

CHAPTER 2



HABIT MAGIC

TURNING YOURSELF ON TO
SELF-DISCIPLINE

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HABIT MAGIC: Turning Yourself On To Self-Discipline

Robert J. Ringer said, "Success is not dependent upon one's being blessed with superior intelligence or special skills, nor does formal education, hard work, or luck play a major role in an individual's climb towards success... the difference between success and failure is not nearly as great as most people believe..."

*Success is a matter of understanding and religiously practicing specific, simple habits that always leads to success."**

STRATEGY 2-1:

Master your habits.

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No habit is unbreakable. Every habit can be subjected to our control. Show me any person with a strong sense of self-control and I'll show you a winner. Conversely, a loser has little self-control. The subsequent sections of this book are immaterial unless we develop the ability to change those habits that hamper our success.

You are more likely to act yourself into feelings than feel yourself into action.

Dr. Jerome Brunner

The really high achievers in life have a common denominator: they have mastered their habits. Take a look at the really poor achievers in life: the opposite is true of them. The under-achievers have failed miserably because they lack self-discipline. They always let things slip. They seem to have not given enough attention, nor had the concern, for the important things in life.

These people have chosen the path of least resistance. They have tried to take the easy way out because it meant less work on the hard things in life, namely change and

***"The chains of habit
are too light
to be felt until
they are too heavy
to be broken"***

Warren Buffett

* Ringer, Robert J., *Million Dollar Habits*, (Ballantine Books, 1990), 1-2. Ringer makes the point that his book is based on these three premises. I loved his book.

control. Who are the most productive and successful people you know? Would they be characterized as people who have mastered habits? Are they highly disciplined people? How many people do you really know to whom you would give the label “*highly disciplined?*” Can you name ten? Five? Two?

DELAYED GRATIFICATION

“Doing more of what doesn’t work won’t make it work any better.”

Charles J. Givens

Delayed gratification can be defined as the delaying of the reward or pleasure phase and counting on, even scheduling, the investment or problem phase first to more fully enjoy the benefits later. It’s getting the unpleasant task done first to enjoy the gratification more deeply later.

How far would hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky have gone if he had tried to put the blessing or victory phase before the *workout* or investment phase? When the game came, he wouldn’t go very far without the early morning runs and late night practices. There’s no way he could handle the game without delaying certain pleasures to more fully enjoy the victory phase later.

Delayed gratification means working on problems NOW. It may be tough. Sure, it will stretch you, but you must agree that for you to really enjoy the pleasure or payoff phase you will work hard first. You forgo now so you can reap later.

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STRATEGY 2-2:

Make a list of all the habits you would like to change in the next two years.

If you are like most people, you probably wish you were more disciplined. Many times a day, you might think critically of yourself for postponing (sometimes indefinitely!) those things you know you want to change. There are certain things you know you should be doing, yet you never seem to tackle them.

The psychological cost for a person is far too great to be living in that vast wasteland called *Lack of Discipline*. You know exactly what you need to do. For some reason, perhaps lack of motivation, lack of initiative, or not having a plan, you have permitted yourself and your life to become cluttered with undesirable habits. The time to change all that is now! A new habit can be formed (generally speaking) every 21 days. Here then is *The Millionaire Mindset* plan of action for your habits.

HABIT WORKSHEET 1

Write at least 35 habits. Don't worry about prioritizing them yet.
Changing or acquiring the following habits would improve the quality of my personal and professional life:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
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- 28. _____
- 29. _____
- 30. _____
- 31. _____
- 32. _____
- 33. _____
- 34. _____
- 35. _____

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STRATEGY 2-3:

Make a plan of attack to acquire 35 new habits.

Ask yourself this very important question:

"What habits would lead to a better life for me personally and professionally?"

In the next two years, at 21-day intervals, you can change or acquire 35 habits in all areas of your life. The beauty about the way we are going to deal with habits in *The Millionaire Mindset* is...

- we will develop a new positive habit every 21 days,
- we will only work on one new habit at a time,
- we will develop a fail-proof plan for each habit.

The Two-Year Plan

For most people, coming up with 35 positive habits will not be difficult. Our contention is that you already know what you need to do to earn more money, have better relationships, enjoy better physical health and improve your emotional well-being.

Step 1

Make a list of at least 35 habits you would like to change over the next two years. Hopefully you have already completed this exercise on the previous page. Do not prioritize your habits yet. Ask yourself, *"Which habits would make me happier, healthier and wealthier?"* Let your mind wander. Don't overlook those things you have tried and failed at in the past. If you have tried to quit smoking for 10 years and you want to do it again, write it down.

The key is to write down at least 35 habits which will improve your personal and professional life.

Step 2

Prioritize the habits. You will only work on one habit at a time. You will aim for 100% adherence for at least 21 days, then you will begin another. Throughout this program, you will always be working on changing one habit.

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Write the dates for each new habit. Next time you feel guilty for eating too many sweets, you can relax because you will know that you are going to be giving that up on a certain appointed date.

Red dots

This next step is very important to your success. You must place a red dot on a prominent calendar at twenty-one day intervals. You want a visual reminder you that are to start a new habit. Place a red dot on your calendar to remind you to begin another positive habit in your life. The dots will be a constant reminder and source of encouragement to stick with it.

Step 3

Every 21 days you pull out another Worksheet and presto! In two years, you will be almost perfect. You will have implemented many habits that have eluded you thus far.

***"Wealth is largely
a result of habit."***

Jack Astor

STRATEGY 2-4:

**Follow the 6-Step process for
developing discipline in your life.**

Step 1: Define Purpose.

Identify one habit or area in which you would like to become more disciplined. The first step is to identify one specific behavior you would like to change. It should describe something you now do that you would like to stop doing, or something you don't do consistently and would like to do regularly.

You can use this step to describe the outcome you would like to accomplish. You must, however, confine each worksheet to one specific issue or behavior. Attempting to do too much may be discouraging. Each worksheet will take you through this 6-Step process.

Step 2: Find role models.

Ask yourself, *"Who is doing it right?"* By identifying one or more people who have discipline in this area, you will see that if others can do it, so can you.

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The people you list in this section need not be personal acquaintances of yours. You may not know them personally. They may be alive or dead. The point is to cause you to think about specific people who you believe had control in this area. That is, people you will emulate.

Step 3: See Success: List the benefits of becoming self-disciplined in this area.

Now ask yourself, *"What's in it for me?"* You want to consider why you want to develop in this area. By listing the rewards, you will be willing to work harder. You need to feel, smell, taste, see and touch exactly how it will be once you are strong in this area. This step gets you to focus on the benefits of becoming disciplined in this area. You could consider listing the pain of NOT becoming disciplined here as well.

Step 4: Delay Gratification: Consider the danger zones.

Now, consider where you might fall. You need to give some thought to the danger zones. You know that if you are going to become more disciplined then you will be tempted to fall off the wagon, to be led astray, to procrastinate. If you have been attempting to become more self-disciplined for some time then you know that for you there is a pattern of failure to persist. What happens? You start off strongly then, before you know it, you are doing the very things you said you wouldn't, or you stopped doing the things you said you would and know you should.

List all the potential times, situations and areas that may cause you to fall, then list how you will handle them. If you know you eat too much on business trips, this is a danger zone. By acknowledging it you can plan on how to handle it.

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6 STEPS TO SELF-DISCIPLINE WORKSHEET

Step 1: Define Purpose
What do I want to do?



Step 2: Find Role Models
Who does it right?



Step 3: See Success
What's in it for me?



Step 4: Delay Gratification
What are the danger zones?



Step 5: Use Advanced Decision-Making
To what do I commit?



Step 6: Get Support
Who will hold me accountable?

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Step 5: Use Advanced Decision-Making.

You gotta be tough if you're gonna be dumb.

Author Unknown

You cannot win in life if you are controlled by whimsical or situational decision-making. If you are to succeed then you will need to consider, in advance, how you will live your life.

In this step, give some thought to what specific actions you will need to take to accomplish the goal listed in Step 1. For example, if you wanted to become more disciplined in the area of exercise, one decision made in advance could be to exercise upon waking for 45 minutes every morning while watching a video workout tape.

A PERSONAL NOTE.

Let me share with you how I put this idea to practice in my life. My family has a history of early death. The two main causes are heart disease and alcoholism.

My father died at 54 from alcoholism. My older brother, Ivan, died at 27 from virtually the same illness. My mother died from heart-related problems. I have several aunts and uncles who died from heart failure. My sister had a heart attack when she was 33. I decided that those two options didn't really appeal to me. I know that if I'm going to succeed in my goal of not dying young from a heart attack, or liver disease then I need to take a few steps.

For me, those steps involve planning on the pain period first. They include exercising regularly, weight control and, as far as the alcoholism issue, not drinking. I am willing to subject myself to that to reach the goal of living better and longer. I am delaying the gratification those things would bring to live longer.

Now comes Advanced Decision-Making. I made a decision to not drink. You see, I'm a smart guy. I figured out that if I don't drink, there is no way I'm going to die from alcoholism. Pretty smart, eh? I decide in advance – DO NOT DRINK.

When well-intentioned friends come to me on a hot day in August, while I'm beside the pool, and offer me a very cool beer, there is not even a question in my mind. The answer is "No."

In my case, that door is shut on the basis of a decision I made in advance. If I waited to decide every time I am offered – I would drink. The same applies when I am upset and want to drink or

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when I feel depressed. I simply don't listen to that little voice inside my head that says "Go have a shot of whiskey, it will relax you. It will make things better."

Advanced Decision-Making says: *"It's already been decided. I live my life based on decisions made in advance. The decision cannot, will not be reversed."*

You decide in advance you will do this. You don't wait until the morning to see if you "feel" like doing it. You have already decided in advance how you will live your life. Wayne Gretzky did not decide every morning if he "felt" like practicing. No way. He got up to practice every morning at 4:00 A.M. He did so because he had decided in advance that if he was to become the world's greatest hockey player then he would have to practice.

He got up because he thought the investment was worth it. He did not wait to see if he felt like practicing. When the alarm went off, he got up because that's what he (and his dad) decided in advance that he would do.

Step 6: Enroll a support team.

This step is one of the most crucial. If you don't do this step, you are cheating yourself out of the real power behind this system. It is vital for you to finally becoming the strong and self-disciplined person you know you can be. Resist the temptation to avoid this step because it may be uncomfortable. It will literally change your life.



In this step, you enlist the assistance of someone you respect to help you become disciplined in this area. Think of someone whom you respect and someone who will be strong enough to hold you accountable for certain decisions you make about becoming disciplined. Call this person and tell him or her that you are involved in this material and you have identified certain areas in which you intend to become more disciplined. Send this person a copy of the worksheet and tell him you would like him to hold you accountable for the actions and decisions on the sheet.

This will force you to do what you said you would and know you should. Talk to this person at least once a week. Allow yourself to become accountable to this person. This has transformed my life and that of my students worldwide.

STRATEGY 2-5:

Avoid the three lies.

WATCH FOR THIS...

THE THREE LIES OF THE HABIT DEMONS

Every time we break a commitment and fall back into a bad habit, we have bought into one of the three lies of the Habit Demons.

Think back to when you started a bad habit. Think about what happens to every alcoholic who falls off the wagon or every person who gains back the weight she lost or all the people who waste piles of time dealing with issues they once had under control. These three lies rear their ugly heads, we buy into them, then fall.



LIE #1

"ONCE WILL BE ENOUGH"

"Just have one beer, one smoke, one dessert." Anytime you hear something inside that sounds like this, it's lie #1. Is one beer enough for an alcoholic? No, one is too many and a thousand is not enough. Whenever you hear *"once"* or *"just this time"* let a red flag remind you about the Habit Demons' lies.

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LIE #2

"MESS IT UP GOOD"

Once you give in to Lie #1 and do something you know you shouldn't, then Lie #2 kicks in. *"Now that you've blown it, mess it up good."* It looks like this for someone trying to control the bad habit of eating late at night: *"Just have one piece of pie. One little piece can't hurt you. You deserve just one small piece."* So you cut yourself a piece. Soon afterward you hear Lie #2. *"Well, now you've done it. You might as well have another piece. Wouldn't another piece taste great? You've already blown it, so why not mess it up good? Go ahead, have another piece and why not top it off with some vanilla ice cream?"* So you give in and feel terrible. Then comes Lie #3, which is the final stage of loss of control.

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LIE #3 "GIVE UP"

By giving in and doing what you did not want to do, you feel terrible. You have *"messed it up good."* Now the natural progression is to stop trying, simply "give up." What this lie tries to get you to say is, *"I'm worthless, I'm hopeless, I will never be able to control my habits. I'll quit trying."*

Reject all three lies; they are false. Once is rarely enough. If you are tempted to do something wrong *"once,"* check out if it's not the first of the three lies.

If you do mess something up, don't mess it up worse. You don't have to go any further. You can resume control. Exercise that control now. Never believe Lie #3. Never quit trying. You have immense value and you are never hopeless. The winners in life recognize and refute the lies of the Habit Demons. Jim Sharkey, a man who has had a tremendous impact on my life, once said, *"No man is a loser until he quits trying."*

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