

Notebook - Atomic Habits

kindle

Clear, James

Page 6 | Highlight

A habit is a routine or behavior that is performed regularly—and, in many cases, automatically.

Page 6 | Highlight

I believe I accomplished something just as rare: I fulfilled my potential.

Page 7 | Highlight

changes that seem small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you're willing to stick with them for years.

Page 7 | Highlight

We all deal with setbacks but in the long run, the quality of our lives often depends on the quality of our habits.

Page 13 | Highlight

“the aggregation of marginal gains,” which was the philosophy of searching for a tiny margin of improvement in everything you do.

Page 18 | Highlight

Success is the product of daily habits—not once-in-a-lifetime transformations.

Page 18 | Highlight

That said, it doesn't matter how successful or unsuccessful you are right now. What matters is whether your habits are putting you on the path toward success. You should be far more concerned with your current trajectory than with your current results.

Page 18 | Highlight

Good habits make time your ally. Bad habits make time your enemy.

Page 18 | Highlight

The more tasks you can handle without thinking, the more your brain is free to focus on other areas.

Page 21 | Highlight

If you find yourself struggling to build a good habit or break a bad one, it is not because you have lost your ability to improve.

Page 21 | Highlight

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.

Page 21 | Highlight

“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.¹⁹ 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.”

Page 23 | Highlight

Goals are about the results you want to achieve. Systems are about the processes that lead to those results.

Page 24 | Highlight

If you want better results, then forget about setting goals. Focus on your system instead.

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.

The problem with a goals-first mentality is that you're continually putting happiness off until the next milestone

Furthermore, goals create an "either-or" conflict: either you achieve your goal and are successful or you fail and you are a disappointment. You mentally box yourself into a narrow version of happiness.

many people find themselves reverting to their old habits after accomplishing a goal.

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.

You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.²³

Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement. Getting 1 percent better every day counts for a lot in the long-run. ■ Habits are a double-edged sword. They can work for you or against you, which is why understanding the details is essential. ■ Small changes often appear to make no difference until you cross a critical threshold. The most powerful outcomes of any compounding

process are delayed. You need to be patient. ■ An atomic habit is a little habit that is part of a larger system. Just as atoms are the building blocks of molecules, atomic habits are the building blocks of remarkable results. ■ If you want better results, then forget about setting goals. Focus on your system instead. ■ You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.

Page 30 | Highlight

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.

Page 31 | Highlight

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

Page 32 | Highlight

Behind every system of actions is a system of beliefs. The system of a democracy is founded on beliefs like freedom, majority rule, and social equality.

Page 33 | Highlight

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.

Page 33 | Highlight

The more pride you have in a particular aspect of your identity, the more motivated you will be to maintain the habits associated with it.

Page 35 | Highlight

It can feel comfortable to believe what your culture believes (group identity) or to do what upholds your self-image (personal identity), even if it's wrong.

Page 36 | Highlight

Your identity emerges out of your habits.

Page 38 | Highlight

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.

Page 38 | Highlight

The most practical way to change who you are is to change what you do.

Page 39 | Highlight

It is a simple two-step process: Decide the type of person you want to be. Prove it to yourself with small wins.

Page 40 | Highlight

"What would a healthy person do?"

Page 40 | Highlight

The formation of all habits is a feedback loop (a concept we will explore in depth in the next chapter), but it's important to let your values, principles, and identity drive the loop rather than your results. The focus should always be on becoming that type of person, not getting a particular outcome.

Page 40 | Highlight

Identity change is the North Star of habit change.

Page 41 | Highlight

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. ■ Your identity emerges out of your habits. Every action is a vote for the type of person you wish to become. ■ Becoming the best version of yourself requires you to continuously edit your beliefs, and to upgrade and expand your identity. ■ The real reason habits matter is not because they can get you better results (although they can do that), but because they can change your beliefs about yourself.

Page 44 | Highlight

“behaviors followed by satisfying consequences tend to be repeated and those that produce unpleasant consequences are less likely to be repeated.”

Page 44 | Highlight

A habit is a behavior that has been repeated enough times to become automatic.

Page 45 | Highlight

This is the feedback loop behind all human behavior: try, fail, learn, try differently.

Page 45 | Highlight

“Habits are, simply, reliable solutions to recurring problems in our environment.”

Page 46 | Highlight

Habit formation is incredibly useful because the conscious mind is the bottleneck of the brain.⁸ It can only pay attention to one problem at a time. As a result, your brain is always working to preserve your conscious attention for whatever task is most essential. Whenever possible, the conscious mind likes to pawn off tasks to the nonconscious mind to do automatically.⁹ 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.¹⁰

Page 55 | Highlight

A habit is a behavior that has been repeated enough times to become automatic. ■ The ultimate purpose of habits is to solve the problems of life with as little energy and effort as possible. ■ Any habit can be broken down into a feedback loop that involves four steps: cue, craving, response, and reward. ■ 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.

Page 61 | Highlight

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.

Page 61 | Highlight

It's also what makes them dangerous. As habits form, your actions come under the direction of your automatic and nonconscious mind.

Page 62 | Highlight

Over time, the cues that spark our habits become so common that they are essentially invisible: the treats on the kitchen counter, the remote control next to the couch, the phone in our pocket.

Page 62 | Highlight

"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate."⁹

Page 63 | Highlight

process, known as Pointing-and-Calling, is a safety system designed to reduce mistakes. It seems silly, but it works incredibly well. Pointing-and-Calling reduces errors by up to 85 percent and cuts accidents by 30 percent.

Page 63 | Highlight

Pointing-and-Calling is so effective because it raises the level of awareness from a nonconscious habit to a more conscious level.

Page 64 | Highlight

One of our greatest challenges in changing habits is maintaining awareness of what we are actually doing.

Page 65 | Highlight

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.

Page 65 | Highlight

“Does this behavior help me become the type of person I wish to be? Does this habit cast a vote for or against my desired identity?”

Page 66 | Highlight

Hearing your bad habits spoken aloud makes the consequences seem more real.

Page 66 | Highlight

The process of behavior change always starts with awareness.

Page 66 | Highlight

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.

Page 70 | Highlight

Broadly speaking, the format for creating an implementation intention is: “When situation X arises, I will perform response Y.”

Page 70 | Highlight

people who make a specific plan for when and where they will perform a new habit are more likely to follow through.

Page 71 | Highlight

We tell ourselves, “I’m going to eat healthier” or “I’m going to write more,” but we never say when and where these habits are going to happen.

Page 71 | Highlight

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

Page 71 | Highlight

Once an implementation intention has been set, you don’t have to wait for inspiration to strike.

Page 71 | Highlight

The simple way to apply this strategy to your habits is to fill out this sentence: I will [BEHAVIOR] at [TIME] in [LOCATION].

Page 72 | Highlight

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.

Page 72 | Highlight

When your dreams are vague, it’s easy to rationalize little exceptions all day long and never get around to the specific things you need to do to succeed.

Page 73 | Highlight

The Diderot Effect states that obtaining a new possession often creates a spiral of consumption that leads to additional purchases.

Page 74 | Highlight

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.

Page 74 | Highlight

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.

Page 74 | Highlight

The habit stacking formula is: "After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [NEW HABIT]."

Page 79 | Highlight

The 1st Law of Behavior Change is make it obvious. ■ The two most common cues are time and location. ■ Creating an implementation intention 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]. ■ 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].

Page 81 | Highlight

People often choose products not because of what they are, but because of where they are.

Page 83 | Highlight

customers will occasionally buy products not because they want them but because of how they are presented to them.

Page 87 | Highlight

Most people live in a world others have created for them.

Page 87 | Highlight

Our behavior is not defined by the objects in the environment but by our relationship to them.

Page 87 | Highlight

Stop thinking about your environment as filled with objects. Start thinking about it as filled with relationships.

Page 88 | Highlight

You can train yourself to link a particular habit with a particular context.

Page 88 | Highlight

habits can be easier to change in a new environment.

Page 89 | Highlight

“One space, one use.”

Page 89 | Highlight

Whenever possible, avoid mixing the context of one habit with another. When you start mixing contexts, you’ll start mixing habits—and the easier ones will usually win out.

Page 89 | Highlight

This is one reason why the versatility of modern technology is both a strength and a weakness. You can use your phone for all sorts of tasks, which makes it a powerful device. But when you can use your phone to do nearly anything, it becomes hard to associate it with one task. You want to be productive, but you’re also conditioned to browse social media, check email, and play video games whenever you open your phone. It’s a mishmash of cues.

Page 90 | Highlight

Small changes in context can lead to large changes in behavior over time. ■ Every habit is initiated by a cue. We are more likely to notice cues that stand out. ■ Make the cues of good habits obvious in your environment. ■ Gradually, your habits become associated not with a single trigger but with the entire context surrounding the behavior. The context becomes the cue. ■ It is easier to build new habits in a new environment because you are not fighting against old cues.

Page 92 | Highlight

The idea that a little bit of discipline would solve all our problems is deeply embedded in our culture.

Page 92 | Highlight

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.⁵

Page 93 | Highlight

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.

Page 94 | Highlight

You can break a habit, but you’re unlikely to forget it.

Page 94 | Highlight

simply resisting temptation is an ineffective strategy.

Page 94 | Highlight

One of the most practical ways to eliminate a bad habit is to reduce exposure to the cue that causes it.

Page 95 | Highlight

The inversion of the 1st Law of Behavior Change is make it invisible. ■ Once a habit is formed, it is unlikely to be forgotten. ■ People with high self-control tend to spend less time in tempting situations. It's easier to avoid temptation than resist it. ■ One of the most practical ways to eliminate a bad habit is to reduce exposure to the cue that causes it. ■ Self-control is a short-term strategy, not a long-term one.

Page 102 | Highlight

Humans are also prone to fall for exaggerated versions of reality. Junk food, for example, drives our reward systems into a frenzy. After spending hundreds of thousands of years hunting and foraging for food in the wild, the human brain has evolved to place a high value on salt, sugar, and fat.

Page 102 | Highlight

When you don't know where your next meal is coming from, eating as much as possible is an excellent strategy for survival.

Page 104 | Highlight

The more attractive an opportunity is, the more likely it is to become habit-forming.

Page 104 | Highlight

We have the brains of our ancestors but temptations they never had to face.

Page 104 | Highlight

If you want to increase the odds that a behavior will occur, then you need to make it attractive.

Page 106 | Highlight

Habits are a dopamine-driven feedback loop.

Page 106 | Highlight

dopamine is released not only when you experience pleasure, but also when you anticipate it.¹⁶ Gambling addicts have a dopamine spike right before they place a bet, not after they win.

Page 106 | Highlight

It is the anticipation of a reward—not the fulfillment of it—that gets us to take action.

Page 108 | Highlight

Your brain has far more neural circuitry allocated for wanting rewards than for liking them.

Page 108 | Highlight

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.

Page 110 | Highlight

“more probable behaviors will reinforce less probable behaviors.”²³ In other words, even if you don’t really want to process overdue work emails, you’ll become conditioned to do it if it means you get to do something you really want to do along the way.

Page 111 | Highlight

The 2nd Law of Behavior Change is make it attractive. ■ The more attractive an opportunity is, the more likely it is to become habit-forming. ■ 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.

Page 114 | Highlight

whatever habits are normal in your culture are among the most attractive behaviors you’ll find.

Page 115 | Highlight

We don't choose our earliest habits, we imitate them.

Page 116 | Highlight

We imitate the habits of three groups in particular: 2 The close. The many. The powerful.

Page 117 | Highlight

peer pressure is bad only if you're surrounded by bad influences

Page 117 | Highlight

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

Page 117 | Highlight

Join a culture where (1) your desired behavior is the normal behavior and (2) you already have something in common with the group.

Page 118 | Highlight

Nothing sustains motivation better than belonging to the tribe.

Page 120 | Highlight

The normal behavior of the tribe often overpowers the desired behavior of the individual.

Page 120 | Highlight

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.

Page 121 | Highlight

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.

Page 121 | Highlight

Many of our daily habits are imitations of people we admire.

Page 122 | Highlight

The culture we live in determines which behaviors are attractive to us. ■ We tend to adopt habits that are praised and approved of by our culture because we have a strong desire to fit in and belong to the tribe. ■ We tend to imitate the habits of three social groups: the close (family and friends), the many (the tribe), and the powerful (those with status and prestige). ■ 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. ■ The normal behavior of the tribe often overpowers the desired behavior of the individual. Most days, we'd rather be wrong with the crowd than be right by ourselves. ■ If a behavior can get us approval, respect, and praise, we find it attractive.

Page 126 | Highlight

"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."

Page 127 | Highlight

Find love and reproduce = using Tinder ■ Connect and bond with others = browsing Facebook ■ Win social acceptance and approval = posting on Instagram ■ Reduce uncertainty = searching on Google ■ Achieve status and prestige = playing video games Your habits are modern-day solutions to ancient desires.

Page 129 | Highlight

You have been sensing the cues the entire time, but it is only when you predict that you would be better off in a different state that you take action.

Page 130 | Highlight

When you binge-eat or light up or browse social media, what you really want is not a potato chip or a cigarette or a bunch of likes. What you really want is to feel different.

Page 130 | Highlight

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

Page 131 | Highlight

Now, imagine changing just one word: You don't "have" to. You "get" to.⁴ You get to wake up early for work. You get to make another sales call for your business. You get to cook dinner for your family.

Page 131 | Highlight

Exercise. 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 you up. Instead of telling yourself "I need to go run in the morning," say "It's time to build endurance and get fast."

Page 132 | Highlight

You can reframe "I am nervous" to "I am excited and I'm getting an adrenaline rush to help me concentrate."⁷

Page 133 | Highlight

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. ■ The cause of your habits is actually the prediction that precedes them. The prediction leads to a feeling. ■ 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. Create a motivation ritual by doing something you enjoy immediately before a difficult habit.

Page 142 | Highlight

motion allows us to feel like we're making progress without running the risk of failure. Most of us are experts at avoiding criticism. It doesn't feel good to fail or to be judged publicly, so we tend to avoid situations where that might happen. And that's the biggest reason why you slip into motion rather than taking action: you want to delay failure.

Page 143 | Highlight

If you want to master a habit, the key is to start with repetition, not perfection.

Page 143 | Highlight

Habit formation is the process by which a behavior becomes progressively more automatic through repetition.

Page 143 | Highlight

Repeating a habit leads to clear physical changes in the brain.

Page 144 | Highlight

All habits follow a similar trajectory from effortful practice to automatic behavior, a process known as automaticity.

Page 147 | Highlight

The 3rd Law of Behavior Change is make it easy. ■ The most effective form of learning is practice, not planning. ■ Focus on taking action, not being in motion. ■ Habit formation is the process by which a behavior becomes progressively more automatic through repetition. ■ The amount of time you have been performing a habit is not as important as the number of times you have performed it.

Page 152 | Highlight

the less energy a habit requires, the more likely it is to occur.

Page 152 | Highlight

it is crucial to make your habits so easy that you'll do them even when you don't feel like it.

Page 153 | Highlight

The idea behind make it easy is not to only do easy things. The idea is to make it as easy as possible in the moment to do things that payoff in the long run.

Page 153 | Highlight

One of the most effective ways to reduce the friction associated with your habits is to practice environment design.

Page 153 | Highlight

Habits are easier to build when they fit into the flow of your life. You are more likely to go to the gym if it is on your way to work because stopping doesn't add much friction to your lifestyle.

Page 154 | Highlight

"Japanese firms emphasized what came to be known as 'lean production,' relentlessly looking to remove waste of all kinds from the production process, down to redesigning workspaces, so workers didn't have to waste time twisting and turning to reach their tools. The result was that Japanese factories were more efficient and Japanese products were more reliable than American ones.

Page 155 | Highlight

The central idea is to create an environment where doing the right thing is as easy as possible. Much of the battle of building better habits comes down to finding ways to reduce the friction associated with our good habits and increase the friction associated with our bad ones.

Page 156 | Highlight

I'm just proactively lazy. It gives you so much time back."

Page 158 | Highlight

“How can we design a world where it’s easy to do what’s right?” Redesign your life so the actions that matter most are also the actions that are easiest to do.

Page 158 | Highlight

Human behavior follows the Law of Least Effort. We will naturally gravitate toward the option that requires the least amount of work.

Page 158 | Highlight

Create an environment where doing the right thing is as easy as possible. ■ 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. ■ Prime your environment to make future actions easier.

Page 160 | Highlight

Habits are automatic choices that influence the conscious decisions that follow.

Page 160 | Highlight

the habits you follow without thinking often determine the choices you make when you are thinking.

Page 161 | Highlight

Decisive moments set the options available to your future self.

Page 162 | Highlight

Your options are constrained by what’s available. They are shaped by the first choice.

Page 162 | Highlight

the Two-Minute Rule, which states, “When you start a new habit, it should

Page 163 | Highlight

The idea is to make your habits as easy as possible to start.

Page 163 | Highlight

Your goal might be to run a marathon, but your gateway habit is to put on your running shoes.

Page 163 | Highlight

But the point is not to do one thing. The point is to master the habit of showing up.

Page 164 | Highlight

You have to standardize before you can optimize.

Page 164 | Highlight

The more you ritualize the beginning of a process, the more likely it becomes that you can slip into the state of deep focus that is required to do great things.

Page 164 | Highlight

By developing a consistent power-down habit, you make it easier to get to bed at a reasonable time each night.

Page 165 | Highlight

Ernest Hemingway believed in similar advice for any kind of writing. “The best way is to always stop when you are going good,” he said.

Page 165 | Highlight

Strategies like this work for another reason, too: they reinforce the identity you want to build. If you show up at the gym five days in a row—even if it’s just for two minutes—you are casting votes for your new identity.

Habits can be completed in a few seconds but continue to impact your behavior for minutes or hours afterward. ■ Many habits occur at decisive moments—choices that are like a fork in the road—and either send you in the direction of a productive day or an unproductive one. ■ The Two-Minute Rule states, “When you start a new habit, it should take less than two minutes to do.” ■ The more you ritualize the beginning of a process, the more likely it becomes that you can slip into the state of deep focus that is required to do great things. ■ Standardize before you optimize. You can’t improve a habit that doesn’t exist.

Page 169 | Highlight

Sometimes success is less about making good habits easy and more about making bad habits hard.

Page 170 | Highlight

A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that controls your actions in the future.

Page 170 | Highlight

Commitment devices are useful because they enable you to take advantage of good intentions before you can fall victim to temptation.

Page 171 | Highlight

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.

Page 172 | Highlight

The best way to break a bad habit is to make it impractical to do.

Page 174 | Highlight

“Civilization advances by extending the number of operations we can perform without thinking about them.”

Page 174 | Highlight

Technology creates a level of convenience that enables you to act on your smallest whims and desires.

Page 174 | Highlight

At the slightest hint of boredom, you can get lost in the vast expanse of social media.

Page 174 | Highlight

When the effort required to act on your desires becomes effectively zero, you can find yourself slipping into whatever impulse arises at the moment.

Page 175 | Highlight

If I feel bored for just a fraction of a second, I reach for my phone.

Page 175 | Highlight

create an environment of inevitability—

Page 176 | Highlight

The inversion of the 3rd Law of Behavior Change is make it difficult. ■ A commitment device is a choice you make in the present that locks in better behavior in the future. ■ The ultimate way to lock in future behavior is to automate your habits. ■ Onetime choices—like buying a better mattress or enrolling in an automatic savings plan—are single actions that automate your future habits and deliver increasing returns over time. ■ Using technology to automate your habits is the most reliable and effective way to guarantee the right behavior.

Page 187 | Highlight

The human brain did not evolve for life in a delayed-return environment.

Page 187 | Highlight

The earliest remains of modern humans, known as *Homo sapiens sapiens*, are approximately two hundred thousand years old.¹² These were the first humans to have a brain relatively similar to ours. In particular, the neocortex—the newest part of the brain and the region responsible for higher functions like language—was roughly the same size two hundred thousand years ago as today. You are walking around with the same hardware as your Paleolithic ancestors.¹³

Page 188 | Highlight

the consequences of bad habits are delayed while the rewards are immediate.

Page 189 | Highlight

“It almost always happens that when the immediate consequence is favorable, the later consequences are disastrous, and vice versa¹⁸ Often, the sweeter the first fruit of a habit, the more bitter are its later fruits.”

Page 189 | Highlight

When you make a plan—to lose weight, write a book, or learn a language—you are actually making plans for your future self.

Page 189 | Highlight

As a general rule, the more immediate pleasure you get from an action, the more strongly you should question whether it aligns with your long-term goals.^{fn3}

Page 190 | Highlight

If you're willing to wait for the rewards, you'll face less competition and often get a bigger payoff. As the saying goes, the last mile is always the least crowded.

Page 190 | Highlight

The vital thing in getting a habit to stick is to feel successful—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.

Page 191 | Highlight

The ending of any experience is vital because we tend to remember it more than other phases.

Page 191 | Highlight

You want to make avoidance visible.

Page 192 | Highlight

The identity itself becomes the reinforcer.

Page 193 | Highlight

The 4th Law of Behavior Change is 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: What is immediately rewarded is repeated. What is immediately punished is avoided. ■ To get a habit to stick you need to feel immediately successful—even if it's in a small way. ■ The first three laws of behavior change—make it obvious, make it attractive, and make it easy—increase the odds that a behavior will be performed this time. The fourth law of behavior change—make it satisfying—increases the odds that a behavior will be repeated next time.

Page 197 | Highlight

“Don’t break the chain” is a powerful mantra. Don’t break the chain of sales calls and you’ll build a successful book of business. Don’t break the chain of workouts and you’ll get fit faster than you’d expect. Don’t break the chain of creating every day and you will end up with an impressive portfolio.

Page 197 | Highlight

Habit tracking also keeps you honest. Most of us have a distorted view of our own behavior. We think we act better than we do. Measurement offers one way to overcome our blindness to our own behavior and notice what’s really going on each day.

Page 198 | Highlight

| Tracking can become its own form of reward.

Page 199 | Highlight

| many people resist the idea of tracking and measuring.

Page 199 | Highlight

| First, whenever possible, measurement should be automated.

Page 201 | Highlight

| never miss twice.

Page 201 | Highlight

| This is a distinguishing feature between winners and losers. Anyone can have a bad performance, a bad workout, or a bad day at work. But when successful people fail, they rebound quickly. The breaking of a habit doesn't matter if the reclaiming of it is fast.

Page 201 | Highlight

| the "bad" workouts are often the most important ones.

Page 202 | Highlight

| The dark side of tracking a particular behavior is that we become driven by the number rather than the purpose behind it.

Page 203 | Highlight

| "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure."⁹ Measurement is only useful when it guides you and adds context to a larger picture, not when it consumes you.

Page 203 | Highlight

Each number is simply one piece of feedback in the overall system.

Page 204 | Highlight

One of the most satisfying feelings is the feeling of making progress.

Page 204 | Highlight

A habit tracker is a simple way to measure whether you did a habit—like marking an X on a calendar. ■ Habit trackers and other visual forms of measurement can make your habits satisfying by providing clear evidence of your progress. ■ Don't break the chain. Try to keep your habit streak alive. ■ Never miss twice. If you miss one day, try to get back on track as quickly as possible. ■ Just because you can measure something doesn't mean it's the most important thing.

Page 206 | Highlight

If a failure is painful, it gets fixed.

Page 206 | Highlight

When the consequences are severe, people learn quickly.

Page 210 | Highlight

Knowing that someone is watching can be a powerful motivator.

Page 210 | Highlight

The inversion of the 4th Law of Behavior Change is make it unsatisfying. ■ We are less likely to repeat a bad habit if it is painful or unsatisfying. ■ An accountability partner can create an immediate cost to inaction. We care deeply about what others think of us, and we do not want others to have a lesser opinion of us. ■ A habit contract can be used to add a social cost to any behavior. It makes the costs of violating your promises public and painful. ■ Knowing that someone else is watching you can be a powerful motivator.

Page 218 | Highlight

The secret to maximizing your odds of success is to choose the right field of competition.

Page 219 | Highlight

Competence is highly dependent on context.

Page 219 | Highlight

The people at the top of any competitive field are not only well trained, they are also well suited to the task.

Page 222 | Highlight

Choose the habit that best suits you, not the one that is most popular.

Page 223 | Highlight

Pick the right habit and progress is easy. Pick the wrong habit and life is a struggle.

Page 225 | Highlight

Whenever you feel authentic and genuine, you are headed in the right direction.

Page 225 | Highlight

When you can't win by being better, you can win by being different. By combining your skills, you reduce the level of competition, which makes it easier to stand out.

Page 227 | Highlight

Until you work as hard as those you admire, don't explain away their success as luck.

Page 227 | Highlight

The secret to maximizing your odds of success is to choose the right field of competition. ■ Pick

the right habit and progress is easy. Pick the wrong habit and life is a struggle. ■ Genes cannot be easily changed, which means they provide a powerful advantage in favorable circumstances and a serious disadvantage in unfavorable circumstances. ■ Habits are easier when they align with your natural abilities. Choose the habits that best suit you.

Page 227 | Highlight

Play a game that favors your strengths. If you can't find a game that favors you, create one. ■ Genes do not eliminate the need for hard work. They clarify it. They tell us what to work hard on.

Page 231 | Highlight

The human brain loves a challenge, but only if it is within an optimal zone of difficulty.

Page 231 | Highlight

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.

Page 233 | Highlight

to achieve a state of flow, a task must be roughly 4 percent beyond your current ability.⁵

Page 233 | Highlight

“At some point it comes down to who can handle the boredom of training every day, doing the same lifts over and over and over.”

Page 234 | Highlight

The greatest threat to success is not failure but boredom.

Page 235 | Highlight

you have to fall in love with boredom.

Page 236 | Highlight

if you only do the work when it's convenient or exciting, then you'll never be consistent enough to achieve remarkable results.

Page 237 | Highlight

The Goldilocks Rule states that humans experience peak motivation when working on tasks that are right on the edge of their current abilities. ■ The greatest threat to success is not failure but boredom.

Page 237 | Highlight

As habits become routine, they become less interesting and less satisfying. We get bored. ■ Anyone can work hard when they feel motivated. It's the ability to keep going when work isn't exciting that makes the difference. ■ Professionals stick to the schedule; amateurs let life get in the way.

Page 239 | Highlight

However, the benefits of habits come at a cost. At first, each repetition 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.

Page 240 | Highlight

What you need is a combination of automatic habits and deliberate practice. Habits + Deliberate Practice = Mastery

Page 247 | Highlight

The tighter we cling to an identity, the harder it becomes to grow beyond it.

Page 248 | Highlight

When you cling too tightly to one identity, you become brittle. Lose that one thing and you lose yourself.

Page 248 | Highlight

“I’m an athlete” becomes “I’m the type of person who is mentally tough and loves a physical challenge.”

Page 249 | Highlight

The upside of habits is that we can do things without thinking. The downside is that we stop paying attention to little errors. ■ Habits + Deliberate Practice = Mastery ■ Reflection and review is a process that allows you to remain conscious of your performance over time. ■ The tighter we cling to an identity, the harder it becomes to grow beyond it.

Page 252 | Highlight

commitment to tiny, sustainable, unrelenting improvements.

Page 252 | Highlight

Success is not a goal to reach or a finish line to cross. It is a system to improve, an endless process to refine.

Page 259 | Highlight

Awareness comes before desire.

Page 259 | Highlight

Happiness is simply the absence of desire.

Page 260 | Highlight

“Happiness is the space between one desire being fulfilled and a new desire forming.”

Page 260 | Highlight

Peace occurs when you don’t turn your observations into problems.

Page 260 | Highlight

| Craving is about wanting to fix everything.

Page 260 | Highlight

| With a big enough why you can overcome any how.

Page 260 | Highlight

| Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher and poet, famously wrote, “He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.”

Page 261 | Highlight

| Being curious is better than being smart.

Page 261 | Highlight

| Emotions drive behavior.

Page 261 | Highlight

| We can only be rational and logical after we have been emotional.

Page 261 | Highlight

| Your response tends to follow your emotions.

Page 262 | Highlight

| Suffering drives progress.

Page 262 | Highlight

| Your actions reveal how badly you want something.

Page 262 | Highlight

Reward is on the other side of sacrifice.

Page 262 | Highlight

Self-control is difficult because it is not satisfying.

Page 262 | Highlight

Our expectations determine our satisfaction.

Page 263 | Highlight

Satisfaction = Liking – Wanting⁶

Page 263 | Highlight

“Being poor is not having too little, it is wanting more.”

Page 263 | Highlight

The pain of failure correlates to the height of expectation.

Page 263 | Highlight

Feelings come both before and after the behavior.

Page 264 | Highlight

Cue > Craving (Feeling) > Response > Reward (Feeling)

Page 264 | Highlight

Desire initiates. Pleasure sustains.

Page 264 | Highlight

Hope declines with experience and is replaced by acceptance.

Page 264 | Highlight

The first time an opportunity arises, there is hope of what could be. Your expectation (cravings) is based solely on promise. The second time around, your expectation is grounded in reality. You begin to understand how the process works and your hope is gradually traded for a more accurate prediction and acceptance of the likely outcome.

Page 264 | Highlight

New strategies seem more appealing than old ones because they can have unbounded hope.