

Charles Duhigg

THE POWER OF HABIT

"The Golden Rule of Habit Change: You can't extinguish a bad habit, you can only change it."

CUE:

The trigger that initiates the habit. It can be a specific time of day, emotional state, or environmental factor that prompts the behavior.

You're feeling stressed after a long day at work.

You eat a chocolate bar.

ROUTINE:

The behavior itself, which is the action you take in response to the cue. This is the habitual activity that follows the trigger.

HOW HABITS ARE FORMED WITH THE HABIT LOOP

You experience a sense of comfort and relaxation from the chocolate.

REWARD:

The benefit or satisfaction gained from the routine. Rewards reinforce the habit, making it more likely to be repeated in the future.

HOW TO SWAP BAD HABITS FOR GOOD ONES

Identify the Cue:

Recognise that stress after work triggers the urge to eat chocolate.

Modify the Routine:

Replace eating chocolate with taking a short walk or practicing deep breathing exercises.

Ensure a Reward:

Experience the relaxation and stress relief from walking or breathing exercises, similar to the comfort chocolate provided.

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Key Insights:

The Power of Habits by Charles Duhigg

1 Habits are simple cue-routine-reward loops that save effort and endure.

Habits operate through a loop where a cue triggers a routine, followed by a reward. This process automates behavior, reducing cognitive load and making actions more efficient and enduring over time.

2 Habits stick because they create craving.

The reward associated with a habit generates a craving, reinforcing the cycle. This craving drives repetition, making habits persistent and difficult to change without addressing the underlying desire.

3 To change a habit, substitute the routine for another and believe in the change.

Altering a habit involves replacing the existing routine with a new one while maintaining the same cue and reward. Belief in the ability to change is crucial for sustaining the new behavior.

4 Change can be achieved by focusing on keystone habits and achieving small wins.

Keystone habits, like regular exercise, have a ripple effect, influencing other behaviors positively. Small wins build momentum, encouraging further progress and facilitating larger changes.

5 Willpower is the most important keystone habit.

Strengthening willpower enhances self-control across various aspects of life. It serves as a foundational habit that supports the development and maintenance of other positive behaviors.

6 We bear the responsibility for changing our habits.

Individuals are accountable for recognizing and modifying their habits. Understanding the habit loop empowers personal transformation and the pursuit of healthier, more productive behaviors.