

Take Control of Your Habits



California Department of Human Resources Statewide Training

www.calhr.ca.gov/Training

WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY

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Overview

This course will introduce you to a three-step model for both reversing bad habits and sticking to good ones. Winners and losers start with the same goal in mind. Of course goals are important, but there is increasing evidence that what differentiates winners is their systematic building of good habits and their elimination of bad ones. There is good science, built on years of behavioral findings, that lays out a clear path for making and breaking habits. Imagine the impact this course could have on your efficiency, your productivity, your belief in yourself, and your ultimate success in the workplace.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the science of habits (how habits work) and how this relates to practical workplace application.
- Discover the most common mistakes people make around habits (and how to avoid them).
- Practice a three-step model for making or breaking habits.
- Design a plan for implementing habit change, no matter your environment or how busy you are.

Agenda

1. Introduction/Overview
2. Behavioral Economics
 - a. Defined/Summarized
 - b. Exploring Concepts
 - c. The Research
3. Three Main Strategies
 - a. Understand the Structure of Habits
 - b. Set Realistic Goals & Expectations
 - c. Use the Six Sources of Influence
4. Application & Feedback



Behavioral Economics

What it is and why it matters

You probably remember at least one thing from your high school economics course: All other things being equal, people will always pay less for something than more.

In behavioral economics, the principle is the same. Our brains want to pay as little “price” as possible and to work as efficiently as possible in order to conserve energy. At least one study suggests adults typically make 35,000 decisions a day. For kids, the number is 3,500. No wonder they have time to ask so many questions!

The point is that by the time we are adults, we have collected a lifetime of literally billions of experiences and observations about the way the world works. As a result, in order to function efficiently, our brains have to engage in something called System 1 thinking most of the time. This kind of thinking is reflexive and intuitive, as opposed to System 2 thinking which is deliberate and analytical.

Characteristic	Type 1	Type 2
Reasoning style	Intuitive Heuristic Associative Concrete	Analytical Normative Deductive Abstract
Awareness	Low	High
Verbal behavior	None to minimal	Yes
Action	Reflexive, skilled	Deliberate, rule-based
Propensities	Causal	Statistical
Effort	Minimal	Considerable
Vulnerability to bias	Yes	Less so
Reliability	Low, variable	High, consistent
Errors	Common	Few
Predictive power	Low	High
Hard-wired	May be	No
Context	Specific	General
Context importance	High	Low

Why do habits form? Because they have been imprinted in our neural pathways through a lifetime of experiences.

Can they be changed? Yes, by converting any deliberate System 2 “rule” into a reflexive System 1 skill through repetition.

The Power of Habits: A Science-Based Approach

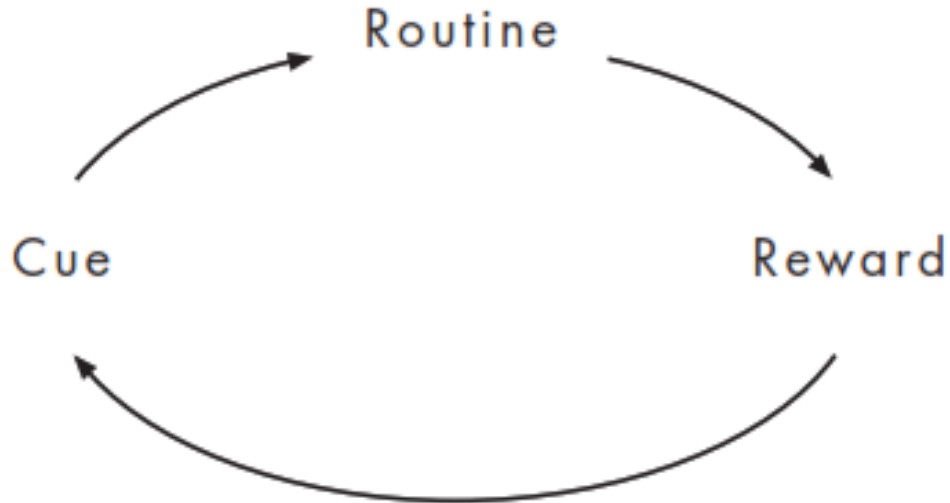
Habits Quiz

1. _____ It takes 21 days to form a habit.
2. _____ If you miss a day, you probably won't be able to form the habit.
3. _____ A lack of willpower is to blame for bad habits.
4. _____ Learning about the benefits of new habits helps change our behavior.
5. _____ The best way to change a habit is to set realistic goals.
6. _____ The best way to change a habit is to cue behavior.
7. _____ The best way to change a habit is to have a routine.
8. _____ Rewards will help you stick to your habit.
9. _____ Distractions can help you turn away from a bad habit.
10. _____ Apps can help us change our behavior.

Research about Habits and Behavioral Sciences

Three Main Strategies

The Structure of Habits: Cue-Routine-Reward



How to Build Your Habit

1. Identify the Routine. What is the specific behavior you want to change?
2. Experiment with Rewards. What is the reward itself?
3. Isolate the Cue. What is the cue for this routine?
 - a) Location. Where are you?
 - b) Time. What time is it?
 - c) Emotional State. What's your emotional state?
 - d) Other People. Who else is around?
 - e) Immediately Preceding Action. What action preceded the urge?

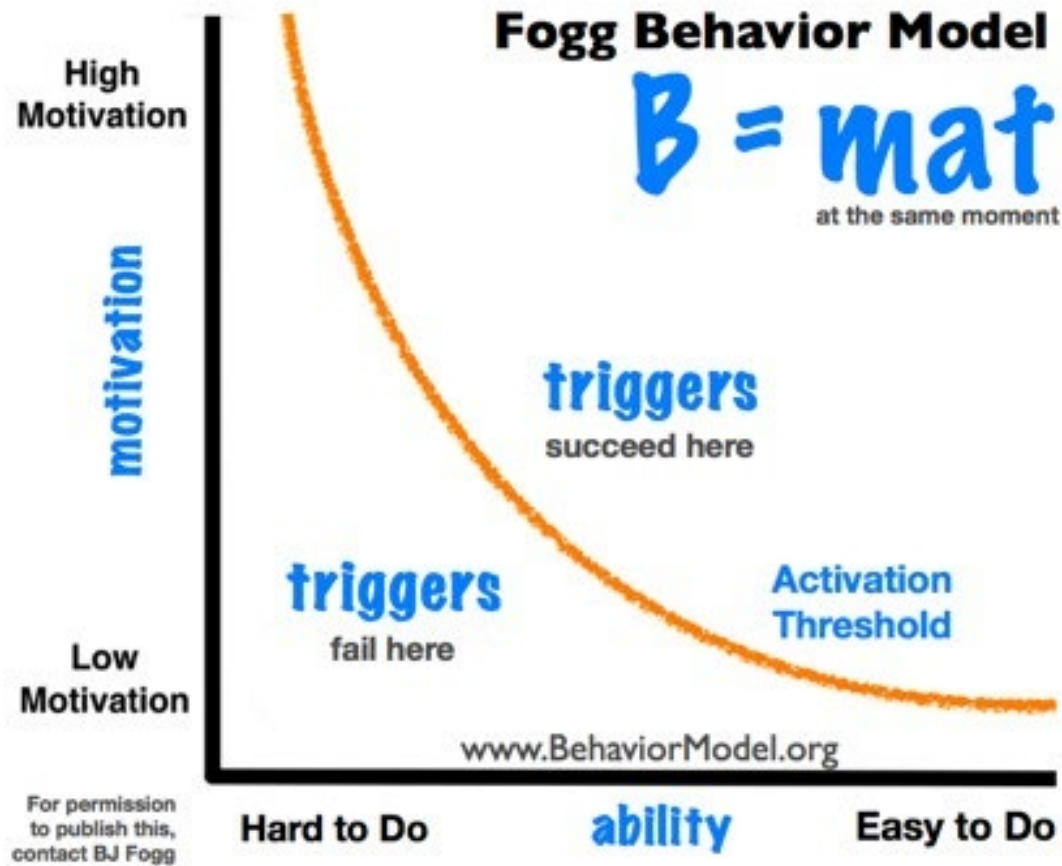
4. Have a Plan.

When _____, I will _____
(CUE) (ROUTINE)

because it provides me with _____.
(REWARD)

Try “Tiny Habits”

Review your habit. Is it too ambitious? Does it all sound fine and good, but you keep falling off the wagon? To increase the likelihood of success, try building tiny habits.



What is a Tiny Habit?

A tiny habit is a personal behavior that:

- You do at least once a day
- Takes less than 30 seconds
- Requires little effort

The Power of Habits: A Science-Based Approach

How to Use Tiny Habits in Real Life

Craft a tiny habit in this form:

After I brush, I will floss one tooth.
(ANCHOR) (NEW TINY BEHAVIOR)

After I _____, I will _____.
(ANCHOR) (NEW TINY BEHAVIOR)

After I _____, I will _____.
(ANCHOR) (NEW TINY BEHAVIOR)

After I _____, I will _____.
(ANCHOR) (NEW TINY BEHAVIOR)

Celebrate Tiny Successes

Celebrating success is a key behavior that can help habits take hold fast. The key is to celebrate immediately, either while you're doing the tiny habit or immediately afterward.

Here are some ways to celebrate success:

1. Do a physical movement once.
2. Do a physical movement that flows.
3. Say a word or phrase out loud.
4. Say a word or phrase inside, to yourself.
5. Sing a song phrase out loud.
6. Sing a song phrase inside, to yourself.
7. Vocalize music or a sound effect out loud.
8. Imagine hearing music or sound effect.
9. Feel an internal glow inside yourself.
10. Move your face to look happy.

Pick one of your tiny habits from above. Write your habit with your tiny celebration here:

After I _____ (ANCHOR),
I will _____ (NEW TINY BEHAVIOR).
I will celebrate by _____ (CELEBRATION).

The Power of Habits: A Science-Based Approach

Use the 6 Sources of Influence

The Model

	Motivation	Ability
Personal		
Social		
Structural		

Application

Cue Routine Reward

When _____ (CUE),
I will _____ (ROUTINE),
because it provides me with _____ (REWARD).

—Or, if you prefer—

After I _____ (ANCHOR),
I will _____ (NEW TINY BEHAVIOR).
I will celebrate by _____ (CELEBRATION).

The Power of Habits: A Science-Based Approach

	Motivation	Ability
Personal		
Social		
Structural		

Resources

[Thinking, Fast and Slow](#)

Daniel Kahneman - Farrar, Straus and Giroux – 2015

[Atomic Habits: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results: an Easy & Proven Way To Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones](#)

James Clear - Avery, an Imprint Of Penguin Random House – 2018

[The Power Of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business](#)

Charles Duhigg - Random House Trade Paperbacks – 2014

[Change Anything: the New Science Of Personal Success](#)

Kerry Patterson-Joseph Grenny-David Maxfield-Ron McMillan-Al Switzler - Piatkus - 2014

[The Four Tendencies Quiz](#), gretchenrubin.com

[BJ Fogg Behavior Model](#), tinyhabits.com

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