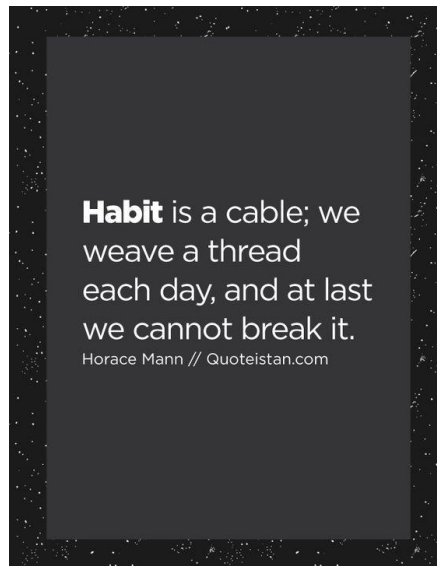


Mindful Practice Group Worksheet – 18.7.16

Habit Breaking



Quotes

“It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them” – Benjamin Franklin

“Habits change into character” - Ovid

Exercise – From Zen Habits

1. **Commit for a Month.** Thirty days is all you need to make a habit change permanent. Less time than that and the new alternative might not be hardwired into your brain. More time and any failures to last are usually a failure of strategy, not duration.
2. **Replace What You Lose.** Your habits fulfill needs. When you suddenly cause a change, you may inadvertently cut them out. Before you make a change, write down all the benefits you currently get from your bad habit and make sure they are retained going into the new habit.
3. **Start Small.** Changing habits isn't a matter of willpower, but patience and strategy. Don't expect to overhaul your diet, exercise or thinking patterns in a day. Tackle one habit at a time.
4. **Know the Benefits.** Get clear in your mind what the benefits are of making a change. If making a change rationally seems good but it doesn't feel good, it won't stick. Emotions have more power than many of us realize.
5. **Write it Down.** Winston Churchill once said, ““ Plans are useless, planning is invaluable.”” Writing out any commitments you make will give you clarity both to what you desire and how you intend to do it.

6. **Swish.** A technique from NLP. Visualize yourself performing the bad habit. Next visualize yourself pushing aside the bad habit and performing an alternative. Finally, end that sequence with an image of yourself in a highly positive state. See yourself picking up the cigarette, see yourself putting it down and snapping your fingers, finally visualize yourself running and breathing free. Do it a few times until you automatically go through the pattern before executing the old habit.
7. **Tell a Friend.** Get some leverage on yourself. Tell a friend your plan so you will be more likely to commit to the change.
8. **Make it an Experiment.** Be a scientist. Just try the new habit to see what it will be like, rather than a great emotional struggle. This will help keep you focused on conditioning the trial and allow you to view results with less bias.
9. **If at First You Don't Succeed...** Most big changes aren't going to happen the first time. It took me three attempts before I finally stuck on with exercising regularly. Now I love it. Don't be too hard on yourself if you fail the first time; just tweak your approach and go again.
10. **Get Out of Hazard Zones.** Get yourself out of situations that can trigger your old habit. Remove junk food from your house. Don't go to places where you might break your budget. This isn't always possible, but do your best to avoid temptation.
11. **Use "But"** . A prominent habit-changing therapist once told me this great technique for changing bad thought patterns. When you start to think negative thoughts, use the word "but" to interrupt it. "I'm no good at this, but, if I work at it I might get better later." "
12. **Know the Pain.** Feel what will happen to you if you don't make a change. Use your imagination to enhance the image of your results should you do nothing.
13. **Add Role Models.** Start spending more time with people who live the way you want to live. Join groups and find mentors who have already adapted the habits you want to take on. They can be invaluable in giving you the positive reinforcement and guidance you need.
14. **Stay Consistent** . Try to keep as many aspects of your habit in control when conditioning to make the associations stronger. For the first month don't just exercise a few times a week, but every day. Do things at the same time and in the same pattern to ensure your results stick.
15. **Keep it Simple Stupid!** Habits should be one or two rules, not 20. If your plan looks like a User License Agreement from Microsoft, it's probably too long. Keep changes simple so they will be easier to adhere to.
16. **Remind Yourself.** Put reminders of your habit around you. After spending a few years changing many habits, I've learned that one of the biggest ways I've failed is simply a poor memory. Forgetting to run a trial one day leads to two until your back where you started. Put up Post-It notes, affirmations or whatever you need to stay consistent.
17. **Motivate Yourself.** Get the motivation when things get tough.

18. **Break Down Your Goals.** Use habits to get your goals. Break down your goal to be wealthy into habits of investing, frugality and entrepreneurship.
19. **Don't Strive for Perfection.** Focus on the habits that are important and minimize those that aren't. I've changed many major habits, but I've also learned to let minor problems exist if they distract me from the bigger picture.
20. **Do it Now.** Waiting for life? The best way to learn how to change those stubborn habits in your life is to practice. Make a change now and in a month you can have a completely new way of living.

Meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wmiV5tUsy4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F86zvZell0>

Links

<http://www.maxabellaloves.com.au/2015/10/how-to-break-a-bad-habit-step-1.html>

<http://lifehacker.com/5903077/change-a-habit-in-three-steps-with-this-flowchart>

<http://jamesclear.com/how-to-break-a-bad-habit><http://zenhabits.net/20-tricks-to-nuke-a-bad-habit/>

