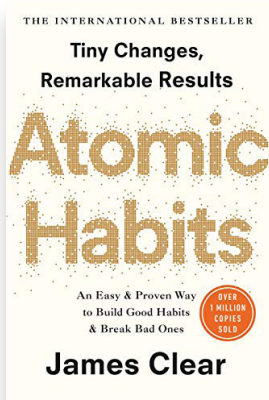


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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James Clear is an author and speaker focused on continuous improvement. His website attracts millions of visitors per month and his weekly email newsletter has five hundred thousand subscribers.

Atomic Habits

THE NUTSHELL

Avery 2018

Introduction

In the pages that follow, I will share a plan for building better habits for a lifetime. While science supports everything I've written, this book is not an academic research paper; it's an operating manual. You'll find wisdom and practical advice front and center as I explain the science of how to create and change your habits in a way that is easy to understand and apply.

The Fundamentals: Why Tiny Changes Make a Big Difference

Prevailing wisdom claims that the best way to achieve what we want in life is to set up specific, actionable goals. Eventually, I began to realize that my results had very little to do with the goals I set and nearly everything to do with the systems I followed.

The 1st Law: Make It Obvious

Every habit is initiated by a cue, and we are more likely to notice cues that stand out. It's easy *not* to practice the guitar when it's tucked away in the closet. It's easy *not* to read the book when the bookshelf is in the corner of the guest room. It's easy *not* to take your vitamins when they are out of sight in the pantry.

Atomic Habits

If you want to make a habit a big part of your life, make the cue a big part of your environment. Put the apples in a bowl in the middle of the kitchen counter. Place your guitar on a stand in the living room. By sprinkling triggers throughout your surroundings, you increase your odds that you'll think about your habit throughout the day. Make sure your best choice is the most obvious one. The secret to self-control is making the cues of your good habits obvious and the cues of your bad habits invisible.

The 2nd Law: Make It Attractive

The more attractive an opportunity is, the more likely it is to become habit-forming. While it is not possible to transform every habit into a supernormal stimulus, we can make any habit more enticing. Look at nearly any product that is habit-forming and you'll see that it does not create a new motivation, but rather latches onto the underlying motives of human nature.

There are many different ways to address the same underlying motive. One person might learn to reduce stress by smoking a cigarette. Another person learns to ease their anxiety by going for a run. Your current habits are not necessarily the best way to solve the problems you face; they are just the methods you learned to use. The key to fixing your bad habits is to reframe the associations you have about them and learn to associate them with a positive experience.

The 3rd Law: Make It Easy

Habit formation is the process by which a behavior becomes progressively more automatic through repetition. It doesn't matter if it's been twenty-one days or three hundred days. It's the frequency that makes the difference. Your current habits have been internalized over the course of hundreds, if not thousands of repetitions. New habits require the same level of frequency.

The central idea is to create an environment where doing the right thing is as easy as possible. Find ways to reduce the friction associated with your good habits and increase the friction associated with your bad ones. Want to improve your diet? Chop up a ton of fruits and vegetables on weekends and pack them into containers, so you have easy access to healthy, ready-to-eat options during the week.

The 4th Law: Make It Satisfying

With our bad habits, the immediate outcome usually feels good, but the ultimate outcome feels bad. With good habits, the immediate outcome is not enjoyable, but the ultimate outcome feels good. Smoking might kill you in ten years, but it reduces stress and eases your nicotine cravings *now*. Overeating is harmful in the long run but appetizing in the moment. The costs of your good habits are in the present. The costs of your bad habits are in the future.

Atomic Habits

To change your behavior and get a habit to stick, you need to feel immediately successful even if it's in a small way. A habit needs to be enjoyable for it to last. What is *immediately* rewarded is repeated. What is *immediately* punished is avoided. Change is easy when it is enjoyable.

Advanced Tactics: How to Go from Being Merely Good to Being Truly Great

Our habits are not solely determined by our personalities, but there is no doubt that our genes nudge in a certain direction. Our deeply rooted preferences make certain behaviors easier for some people than for others. The takeaway is that you should build habits that work for your personality.

Improvement requires a delicate balance. When you're starting a new habit, it's important to keep the behavior as easy as possible so you can stick with it even when conditions aren't perfect.

Conclusion: The Secret to Results That Last

Can one tiny change transform your life? The answer is probably not, 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 power of atomic habits is that tiny changes yield remarkable results.