

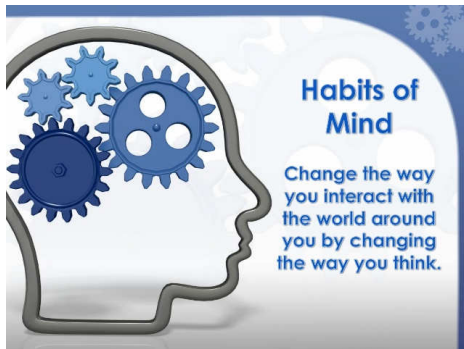


VENTRAX BE TIME WISE March 2017

HABIT

Let us examine the definition of HABIT! It is said to be “a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up” – and it can develop into “**a bad habit**”. Now let us examine what is said about the.....

HABITS OF MIND



These are the characteristics of what intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions to which are not immediately apparent. These Habits of Mind seldom are performed in isolation; rather, clusters of behaviours are drawn forth and used in various situations.

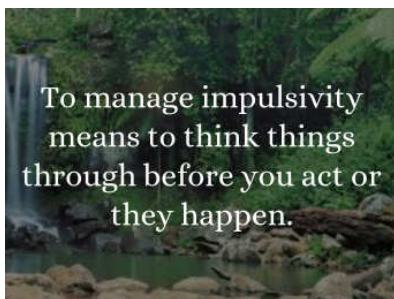
The Habits of Mind are an identified set of **16 problem solving, life related skills**, necessary to effectively operate in society and promote strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity and craftsmanship. The understanding and application of these 16 Habits of Mind serve to provide the individual with **skills to work through real life situations** that equip that person to respond using awareness (cues), thought and intentional strategy in order to gain a positive outcome.

1. PERSISTING

Sticking to task at hand; Follow through to completion; Can and do remain focused.



2. MANAGING IMPULSIVITY



Take time to consider options; Think before speaking or acting; Remain calm when stressed or challenged; Thoughtful and considerate of others; Proceed carefully.

3. LISTENING WITH UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY

Pay attention to and do not dismiss another person's thoughts, feeling and ideas; Seek to put myself in the other person's shoes; Tell others when I can relate to what they are expressing; Hold thoughts at a distance in order to respect another person's point of view and feelings.



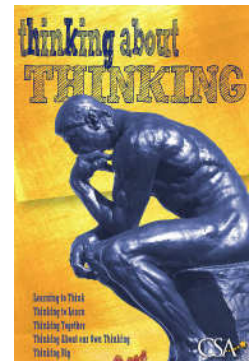
4. THINKING FLEXIBLY



Able to change perspective - Consider the input of others; Generate alternatives; Weigh options.

5. THINKING ABOUT THINKING (METACOGNITION)

Being aware of own thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions; Knowing what I do and say affects others; willing to consider the impact of choices on myself and others.



6. STRIVING FOR ACCURACY



Check for errors; Measure at least twice; Nurture a desire for exactness, fidelity & craftsmanship.

7. QUESTIONING AND POSING PROBLEMS

Ask myself, "How do I know?" develop a questioning attitude; Consider what information is needed, choose strategies to get that information; Consider the obstacles needed to resolve.



8. APPLYING PAST KNOWLEDGE TO NEW SITUATIONS



Use what is learned; Consider prior knowledge and experience; Apply knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.

9. THINKING AND COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY AND PRECISION

Strive to be clear when speaking and writing; Strive to be accurate when speaking and writing; Avoid generalizations, distortions, minimizations and deletions when speaking, and writing.



10. GATHERING DATA THROUGH ALL SENSES



Stop to observe what I see; Listen to what I hear; Take note of what I smell; Taste what I am eating; Feel what I am touching.

11. CREATING, IMAGINING, INNOVATING

Think about how something might be done differently from the “norm”; Propose new ideas; Strive for originality; Consider novel suggestions others might make.



12. RESPONDING WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE



Intrigued by the world's beauty, nature's power and vastness for the universe; Have regard for what is awe-inspiring and can touch my heart; Open to the little and big surprises in life I see others and myself.

13. TAKING RESPONSIBLE RISKS

Willing to try something new and different; consider doing things that are safe and sane even though new to me; face fear of making mistakes or of coming up short and don't let this stop me.



14. FINDING HUMOR



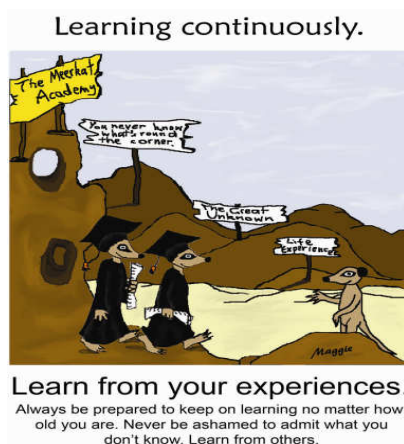
Willing to laugh appropriately; Look for the whimsical, absurd, ironic and unexpected in life; laugh at myself when I can.

15. THINKING INTERDEPENDENTLY

Willing to work with others and welcome their input and perspective; Abide by decisions the work group makes even if I disagree somewhat; willing to learn from others in reciprocal situations.



16. REMAINING OPEN TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING



Open to new experiences to learn from; Proud and humble enough to admit when don't know; Welcome new information on all subjects.

It's easy to identify other people's bad habits. Maybe your co-worker always rushes at the last minute to complete their part of the project, your boss shoots down ideas without even listening, and your partner is horribly disorganized. Recognizing these traits in ourselves, however, isn't quite as easy.

Your blind spots for your own bad habits could be keeping you from raises and promotions. In a recent study identified the *top five career killers*:-

1. BEING DISORGANIZED AND UNRELIABLE



This person doesn't spend the necessary amount of time planning, organizing, communicating and coordinating with others. They fail to follow through on commitments and are difficult to rely upon.

UNRELIABLE

2. DOING TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

This person procrastinates, misses deadlines, and cuts corners rather than going the extra mile to produce great work.

**IT'S PROBABLY
TOO LITTLE TOO
LATE.**

3. DEFLECTING BLAME



This is the person who says, "It's not my job." They don't take responsibility, cling to their job description, and are unwilling to sacrifice personal interests for a larger goal.

4. BEING UNWILLING TO CHANGE

This person is stuck in the past, complaining about the future, and repeating the same mistakes. They expect others to accept them as they are, dragging their feet in taking on new approaches.



5. HAVING A BAD ATTITUDE



This person suffers from cynicism and negativity. They are often the contrarian, finding fault before looking for benefits.

These five habits are common, and most employees report having at least one. Unfortunately, they also hold you back for two reasons: "They prevent the person from being part of the team, and people with these habits are often unable to change them".

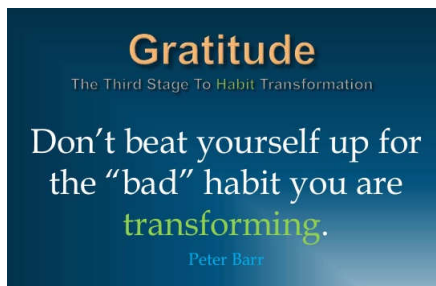
HOW TO CHANGE?

If you're concerned you have a bad habit that's impacting your career, it's time to be honest with yourself. "Be willing to say, 'This is me; I do this sometimes'. 'The first step is to accept that it's our problem and **own it**'".

If you're not sure, get outside opinions. Few of us are insightful enough to recognize what is holding us back, and if you want to be good at changing, you have to ask for feedback.



DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP OVER HAVING BAD HABITS



Most of us develop ways of doing our job and living our lives. "As the job changes and as life changes, sometimes these habits are not robust enough to keep up with changes. All of us fall into this, but it's a case of what got you here won't get you there."

WHY ARE HABITS SO HARD TO BREAK?

The great English writer Samuel Johnson once said, “The chains of habit are too weak to be felt, until they are too strong to be broken.”



Most of us can attest to that. From the kinds of clothes we put on in the morning to how much sugar we take in our coffee, humans are creatures of habit.

“Habits allow us to do things quickly and efficiently, like, “to get the things we want and to avoid the things we don’t want, without using a lot of resources for making decisions.”

Though you might not think of them this way, you rely on habits to successfully get through your day.

“Without habits, our brains would shut down, overwhelmed by the minutiae of everyday life.”

But let’s back up for a minute. What exactly is a habit? “Habits are generally considered things that you do automatically when in a particular situation, or in response to a particular image or sound. ***A habit is something that has been learned through repeatedly performing an action.*** However, just performing a behaviour doesn’t make it a habit. “But if you perform that behaviour regularly in response to a particular situation, such that whenever you are in that situation you have a tendency to do that behaviour as a default, then it is a habit.”

There’s an old adage, ***“Neurons that fire together, wire together.”*** In other words, if the neurons that respond to a particular image or sound frequently fire at the same time as the neurons that cause you to do a particular behaviour, the connections between those neurons will become stronger.



These connections strengthen if you receive a reward for performing a behaviour. “A reward is the stuff we get that’s good. “That can be all sorts of things: money, good-tasting food, even the faces of attractive people.”

When we get rewards, our brains release dopamine, which facilitates the building of connections between brain cells.

“Each time you do something and you get a reward and those circuits in the brain become stronger, you’re more likely to do it again the next time you encounter that situation.” Because the brain is continually computing expectations, it can think that if a thing was rewarding in the past, it will be again.

This process starts off consciously. You might eat a food and enjoy it, so you want to eat it again. That’s not yet a habit. “It becomes a habit when you no longer have to expect a reward from eating the food”. “You eat the food because you’ve always eaten it.”

How quickly a person learns a habit depends on a few different things, like the strength of a particular reward and the regularity with which an action is performed. “A habit will grow stronger and faster, for example, if it’s done exactly the same each morning,” she says.

But if you perform any behaviour and get rewarded for it often enough, you will eventually come to perform that behaviour even if you’re not expecting a reward.

So, what if you’ve developed a bad habit—going to bed too late or eating a doughnut every morning—how do you go about breaking it?

In order to do something different, you have to activate a different part of the brain to override those habitual tendencies. That’s the prefrontal cortex. It keeps track of your current situation and goals, and how they might be different from what they were before.

Breaking Bad Habits



The problem with the prefrontal cortex is it’s easily distractible and doesn’t work well when you’re stressed or tired. “When that part of the brain is vulnerable, those habits that are hardwired into the other parts of the brain automatically take over.”

To combat this, you might try giving yourself a physical reminder that you are trying to change a habit. That way, your prefrontal cortex isn’t tasked with remembering what you’re trying to change. Perhaps, you hide your phone so you’re not seeing it all the time. There’s another thing you can do to curb a habit, and it’s much more effective in the long run: develop new ones.

How long do you want to continue to live with your bad habits?

“If you go to a doughnut shop every morning, try going to a farmer’s market instead. The first time you do that, it’s going to be really hard because you have to remember to go in a different direction, and then you’ll have to find something there that tastes as good as the doughnut. It’s going to be difficult until you find something you enjoy at the new place.”

Once you find a new rewarding thing, it gets easier. Before you know it, you’ve replaced the bad habit with a better one. “The new habit overwrites the old one in your brain, so you don’t use the prefrontal cortex all the time.”

Any time you can eliminate the stimulus that drives the habit, you’re one step closer to overcoming it.

HOW TO CHANGE UNHEALTHY HABITS

Do you ever find yourself standing at the refrigerator when you’re not hungry? Have you ever reached for the one food in your cupboard that is guaranteed bad for you? It’s not just you. We all do it. These are “bad” habits, and habits by definition are the things we are so used to that they become our default, even when we know better. Instead of using the word “bad” let’s call them “unhealthy”—much more accurate and less judgmental. Now, the trick is to stop justifying our poor choices and rewrite the script so we default to where we want to be.



Whether it’s not sleeping, lack of exercise, poor food choices, or overindulgence in alcohol—we know these things are not healthy for us. Why do we persist—and just as importantly, how can we stop?

**BREAK
THE BAD HABITS
AND MAKE
better ones**

Although positive and affirmative self-talk is powerful, I am not going to whitewash today’s message with unhelpful clichés which are as useful as saying “just relax” to someone having a panic attack. Thus, “Just think positively,” or “Flex your willpower muscle” are not on my list of steps towards change.

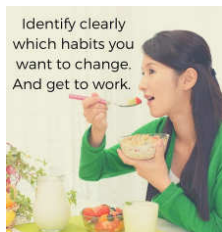
Instead, let's dive into a really juicy, habit-changing discussion. First, love *yourself into change*. The concept is simple. Use some compassion with yourself and notice that your unhealthy behaviour is probably an alert that something is off-kilter in your life. Love yourself enough to make some changes. Don't wait until you hit "rock bottom" to have to make the change. You know the habits I'm talking about.



Most unhealthy habits are in *reaction to stress*: excessive work (or hating your job), loss, worry, avoidance of the tough stuff. These kind of stresses can paralyze us. Change becomes harder than ever and we compensate for the stress by exercising behaviours that, though they are unhealthy, serve a clear purpose for us, whether physical, emotional, or psychological.

Here are 10 steps to changing unhealthy habits.

1. Identify the habits you want to change.



This means bringing what is usually unconscious (or at least ignored) to your awareness. It does not mean beating yourself up about it. Make a list of things you'd like to change, and then pick one.

2. Look at what you are getting out of it?

In other words, how is your habit serving you? Are you looking for comfort in food? An outlet or connection online? Stress alleviation through eating or nail biting? This doesn't have to be a long, complex process. You'll figure it out—and you'll have some good ideas about how to switch it up for healthier outcomes.



3. Honour your own wisdom.



Here's a common scenario. You feel like you have no downtime, so you stay up way too late binge-watching your favourite show on Netflix. You know you'll be exhausted and less productive the next day, but you feel "entitled" to something fun, just for you.

Your wisdom knows this is not a healthy way to get it. Use that wisdom to build something into your schedule that will provide what you really want. Realize you do have the answers and are capable of doing something different.

4. Choose something to replace the unhealthy habit.

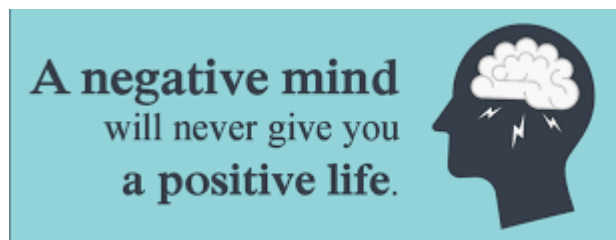
Just willing yourself to change isn't enough because it does not address the underlying benefit of the behaviour you want to replace.

What can you do instead of standing in front of the fridge when you're stressed?

If you have a plan, you are **"armed" with tools** and a replacement behaviour. Next time you catch yourself standing in front of the refrigerator and not hungry, use the tools and try a replacement behaviour.



5. Remove triggers.



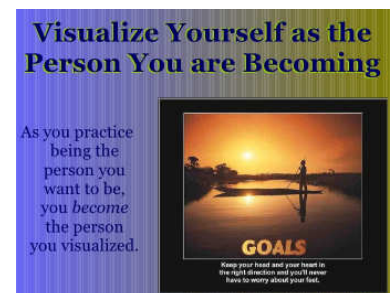
If Doritos are a trigger, throw them out on a day you feel strong enough to do so. If you crave a cigarette when you drink socially, avoid social triggers—restaurants, bars, nights out with friends... just for a while until you feel secure in your new habit.

Sometimes certain people are our triggers. Remember that you end up being like the five people you hang out with most. Look at who those people are: do they inspire you or drag you down?

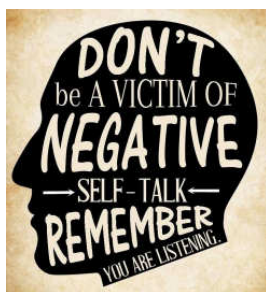
6. Visualize yourself changing.

Serious visualization retrains your brain. In this case you want to think differently about your ability to change—so spend some time every day envisioning yourself with new habits. Exercising and enjoying it, eating healthy foods, fitting into those jeans.

See yourself engaged in happy conversation with someone instead of standing in the back of the room. This kind of visualization really works.



7. Monitor your negative self-talk.



The refrain in your brain can seriously affect your default behaviours. So when you catch yourself saying, "I'm fat" or "No one likes me," reframe it or redirect it.

Reframing is like rewriting the script. Replace it with, "I'm getting healthy, or "My confidence is growing." Redirecting is when you add to your negative self-talk of "I'm fat" with "but I'm working my way into a healthier lifestyle."

8. Take baby steps, if necessary.

Even if you can't follow through 100% right away with a whole new habit, turn something new into habit. For example, if you've blocked out an hour to exercise and you have to go to a doctor's appointment, find another time to squeeze in at least 15 minutes. That way you'll reinforce that "this is my new habit."



9. Accept that you will sometimes falter.



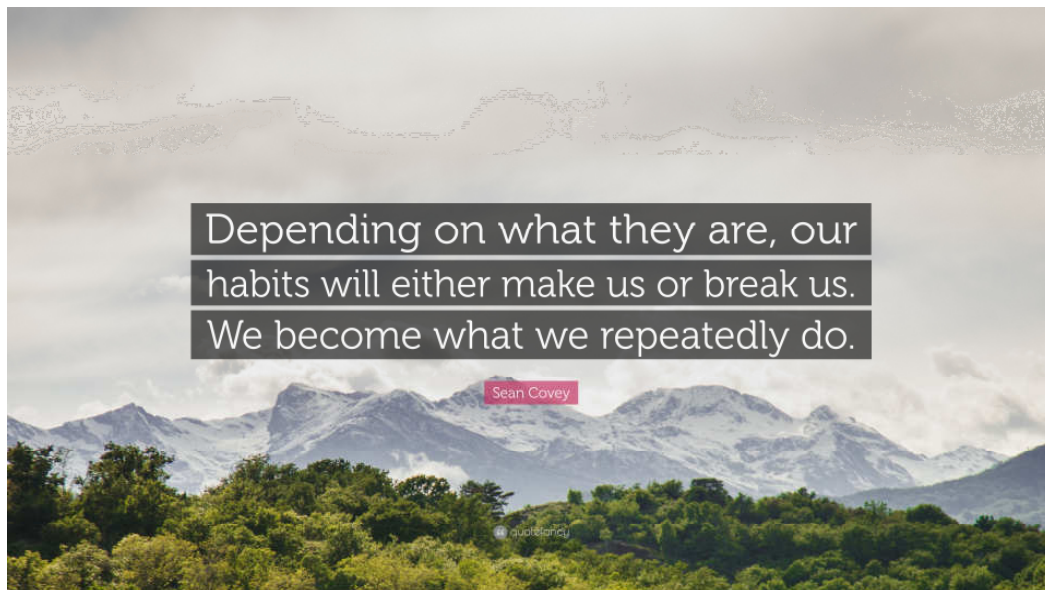
We all do. Habits don't change overnight. Love yourself each time you do and remind yourself that you are human.

10. Know that it will take time.

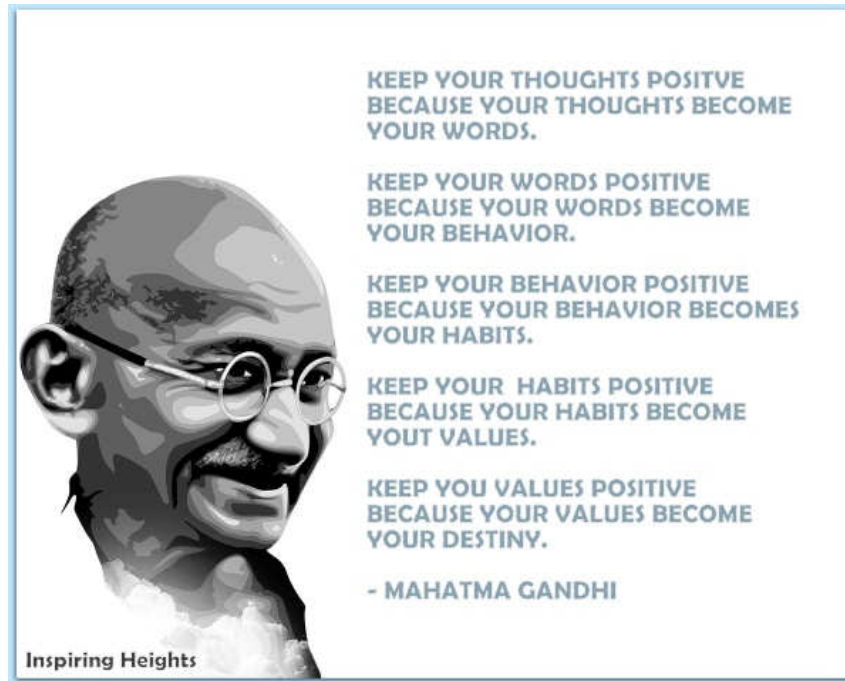
Habits usually take several weeks to change. You have to reinforce that bundle of nerves in your brain to change your default settings.



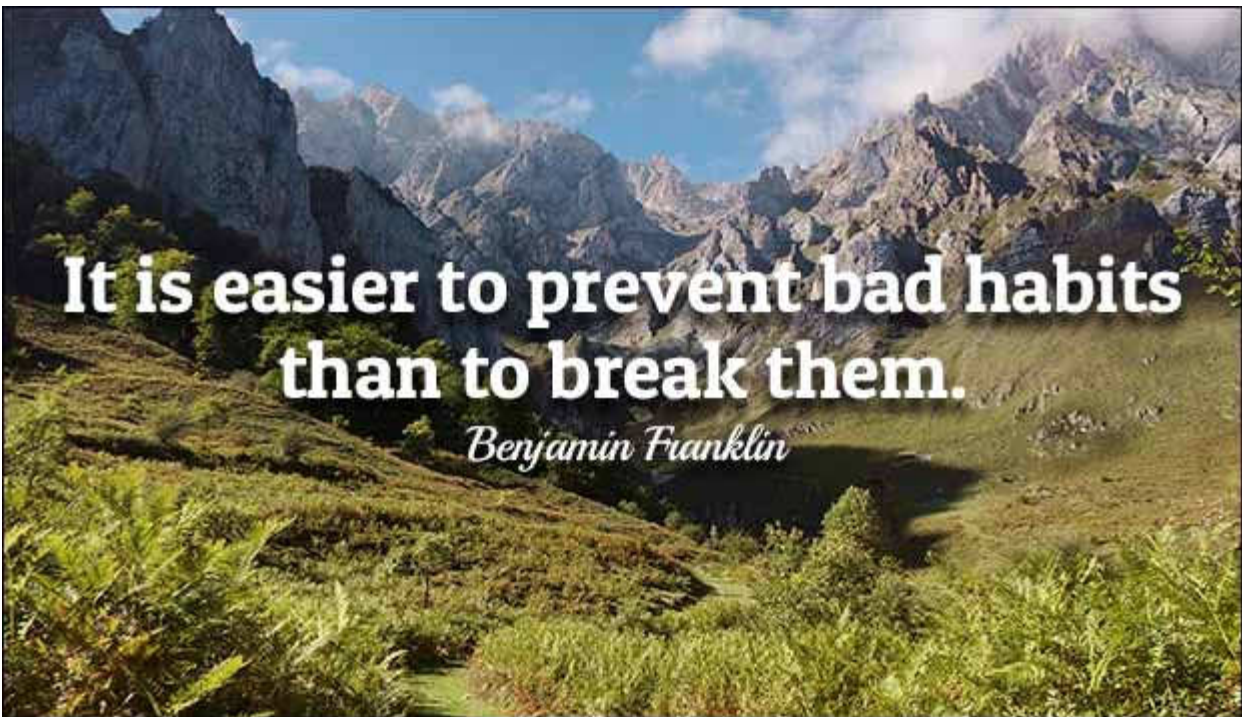
QUOTES ABOUT HABITS



Sean Covey



Mahatma Gandhi



Benjamin Franklin

"Who is strong?
He that can conquer
his bad habits."

~ Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin



Socrates



When habit has strengthened our sense of duties,
they leave us no time for other things; but when
young we neglect them and this gives us time for
anything.

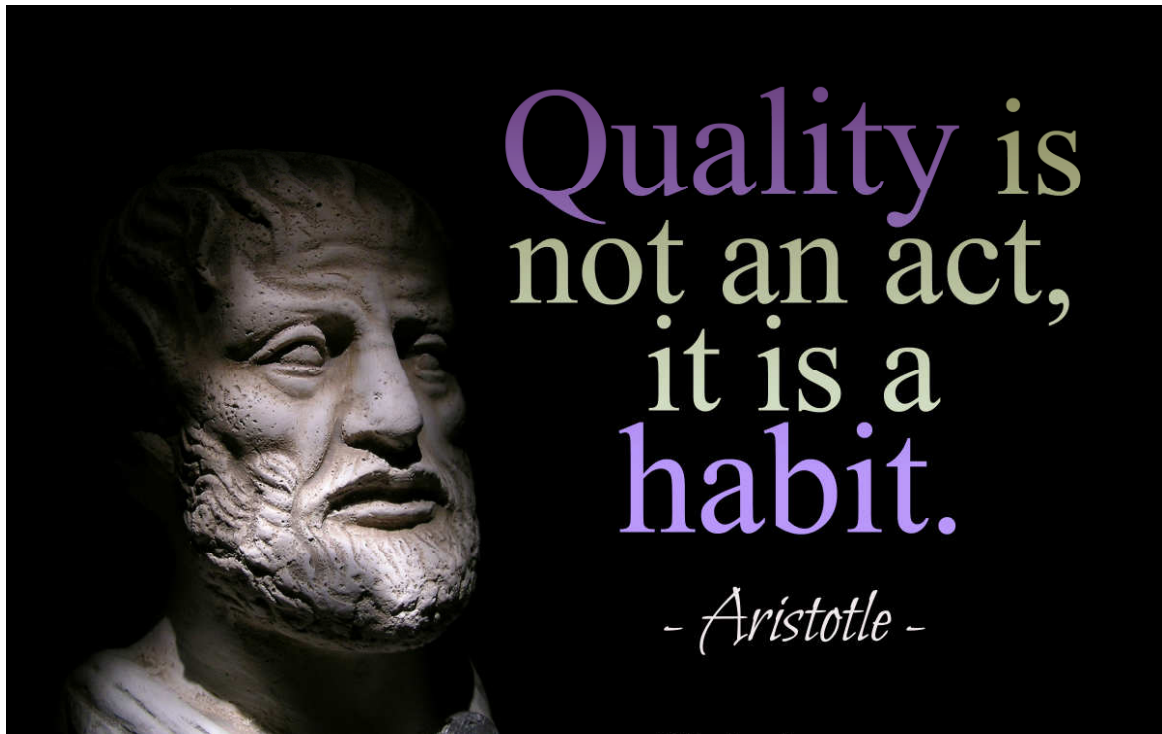
(Thomas Jefferson)

Thomas Jefferson

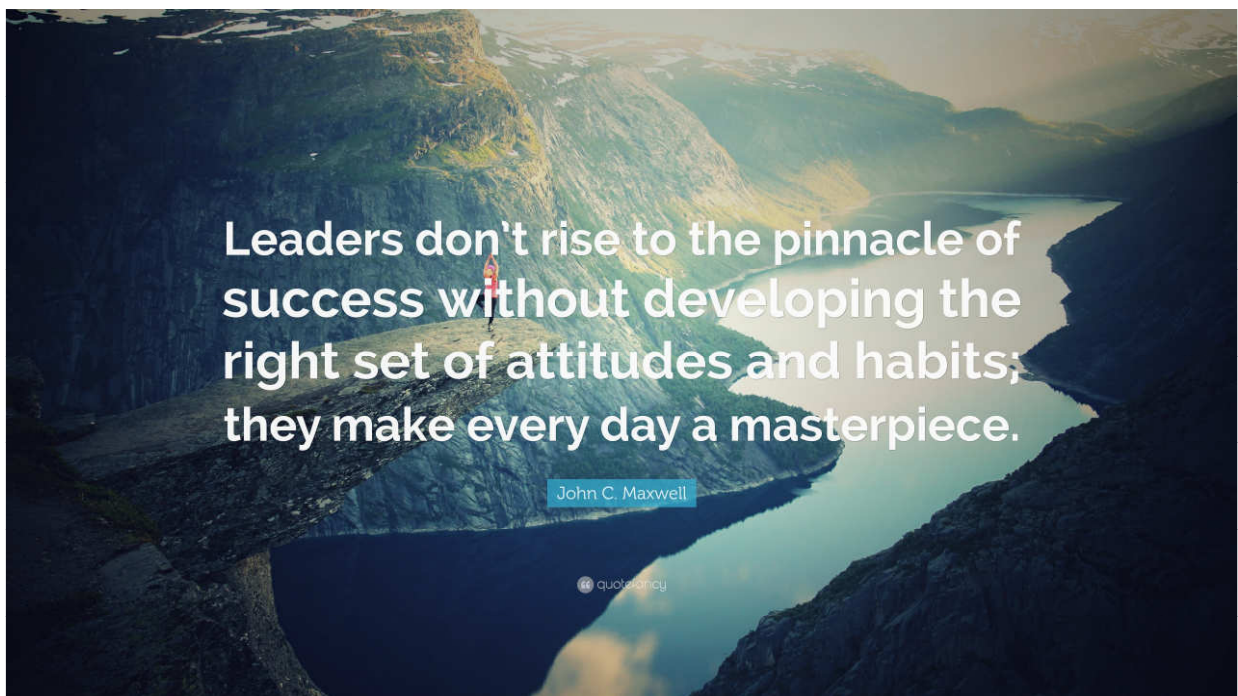


**“Motivation gets you going
and habit gets you there.”
Zig Ziglar**

Zig Ziglar



Aristotle



John C. Maxwell

SDS topic for April 2017

MANAGING AWAY BAD HABITS

Date : 3rd April 2017

Venue: Banker's Club Kuala Lumpur
(Opposite Berjaya Times Square)
(Amoda Building)
Jalan Imbi, Kuala Lumpur

Time : 6.00pm – 8.00pm



Timely Inspiration

If you've recognised that you have a time management problem, enrolling in time management program will not solve your problem. There is nothing wrong with these seminars - most are highly motivating and you'll walk away feeling all geared up to charge into life. However after a few days when the initial euphoria disappears, you'll go back to your old habits and end up in the rut again, leaving our expensive notebooks and diaries in your drawers. In no time, you're back to square one, saying that you do not have time to manage time.

In the process of improving on your time management habits, you will have to make changes to your everyday thinking, habits and "the way things should be done". Being organized will lead you to achieve your desire which will give you your Better Quality of Life. Remember readers, there are no quick push button answers to improve your time management.

(Extracts from "How long can you wait for results")



NEWS....AT ...VENTRAX.....

The SDS March 2017 addressed the topic of “How to Cope Better With Life’s Challenges. In our personal lives as well as on a global scale, we face challenges that test our emotional mettle: injury, illness, unemployment, grief, divorce, death, or even a new venture with an unknown future. Some of the key issues Dr Venga covered during the SDS were as follows.

People will be happy and be productive at work if they were generally “happy”. People who are not happy at work are basically not explicit of what they need to do. Despite the challenges that come our way every single day in various forms, we will only be able to keep our priorities in check if we go back to WRITE down what we need to accomplish for the day.....GOALS set simple goalsREVIEW what was carried out. Question yourselves.....Could I have done it differently and better. This is the only way we can make that incremental progress within us by this sheer awareness.

Dr Venga also touched on how we should get into the habit “reading”, which will “open our mind” to many issues in life. The reflection of what we are constantly doing has to become a habit. He concluded the evening by speaking about relationships, about how it has to be a UNION...there must be sharing but on the flipside there must also be a “SPACE” too.



Dr Venga this year has endeavoured into a journey to meet his clients from time to time. These are mainly the users of the planners for more than 15 years.....





reflections

