

How do we create new habits?

While “[c]lever minds have come up with some creative ways to put barriers between ourselves and our vices,” Amanda Morgan has developed a more proactive approach (Achor, 2010, p. 163). According to Morgan, instead of focusing on these vices, we should examine “the possible causes, the action itself, the responses the behavior elicits, and the expectations that play a role in the situation”; thereby, we can disrupt the habitual response “as soon as the behavior patterns begin to emerge” (Morgan, 2011).

Morgan, A. (2011, January 11). *A Positive Approach for Changing Kids' Challenging Behaviors*. Retrieved May 1, 2015, from Modern Parents Messy Kids: <http://www.modernparentsmessykids.com/2014/04/11-a-positive-approach-changing-kids-challenging-behaviors.html>

Bad Habits and the 20-Second Rule:

According to The Happiness Advantage, “[s]ustaining lasting change [can] often feel impossible because our willpower is limited” (Achor, 2010, p. 18). Therefore, “when [our] willpower fails, we fall back on our old habits and succumb to the path of least resistance.”

Through small adjustments to our weekly schedule – such as meal planning – “we can reroute the path of least resistance and replace bad habits with good ones.”

Achor, S. (2010). *The Happiness Advantage*. New York City, NY: Random House.



Meal Planning

and the 20-Second Rule



Activation Energy:

In *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor explains that in order to “kick-start a positive change,” more initial effort is almost always required; this is also known as “activation energy” (Achor, 2010, p. 155). According to Achor, “[t]he more we can lower or even eliminate the activation energy [needed] for our desired actions, the more we [can] enhance our ability to jump-start [these] positive change[s]” (Achor, 2010, p. 161). One example of this would include, “prepar[ing] healthy snack in advance so that we can simply pull them out of the refrigerator” (Achor, 2010, p. 163).

Achor, S. (2010). *The Happiness Advantage*. New York City, NY: Random House.



Helpful tips for eliminating meal planning barriers:



1. Be mindful of your specific nutritional needs, and/or food allergies, when choosing menu items; therefore, you can choose a preferred substitution, before leaving for the grocery store.
2. When choosing menu items, be mindful of both the required cooking time, and skill level needed.
3. If you are unable to devote a large portion of your schedule to food preparation, consider one-pot meals, as they can be easily doubled or tripled for additional leftovers.
4. When choosing menu items, try to select dishes that can be repurposed, for added cost savings.
5. Try to incorporate seasonal fruits and vegetables whenever possible.
6. If your schedule allows, price compare grocery stores, and plan your shopping lists accordingly.
7. After completing your weekly menu, construct a shopping list, thereby avoiding forgotten items.
8. Don't be afraid to recycle past menus.