

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



763 Take Your Micro-Habits to Work

We've talked about the concept of developing micro-habits, as a way of enhancing productivity and bringing greater value to our lives. Today, a few that are worth thinking about. That's next, on The Extra Point.

The whole topic of "micro-habits" came about when Stanford professor B.J. Fogg revealed his study on the topic several years ago. Basically, a micro-habit is an action that takes about one minute, maybe less. None of them will transform or revolutionize your life, but they can help you live a little bit better every day and this adds up over time.

I got interested in this when I wanted to increase the number of pushups I could do. I figured that I should do this first thing in the morning. My micro-habit was to wake up, go to the bathroom, brush teeth, kiss wife if she was awake, then do the pushups. I did this for a while and the pushup count increased. So did the morning kiss count. Wife was happy, I was happy. Good deal all around.

The key here is that developing such a habit has nothing to do with willpower, where most of us fail. In theory, as long as my first action was to get out of bed and head to the bathroom, the rest of the actions should fall into place.

How can you use such a concept? First off, you can download the transcript for this right now, #763, at guamtraining.com. I caught an article on this topic a few days ago, and here's a few micro-habits you might consider.

1. Eat before you go shopping. Research has long shown that when we shop on an empty stomach, we buy more impulse items, and virtually all impulse items are unhealthy.

Have a meal at home, a healthy snack before leaving work, even munch something in the car on the way to the store. Just make sure you're not hungry when you start shopping.

Besides helping your overall fitness, your grocery bill will go down. Heading for the store? When that thought hits your mind, eat something. That's the habit.

2. Drink a glass of water before you eat a meal. It's easy to confuse hunger and thirst, and most adults are always dehydrated. Besides adding to your hydration, you'll eat less. Hydration is extremely important at work. A glass of water every couple of hours should be the minimum water intake. This habit is easy. Just set an alarm on your phone. When it goes off, drink.

3. Eat with people at work, not your phone. The habit is, don't take a bite before there is somebody in front of you. No screens while eating. It helps us be more social, we'll eat slower, and we'll likely eat less. Come on, we're on that thing dozens of times a day. Some research shows we pick it up over 100 times a day. Does it really have to be our lunch companion, too?

4. Remember that glass of water you're going to drink every so often at work? Why not add a short exercise movement to it? If you're able to do them, some simple body-weight squats are fine. Maybe do 10 before you drink the water, or right afterwards. Maybe you'll work that up to 20 or more, several times a day. Can't go all the way down and then come up? Do them sitting in your chair. Stand up, sit down, repeat.

5. More with workplace exercise. When you go on break or to lunch, balance on one leg for as long as you can. When you return, balance on the other leg. Does that seem silly? Our ability to balance usually erodes as we get older. Strengthen it now. You're giving yourself a gift that keeps paying benefits.

(Con't.)

6. Do you have trouble communicating with one of your coworkers? At one time or another, we've all had that one person at work that just drives us up the wall, but it probably wasn't always that way.

Here's the habit. When an encounter with that person is upon you, flash back to a time when things were okay between the two of you. Just for a second or two, go back to that time in your mind. Then tell your face about that better time, and muster a smile. See if you don't greet that person differently, and communicate better.

I've got a 15-year-old. Fifteen is an age for a kid when you're constantly shaking your head and saying stuff like, "Where did you get that idea from?"

I'm working on this habit...whenever one of those times comes, I look and see my kid as a five-year-old, reaching out to explore his world, always with a big smile for daddy. Guess what? I respond to him better. My better response brings his better response.

Try this with your kid, or coworker, and I think you'll find the relationship improves. As soon as they come into view, the habit is to immediately go to that better and happier time.

Tiny habits can make a difference, even at work. Give some of these a try, or devise your own. Let me know how it turns out for you.

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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