



The Power of Habit By Charles Duhigg

“Habits, scientists say, emerge because the brain is constantly looking for ways to save effort.” Much like water cuts into a mountain to form a ditch. So our habits make a path in our brain. When it rains on the mountain the water takes the easiest path and our brains do the same things with habits.

“The Habit Loop:

1. The Cue: a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode and which habit to use.
2. The routine: this can be physical or mental or emotional.
3. The reward: this helps your brain figure out if this particular loop is worth remembering for the future.”

“When a habit emerges, the brain stops fully participating in decision making. It stops working so hard, or diverts focus to other tasks. So unless you deliberately fight a habit—unless you find new routines—the pattern will unfold automatically.”

Changing Habits:

“Cravings are what drive habits. And figuring out how to spark a craving makes creating a new habit easier...to change a habit, you must keep the old cue, and deliver the old reward, but insert a new routine....Almost any behavior can be transformed if the cue and reward stay the same.”

You never get rid of habits. They are always there. Once the cue is triggered it wants to kick into place. The only way to change what happens after the cue is to create a new routine.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

1. **Identify the routine:** Something you want to change.
2. **Experiment with rewards:** Change the reward. See what it is that you are really craving. Ex. Are you eating out of hunger or boredom?

3. Isolate the cue: almost all habitual cues fit into one of five categories: Location, Time, Emotional State, ,Other People, Immediately Preceding Action

4. Have a plan: “When I see CUE, I will do ROUTINE in order to get a REWARD.”

Keystone Habits:

“Keystone habits offer what is known within academic literature as “small wins.” They help other habits to flourish by creating new structures, and they establish cultures where change becomes contagious.” Keystone habits include things like regular exercise; once someone begins, other good habits are likely to follow.

The way that they work is by creating small wins that “fuel transformative changes by leveraging tiny advantages into patterns that convince people that bigger achievements are within reach.” They also encourage change “by creating structures that help other habits to flourish.”

Willpower:

Willpower is a muscle. It can be strengthened by practice and it can also be fatigued. “Willpower becomes a habit...by choosing a certain behavior ahead of time, and then following that routine when an inflection point arrives”

Researchers found that “the key difference was the sense of control (people) had over their experience. “When people are asked to do something that takes self-control, if they think they are doing it for personal reasons—if they feel like it’s a choice or something they enjoy because it helps someone else—it’s much less taxing. If they feel like they have no autonomy, if they’re just following orders, their willpower muscles get tired much faster.”

...For companies and organizations, this insight has enormous implications. Simply giving employees a sense of agency—a feeling that they are in control, that they have genuine decision-making authority—can radically increase how much energy and focus they bring to their jobs.

Changing Organizational Habits:

“There are no organizations without institutional habits. There are only places where they are deliberately designed, and places where they are created without forethought, so they often grow from rivalries or fear. But sometimes, even destructive habits can be transformed by leaders who know how to seize the right opportunities. Sometimes, in the heat of a crisis, the right habits emerge.” Someone has well said: ““You never want a serious crisis to go to

waste”. “Crises are so valuable, in fact, that sometimes it’s worth stirring up a sense of looming catastrophe rather than letting it die down.”

How to do this: “A company with dysfunctional habits can’t turn around simply because a leader orders it. Rather, wise executives seek out moments of crisis—or create the perception of crisis—and cultivate the sense that something must change, until everyone is finally ready to overhaul the patterns they live with each day.”

A second way to create change: “If you dress a new something in old habits, it’s easier for the public to accept it.”

Social Habits:

“A movement starts because of the social habits of friendship and the strong ties between close acquaintances. It grows because of the habits of a community, and the weak ties that hold neighborhoods and clans together. And it endures because a movement’s leaders give participants new habits that create a fresh sense of identity and a feeling of ownership.