

Change Your Life by Changing Your Habits

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You can change your life by changing your habits. Here are some guidepost rules regarding change:

RULE 1: No one can change you and you can't really change anyone else. You must admit your need, stop denying your problem, and accept responsibility for changing yourself.

RULE 2: Habits aren't broken, but replaced—by layering new behavior patterns on top of the old ones. This usually takes a least a year or two. Forget the 30-day wonder ones. I don't know where motivational speakers got the idea that it takes 21 days to gain a new habit. It may take that long to remember the motions of a new skill, but after many years of being you, it takes far longer to settle into a new habit pattern and stay there. Habits are like submarines. They run silent and deep. They also are like comfortable beds, in that they're easy to get into, but difficult to get out of. So don't expect immediate, amazing results. Give your skills training a year and stick with it, knowing that your new ways can last a lifetime.

RULE 3: A daily routine adhered to over time will become second nature, like riding a bicycle. Negative behavior leads to a losing lifestyle, positive behavior to a winning lifestyle. Practice makes permanent in both cases.