

Habits in the Making

Your Coherent Minute

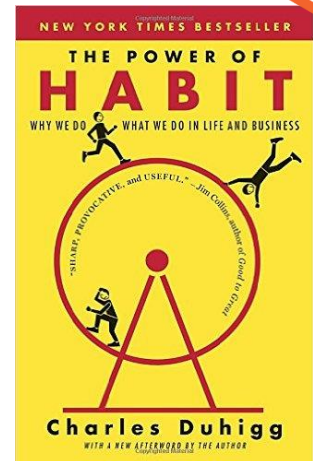
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In Cooperation with the HeartMath Institute
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Habits, what an appropriate time to talk about habits. New Year's Day is here and now is the time of ceremonial discussion with ourselves and others about what "resolutions" we want to make this year. As educators, whether you are teachers or administrators, we spend countless hours trying to rationalize our position, convince others, manipulate, coerce and, at times, strong-arm others to change, to see it our way, or to simply just do what we ask.

In reality, the only one we can change is ourselves.

Then there is the routine, which can be physical or mental or emotional. Finally, there is a reward, which helps your brain figure out if this particular loop is worth remembering for the future." (19, 2014)

This theme was echoed in the survey Project BLEND administered in the fall, asking if you used the devices and how. Survey results from the fall offered obstacles as to why candidates were not using HeartMath tools and strategies. Some of the responses were (purple area):



- Simply keeping it in the forefront of my mind in the midst of everything else.
- Time.
- I have not thought to use them while at work or at home.
- Honestly, I have not used since back to work! It is something that I need to establish as a daily habit. This (survey) was a good reminder.
- Remembering to use them, practice, making it a habit.

What a perfect time to set that new course that will allow you to work from a place of calm, a place of ease, to be more in flow with the events with which you come in contact. Our habits are who we are, yet they are nothing more than patterns. In his book, *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg describes a habit as follows:

"The habit process within our brains is a three-step loop. First, there is a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode and which habit to use.

We can use these responses to assist in developing practices, reinforcing and sustaining better resilient-based habits. Who wouldn't want to be more calm, or at ease and in flow when handling a contentious parent, a disgruntled staff member, or a belligerent board member?

If we are to understand that our breathing and our emotional state drives our physiology into regenerative states increasing our resiliency, then why wouldn't we choose to be more resilient?

Learn more:

How to NOT Suck at Building Healthy Habits – By Steve (Nerd Fitness)

<https://www.nerdfitness.com/blog/how-to-build-healthy-habits-that-stick/>

To start with, review where you travel during the day. What are your routines?

Here are a few ideas for how you can begin to re-pattern your breathing behaviors.

1. First, as a teacher and/or administrator, what do you do during the day?
 - a. At home, what is your routine as you prepare for work?
 - b. At work, what is your routine in your classroom or office?
 - i. Are there certain places where you hang out?
 - ii. Do you greet the busses or students?
 - iii. Is there a specific spot where you stand?
 - c. Observe your surroundings in your classroom or office.
 - d. Do you have centering items, calming quotes, photos, a water fountain, etc.?
2. Second, make a note as to where you can place or identify a trigger. Triggers serve as reminders for us to do a particular act, like heart-focused breathing.
 - a. Within the path or routines that you follow, what items stand out for you that when you see, hear, or taste them, you can slow your breathing?
 - i. Take a slow deep inhalation and a slow complete exhalation.

ii. Can you take two, three deep breaths?

iii. Maybe five?

- b. ALL we are doing is finding places where we can carve out a few moments to do Heart-focused Breathing. Hey, you have to breathe anyway, so just make a few more deeper and slower through the course of your day.
3. You are essentially creating **“Environmental Triggers,”** as it’s called in the field.

What new associations are you going to make to bring more heart focused breathing into your day? Is it... before you answer the phone, while you’re walking around the building, every time you see a fire extinguisher, school mascot, your family picture on your desk, a heart sticker, a clock? Whatever, it doesn’t matter what the item is, it’s about YOU, building more resiliency and capacity. What environmental triggers do you want to set up for yourself?

Even simpler, Leo Babauta (2016) suggests leveraging your smartphone by putting a picture on your lock screen that says “Breathe.” Every time you check it, there’s your reminder. You may not be able to do it every time, but

you will be able to slip into it more easily when you do see it. Steve from Nerd Fitness says start small. I can’t think of anything smaller than a breath and a regenerative feeling, can you?

I tried to bring in a variety of sources, from the mindfulness approach to the nerd within us. Other sources are listed below. There are hundreds of these sites and list of things to do, but in reality it’s all up to you. Only you can create the change in you. I’m not going to belabor this point any further. The intent is to provide you with initial strategies to assist you in spending more time as a heart-focused, heart-centered resilient educator/administrator. I hope as you are completing your CAS, you want to be an administrator, or at the very least a better educator. I also assume that you want to constantly improve yourself and your situation. Being present and heart-centered is a great place to start.

Wishing you the best as we start this **NEW** year.

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[How to Trick Your Brain to Create a New Healthy Habit - Lifehacker](https://lifelife.com/how-to-trick-your-brain-to-create-a-new-healthy-habit-868231...)

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Jul 23, 2013 - Have you ever started a diet or exercise program but didn't stick with it? If you're like millions of other people, you've set out with the best intentions but failed to keep the momentum going. Here's why relying on motivation and willpower doesn't work (and what works instead).

[18 Tricks to Make New Habits Stick - Lifehack](http://www.lifehack.org/articles/featured/18-tricks-to-make-new-habits-stick.html)

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Here are some tips for creating *new habits* and making them stick: Commit to Thirty Days – Three to four weeks is all the time you need to make a *habit* automatic. **Start** Simple – Don't try to completely change your life in one day. Remind Yourself – Around two weeks into your commitment it can be easy to forget.

[5 Scientific Ways to Build Habits That Stick - 99U](http://99u.com/articles/17123/5-scientific-ways-to-build-habits-that-stick)

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A more scientific approach on this phenomenon is called the 'What the Hell Effect', which explains why we are so likely to abandon ship with a *new habit* at the first slip-up. The solution? Examine your habit and find exactly where things *start* to break down. In a great example of putting this in action, Author and 99U speaker Ramit ...

REFERENCES

Babauta, L., (2016) Two Ways to Form Habits Effortlessly, Zen Habits, May 27th, Retrieved from <https://zenhabits.net/effortless-habits/>

Covey, S., (2000), The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Running Press,

Duhigg, C. (2014) The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do In Life and Business. Random House, New York.