Context to the nugget

BJ speaks about the role of celebration in locking in a habit. He also makes the distinction between a reward that often comes several days, weeks or months later and a celebration, which is often in that moment when you perform that habit. He speaks about the need to hack that emotion to really wire in the habit.

Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Just moving to the other piece, celebration BJ, you talk about celebration being a habit fertilizer. You spoke about it earlier in our conversation, but I like the nuance you bring between the distinction between celebration and rewards.

BJ Fogg (BJ): So important.

DJ: And you talk about the fact that the brain requires a quick lock-in after behaviour. Could you talk a little bit more about the distinction here?

BJ: Yeah. So, rewards is one of those words that the way we use it in English today is ambiguous and reward is the right technical term. However, many people use it in a way that's not accurate. Too often many people say, oh I am going to go to the gym and then I am going to reward myself by going and watching a movie. Well, I would call that a prize or an incentive, it's not a reward. Reward is a thing that happens as you do the behaviour or immediately after and your brain associates the reward with the habit you just did. And so, because it's a problematic word, I have decided not to use that word. Again, it's ambiguous and if you have an ambiguous word, then it's not a very good technical term. So, instead I talk about celebration as a technique for creating a positive emotion. So, it's serving the function of a reward in the technical sense of things but I try not to use that word, because too often people think of a reward as like a prize, they will get at the end of 30 days. So, I'll eat a vegetable every day and at the end of 30 days I'll get my reward. Well, that doesn't wire in a habit, that's serving as an incentive to motivate you but it doesn't serve to wire in the habit. So really what you are shooting for to wire in a habit is to cause a positive emotion inside yourself. Now, sometimes these will happen naturally. When you look at any app or technology that you love and you use on the daily basis I would wager a lot of money that the first time you use that app or that technology it made you feel very successful and made you feel like you had super powers like, oh my gosh I can do so much, I am so capable with this. And that's what helped to wire then in as a habit was that sense of success. I am achieving something important. And so that will happen naturally with oh lots of things but for new habits that doesn't always happen naturally. The fact that you are wiping the kitchen counter doesn't make you go oh, I am so great, you know, naturally, so you hack that emotion by going, look at the counter, I am so awesome, so you deliberately cause that

emotion to fire off. And so, celebration is the term that we decided to use for causing that emotion. And we looked at other terms like self-cheer, that were the one we liked, just plain cheer, cheer you, cheer for yourself. I could have also picked like reinforce, self-reinforcement as the word but self-reinforcement has already been used in the 70s to mean something and it's something quite a bit different, so I couldn't use the term self-reinforcement. But that's what you are doing with celebration. You are reinforcing, you are making that habit stronger and you are doing it deliberately. So, celebration is the technique to self-reinforce.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

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End of nugget transcription

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BJ Fogg - Nuggets

- 58.00 BJ Fogg - The Full Conversation
- 58.01 BJ Fogg - The ABC of tiny habits
- 58.02 BJ Fogg - The MAP of behaviour change
- 58.03 BJ Fogg - Prompts - the low hanging fruit of change
- 58.04 BJ Fogg - Action versus Context Prompt
- 58.05 BJ Fogg - Build ability to beat motivation cycles
- 58.06 BJ Fogg - Celebrating to wire in a habit
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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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