

FORM EMPOWERING HABITS TO CREATE THE LIFE YOU DESIRE

When you intend to do something, the likelihood of getting it done goes up dramatically. Knowing your intentions is key. Forming habits to encourage those intentions only makes sense. Your life becomes what you consistently do. This lesson focuses on habits.

How you go about your daily life ultimately determines the life you live. Think about it—if you eat more than your share of high fat, high sugar food and spend your spare time watching television, you’re creating the life of a sedentary person who carries at least a bit of extra weight and has a sparse social life.

On the other hand, if your daily life is filled with healthy choices and activities you do each day, it stands to reason that you’re a healthier, more active

person. Applying this idea further, if you don't choose to do your own homework regarding your work or career, you might be the type of person who just does what he has to do to get by at work.

After all, you've got other things you'd rather do like watch sports on television or hang out with your friends.

If you're interested in advancing your career, you probably spend at least some time daily engaging in reading, tasks, projects, and activities that focus on your career development. The results of your behaviors most likely are that you're high-achieving in your work, well-respected at the office, and have done quite well in your career.

How can you fill your life engaging in activities with people and study that bring richness and fulfillment to you? How can you create the life you truly desire? The answer? Form empowering habits that ensure you live the life you seek.

WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT FORMING HABITS?

When you think about it, your life is all about the habits you have.

1. **Your habits=your life.** What you do every single

day over and over again combines, over time, to become the very foundation of your life.

2. **Habits are automatic behaviors.** When you develop a habit, it takes that action out of the realm of having to make a conscious choice every time you do it. ***You don't have to think about it or make yourself do something once it's a habit.*** You just do it automatically.
3. **Habits can be empowering or inhibiting and even unhealthy.** This same information applies to both forming empowering, positive habits that help you get what you want or negative habits that hold you back from fulfilling your potential.
4. **Positive habits create the life you want.** If you form positive habits, you're more likely to enjoy the riches and fulfillment of the good life you want.

Your habits are the most basic elements of your life. Whether you look at your day-to-day routines or your overall life, it's made up of all the behaviors you do. Those actions practiced consistently are your habits. ***If you establish positive empowering habits, you'll live the life of your dreams.***

"I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one subject at a time."

-Charles Dickens

THE SCIENCE OF HABIT DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, you might have read a lot about how long it takes to develop a habit from repeating new positive behaviors that you exhibit. If you ask around or even search the internet, you'll hear that it takes anywhere from 10 to 28 days to establish a habit.

However, some new research by Phillippa Lally and others at University College London have truly shed light on the science behind habit development. Take a look at some of Lally and her fellow researchers' findings and some additional suggestions based on the research:

1. ***A behavior must be repeated 66 times consecutively before it forms a habit.*** If you've ever tried to establish a habit by performing a behavior every day for say, 14 or 21 days, it probably didn't work because you didn't do the behavior enough times in a row in order to successfully develop the habit.

2. **Repeat the behaviors in the same setting/situation.** You're more likely to form a habit when you keep doing a behavior in the same place and/or situation. Where you are affects habit formation.

- *The researchers determined that where you are whenever you're trying to form a habit has something to do with how successful you'll be.* In essence, if you're in the same place when you're doing the new behavior over and over, you're more likely to successfully form a habit.

3. **Forming a new habit is "cue-dependent."** Whether you form a habit depends somewhat on cues in your environment and behaviors. There are 2 types of such cues, according to Lally and the other researchers: situational and contextual.

- Situational cues originate from your environment or location while contextual cues are other behaviors you do in conjunction with or related to the new behavior you wish to perform to start a habit.
- An example of a situational cue is what you see in the morning when you first

enter your kitchen: you see your coffeemaker and therefore decide to make some coffee. Your coffee maker is therefore, something that triggers you to make and drink your morning coffee, which you do every morning (possibly out of habit).

- An example of a contextual cue in this case of morning coffee is that as soon as you shut off the alarm and put on your robe, you head to the kitchen to prepare your morning fix. Getting up and getting on your robe trigger you to go make and drink your coffee.

4. **Consistency is an important key to establishing habits.** Results of the research also emphasize the importance of consistency of doing a behavior when trying to form a habit.

- *Although researchers found you could skip a day when trying to establish a habit, it's unknown how many total days you could skip during the 66 days and still successfully end up forming a habit.*

5. **Avoid skipping the behavior if you want it to become a habit.** Plan to repeat a behavior 66 times in a row without skipping to ensure you develop a habit. After consistently doing the new behavior 66 times, you'll likely discover you're automatically performing the behaviors. You will have formed a habit.
 - Focusing on what you really want in life and developing habits leading to those goals will ensure you live the life you seek.
6. **In particular, be 100% consistent in the initial process** of establishing a habit. Another factor that researchers found to be important is that early on in the process of performing behaviors, be absolutely consistent.
 - Research revealed that those who skipped days initially during the 66 day period were less likely to successfully establish a habit. One could theorize that you're setting up your brain to become accustomed to a habit early on in the process.
7. **Be in the same place/room** when doing a behavior you want to become a habit. Ideally,

perform your behavior in the same room when you do it.

8. **Pair the new behavior** with one you already do regularly. For example, if you want to start flossing your teeth, lay the package of floss right by your toothpaste tube or even on top of it to be reminded to do it just after you brush your teeth for the night. Be consistent about flossing your teeth each time you brush your teeth.

Apply the info gained from this valuable research when you're attempting to form positive habits.

Let's take a look at negative habits and their consequences, substituting positive habits for negative habits, and developing new, empowering habits.

Just as positive habits can shape the course of your life in positive ways, negative habits can have the opposite effect. You'll understand how to deal with negative habits during the next lesson.

GET STARTED ON THE TIPS FOR THIS LESSON

Take a few minutes to list the new habits you'd like to develop. Keep your intentions from the previous lesson in mind.

Choose one of those habits and work through the process in this lesson. Note your results. New habits are challenging to develop and old habits are challenging to break. The sooner you begin perfecting these skills, the more quickly you can achieve success.