes over her notes and adds his thoughts. Reflection and review ensure that you spend your time on the right things and make course corrections whenever necessary.