

# Setting Up for Success

If you subscribe to my Book Notes (quotes from leadership-related books), you can see this one coming...

In the April edition, the focus was on destined-to-be-a-classic *Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones* by James Clear. In reviewing these book notes the other day, I am compelled to double-down on the significance of habits in the life of a leader.

To that end, allow me to do two things. First, let me post a handful of quotes that continue to resonate in my thinking about the power of habits. And second, let me encourage you to read this game-changing book.

- *It is so easy to overestimate the importance of one defining moment and underestimate the value of making small improvements on a daily basis. Too often, we convince ourselves that massive success requires massive action.*
- *Habits are the compound interest of self-improvement. The same way that money multiplies through compound interest, the effects of your habits multiply as you repeat them.*
- *It doesn't matter how successful or unsuccessful you are right now. What matters is whether your habits are putting you on the path toward success. You should be far more concerned with your current trajectory than with your current results.*
- *Achieving a goal only changes your life for the moment. That's the counterintuitive thing about improvement. We think we need to change our results, but the results are not the problem. What we really need to change are the systems that cause those results. When you solve problems at the results level, you only solve them temporarily. In order to improve for good, you need to solve problems at the systems level. Fix the inputs and the outputs will fix themselves.*
- *If you're having trouble changing your habits, the problem isn't you. The problem is your system. Bad habits repeat themselves again and again not because you don't want to change, but because you have the wrong system for change.*
- *You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.*

- *Your habits are shaped by the systems in your life.*

One of my key takeaways from *Atomic Habits* is the importance of systems—**systems that set the stage for productive habits that lead toward the accomplishment of worthy goals.**

Several years ago, I set a goal to run the Camp Pendleton 10k Mud Run—and to do so with a respectable time. My goal was set. From there, I developed the habit of running three times a week, increasing my distance each week. But the key to actually running three times a week was the system that I created that included managing my daily appointments and meetings so that my in-office workday concluded by 4:00 PM, creating the time needed to lace up my Asics and get in some roadwork. My success was tied directly to my system. (BTW: I'm not sure how "respectable" my time was, but I did finish. ).

What system will you set in motion this week that will create the habit that will allow you to achieve something significant?

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