***Atomic Habits*: by James Clear**

* Changes that seems small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you’re willing to stick with them for years. We all deal with setbacks but in the long run, the quality of our lives often depends on the quality of our habits.

**Why Small Habits Make A Big Difference**

* It is so easy to overestimate the importance of one defining moment and underestimate the value of making small improvements on a daily basis.
* The difference a tiny improvement can make over time is astounding. Here’s how the math works out: if you can get 1 percent better each day for one year, you’ll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you’re done.
* A slight change in your daily habits can guide your life to a very different destination. Making a choice that is 1 percent better or worse seem insignificant in the moment, but over the span of moments that make up a lifetime these choices determine the difference between who you are and who you could be. Success is the product of daily habits- not once-in a-lifetime transformations.
* It doesn’t matter how successful or unsuccessful you are right now. What matters is whether your habits are putting you on the path toward success. You should be far more concerned with your current trajectory than with your current results.
* If you want to predict where you’ll end up in life, all you have to do is follow the curve of tiny gains or tiny losses, and see how your daily choices will compound ten or twenty years down the line. Are you making it to the gym each week? Are you reading books and learning something new each day? Tiny battles like these are the ones that will define your future self.
* This is one of the core reasons why it is so hard to build habits that last. People make a few small changes, fail to see a tangible result, and decide to stop. You think, “I’ve been running every day for a month, so why can’t I see any change in my body?” Once this kind of thinking takes over, it’s easy to let good habits fall by the wayside.
* All big things come from small beginnings.

**Forget About Goals, Focus on Systems Instead**

* Prevailing wisdom claims that the best way to achieve what we want in life- getting into better shape, relaxing more and worrying less- is to set specific, actionable goals.
* I began to realize that my results have very little to do with the goals I set and nearly everything to do with the systems I followed.
* What’s the difference between systems and goals? Goals are about the results you want to achieve. Systems are about the processes that lead to those results.
* If you want better results, then forget about setting goals. Focus on your system instead.
* Are goals completely useless? Of course not. Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress. A handful of problems arise when you spend too much time thinking about your goals and not enough time designing your systems.
* Achieving a goal only changes your life *for the moment*. What we really need to change are the systems that cause those results.
* The implicit assumption behind any goal is this: “Once I reach my goal, then I’ll be happy.” The problem with a goals-first mentality is that you’re continually putting happiness off until the next milestone.
* Goals create an “either-or” conflict: either you achieve your goal and are successful or you fail and you are disappointed.
* When you fall in love with the process rather than the product, you don’t have to wait to give yourself permission to be happy. You can be satisfied anytime your system is running.
* A goal-oriented mind-set can create a “yo-yo” effect. Many runners work hard for months, but as soon as they cross the finish line, they stop training. The race is no longer there to motivate them. When all of your hard work is focused on a particular goal, what is left to push you forward after you achieve it? This is why many people find themselves reverting to their old habits after accomplishing a goal.

**A System of Atomic Habits**

* An atomic habit refers to a tiny change, a marginal gain, a 1 percent improvement. They are little habits that are part of a larger system.
* This is the meaning of the phrase *atomic habits*- a regular practice or routine that is not only small and easy to do, but also the source of incredible power; a component of the system of compound growth.

**How Your Habits Shape Your Identity**

* You may want better health, but if you continue to prioritize comfort over accomplishment, you’ll be drawn to relaxing rather than training. It’s hard to change your habits if you never change the underlying beliefs that led to your past behavior. You have a new goal and a new plan, but you haven’t changed *who* you are.
* The ultimate form of intrinsic motivation is when a habit becomes part of your identity. It’s one thing to say I’m the type of person who *wants* this. It’s something very different to say I’m the type of person who is this.
* The more pride you have in a particular aspect of your identity, the more motivated you will be to maintain the habits associated with it.
* Once your pride gets involved, you’ll fight tooth and nail to maintain your habits.
* True behavior change is identity change. You might start a habit because of motivation, but the only reason you’ll stick with one is that it becomes part of your identity. Anyone can convince themselves to visit the gym or eat healthy once or twice, but if you don’t shift the belief behind the behavior, then it is hard to stick with long-term changes. Improvements are only temporary until they become part of who you are.
* The goal is not to read a book, the goal is to b*ecome* a reader. The goal is not to run a marathon, the goal is to *become* a runner.
* Your behaviors are usually a reflection of your identity. What you do is an indication of the type of person you believe that you are- either consciously or non-consciously. Doing the right thing is easy. After all, when your behavior and your identity are fully aligned, you are no longer pursuing behavior change. You are simply acting like the type of person you already believe yourself to be.
* Good habits can make rational sense, but if they conflict with your identity, you will fail to put them in action.

**The Two-Step Process to Changing Your Identity**

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* Your identity emerges out of your habits. You are not born with present beliefs. Every belief, including those about yourself, is learned and conditioned through experience.
* More precisely, your habits are how you *embody* your identity. When you make your bed each day, you embody the identity of an organized person. When you train each day, you embody the identity of an athletic person.
* The more you repeat a behavior, the more you reinforce the identity associated with that behavior.
* Whatever your identity is right now, you only believe it because you have proof of it. If you go to the gym when it’s snowing, you have evidence that you are committed to fitness. The more evidence you have for a belief, the more strongly you will believe it.
* We do not change by snapping our fingers and deciding to be someone entirely new. We change bit by bit, day by day, habit by habit. We are continually undergoing microevolutions of the self.
* Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become. No single instance will transform your beliefs, but as the votes build up, so does the evidence of your new identity.
* Each habit not only gets results but also teaches you something far more important: to trust yourself. You start to believe you can actually accomplish these things. When the votes mount up and the evidence begins to change, the story you tell yourself begins to change as well.
* It’s a simple two-step process: 1) Decide the type of person you want to be. 2) Prove it to yourself with small wins.
* Habits are, simply, reliable solutions to recurring problems in our environment. Without good health habits, you will always seem to be short on energy.

**The Best Way to Start A New Habit**

* Many people think they lack motivation when what they really lack is clarity. It is not always obvious when and where to take action. Some people spend their entire lives waiting for the time to be right to make an improvement.
* The simple way to apply this strategy to your habits is to fill out this sentence: I will [BAHAVIOR] at [TIME] in [LOCATION].
* When scientists analyze people who appear to have tremendous self-control, it turns out that those individual aren’t all that different from those who are struggling. Instead, “disciplined” people are better at structuring their lives in a way that *does not require* heroic willpower and self-control. In other words, they spend less time in tempting situations.
* The people with the best self-control are typically the ones who need to use it the least. It’s easier to practice self-restraint when you don’t have to use it very often. So, yes, perseverance, grit, and willpower are essential to success, but the way to improve these qualities is not by wishing you were a more disciplined person, but by creating a more disciplined environment.

**How to Stick with Good Habits Every Day**

* Research has shown that people who trace their progress on goals like losing weight, quitting smoking, and lowering blood pressure are all more likely to improve than those who don’t. The mere act of tracking a behavior can spark the urge to change it.
* When you’re feeling down, it’s easy to forget about all the progress you have already made. Habit tracking provides visual proof of your hard work- a subtle reminder of har far you’ve come.
* Habit tracking also helps keep your eye on the ball: you’re focused on the process rather than the result. You’re not fixed on getting six-pack abs, you’re just trying to keep the streak alive and become the type of person who doesn’t miss workouts.
* No matter how consistent you are with your habits, it is inevitable that life will interrupt you at some point. Perfection is not possible. Before long, an emergency will pop up- you get sick or you have to travel for work or your family needs a little more of your time. Whenever this happens to me, I try to remind myself of a simple rule: never miss twice.
* If I miss one day, I try to get back into it as quickly as possible. Missing one workout happens, but I’m not going to miss two in a row.
* The first mistake is never the one that ruins you. It is the spiral of repeated mistakes that follows. Missing once is an accident. Missing twice is the start of a new habit.
* Too often, we fall into an all-or-nothing cycle with our habits. The problem is not slipping up; the problem is thinking that if you can’t do something perfectly, then you shouldn’t do it at all.
* It’s about being the type of person who doesn’t miss workouts. It’s easy to train when you feel good, but it’s crucial to show up when you don’t feel like it- even if you do less than you hope.
* The all-or-nothing cycle of behavior change is just one pitfall that can derail your habits.

**How to Stay Focused When You Get Bored Working on Your Goals**

* What’s the difference between the best athletes and everyone else? At some point it comes down to who can handle the boredom of training every day, doing the same lifts over and over and over.
* Really successful people *feel* the same lack of motivation as everyone else. The difference is that they still find a way to show up despite the feelings of boredom.
* I can guarantee you that if you manage to start a habit and keep sticking to it, there will be days when you feel like quitting. When you’re in the gym, there will be sets you don’t feel like finishing. Stepping up when it’s annoying or painful or draining to do so, that’s what makes the difference between a professional and an amateur.
* Professionals stick to the schedule; amateurs let life get in the way. Professionals know what is important to them and work toward it with purpose; amateurs get pulled off course by the urgencies of life.
* When a habit is truly important to you, you have to be willing to stick to it in any mood. Professionals take action even when the mood isn’t right. They might not enjoy it, but they find a way to put the reps in.
* The only way to become excellent is to be endlessly fascinated by doing the same thing over and over. You have to fall in love with boredom.

**The Secret to Results That Last**

* Can one tiny change transform your life? It’s unlikely you would say so. But what if you made another? And another? And another? At some point, you will have to admit that your life was transformed by one small change.
* The holy grail of habit change is not a single 1 percent improvement, but a thousand of them. It’s a bunch of atomic habits stacking up, each one a fundamental unit of the overall system.
* Gradually, though, as you continue to layer small changes on top of one another, the scales of life start to move. Each improvement is like adding a grain of sand to the positive side of the scale, slowly tilting things in your favor. Eventually, if you stick with it, you hit a tipping point. Suddenly, it feels easier to stick with good habits. The work of the system is working for you rather than against you.
* Success is not a goal to reach or a finish line to cross. It is a system to improve, an endless process to refine.
* The secret to getting results that last is to never stop making improvements. It’s remarkable what you can build if you just don’t stop. That’s the power of atomic habits. Tiny changes. Remarkable results.