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## **Exploring Habits and How They Work**

According to Dictionary.com, a habit is an “acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary.”

This means that a habit is a behavior that is repeatedly done until you almost don’t know that you are even doing it.

It becomes second nature to you.

Back in 2010, a University College London study showed that it took an average of 66 days (over 2 months) to make a new habit become automatic.

The in-depth study tells us two very important things:

- Bad habits take time to break.
- Good new habits take time to become ingrained.

A habit is something that only comes with time and repeated action. You often don’t even realize that you have a bad habit until someone else points it out. Or, you notice something’s preventing you from moving forward.

The brain likes to develop automatic habits because it can utilize its mental energy toward another task while it engages in the habit.

## **Good Habits Versus Bad Habits**

In truth, the only real difference between good and bad habits is that the acquired behavior pattern is a good action or a bad action as defined by the majority of society.

So, how do you get rid of bad habits that may be preventing you from reaching your goals?

## **Define Bad Habits and Phase Them Out Of Your Life**

As mentioned above, bad habits are behaviors considered as such by most of society and are repeatedly done by the person. They may also be habits that prevent you from moving forward.

*Breaking or overriding the bad habit will NOT be an overnight process, and depending on how quickly you adopt new habits and the complexity of the action(s) involved, it could take a few weeks to several months to adopt the new habit.*

- You need to recognize the bad habits you want to eliminate, then avoid repeating those actions. Keep consciously avoiding the bad actions until the avoidance become automatic.
- You need to determine what alternative action you must take to eliminate the bad action.

It will take time to “rewire” your brain to dispose of the bad habit and take up the new good habit.

Actions that take more effort will take a longer period of time to adopt as habits compared to those actions that take less effort.

*Procrastination may be an example of a bad habit.*

## **How to Form Good Habits and Make Them Stick**

When you have a bad habit and want to replace it with a good habit, you need to consciously be aware of the bad habit. You also need to know what action/s you’ll take to replace it.

- You need to determine what good habits you want to adopt, then repeat the good action that constitutes that habit repeatedly until you do it automatically.

- You'll need to repeat the positive action many times before it will become ingrained in your actions and it becomes an automatic behavior.

This is when the bad habit will be erased and the good habit is established.

*Reading your goals each morning may be considered a good habit.*

## **Set Up a Support System to Stay On Track**

It's quite possible you will repeat the bad habit a number of times while trying to integrate the new good habit. A support system can help you stay on track.

- The support system can include family and friends who can check in on you and ensure you're sticking with the new good habit.
- A support system can include a memory device, such as tying a piece of string around your finger. It can also be a written affirmation that you read and/or say each day.

## **Start Small and Create One New Habit At A Time**

Some people will attempt to make massive changes to their lives instead of trying to make one simple change at a time.

The problem with the massive change approach is that you'll end up feeling overwhelmed. This in turn can make you lose motivation and enthusiasm and. Chances are you'll revert back to your old habits and routines.

It's better to successfully integrate one new habit instead of trying to implement 3-5 new habits at a time.

- The amount of effort needed to successfully implement a new habit will directly impact how much time it takes to successfully implement that new habit.

- If the new habit you want to adopt is complex and substantial, you should expect to take more time to successfully integrate it into your regular routine.

Each new habit you want to integrate into your regular routine should be something you believe will help you improve your life and build your wealth.

Take the required time necessary to ensure that a new habit is successfully integrated into your routine.

*Doing the good habit 50% of the time and the bad habit 50% of the time doesn't do you any good, nor does it improve your life and wealth.*

## **Rinse, Repeat and Maintain New Habits**

- Realize what bad habit you're doing.
- Determine what action(s) you need to take to stop that bad habit.
- Start taking the action/s required to stop that bad habit and form the good habit.

*Take the necessary time and use support systems such as family, friends, and/or memory devices to help retrain your mind to perform the new good action repeatedly in place of the old bad action.*

Over time, you'll automatically perform the good action on a regular basis. This is how you'll know you've successfully integrated the new habit and replaced the old habit.

Chances are high that once you form a new good habit, you'll be able to keep it. But, if you find yourself slipping back to an old bad habit or are doing a new bad action, follow the process again.

*"Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs one step at a time." ~ Mark Twain*

*"Winning is a habit, unfortunately so is losing." ~ Vince Lombardi*

## TOOLS TO HELP YOU MOVE FORWARD

Along with breaking bad habits and replacing them with good ones, it's important to keep moving forward in your writing and marketing by utilizing available tools.

### **CHECK OUT these WOW! Women on Writing classes:**

#### **Build Your Author/Writer Platform**

[http://wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi\\_WebsiteTrafficInboundMarketing.php](http://wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi_WebsiteTrafficInboundMarketing.php)

It's 4-weeks, in-depth, and interactive.

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#### **Become a Power-Blogger and Content Writer in Just 4 Weeks**

[http://wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi\\_BecomeAnSEOWriter.php](http://wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi_BecomeAnSEOWriter.php)

Learn to write super-charged blog posts in just 4-weeks – it's interactive.

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#### **Blogging Made Easy**

[http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi\\_BloggingMadeEasy.php](http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi_BloggingMadeEasy.php)

In just 4-weeks you'll feel comfortable and confident about how to blog in no time.

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#### **Create Your WordPress Website Today** (No code, no technical stuff, no fuss)

[http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi\\_CreateYourWebsite.php](http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/classroom/KarenCioffi_CreateYourWebsite.php)

There's video instruction and one-on-one with the instructor.

**To keep up** with additions and/or changes to my e-classes visit:

<http://www.articlewritingdoctor.com/content-marketing-tools/>

**Karen Cioffi** is an award-winning children's author, children's ghostwriter, and author/writer online platform instructor with WOW! Women on Writing.

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**SOME OF MY FAVORITE QUOTES:**



Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do." ~ Mark Twain

"If you don't like the road you're walking, start paving another one."  
~ Dolly Parton

"What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work." ~ Stephen King

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant." ~ Robert Louis Stevenson

"Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one."  
~ Brad Paisley

"Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude."  
~ Zig Ziglar

"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right."  
~ Henry Ford

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do."  
~ Goethe

"Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday."  
~ Dale Carnegie

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."  
~ Will Rogers

One of Carol Ashby's signature expressions when they were having problems at work was "With this much manure, there's got to be a pony somewhere."  
~ Carol Ashby (Books and Such.com)  
*You just have to be a good pony spotter*

"100% of the shots you don't take don't go in."  
~ Wayne Gretzky