

Learn the skill of building good habits

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Topics

🕒 What?

- Habits defined
- Habits: blessing and curse
- Brain science overview

🕒 So what?

🕒 Now what?

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How many habits
do you think you
have?

Quiz

According to researchers, habits make up about what percentage of our daily activity?

- a) 10%
- b) 20%
- c) 40%
- d) 60%

What? Habits defined

5 characteristics from Dr. Ann Graybiel, MIT

1. Are **learned** behaviors
2. Can be **actions** or **thoughts**
3. Performed **repeatedly** and **regularly** in a **fixed manner**
4. Performed almost **automatically**, virtually non-consciously, allowing attention to be focused elsewhere
5. Involve an ordered, structured action sequence that context or stimulus starts **(the trigger)**



What's going on—The back story

Flashback: December 2011

- Successful consultant, coach & facilitator for strategic initiatives, including change leadership and behavior change
- College graduate with BSJ, MBA and MA
- Failure at tooth flossing



Now: September 2016

- Floss teeth daily since Dec. 19, 2011
- Credentialed as a Tiny Habits® coach
- Graduate of applied neuroscience program with focus on habits



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What? Habits are workhorse of daily life

Blessing

- Can do quickly without thinking
- Get things done
- Preserve energy by reducing your cognitive load

Curse

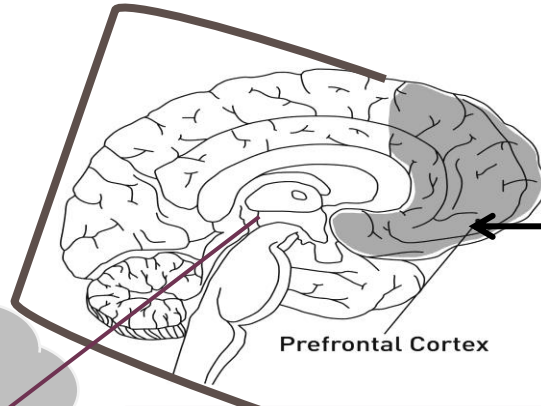
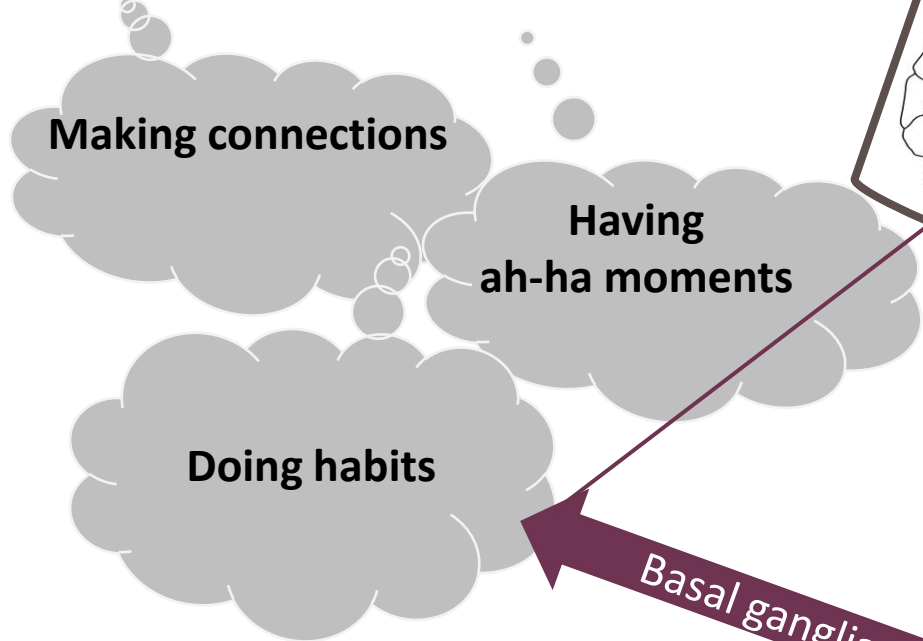
- May take unwanted actions
- May be unaware of what you're doing
- May struggle to change



What? Two big systems in the brain

System 1: fast thinking

Works on billions of things at any one time

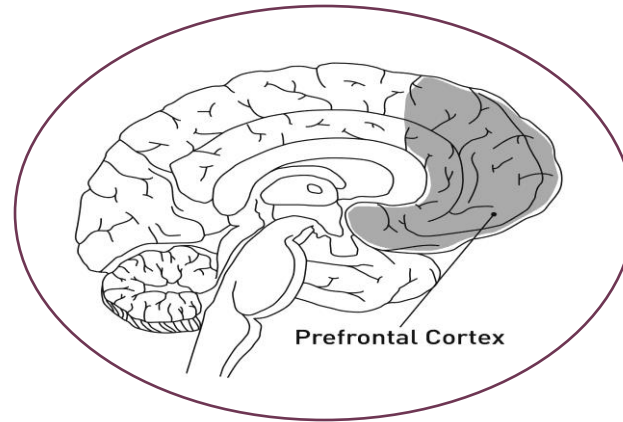


System 2: slow thinking

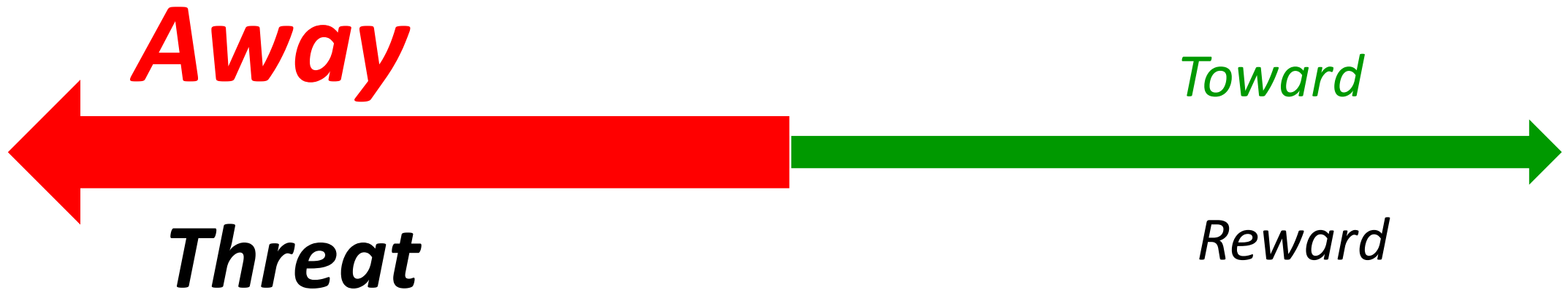
works on 1 thing at a time, tires easily and has small capacity for working memory

Prefrontal cortex—executive function—monitors our habits, acting as a surveillance system without our consciousness

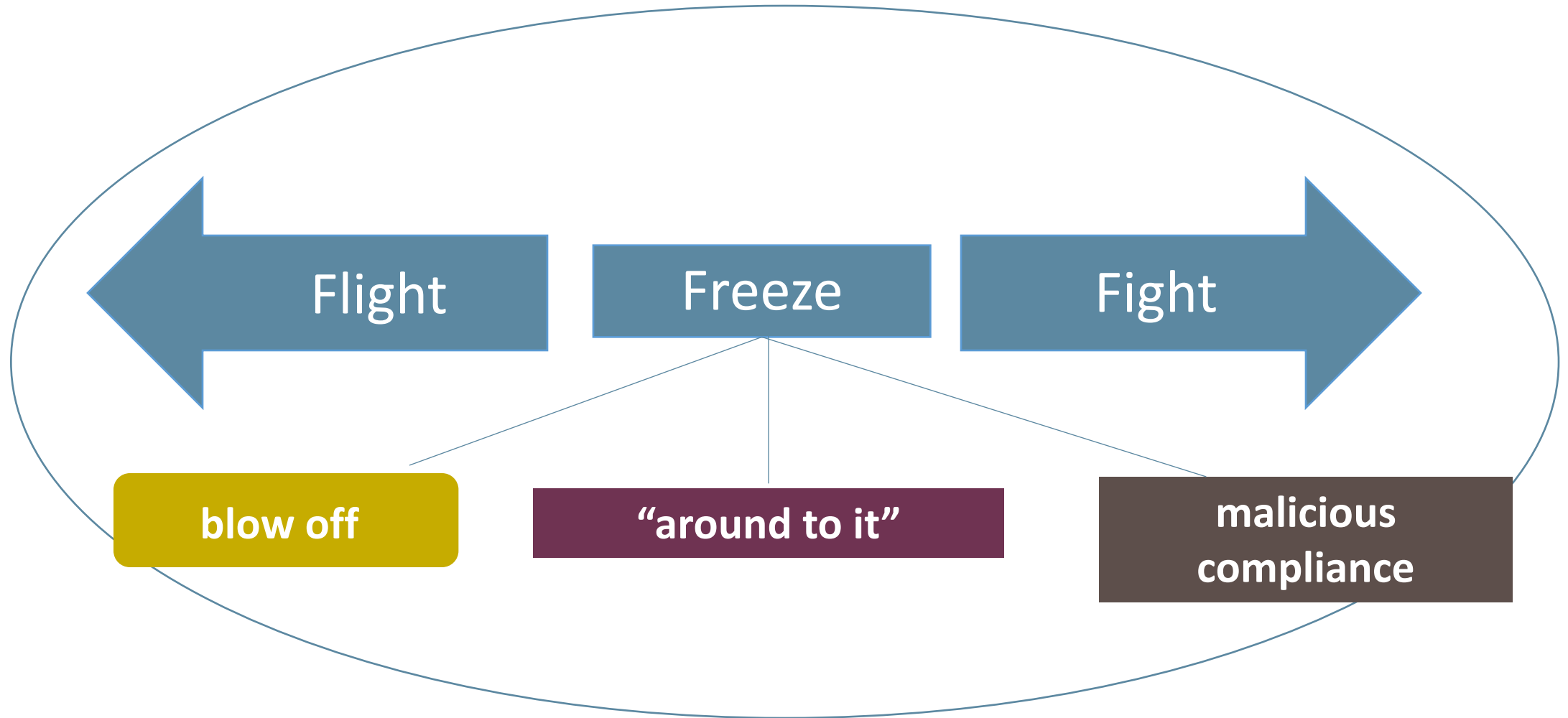
What? Brain focuses on safety



Scanning 5x
every second

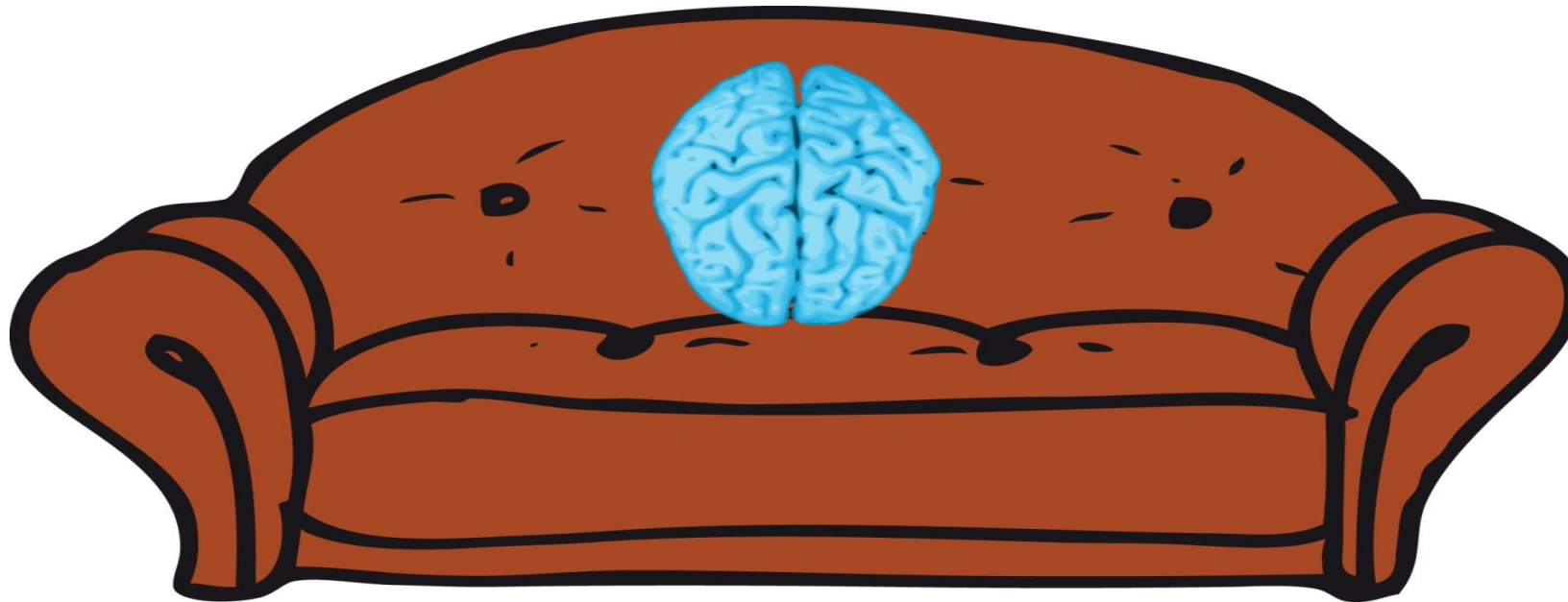


What? When brain feels threatened



What?

Our brain is hardwired for inattention and inertia



When at rest, we act as “mental couch potatoes” *

* Dr. Matthew Lieberman, author of *Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect*

So what? Behavior change is hard!

Don't fight; switch!

Learn the *skill* of building habits



***Make it easy
to act!***

- Make the behavior **tiny**.
- Sequence it **after the right anchor – the *trigger***.
- **Celebrate** immediately.

Based on Tiny Habits® invented by Dr. BJ Fogg,
founder of the Persuasive Technology Lab at Stanford University

So what?



Simple and small with celebrations

So what? Learn habit-building skill

1. Start with action/thought you **desire** to do
2. Choose **anchors** that *trigger* your behavior*
3. Make behavior **simple** to do
4. Adjust your **environment** for success
5. **Celebrate** to embed and rewire your brain
6. **Repeat often**, preferably daily
7. **Evaluate** and **experiment**

* Work on today



So what? Getting started

Think **DEE**

- Desire to do
- Every day--at least
- Easy to do

Why keep it so simple:

NO willpower

NO motivation

NO extra effort

Just triggers to remind you

Your benefits?

Helps you be positive, reduce bad stress, and improve your productivity!

So what? Follow the recipe

Recipe:

***“After I . . .”* combined with a new behavior you want.**

Examples:

- *“After I put my feet on the floor, I will say ‘It will be a great day!’”*
- *“After I pour my first cup of coffee, I will review my schedule for the day.”*
- *“After I first turn on my computer, I will tidy my desk area.”*

Common categories: Priorities, de-stressing and organization

So what? To make it easier....



Give yourself permission to:

- Choose **anchors** that *trigger* your behavior
- **Adjust your environment** for success
- **Celebrate** to embed and rewire your brain

So what? Anchors

- **Anchor:** An existing routine/habit that prompts you to do the new small behavior you want.

For work habits, good anchors include “After I...”:

- Get in/out of the shower.
- First turn on my computer.
- Sit down at my desk after lunch.
- End a phone call.
- Make a commitment to meet or do something.

So what? Anchors

Exercise:

- What “anchor” moments do you now have in your day?
- Which ones are rock solid that can serve as a springboard for a new habit?
- Can you relate the anchor to the new habit you want?
 - Flossing to anchor of brushing your teeth
 - Scheduling to anchor of agreeing to a meeting
 - Taking big breath/stretch to anchor of hanging up the phone

So what: Your environment



**Make it easy!
And experiment.**

To get over the hill, change the mountain to a smooth path.

Set up:

- Reminders to prompt you
- Tools within easy reach
- People to help you

So what: Celebrations

Celebrate at least twice:

1. **When you remember** to do your habit
2. **After you do** your habit

Celebrating:

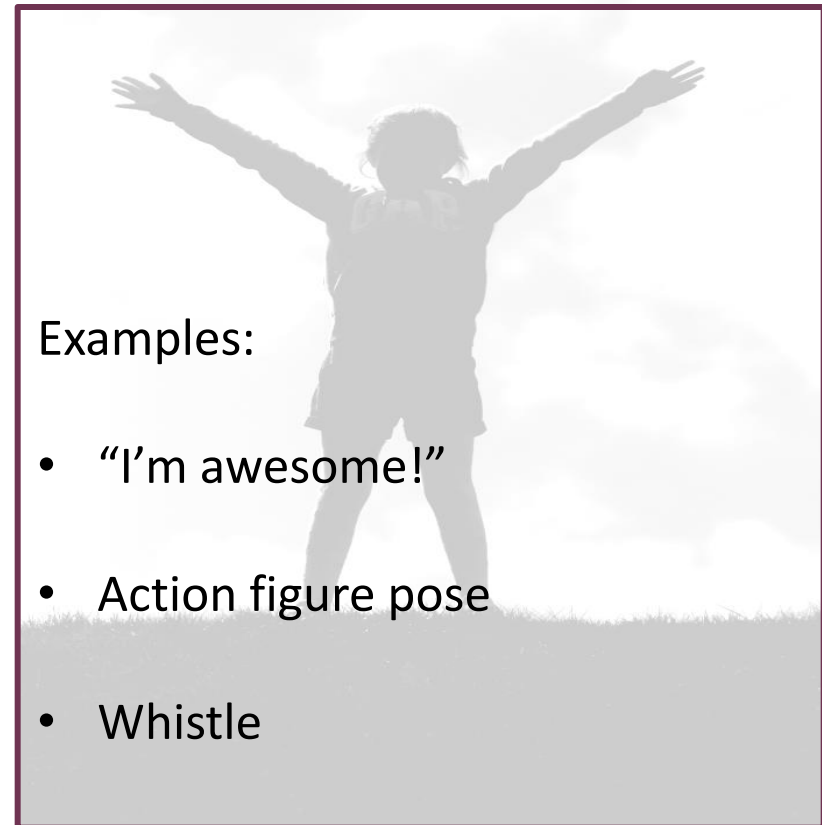
- Gives you an emotional lift—dopamine
- Reinforces the behavior
- Helps your brain rewire faster



So what: Celebrations

Tips:

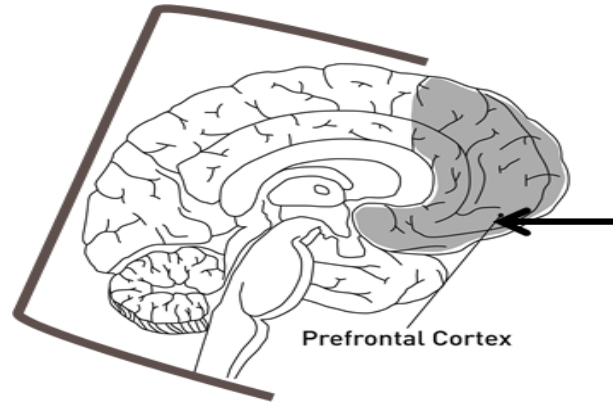
- Consider act of celebrating another habit to build
- Experiment with different types of celebration:
 - Phrases
 - Movements
 - Noise



So what? Grow and master habits



So what? Implications



- Brain can change; this “neuroplasticity” extends to habits
- We can control our habits:
 - Rewire our mental maps and routines to fit our changing situations— with effort and practice
- We may want to think about habits as:
 - **Scripted habits**—lower order running on automatic pilot
 - **Improv habits**—higher order over which we exhibit more conscious, voluntary and deliberative control

We can adjust our habits before we’re disrupted! Great skill for our VUCA world!

So what? Practical implications

- View habits like milk
 - With an expiration date
 - Not an unlimited shelf life
- Mix things up
 - Meet in different conference rooms
 - Change where you sit
 - Eat with new crowd
- Transform your environment every 18-24 months, unless you're already changing jobs or moving



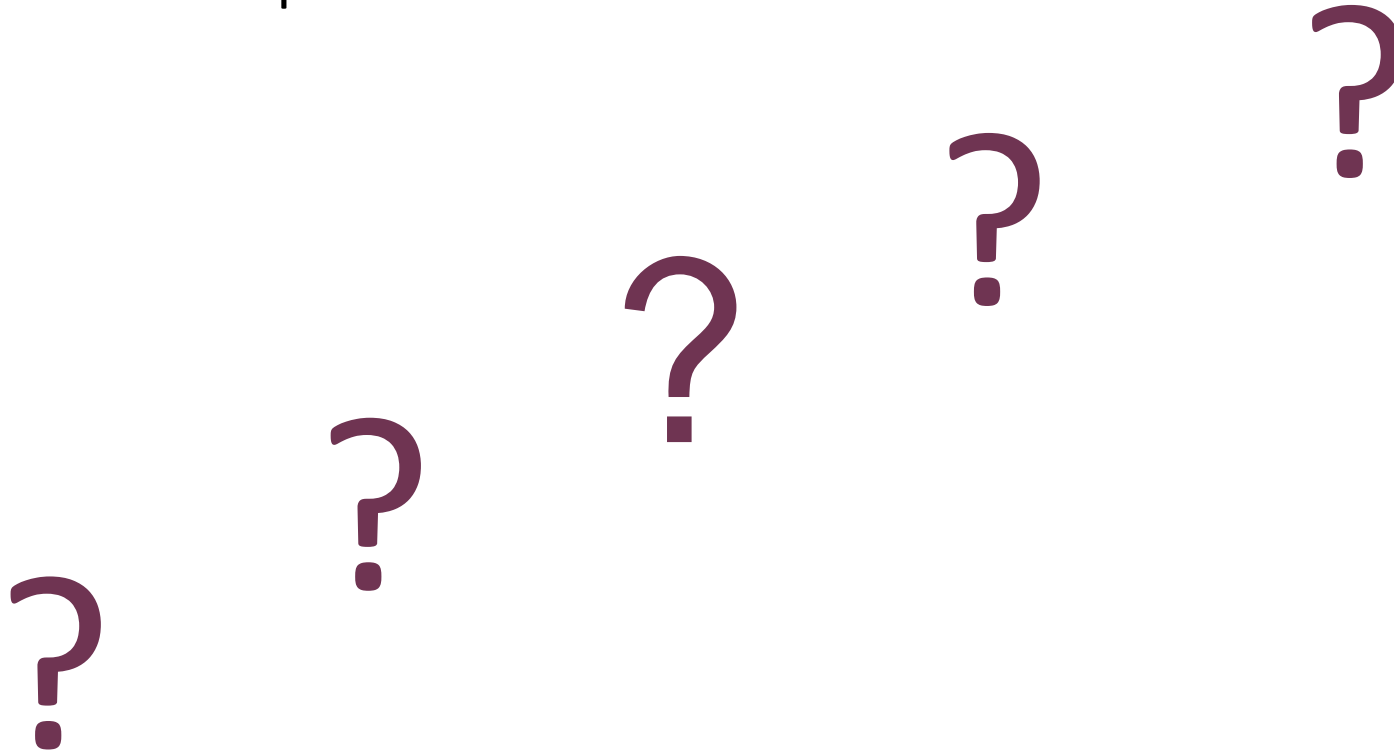
So what? Practical implications

3 questions to ask regularly:

1. How **effective** are my habits in getting me closer to my goals?
2. How **likely** will my current habits help me reach my goals?
3. If the habits are still effective, how **easy** are they to do?

If the habits have served their purpose, move on. Create new habits to replace old.

Now what? More questions and answers



Now what? Actions to take

Scripted Habits: *Actions*

- Take Tiny Habits®—free
- Learn more at: <http://tinyhabits.com>
- 5-day online program Mon – Fri with pre-work to choose habits
- Proven: 42,000 participants to date
- Value:
 - Build skill—work on 3 Tiny Habits at a time
 - Have structure
 - Have accountability

Improv Habits: *Actions & Thoughts*

- Download free **10 healthy meeting habits**:
<http://connectconsultinggroup.com/10meetinghabits/>
- Email me for free consultation:
liz.guthridge@connectconsultinggroup.com
- Value:
 - Get helpful tool
 - Ask questions
 - Get insights about using habits to make positive change