

## Make a Habit of it

You have to enjoy the *habit*...not just have one for the sake of having one.

I was going to write an article on this myself, but it is now 2h30 in the morning... I have one day to finish a never-ending list of tasks, because I will be away for a week and a bit, and I want to make sure you get this message now rather than later.

I have various videos in [The-traders-mindset](#) on *habits* and how important it is to have good *habits* in the first place...and of course...how important it is to dump bad *habits* as soon as you can – especially trading *habits*, because more than just the pain, it can cost you actual money as well.

So firstly, know what *habits* you will need as a trader, know what dangers await you should you not pay the necessary attention to forming these *habits* – through sheer discipline and effort (yes I bet you didn't want to hear that).

Remember, we always respond to pain or pleasure, as I mentioned in my last email and PDF. So be aware of this.

Forming new *habits* can be painful...well because it's hard...and because it takes time (and who has any of that these days?).

Breaking old *habits* is perhaps even harder though...as they, by their very nature, become part of who we are and so it is never easy getting rid of something that you are – a piece of you so to speak.

So that being said – they are essential to longevity in this game...remember, the very best traders keep the very best of *habits*.

I received this article this week from Leo Babauta who is one of my favorite authors, and as I had planned to do this article anyway (sometimes life can be rather uncanny) and seeing as I have a 3000km round trip planned for this week...I need to get to bed – and anyway he says it better than I could...

“I’ve written a lot about habits — it’s in the title, after all — and after all these years, and after all the questions that people have asked about forming habits, there’s one thing that seems more important than anything else.

It’s simply this: enjoy the habit.

That might seem obvious to some of you, but you’d be surprised how many people try to force themselves to do things they don’t enjoy. They try to instill “discipline” because they think it’ll make them a better person or give them a better life, but what kind of life is it if you force yourself to do things you hate all the time?

And here’s the thing: if you try to make a habit of something you don’t like doing, you’re almost sure to fail. I know, because I’ve tried it many times. If I find myself saying, “I hate this, but I can do it!” then it’s an uphill battle, and one I almost always lose. Because after a week or two of doing this, you’ll lose enthusiasm. You’ll run out of the incredible energy required to form a new habit, and then miss the habit one day, and another day, and soon it’s over.

But look at the opposite scenario — you do something you love doing. Well, how hard is it to motivate yourself to do this? You look forward to it. You are excited about it. When you actually do the habit, you’re happy, and your overall experience is positive. That’s a habit that is much more likely to stick.

I’ve done dozens of experiments in creating habits in my own life, and I’ve helped hundreds if not thousands of others form habits, and it’s a common theme — when the person doesn’t enjoy the new habit, it fails, and when they do, it has a high degree of success.

Sure, there are other factors — how consistent you are, whether you have a trigger that's already anchored into your regular routine, whether you have social accountability, etc. But the most important factor, by far, is loving the habit.

### THE THINGS WE DON'T LIKE

I'll acknowledge there are times we have to do things we don't like. That's a necessary part of life. But why choose such a thing to become a daily habit? If that's what you're doing, you should take a long hard look at whether it's really necessary, and if so, whether you can possibly make changes to your life so that you don't need to do this activity on such a regular basis. I've done this many times, and though the change in my life is sometimes time-consuming, the result is always worth it.

But what about kicking bad habits? Isn't that hard and unenjoyable? Sure, of course. I kicked the smoking habit (almost 5 years ago), and it was difficult. Agonizing. Fortunately, I figured out that I had to put enjoyable habits in place of the smoking, and I actually looked forward to them — things like running to relieve stress, eating healthy foods, writing, stuff like that. I love those activities, and it made the whole process much easier.

### HOW TO LOVE THE HABIT

This how-to section will seem too obvious to some, but it seems necessary to me. How do you go about enjoying the habit? Two ways:

**1. Choose a habit you already love.** This is the easy way. If you love reading, or drinking tea, or journaling, or taking walks in the park, choose something like that. Want to get active? Choose a sport you love playing, or an outdoor activity that gives you joy. Want to be more productive? Choose a work activity you love doing as your first task each day.

Or:

**2. Focus on the enjoyable aspects.** If you don't already love the habit, learn to love it. Not by reprogramming your mind to love something you hate, but by finding things about the habit you do enjoy. For example, when I started running, it was hard. I was a recent smoker, so my lungs were crap, and my legs were weak, and I'd get tired fast. But there were things I enjoyed too — getting outside, the fresh air, moving and feeling my heart beating, the beauty of nature, the good feeling after I was done. So I focused on these things, and it worked. And then eventually the running got easier and I loved everything about the activity. This kind of thing can be done with almost anything — look hard for the good aspects, the things you enjoy. If you can't find anything, you've chosen the wrong habit.

In the end, discipline doesn't work. You can't use discipline to form a habit you hate, because what exactly do you do when you don't feel motivated to do the habit? You find something about it to get you going, and that's thinking about something enjoyable — the enjoyable end result, for example, or an enjoyable reward, or how good you'll feel telling others you did it. There are many ways to motivate yourself with something enjoyable, but no ways to use the nebulous concept of "discipline" to do something you hate.

Love the habit, and it will stick around longer."

So that works for me...makes perfect sense and explains why people struggle to retain a change of habit...they simply don't enjoy it...and we never do what we don't want to if we can avoid it somehow.

So set some fun goals for yourself this week regarding habits you may want to break, dump, or make and go get your goals acted on and thereby obtained through good conscious effort and discipline.

Cheers for now,

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Chris