

by Viraf Pocha



What is a Habit?
An action you do as a routine. Without thinking. Some are addictive, some are cathartic.

They become so much a part of you that if for any reason, you are kept away from this activity, you get withdrawal symptoms. An uneasiness. A sense of incompleteness.

Gurus say it takes 21 days to form or break a habit. Perhaps.

Not me. My relationships to my habits are strange. They can lie dormant for days. I don't miss them if I am occupied in something else. The day I find the time to get back to them, I'm re-addicted as if I never went away.

For the purpose of this piece, I'm going to stay away from destructive habits of all natures. This is a technical magazine, so we have little interest in your intoxicants or social patterns.

I recognise that they may form a vital feature of your life and so, they will definitely affect your professional life. But today, let's leave that aside and focus on your habits that make you into the professional you are in our wonderful world of event technology.

Let's focus on positive habits. If you just starting out – I would encourage you to force yourself to perform these activities just because they need to be done.

In time, you will see the benefits for yourself and I'm certain you will incorporate some into your routine if you are to be successful.

If this sounds preachy, please be assured that is not my intention. Rest assured that I have not come up with these 'habits' in isolation. Rather, they have been gathered by observing respected professionals at various stages of their professional lives. Here goes.

First, let me make an important distinction. There are mental activity habits. There are physical activity habits. One usually precedes the other. But if it is not followed in a structured way, there is a huge risk you will lose time, and in worst case scenario, lose focus.

The first habit that is essential for any kind of success is to always look

ahead.

True, everybody says 'Live in the now'. I agree. But what governs your 'now'?

Your future. Where do you want to be? 5 years from now, 5 months from now, and 5 weeks from now. If you are clear – you will know what to do today!

Of course, the future is not predictable. Remember Covid? But it is guaranteed to arrive - Unless.

If so – what does it matter? Not being callous.

This is a mental activity. To crystallise the activity, it may be useful to write it down. Paper and pen, please. Somehow, digital notes just do not have the same weight as handwritten notes.

Make this a habit. To discipline your thinking. Formalise your approach to each project. A thought. You're given a project. You are going to execute it. It will take thought and effort. Now, what

cup of ice cream. In time, this attitude wears thin. It takes courage, but try sharing your ice cream with everybody. Sure, there will be some who grab and run.

Rationalise that with the thought that the particular ice cream was not meant for you. There will be enough people who will stick around and share. Revel in that company.

Break down each project into tasks. Keep nothing for yourself. That way, you will be free to supervise everybody and ready to step in when there is a gap. There are good chances that you are better qualified to do every job yourself, better than any of your associates. Use this as an opportunity to nurture them along. Invite them to be better than you. Takes courage. But that's how great teams are built.

When you make this a habit, you will do this as reflex, without thinking. That

The moment you embrace nurturing habits, you will find a change of your environment. You will be attracted to positive people with whom you can share good habits.

if you kept in mind this simple idea – What do I have to do on this project that will guarantee that I will be invited onto the next project?

This will probably trigger some mental effort. What it is guaranteed to do is make you more aware of your surroundings and the people in the environment.

Over time, you will understand what attracts them to you. And you will incorporate that into your way of working.

Until it becomes a habit. A habit that will continuously generate the next project. Over time, you will learn to expand this onto the next few projects, wilfully. For this, you will need to hire people. This antenna will help you hire the right people, guide them to think like you, learn from them, and watch a relationship grow from underling to associate to partner.

Another habit I acquired and found most useful was how to break down the work. In India, I find that people are insecure. They hold their cards very close to their chest. In the short run, this may work, as you get to eat out of every

is how you build winning habits.

I could of course go on, but then I would be preaching.

This piece is to encourage you to form YOUR winning habit, that make you win.

If you do your thinking right, the rest follows.

I see a lot of young stars shine brightly and then fade away. The common reason I can see is that they are too full of themselves and are very easy to impress themselves. This leads to bragging, and as you can imagine, being insufferable.

If you fall into this habit, you will find that you become opiated on everybody else's jobs and think you can do everybody's job. The idea of 'Usme kya hai?' 'Woh toh kuch nahi hai!' 'Mera kaam mast hai!'

Terrible habit. One that creeps upon you and so you are unconscious of it. Those habits are the worst. The ones you are not even aware of. The only way to counter these habits – is to always self-monitor. Probably the most important habit.

As I'm sure you have noticed, these are sometimes tough to inflict onto yourself. You confront too many of your own demons. That's why, I urge you to make them into habits. To get over the barriers and break resistances.

That way you become comfortable with accepting your mistakes and this helps you with the exercise we started out with. Always keep your eyes focused on your future and your hands in the present.

If any of this makes sense and you are looking for a way to start, I would urge you to read this great book **Atomic Habits by James Clear**. He lays out exactly how to start a positive cycle (habit) and break out of negative cycles. Because in the end, what is a habit – a learning based on mindless repetition.

Wouldn't it be better if you consciously chose your habits? I'm assuming they will be good ones. To replace the routine that gets in the way of reaching FULL POTENTIAL.

The moment you embrace nurturing habits, you will find a change of your environment. You will be attracted to positive people with whom you can share good habits.

This is the basis of good leadership. We all know that we rarely follow spoken advice. But when the people around you, juniors and children do not do as they are told, they follow what they see.

Careful here, because they see what the end result is. Even if it is over time. Then they make the connection between the effort and the reward.

In the end, it boils down to a work ethic. Consistent discipline and smart work. As the old saying goes, 'The harder I work, the luckier I get'.

Make it a habit.