



5 Essential Keys to Change Habit Patterns



I hope you find this report helpful. If so, I would love to hear from you. We are not meant to know everything or do everything alone. Getting the needed support can make all the difference. I hope that you tune into your need and reach out!

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A New Mindset For Changing Habits

Our health, happiness and our success is a direct result of our habits. We are not talking about the harmless or inconsequential habits but a pattern of behavior that repeats over and over again and keeps us stuck. It is an established pattern of being, of feeling, of living, and is deeply wired in our psyche and has deep neurological grooves that are difficult to overcome with affirmations, will power and discipline alone.

There is no doubt how hard it is to change these patterns of behavior! Much harder, though, is to live a life that does not look like anything we had wanted because of our habits.

Habits are learned, we are not born with them. And when something is learned, it can be unlearned. Denial, resistance and rationalization is a natural part of the process as long as we are not stuck in it forever. We have countless examples and inspiring stories of people making radical changes in their lives. They change the way they view themselves, they change the direction of their lives, they go back to school to finish their education, they leave that job that was sucking the life out of them, they leave that toxic relationship, they kick the worst of addictions and much more. We all have that fire inside of us waiting to be lit. Once we discover that fire, it is no longer possible to live any other way.

Changes that stick are the ones that are made from deep within. Habit patterns are a symptom of our deeply held beliefs about ourselves, about life, about relationships, about health, about money and other things that affect the quality of our life. We know that in order to eradicate the symptoms completely, we must treat the root cause of those symptoms. Until we dive deep and change our beliefs, any change we make on the surface level will only be temporary. Our beliefs are a result of our past experiences, conditioning and old structures (that we once had to establish because they served a purpose then). Once they served that purpose, they no longer represent us now and therefore are no longer needed. However, they become part of our conditioning and will continue to control our behavior now unless we evaluate them from time to time and discard them.

In that sense, habits by themselves are not good or bad, they merely feed the belief patterns that we are holding in the subconscious. The subconscious does not judge the habits, it simply does what it needs to do to maintain the status quo - the belief. A habit is a good habit if it is taking us in the direction we want, if it isn't then it simply is a distraction away from our goals. It is up to us to decide our direction and evaluate whether a habit/choice/action is taking us in that direction.

Before tackling the deep inner work that is necessary to make long lasting changes, it is important to establish a mental frame of mind that can serve as a foundation to make these changes.

1. Changing Habits are about Self Discovery and not about Self Improvement

Number one thing to realize is that changing habits is not about self-improvement, rather it is about Self discovery. It is a much kinder and encouraging way of thinking and it actually IS the truth. It feels exhausting to think that we continuously have to improve regardless of where we are in our journey. It can feel like chasing our tails at times. The question to ask is, "Is this habit a true representation of me?" Anything that is not a true representation of who we are will naturally fall off as we move more and more towards who we truly are.

2. Replace an Old Habit with a New One

Replacing an old habit with a new one works much better for our psyche than getting rid of the habit. Taking away something creates a vacuum and the subconscious will fill it with something else unless we consciously fill it with what we want. One of the most common example of that is weight gain after someone quits smoking. As life changes, what we need also changes. Therefore, it is good to review our habits from time to time to see which ones are no longer in alignment with our growth and our goals and replace them with the ones that are.

3. Refrain from Negative Self -Judgment

Habits are not a moral compass to judge ourselves or others by, i.e., bad habits don't mean that you are a bad person. It just means that we have been there, done that and it no longer holds our interest. Ultimately, we are not our habits. An over identification with our habits is a mental trap that keeps us stuck in the same pattern. The negative self judgment makes us feel the familiar bad inner feeling that acts as a magnet for the same old habit that we are trying to change. So, putting a positive spin on this even on temporary basis and believing that we CAN change the habits works to our advantage and becomes a catalyst in doing the deeper work to make the changes stick.

4. Remember Your Why

When we are in the middle of the challenges, naturally we want to give up and do what we have always done. Our comfort lies in the familiarity not what is best for us;

comfort, however, does not bring the necessary growth. It is in the middle of the challenge, that we must remind ourselves as to why we wanted to make the changes in the first place.

5. Remember Your Potential

Our potential is always greater than what we have accomplished today. Just because we can't do something today does not mean we can't do it tomorrow. Self - identification is important for us to find our purpose in life but the negative Self - identification can be detrimental. " I am just a lazy person", "Exercise is not my thing", " I have anxiety or other disorder", are sure ways to remain stuck. We only know what we know. We never really know our potential until we put ourselves in the challenging or unfamiliar situations and realize we can do far more than we thought. Then we begin to see ourselves differently and more than what we once thought of ourselves. Attaching negative labels and adjectives to ourselves only undermines our potential as human beings and becomes a major mental block in uncovering that potential and really serves no purpose. We are all a certain way until we are not! We can break free of these mental limitations and labels that we impose on ourselves. Since Self- identification is important, find the one that is going to uplift you, make you more of who you truly are and take you in the direction of your goals.

The whole of life is a learning process. Just because you don't know something today does not mean you won't tomorrow. Actually, you can and you will!

5 Essential Keys

Our habits, good and bad, show up when we try to make changes to better our health. How effectively and quickly we make the changes depends on our ability to change our habits. This is one of the most relevant issues that I work with in my Ayurvedic practice as the work requires the clients to take responsibility for their health. This responsibility can be daunting in the beginning but as they gain more insight, it proves to be a very fruitful process for all of them. Client after client, I have identified the following essential key concepts that have proved to be very effective in changing the most stubborn of habits.

1. Tune in to The Internal Dialogue

The biggest source of our stress is the misperceptions and beliefs that have been programmed into our internal voice - the mind. It is the trickiest yet a powerful part of our being that holds the answers.

We have two separate minds, conscious and the unconscious mind. We can refer to this as our dual system mind. Conscious mind is the thinking and the creative mind and possesses our desires, dreams and aspirations and it is also the seat of positive thinking. The subconscious mind holds our life experiences, especially the ones we haven't metabolized or processed. A large portion of the subconscious mind has developmental learning experiences and they represent nurture and a small part is genetics and instincts and represents nature.

Subconscious mind is a stimulus response mechanism. It does not think or judge the response, it simply generates a response that it always has - kind of like an auto pilot. The stimulus could be perceived or real, it simply reflexively activates a previously stored behavioral response - no thinking required. This happens without the awareness of the conscious mind.

How well our dual system mind works depends on the quality of programs in the subconscious mind. If the subconscious mind is programmed with inappropriate behavior patterns then we are stuck in the downward spiraling habit patterns. In our conscious mind, we may consider ourselves to be motivated and filled with aspirations and desires, self-sabotaging or limiting beliefs and behavior patterns in the subconscious mind undermine our efforts. This is the most common and most insidious problem that we struggle with, as most of us are generally unaware of our fundamental subconscious

perceptions or beliefs about life. We download beliefs about ourselves as facts when the person of authority in our life calls us stupid, failure or not good enough. Although the conscious mind may hold one self in high regard, the more subtle and powerful subconscious mind may simultaneously engage in self-sabotaging behavior and be in charge of our behavior 90-95% of the time.

What that means is that we only move 1-5 percent towards our desires and goals in a given day!

Therein is the need to increase our level of consciousness so we can create new patterns and beliefs and create new ways of responding and being. As we become more conscious, we gain insight on our behaviour and differentiate when it is a result of the automated subconscious writing or consciously chosen response. We can then rewrite our beliefs and create new ways of responding, experiencing and being. Of course, this is not a one shot deal, but once we gain this insight, there is no turning back. Our entire way of living then can be a result of consciously chosen ways of responding and being. This is how we become the masters of our fate and not the victims of our past programming.

It is important to understand the nature of the subconscious mind. First, the subconscious mind does not process the negative, so all affirmations must be done in the positive. For example, to affirm that I am not going to eat junk food is to reinforce eating junk food as the only message the subconscious hears is junk food. Secondly, there is no future or past in the subconscious mind. All stored experiences are processed as NOW. Know that the past affects us NOW, as the subconscious replays past programming in the present. That is why we react to a current situation based on a past experience as if it is happening right now. So affirm in the now, not in the future. " Now, I eat healthy" And We have the power right now to rewrite programs from the past so we can claim a better future.

The subconscious mind is the most subtle and the more powerful mind and it is also the gateway to our higher selves. It is by uncovering the subconscious mind, that we experience Consciousness, the Source of our being.

2. Find the Trigger

Bad habits are not isolated events, rather they become part of the downward spiral chain of events/feelings and there is a trigger. The trigger may be obvious but most of the time it is a subtle inner feeling, environment or something that starts the cascade effect. A way to find a trigger is to find the most dominant pattern - the one that is coloring all

aspects of your life. Then list the triggers or reasons. Ask why and continue to drill down to get to the cause or the trigger. A trigger may be the most common reason and is a part of a chain reaction to another trigger that sets the downward spiral. A common example is a negative feeling about oneself that leads one to find comfort in anything outside of oneself, such as food, sex or alcohol. Using the example of the food, the first couple of bites may be comforting and feel good but it may not feel familiar; the enjoyment of the comfort, or I don't deserve to enjoy. This may trigger then overeating to the point of feeling sick or feeling bad (as I should since I don't deserve to enjoy). This is how the self-sabotaging behaviour begins. We may feel comfort in this cycle as we have been there before, we know how to do that. Notice the root cause here (lack of self-esteem) may seem unrelated to the pattern (overeating), but once we get rid of the root cause, we will get rid of the pattern. When we change the belief that we are allowed to enjoy and to feel good, our habits will feed *THAT* belief and we won't do anything that will make us feel otherwise.

As, it may be disturbing to know our subconscious beliefs, we tend to rationalize and intellectualize our habits so we don't have to deal with the skeletons in the closet, sort of speak. But once we own our skeletons in the closet, we can move forward and bring our life closer to what we desire.

We tend to hold on to the experiences, but forget the lessons. Every horrible experience has a blessing in it. We must look for it or ask for the lesson. This is something we can choose to do with all the unwelcomed experiences. As frustrating as it may feel, when we hold on to the lessons and let go of the experiences, that experience may not repeat as it came about to teach us a lesson that we now have learned.

3. Stay Focused: Distractions Vs. Direction

Doing this deep inner work is not only difficult, it can be painful and we need a lot of internal strength and courage to face up to that. It is natural that we would avoid this direct confrontation with ourselves and the easiest thing to do is to find distractions which seem perfectly innocent and logical on the surface but are really driven by fear. We may find ourselves stuck in the details or unnecessary worries that leaves us overwhelmed and anxious. This is exactly what can lead to the same old habits and this is exactly the time when we consciously must choose to stay focused on our goal. Find a single focus and let go of the whole laundry list of stuff. Stay focused on what you need to do and the details work themselves out. We can't change everything in one day and we are not supposed to, but if we keep our mind on that single focus on a daily basis, then we are moving in the direction we want to.

It is important to talk about personal responsibility here. Who did what keeps us stuck and takes our power away. When we take responsibility for our own actions and don't pass on the blame to others, we also set an example for others not to hold us accountable for their happiness. When we take our own power back, we allow others to take their power back and not rely on us and keep us stuck in any dysfunction.

4. Radical Action/Radical Change

Comforts and conveniences do not translate into joy and success. Growth comes from challenges, discomfort and perseverance. If we desire a radical change in our lives, we must be willing to take a radical action. Do something you have never done before! Do what makes you uncomfortable! Do what you deeply wish to do but have not had the courage yet! Experience yourself differently! I am not suggesting that we jump into things just because they are different, what I am asking is that when an opportunity comes knocking on your door that is different from your comfort zone, take that opportunity. It might be just the thing that you need to jump start your life in the desired direction. When we put ourselves in different situations, we become more and more of who we want to become, this is what gives us a sense of purpose. We begin to recognize and resonate with ourselves.

Go put yourself in an experience that stirs you, makes you question, awakens you so you can find your calling and your purpose. The purpose is that internal fire that will make your life worth living. These different experiences will make you view yourself differently and this is how you can change the old programming in the subconscious.

If we continue to do the same old, we will feel the same old and get stuck in our lives. There is no feeling that is worse than feeling stuck. If we want to change our life, we have to change what we have been doing. It does not have to be perfect, but it must start today. **"In order to be kept up, we must keep up" - Yogi BhaJan.** We must give the Universe something to play with if we want its support. We can't hide out for the sake of maintaining the status quo. We must engage, interact, share, connect, play and we must say yes to the right opportunities when they come along. When we continuously turn away much needed opportunities the message we are sending the Universe is that we don't want more for ourselves and guess what happens? We stop getting the opportunities! Now, that's a dead-end!

With more positive experiences, we see ourselves differently. We are reminded of our innate goodness, our joys, our potential and our abilities and affirm the belief that we can! It is these experiences that will become part of the subconscious for our better future. Doing something different that we may have never done before will feel

frightening and we might be tempted to repeat the same old, this is where our strong will and determination can really work for us. Take that radical leap forward as this is what is needed to break away from the old conditioning and beliefs and you will be glad you took that opportunity! I gurantee it!

5. Keep the Focus on Your Actions and Not the Results

This may feel counter -intuitive especially in our result oriented world, where everything is about bottom lines and results. When we are only focused on the results, we tend to not care how we got them. This may work well in some aspects of our life, but when it comes to our health and happiness, it is our actions that give us the ultimate results. Every result can not be measured but can be experienced. It is the experiences that become part of our belief system. An example would be the overreliance on the weight machine to assess our weight reduction efforts. We may not loose any weight, but we may have learned better eating habits, better sleeping habits and other life style habits that will continue to serve us for the rest of our lives.

At the end of a yoga class in Shavasna, this is one of the things I say to help my students let go and relax, " All you have know to do, you have done. Now, let go of everything else and just rest." Now imagine if we lived this way. The trouble is we don't do what we already know to do, which creates an inner conflict and stress as whatever we did not do but could have done continuously is on our mind zapping our energy and keeping us anxious. We don't need to know more; we need to do what we already know.

Our power lies in our actions, not in the results. Our limited mind can't fathom the results that are possible. The right actions don't have an expiration date, they are for life and they are in our control. When we become too result oriented, we may give up too soon, don't try hard enough, and not be committed enough. Our ultimate power lies in our actions, not the results. Once the actions are consistent with our values and what matters to us, we are okay with any results.

Our actions form our habits. Good habits mean good results. We can't have the results beforehand or the guranrantee of them. The action itself is the result and therefore the reward. We may not be able to have all the results we want, but we can always do that one thing that uplifts us and puts us mentally in a better state. The better mental frame in turn helps us think better and see solutions that we did not see before. We may not be able to solve all our problems on hand right away, but we can always do that one thing that can take us in the direction. That is all that is required of us, to start to do that one thing.

In our progressive world, one of the most welcomed phrases is "I will try it" or "I will think about it". It is important to point this out so it does not become a cliché that we use to avoid confrontation or run the risk of being thought of as "closed minded". Pay attention to how many times you use this phrase and actually never attempt that which you said you were going to try. When we are not honest with ourselves and not make the commitment to change, we are simply pushing the problem further away, escaping and getting more stuck. This is the point where we must reach out for help.