



The Habit Mindset:  
The art and science  
behind habits  
that stick

**AUTHORS**

Ali Navidi, Psy.D.  
Dr. Navidi and Associates

Marialane Schultz  
Founder/CEO IOCI

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**CONTACT**

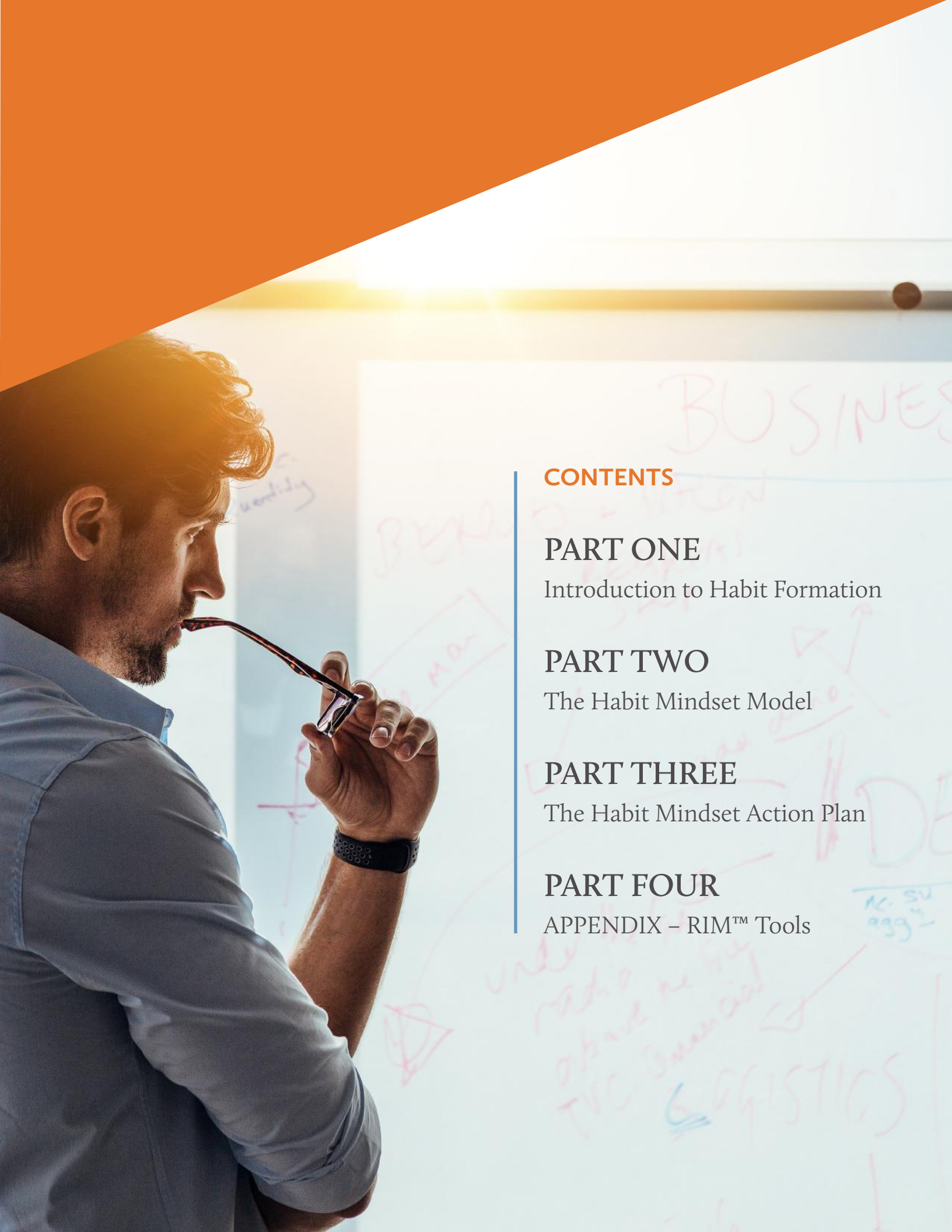
IOCI  
(703) 665-0940  
(877) 405-2955 toll free  
info@ioci-consulting.com  
www.ioci-consulting.com

**ABOUT IOCI**

We help our clients build leadership readiness and solid business capabilities that position them for sustained relevance and success. We believe in Spirited Business® as an enabling force behind all we do. We aim to help our clients build spirited cultures by cultivating empowering, passionate and purposeful environments. If you are ready to position your organization for impact and to create spirited cultures, contact us.

**DISCLAIMER**

The information provided in this white paper is strictly the perspectives and opinions of IOCI and the references cited.



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## PART ONE

First, forget everything you thought you knew about habits.

Understand the science then get ready for life-changing results.

Want to change something about your life? Increase an activity, an attitude, an achievement or decrease a negativity? Well, according to the self-help shelf, you are less than a month from your goal. Because, as everyone knows, it takes 21 days to change a behavior.

Except everybody is wrong on this.

And we're not just talking about those outliers who say the magic number is 28 days. The advice is arbitrary, as random as the fact that the gentleman who founded Alcoholics Anonymous didn't have a scientific reason to recommend 12 steps – that number came about because Bill Wilson took his inspiration from the 12 apostles. In this case, the famous advice is a misinterpretation of [Dr. Maxwell Maltz's](#) work on self-image. As a plastic surgeon, he noted in the 1960s that amputees took an average of 21 days to adjust to losing a limb.

The assumption this applied to a host of situations spread like wildfire, in large part because people wanted to believe it.

But a 2009 study from the University College London in the *European Journal of Social Psychology* shined a light on that fallacy. Phillippa Lally's team asked participants to choose an eating, drinking or other behavior to carry out daily following a unique cue – say, having a glass of water after breakfast. The average time it took for a group member to make this a habit was 66 days, although a few hardy souls made the switch in 18 and others had to work at it for 254 days.

And that's to drink water, not make a wholesale lifestyle change that requires rearranging your calendar or rewiring your view of the world.



### True or False?

It takes 21 days to change a behavior.

- True
- False

# Most people want positive habits to be as easy as brushing their teeth

Therein lies the problem. A habit, according to England's National Health Service, is an action that is triggered automatically in response to contextual cues that have been associated with their performance, e.g. washing your hands after using the toilet or putting on a seatbelt when getting into the car. And these habits aren't always completely in your control. When journalist Charles Duhigg of the *New York Times* dug into the research for his book, *The Power of Habit*, he discovered that marketing departments are happy as clams to exploit habit cues and rewards to influence customers.

His example: Procter & Gamble's popular Febreze air freshener, which flopped initially because the marketing team appealed to consumers' need to get rid of odors. Wrong trigger. But when P&G reformulated to include different scents, folks flocked to Febreze to combine nice scents with clean environments.

Likewise, Target ... well, "targets" pregnant women, based on their buying data, to become the go-to store for all family needs in the future. The retailer positions itself to help you form a lucrative habit for its cash registers.

More downbeat news: bad habits are easier to form, it seems. "Order a doughnut with your coffee on Monday morning and Tuesday morning, and you'll probably find it very hard to resist ordering a doughnut on Wednesday," Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*, writes for *Psychology Today*. She readily admits she flunked the 21-day change-your-life challenge, too.

"Most people want positive habits to be as easy as brushing their teeth. Let's be adults here. Being great isn't easy. In fact, greatness requires sacrifice. It requires doing things that others won't or can't do ... truth be told, good habits require consistent commitment," says Jason Selk, who reports on mental toughness issues for *Forbes*.

## What's really going wrong?

### How did so many people, and indeed an entire industry, get sideways?

For starters, most guidance focuses on adopting disciplines, with very little emphasis on a person's ability to create new habits.

Art Markman, a professor of psychology and marketing at the University of Texas at Austin, lays some of the blame at the feet of the positive-thinking movement. Oh, he's not against optimism at all. But folks who are too cheery about their ability to break a habit set themselves up for a rude awakening. "People don't take the obstacles they're going to face seriously enough when they set out to change behaviors," he told *Healthy Living*. "Turns out, each of us has a finely honed ability to really be able to take ourselves out of anything."

"Good habits require consistent commitment."

Dr. Jason Selk  
*The Relentless Pursuit of Greatness*

Bad habits are easier to form, it seems. "Order a doughnut with your coffee on Monday morning and Tuesday morning, and you'll probably find it very hard to resist ordering a doughnut on Wednesday".

Gretchen Rubin,  
author of  
*The Happiness Project*



Most guidance focuses on adopting disciplines, with very little emphasis on a person's ability to create new habits.

In other words, prepare yourself in advance for bumps – these are real obstacles ahead. After all, habits aren't a one-size-fits-all action, either. Even [Lally's myth-busting study](#), now eight years old, highlighted the fact that nailing down a timeframe for success depends on the type of behavior you want to make a habit and your idiosyncrasies, personality traits and attitudes you bring to the table.

### Common mindsets that affect motivation

Consider, for instance, how these common mindsets could affect your overall motivation:

- You're doing it because someone else wants the results. Maybe your wife is urging you to lose weight or your parents are pushing you to increase your income potential.
- You've failed at breaking (or forming) this habit before.
- Your life is a hotbed of stress and commitments 15 or more hours a day.
- An unexpected change at work, an illness, or family news interferes.

The good news from Duhigg: There's no age limit when it comes to breaking a habit. And that's knowledge straight from the lab as well.

### Your brain and habit formation

But just what are you up against? To take a page from the Neurology 101 textbooks, the basal ganglia section of the brain controls the development of emotions, memories and pattern recognition, while the prefrontal cortex is in charge of decisions. In order for a behavior to morph from a decision to an automatic reaction, it has to be pushed back to the basal ganglia. (It's a survival technique, of course, as the prefrontal cortex has plenty of stimuli to deal with and has to triage.) So the more you do the behavior, the more likely you drive it to the basal ganglia, where it's out of sight, out of mind — and running on autopilot every time the trigger conditions exist.

This science explains why changing habits on a vacation is one of the most-proven routes to success; you're already mired in changing routines and changing cues and rewards. It's easier to snap old triggers and program new processes into the basal ganglia in that case.

So breaking a habit is to dig into a subconscious, hidden part of the brain and rip its routines away from its busy little hands. Selk identifies three stages:

- The honeymoon, where hopes are high and enthusiasm rampant.
- The fight-through, where you realize that reality is a different game altogether. The rubber is meeting the road, and you need to recognize the signposts on this leg of the journey, question your instincts to cheat and project consequences to stay motivated.
- Second nature, where you are settling into the groove, but are still vulnerable to setbacks from discouragement, disruptions and, conversely, delusions of grandeur.

"People don't take the obstacles they're going to face seriously enough when they set out to change behaviors..."

Art Markman,  
Professor of Psychology  
and Marketing,  
University of  
Texas at Austin





## Building up your capacity for change

It's not uncommon to bounce back to the fight-through more than once. To complicate the battle, while you want motivation on your side, even it can be a fickle friend in some cases. In the long run, you're better off building up your capacity for change than thinking the motivation you feel now is necessarily going to last.

The second and third wild card components in a successful habit-breaking (or forming) guidebook are the people themselves and the task. It should be shorter to, say, drink more water than to find an extra 10 hours a week to change your speaking dialect.

### Habits are responses to needs

At the base of it all is the fact that habits are responses to needs, so unless you also address some deeply seated "whys" in your life, it's hard to drum up commitment to change. As Oliver Burkeman, who covers the well-being beat at *The Guardian*, puts it, "If you eat badly, you might resolve to start eating well, but if you're eating burgers and ice cream to feel comforted, relaxed and happy, trying to replace them with broccoli and carrot juice is like dealing with a leaky bathroom tap by repainting the kitchen. What's required isn't a better diet but an alternative way to feel comforted and relaxed."

### It's time to get to work

The good news? "Attitudes are within your control, so once you understand that habits can be rebuilt, the power of habit becomes easier to grasp and the only option left is to get to work," says Duhigg.

While you want motivation on your side, even it can be a fickle friend in some cases. In the long run, you're better off building up your capacity for change than thinking the motivation you feel now is necessarily going to last.

# A dose of preparation

Your first step is to identify your keystone habit, that one motivation that fuels why you sent a behavior to the basal ganglia in the first place, and then identify the excuses you tend to wrap around that habit to protect it. We're talking about phrases like "one more time won't hurt me" or "I know I'm being bad, but I deserve this" and the ever-popular "oh, I messed up already today so once more won't hurt. I have to start again tomorrow anyhow."

## Choose your one habit

But only choose only one habit for now. You don't get brownie points for trying to make multiple changes, and who needs the added hassle?

Markman's advice before you begin to change your habits: tidy up your environment. For instance, if you want to spend less time on your cell phone, he suggests, shut it off. Toss it in your glove box so you can't sneak a peek at email at the stoplight. Don't tempt your willpower – breaking habits comes with enough of its own challenges without piling on superhero temptations.

## Declare your commitment

Finally, spread the news that you're about to plunge into this workbook from IOCI. Accountability is a mandatory requirement to staying on track. Anecdotal feedback shows that you increase your chances of sticking to the commitment by 50 percent when you ask to have your feet held to the fire.

But the results are worth a bit of sweat.

↑ 50%

Accountability is a mandatory requirement to staying on track. Anecdotal feedback shows that you increase your chances of sticking to the commitment by 50 percent when you ask to have your feet held to the fire.





Society is quick to provide plenty of reasons to quit your commitment – and many times, the advice is wrong:



## MYTH



## REALITY



### MYTH

You can't miss a day on this new focus or you'll wipe out all of your gains.



### REALITY CHECK

Nah. Missing a day makes no difference, according to the results of a groundbreaking study at University College London last decade. Get back on the bicycle and keep moving!



### MYTH

You're too old to change now.



### REALITY CHECK

Keep blowing out candles on your cake and making new year's resolutions at the same time. Your brain retains the flexibility to form and break habits throughout your lifetime.



### MYTH

It's a matter of willpower.



### REALITY CHECK

It's a matter of routine. Even better: scientists say the easier and simpler you make each step, the better the results.

# Change

## PART TWO

### The Habit Mindset Model

#### The Problem: Motivation

As Charles Duhigg says in *The Power of Habit*, "There's nothing you can't do if you get the habits right." Having effective habits is an important key to success.

So when you take a closer look at high performers, the difference isn't intelligence or where they went to school. The difference lies in whether they have effective habits such as responding promptly to emails, getting into the office early or spending time at the beginning of the day to plan and prioritize. There is no shortage of good suggestions about useful habits to adopt that lead to success.

The problem lies in making useful habits stick.

Most people are terrible at adopting new habits. In fact, research by the University of Scranton reports that a staggering 92 percent of people who commit to New Year's resolutions don't fully achieve them.

So why are we so bad at adopting new habits? According to Ali Navidi, Psy.D, who has worked extensively on this topic, "People focus on the wrong thing - that fickle friend called motivation. They think they need to get motivated to adopt a new habit. Intuitively this makes sense. Of course, wanting to do something is going to help make it a habit. However, what people don't think about is that motivation is fickle." Navidi goes on to say, "Motivation goes up and down based on a bunch of different things such as blood sugar, amount of sleep, mood, stress levels and many other factors. If your goal is consistency, motivation isn't the answer."

"People think they need to get motivated to adopt a new habit. What they don't know is motivation is fickle."

Ali Navidi, Psy.D.  
Dr. Navidi and Associates



92% of people who commit to New Year's resolutions don't fully achieve them.

# Motivation ebbs and flows. Habits are things you do naturally, like clockwork.

For example, if you are about to visit the dentist, your motivation to floss may be higher. However, after the appointment, your motivation may decrease. If the act of flossing is based on motivation, don't count on consistency. If it is based on a habit, you will automatically do it like clockwork. After all, most people brush their teeth regardless of a dentist appointment because, long ago, they made it a habit.

And don't overlook the fact that motivation betrays us, too. How many times have you listened to a good TED talk and were fired up to change your habits in some way? How often has that zeal faded over time, leaving the new habits to fade away as well?

## Developing a capacity to form new habits

So if the necessary ingredient is not motivation - what is it? It's the capacity to establish habits, which Navidi calls the Habit Mindset. Navidi developed this model of change based on his work with clients over the years. Today, IOCI and Navidi have collaborated to dig into the science of habit formation to create tools that help you make positive changes in your life. His model is an important foundational component for anyone interested in assessing and building the Habit Mindset for themselves.

## What is the Habit Mindset?

The Habit Mindset is your ability to form new habits and stick to them independent of your motivation level. Consider it your escape from the motivation roller coaster. People with a strong Habit Mindset get things done whether they feel like it or not. When people with a strong Habit Mindset get knocked off their routine habit, they get right back on it. When their life changes and they need new habits, they adapt quickly and easily.

“Everything you are used to, once done long enough, starts to seem natural, even though it might not be.”

Julien Smith,  
The Flinch

The Habit Mindset is your ability to form new habits and stick to them independent of your motivation level.

## A strong Habit Mindset is a very learnable skill

The good news is a strong Habit Mindset is a very learnable skill. By the end of this program, you will be ready to start your own four-week action plan to build a Habit Mindset.

### A strong Habit Mindset consists of these disciplines:



**Attitude**

Having a growth mindset regarding your ability to form new habits.



**Awareness**

Keeping up to date and tracking the different habits you are implementing.



**Analysis**

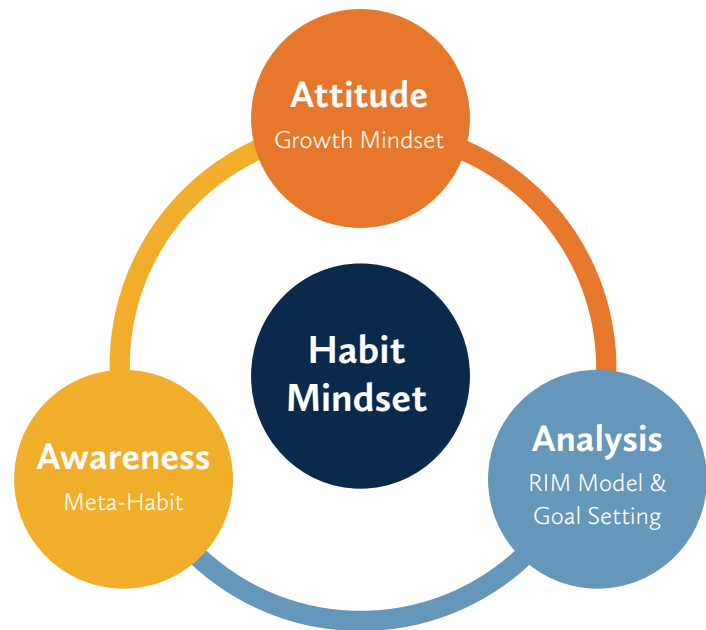
Being able to troubleshoot problems in habit implementation and translate new goals into habits.

### Attitude

The right attitude can be the difference between success and failure. Psychologist Carol Dweck, who developed the concept of growth and fixed mindsets, found that people who believe their intelligence can increase with effort (growth mindset) tend to be more successful. Those who believe their level of intelligence is unchanging (fixed mindset) tend to be less successful. Therefore, the people who believe that their self-discipline (i.e. their ability to form and stick with habits), their Habit Mindset, is not fixed but can increase with effort will be much more successful with this program. The right attitude provides the motivation and energy to improve your Habit Mindset.

### Awareness

To develop a strong Habit Mindset, you must be self-aware. Without feedback, humans can't improve. Imagine being a painter whose vision is blurry. How would you know how well you painted and what you should improve? Most people aren't aware of the habits they are currently working on or how successfully they have implemented them. Awareness provides us with the data we need to ask the right questions and make corrections so that we can improve.



### What is a meta-habit?

A meta-habit improves your awareness of all your habit change efforts and shows how you are doing with implementing them.

You're in good company. [Benjamin Franklin used a similar technique](#) to make a habit of the virtues he saw as important. He kept a daily journal that tracked all of his important virtues, and he marked how he did with them each day.

Awareness involves using a tool called the meta-habit, which allows you to manage and track all of your habits. For *Lord of the Rings* fans, it acts like the one ring that controls all the others. By taking the time to form a meta-habit, you improve your chances exponentially of successfully implementing other habits and, more importantly, developing a Habit Mindset.

The meta-habit improves your awareness of all your habit change efforts and shows how you are doing with implementing them.

To see the meta-habit in action, check out the [Action Plan Case Study](#).

## Analysis

The right attitude positions you for growth, awareness provides you with the data and analysis helps you ask the right questions. Analysis figures out what to do when things don't go according to plan. After all, when life throws you a curve ball, you must adapt.



### Strategic Questions

This is known as the discipline of asking strategic questions. It consists of two main questions:

1. *Am I having trouble implementing any of my current habits?*
2. *Has my life changed in a way that I need to add new habits or remove old habits that no longer serve me?*

## Question One – Problem With An Individual Habit

When you have trouble implementing an individual habit, it is best to analyze the problem based on the RIM™ model for habit implementation. RIM™ stands for remember, initiate and maintain.

- **Remember:** How good are you at remembering to do the habit at the right time and place?
- **Initiate:** When you do remember, how good are you at getting yourself to do the habit?
- **Maintain:** How good are you at maintaining the habit over time? Also, if you get knocked out of the habit, how good are you at restarting?

If there is a weakness in one of these variables, you will not likely form the habit. Someone with a strong Habit Mindset who is having trouble implementing a new habit will know to ask whether the problem is occurring in one of the RIM™ variables.

The Habit Mindset Action Plan offers a personalized [self-assessment](#) to help you understand which RIM™ variable tends to cause you the most problems. This program also features a collection of tools and techniques based on RIM™ variables, located in the Appendix in Part Four.

## Question Two – Adding Or Removing A Habit

Taking the time to regularly assess when your situation changes or if you need to add or remove a habit from your life can be extremely useful. Frequently, your goals change, your priorities change, because life changes. If your habits don't keep up with those changes, you are out of sync. Asking this question as part of your weekly strategic questions allows your habits to stay current with your goals.

We like to use SMART Goals, a goal-setting formula originally coined by Peter Drucker in the '50s, and later popularized by George T. Doran, Ph.D., in 1981. We explain below how this easy-to-remember SMART goal-setting method helps with shaping new goals clearly.

**Answer the following questions to make sure your goal is (s)pecific, (m)easurable, (a)chievable, (r)elephant and (t)ime bound.**

<b>Specific</b>	What exactly do I want to do?
<b>Measurable</b>	How will I track my progress? How will I know I have succeeded?
<b>Achievable</b>	What steps will I need to take? Which HABITS will I need to achieve this goal?
<b>Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to me?
<b>Time</b>	When will I have completed this goal?

The only difference between this and the SMART goal-setting method is the additional question under **Achievable: Which habits will I need to achieve this goal?**

Once you determine the necessary habits, you enter them into your meta-habit and the cycle continues.



## CASE STUDY – A RIM™ analysis of procrastination

Jim has a report that needs to be completed in one month. He doesn't feel motivated because the deadline is so far away. Once the deadline is a day away, the motivation (based on fear) is very high, and Jim frantically works to get it done. But this response doesn't form the habit of working on reports in a timely manner, so when the next report comes in, Jim will again procrastinate until the last minute.



Here's how it looks using the RIM™ model (remember, initiate, maintain):

- First, Jim realizes that what prompts him to do most of his work is his email inbox. It turns out that no one sends him emails about doing these kinds of reports, so he hasn't been **remembering**.
  - **RIM™ Tool** - He can correct the problem by creating an automated reminder. This reminder will go straight to his inbox.
- Second, whenever he does remember to do the report, he tends to put it off until later. That's because it is a big project, so whenever he thinks about it, he gets overwhelmed and doesn't know where to start. He needs something to **initiate** his action.
  - **RIM™ Tool** – Jim sets up a checklist that breaks the report into bite-size, manageable pieces so he can avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- Third, Jim has never been able to make prompt report writing a successful habit, so **maintaining** isn't really an issue yet!
  - **RIM™ Tool** - To avoid future procrastination, as well as form and maintain a prompt report writing habit, he puts working on his reports into his meta-habit so he can track it over time and see his progress.

The RIM™ model immediately provides insight into the problem and provides a set of tools that can address the issue. Next, take a self-assessment to learn more about which RIM variable causes you the most trouble.

# Review: Developing a Habit Mindset

The goal of this program is for you take the time to develop a solid Habit Mindset. This is a mindset where you have the right attitude, you are aware of your habits and you can analyze a problem in progress. Plan to take the time to develop this mindset, because having it will help you escape your dependence on motivation.

- **Attitude** – You know that the Habit Mindset isn't something you are born with, you can learn it, and you will get better at it.
- **Awareness** – You check your meta-habit multiple times every day. Because of this, you know when you are having trouble implementing a habit.
- **Analysis** – You regularly use your strategic questions to address problems implementing habits and changes in your goals.



Take your time, follow the plan and build your Habit Mindset. You are developing a whole new way of being productive. This mindset is very different than what you are probably used to. Most people don't think in terms of habits — they think in terms of goals: “I want to lose weight,” “I want to get a promotion” or “I want my team to listen to me.” Someone with a Habit Mindset takes it a step further and thinks, “What habits do I need to adopt to get me to my goal?” In other words, it is the system or collection of habits that move you toward your goals.

The Habit Mindset is a tool that will benefit you for the rest of your life.





# CASE STUDY – Action Plan Case Study

Mary is unhappy working as an executive at Acme Chemicals. She longs to find a new job. However, she never seems to get around to consistently pursuing her job search. Luckily, Mary found this program, read about the Habit Mindset model and completed her Habit Mindset assessment. Her total score is 35; which puts her in the inconsistent capacity to change, or level 2. Of all her RIM™ variables, she scores worst in initiating. This makes sense to Mary because, upon reflection, she often remembers to do her job search, but when it comes down to actually working on it, she puts it off, saying it just isn't a good time.

Now Mary moves on to her action plan. She spends the first week practicing her meta-habit by identifying things she already does regularly in her life, and tracks them. The idea is to get used to using the meta-habit regularly.

Here is the first week of her action plan:

## Week 1 - Establish the meta-habit and at the end of the week set your initial goal

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Brush Teeth	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eat Lunch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Take Shower	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Finally, before the start of the second week, Mary goes through the SMART goal-setting process:

## Goal Setting - SMART

<b>Specific</b>	What exactly do I want to do?	Find a new job.	
<b>Measurable</b>	How will I track my progress?	By the number of applications I send out.	
<b>Achievable</b>	What steps will I need to take?	Research job openings and fill out applications.	
	Which HABITS will I need to achieve this goal?	Research job openings every day.	Fill out an application per week.
<b>Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to me?	Because I deserve to have a fulfilling job I enjoy.	
<b>Time</b>	When will I have completed this goal?	Best estimates are that it will take three to six months.	

Based on this, she adds these two habits to her week 2 meta-habit:

## Initial Goal Setting

<b>Habit #1</b>	Research (5x/wk)	<b>Habit #2</b>	Submit Applications (1x/wk)
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Mary moves into week two with high motivation. On the first three days, she researches job postings after work. But on Thursday, there is an emergency at work and when she gets home she feels stressed and wants to relax. This knocks her off her stride, and she misses Friday as well. Furthermore, she can't seem to get herself to even submit one application this week.

## Week 2 - Take care with the strategic questions to evaluate your progress.

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Research	X	X	X				
Submit Application							
Strategic Questions							X

Luckily, she answers her strategic questions and determines that, as usual, she is having trouble with initiation. In preparation for week three, Mary picks out the root cause tool to help her figure out what is getting in her way:

## Week 3 - This week you introduce the first RIM tool, based on your assessment.

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Root Cause	X	X	X	X	X		
Research	X	X					
Submit Application							
Strategic Questions							X

Week 3 seems even worse for Mary. However, she is keeping up with her meta-habit and strategic questions, and she uses her root cause tool diligently. Using the information gained from these, Mary now has a couple of insights as to why she has trouble with her two habits.

After she gets home, she tends to relax and watch TV before tackling her research. When her motivation is high and she isn't very tired (early in the week), she is able to pull herself away from the TV. However, when her stress levels rise and she is more exhausted, she finds it very hard to pull away from the TV. She decides that next week she will implement the "starting small" tool. She will get to her research right away when she gets home, but only require herself to do it for five minutes.

Each day that she doesn't submit an application, she follows the steps of the root cause tool in her journal. Through this self-reflection, she realizes that she fears starting a new job. She worries that she might not be able to handle learning a new job. Now she understands what is driving her behavior, and she can rationally consider her fears.

#### Week 4 - Introduce the second RIM™ tool, based on your assessment.

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Starting Small	X	X	X	X	X		
Root Cause	X	X	X	X	X		
Research	X	X	X	X	X		
Submit Application		X					
Strategic Questions							X

As you can see in week 4, once Mary understands the fear underneath her problem, it becomes easier to initiate and submit her application. Furthermore, by starting small, Mary is able to consistently get her research done. Sometimes she chooses to work for only five minutes, but often she works for much longer once she gets started. Based on these habits, Mary is now well on her way to getting a new job.



## PART THREE

# The Habit Mindset Action Plan

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In Part Three, The Habit Mindset Action Plan, you will find:

**The Habit Mindset Self-Assessment:** establishes your Habit Mindset Score and RIM™ Scores

**The Action Plan Outline:** provides a broad overview of the four-week program

**The Action Plan Worksheet:** the week-by-week sheets to guide you through the program

# Habit Mindset Self-Assessment

Now that you have learned about the Habit Mindset and its components, let's build one for you. The first step is to complete a self-assessment.

Why is it important to assess your capacity to form new habits? Maybe you already know that forming habits is a problem for you. Why not go straight to improving yourself? Because the assessment provides you with feedback that will let you know where to focus your change efforts. Do you have more trouble with remembering, initiating or maintaining habits? The assessment will answer that question. Once you have the results, all you need to do is fill in your action plan and get started on your four-week program.

Let's get started on the assessment!

Rank yourself on a scale of 1-5 (then put in scale) for each of the statements below. 1 - never, 2 - rarely, 3 - sometimes, 4 - often, 5 - always.	
1. I rely on my memory when starting a new habit.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I lose track of how I spend my time.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I have trouble remembering to do new habits.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Other people must remind me to do things.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I put off doing things I should do but don't like.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I have trouble getting out of bed in the morning.	1 2 3 4 5
7. It is hard for me to get started on tasks that are unpleasant.	1 2 3 4 5
8. I dread getting my tasks done for the day.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I get knocked off my new habits by weekends, holidays, family trips or other interruptions to my regular routine.	1 2 3 4 5
10. It is difficult for me to stay committed to things.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I have a lot of half-read books and/or partially completed projects.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I start new habits and then get distracted by other projects.	1 2 3 4 5

The self-assessment will show you specifically:

How good you are at forming habits in general (your Habit Mindset score).

Your specific weaknesses in forming your habits (remember, initiate, maintain).

Which tools and techniques will be most effective for you in improving your Habit Mindset during the action plan.

## Habit Mindset Score

Your total score reveals:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (60-40) Little or no Habit Mindset[1]
- \_\_\_\_\_ (39-31) Inconsistent Habit Mindset[2]
- \_\_\_\_\_ (30-21) Moderately successful Habit Mindset[3]
- \_\_\_\_\_ (20-12) Consistently high Habit Mindset[4]

## RIM™ Scores:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Remembering: Add score for questions 1-4
- \_\_\_\_\_ Initiating: Add score for questions 5-8
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining: Add score for questions 9-12

\*Pick the RIM™ variable with the highest score. You will work on that variable in week three of the action plan.

# The Action Plan Outline

## Week 1

- **Meta-habit** will give a daily awareness of your habit change efforts.
- **Initial Goal Setting** at the end of the week will set a goal and establish habits that you will implement during the rest of the program.

## Week 3

- **RIM™ Tool #1** (See Appendix in Part Four)
- **Goal Habit #1**
- **Goal Habit #2**
- **Additional Goal Habits, if identified during Strategic Questions from previous week**
- **Strategic Questions**

## Week 2

- **Goal Habit #1**  
This is a habit that will support the goal you just set.
- **Goal Habit #2**
- **Strategic Questions**

## Week 4

- **Goal Habit #1**
- **Goal Habit #2**
- **Additional Goal Habits, if identified during Strategic Questions from previous week**
- **RIM™ Tool #1**
- **RIM™ Tool #2**
- **Strategic Questions**



# The Action Plan Worksheet

The Action Plan Worksheet spans four weeks. The first week, you will establish your meta-habit and at the end of the week you will set your initial goal. In week two, you will work to establish the habits related to that goal. At the end of the week, use your strategic questions to see how you did. Week three you will begin to work on the weakest variable in your assessment, using a RIM™ tool. In week four, you will introduce the second RIM™ tool, based on your assessment.

### Week 1 Actions:

- *Every day* – use Table 1 to track current habits. This will help you to establish the meta-habit.
- *End of the week* – complete your Initial Goal Setting form.

## The Meta-Habit

To establish the meta-habit, make a list of all the habits you are already doing. Then, every day, mark whether you did the habit or not. In the chart below, we have inserted habits for you. **Assume that you will use every new tool or habit you learn in the future within the meta-habit.**

TABLE 1

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Brush Teeth							
Eat Lunch							
Eat Dinner							

## Initial Goal Setting

Goal setting is well known but infrequently done. By taking the time to write out your goals, you greatly increase your chances for success. Let's use the standard tried-and-true method for goal setting, the SMART method, and modify it slightly to incorporate the importance of habits. You will add the Goal Habits that come from this exercise to your meta-habit in week 2.

## Goal Setting - SMART

<b>Specific</b>	What exactly do I want to do?		
<b>Measurable</b>	How will I track my progress?		
<b>Achievable</b>	What steps will I need to take?		
	Which HABITS will I need to achieve this goal?	Goal Habit #1	Goal Habit #2
<b>Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to me?		
<b>Time</b>	When will I have completed this goal?		

### Week 2 Actions:

- *Every day* – use Table 2 to track Goal Habit #1 and Goal Habit #2 from the Initial Goal Setting tool completed in week 1.
- *End of the week* – complete your Strategic Questions and mark as completed in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Goal Habit #1							
Goal Habit #2							
Strategic Questions							

## Strategic Questions

Strategic questions, which you ask yourself at the end of every week, form the basis for the analysis discipline within the Habit Mindset model:

### 1 Am I having a problem with any of my habits? Analyze with RIM™

Am I having a problem REMEMBERING?

Am I having a problem INITIATING?

Am I having a problem MAINTAINING?

\*See Appendix to find a tool for specific RIM™ variables.

Spend a moment remembering why you are doing the habit in the first place.

### 2 Are there any new habits I need to add or old habits I need to remove?



Goal Setting - SMART

<b>Specific</b>	What exactly do I want to do?		
<b>Measurable</b>	How will I track my progress?		
<b>Achievable</b>	What steps will I need to take?		
	Which HABITS will I need to achieve this goal?	Goal Habit #3	Goal Habit #4
<b>Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to me?		
<b>Time</b>	When will I have completed this goal?		

Simply continue to track the Goal Habits from week 1 if you do not identify any new Goal Habits from the SMART strategic questions. If you do identify new Goal Habits from the SMART questions above, add them to your meta-habit in week 3.

### Week 3 Actions:

- *As needed* – track your progress using RIM™ tool #1 and mark on Table 3.
- *Every day* – use Table 3 to continue to track Goal Habit #1 and Goal Habit #2 (and any additional Goal Habits\* you identified in week 2).
- *End of the week* – complete your Strategic Questions and mark as completed in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
RIM™ Tool #1							
Goal Habit #1							
Goal Habit #2							
Goal Habit #3*							
Goal Habit #4*							
Strategic Questions							

## RIM™ Tools

This week, you will introduce the first RIM™ tool based on your self-assessment RIM score. Go back to the [self-assessment](#) and pick your RIM™ variable (remember, initiate or maintain) with the highest score and find a RIM tool in the Appendix to add to the meta-habit table.

NOTE: Depending on the RIM™ tool you choose to implement, you may need to track your progress daily, every other day or perhaps weekly.

### Strategic Questions

Strategic questions, which you ask yourself at the end of every week, form the basis for the analysis discipline within the Habit Mindset model:

<b>1 Am I having a problem with any of my habits?</b> Analyze with RIM™	
Am I having a problem REMEMBERING?	
Am I having a problem INITIATING?	
Am I having a problem MAINTAINING?	
*See Appendix to find a tool for specific RIM™ variables.	
Spend a moment remembering why you are doing the habit in the first place.	
<b>2 Are there any new habits I need to add or old habits I need to remove?</b>	

### Goal Setting - SMART

<b>Specific</b>	What exactly do I want to do?		
<b>Measurable</b>	How will I track my progress?		
<b>Achievable</b>	What steps will I need to take?		
	Which HABITS will I need to achieve this goal?	Goal Habit #5	Goal Habit #6
<b>Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to me?		
<b>Time</b>	When will I have completed this goal?		

Continue to track the Goal Habits from previous week(s) if you do not identify any new Goal Habits from these SMART strategic questions. If you do identify new Goal Habits, add them to your meta-habit in week 4. Remove any Goal Habits you no longer need to track. Remember that, depending on the RIM™ tool you choose to implement, you may need to track your progress daily, every other day or perhaps weekly.

### Week 4 Actions:

- *As Needed* – track your progress using RIM™ tool #1 and RIM™ tool #2 and mark on Table 4.
- *Every day* – use Table 4 to continue to track Goal Habit #1 and Goal Habit #2 (and any additional Goal Habits\* you identified in WEEK 2 and/or week 3).
- *End of the week* – complete your Strategic Questions and mark as completed in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Habit	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
RIM Tool #1							
RIM Tool #2							
Goal Habit #1							
Goal Habit #2							
Goal Habit #3*							
Goal Habit #4*							
Goal Habit #5*							
Goal Habit #6*							
Strategic Questions							

## RIM™ Tools

This week, you will introduce the second RIM™ tool based on your Self-Assessment RIM™ score. Go back to the [Self-Assessment](#) and pick your RIM™ variable (remembering, initiating or maintaining) with the second-highest score and find a RIM™ tool in the Appendix to add to the meta-habit table.

Remember that, depending on the RIM™ tool(s) you choose to implement, you may need to track your progress daily, every other day or perhaps weekly.

### Strategic Questions

Strategic questions, which you ask yourself at the end of every week, form the basis for the analysis discipline within the Habit Mindset model:

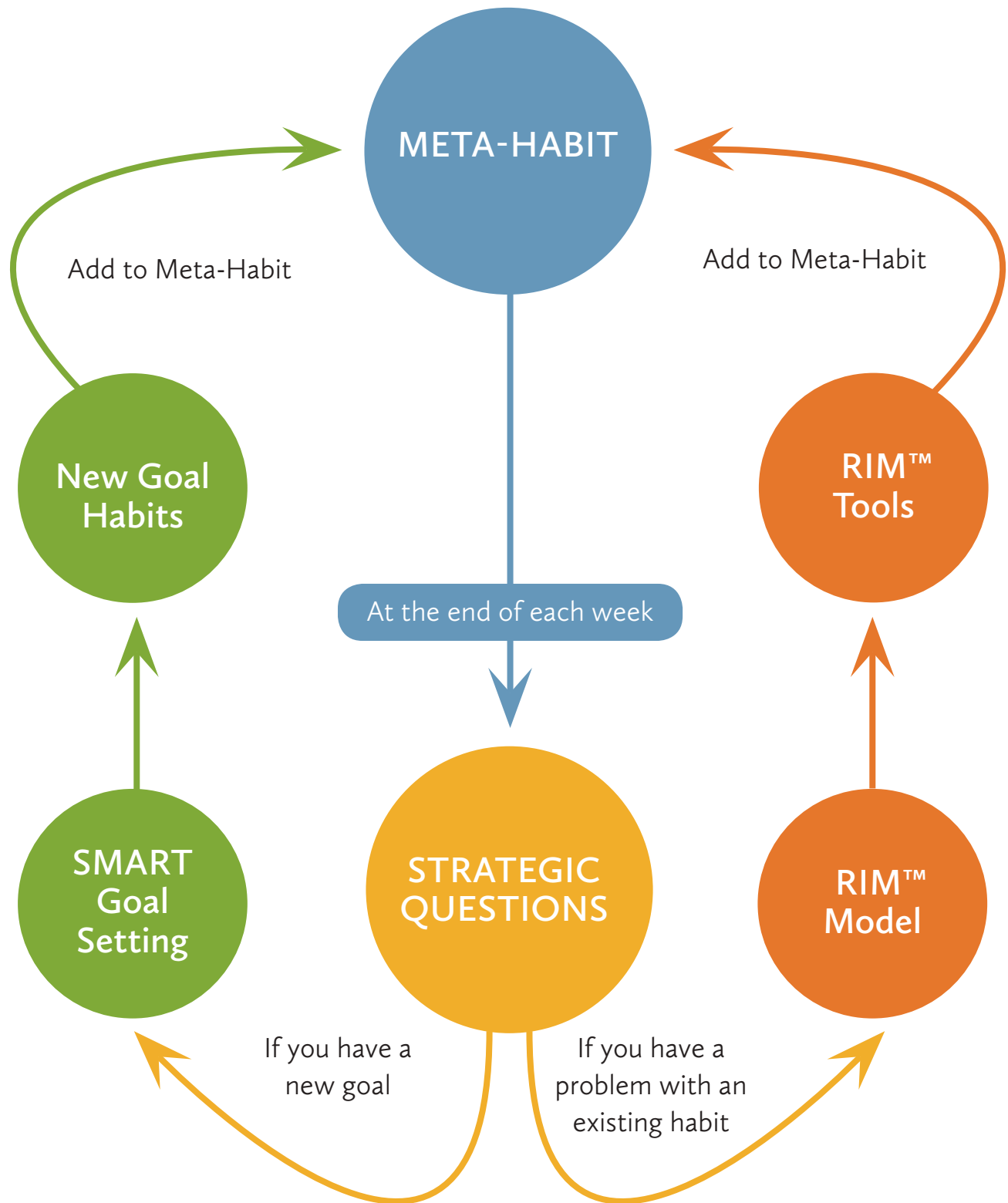
<b>1 Am I having a problem with any of my habits?</b> Analyze with RIM™	
Am I having a problem REMEMBERING?	
Am I having a problem INITIATING?	
Am I having a problem MAINTAINING?	
*See Appendix to find a tool for specific RIM™ variables.	
Spend a moment remembering why you are doing the habit in the first place.	
<b>2 Are there any new habits I need to add or old habits I need to remove?</b>	

### Goal Setting - SMART

<b>Specific</b>	What exactly do I want to do?		
<b>Measurable</b>	How will I track my progress?		
<b>Achievable</b>	What steps will I need to take?		
	Which HABITS will I need to achieve this goal?	Goal Habit #7	Goal Habit #8
<b>Relevant</b>	Why does this matter to me?		
<b>Time</b>	When will I have completed this goal?		

Continue to track the Goal Habits from previous week(s) if you do not identify any new Goal Habits from these SMART strategic questions. If you do identify new Goal Habits, add them to your meta-habit next week. Remove any Goal Habits you no longer need to track. Remember that, depending on the RIM™ tool you choose to implement, you may need to track your progress daily, every other day or perhaps weekly.

# The Habit Mindset Process





# PART FOUR

## APPENDIX – RIM™ Tools

### REMEMBER

Here are the tools to implement if you have trouble remembering to do your habit. They include using your calendar, chaining, setting the stage, using alarms and improving your working memory.

#### Calendar

Use your calendar to plan the best time to do your habit. It is surprising how many people neglect this straightforward technique. It also helps to make sure that when you do your habit, you are in a situation that makes compliance as easy as possible. This is usually best done at the beginning of the week, either on Sunday or Monday.

Review your calendar for the week and figure out the best time to do your new habit. The following questions can help you consider some important factors.

- **How much energy will I need to do this habit?**
- **How much time will I need to do this habit?**
- **What will be the ideal setting (i.e. noisy, crowded)?**
- **What equipment will I need?**

Make sure you add a weekly calendar review to your meta-habit.



## Chaining Habits

The term *chaining habits* gets its name from the observation that habits don't exist in isolation. Every habit is triggered by the habit before it throughout your day. Habits are your mind on automatic pilot. People wake up, make coffee, read the newspaper, etc. They never read the newspaper and then make coffee, because waking up triggers coffee and coffee triggers newspaper. Your day is usually like knocking down dominoes.

So deliberately put the beginning of your new habit right next to the end of an established one. This will make it more likely that you will remember and initiate the new habit:

1. Pick when you want to do your habit.
2. Which habit happens right before the time you want your new habit to occur?
3. Spend some time linking the two habits in your mind:
  - Visualize yourself doing the new habit right after the old one.
  - Leave a physical prompt to remind you.

Make sure you add a weekly review of your chaining to your meta-habit.

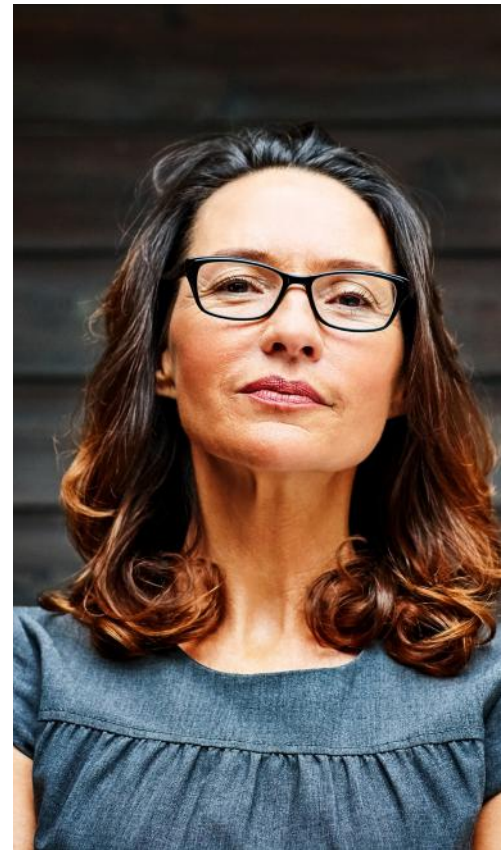
## Setting the Stage

This technique is based on the psychological principle of cognitive efficiency, a.k.a., the laziness principle. The brain doesn't want to think too hard or work at something unless it has a darn good reason to. So you want to make it as easy on your brain as possible when starting a new habit. Doing something new is difficult enough, so clear the runway for it!

For example, suppose you want to start working out. It is already hard enough for your brain to get you to wake up early and go to the gym. If you also have to find your workout clothes in three different places and hunt down your gym membership, you add a bunch of other tasks to your overtaxed brain. Make it easy for yourself by preparing things ahead of time.

Questions to help you set the context:

- What equipment do you need for the habit?
- Where is the most efficient place to put that equipment?
- Which aspects of the habit can be done ahead of time?
- Is there any way you can make the habit more pleasant?



### Example:

You want to get into the habit of reviewing your sales meetings to evaluate your effectiveness. After your meetings, you are in the habit of going to the computer to check your email. Therefore, leave your notebook on your keyboard, because you will see it after the meeting and it will prompt you to implement the new habit. The intention is to chain your self-analysis habit to your habit of going to the computer.



Furthermore, you can place your gym bag in a strange place, like the bathroom sink, so it serves as a reminder when you wake up. This combines the context tool with the chaining tool.

Make sure you add a setting the context review to your meta-habit.

## Alarms

When starting a new habit, remembering to do it is often difficult. This is because most of your day is spent on automatic pilot. Something new is easily forgotten as you move from one thing to another during the day.

This is where alarms come in. Just set an alarm for the time of day that you want to do the new habit. Once you are reminded, all you must do is initiate the habit. Even better, many smartphones have location specific alarms, so you can have your phone remind you of specific things when you arrive at work or when you arrive at home.

Questions to consider:

- When do I want to do the habit?
- Will I need to set an alarm early to get the habit done? For example, if I want to work out at 6 p.m., I need to remember at 5:30 p.m. to drive to the gym.

## Improve Working Memory

Sometimes remembering things is such a problem, your best long-term solution is to actually work to improve your memory. Memory techniques can often help with this option. Spend a moment visualizing yourself doing the habit at the appropriate time. Then add something that brings an emotional element to the memory — humor or something absurd, for instance — to burn the memory in your brain. For example, say you want to remember to wash the dishes. You might imagine a giant clown coming out of the drain. That makes it easy to remember the dishes.

- Visualize yourself doing the habit at the appropriate time.
- Add something that will elicit an emotional response in you (humor or absurdity).

## Initiate

The tools to help when you are having trouble initiating a habit include **distress tolerance, root cause analysis, start small, reduce anxiety, set the stage, commitment contract, rewards and meditation.**

### Distress Tolerance

People often have trouble initiating a habit because it makes them uncomfortable in some way. For example, giving negative feedback to a direct report might distress you. That discomfort causes you to avoid giving negative feedback. Learning to tolerate feelings of discomfort will make it easier to give the feedback despite the discomfort.



You can build that ability by deliberately exposing yourself to uncomfortable situations, whether they are physical, mental or emotional. Simply follow these directions to build up your own distress tolerance:

1. Make a list of all the things in your life that are even a little annoying, uncomfortable or anxiety-provoking.
2. Eliminate all of the items that don't occur regularly.
3. Identify the distressing items that you do something to avoid. For example, you are stuck in traffic so you distract with music, or you are in a boring conversation with a co-worker, so you make an excuse to leave.
4. Pick one item from your list (or multiple items if you are ambitious).
5. Figure out what you need to do to tolerate that distress a little longer. For example, forcing yourself to sit in traffic for five minutes before turning on the music.
6. Just as you would when lifting weights, start easy and work up to harder challenges. For example, at first, wait one minute before turning on the music, then five minutes, then eight and eventually 10.
7. Finally, put the distress tolerance tool on your meta-habit for daily practice.

## Pushing outside of the limits of your comfort zone helps to develop your distress tolerance

You can build your distress tolerance by doing nearly anything that makes you uncomfortable. Exercise is a very reliable method, but there are many more. The only limit is your imagination. You could deliberately talk to someone that annoys you. You could sit through a movie you find boring. You can even recognize opportunities that come up in your life naturally. For example, when sitting in traffic, recognize that you are in a distressing situation that is helping to build your distress tolerance. The more you deliberately expose yourself to hardship, the more tolerant of hardship you will become.

## Root Cause Analysis

This tool involves a systemic search for the underlying psychological cause for the reasons you struggle with initiating your habit. When you understand the underlying factors driving your behavior then you have the option of doing something about them. If you don't understand the causes, you are a slave to them.

There can be many different root causes, but a few of the most common are anxiety, arrogance, entitlement, low self-esteem, self-destructive tendencies, passive aggression, fear of success, fear of failure. Usually the fastest way to get to your root cause is to get a coach.

If that isn't an option, using a journal can work well. These are the elements you would write about every day:

- Find an incident in which you had trouble initiating and describe it.
- Describe which emotion you were feeling.
- Describe what you were thinking about the situation.
- Do you see a bigger or deeper pattern here?

Add this tool to your meta-habit and go through it every day for at least two weeks.



## Starting Small

Often, we have trouble starting a task because it can seem overwhelming. We put it off because we don't feel up to it. Unfortunately, sometimes we never feel up to the task and we consequently never get started. Starting small short-circuits that problem by identifying the smallest next action needed to move the habit forward. The trick is to pick something that feels so easy, it would be silly not to do it.

For example, say John wants to get into the habit of clearing his inbox every day. However, the huge stack of emails seems overwhelming. So instead he glances at them to make sure there is nothing urgent and then moves onto other things. Using the starting small technique, John would set a goal to clear one email. Afterward, he would clear one more. At any point he could stop, but he will most likely find that it isn't so bad once he gets started.

### Three Steps To Help You Get Started

- Identify a daunting task you are avoiding.
- Identify the very next task you need to do to move the habit forward.
- See if you can break that next task down to something even smaller. For example, if the habit is working out, you may identify the next task as getting your workout clothes on. You make it even smaller by focusing on getting the workout shirt on.

Add this tool to your meta-habit and practice it every day for two weeks.

## Reduce Anxiety

**Often, humans avoid a task because it makes us feel anxious.**

While anxiety is complicated enough to be the subject of thousands of books, simple solutions can make a big difference.

The next time you notice yourself delaying on a task because of anxiety just take a breath and then dive in.

Adopt these steps to use this tool effectively:

- Identify when a task is making you even a little anxious.
- Take in a slow, deep breath through your nose.
- Hold that breath for one second.
- Slowly breathe out through your nose.
- Focus on releasing tension as you breathe out.
- Repeat one to five cycles until feel more relaxed.

Add this to your meta-habit and practice it daily for two weeks.

You aren't aiming for zero anxiety or stress, merely a reduction in anxiety and an increase in feelings of calm.



## Commitment Contract

Online commitment contracts are a relatively new idea in the last five or so years. In general, people tend to follow through on commitments when their own money is at stake. No surprise there — research in behavioral economics demonstrates the power of incentives and punishments to alter behavior.

So at websites like [Beeminder.com](https://www.beeminder.com) and [Stickk.com](https://www.stickk.com), essentially, you make a bet that you will achieve some goal or stick to a habit.

For example, if you want to wake up one hour earlier every morning, you place a monetary bet at the website. A judge will determine if you achieve your habit or goal. If you do, you keep the money. If you don't the money could go to a charity of your choice ... or to a charity you disagree with.

To start your own commitment contract, follow these steps:

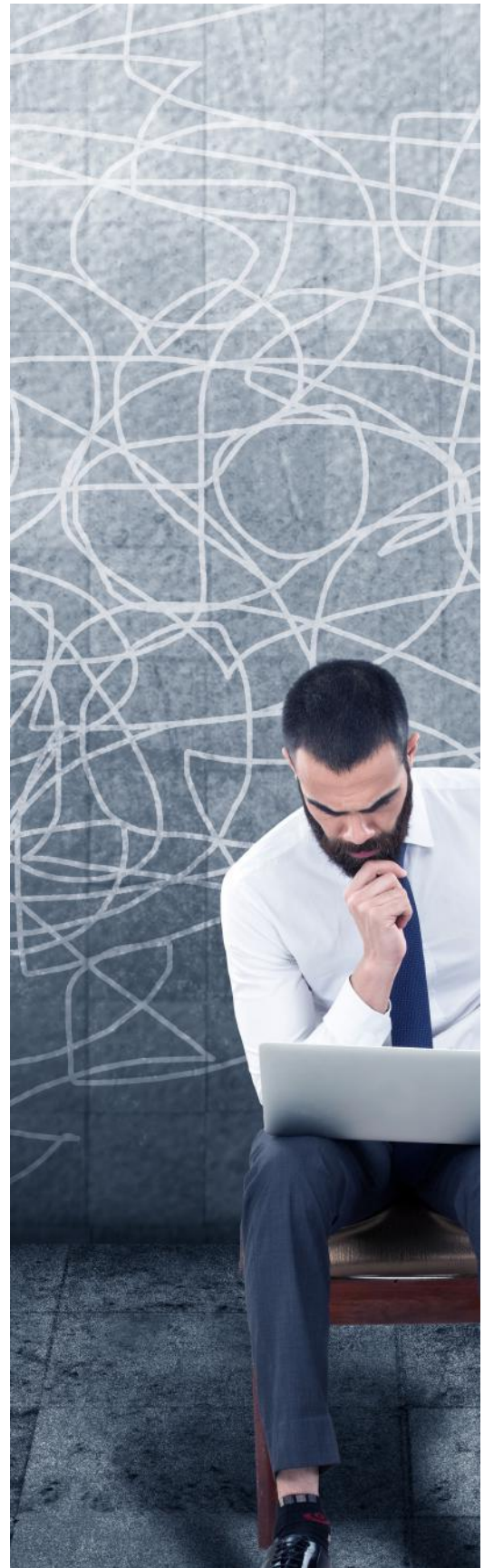
- Pick a habit you want to implement.
- Quantify achieving that habit. For example, losing two pounds per month.
  - Something small is better, say an extra dessert as opposed to a \$200 spending spree.
  - You can pick things that you already do, but make them contingent on the habit.
  - Get a friend to help if you don't have the willpower to hold the reward back from yourself.

## Rewards

This uses the same philosophy as the commitment contract tool, but instead of punishing yourself, you give yourself a reward for taking action.

Here are some steps to get started:

- Pick a habit to implement.
- Pick a reward that you would enjoy.
  - Something small is better, say an extra dessert as opposed to a \$200 spending spree.
  - You can pick things that you already do, but make them contingent on the habit.
  - Get a friend to help if you don't have the willpower to hold the reward back from yourself.



## Meditation

At first glance, meditation doesn't seem like a tool to help you initiate more effectively. After all, most people assume meditation is about sitting around not doing anything.

Mindfulness meditation, however, is an intense mental workout that builds your capacity to self-monitor. This type of meditation has been shown to create changes in the brain regions associated with executive functioning. In turn, having that capacity will help you to initiate habits more frequently.

To begin the practice of meditation, start small (five minutes) and build up. It is also important to do it daily. Find a quiet place, sit comfortably, and then begin to focus your attention on your breathing. You don't need to change it in any way, simply notice it. When you get distracted, gently pull your attention back to your breathing. Getting distracted frequently doesn't mean you have failed. The mental improvement comes from how often you bring yourself back to paying attention to your breathing.

If you want a little more help, there are many resources available. We recommend the work of [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#).

There are also solid apps to help you get started:

- [Headspace](#)
- [The Insight Timer](#)
- [Stop Breath Think](#)



# Maintain

The tools that help when you have trouble maintaining a habit include **accountability partner, letting people know, recursive journaling and contingency planning.**

## Accountability Partner

People tend to maintain habits better when someone is following up on them, even if there is no possible punishment or reward based on the follow-up. This is likely because humans are okay with disappointing themselves, but not so okay with disappointing others. We know that we will forgive ourselves, but we aren't so sure other people will forgive us.

There are a lot of reasons to use a professional coach instead of a friend or colleague or, God forbid, your spouse for this role. Your relationship to an accountability coach is very different than your current relationship with your inner circle. Accountability can easily cause conflict and tension in the existing relationship. Don't risk ruining a perfectly good relationship by making someone also play the role of coach for you!

If you want to take the risk, here are the steps to set that up:

- Find someone you think will be able to hold you accountable to your habit.
- Setup a check-in at regular intervals.
- During those check-ins, be ruthlessly honest about how successful you have been.
- If you are having trouble, take the time to think about what got you off track.

## Letting People Know

Let people know about the habit you want to establish. This strengthens your resolve to go through with it and motivates you through the potential shame you will feel if you don't succeed and the pride if you do. If you have trouble maintaining, seeing the person might remind you of the habit, which could prompt you to restart. Research shows that when starting a new habit, if you let people know, you are more likely to succeed.

Use these guidelines to get started:

- In general, pick people you respect and whose opinion about you matters.
- Pick people with whom you have regular contact and who might have an interest in your success.
- Beware of picking people who might be secretly rooting for you to fail.
- Be thoughtful before posting on social media. This can be a very successful tactic, but only if your Facebook fans or Twitter followers will be encouraging and not discouraging.



## Recursive Journaling

The difference between a normal journal and a recursive journal is that the recursive journal is dynamic. Each page of a recursive journal could pop up through reminders. This doesn't seem like a big deal, but it allows you to turn journaling from a good self-improvement tool into an amazing one.

In short, recursive journaling allows you to keep insights or ideas fresh over time.

Imagine you are starting a self-improvement program like this one and you are writing in your journal every day. At the beginning of the program, you write out your goals. But instead of leaving it at that, you then put a reminder on that page to pop back up halfway through the program. This allows you to check on your progress and modify and refine your goal based on what you have learned rather than write out your goals and then promptly forget to look at them until you stumble upon them years later.

Now let's say that one day, while writing in your journal, you have an insight into some aspect of your personality that has been sabotaging you at work. It is important enough that you create a reminder to come back to that page in one week. One week later, the page pops up again and you write about your progress at putting that insight into practice. You continue to have that page return until you feel you have done the work necessary to change that aspect of your personality.

Typically, people have an insight about themselves, forget that insight, then revisit the insight years later and think it is new. This cycle can repeat throughout a person's life.

Recursive journaling requires software. Currently, the only software we have tested to create a recursive journal is [Evernote](#). To start this tool:

- Sign up for a free Evernote account.
- Write daily in your journal, starting a new page for each entry.
- When you have a new goal, write about it in your journal.
- Set a reminder for that goal so that you can review it later.
- Whenever you write about something that seems important, put a reminder on it, too.
- Experiment! The recursive journal is a very powerful and broad tool you can use to support a variety of efforts.

Be sure to add writing in it daily to your meta-habit.



## Contingency Planning

Contingency planning is a great way to become more resilient and to avoid problems with maintaining. It is, simply, identifying trigger events that will likely knock you off your habit and planning what you will do to either avoid that consequence or to get back to the habit as quickly as possible. For example, sometimes weekends knock people off their habits. It could be a business trip or vacation. And many people are knocked off their habits by stress and deadlines.

### Know What You Need to Succeed

Your contingency plan checklist:

- Pick a habit you believe might be fragile.
- Determine events that will significantly change your routine.
- Consider the stressful points in your life: deadlines, the times that your routine is disrupted.
- Plan how you will want to deal with those events:
- How might you need to alter your habit?
- Will you need to reduce the habit's frequency?
- Will you need to take a break from the habit? If so, choose a firm date to restart, and set a reminder.





Author

## Ali Navidi, Psy.D.

Ali Navidi is a clinical psychologist who provides executive coaching to clients, including individual contributors, technical leads, new managers and C Suite-level executives. He also assists organizations at the group level, working with their management teams and working groups, and has worked with federal agencies to develop best practices in coaching and organizational development.




Author

## Marialane Schultz

Marialane Schultz is the founder and CEO of Innovative Outcomes Consulting Inc. and brings more than 25 years of successful leadership and employee development experience to the company. As a respected business executive, she has been responsible for major business operations, strategy and policy in Fortune 100 and defense organizations. Marialane helps organizational leaders and their teams remove barriers to success and excel through individual and team coaching.



 (703) 665-0940  
(877) 405-2955 toll free

 [info@ioci-consulting.com](mailto:info@ioci-consulting.com)  
inquiries

 [www.ioci-consulting.com](http://www.ioci-consulting.com)  
web

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