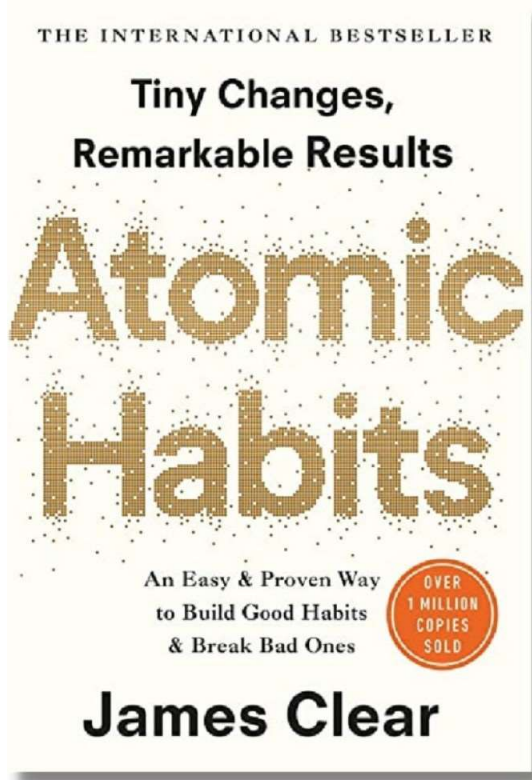


**Atomic Habits:** An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones



### **Introduction:**

Atomic Habits (2018) provides a practical and proven framework for creating good habits and shedding bad ones. The term "atomic" in the title refers to the tiny, fundamental units of a habit—the small actions and choices that compound over time to create significant outcomes.

The book is structured around the four laws of behaviors change, which author introduces as a framework for understanding and implementing habit formation. These laws are:

- Cue: Make it obvious.
- Craving: Make it attractive.
- Response: Make it easy.
- Reward: Make it satisfying.

If you're looking to get your life back on track, then Atomic Habits offers an easy framework for improving your life every day.

### **About the author:**

James Clear, one of the world's leading experts on habit formation, reveals practical strategies that will teach you exactly how to form good habits, break bad ones, and master the tiny behaviors that lead to remarkable results.

## Book Summary

### The Fundamentals: Why Tiny Changes Make a Big Difference

#### Chapter 1: The Surprising Power of Atomic Habits

Focus on making small improvements each day, over time those small improvements will equate to massive change. Bad habits also compound over time, if you delay working on something every day, the bad habit of procrastinating will multiply and seep into other areas of your life.

For example, you want to lose weight. Instead of focusing on losing 50 lbs., concentrate on working out for 30 minutes three times a week for 30 days. Over time you will begin to see changes in your body. Thirty minutes a day, three times a week for 52 weeks is 4680 minutes' worth of exercise.

In a nutshell, tiny improvements often appear small, but minute changes are transformational if you stick with it.

#### Forget About Goals, Focus on Systems Instead

- a.) Goals are the results you want to achieve. Systems are the processes that lead to those results.
- b.) Goals set directions. Systems make progress.
- c.) Fall in love with the process and not with the result.
- d.) You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.

#### Chapter 2: How Your Habits Shape Your Identity (and vice versa)

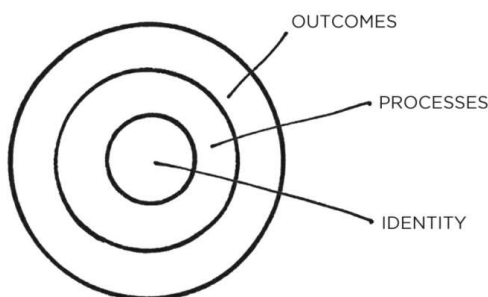
Why is it so easy to repeat bad habits and so hard to form good ones? Few things can have a more powerful impact on your life than improving your daily habits. Yet it is likely that this time next year you'll be doing the same thing rather than doing something better.

Changing our habits is challenging for two reasons.

- a.) We try to change the wrong thing, and
- b.) We try to change our habits in the wrong way. Outcomes are about what you get. Processes are about what you do. Identity is about what you believe.

There are three levels at which change can occur.

#### THREE LAYERS OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE



Let's understand these layers of Behavior change:

- a.) The first layer is changing your **outcomes** – concerned with changing your results. E.g. losing weight, publishing a book etc.
- b.) The second layer is changing your **process** – concerned with changing habits and Systems. E.g. implementing a new routine at the gym, developing meditation practice.
- c.) The third and deepest layer is changing your **identity** – this is concerned with changing. E.g. your beliefs, your self-image, your judgement about yourself.

Many people begin the process of changing their habits by focusing on what they want to achieve which 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.

Behind every system of actions is a system of beliefs.

E.g. There are two people resisting a cigarette. When offered a smoke the first person says, “No thanks. I’m trying to quit.” On the other hand, the second person declines by saying, “No thanks. I’m not a smoker.”

Behavior that is incongruent with the self will not last. 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.

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

A habit is something you do without thinking because you've done it many times before. When you come across a new situation, your brain decides how to react. If you face a problem a lot, your brain learns to solve it automatically. Your habits are like shortcuts your brain has learned to deal with problems and stress.

The process of building a habit can be divided into four simple steps:

**a.) Cue:** A cue is like a signal that tells your brain it's time to initiate a behavior.

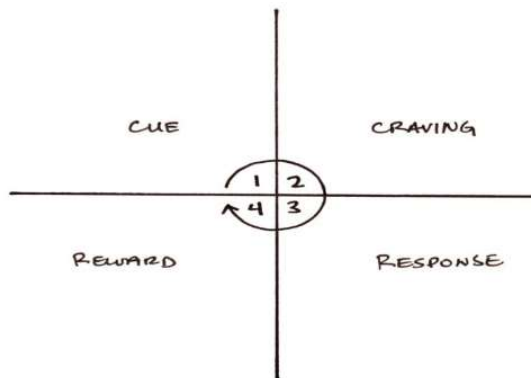
E.g. Imagine you feel stressed (the cue). This stress could be the trigger that signal your brain to start a habit.

**b.) Craving:** It is the motivational force behind every habit. What you crave is not the habit itself, but the change in state it delivers. E.g. you do not crave smoking a cigarette, you crave the feeling of relief it provides.

**c.) Response:** Response is the actual behavior or action that you take in response to the cue and craving. E.g. To deal with stress (cue) and fulfill the craving for relief, you might respond by engaging in the habit, such as taking a short walk, practicing deep breathing, or any other activity you associate with stress reduction.

**d.) Reward:** The reward is the positive outcome or feeling that you get from completing the habit. It reinforces the habit loop, making you more likely to repeat the behavior in the future. E.g. After taking that short walk or practicing deep breathing (response), you experience a sense of relief and relaxation (reward). This positive feeling reinforces the connection between the cue, craving, and response, making it more likely for you to repeat the habit the next time you feel stressed.

## THE HABIT LOOP



If any of these steps are not strong enough, it won't turn into a "habit". Eliminate the cue that predicts a reward, and your habit will never start. Reduce the craving and you won't experience enough motivation to act.

If the habit is too hard to do, you won't be able to make it a regular thing. If the good feeling or satisfaction you get from the habit isn't enough, you won't want to do it again in the future.

To make good habits, there are Four Laws of Behavior Change that act like simple rules to follow. These rules can be used to build better habits.

- a.) Make it obvious** - Don't hide the books you need to read or the fruit you want to eat, display them to remind yourself to form new habits.
- b.) Make it attractive** - Read the books you like to read, and it'll encourage you to read more.
- c.) Make it easy** - If you want to eat more fruit, eat the fruits that are easy to eat.
- d.) Make it satisfy** - If you are satisfied, you will want more.

Apply the above rules to all good habits. We can invert these laws to learn how to break a bad habit:

- a.) Make it invisible.
- b.) Make it unattractive.
- c.) Make it difficult.
- d.) Make it unsatisfying.

You can simply ask four questions whenever you want to change your behavior:

- a.) How can I make it obvious?
- b.) How can I make it attractive?
- c.) How can I make it easy?
- d.) How can I make it satisfying?

### The 1st Law: Make It Obvious

#### Chapter 4- The Man Who Didn't Look Right

THE PSYCHOLOGIST GARY Klein once told author a story about a woman who attended a family gathering. The woman used to help sick people, once noticed something strange at a family gathering. She saw her father-in-law and didn't like the way he looked. Even though he felt okay, she told him to go to the hospital.

Turns out, he had a blockage in a major artery that could lead to a heart attack. Thanks to her experience as a paramedic, she could see changes in his face that signaled a problem. She couldn't explain exactly what she saw but knew something was wrong. Her quick action saved his life!

Sometimes, people in different jobs notice things without really thinking about them. E.g.

- a.) A military analyst can tell if something on a radar is a friendly plane or an enemy missile, even if they look the same.
- b.) Paramedics can see signs of a heart attack just by looking at a person's face.

The human brain is a prediction machine. It is continuously taking in your surroundings and analyzing the information, it comes across. They're always predicting what might happen based on what they see. When we experience things repeatedly, our brains learn from those experiences. This helps us notice important details without even thinking about it, and that's how habits start.

Habits are things we do automatically, even when we're not paying attention. Our bodies do lots of stuff on their own, like growing hair, pumping our hearts, and digesting food. Sometimes, our bodies sense hunger without us really knowing why.

One of the most surprising insights about our habits is you don't need to be aware of the cue for a habit to begin. You can notice an opportunity and act 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 non-conscious mind. You fall into old patterns before you realize what's happening. The more you repeat these patterns, the less likely you become to question what you're doing and why you're doing it.

e.g.

- a.) There was a retail clerk who was used to cutting up empty gift cards. One day, without thinking, they cut a customer's real credit card by mistake.
- b.) Another person, who used to teach preschool, kept asking coworkers about washing hands, a habit from their old job. These stories show how habits can take over without us realizing it.

The things triggering our habits often become so common that we don't even notice them anymore, like treats in the kitchen or the phone in our pocket. To change our habits, we first need to pay attention to them. If we don't, habits control us, and as psychologist Carl Jung said, "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life, and you will call it fate."

## THE HABITS SCORECARD

In Japan, the train system is known as one of the best globally. If you ride a train in Tokyo, you'll see conductors doing a special routine. They point at different things and say out loud what they see.

e.g. they'll point at a signal and say, "Signal is green."

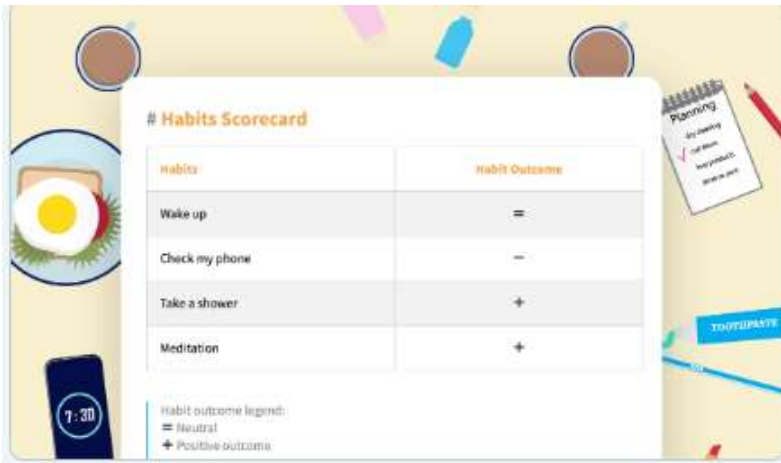
This process is called **Pointing-and-Calling**. This might seem a bit funny, but it works well for safety. Pointing-and-Calling reduces mistakes by a lot—up to 85 percent—and lowers accidents by 30 percent.

The reason it works is that it makes people more aware. By using their eyes, hands, mouth, and ears, train operators are more likely to catch problems before something bad happens.

E.g.: my wife does something similar when we're about to leave for a trip. She says out loud the important things she needs to bring, like keys, wallet, glasses, and even her husband. It might seem a bit funny, but it helps her remember everything!

When a behavior becomes automatic, we often stop thinking about it. We might overlook things because we assume it will be the same as before. This lack of self-awareness can lead to mistakes and failures.

Changing habits can be hard because we may not be aware of what we're doing. The Habits Scorecard is a simple exercise to help with this. Make a list of your daily habits and mark each as good (+), bad (-), or neutral (=). For instance:



The marks depend on your situation and goals. There are no good or bad habits – there are only effective habits. All habits serve you in some way.

Ask yourself – “Does this behavior help me to become the type of person I wish to be?”

Creating a Habits Scorecard doesn't mean changing anything at first. The first step to changing bad habits is to be on the lookout for them. The process of behavior change starts with awareness.

If you eat a chocolate bar every morning, observe it without blaming yourself. To reinforce awareness, you can use Pointing-and-Calling in your life. Say out loud what action you're about to take and its outcome.

e.g. if you're tempted to grab a cookie but want to cut back on junk food, say, "Eating this cookie will make me gain weight and hurt my health." Speaking it aloud makes the consequences real and helps you avoid slipping into old routines.

Behavior change starts with awareness, and these strategies aim to help you recognize and respond to your habits positively.

## Chapter 5 - The Best Way to Start a New Habit

Many people think they lack motivation when what they really lack is clarity.

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]’

To illustrate this Big Idea, Clear tells the story of an engineering student named Ronan, who had the unhelpful habit of constantly binge-watching shows on Netflix. Ronan wanted to binge-watch less and exercise more.

But he had a big problem on his hands—he LOVED binge-watching and HATED exercising.

So, he came up with a clever solution: he connected his stationary bike to his laptop and television... then, he coded a computer program that allowed him to watch Netflix only if he was also cycling at a certain speed. When he slows down, his TV (or laptop) automatically pauses. When he picks up the pace again, it starts playing again.

Ronan's solution to developing his exercise habit is an excellent example of temptation bundling, which works by linking an action you want to do with an action you need to do.

For Ronan, bundling Netflix (the thing he wanted to do) with exercising on his stationary bike (the thing he needed to do) was exactly what he needed to get himself going.

### Some examples:

a.) If you need to wash your dishes but want to watch YouTube: After I wash my dishes, I will watch YouTube videos for 20 minutes YouTube. As an alternative option, you can choose to combine the two—like Ronan did with his exercise bike + Netflix—by watching YouTube only while you're washing your dishes.

b.) If you want to read the news but need to read a book: After I read my book for 30 minutes, I'll read the news for 20 minutes.

## Chapter 6 - Motivation Is Overrated; Environment Often Matters More

Every habit begins with something that reminds us to do it. It's easier to forget things or not do them if they're not easily seen.

E.g.

a.) If your guitar is hidden in the closet, you might not play it.

b.) If your books are tucked away, you might forget to read.

To make a habit of being a big part of your life, put things in places where you can easily notice them.

Keep your guitar in the living room, place books where you can see them, and place important items like water bottles where you spend a lot of time.

When you scatter these reminders around, you're more likely to think about your habit throughout the day. Making the right choice becomes simple when you can easily see the things that remind you of good habits. Designing your surroundings lets you control and shape your life.

It's also easier to start new habits in a new environment because you're not dealing with reminders from your old surroundings.

## Chapter 7- The Secret to Self-Control

If you're overweight, smoker or an addict people often say it's because you lack self-control. But recent research tells us a different story. When scientists look at those with great self-control, they find out these individuals aren't so different from those who struggle. The key difference is that disciplined people are good at organizing their lives to avoid situations where they need a lot of willpower.

Those with the best self-control are usually the ones who don't have to use it too often. So, while perseverance and willpower are important for success, the way to enhance these qualities isn't just by wishing you were more disciplined. It's about creating an environment that naturally supports discipline.

You can break a habit, but you're unlikely to forget it. Once the mental grooves of habit have been carved into your brain, they are nearly impossible to remove entirely even if they go unused for quite a while.

Simply resisting temptation is an ineffective strategy. Self-control is a short-term strategy – not a long term one.

The most 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. The secret to self-control is to make the cues of good habits obvious and the cues of bad habits invisible.

## **The 2nd Law: Make It Attractive**

### **Chapter 8- How to Make a Habit Irresistible**

The 2nd Law of Behavior change is making it attractive. The more appealing an opportunity is, the more likely it is to become a habit.

Habits operate on a dopamine-driven feedback loop. When dopamine levels rise, so does our motivation to act.

It is the anticipation of rewards not the fulfillment of it that gets us to act. The greater the anticipation, the greater the dopamine spike.

Temptation bundling connects an action you want to do with one you need to do. This method aligns with Premack's principle, stating that more likely behaviors can reinforce less likely ones.

You can combine temptation bundling with habit stacking. For instance, after your current habit, you can add what you need to do, and then follow it with what you want to do.

E.g.

- a.) Watching Netflix only when riding your stationary bike.
- b.) After getting up every morning I will get my coffee, I will say one thing I am grateful for that happened yesterday [need]. After I say one thing that I am grateful for, I will read the news [want]

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

We don't pick our first habits; we copy them. We follow what our friends, family, and society do. We usually imitate three groups:

- a.) those close to us
- b.) many people, and
- c.) powerful people.

We often adopt habits that our culture approves of because we want to fit in. According to a study it has been shown if you are having friends who are obese, then your chances of becoming obese increase.

Another study found, if one person in a relationship loses weight, the partner would also slim down too.



To build the habits we want, it's helpful to be part of a culture where those habits are normal. Surrounding around people who already have the habits you want strengthens your personal identity. Staying in a group after reaching a goal is vital for keeping up your habits. Friendship and community embed a new identity and help behaviors last over the long run.

Many of our daily habits come from imitating people we admire. As we want to achieve success, we copy successful people. If a behavior brings us approval and respect, we find it appealing.

## Chapter 10: How To Find and Fix the Causes of Your Bad Habits

The inversion of the 2nd law of Behavior change is **make it unattractive**. Every behavior has a surface level craving and a deeper underlying motive.

Your habits are modern day solutions to ancient desires. Your brain didn't develop wanting to smoke or check Instagram; it aims to reduce uncertainty, ease anxiety, gain social approval, or achieve status.

The cause of your habits is the prediction that precedes them – which leads to feeling.

Different people might address the same deep motive in various ways.

E.g. One person may reduce stress by smoking, while another might go for a run to ease anxiety. Your current habits aren't necessarily the best solutions; they're just what you learned.

To change bad habits, it's crucial to rethink how you see them. Highlight the benefits of avoiding a bad habit to make it seem unattractive. Habits are attractive when we associate them with positive feelings and unattractive when we associate them with negative feelings.

## The 3rd Law – Make It Easy

### Chapter 11: Walk Slowly, but Never Backward

Trying to find the perfect plan for change, like the quickest way to lose weight or the best muscle-building program, can be overwhelming. We are so focused on figuring out the best approach that we never get around to acting. There's a difference between being in motion (planning and learning) and acting (doing something that brings results).

The biggest reason behind us staying in motion (planning and learning) is because we want to avoid failure. It's easier to convince ourselves that planning is progress. When planning becomes a way to delay doing, it's time to make a change.

Habit formation is the process by which a behavior becomes progressively more automatic through repetition. The more you do something, the more your brain gets used to it. It doesn't matter if it's been a few weeks or several months; what matters is how often you repeat the behavior.

Your current habits are formed through hundreds or thousands of repetitions. To build a habit, you need to practice it. And the most effective way to make practice happen is to adhere to the 3rd Law of Behavior change – **Make it easy**.

## Chapter 12: The Law of Least Effort

The central idea is to set up an environment where doing the right thing is as easy as possible. When it comes to building better habits, a big part is about making good habits simpler and bad habits more difficult.

You can get your environment ready for action in many ways. For instance, if you want to eat healthier, cut up lots of fruits and veggies over the weekend and pack them into containers. This way, you'll have quick access to healthy snacks during the week.

You can also use this idea the other way around. Make it difficult to do things you don't want to do. If you watch too much TV, unplug it, or put it in a closet after using it. Only bring it out or plug it in if you can say out loud the name of the show you want to watch. This adds a bit of difficulty, helping you avoid watching mindlessly.

It is remarkable how little friction is required to prevent unwanted behavior.

e.g. if I hide beer in the back of the fridge where I can't see it, I tend to drink less. Though this may not work for serious addictions, for many of us, a little bit of difficulty can be the difference between sticking with a good habit or slipping into a bad one.

Reduce the friction associated with good behaviors. When friction is low, habits are easy.

Increase the friction associated with bad behaviors when friction is high, habits are difficult.

Whether we are approaching behavioral change as an individual, a parent, a coach, or a leader, we should ask ourselves the same question – “How can we design a world where it is easy to do what is right?”

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

The Two-Minute Rule is a simple and effective strategy to overcome procrastination and build new habits. It is a way to make sure the action is taken and overpower procrastination.

The Rule is When you start a new habit, it should take less than two minutes to do.

Many habits occur at decisive moments (the moments that have a huge impact). This could be the moment you choose between driving your car or riding your bike, or between grabbing your homework or the video game controller. These choices are a fork in the road. Decisive moments set the options available to your future self. Mastering these decisive moments throughout the day is important.

By making a positive direction in our decisive moment, even if it's for two minutes, it will eventually influence the whole outcome positively. For instance, when we are not eager to start reading a book – it's much easier to start reading it if we say to ourselves, it will only take two minutes – or one page. After we complete one page, it is easier to continue with the second, third, etc.

This is a way to make a habit and not like a challenge. It's a challenge to read 50 pages a day, but it's only a small task to read one.

If we do this daily, the completed task will accumulate, and the result will follow. The key is to master the habit of showing up to it.

Make it easy to start, and the rest will follow. The author suggests that the secret is always staying below the point where it feels like work.

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

As the conclusion of the 3rd law, the author provides us with its inversion – making it difficult.

Sometimes success is less about making good habits easy and more about making bad habits hard. This is where the author introduces us to commitment devices. 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, which binds you to good habits, and restrict you from bad ones.

There are many ways to create a commitment device.

- e.g.
- a.) Placing fruit instead of candies in the middle of your kitchen.
  - b.) Reducing calories when dining at restaurants by asking the waiter to split my meal and box half before the meal is served.
  - c.) You may wish to pre-pay your yoga session.

Commitment devices are useful because they enable us to take advantage of good intentions before we can fall victim to temptation. The best way to break a bad habit is to make it impractical to do. Increase the friction until you don't even have the option to act.

Also using technology to automate your habits can be the most reliable and effective way to guarantee the right behavior.

e.g. Ritty's is an Incorruptible cashier – the machine automatically locked the cash and receipts inside after each transaction. Here the brilliance of the cash register was that it automated ethical behavior by making stealing practically impossible.

Also, by looking at one time options which requires a little bit of effort upfront, but which creates increasing value over time.

- E.g.
- a.) Buying a water filter to clean your drinking water.
  - b.) Making use of smaller plates to reduce caloric intake.
  - c.) Removing your television from your bedroom.

## The 4th Law: Make It Satisfying

### Chapter 15: The Cardinal Rule of Behaviors Change

The 4th Law of Behavior change is to make it satisfying. We are more likely to repeat a behavior when the experience is satisfying. The human brain evolved to prioritize immediate rewards over delayed rewards.

The cardinal rule of behavior change is – what is immediately rewarded is repeated. What is immediately punished is avoided. The fourth law of behavior change – making it satisfying increases the odds that a behavior will be repeated next time. It completes the habit loop.

Imagine you're a giraffe wandering through Africa, making choices that impact your life right away. You decide what to eat, where to sleep, and how to stay safe from predators. Your focus is on the present or the very near future – an immediate-return environment.

In today's modern society, we live in a delayed-return environment. Our actions may take years to show their desired results.

E.g.

- a.) We exercise to stay healthy in the long run.
- b.) Saving money for retirement many years from now.

After thousands of years in an immediate return environment, our brains evolved to prefer quick payoffs to long-terms ones. Every habit produces multiple outcomes across time. Unfortunately, those outcomes are often misaligned.

Bad habits might feel good right away but in the long run it is harmful us in.

e.g. Smoking may give immediate relief, but it could lead to serious health issues in the long run.

Similarly good habits might not be enjoyable at present, but they bring positive outcomes in the long term. The costs of our good habits are now, while the costs of bad habits are in the future.

We like to delay the negative outcome and enjoy the immediate satisfaction of a candy, TV show, or sleeping-in. In contrast to positive habits – the cost of them comes immediately – we switch the candy to an apple, we don't watch our TV show to finish our work, and we get up to work out instead of sleeping in.

This is where we trick ourselves to gain instant satisfaction rather than the delayed one.

Generally – the more immediate pleasure you get from an action, the more strongly you should question whether it aligns with your long-term goals.

We need to make our non-enjoyable habits enjoyable and be grateful for every accomplished task. Immediate reinforcement helps us maintain motivation in the short term while we wait for the long-term rewards to arrive.

### **Chapter 16: How to Stick with Good Habits Every Day**

One of the most satisfying feelings is the feeling of making progress. This is why our author introduces us to the concept of tracking our habits.

When we track our progress, even if it's simple as putting a small X on our calendar every day, it brings us satisfaction and the urge not to break the chain.

Habit tracking is powerful because it leverages multiple Laws of Behavior Change that makes it obvious, attractive, and satisfying at the same time.

It is a simple tool to see if you're keeping up with your habits. You can use a calendar and mark off each day you stick to your routine. Over time, the calendar shows how long you've been keeping the habit.

Tracking also keeps you focused on the process, not just the result. Despite of these benefits some people resist tracking because it feels like an extra burden. It adds another habit – tracking itself – alongside the one you're trying to build. Tracking isn't necessary for everyone, and you don't need to measure every aspect of your life. But for many, it can be helpful, even if only for a while.

No matter how consistent you are with your habits, it is inevitable that life will interrupt you at some point. Whenever this happens to me, I try to remind myself to never miss twice. Maybe I'll eat an entire pizza, but I'll follow it up with a healthy meal. I can't be perfect, but I can avoid a second lapse.

Missing twice is the start of a new habit. Getting back on track is important for the progress not to fade away.

## Chapter 17: How an Accountability Partner Can Change Everything

The inversion of 4th Law of Behavior change is to make it unsatisfying. We are less likely to repeat a bad habit if it is painful or unsatisfying.

The author suggests having an accountability partner that tracks our progress and calls out on us whenever we are inconsistent with our desired behavior. We care deeply about what others think of us, and we do not want others to have a lesser opinion of us.

Knowing that someone else is watching you can be a powerful motivator. This is precisely why inviting someone to help us stay accountable or signing a habit contract (means 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) can work so well.

### 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)

Author explains how our predispositions and personality affect the habits we are good or not good at.

Imagine being an athlete and wanting to succeed in your sport. Well, the secret to increasing your chances of success lies in choosing the right field to compete in. It's like picking a game that you're not only good at but also really enjoy. Habits become a lot easier to stick with when they match your natural talents and interests.

People are born with different skills. While it might seem like your genes are fixed and unchangeable, discussing things beyond your control can be a bit dull. Phrases like "biological determinism" can make it sound like some are destined to succeed while others are doomed to fail. But this is a narrow way to view how genes influence behavior.

The strength of genetics is also their weakness. Genes cannot be easily changed, which means they provide a powerful advantage in favourable circumstances and a serious disadvantage in unfavourable circumstances. They do determine your areas of opportunity. The key is to direct your effort toward areas that both excite you and match your natural skills, to align your ambition with your ability.

Our habits are not only shaped by our personalities, but there's no denying that our genes push us in a certain direction. Our deeply rooted preferences make certain behaviors easier for some people than for others.

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 easily comes.

## Chapter 19: The Goldilocks Rule: How To Stay Motivated In Life And Work

The Goldilocks Rule states that humans experience peak motivation when working on tasks that are right on the edge of their current abilities.

When you're starting a new habit, it's important to make it easy at first so you don't give up easily. Once a habit has been established, however, it's important to continue to advance in small ways. This way, you stay engaged and interested. If you do this just right, you might get into a flow state, which is when you're so focused on what you're doing that you feel like you're "in the zone."

The Goldilocks Rule tells us that working on things that are a bit challenging is important to stay motivated. Getting better at something is like walking on a tightrope – you want to keep finding things that push you just enough, but not too much.

Improvement requires a delicate balance. You need to regularly search for challenges that push you to your edge while continuing to make enough progress to stay motivated. Behaviors need to remain novel in order for them to stay attractive and satisfying. Without variety, we get bored. This is why it's boredom that is a bigger threat to our success rather than failure.

Anyone can work hard when they feel motivated. It's the ability to keep going when work isn't exciting that makes the difference. This is why amateurs get bored and stop afterward. Professionals keep going even when the habit stops being exciting.

## Chapter 20: The Downside Of Creating Good Habits

The downside of habits is that you get used to doing things in a certain way and stop paying attention to little errors. We can't repeat the same things blindly and expect to become exceptional.

Alongside habits, we need deliberate practice to achieve mastery. When mastering a habit, we should add to it to unlock the next level of performance.

Repeating this cycle and aspiring to become at least 1% better, rather than static, provides big results in the long run. This is where self-reflection kicks in.

To avoid slipping into the trap of complacency, we need to establish a system for reflection and review. Personally, I employ two primary modes of reflection and review.

In December, for my Annual Review, I ask myself

- a.) What went well this year?
- b.) What didn't go so well this year?
- c.) What did I learn?

Six months later, for my Integrity Report, I ask myself

- a.) What are the core values that drive my life and work?
- b.) How am I living and working with integrity right now?
- c.) How can I set a higher standard in the future?

Whenever we form a habit, we shouldn't consider it our whole identity. We should consider it a part of us that can shape, shift, and adjust to our future needs.

Connecting a habit to an identity and being demotivated if something affects it is easy. We should always strive to improve and "keep our identity small" to make room for upcoming big things in life.

Life is constantly changing, so we need to periodically check in to see if our old habits and beliefs are still serving us. A lack of self-awareness is poison. Reflection and review is the antidote.

### Conclusion: The Secret to Results That Last

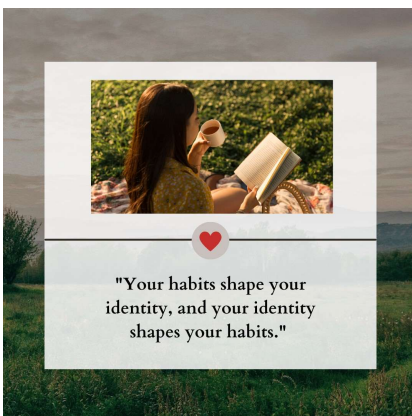
**Can a tiny change really make a big difference in your life?** Probably just one cannot, but what if you make a few more, and then a few more after that? Eventually, you might realize that your life has changed because of all these small changes. This is the magic of tiny habits – small changes that lead to amazing results.

Sometimes, it's hard to remember to do a new habit, you have to **make it obvious**. Sometimes, you may feel not to start with new habit, so you have to make it something **you find it as attractive**. Suppose if a habit is too tough, you need to **make it easier**. If you don't feel like sticking with it, you **make it satisfying**.

The superpower of changing habits is in a bunch of tiny ones and not in one big improvement. It's like building a tower with many small blocks, each one important for the whole thing to work.

The secret to getting results that last is never to stop making improvements. Our efforts and improvements compound and overall, greatly impact our lives slowly.

### Three BEST Quote from the book



"Every action  
you take is a vote  
for the person  
you wish to  
become."

### Insights from the book:

1. **Tiny Changes Matter:** Small habits may seem inconsequential, but they can lead to significant improvements over time.
2. **The 1% Rule:** Focus on getting 1% better each day. Continuous, incremental improvement adds up to substantial progress.
3. **Cues, Cravings, Responses, Rewards:** Understand and manipulate the habit loop to create or break habits effectively.
4. **Make It Obvious, Attractive, Easy, and Satisfying:** Applying these principles can help you build positive habits. Make your habits obvious, attractive, easy to perform, and satisfying to reinforce them.
5. **Habit Stacking:** Attach new habits to existing ones to leverage the routines you already have. This makes it easier to integrate new habits into your daily life.
6. **Two-Minute Rule:** Break down habits into tasks that take less than two minutes to complete. Starting with a small, manageable action makes it easier to build up to more significant tasks.

"Atomic Habits" provides a practical and insightful framework for understanding and transforming habits to achieve long-term success and personal growth.

### Pro Tip:

1. **Two Minute Rule:** Start a habit using the two-minute rule. Implement a habit that only takes two minutes to do. Some examples:
  - a.) Walk for two minutes.
  - b.) Learn a new language in two minutes.
  - c.) Exercise for two minutes
  - d.) Read a book for two minutes.



2. **Start Small:** Begin with tiny habits to make them more manageable and increase the chances of success.

E.g. Instead of aiming to run 5 miles every day, start with a small habit of walking for 10 minutes each day. Gradually increase the intensity over time.

3. **Track your habits:** Keep a record of your habits to monitor progress and stay accountable.

e.g. Use a habit-tracking app or a simple journal to record whether you completed your habit each day. This visual record helps you stay accountable.

4. **Habit Stacking:** Integrate new habits into existing routines to take advantage of established behaviors.

e.g. If you want to develop a habit of stretching in the morning, stack it onto an existing habit like making your bed. Stretch for a few minutes right after you finish making your bed.

5. **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge and celebrate even the smallest successes to reinforce positive behavior.

Example: If your goal is to drink more water, celebrate each day you successfully meet your water intake target. Small celebrations could include a mental acknowledgment or a small treat.

The above examples demonstrate how applying the principles from "Atomic Habits" can make positive behaviors more achievable and sustainable over time.

"Watch this video where James Clear discusses the concept of continuous improvement, aiming to make progress of 1% each day at Convert Kit conference." - [1% Better Every Day – James Clear](#)

**I hope you found this summary enjoyable and insightful. Thank you for your time.**