

Atomic Habits Book Review

By Melissa Muirhead

We all have habits that we perform on a daily basis, some good like brushing our teeth and going to work or reading before bed opposed to turning on the television. And some habits we should work on quitting, like snacking after dinner or scrolling social media. While all of these seem small and insignificant, the system that is set in place in the process of these habits forming can have atomic results. James Clear emphasizes the idea that in order for a habit or behavior to stick, it must become a part of our identity. For example, if we want to become “a reader” we must become the type of person who prioritizes a book at the end of the night over media. Or if we want to become someone who is fit and healthy, we must change our lifestyle to resemble that of a healthy person. In order to do this, Clear outlines 4 laws of behavior change. One, “make it obvious”. Two, “make it attractive”. Three, “make it easy”. Four, “make it satisfying”.

The first law, “make it obvious”, is in my opinion the most important. If we don’t take the initial step to recognize how we want to change there will be no accountability to carry out this progress. For example, as I am working through my professional growth system program, I make sure to block time each week to work toward my education goals. I know when I look at my calendar I have certain hours a day set aside just for education. By putting it right in front of me, I am being held accountable before ever beginning the task at hand.

Next, we have “make it attractive” and “make it easy”. These two laws go hand in hand. Once this new habit is in front of us, we then need to have a desire to act upon it. At Cavignac, we pride ourselves on being Learners. It is not only a core value we advertise but one we live by. This value is the reason we offer 40 hours of paid time off solely for education. On top of that we have put in place the Cavignac Audible Program which offers our colleagues with free access to an Audible Premium Plus membership. Not everyone is a reader, but with the importance we place on education, it is crucial that we motivate our colleagues to be always expanding their knowledge, in whichever medium works best for them. Creating good habits can be challenging, but by removing barriers that lead to excuses we can exponentially increase the likelihood of committing to these habits.

Lastly, we have “make it satisfying”. By creating an environment around a habit that increases dopamine, we are inherently more likely to repeat that behavior in the future. When those behaviors are repeated day in and day out, they become second nature and we quickly become the people we were striving to be just a short time before. Atomic is often defined as “of or forming a single irreducible unit or component in a larger system.” If we view changing our habits and behaviors as these small steps we take each day, the results will inevitably compound into life-changing results. We quickly will become the type of people that “live healthy lifestyles”, or “prioritize career growth” or whoever we wish to become but believe is too far out of reach.

Our core values, Leaders, Learners, Team Players, Professionals, and Givers, are at the heart of who Cavignac is. However, the culture that has been built here did not happen overnight. Rather, it happened through consistent and repeated behavior in the work that we do, the people that work alongside us, and the commitment to never stray from who we are. An organization that was founded on knowledge, is driven by the relationships we foster, and is continuously inspired by the community in which we serve.