Charles Duhigg: The power of habit [Summary & takeaways]

Struggling with habits? We all have those routines – good and bad – that we can't seem to shake. Charles Duhigg's The power of habit breaks down why we do what we do and how to take control of it.

The habit loop: cue, routine, reward

Cue

Trigger that starts the habit (time of day, emotion, environment).

Example: 3 PM sugar craving = snack time.

Routine

The action taken after the cue hits.

Example: Grabbing a cookie when stressed.

Reward

The feel-good result from the routine (often immediate).

Example: Temporary satisfaction from the cookie.

Insight: Understanding this loop is key to changing your habits. Bad habits are just loops we need to disrupt.

How to change your habits

Identify the habit

Take a hard look at what's working and what's not.

Reflect on your habits (try using the Mental Walk app for insight).

Change the cue

Shift the trigger

Example: Instead of boredom leading to a snack, take a quick walk.

Alter the desire

Address the craving by finding healthier alternatives.

Example: Meditate or stretch instead of stress-eating.

Change the reward

Adjust your rewards to make the new habit stick.

Example: Reward yourself with a night out, a book, or a treat after a productive day.

Tools to help you build new habits

- **Awesome Habits:** Track goals & get reminders.
- **UpLife:** Meditation app for managing emotional triggers.
- **Headway:** 15-minute book summaries for your reward system.

The results?

- **The good:** I stopped my cake habit (hello, fruit!), felt proud with every small win.
- **The bad:** Some habits didn't change overnight. Progress is slow but steady.
- **The truth:** Changing habits isn't magic, but the process works if you put in the effort.

Final thoughts:

- **The Power of habit** provides solid tools, but it's up to you to apply them.
- Progress can be messy. Be kind to yourself along the way.
- Some habits will stick, and others will take time. But it's all part of the journey!