Lecture Summary: Goal Setting & Habit Change

Goals

Goals are different than dreams. Goals require action, dreams do not. Goals are an important aspect part of life. They provide us with a sense of direction, motivation, and a clear focus. A prevalent acronym among many successful businesses to methodically approach goal setting is "SMART".

Specificity: The goal is definitive, clear and unambiguous.
Measurable: Specific criteria that measure progression towards the goal.
Attainable: The goal is challenging. However, achievement of the goal remains realistic.
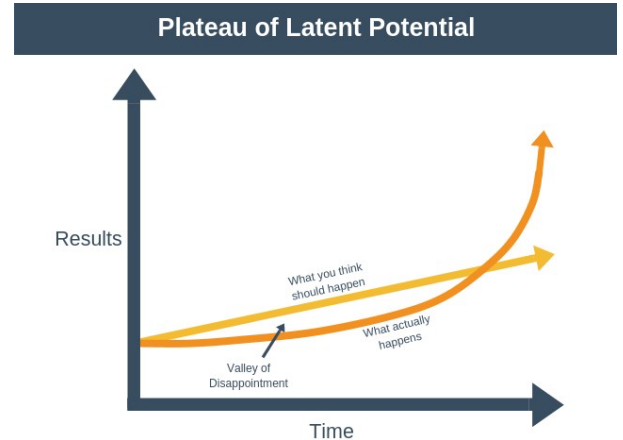**R**elevant: The goal is relevant to you, your values, ethics, and purpose.
Time-based: A clearly defined timeline for goal achievement. This includes a start date, mid-target goal benchmarks, and a date of goal completion. This step creates a sense of urgency to act.

Habits

Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress.

Atomic habits are small habits with results that compound over time. The hallmark of any compound process is that the outcomes are delayed. **This is one reason why it is hard to build habits.** You make a change, fail to see a tangible result and decide to give up. However, habits need to persist long enough to break through a threshold known as the Plateau of Latent Potential. This takes time.

So, how long does it take to form a habit? Wrong question. Habits are based on frequency, **not time.** The real question is "How many repetitions does it take to form a habit?". Your current habits have been internalized over thousands of repetitions. New habits will require the same level of frequency.

Plateau of Latent Potential

Results

What you think should happen

What actually happens

Valley of Disappointment

Time

Understanding your habits

Your current habits are not necessarily the best way to solve problems. They are just the methods you've learned to use. You can track your current habits using a **habit scoreboard**. List & score your current habits/daily routines. Example (see next page).

("#) for good, (X) for bad, & (=) for neutral

Habit	Outcome
Wakeup	=
Check phone	X
Eat pancakes with butter and syrup	X
Brush teeth	"#

Implementing atomic habits

Step 1: Make it obvious
- Write down your intentions: "I will [BEHAVIOUR] at [TIME] and [LOCATION]".
- Habit stacking: Implement a new habit upon immediate completion of a current habit.

Step 2: Make it attractive
- Temptation bundling is a way to create a more desirable version of a habit by connecting it with something you already want.
  - "After [CURRENT HABIT], I will [HABIT I NEED TO DO]. After [HABIT I NEED TO DO], I will [HABIT I WANT TO DO]".
  - You can also bundle a new habit with a habit you currently enjoy. Example: Instead of having to choose between watching TV or exercising, instead combine these two habits. Exercise *while* you watch TV.

Step 3: Make it easy
- Reduce friction against positive habits. o Example: Instead of calling your relative and then going for a walk, perhaps you use a mobile phone and chat to your relative while you walk.
- Increase friction against negative habits.
  - Example: If you want to watch less TV, hide the remote. Therefore, you must get up and manually change channels or turn on/off the TV.

Step 4: Make it satisfying
- This step increases the odds that a behavior will be repeated
- Loyalty system
- Example: Eating a low-fat vegetarian meal for lunch. What if every time you ate a low fat and vegetarian lunch, you transferred $2 to your holiday bank account?
- Use a tracker to track your progress!
- **Never miss twice**. Remember, missing once is an accident. Missing twice is the start of a new habit.
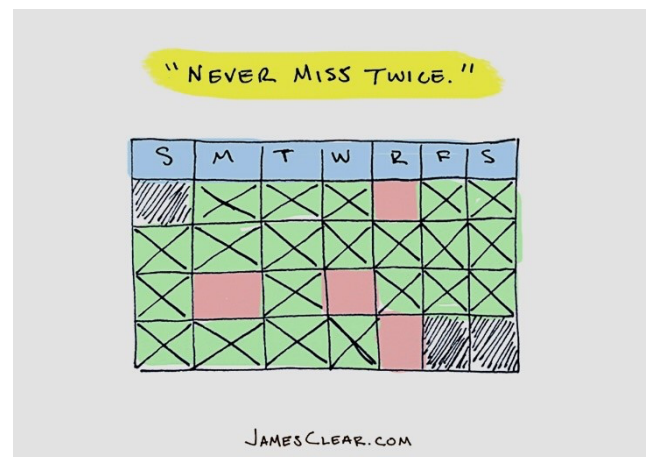
For more information on habit change and atomic habits, please consider reading the book
Atomic Habits by James Clear.

Habit Scoreboard

Habit	Outcome

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