

Tools for the Daily Walk – The Power of Habit

Next to having a success mindset and a daily spiritual practice, nothing will create greater change in your client's life than the power of habit! Brain research has taught us that even when memory is impaired new habits can be formed. These habits can form outside our consciousness or be deliberately created. Research conducted by Duke University in 2006 showed more than 40% of the actions we take are not conscious decisions but rather habits.

"All our life…is but a mass of habits" ~William James 1892

In the groundbreaking book, The Power of Habit, Charles Duhigg breaks down habits into 3 important components.

The three components of habit:

- **Reminder (Cue)** – This is the trigger that puts our brain in automatic mode and tells it which habit to use.
- **Routine –** The physical, mental, or emotional routine part of the habit.
- **Reward** – Tells your brain this is worth remembering and repeating.

Replacing bad habits with a better one.

The good news is that habits can be created, changed, or replaced.The secret to changing a habit is to KEEP the cue and the reward the same and **only change the routine.**

Tool #1 - Discover the Cue

Let's say your client hits the sweets too often. He/she desires to change this habit. It is important for them to discover the cue that starts the habit.

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Have your client create a log each time they go to eat sweets. Have them observe and make a note of what they felt and did immediately prior to eating the sweets.

Tool #2 - Discover the Reward

Suppose they discover your cue is boredom. Each time they are bored, they head to the snack drawer or vending machine.

Next, they need to discover the reward (the pleasure and satisfaction they experience when they eat the sweets).

Tool #3 - Create a Different Routine

It is important to choose a replacement routine (in this case healthy dessert) to eat when they get the cue, like this delicious avocado chocolate mousse.

They now begin the conscious formation of the new habit. When the cue (e.g. boredom) strikes they immediately do the new routine. This should give them the same or similar reward.

Other examples include, attending an AA or fellowship meeting instead of the bar or walking in nature instead of eating.

Tool #4 - Accountability

Solidify your client's success by providing accountability. Have them keep a record of their success and trials and share at the beginning of each coaching call.

What is Coaching Success?

- Client understands the power of habit.
- Client understands and identifies the cue (reminder) and reward.
- Client becomes aware of cue and notes in journal.
- Client identifies alternate routine.
- Coach establishes accountability plan.

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