



SUMMARY:

ATOMIC HABITS:

JAMES CLEAR

An Easy & Proven Way to Build
Good Habits & Break Bad Ones

Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results

SCOTT CAMPBELL

SUMMARIES1000

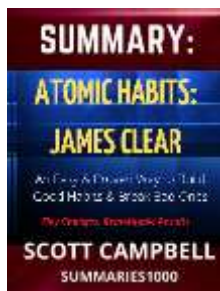


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The following arises from a summary of the introduction and first chapter of James Clear's best seller, *Atomic Habits*. Everyone who wants to make any sort of improvement in their life will benefit from Clear's educational efforts. That means just about everyone on the planet and explains his popularity with over 6 million readers.

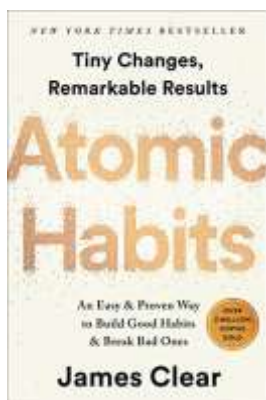
His entire book serves as the basis for a [Summary1000.com best seller summary](#) in audiobook and ebook forms.

- Mr. Clear tells us to become a reader rather than create a goal to read a book.

We, at Summary1000.com, hope you can apply Clear's famous techniques to your reading habits. For the same amount of time and money as reading one bestselling book, you can read three summaries about bestselling books, gaining three times the breadth of knowledge. We think that is a good habit to adopt that will lead to your being complemented as "well-read."

Incremental knowledge compounds into increased intelligence. Clear discusses the compounding of knowledge in his book. Become an efficient, frugal, and smart reader with a focus on best-sellers with summaries1000.com.

Many buy both the summary and the original book as they complement each other and facilitate deeper understanding. [Take a look at the original on Amazon.](#)



Mr. Clear begins his fine book with a few DEFINITIONS.

ATOMIC

Relating to atoms.

Consisting of uncombined atoms rather than molecules.

Forming a single fundamental unit or component in a more extensive system.

The source of great power or energy.

HABITS

Automatic behavioral patterns in reaction to a situation that become acquired through frequent repetition.



INTRODUCTION: CLEAR'S TOUCHING STORY

James Clear loved baseball and made the varsity team as a sophomore in high school.

His dad played in the minor leagues and they enjoyed a great connection through baseball. Although Clear loved baseball, baseball didn't always love him back.

On the final day of his sophomore year, James Clear suffered an injury that would change his life forever. At baseball practice, a batter let his bat slip out of his hands, and it flew at high speed to hit Clear right between the eyes, fracturing and flattening his nose and damaging his brain, skull, and memory. The blow hit with such force that his eyeball came out of its socket. A series of predictable seizures would follow. Post-traumatic seizures loomed as a given.

Clear found himself in a helicopter in a rush to the same large hospital where his sister had undergone successful chemo-therapy. They called in a priest. The doctors decided to place Clear in a coma and hooked up a ventilator to begin his treatment. His improvement in breathing patterns the next day permitted release from the coma.

When he began to recover, he experienced double vision. His recovery took quite some time but had a steady pace to it. Re-positioning itself, his eye cooperated to resemble a state of normalcy after about a month. After eight months, Clear managed to drive. Refusing to quit baseball, he found himself cut from the team after a year of absence and medical recovery. He still could not give it up and joined the junior varsity. Baseball played a considerable role in his life, and he wanted to heal up and get back on the field. He dreamed of playing professionally. He rejoined the



varsity team as a senior but only racked up eleven innings—enough to make a statement about his perseverance.

Clear began to attend Denison University and joined its baseball team.



HABITS, HABITS, AND MORE HABITS

Clear directed some of his motivation to do well and make-up for his high school tragedy into forming good habits. He turned in early, resisting staying up late each night, like his peers seemed to do, to play video games. Many males, at the college age, live in unkempt, dirty, and chaotic rooms. Clear's room showed organization and cleanliness. A feeling of control over his life rewarded Clear, as did the results of his efforts. As his confidence returned, he polished up his study habits, and he racked up a 4.0-grade point average in his first year, destined to be honored as a scholar in several ways.

Clear informs the reader that a habit is a behavior or routine that displays regular performance and often automatically. Small but consistent habits led to impressive and previously unimaginable results. Clear applied his habits theory to bodybuilding with success. He secured a starting role on the pitching staff, became team captain, made the all-conference team, earned the "top male athlete" title at Denison, and joined the ESPN Academic All-America Team of just 33 players. Denison's top academic honor, the President's Medal, became Clear's.

Clear's baseball injury led to his realization that good habits and small changes can compound into remarkable success. The quality of life, says Clear, becomes dependent upon the quality of our habits. Better habits lead to a better life.

In 2012, Clear began sharing his knowledge of good habits in articles online and built his followers into an audience of some 200,000



email subscribers by 2015. He earned national recognition, some eight million readers, after publishing with Penguin Random House. Coaches jumped on his story and shared it with their teams. Clear launched his Habits Academy in 2017.

Clear offers the reader an incremental and lifetime plan for sculpting improved habits to help the reader achieve what they want in life. Science backs up Clear's method, and he makes it easy to comprehend and apply.

His four-step-plan, which arises from classic operant conditioning, is the backbone of his efforts:

- Cue
- Craving
- Response
- Reward

Integrating behavioral and cognitive science, Clear shows how our feelings, thoughts, and moods shape our fundamental behavior. Clear's principles regarding fundamental behavior can help the reader build a family, build a business, and build anything desired in life.



THE FUNDAMENTALS: Why Tiny Changes Make a Big Difference





Chapter 1: The Surprising Power of Atomic Habits

British Cycling's destiny transformed itself when the governing body for UK professional cycling in Great Britain employed a new performance director named Dave Brailsford.

One hundred years of mediocre performance cast a dark shadow over UK cyclists. Just one gold medal since 1908, and an even worse record in the Tour de France, didn't exactly inspire a sense of pride and accomplishment.

British cyclists marked and well-known underperformance spurred one European manufacturer to reject selling bikes to the team out of fear of tarnishing sales.

In the hope of overcoming their dismal and embarrassing past, they brought on Brailsford to launch British Cycling on a more positive trajectory. Brailsford showed unrelenting dedication to a strategy called "the aggregation of marginal gains." Even as low as 1%, applying minuscule margins of improvement could achieve stellar results in "everything cycling."

And it did.

Incremental adjustments made at the "atomic" level:

- Rub alcohol on tires, so they grip more efficiently.
- Improve the comfort of seats.
- Adorn the riders with electrically heated oversHORTS to support and maintain ideal muscle temperature.





- Apply biofeedback sensors to monitor each workout.
- Test fabrics in a wind tunnel to find lightweight and aerodynamic materials.
- Determine which massage gels offered the quickest recovery for those aching muscles.
- Employ a surgeon to instruct on how to wash hands to reduce the chances of contracting illnesses.
- Secure the type of mattress and pillow that promised the best night's sleep.
- Paint their transport interiors white, allowing for better detection of dust, which degrades bikes' performance as well-tuned machines.

Hundreds of relatively minor improvements accumulated over time to usher in impressive results sooner than they expected.

Five years later, at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, the Brit team dominated the road and track cycling events. They earned an astounding 60 percent of the gold. Four years after that, at the Olympic Games in London, the Brits boasted seven world records and nine Olympic records.

Bradley Wiggins, in 2012, won the Tour de France. Teammate Chris Froome won the following year, and also three more. The Brits tallied up five Tour de France victories in six years. Emphasizing incremental and habitual improvements underlay the most successful run in cycling in history. From 2007 to 2017, the Brits





held 178 world championships, sixty-six gold medals in the Olympic or Paralympics, and five victories in the Tour de France.¹

Clear wants to show readers how to replicate the cyclists' famous techniques and results in their lives.

¹ <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/search/article/bc-50-Years-Of-British-Cycling-News-The-80s>





WHY SMALL HABITS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

We tend to overestimate the significance of one defining moment just as we underestimate the worth of instigating minor improvements consistently. We mistakenly buy into the belief that big success requires big action. We seek unrealistic earth-shattering events or enhancements to improve our systems, habits, and performance incrementally. This applies to our families, writing a book, growing a business, winning a championship, or any other long-term goal.

Moving forward by one percent, improvements will not break the sound barrier but an aggregate of them will be more consequential in the long run.

Mathematically, a one percent daily improvement makes thirty-seven times better improvement after one year. A one percent daily worsening takes you down to zero at the same time.





TIME

Habits become the "compound interest" of self-improvement. Just as money will multiply through compound interest, the effects of your practices will increase as you reiterate them. The British cyclists showed us that habits, although they appear not to matter that much daily, can give us progress and improvement over months and years. The results can be tremendous.

This can be a challenging concept to master in daily life.

The measured and methodical velocity of transformation also makes it easy to let a lousy habit persist. If you succumb to that salty cheeseburger and fries, your weight or health does not change much in one day. If you work late tonight and ignore your loved ones, they are likely to forgive you. If you put your project off until the next day, you will probably have time to finish it later. A solitary decision becomes easy to dismiss.

But the repetition of one percent errors each day replicates poor decisions, duplicates mistakes, and allows for rationalizing excuses. Our small choices compound into large and venomous results. The unyielding accumulation of numerous missteps undoubtedly leads to big problems.

Rather than once-in-a-lifetime transformations, success arises slowly as the product of intelligent daily behavior. Your track record is not as crucial as your arsenal of habits and your trajectory. You become what you repeat. Your weight becomes a lagging measure of your eating and exercise habits. Your wealth reflects your





financial habits. If you want to predict your future, just follow your current trajectory of habits.





HABITS AND COMPOUNDING

POSITIVE COMPOUNDING

- Making an old task automatic and mastering new skills are examples of positive compounding. Automation frees your thinking to take on new challenges or create.
- A commitment to lifelong learning will be transformative as your knowledge compounds.
- Each book teaches you something new and also opens up different ways of thinking about old ideas. Knowledge is much like compounding interest in the mind.
- Relationships and compounding. Your behavior becomes reflected on you. The more you look out for others, the more others want to look out for you. Making each interaction more positive and enjoyable will weave a network of solid and comprehensive connections over time.

NEGATIVE COMPOUNDING

- Stress compounds. When stress lasts for years, the result is often severe health issues.
- Negative thoughts compound. The more you think of yourself as unattractive, slow, or worthless, the more you program yourself to view all of your life that same way. You find yourself trapped in a negative thought loop. How you think about others reflects the same dynamics. If you label people generally as angry, unjust, or selfish, you will perceive them to pop up everywhere to prove your correct.





- Outrage compounds. Rather than the result of a single event, protests, riots, and revolutions arise from a long series of daily frustrations and microaggressions, which slowly multiply until one event tips the scales, and the results spread like wildfire.

One culprit haunts any compounding process in the early and middle stages: the Valley of Disappointment. Nothing seems to be measurably happening. Frustration sets in. Habits seem inconsequential until you jump over a critical threshold to grab onto success and a new performance level. Powerful outcomes do not come quickly. Mr. Clear likes another geographic term to describe a common challenge: the Plateau of Latent Potential, which arises from no noticeable or measurable progress. Stuck on this plateau, many give up and quit. It takes time to cross this plateau into the land of success. Your work stayed as potential, and it did not become lost or wasted. All of a sudden, they mistakenly call you "an overnight success."





FOCUS ON SYSTEMS, NOT GOALS

Habits arise from tiny and often single decisions. Repetition strengthens it. James Clear tells us not to emphasize goals and focus instead on cultivating and perfecting good habits. He realized that his results reflected his systems' integrity rather than his guestimates of goals, whether small or big. Goals concern themselves with what you want to achieve. Systems concern themselves with the processes that will lead to the achievements you seek.

A coach's goal is to win a championship. His or her system involves the recruitment of players, the flow and purpose of practices, and the proper management of assistant coaches and staff.

An entrepreneur's goal is to build a profitable business. His or her system arises from product proposals, product testing, hiring, and managing employees, and conducting marketing campaigns.

Goals give direction, but systems etch out the habits and progress for achieving them.

PROBLEM #1: WINNERS AND LOSERS SHOW THE SAME GOALS

Setting goals leaves us susceptible to survivor bias. We tend to focus on the surviving winners and think their goals were responsible, but did not the losers have the same goals? The goals are often no-brainers, but how to achieve them, with good and improving habits, requires thinking and daily dedication.

PROBLEM #2: Goal achievement reflects but a momentary change. Solve problems and achieve goals at the system level for better results.





GOALS CONSTRAIN HAPPINESS

Happiness is assumed to come from achieving a goal. The problems are that a moment's pleasure is lost as a new milestone replaces the original goal. Life and happiness become fickle and bipolar. If you achieve your goal, you are not happy for long, and if you don't, you label yourself as a failure.

A systems-first mentality rewards you differently. You have an affinity for your processes and systems to the point that achieving a "goal" to be happy becomes irrelevant.

You postpone possible temporary happiness in the future in favor of satisfaction arising from a current and humming system bursting with incremental improvements.

PROBLEM #4: Goals are at odds with long-term progress and result in a mental "yo-yo" syndrome. Achieving a goal often results in a loss of motivation and results and a fall back into old bad habits—and their results.

Mr. Clear points out that setting goals are to win the game, but its purpose is to continue playing the game. The best form of long-term thinking arises as goal-less thinking. Rather than a single accomplishment, what becomes essential is cycles of endless refinement and improvement that are both incremental and continuous. Ultimate long-term success is more correlated to commitment to playing the game than achieving a goal.





THE SOLUTION: A SYSTEM OF ATOMIC HABITS

Rather than you, if you fail at changing habits, the problem is your system. Repeating bad habits arises not because you are an enemy to change but because you lack the proper technique for change.

Instead of rising to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your shoddy and chaotic systems.

Rather than a single goal, focusing on the overall system reflects James Clear's core theme. It also reflects on one of the deeper meanings behind the word "atomic." An atomic habit suggests tiny change, a marginal gain, something akin to a 1 percent improvement. Atomic habits self-organize into a more extensive and robust system. Mighty but small, atomic habits become the building blocks of compound growth that will guarantee remarkable results.





SUMMARY FOR CHAPTER 1

- Logging just one percent better every day yields exceptional long-term gains.
- Habits become the compound interest of self-improvement.
- Habits reflect a double-edged sword.
- Understanding the nature and power of habits becomes essential.
- Incremental changes often seem insignificant until we breach a critical threshold
- Delays accompany the most potent results of any compounding process. Patience is a virtue when it comes to developing systems of good habits.
- An atomic habit is a minuscule habit that forms a part of a more extensive system.
- Atomic habits serve as the building blocks of outstanding results.
- Setting goals is not nearly as important as perfecting your systems.
- Happiness and satisfaction can arise from well-functioning systems irrespective of achieving goals.
- One does not elevate to the level of goals. One falls to the level of one's systems.





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