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Context to the nugget

James speaks about the notion of a gateway habit which helps us establish the habit before we start expanding on it or optimizing it. He speaks about the criticality of us mastering the art of showing up before we start obsessing about the fine tuning of the habit.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And just as we wrap up this conversation James. You also talk about the notion of a two-minute rule or a gateway habit that often is the sort of the door that opens us into a path of building multiple other habits. So, talk to us a little bit about the concept here, why this is important and what are some of the gateway habits that you see people using to build other habits?

James Clear (JC): Yeah, this is a great place to finish because the two-minute rule I think is a really good place to start if you are looking for one takeaway what should I do with this information, this is a really good place to start. So, the two-minute rule says take whatever habit you are trying to build and scale it down to something that takes two minutes or less to do. So, read 40 books a year becomes read one page or do yoga 4 days a week becomes take out my yoga mat and sometimes when I say that people resist a little bit because you are like okay, I know the real goal isn't just to take my yoga mat out like I know I actually want to do the workout. So, if it's this mental trick and I know it's a trick like why I would fall for it. Then if you feel that way, I understand that but I would suggest for the first day or the first week actually force yourself to stop after two minutes. So, I tell this story of a reader named Mitch and I mentioned this in the book and he ended up losing a lot of weight, 100 pounds, so 40 kilograms or something like that and when he went to the gym for the first time he wasn't allowed to stay for longer than 5 minutes. So, he would show up at the gym, work out for... do half an exercise, get back in the car, drive home and it sounds silly, right, it sounds ridiculous because you are like this is not going to get the guy the results that he wants but what you realize if you step back is that he was mastering the art of showing up, he was becoming the type of person that went to the gym 4 days a week even if it was only for 5 minutes. And this I think is a much deeper truth about habits that's often overlooked which is a habit must be established before it can be improved, right, you have to make it the standard in your life, make it the new normal before you can worry about optimizing it or expanding it from there and so often we are focused on finding the perfect business idea, the best work out program, the ideal diet plan, we are so focused on optimizing that we don't give ourselves permission to show up even if it is just in a small way. But if you can't master the art of showing up there is no raw material to work with, there is nothing to optimize. So, the two-minute rule really helps you get over that hurdle, it helps you master the art of showing up, start building a habit even if it's small and then you have somewhere to gain a foothold, then you have something to push off rather than expand into and for that reason I think it's a really valuable strategy to use when you are trying to get started with a new habit.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: When I was training for a half marathon, I started out with a time goal saying, I want to run the half marathon under X amount of time. I had 1 year to work on my training. My running coach told me; let us break up our journey into 3 parts of 4 months each. First 4 months, let us just get you on the road and start doing small distances. Next 4 months, let us build the distance and in the final 4 months, let us work on the time. In other words, the first four months were just about showing up on the road and establishing the basic habit before we start expanding on it.

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End of nugget transcription

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James Clear - Nuggets

- 52.00 James Clear - The Full Conversation
- 52.01 James Clear - Journey to studying habits
- 52.02 James Clear - Building habits in the right areas
- 52.03 James Clear - Keeping the identity small
- 52.04 James Clear - Plateau of latent potential

- 52.05 James Clear - Systems versus Goals
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- 52.08 James Clear - 2 minute rule - the gateway habit

About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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