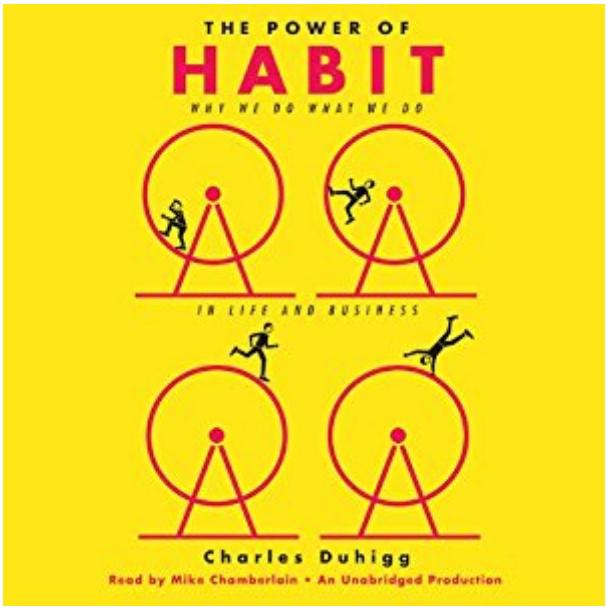
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The Power Of Habit: Why We Do What We Do In Life And Business



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Synopsis

A young woman walks into a laboratory. Over the past two years, she has transformed almost every aspect of her life. She has quit smoking, run a marathon, and been promoted at work. The patterns inside her brain, neurologists discover, have fundamentally changed. Marketers at Procter & Gamble study videos of people making their beds. They are desperately trying to figure out how to sell a new product called Febreze, on track to be one of the biggest flops in company history. Suddenly, one of them detects a nearly imperceptible pattern - and with a slight shift in advertising, Febreze goes on to earn a billion dollars a year. An untested CEO takes over one of the largest companies in America. His first order of business is attacking a single pattern among his employees - how they approach worker safety - and soon the firm, Alcoa, becomes the top performer in the Dow Jones. What do all these people have in common? They achieved success by focusing on the patterns that shape every aspect of our lives. They succeeded by transforming habits. In The Power of Habit, award-winning New York Times business reporter Charles Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed. With penetrating intelligence and an ability to distill vast amounts of information into engrossing narratives, Duhigg brings to life a whole new understanding of human nature and its potential for transformation. Along the way, we learn why some people and companies struggle to change, despite years of trying, while others seem to remake themselves overnight. We visit laboratories where neuroscientists explore how habits work and where, exactly, they reside in our brains. We discover how the right habits were crucial to the success of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, and civil-rights hero Martin Luther King, Jr. We go inside Procter & Gamble, Target superstores, Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church, NFL locker rooms, and the nation’s largest hospitals, and see how implementing so-called keystone habits can earn billions and mean the difference between failure and success, life and death. At its core, The Power of Habit contains an exhilarating argument: The key to exercising regularly, losing weight, raising exceptional children, becoming more productive, building revolutionary companies and social movements, and achieving success is understanding how habits work. Habits aren’t destiny. As Charles Duhigg shows, by harnessing this new science, we can transform our businesses, our communities, and our lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Two halves coexist within this bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s covers. One is outstanding; the other is a bit sloppy. Part one is the heart of the book; it explains what habits are about, where they come from, how theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re hard-wired into our brains, and how they can be enormously powerful ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •both to enslave us and to free us if we only we learn how to handle them well (the bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s mission). I found this part of the book to be truly outstanding: well-researched, engagingly written and extremely persuasive. It combines scientific research, personal life-stories and journalistic interviews to great effect.While the 1st part is circumscribed to the individual level of analysis, on parts 2 and 3 the author takes the analysis from the micro to organizations (meso-level) and societies (macro-level). The author describes ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“the power of weak tiesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• of social networks, and claims that it helps understand the rise of social movements ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •which it clearly does. But in his explanation, networks are rebranded as ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“the habit of peer pressureÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. Networks ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •as well as peer pressure, or cultureÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • can be powerful forces for change, undoubtedly. But networks are not habits ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •as per his own definition. Different phenomena are conflated into the concept of habits, and in doing so the concept loses elegance and consistency.Intellectually, the book is revealing. On a personal level, it is incredibly useful ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •and IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m thankful to the author for writing it. I would have limited the book claims to the phenomena it can explain beyond any reasonable doubt. By taking the concept of habits beyond what it can solidly explain, parts 2 & 3 detract a bit of value and credibility from the book. Were it not for that, I would have given 5 stars to the book. In balance, this is still a great book that --with the caveat expressed-- I strongly recommend.

Only three chapters are both interesting and useful, but they all slow down when the author drags us through stories that could have been condensed into a few sentences or a couple paragraphs. Frustrating.The science is interesting, but shallowly covered. Basically the book is one big series of stories about how people changed habits to succeed in life.If you are looking for help yourself in this area, look elsewhere. The author offers a small bit of useful advice:Basically, you look for the cues/triggers that are starting the routine/habit that you are not happy with but cannot seem to stop. Then you determine what is the reward you are getting. Are you eating the candy because of low blood sugar or because you eat with friends and need a chat or because you are nervous and it calms you, etc.?Discovering the triggers and rewards takes time and introspection--all left up to you. The book cannot help you there.But once you do, you change the routine/habit by force of will every time you encounter the cue/trigger, making sure that the reward is the same. The cue and reward must be the same. So, instead of eating candy, you just go chat with friends on purpose, or you eat a better form of food to satisfy low blood sugar, or whatever.When you feel like engaging in the "bad" habit, ask yourself what you get out of the habit beyond the superficial and obvious. Then replace that habit with a new one you desire to do that gives you the same type of reward/outcome/feeling. Do this over and over until it becomes . . . a habit.So, there you go. Saved you money. Unless you enjoy random success stories. Then the book is a good read for you.I wish I had not purchased this book, but you live and learn.

... Or at least close to perfect. It starts with a conscious effort, and with enough repetition, it scientifically becomes natural, and second nature. With enough conscious repetition, the brain (especially the part of the brain called "basal ganglia,") creates new path ways that allows us to perform that action faster and faster. Making the action a reflex. Just like how we can walk without thinking, or we never forget how to ride a bike. Reflexes that are triggered by external cues, that tells your brain, its time to do this. That’s why some basketball players can react to a play in a split second, and boxers can dodge a punch even before its thrown.One of my favorite examples from the book is the very first true story that was presented about a man who lost his short term memory. He couldn’t remember anything he did just a minute ago, but he was always able to find his way home. His brain was just wired to find his way home without him consciously knowing how to.This book really opened my eyes to all my daily habits. I consciously observe why I do things at certain times, and what cues makes me do those things. Now if i want to get into a study mode, I know I have to drink a cup of coffee, and sit at my kitchen table. If I want to get into exercise mode, I turn

on my favorite TV show and curl my weights. The Power of Habit, has the power to change the way your view on life and carrying out your day to day activities.

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