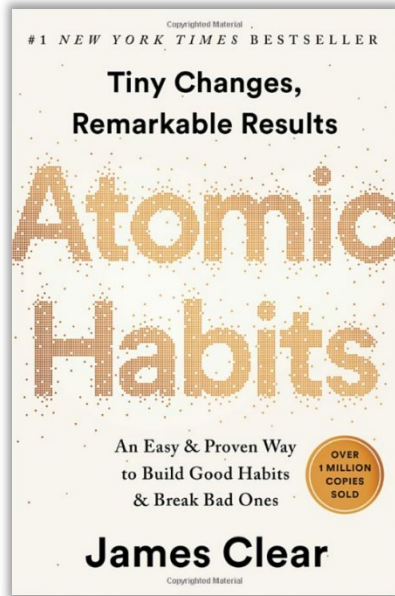
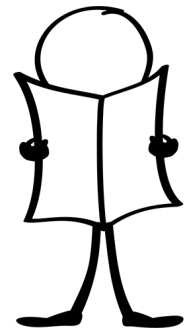


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ATOMIC HABITS

An easy & proven way to build good habits & bread bad ones

POINT of Reference:

Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic Habits: An easy and proven way to build good habits and bread bad ones*. Avery: New York, New York.

ISBN: 978-0735211292 | 306 pages



At 306 pages, this is a MEDIUM length read. Filled with lots of stories, so you could do a fair amount of skipping if you get the concepts.

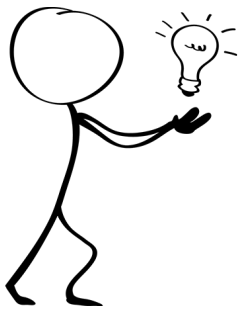
Genre

Business
Psychology
Self-Help
Goal Setting &
Achievement

A great example of an author who has taken proven human psychological principles and adapted them to personal development and to the world of business leadership. The visualization techniques and systems approach are powerful.

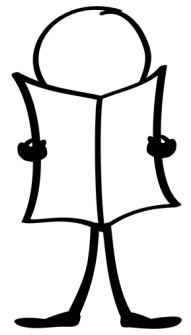
Key POINTs

- “You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.”
- Bad habits are hard to shake because we have surrounded ourselves with reinforcing systems that perpetuate the habit. It’s not that we don’t want to change them, it’s that we don’t have the reinforcing systems in place to do so.
- Small changes compound over time. They are easier to adopt and to systematize into our routines, which increase the probability of success.
- To effectively change your habits, it is most useful to focus constantly on *who* you want to become. (This is more powerful and sustainable than focusing on goals.)



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Main POINTs

If you've ever done any reading on the business topic of *continuous improvement*, this is the personal self-help equivalent of that time-tested business topic. Just like *continuous improvement* seems to fly-in-the-face of concepts such as innovation, re-engineering, and disruption, *Atomic Habits* would seem to fly-in-the-face of concepts such as personal goals, new year's resolutions, and even dieting. Anyone who has been a practitioner of continuous improvement techniques understands how powerful they can be over time, and the pace at which one can wholly change an organization with continuous improvement is mind-boggling fast. I/O psychology and the sub-discipline of change leadership supports this phenomenon: organizations (people) accept and embrace incremental change better than revolutionary change. The premise is essentially the same when it comes to changing personal habits. Smaller and continuous improvements over time add up to remarkable achievements.

The author uses a great analogy of the 'rule of earned interest.' In the financial planning and investments space, it's also known as the rule of 72. The rule of 72 is a short formula for estimating the length of time it takes to double one's investment given a certain earned interest rate. It essentially results in a logarithmic curve of payout: initially seeming

Extra POINTs

Practice "positive compounding":

Productivity – Accomplishing one extra task a day adds up to a lot in a long-run

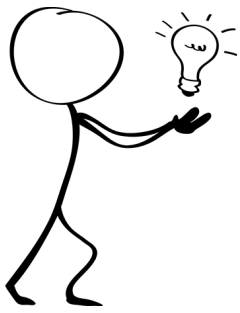
Knowledge – Committing to continuous learning leads to transformation

Relationships – The more you help others, the more others want to help you

Eliminate "negative compounding":

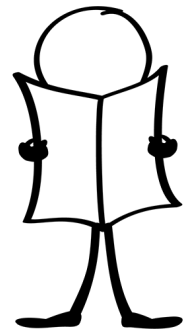
Stress – Seemingly little stresses can add up to serious health issues

Thinking – Your interpretation of life is based on your thoughts. If you think you (or others) are stupid, worthless, ugly, incompetent, etc...your life will reflect these thoughts



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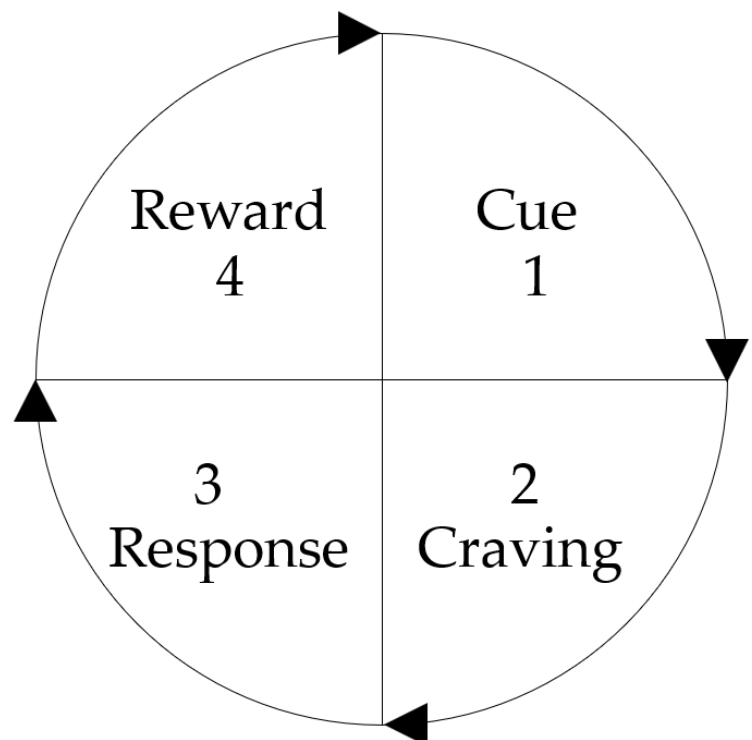
*Get to the **point**, fast!*



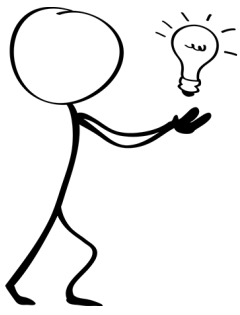
small and insignificant but compounding itself over time and ballooning into large returns down the road. As the author states, “Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement. The same way that money multiplies through compound interest, the effects of your habits multiply as you repeat them.” Accomplishing that 1 extra task in a day compounds exponentially over time. Learning one new concept won’t make you an expert but committing to learning one new concept every week can add up to an entire domain of expertise over the course of time.

We can tell by reading the book that the presence of systems-thinking is no mistake; it is very intentional.

The author clearly understands that we live and work in a world of systems and systems-within-systems that reinforce our behaviors and our activities (good, bad, or indifferent.) The macro-system that the author addresses is the one shown by the illustration, that of 1) Cue, 2) Craving, 3) Reward, and 4) Response. He provides a succinct framework for how to go about

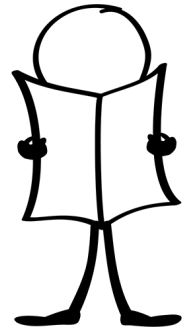


making incremental adjustments in your systems so you can create (or sustain) good habits and so you can break bad habits. To create and sustain good habits, make changes to each of the four steps to make the cues more obvious, the cravings more attractive, the



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responses easier, and the rewards more satisfying. To break bad habits you have to do the opposite and make the cues invisible (or eliminate them altogether,) the cravings unattractive, the responses difficult, and the rewards unsatisfying and unpleasant.

An interesting point is that the author says that people with high levels of self-control (or, apparently high levels of self-control) are those who spend less time in tempting situations. In other words, they avoid the situations that cause them temptation to begin with. The premise being that it is easier to *avoid* than it is to *resist*.

“Simply doing something – ten squats, five sprints, a push-up, anything really – is huge. Don’t put up a zero. Don’t let losses eat into your compounding.”