

The Power of Building Positive Habits, Routines & Rituals into your Daily Life

There is power in structuring your life so that you build positive habits.

The big mistake most of us make is wanting to feel good before we do something – after all we should follow our feelings – Right? Wrong actually. It’s a trap. The belief is that once we feel good we will be able to do all the things we value. The truth is that the way things change is the other way around –act first, feelings second. From actually doing positive behaviours we then start to feel better about ourselves and then can do even more of what we value. So the good news is you don’t have to feel good, or ready or motivated to change your life for the better. You just need to activate the behaviours (this is called “behavioural activation”).

Start with a plan. Some of us are more natural planners than others but whichever way it works for you, choose a set of behaviours that you can regularly do, so that you don’t have to decide on a regular basis what to do – this is the absolute joy of habits – it frees you from the endless cycle of decision making (which often just ends in paralysis). For some people this will best work if you can link your habit to some other group or some form of social obligation. Accountability to the self is enough for others.

Name some simple routines, habits or activities that there is evidence will activate good behaviors. The simplest and guaranteed is physical movement. Plan to increase the amount of exercise you do in any way that can work for you. This can be any movement-based behaviour – like walking the dog. You need to monitor your exercise and record the establishment of the new habit – this is important in setting up the feedback loop – I planned this, I did it, I measured it and notice the feeling that results.

Next choose another positive action to do to activate yourself. There are well established ways of feeling more in control – such as cleaning up, doing something for someone else or simply expressing appreciation to someone. **Then link** the positive actions and routines so that they are linked in a series. By doing more and thinking less your life runs more on “automatic” – but an “automatic” that you have set when you are your best self.

Learn more about the positive power of habits from this 2015 book by Gretchen Rubin or follow her on any social media platform for tips about establishing positive habits.

Better than Before: Mastering the Habits of our Everyday Lives

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Better-Than-Before-Gretchen-Rubin/9780385348614?ref=grid-view&qid=1665896568758&sr=1-1>

