Starting a New Habit

Shawn Achor recommends that we not count on willpower alone to accomplish our intentions as willpower diminishes as the day progresses. Instead, remove the first 20 seconds of obstacles between you and the task at hand. The inverse is also true: if you want to stop doing something, create 20 seconds of obstacles to get in your way of engaging with the bad habit you are trying to break.

*Changing a Habit: The 20 Second Rule*

1. The new habit I want to start or stop is…
2. What obstacle can I add that will help me?
3. What obstacle can I remove that will help me?

*Identifying Cues*

What will trigger you to get started each time? List three things.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Note: This material comes from the Thrive program at Ryerson University

Define the Rewards

What pleasure do you feel if you do (or don’t do) the behavior?

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Keeping the Habit

1. Anticipate and crave the rewards (let this craving motivate you and lead you to feel disappointed if you don’t get the reward).
2. Do the routine (repeat the behavior until it becomes a habit, 21 days or times in a row needed).
3. Announce your intentions (you are more likely to keep repeating the habit if someone else knows you are trying).
4. Ask for support (study buddy, exercise pal, encouragement from community or someone important to you). Tell them what you need: