

Atomic Habits

There's a never-ending search for humans to find ways to achieve things personally and organizationally and the search seems perpetual and the answer elusive. While Atomic Habits is a continuation of this search, it does provide insight into elements of our lives that we can implement in ways that make the likelihood of succeeding much higher.

How many times have we wished we could lose weight or increase our physical fitness, be more disciplined with our finances, or accomplish more at work. In an interview, Steve Martin reflects on questions he's been asked by aspiring entertainers. He says people will ask him how to get into the entertainment world, expecting advice on how to acquire an agent, sell a script, or nail an audition. But Steve's advice takes on an unexpected direction. His answer? Be so good that they can't ignore you. Natural ability counts for a lot, but nothing makes up for the discipline and hard work that goes into becoming so good they can't ignore you. My wife is a phenomenally naturally talented musician, but even that doesn't make up for how accomplished she really is. She spent hours doing exercises that improved coordination, independence of her hands and even fingers, scales, and arpeggios. This as a result of atomic habits she developed.

Atomic Habits presents a framework for building great habits that contribute positively to our success in life's endeavours. James Clear uses atomic as a description of habits that are both incredibly powerful, yet also very small. Minute changes that pave the way to develop into bigger habits. For example, at the beginning of a fitness journey, commit two minutes a day to exercise. The two minutes is pretty minor in the beginning, but it paves the way to bigger commitments and success in the long term. The habit isn't the exercise, but the commitment to two minutes. In addition, Clear talks about being less oriented toward results and more committed to the system of habits. Essentially, being committed to daily exercise will result in physical fitness, and when the weight or endurance goal is achieved, the habit continues because exercise has become a part of how you identify yourself. Thus, the habit is kind of like a highway on-ramp, gets you started in the right direction.

Developing good habits begins with four keys:

- **Make it Obvious**
- **Make it Attractive**
- **Make it Easy**
- **Make it Satisfying**

Breaking an unhelpful habit is just the opposite:

- **Make it Invisible**
- **Make it Unattractive**
- **Make it Difficult**
- **Make it Unsatisfying**

The power in getting 1% better in any habit works like compound interest. Seemingly insignificant, the realized gains over time have the ability to transform your life, your work, and even your family. Atomic Habits is available on Amazon.

(Credit to James Clear, Atomic Habits, Avery, 2018)