

HOW TO
CREATE HABITS
THAT SERVE YOUR
PURPOSE

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You Have Probably Done This Before

You made the list. You bought the planner. You started on a Monday with real intention, and by the following Thursday it had quietly slipped away. Then came the worst part: that little voice of judgement. *I never stick with anything.*

Before you read another word, I would like you to know that the voice is wrong and the approach was just incomplete. Most habit advice speaks only to the part of you that makes plans. The part that actually runs your days is a different part, and it does not respond to plans. It responds to repetition, to feeling, and to who you believe yourself to be.

This guide speaks to that part.

What can happen for you

- A first step so small it does not need motivation.
- Days that stop ending in frustration for lack of forward movement.
- A habit that is truly yours, chosen rather than borrowed from someone else's morning routine.
- Trust in yourself that builds from evidence you gather, not from pep talks.
- More energy, because you are no longer spending it on convincing, negotiating, and explaining.

Results vary, and I will not promise you a transformation by Friday. What I can offer is a way of working that respects how your mind actually learns.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Keep a pencil nearby. Every section ends with a short practice and a few lines to write on.
- You do not need to do everything. Read it through once, then choose one section to start with.
- If unsure where to start, turn to Your First Week near the end.

THE REASON IT HAS BEEN HARD

Your Mind Runs on Habit, Whether You Choose It or Not

A habit is simply a behavior repeated often enough that it moves out of your thinking mind and into the part that runs on its own. Researchers such as Wendy Wood estimate that roughly forty percent of what we do each day is habitual rather than decided.

That is why willpower alone so often fails. You are asking the conscious part of you to overrule the part that is already driving. It can win for a few days. It rarely wins for a few months.

It is also why the good news is so good. Once a habit is installed, it costs almost nothing to keep. And it does not take as long, or as much effort, as you may have been led to believe. You may have heard that habits take twenty-one days. That number has no solid research behind it. A well-known University College London study found that forming a new daily habit took an average of sixty-six days, with a wide range from person to person. If you are on day thirty and it still feels like effort, nothing is wrong with you. You are in the ordinary middle.

What “serve your purpose” means

A habit that serves your purpose belongs to the person you are becoming. It is not one you took on to impress someone, or because a course said so. Those last about as long as your patience with being told what to do.

Underneath everything in this guide is one idea. There are two ways to stand in your own life. You can be a person things happen to: the weather, other people, the year you are having, your own moods arriving like weather. Or you can be a person who creates experiences. Most of us are handed the first position by default and never told there was a second.

Not a victim of life. A creator of experiences.

Habits are simply how that choice becomes daily. They are the small, repeatable ways you build the life you mean to have, rather than the one that happens while you are busy.

THE METHOD

Start With Who You Are Becoming

What can happen for you: You stop negotiating with a to-do list and start acting from identity, which your mind defends instead of dropping.

The usual advice is to list the habits you want. Try something else first, because the list is where most people install their own failure without noticing.

A list of habits is a list of tasks, and tasks are negotiable. On the day you are tired, “meditate for ten minutes” competes with rest, with your inbox, with the dishwasher, and it loses. An identity is different. It is not a task to be won or lost. It is a description of who is doing the choosing. Your unconscious mind is deeply invested in identity, and works constantly to keep your behavior consistent with who you believe you are. Named well, that machinery works for you.

Do not ask what you want to do. Ask who you are becoming, then ask what that person does on an ordinary Tuesday.

TRY THIS

- Take the change you want most and turn it into a sentence about a person.
- Not: “I want to stop staying up until one in the morning.” Instead: “I am becoming a person who protects their sleep.”
- Keep it small, specific, and in the present progressive. *Becoming* is honest. *Being* invites your mind to argue.
- Write yours, then read it aloud once. Your unconscious registers your own voice differently than your thoughts.

I am becoming a person who —

THE METHOD

See It Finished

What can happen for you: Your goal stops being a sentence and becomes an experience your mind recognizes as its own.

Most goal-setting stops at words. Lose the weight. Leave the job. Write the book. Words are conscious currency, and the conscious mind is not what runs your Tuesday. To reach the part of you that decides, a goal has to become something you can feel.

So do not describe the outcome. Go and stand in it. Where are you? What is the light doing? What is under your feet, what can you smell? Who else is there, and what is in their face? What does your body feel like from the inside, in your shoulders, your jaw, your breathing, when the thing is already true? Not what you hope it feels like. What it feels like, in the present tense.

If you think you cannot visualize, start with what you can do. Some people hear it before they see it. Some feel it in the body first. Some simply *know*, with no picture at all. All of those count.

TRY THIS

- Choose the change from the last page. Sit somewhere quiet for five minutes.
- Step into the day it has already happened. Move through it slowly, one sense at a time.
- Notice one thing that surprises you. The surprise is usually the most honest part.
- Write it down in the present tense, as though describing today.

Standing inside it, I notice —

THE METHOD

Walk It Backwards

What can happen for you: *You always know your next step, and it is never overwhelming.*

Here is where nearly every habit plan goes wrong. It starts at the beginning, with a first step, and hopes the middle takes care of itself. Six weeks in, it loses the thread, because you were walking toward a destination you had never really looked at.

You have now looked at yours. So work back from it. Begin at the finished vision and ask one question: *what was true the day before?* Then ask it again. And again. Keep stepping backward through the weeks and days until you arrive somewhere very close to today.

What you have built is a set of stepping stones. Each is small, because it only has to reach the next one. The last stone, the nearest to you, is almost embarrassingly easy. That is not a flaw in the plan. It is the plan working.

Hold the plan loosely. Your vision will update as you approach it, and it is meant to. That is the method working, not breaking.

TRY THIS

- Write your vision at the top of a page.
- Underneath, write “The day before this was true:” and finish the sentence. Repeat, moving backward, five to seven times.
- Stop when you reach an action small enough you could do in the next twenty-four hours. Circle it.

The stepping stone nearest today is —

THE METHOD

Make the First Step Too Small to Refuse

What can happen for you: You make the groove first. The habit grows on top of it, without a fight.

This is the part people resist, because it feels like it cannot possibly be enough. Two minutes? One page? A single push-up?

The point is that you are not building the behavior yet. You are making the groove. Your unconscious learns through repetition and emotional association, and it does not care how large the action was. It cares that it happened, on cue, and that it felt manageable. Establish that, and everything else can grow. Skip it, and you get a heroic week followed by a quiet collapse.

Make the step small enough to survive your worst day. Not your average day. The day of the flu and the deadline and the argument. If the step would not happen then, cut it in half.

TRY THIS

- Take the stepping stone you circled and shrink it to two minutes or less.
- Now cut it in half.
- Ask: would I do this on my worst day this month? If not, cut it again.
- Write the final version as one plain sentence: “I will _____ for two minutes.”

The version I cannot refuse is —

THE METHOD

Anchor the Habit to Something You Already Do

What can happen for you: Your new habit has a place to live, so you stop relying on remembering.

You already have a set of reliable roads. Waking up. Pouring coffee. Brushing your teeth. Opening the laptop. These behaviors run without a decision, at the same time and place, every day.

Borrow one. Attach your tiny new step to it so tightly there is no gap between them. Not “sometime in the morning.” Not “when I have a moment.” Those are gaps, and gaps are where habits leak out. Instead: *After I pour my coffee, I will take three slow breaths.* Psychologists call this an implementation intention, and the research behind it is some of the most consistent in the field.

Choose your anchor carefully. It must happen every day, at roughly the same point, without you thinking about it. “After I get home from work” is weaker than it sounds, because the moment of arriving varies. “After I put my keys in the bowl” is a road.

TRY THIS

- List three things you do automatically every day, in the same place.
- Choose the one that fits best with your tiny step.
- Write it exactly: “After I _____, I will _____.”

My anchor is —

THE METHOD

Close the Loop With Feeling

What can happen for you: Your mind learns that this is worth repeating, because it finally gets to feel the result.

Most habit advice ends when the behavior does. You did the thing; go on with your day. That is a missed opportunity, because the behavior is only half the loop. The other half is what your mind learns from it.

Your unconscious decides what to repeat by what it associates with feeling. A habit that ends in nothing registers as nothing. A habit that ends in a small, genuine *I did that, and made a small step towards my goal* teaches your mind that this is the kind of thing that happens here.

This is not party-popper celebration. It is ten seconds of honest noticing. Many people find it harder than the habit itself. They finish the task and move straight to the next one, and their mind never gets the memo. By recognizing the win, you begin to train your reticular activating system to place a higher value on feel-good moments like these.

TRY THIS

- Immediately after the habit, before anything else, pause for ten seconds.
- Let yourself register: *I did that*. Say your identity sentence while you do.
- Ask whether any moment today resembled your vision, even faintly. If one did, name it.

What I felt when I closed the loop —

THE METHOD

Come Back Without Blame

What can happen for you: A missed day stops being the end of the story. It becomes information.

You will miss. Not as a possibility. As a certainty, probably in the first two weeks. Everything here is designed with that in mind.

So let me be exact about what actually ends habits, because it is not the missing. The miss costs you a day. What costs you the habit is the twenty minutes afterward, when that old familiar voice chimes in with judgement rather than grace and resilience.

A missed day is information, not who we are. Who we are is decided by our character and our behaviors over time.

The same UCL study found that missing a single day did not meaningfully derail habit formation. What mattered was returning. The people who change are not the ones with the longest unbroken chains. They are the ones who return faster and with less commentary.

When you return, look at the conditions. Was the step still too big? Was the anchor unreliable? The repair is nearly always technical rather than moral. Write your return sentence in advance, while you are calm.

TRY THIS

- On a hard day, substitute. If meditate five minutes is my goal and I am sick, I may substitute a warm bath. Two soul-satisfying activities, though one may be more beneficial in the moment. This way we still create the space for the positive habit.
- Decide now what you will do the first time you miss. Not whether. When.
- Write a plain sentence, such as: “I missed yesterday, and I am a person who returns. Beginning again now.”

My return sentence —

ONE MORE THING

Keep It Quiet for Now

What can happen for you: More of your energy goes into the change itself, and less into managing everyone else's opinion of it.

When you begin something new, you will want to tell people. It feels like commitment. Popular advice encourages it: find an accountability partner, announce your goal, post your progress.

In my experience, this quietly costs more than it gives. The moment you announce a change in progress, you create an audience, and managing an audience takes the same energy the change requires. Every explanation, every well-meant opinion you have to absorb, every moment of performing progress rather than making it, is a small leak. I call it **energy leakage**.

Let what is finished be public. Let what is forming stay private.

This is not secrecy or shame. Keep the work quiet while it is fragile. Let it take hold. Share it once sharing costs you nothing.

TRY THIS

- This week, notice each time you want to tell someone about your new habit. No judging. Just notice.
- Ask what you are hoping to receive: reassurance, permission, a witness.
- See if you can give that to yourself, quietly, with the ten-second loop.

START TONIGHT

Your First Week

Small enough to begin this evening.

Reading about change is pleasant, and it is not the same as change. Here is the smallest real version, laid out by day.

Day 1 — Write your sentence. “I am becoming a person who _____. ” Name one thing that person does on an ordinary day.

Day 2 — See it finished. Five quiet minutes standing inside the vision. Write down what you noticed.

Day 3 — Walk it backwards, one “step before” at a time, until you reach something you could do tomorrow.

Day 4 — Shrink it to two minutes or less. Then cut it in half. Test it against your worst day.

Day 5 — Anchor it: “After I _____, I will _____.” Begin. Take ten seconds afterward.

Day 6 — Do it again. Notice what the ten seconds feel like. Say your sentence from Day 1.

Day 7 — Write your return sentence and put it where you will find it. Then keep going, quietly.

At the end of the week you will not have transformed. You will have something better at this stage: seven days of evidence, gathered by you, that you are a person who does what they say they will do. That evidence is the raw material. Everything else is built from it.

WHEN YOU NEED MORE THAN WILLPOWER

Some Patterns Sit Below the Level of Deciding

What can happen for you: *You find out what a stubborn pattern has been protecting, and give that need a better way to be met.*

Everything so far works with your conscious mind and your surroundings, and that goes further than most people are told. But if you have followed it faithfully, made the step small, anchored it well, and something still stops you at the same place, perhaps there is a subconscious block. It is often information about what is happening below the level where deciding takes place.

That is where hypnotherapy comes in. Hypnotherapy is a focused, relaxed state in which you stay aware and in control, and in which the part of you that runs your automatic behavior becomes more available to work with. You are not asleep, nobody can make you do anything against your will, and it looks nothing like the stage shows.

Instead of asking you to push harder, we ask the part of you that has been keeping the pattern what it is trying to do for you, and then find a better way for that need to be met. In my work, people often find that reactions lose their charge, that a goal they could not picture becomes clear, and that changes they made months ago quietly stay solid.

Is it right for you?

Hypnotherapy works well for many people, and is not for everyone. It is a complementary approach and is not a substitute for medical or mental health care. If you are managing a medical or psychological condition, keep your doctor or therapist in the loop, as some diagnoses are contraindicated with hypnotic processes. I do not diagnose or treat medical or psychological conditions.

WHAT COULD HAPPEN NEXT

Begin the Work Itself

I work with people one to one, online. Sessions are unhurried, confidential, and shaped around what you bring rather than a fixed program. I work with women and with men.

If something in these pages sounded like you, the first step is a short, confidential application. Then the two of us talk for twenty minutes about what has been holding, what has not, and whether this work is right for you. It costs nothing and commits you to nothing. Sometimes the honest answer is that I am not the right person, and I will tell you so.

Start here: www.yestohypnosis.com/start-here/

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Your Notes



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