

# Ninja Habits

CREATE  
MASSIVE  
CHANGE



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Hi there.

My name is Patrick Meninga. I am just a regular guy, nobody special, but I have mastered a lot of important habits in my life, and I have come a long, long way.

In my "old life," I was relatively lazy, addicted to many substances, and going nowhere fast. I did not have much purpose, nor did I have any goals for myself. I was content just to exist, but I was quick to complain about the lousy hand that I was supposedly being dealt in my life.

That stage of my life was over 10 years ago. What have I been doing since then that is different?

**Deliberately changing my habits** and mastering a new aspect of my life.....one habit at a time.

Since then I have learned how to master many habits in my life, including:

- \* **Abstaining from drugs and alcohol** (even though I used to be hopelessly addicted).
- \* **Exercising and running on a regular basis** (even though I hated to run at first).
- \* **Building and running my own personal business** that gave me freedom from my day job (even though I never was motivated enough to create much of anything in the past).

In short, I was able to shed all of my bad habits, and also create some new, positive habits that have allowed me to have a pretty awesome life today.

I was able to overcome a life of addictions and bad habits, and now I run about 20 miles per week while casually working on a profitable business that allows me the freedom to work as much or as little as I want.

I have achieved real freedom and what I would call "my dream life," and **it is all due to habit mastery**.

Let me tell you how I arrived at this process. It all started with quitting smoking.

## PERSONAL STORY

When I cleaned up from drug and alcohol addiction, I was still hanging on to nicotine addiction, and I was smoking over a pack of cigarettes every day.

Now whether you are a smoker or not is irrelevant. The point of this story is that *this was the challenge that taught me how to master a habit.*

I was already clean and sober from drugs and alcohol, but at the time, I continued to smoke. And I wanted to quit smoking very badly, but I kept trying and failing to put down the cigarettes. It seemed like an insurmountable challenge.

But I kept at it, and I continued to try to quit. As I was trying, I experimented with:

- \* Accountability.
- \* Incentives.
- \* Quitting strategy (planning).

For example, at one time I made a quick plan to try and quit smoking by buying Nicotine patches. "These things work for some people, maybe they will work for me." That was my plan. However, on that attempt, I did not take the idea of incentives or accountability into consideration. I failed to quit that time.

Another time, I had a close friend who wanted to quit with me. We decided we would hold each other accountable. Beyond that, I did not create a plan for myself, nor did I create any incentives. I failed that time too.

You can probably guess the conclusion here: when I was finally able to quit smoking successfully, **I had a perfect mix of accountability, incentives, and planning.** I would take that one step further and argue that the final ingredient was *persistence*. This was a change that I really wanted badly in my life, and it was one of the toughest habits I ever had to master. I tried so many times to quit that people around me got sick of my quitting attempts. Obviously, persistence was a key factor.

## HABIT MASTERY

Around the same time that I finally quit smoking cigarettes, another major change was underway in my life. I was also attempting to become a runner as a way to replace the nicotine. I had noticed that when I ran in the past, the "high" from running drastically reduced my craving for cigarettes. So part of my plan to quit smoking was to incorporate exercise.

Unfortunately, I have moderate to severe asthma, and I have never been a natural runner. It has always been a struggle to run farther than half a mile.

But I knew that exercise would be a huge key to overcoming the nicotine habit, so I pushed myself to keep running, hoping that it would get easier at some point.

It *did* get easier. **But it took months, not weeks.** Maybe even a full year. But I built up to running 6 miles about 4 days per week, and at that point I had also successfully quit smoking cigarettes as well.

I had never been able to run easily, it had always been a huge struggle, but somehow **I forced myself to push through this resistance** and embrace this healthier life.

## MY MOTIVATIONAL POSTER MOMENT

So you know those motivational posters from grade school that tell you that you can be anything you want to be, that you can accomplish anything you want to accomplish in life, and so on?

I sort of took a step back at this point and said to myself: "Whoa! I finally quit smoking, and then I became a runner, and I think I finally understand what it takes to really master a new change in my life. It is darn hard to do, **but at least I see the process and how it works.** I know what is required to make the really big changes now. I can do anything I want with my life!"

"I really can do anything that I want in life!"

I really believed it, and almost felt embarrassed that I was having my own little "motivational poster moment." I mean, I had seen those phrases before—that you can be anything that you want to be, **but now I was actually experiencing it.** And I knew it was true.

And so my next big challenge was to overcome the drudgery that was my day job. I knew that there were people out there who owned businesses, people who created very lean businesses online that required very few hours of work each month, and I wanted that freedom that they were enjoying. **I did not want to keep selling my time for money at a day job that was only marginally inspiring to me.**

And so I said to myself: "I am going to learn what it takes to build and create a successful business, and then I am going to do it!"

Because I had overcome addiction and managed to quit smoking, I could sort of see the process that building a business would entail. For example, I knew it would be difficult, and I was not put off by that. I already had my incentive, because I wanted economic and time freedom so badly. And so I could see that the other two important pieces of the puzzle were going to be:

- \* Planning.
- \* Accountability.

So over the next two years or so, I created a very lean business with almost no overhead and just myself as the only employee, and now I manage to earn a full time income with only a few hours of input each week.

This has freed up my time so that I can now master other new habits in my life, and continue to make new positive changes.

Now that I understand the process of mastering a new habit in my life, I continue to find that next challenge; the next big change I want to make, and then I tackle it.

This is essentially personal development, one habit at a time. If you can create positive habits, you can change your life.

## **PLANNING**

Planning can encompass both incentives and accountability, so it is normally your most important step in setting up the life altering changes that you want to make for yourself.

There really are only 2 steps to making the massive, life-altering changes that we seek to make here: One, you **figure out exactly what you want to do**, and then two, **you do it**.

Both parts are equally important. Many who fail to achieve the life they really want are not poor at the *doing* part, they are poor at the *planning* part.

Let's break it down into more detail:

- \* Life evaluation and which habit to master first.
- \* Designing an approach to tackle the habit.
- \* Creating incentives for yourself.
- \* Setting an aggressive timeline.
- \* Building in accountability.
- \* Executing your plan and persistence.

## **LIFE EVALUATION**

Most people who want to make changes can break those changes down into 2 types:

- 1) Bad habits that they want to break, and**
- 2) Good habits that they want to establish.**

Now, answer this question:

"Which do you think offers more happiness for most people: breaking a bad habit that decreases their happiness, or forming a good habit that increases their happiness?"

The answer is a bit counter-intuitive. The correct answer is that you get the most bang for your buck if you **eliminate bad habits**. This is because those bad habits are the source of all of your frustration and discontent in your life.

Forming new, positive habits and achieving personal goals is still a big deal, and if you stick with personal growth then you will definitely be doing a lot of that in the future. But it makes most sense to start with *bad habit elimination* so that you can create the most success in the shortest amount of time.

Part of our strategy here is about **efficiency**. This philosophy is meant to be very effective and very efficient in the shortest amount of time possible. Would a ninja have it any other way?

Therefore, the main idea I want you to think about with "life evaluation" is to figure out just ONE single objective that would have *the biggest impact in your life right now*.

Remember, we only focus on **one** major change at a time. We master one habit, then we move on. But we do not move on until we have locked in those positive changes.

So the idea behind "life evaluation" is to consider 2 questions, in the following order:

**1) What bad habit could I eliminate right now that would have the greatest impact on my life?** (Drug or alcohol addiction, smoking, procrastination, internet addiction, etc.)

**2) What goal do I want to achieve most in my life?** (Learn a new skill, travel somewhere exotic, build a new business, start a new relationship, etc.)

The point here is that you need to tackle your bad habits *FIRST* and eliminate those, before moving on to "lifestyle design and personal achievement" type habit creation. This approach will give you **the most benefit and happiness per unit of effort** possible. If you start with question #2 instead, it will be an uphill struggle, because you will always have the negative stuff in your life from question #1 holding you back.

Sometimes, it is not always clear what your next big goal should be, or which habit you should try to change or establish next in your life. For me, I had a pretty clear road map after getting clean and sober because I still had a few bad habits in my life, and I also had a few positive goals that I really wanted to achieve.

If you are not clear about **what** your plan should be and what the biggest impact change that you should be making next in your life is, then I would suggest asking trusted friends and family members for advice. If several of them all think you should be moving in a certain direction, then such an idea has much validity to it.

So ask around. Get opinions. You're not locked into doing anything you don't want to do, but the feedback can be very valuable. This will help you with this process of identifying your next big change in your life.

## DESIGNING AN APPROACH

Once you have decided what your next major life change is going to be, and you have seriously committed to it mentally, the actual approach that you choose to pursue that life change is almost irrelevant. **With clear focus and raw determination to make this goal happen, the exact approach that you use is of only minor importance.**

Different goals will require different strategies anyway. At times, you will need to shift gears, and try a new approach altogether. For example, I tried many different strategies for quitting smoking, and what really paid off in the end was the fact that **I was persistent enough to keep trying new approaches** until I found something that worked.

Certain things worked well for me in designing strategies for making big changes. Here is what I have learned:

\* **Daily action.** Strategies that involve daily action almost always work better than strategies that do not require you to do something each and every day. For example, when I was building my business online, the strategy that finally allowed me to grow the business enough to create a full time income was a strategy that involved *working on the business daily*.

Some days I did not feel like working on the business, and so it was easy for me to just be lazy and do nothing for a day or two (which could easily stretch into weeks or months). Instead, I eventually learned that if I took the choice away altogether, and **mandated** that I put in a certain effort every single day no matter what, then the goal was achieved much more easily (and quickly).

With a strategy of daily action, there was no question any longer--I **had** to do the work. **This created momentum and sparked creativity much faster.** If I allowed myself the "luxury" of not working on the business, then creativity and inspiration almost never struck. But it was when I forced myself to take action on the goal on a daily basis that things really start to work for me.

\* **Overwhelming force.** If your goal is the most important thing in your life right now (and it is, otherwise, you chose the wrong goal to work on!) then you should have no problem *dedicating your entire life and all of your resources to achieving that goal.*

The concept of overwhelming force is simple but powerful. Don't just try to meet your goal with a modest effort; instead, **use every available resource to completely dominate your new goal.** Chase it relentlessly and make it your singular focus. If you think your new goal will realistically require an hour per day of your time, dedicate 3 hours per day of your time instead. If you think it will cost you about \$500 dollars to reach your goal or master a certain habit, save up until you have \$1,000 dollars to put towards your new goal.

\* **Massive action.** Similar to the idea of overwhelming force, the strategy of massive action is that you do not want to just make *small* changes and expect big results from them. Instead, **be prepared to take massive action** in order to achieve the life altering goals that we want to achieve.

For example, when I was building my online business, a successful mentor once suggested that I publish 10 articles each day in order to achieve my income goal. **I decided to take massive action** and see just how many articles I could publish in a day. It turned out that if i really pushed myself, I could squeeze in about 25 articles before my brain and my back gave out. So during one of my vacations from my day job, I did exactly that--taking massive action each day in order to push myself closer to my goal of creating a profitable business.

*It would have been a lot easier to just publish one or two articles per day.* But that is not the kind of action that creates life-changing achievements. For that, you need to take massive action.

There are other approaches out there, but if you experiment with these 3 (massive action, overwhelming force, daily action) then you will probably be able to meet quite a few goals in your life.

## **CREATING INCENTIVES**

There are 2 possibilities with each goal or habit that you attempt to master:

1) The goal itself provides enough incentive to motivate you.

2) The goal is far enough removed from the actions required to get there, such that it does *NOT* motivate you enough to get there.

For example, when I started my online business, I messed around with it for a long time without really being serious about it. At some point, it started earning a small amount of income, and a light bulb went off for me. I could clearly see that I could gain liberation from my day job, and I had evidence of a small amount of income coming in from it already. **I had all the incentive that I needed to start taking massive action.**

On the other hand, when I first quit smoking cigarettes, there was almost **no** incentive for me to resist the temptation to smoke. I was *not* suffering from lung cancer, even though I knew that continued smoking could lead to that condition eventually. The fact was, smoking *one more* cigarette was not going to kill me. So during that first week of withdrawal, I had **very little incentive** to continue with my goal of quitting.

Thus, I had to *create* incentives. I did this by saving money in advance, and using that money to **reward myself** with whatever I chose at the time. I deliberately created an incentive for myself where none previously existed.

**You will have to evaluate if the goal or habit that you are pursuing has enough incentive built into it to keep you motivated.** If you fail to reach your goal, then take a step back and consider why. Was it a lack of incentives? If so, consider creating them.

How do you do this?

The way I did it was to set a new quit date for myself 2 months in advance. I vowed to save a bit of money each week and put it into a reward fund for myself. I did this, and when it came time to quit smoking, I used my saved up reward fund as an incentive. I made an agreement with myself that I could use that money for anything (except smoking of course!).

If you do not have enough incentive to reach your goal, then create it. Reward yourself.

## **SETTING A TIMELINE**

You might think that mastering a huge goal in your life or creating life-altering habits would take months or even years to achieve.

I believe the exact opposite is almost always the better scenario. **Create urgency and a tight deadline in order to inspire massive action.**

Think about it: if you give yourself one full year to achieve your goal of building a new business for yourself, guess what is going to happen? **You will fiddle around and pretty much spin your wheels for the next 11 months or so.** Then, if you are actually serious about the goal, then you will get to down to business finally.

Why bother with that 11 month fiddling around thing? It's such a waste of time!

Also: you are *not* going to learn all sorts of important things in the next 11 months to help you reach your goal. You have everything that you need to achieve your goal right **now**. You are lying to yourself when you argue that you need time in order to get ready for this change to occur in your life.

**Change only happens right now.** So set an aggressive timeline, and make something happen.

The Ninja Habits eBook was completed in just 10 days due to a highly aggressive deadline, and to be honest--I flitted away the first 4 days complaining that the concept would never work!

So the whole thing took off when I sat down and said to myself: "OK, I have 6 days to make this happen. I have to create some stuff *now* that will help people to change their lives for the better." And so I started to pound out my ideas.

The deadline loomed, so I made it happen. **It is not any better or worse than if I had given myself a full year to do it.** Instead, my deadline was 10 days, and I wasted 4 of them.

You can do the same thing with nearly any goal in your life. Figure out your next big action step to make this day a success for you, and then DO IT. No excuses.

Shorter deadlines = massive action.

**PLANNING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY**

How can you build in some level of accountability into what you are trying to accomplish?

There is really only one way: **publicly commit to your goals, and use relationships to help motivate you to achieve those goals.** This is accountability in action.

You are not necessarily “setting yourself up to fail.” Instead, you are declaring what you really want in life, and letting some others know about it. Don’t be embarrassed by your desire to change and have a better life. If they are not supportive of that, then to heck with ‘em!

It is OK to dream a little. This is about creating **massive** change. Publicly announce your goal, and then work like a dog to achieve it. Do not be afraid of a little accountability.

NinjaHabits and creating massive change is for movers and shakers. People who are creating big changes. If you are not "a mover and shaker" then you can become one.

I did.

## **EXECUTING YOUR PLAN AND PERSISTING**

Now then, so far you have:

- \* **Evaluated your life situation and decided that you want to change.**
- \* **Determined the change in your life that will increase your happiness the most.**
- \* **Formed a plan and a strategy to tackle this goal with massive, daily action.**
- \* **Used incentives when necessary to give yourself proper motivation for change.**
- \* **Set an aggressive deadline to inspire massive action and reduce procrastination.**
- \* **Found accountability by publicly announcing your goal to others and committing to make it happen.**

The only thing left is to DO IT.

Execute your plan. Take the daily actions that you promised you would take and make your new life a reality.

If you happen to fail, then:

\* **Own it.** Go to the people who you told about your goal (whoever that may be) and own up to your failure. Don't make excuses. Just own the failure.

\* **Reflect.** Allow yourself time to figure out why you failed, and what was ultimately your downfall. Was it a lack of commitment? A lack of incentives? Did you realize that you don't really want that goal after all? Did you just become lazy and not pull it together enough? Give yourself time to think about these things.

\* **Recommit.** Determine what the most important goal is in your life, and vow to tackle it with renewed strength and determination. Do not allow yourself to just go back to a life of "quite desperation."

\* **Thus, persistence is key.** I failed at least a dozen times when trying to quit smoking, and that was the critical thing that started a domino effect for success in my life. Had I not persisted, my life would probably be a lot less joyful than what it is today.

What can you do differently next time?

Could you:

\* **Create more incentives for yourself to help with motivation?**

\* **Create a better plan to achieve your goal?**

\* **Use a shorter deadline to inspire massive action?**

\* **Publicly announce your goals to give yourself some accountability?**

## **THE 3 CRITICAL STRATEGIES THAT SHOULD GOVERN YOUR HABIT CHANGES**

You will notice that I do not give a lot of specific advice on how to change certain habits.

For example, there is no specific information given about how to lose weight.

Nor is there specific advice about how to quit smoking.

Or how to start a business. And so on.

The fact is that everyone's path will be different, and there is no way that I am an expert on all of these various habits anyway.

Instead, what I am offering is 3 key strategies to help you think about how to change ANY habit in your life.

Strategic thinking is much more powerful and versatile than a list of tips or a few tactics I might offer.

For example, I have a really good tactic for quitting smoking, and it worked great for me, and I love to share it with people.

But how does that tactic really help people who have never smoked anyway? It doesn't.

So instead, I have broken down my system of massive change into the following 3 strategies, that help to guide every decision in my life today:

\* **Efficiency/frugality**

\* **Massive action**

\* **Holistic Health**

When you first consider your life and how you want to change it, you may have some very specific goals in mind.

Perhaps you want to conquer an addiction, or establish a new healthy habit. Whatever the case may be, there is likely one main issue that prompted you to seek help.

And once you achieve that goal, what next?

You need to choose your next "massive change" that you want to make, and tackle it.

But, how do you choose?

You choose by using the 3 strategies. They should govern all of your thinking when you are considering new lifestyle changes or habit formation.

## **HOLISTIC HEALTH**

When I say holistic health, I am not talking about acupuncture treatments or doing Reiki massage or things like that.

"Holistic" just means whole.

So when we talk about holistic health, we are talking about your overall health, including:

- \* Physical health - fitness and being free of disease.
- \* Mental health - being of sound mind.
- \* Emotional health - being happy and stable.
- \* Spirituality - having meaning, purpose, love, etc.
- \* Social health - having meaningful connections with others.

So if you are considering which habits to lose and which positive ones to gain, one of the most important "lenses" through which you can view that question is in terms of your overall health.

For example:

Quitting smoking = extremely good. This is based on the enormous physical health benefit of doing so. One might argue that quitting will "stress them out" and so their emotional health will suffer, but this is actually flawed logic. It is true that quitting will create a roller coaster of emotions for a week or two, but after that, you will be healthier emotionally than you were before, and also be better at managing stress (which cigarettes do a poor job of).

Regular exercise = extremely good. Based on numerous benefits to almost all areas of your health, not just the physical aspect.

Replacing television with something more productive (such as reading or building a business) = good. Less harmful marketing messages clogging up your brain, and more productive output in your life. More emotional stability in some cases. This was the trade off that built my business for me.

So for each possible decision that you are considering, you might ask yourself:

"Does this lead to an increase in my overall health? Or does it actually decrease it?"

If you like your life and your happiness, then your "overall health" is ultimately your greatest asset and has the highest value in your life.

## **EFFICIENCY**

Most people believe that frugality is a bad word. It's not. Frugality is simply being efficient with your money.

Time is money for most people, because nearly everyone has to spend their time in order to generate money.

So if you can spend less money, you can save time that you would have normally spent working....and use that time for yourself instead.

The greatest example that I have in this area is of starting a business.

I used to spend my free time doing typical activities for my demographic: I was playing video games, surfing the internet, a small amount of sports, and so on.

At some point I realized that I wasn't really having much fun with that stuff anymore, and it was all sort of the same thing. And, I wanted a challenge.

So I took that free time and shifted to building a business instead. Easier said than done, I know. But think about it: if all you do is watch television or mindlessly surf the web anyway, what have you got to lose?

Maybe you will find that creating another stream of income is more rewarding and more exciting than mindlessly consuming media anyway.

And you essentially have no time limit. I started out and spent the first 18 months earning no money. Who cares? After that, the business brought in passive income every month with practically no time investment at all.

People are amazed when you explain this to them, and they wish they could do the same. They can. They just are not willing to let go of their other activities, and start doing something productive in its place.

There is something to be said for minimalism as a direction for happiness. Having more stuff does not bring more happiness. Spending more money does not bring more happiness.

When I made the decision to stop buying more stuff in order to be happy, and start building something that generated income instead, my life got a whole lot better.

Creating a business in place of non-productive activities is just one example of efficiency.

Some others might be things like:

- \* Walking or running instead of spending money doing other things such as shopping, gym memberships, etc. (save money + exercise).
- \* Shifting from unproductive free time activities to building an income generating asset (save money + build income stream).
- \* Less time spent with media consumption (television) more time spent with family and friends (less marketing messages, save money + emotional health and stability).

Notice that focusing on efficiency and frugality habits tends to create "super habits" that have more than one benefit for your life.

## **MASSIVE ACTION**

If you tackle a problem using "overwhelming force" then that is a tactic.

The guiding strategy that would lead you to that tactic is known as "massive action."

When you think about solving problems in your life or creating new habits, one of the strategies to keep in mind is that of "taking massive action."

For example, say that you want to quit your day job and start a business.

If you were to ignore the strategy of massive action, you would most likely fail in that endeavor. Working hard on the new business every day would probably be essential.

The same would probably be true if your goal was to run a marathon some day. That is not going to happen by just taking tiny actions and never pushing yourself.

Aim high, hit high. Go for big juicy goals in your life and expect to have to use massive action in order to reach them.

If it were easy, then the reward would be tiny. Who wants that? We are aiming for big juicy goals and big juicy rewards.

If you want to get awesome results in your life then be prepared to take massive action.

This does not always involve the use of overwhelming force, however. For example, taking massive action might involve things like:

- \* Eliminating your vehicle in order to save money, exercise more, and live a more simple life.
- \* Selling your television and exercising every day.
- \* Leaving a life of addictions and getting involved with a positive community.

The bottom line is that if you are going to make a change in your life and try to do something positive, don't just make a minor adjustment and expect a miracle to come of it. Instead, be prepared to take massive action.

So those are the 3 strategies that govern habit changes.

Ask yourself:

"How will this change improve my overall health?"

"How will this change make my life more efficient?"

"How can taking massive action help me to reach this goal?"

Thank you for reading. If you enjoyed this eBook, feel free to share it with others.

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