



CULTIVATING HABITS

transform in big ways with day-by-day automated action

WHAT DECISIONS CAN I REMOVE FROM MY DAY?

Walk through a day with this question in mind. Notice where you falter and the energy expelled to make a decision. *Ex: I noticed that I'd sometimes take my vitamins at different times throughout the day. I could never remember if I took them since it was pretty fluid.*

WHAT HABITS CAN REPLACE IT?

We can't just eliminate something important. How can you establish a routine or consistent response so you aren't expending energy on mundane things? Gretchen Rubin says "Something done at any time is often done at no time." *Ex: I planned a time to take them every day, no exceptions and it wasn't confining. It was freeing! I don't have to think about little old vitamins anymore!*

WHAT IS MY KEYSTONE HABIT? WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT HABIT YOU CAN START WITH?

This is what Charles Duhigg calls the habit that will knock down the domino of other habits and help you build good momentum. *Ex: Using my cellphone less means I have more time for other habits like reading to my kids, working out and having intentional conversations with my husband.*

WHAT ESTABLISHED HABIT CAN YOU PAIR WITH ONE YOU ARE TRYING TO START?

Another great idea from Better Than Before by Gretchen Rubin. Think about habits you want to cultivate and about already established habits: How often you do something? Where you do something?

Ex: I love to read every night. I wanted to start flossing regularly. Now I associate flossing with reading and have flossed nearly every night since starting because I get to do something I love while I do it.

CAN SOMEONE KEEP ME ACCOUNTABLE?

Some habits are easier to see accountability than others: a workout class, a boss, a healthy eating program. But what about other little habits? Can you tell someone to ask about a habit? *Ex: Someone who may be a little further down the road who will challenge you? Not an enabler! The friend who's always up to skip a workout or order dessert even though you've stressed you are trying to cut back.*

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONALITY??

Gretchen goes into this a lot in Better Than Before so I highly recommend pick it up if you are interested. The idea simple. Just work with your personality. If you are introverted you may work out better alone even though your friend who's an extrovert loves a class that you just can't seem to enjoy.

If you aren't sure, take a personality test or two and figure out ways to play to your strengths so you can really finally change those habits. *Ex: I got out of the habit of applying my nightly face routine. It was too many steps so when I was really tired I just skipped the whole thing. In the mornings, I'm bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and actually find the routine relaxing and helps me get moving. I now have 1 step at night and 4 in the morning. I'm sure beauty experts might say applying a facial oil is better at night but if I never do it, then it doesn't help.*

ANTICIPATE THE REWARD.

Visualize the outcome of sticking with your habits. Is it worth it? See the potential of victory. How will I measure the success? *Ex: Visualizing having energy for my daughters or being the dressing room and everything fits as opposed to assuming you will never be able to lose the weight and giving up before you even have a chance to see results.*

ANALYZE THE SETBACKS.

I'm calling them setbacks and not failures because we don't need to see them that way. See them as training ground and learn something from it! Otherwise, it's a total waste. So what were the triggers? What sensation are you going for? Can you find a healthy way to reach it? What did you convince yourself of that might not be true? *Ex: I ate Chick-Fil-A instead of the salad I had prepped in the fridge because the girls were stressing me out. I could drink a LaCroix instead to "cool" off. I convinced myself that CFA would destress me. It was delicious for 10 minutes but didn't do what I convinced myself it would.*

CREATE A GAME PLAN.

Once you analyze, then create a game plan. Habit gurus call this if-then planning. Figure out ahead of time how you will respond to those triggers and obstacles you just wrote down.

Ex: If I make a salad, then I eat it. I don't throw away salads. If I need to cool off, then I pray and grab a LaCroix instead of chocolate.