

# THE POWER OF HABIT

## Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business

**CHARLES DUHIGG**

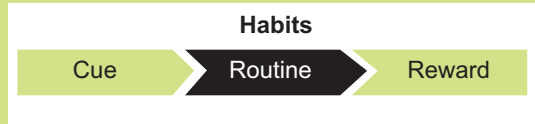
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The Web site for this book is at [www.ThePowerofHabit.com](http://www.ThePowerofHabit.com).

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**MAIN IDEA**

Habits can be changed if you understand how they work. At the core of every habit you have lies a reasonably simple neurological loop:



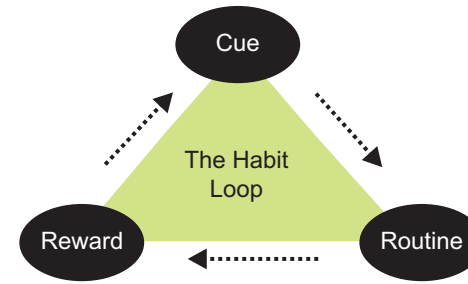
If you want to change and reshape your habits for the better:

- 1. Identify the routines you currently follow** – and figure out how you can change your routines so you swap vices for virtues.
- 2. Experiment with different rewards** – until you can isolate what you're actually craving when you do something habitually. If you can figure out what you're genuinely craving, then you understand how to make a desired behavior automatic.
- 3. Isolate the cue that triggers your habit** – what it is that signals it's time to do something. There are in practice only five types of cues: location, time, your emotional state, other people or an immediately preceding action. Figure out what sparks your habit to occur.
- 4. Then develop a new plan** – for what you'll do differently the next time that cue arises.

When you get right down to basics, habits are formulas your brain automatically follows: When you see a CUE, you do a ROUTINE in order to get the REWARD. To change your habit, keep the cue and the reward the same and insert a new routine.

*“Obviously, changing some habits can be more difficult. But this framework is the place to start. Sometimes change takes a long time. Sometimes it requires repeated experiments and failure. But once you understand how a habit operates – once you diagnose the cue, the routine and the reward – you gain power over it. Transforming a habit isn't necessarily easy or quick. It isn't always simple. But it is possible. And now we understand how.”*

– Charles Duhigg

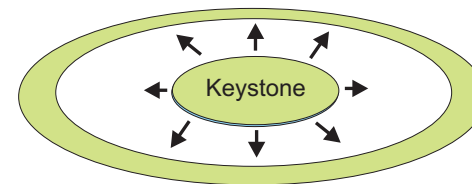


**1. How habits form in the lives of individuals** . . . . . Pages 2 - 4

It has been estimated that more than 40 percent of the actions you perform every day are the result of your habits rather than deliberate decisions you're making. With that in mind, it makes sense to get to understand how habits form and work. It's all due to the operation of the "Habit Loop" – you see a cue and you therefore follow a routine to get the reward you crave. To build new habits or change old ones, keep the cue and the reward the same and look for ways to swap out old routines for new and improved routines.

**2. How habits form within organizations** . . . . . Pages 5 - 7

You can't just order people to change their habits and really expect that to happen overnight. Instead, if you're trying to change an organization for the better, figure out what the "keystone habit" is and start a chain reaction. Keystone habits are the habits that matter the most and when they change, they start a chain reaction that can end up changing everything.



**3. How habits form in societies** . . . . . Page 8

Habits are never as simple as they appear at first glance. Even when habits become firmly entrenched in your personal and professional life, they are not your manifest destiny. Once you understand how habits work, you can choose whether to build on your existing habits or change them. Knowledge is power when it comes to habits.