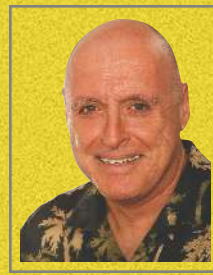


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



710 How to Build a New Habit

If you could start a new habit, what kind of habit would that be? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we'll dig into the process of habits, and how to get one going that will do you some good. It's coming next, on The Extra Point.

In Extra Point #343, June of last year, we introduced you to B.J. Fogg, author of the book *Tiny Habits* and head of Stanford University's Behavior Design Lab. Fogg knows habits inside and out. Through his simple formula, I learned how to combine three actions and make a habit of them. I tried a few different things and ended up with a series of commands I gave myself:

- After I wake up, I will rinse my mouth out
- After I rinse my mouth out, I will kiss my wife
- After I kiss my wife, I will do pushups to failure

It began as a five-day program, but I did it longer than that. And it worked. When my eyes flew open, I went straight to the bathroom, rinsed; then found my wife, kissed; and then dropped down and did pushups. I didn't think about each action, I just did them, in sequence.

The end result was that my mouth was fresher in the morning, I got a little smooch, and the number of pushups I could do increased.

Gradually, I added exercises after the pushups, and when finished I ate breakfast. That was different for me, as I'd always eaten before exercising because I felt I needed that for the energy to exercise. It turned out that was false. All in all, the experiment didn't bring on monumental changes, but it was positive all the way around.

What else could one do with a formula like this, to create other types of tangible results? How can this enhance productivity? Professor Fogg says every behavior comes down to three variables: motivation to do the behavior, the ability to do it, and a prompt that

gets us started. Fogg uses the acronym MAP. Actually, it reads B=MAP. Behavior equals motivation, ability, and prompt.

Let's break that formula down. If you're highly motivated, the more likely it is you will do the behavior. It's the same with ability. The greater the skill, the more likely you are to do it. However, the greater the difficulty, the lower the ability may be, and it becomes less likely. Finally, you need a prompt. Something has to kick you into gear. It can be a bell, a buzzer, or anything you can think of. When you get that specific prompt, you go. No thinking it over, you just move on it.

Paul is a mechanic. Fifteen minutes before his shift ends, his alarm goes off. That's his prompt. His first behavior is to look at his schedule to see what his first job is for the next day. The second thing is he sets out the tools and documentation he'll need. Third, he requests the parts he'll need to do the work. Then, he clocks out for the day. When he comes in the next morning, the parts are waiting for him, and he can start the job. He's productive as soon as he clocks in.

In this instance, Paul combined three specific actions to make up his behavior. When the alarm sounded, he checked his schedule and figured out what his first job would be tomorrow. Then, he laid out the tools for that job. Then, he requested the parts. Three actions, one behavior.

Fogg referenced a worker named Katie, who wanted to keep her desk nice and tidy. She used a prompt to get her to clean and organize before she left work, because she loved the sight of a clean desk when she came in the next morning.

(Con't.)

Whatever you want to do could be a single action, or two, three, four — it doesn't matter. The key is to make a deal with yourself that when you hear or see the prompt, whatever it is, you don't hesitate, you just react.

Ray will appreciate this last story. A middle-aged man wanted to lose weight and get back in shape. He'd been a runner as a kid, but just couldn't muster the will power to do it again. He told himself a dozen times he was going to get outside and run. Each time, he ended up talking himself out of it.

He found a piece of music he liked and told himself that when it played, at 5:45 p.m., he would stop what he was doing, change into his running shorts and shoes, and get outside.

When 5:45 came, that's exactly what he did, and he ran. He was dog tired the first day, but it got better. Hearing his music at 5:45, he ran. Six days a week, he ran. Three months from the day he started, he entered and finished his first marathon.

What could you do to make progress and success more habitual? What positive habits would benefit you?

All you need to do is "MAP" them out. B=MAP. You need motivation, ability, and prompt.

Get after it.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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