

#3 Five habits that you should commit to in order to achieve long-term success

Welcome to another episode of From Stuck to Unstoppable podcast. I am your host Wambui Mburu. It's February already. Can you believe it? This is a time when New Year's resolutions for most people have probably dropped, and excitement and eagerness to be a different person are now on the backside.

But I have good news, this year we're going to do things differently. This is the year we are not only going to hit all our goals, but we are going to apply the right systems to get there. If you're looking to build good habits and eliminate bad habits for good, then this episode is for you. You're going to learn how to form habits that stick by using systems that will get you exactly what you need.

Today I'm sharing five key takeaway lessons from a book I read that I have been implementing in my personal and business life, and I have already started seeing major results. The book is called Atomic Habits, by James Clear. This book was an answered prayer because I have struggled with consistency for a long time. Even though in some areas of my life I've been pretty consistent, there are other areas that I have not been consistent and I needed help.

Have you ever asked yourself, why is it that I don't do what I say that I'll do? Have you ever asked yourself that question? If you have, then there's some behaviour change that needs to be done. James says that before we build good habits, we need to take an inventory of our current habits and ask ourselves if it's the right thing or not because once a habit is formed, it becomes rooted.

Being self-aware of your daily habits will help you check the ones that are effective and those that are not. You can track these daily habits by using what he calls a habit scorecard. Starting with the time you wake up, write down every single thing you do.

For example, wake up, check your phone, use the bathroom, make coffee, make breakfast. Look at each behaviour and ask yourself, does this behaviour help me become the person that I wish to be? Let's say you want to change a bad habit. For instance, you want to stop eating junk food. Say aloud what you're about to do. you can say, I'm about to eat this cookie, but I don't need it. Eating it will make me gain weight and hurt my health.

Maybe you want to buy something that you really don't need, you could say, I'm about to buy this phone, or whatever it is that you wanna buy. Buying it will cause me not to save money and will hurt my future. By pointing and calling, it makes you recognize your habit and helps you to stop yourself and make a behaviour change gradually.

The second lesson that I learned was that it is the daily habits that accumulate and determine who you are. If you want to know where you'll be at the end of the year, all you have to do is look at your daily choices. What are the things that you do repeatedly every day? Do you sleep on time? Do you read on a daily basis? Do you save money? Do you exercise when it comes to forming lasting habits, you just need to get 1% better every day, just 1%. The thing is to start small because small wins accumulate in the long run.

This is true because when I started running, I would run to the end of my driveway and I would just stop because I would lose my breath. I increased my distance to run to the neighbour's driveway and then the next day I ran to the other neighbour's driveway and I continued that way. In a couple of months, I was able to run one mile without stopping.

My 1% of running every day accumulated into running one mile, then two miles, and then running half a marathon a couple of years later. I didn't see these changes daily, but over the long run, I had become a runner. Habit formation requires patience and focus. On the contrary, if you repeat 1% of a poor decision every day, that tool will compound into bad results.

If you're stressed all the time, that compounds and results in not-so-good results in your health. If you eat junk food every day, that eventually results in poor health. If you spend more than you earn and never save, that results in always being broke. Right? Do you see the pattern?

The third lesson that I learned about forming an effective habit is to make a plan ahead of time about the day, the time, and the place you would be doing something. James calls this implementation intention, which is how you plan to implement your intention. For example, if you want to exercise, you can say, tomorrow at 5:00 PM, I will run two miles at the park across from my house. I will journal at 8:00 PM every day in my room. You can do this with anything you're doing, like going to the doctor's office. You can say on Thursday at 10:00 AM, I will go for a mammogram.

You're more likely to perform a habit when you're clear on what, where and when you want to do it. You know, being vague by just saying, I will get healthier, or I will write a blog post. That doesn't help because that action is not likely to happen.

The fourth lesson that I learned to form a lasting habit, is to identify a behaviour that you already do each day and stack your new behaviour on top of it. This is called habit stacking, and just like the implementation intention, where you pair your behaviour with a location and a time, with habit stacking, you pair your desired habit with a current habit. For example, after I brush my teeth, I will take my vitamin. After I get home, I will change into my exercise clothes, see?

My fifth takeaway was that it is our environment and not our motivation that affects how we behave. Science has proven that our vision is the most powerful of all. Our sensory abilities and visual cues stimulate our behaviours in a very big way.

Have you ever noticed that if you place a bowl of fruits on the kitchen counter where you will see it every day rather than in the fruit bin or in your fridge, you will tend to eat more fruit? But if you keep candy on the kitchen counter, hey, you get to eat more candy. Right? So James also talks about the difference between goals and systems.

Goals are the results you want to achieve, but systems are the processes that lead to those goals. Goals help you set a direction. Systems are the steps you take to get your goals because you can spend too much time writing your goals, but you need some steps to get there, right? Implementing a system of continuous small improvements will help you get to your goal.

Those are my five key takeaways from Atomic Habits. If you haven't read the book, I highly suggest that you read it. Actually, I read it for the second time, and this time around I'm sticking to my habits. I hope you take at least one of these strategies and use them in your daily life and start forming atomic habits by mastering just 1% of a behaviour every single day and see how it can lead to amazing results in your daily life work.

All right, my friends, thank you so much for tuning in and if this episode has helped you, please share it with your friends and family. I would love to reach more people and until next week, take care.