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DEAN BOKHARI

BUILD STRONG HABITS

COURSE WORKBOOK
BY DEAN BOKHARI

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Part 2. How to Create Habits

Course Workbook

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INSIDE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is created to be used in conjunction with the Build Strong Habits course by Dean Bokhari.

Inside, you'll find a brief summary of each lesson, along with an exercise (if applicable). Exercises are referred to as "Actionable Insights."

To access your course lessons, visit:

deanbokhari.com/courses/build-strong-habits/

4. What Are Your Goals?

LESSON SUMMARY

- **We can't talk about habits without talking about GOALS.** Think about it: in order to reach your goals, you either need to improve your current habits, establish completely new habits, OR break the habits that are holding you back.
- **What are your goals?** Do you want to eat healthier? Do you want to make more money? Do you want to start a business? Advance your career? Learn a new skill? Wake up earlier?
- **What do you want?** Before we can continue talking about building and breaking habits, it's important to create a clear picture of the direction in which you want those habits to take you.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

In the space below, write down 1–3 goals you want to accomplish. (Don't overthink it. Just write it down—we'll refine + modify them later.)

Goal #1:

Goal #2:

Goal #3:



5. Who Do You Need to Become?

LESSON SUMMARY

- “Success is something you attract by the person you become.”
- The strongest habits are the one’s we’ve internalized and made part of our identity (ex: “I’m the kind of person who exercises”)
- When you can identify WHO you need to become on the inside, it’ll be easier to make things happen on the outside.
- When most people set out to make a change in their lives, they start by identifying WHAT they want (get into shape, write a book, etc) and then they figure out HOW they’ll get it (exercise 30–45 minutes a day, dedicate a minimum of 60 minutes per day to writing, etc.)
- This is effective, but it isn’t always enough... Anyone can hit the gym, avoid junk food, or sit down and write for a week or two, but then the excitement wears off and they give up. This is because the WHAT (the goal) and the HOW (the habit) aren’t congruent with who they are—their identity.
- What if you started FIRST by identifying the type of person you need to become in order to achieve your goals and develop the habits to required to achieve them? For example, what are the characteristics and values of the type of person who writes books or exercises regularly?
- One of the most powerful things you can do to develop new good habits or break bad ones, is to internalize your habit — to make it part of your core identity, to make it part of who you are. It’s not enough to write down “live healthy” as a value if you’re not actually living it. In order to take what we **want** to do, and make it what we **actually** do, we

need to internalize it.

- It's one thing to say you "want to workout more," it's another thing to say you're the "kind of person who hits the gym, rain or shine."
- It's one thing to say you "want to stop gossiping," it's another thing to say you're the "kind of person who never says anything negative about anyone that you're not willing to say to them face-to-face."
- It's one thing to say you "want to read more this year," it's another thing entirely to say that you're "a voracious reader."
- Think of it this way: every time you perform—or neglect to perform—an action related to a habit, you're casting a vote to either break that habit or to build it into your identity over the long-run. For example, if you want to become the type of person who exercises – every time you go to the gym, you're voting for that habit. But every time you decide to forego the gym, you're voting against that habit.
- The more votes you cast for a habit that helps you, the more you internalize that habit and make it a part of who you truly are.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- In order to internalize our habits, we need to focus not just on what we want, but also on who we need to become in order to get what we want.
- Complete the Habit Assessment on the following page.
 - Select one of your goals from the previous lesson and add it to the "What's my goal?" field.
 - Then, fill in the fields that follow.
 - Note: down the line, you can repeat this assessment for each of your goals and the habits you want to establish.

Habit Assessment

WHAT'S MY GOAL?

WHO MUST I BECOME TO ACHIEVE IT?

Write a general description of who you need to become.

HABITS I WILL BUILD TO REINFORCE THIS IDENTITY + SUPPORT THIS GOAL:

List the habits you need to build in order to become the type of person who achieves this goal.

MY TARGET HABIT:

Select your **strongest** habit from above—the **one** habit that will have an outsized impact on your identity + goal. This will be your **target habit**—the one habit that you will focus on building throughout this course.

6. Target Habits → Tiny Habits

LESSON SUMMARY

- In order to build strong habits, we need to start small and master the art of showing up consistently. It's a lot easier to "show up" when you know it's something you can do.
- In this lesson, we'll focus on taking your target habit (a strong habit you want to build) and turning it into a tiny habit—a behavior so simple and easy that you'd feel silly not doing it.
- The idea is this: think big, but start small and stay consistent.
- If you've never been to the gym before, and you walk in tomorrow morning and workout for 4 hours straight—you'll either injure yourself or burn yourself out so badly you'll decrease any desire you might've developed to go back. Not good.
- But if you were to workout for just 5 minutes today, 6 minutes tomorrow, 8 minutes the following day, and build up from there, the likelihood of scaling up this tiny habit (5-ish minute workouts) into a target habit (60 minute workouts) goes up dramatically.
- This is why starting small, showing up, and staying consistent are so crucial to focus on when we're in the early stages of creating habits. So, how do you do it? By turning your target habit into a tiny habit.
- Any habit can be scaled down to a tiny version of itself. For example:
 - "Run three miles" becomes "Run around the block."
 - "Do 50 pushups a day" becomes "Do 1 pushup after every bathroom visit"

- The idea behind this is to make your habits as easy as possible to start. Get yourself into the habit of doing something small, then building up to the more intense version of that habit (your target habit).
 - For example: let's say you've got a goal to write a book, instead of setting a target to write 10,000 words a day, which is very hard, create a tiny version to start with, like writing just one page a day. If you find this too difficult, write one paragraph a day. Start small, get comfortable, do more.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- A new habit shouldn't feel like a challenge. Master the art of showing up and keep in mind that you need to standardize before you can optimize.
- Use the template below to turn your target habit into a tiny habit.
- Remember: a tiny habit is a scaled-down version of the habit you ultimately want to develop. The idea is to gradually build your way up.

TARGET HABIT	→	TINY HABIT
Example: "Exercise for 60 minutes a day, 5 days per week."		Example: "Exercise for 5 minutes a day, 5 days per week."

7. Routines vs Habits

LESSON SUMMARY

- Most of us think routines and habits are one and the same. But there's a difference. And not appreciating the difference can make it hard to shape strong habits.
- **Habit** = any behavior that's performed automatically, with little or no thought.
- **Routine** = a series of behaviors that are performed frequently and intentionally.
- Here's the crucial part: A behavior needs to be a regularly performed routine before it can become a habit.
- Routines are uncomfortable and hard at first because they require focused discipline to perform. But stick with your routine for long enough and it'll eventually transform into a habit.
- Remember: the idea is to regularly work your routine until it regularly works for you.

8. How Long Does it Take to Create New Habits?

LESSON SUMMARY

- You don't need super-human willpower to create new habits... But you do need patience and upfront discipline. Once you've made a habit out of something, you can simply put it on auto-pilot – no more willpower necessary.
- **How hard is it to create new habits?** It can be hard at first, but after a certain point, it becomes easy.
 - Think about a rocket ship launching into space. When it first takes off, it requires TONS of upfront energy and fuel in order to get off the ground. But as soon as the rocket breaks past the earth's atmosphere and the rocket booster detaches, all of the weight that was holding it back practically disappears... that's how habits work.
- When you discipline yourself, you're basically training yourself to behave in a specific way. These specific behavior(s) are what we call routines. If you stay disciplined with your routine for long enough, it eventually turns into a habit. It's about regularly working at something until it regularly works for you.
- So here's the trick if you want to create a habit – you'll need to use your willpower + discipline juice in the beginning. This can be hard. But keep at it, and eventually, the routine that used to be hard to do, will become a habit that's hard NOT to do.
- **How long does it take to create new habits?** You may have heard it takes 21 days to form a habit. This is a myth. According to researchers from the University College of London, it actually takes, on average, [66](#)

days to develop a discipline into a habit.

- This number might vary for you depending on your situation and the habit you're working to develop.
 - The full range cited in the study was between 18–254 days, but 66 days were what they considered the sweet spot when it comes to making a behavior automatic.
 - On average, it takes 66 days to form a habit. But because some habits take hold much faster than others, the point at which a ROUTINE (which requires discipline to perform) becomes a HABIT (which requires little to no discipline to perform) can take as little as 18 days or as much as 254 days.
- The thing to remember is that strong habits don't usually form overnight. They can take some time. But once you turn a discipline into a habit, you become better at it AND it becomes easier to execute.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- Dedicate a minimum of 30 days towards your chosen habit (not because it takes that long, but because it's easier to track).
- During this time, it's important to put your full focus and energy towards doing the behavior consistently until you've set it in stone as a habit.
- At day 30, reassess whether the habit has taken hold and adjust your time-frame if necessary.

9. Create Your Habit Loop

LESSON SUMMARY

- In Part 1, you learned about the habit loop—a three-step process that explains how habits emerge. Every habit loop includes a cue, routine, and reward.
- In this lesson, you'll learn how to use the habit loop to create your own habits. As a quick review:
 - Cue: The cue is a trigger that tells our brains to go into automatic mode and perform a specific behavior.
 - Routine: The routine is the behavior that you want to make into a habit.
 - Reward: The reward is the feeling that you get after completing the routine. The reward helps your brain determine how important the behavior is.
- Here's a 5-step plan for developing any habit. In the example-steps below, I'll use the example of creating an exercise habit, but you can use it as a guide for creating any habit you want:
 - STEP 1: Identify the target habit.
 - Example: Develop a gym habit, whereby I'll workout five days a week.
 - STEP 2: Identify your CUE.
 - Example: I'll set my alarm to wake me up at 6 am every morning so that I can exercise before work.
 - STEP 3. Identify the REWARD.
 - Example: Enjoy a delicious protein shake after my workout, revel in my sense of accomplishment, and embrace the endorphin rush.

- STEP 4. Execute the ROUTINE.
 - Example: Drive to the gym and exercise.
- STEP 5. Write it down, make it happen. The simplest and most effective way to form a new habit is to write a plan. Use the following formula to write yours:
 - When _____, (cue)
 - I will _____ (routine)
 - because it provides me with _____ (reward).

Example: When my alarm clock goes off at 6 am (cue) I will jump out of bed and drive straight to the gym to exercise for 60 minutes (routine) because it provides me with a healthy lifestyle, a fit physique, and an energetic start to my day (reward).

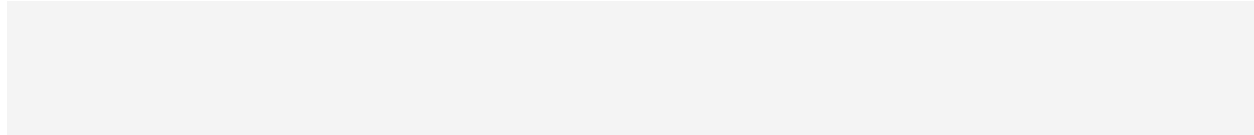
Now, using this plan as a guide, take a few minutes to formulate a habit you've been struggling to implement in your own life.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

STEP 1. Think of a habit you want to create. Write it in the field below. (You can use your target habit from lesson 6)

STEP 2. Think of your cue. Write it in the field below.

STEP 3. Now, add your reward.



STEP 4. Put it all together as a plan

WHEN

[Empty box]

←cue

I WILL

[Empty box]

←routine

BECAUSE IT PROVIDES ME WITH

[Empty box]

←reward

EXAMPLE

WHEN

my alarm clock goes off at 6am

←cue

I WILL

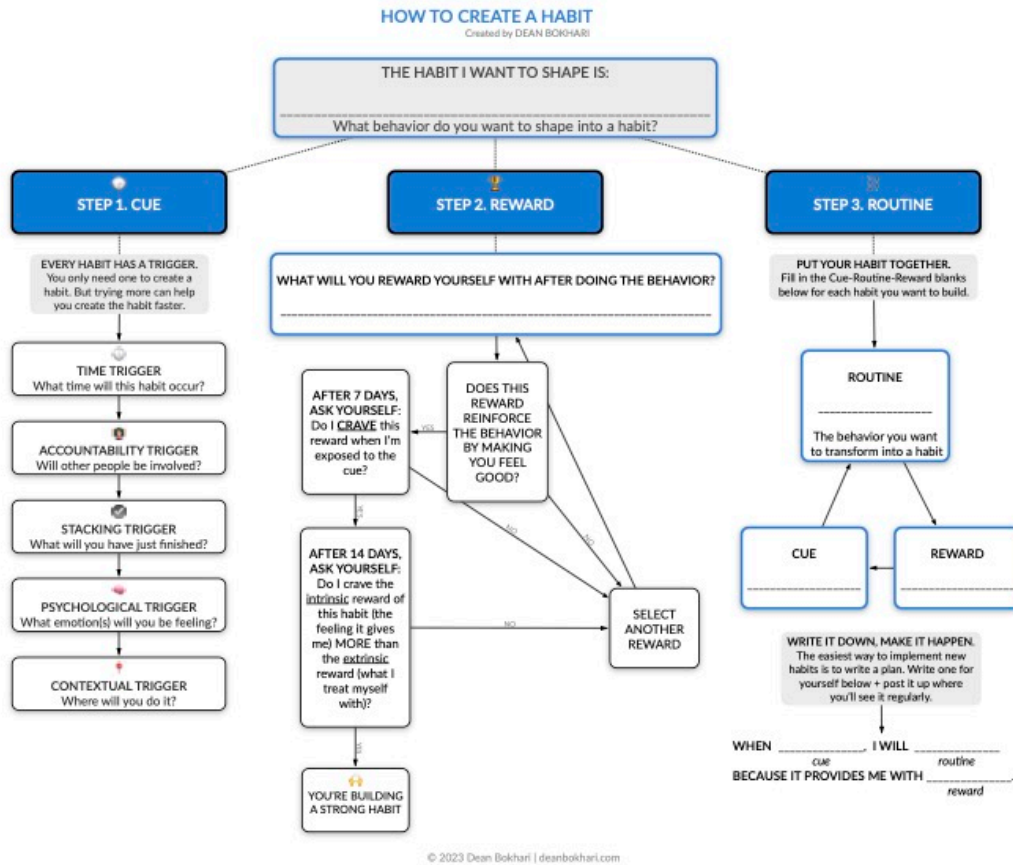
jump out of bed + drive to the gym to exercise for 60 minutes

←routine

BECAUSE IT PROVIDES ME WITH

a healthy lifestyle, fit physique, and an energetic start to my dday

←reward



Note: I've made a landscape version of this Habit Map available for download in the Materials tab of [Lesson 1](https://deanbokhari.com/lessons/bsh1/). (deanbokhari.com/lessons/bsh1/)

10. Cravings Drive Habits

As you've already learned, the key to creating habits is based on a 3-part formula known as a habit loop, which any one of us can use to build new habits.

Let's say you want to create the habit of working out first thing in the morning:

- 1: You begin by choosing a cue, like keeping your gym shoes by the door.
- 2: Then you choose a clear reward, like a smoothie after each workout.
- 3: Finally, you allow yourself to crave/anticipate that reward, by thinking about the smoothie you'll get to enjoy once you're done crushing it in the gym.

It's the craving portion of the loop that many people overlook... And if you've had trouble sticking with habits in the past, you may find it helpful to experiment with different rewards until you find one that you can really crave.

The simple addition of a craving could be what makes the difference between whether a habit takes hold or whether it loses potency. (Whether you get up and hit the gym, or hit snooze and bury yourself back under the sheets.)

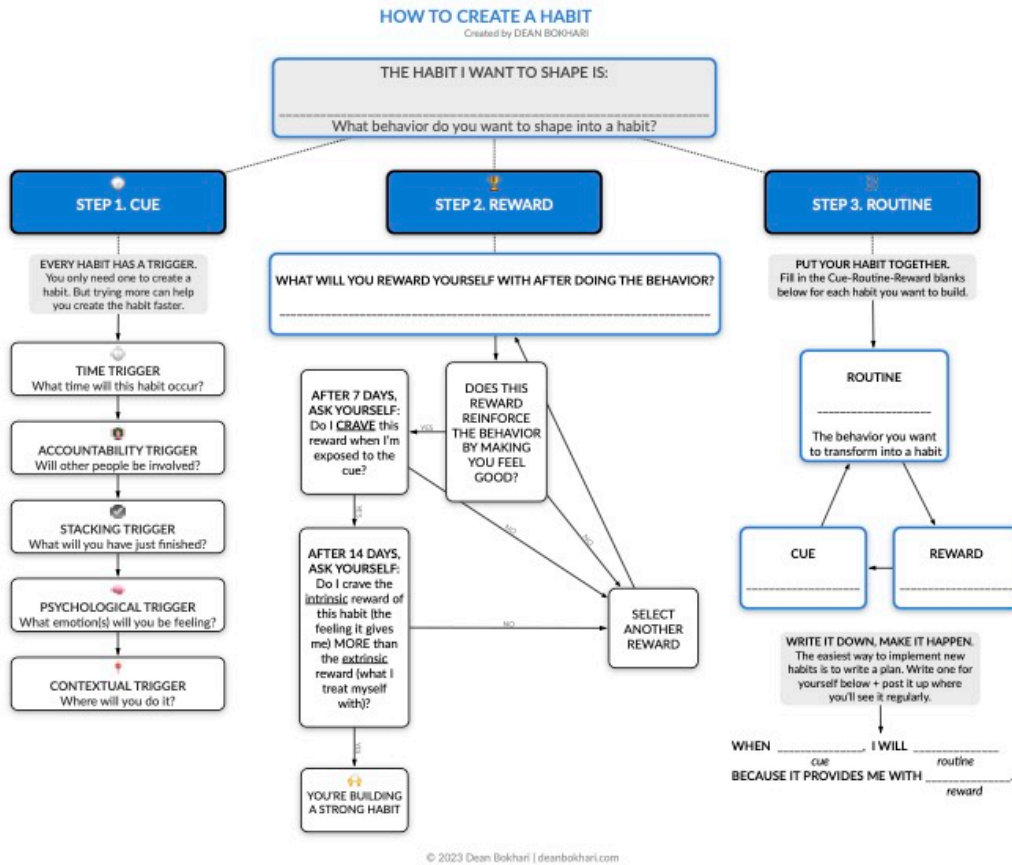
And figuring out what sparks your cravings is what can make creating a habit easier for you.

To make it easier for new habits to take hold, be sure to identify and implement a reward that sparks your cravings.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- Now that you have a target habit to work on creating, and strong cues to trigger the habit, it's time to experiment with rewards and cravings.

- Pick a reward you actually crave.
 - This could be something as simple as switching the flavor of the protein shake you have after your workouts. For example, I don't like vanilla flavored protein, so I wouldn't crave it while I was working out, which means I'd be less likely to give it my all and finish my workout. But I LOVE chocolate protein, and knowing that I'd get to enjoy a delicious chocolate protein shake after my workout sparks a craving that helps my workout habit stick.
- Add this reward to your habit loop and try it out for 7 days.
 - **After 7 days, ask yourself:** "Do I crave this reward when I'm exposed to the cue, or at any point during my routine?"
 - **If the answer is No**, pick a different reward.
 - **If the answer is Yes**, stick with the same reward for another 14 days.
 - **After 14 days, ask yourself:** "Do I crave the **intrinsic** reward of this habit (how it makes me feel) **more** than the **extrinsic** reward (the treat I give myself)?"
 - **If the answer is No**, experiment with a different reward.
 - **If the answer is Yes**—I'm sending high-fives your way, baby, because you're on your way to creating a strong habit!



Note: I've made a landscape version of this Habit Map available for download in the Materials tab of [Lesson 1](https://deanbokhari.com/lessons/bsh1/). (deanbokhari.com/lessons/bsh1/)

11. Habit Goals + Habit Routes

LESSON SUMMARY

Habits help you achieve your greatest goals on autopilot, but only if you know when and how to use them. Here are two ways to use habits as they relate to your goals:

1. Habit goals. When you have a broader goal that's NOT measurable, you need a habit goal. Habit goals are best for building long-term—maybe even life-long—habits. For example, let's say:

- **You want to meditate or build a strong spiritual habit.** You could set a habit goal such as: "Spend 15 minutes a day meditating, 7 days a week at 5:00am, starting January 1st, and do it 66 days in a row."
- **You want to connect more deeply with your spouse/partner.** You could set a habit goal such as: "Go out for date night, once a week, on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm, starting February 14th, and do it for 30 weeks straight."

2. Habit routes. When you want to use one or more habits to help you achieve outcome-based goals (specific and/or measurable goals), then you need what I refer to as *habit routes*. For example, let's say:

- **Your goal is to write a 40,000-word book by February 19th.** You could identify + implement several habit routes to help you get there, or you could focus on shaping a single habit to get there. For example, "Write 500 words a day, 5 days a week, at 8am, starting May 1st, and do it for 90 days straight."
- **Your goal is to lose 25 pounds by July 4th.** You could identify + implement several habit routes or you can focus on a single habit. For example: "Exercise for 45-60 minutes daily, five days a week, at 5am,

starting on January 1st, and do it for 66 days straight—at which point I'll re-evaluate and adjust my habit if necessary”

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

Whether you're building habit goals or habit routes, the following tips can help you shape your habits more effectively:

- **Habit type.** Is it a habit goal or a habit route?
- **Start date.** When will you begin installing this habit?
- **Habit frequency.** How often will you perform this habit? Daily? On specific days? On a weekly basis? Monthly? Indefinitely?
- **Time trigger.** What time will you perform this habit? A time trigger is the specific time in which you'll execute your habit. When you schedule a specific habit to be performed at the same time consistently, it becomes easier to show up and maintain your habit streak. Speaking of streaks...
- **Streak target.** How many times in a row will you perform the routine? A streak target is how many times in a row you need to run a routine before it solidifies as a habit. Keep in mind, it takes around 66 days on average to turn a routine into a habit.
- **Habit tracker.** There are tons of ways to track your habits, both digital and analog. Utilize whichever works best for you. I've included a Habit Tracker for you to print out and use.

12. Use a Habit Tracker

LESSON SUMMARY

- The comedian Jerry Seinfeld marked his calendar with an X every day in which he wrote a new joke. His goal was not to break the chain of X's, which motivated him to cultivate the habit of creating new jokes every day. This simple habit helped him become one of the most successful comedians of all time.
- His technique wasn't ground-breaking, but you don't need ground-breaking techniques to get ground-breaking results. You need simple tools you're willing to use on a consistent basis. A habit tracker is one such tool.

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

- Download the habit tracker I created for you from the Materials tab of this lesson.
- Post it up and use it to hold yourself accountable and to track your progress.

Templates: Part 2





What Are Your Goals?

Goal #1:

Goal #2:

Goal #3:

Who Do You Need to Become?

<p> WHAT'S MY GOAL?</p>
<input type="text"/>
<p> WHO MUST I BECOME TO ACHIEVE IT? Write a general description of who you need to become.</p>
<input type="text"/>
<p> HABITS I WILL BUILD TO REINFORCE THIS IDENTITY + SUPPORT THIS GOAL: List the habits you need to build in order to become the type of person who achieves this goal.</p>
<input type="text"/>
<p> MY TARGET HABIT: Select your strongest habit from above—the one habit that will have an outsized impact on your identity + goal. This will be your target habit—the one habit that you will focus on building throughout this course.</p>

Create Your Habit Loop

STEP 1. Think of a habit you want to create. Write it in the field below. (You can use your target habit from lesson 6)

STEP 2. Think of your cue. Write it in the field below.

STEP 3. Now, add your reward.

STEP 4. Put it all together as a plan

WHEN

←cue

I WILL

←routine

BECAUSE IT PROVIDES ME WITH

←reward

EXAMPLE

WHEN

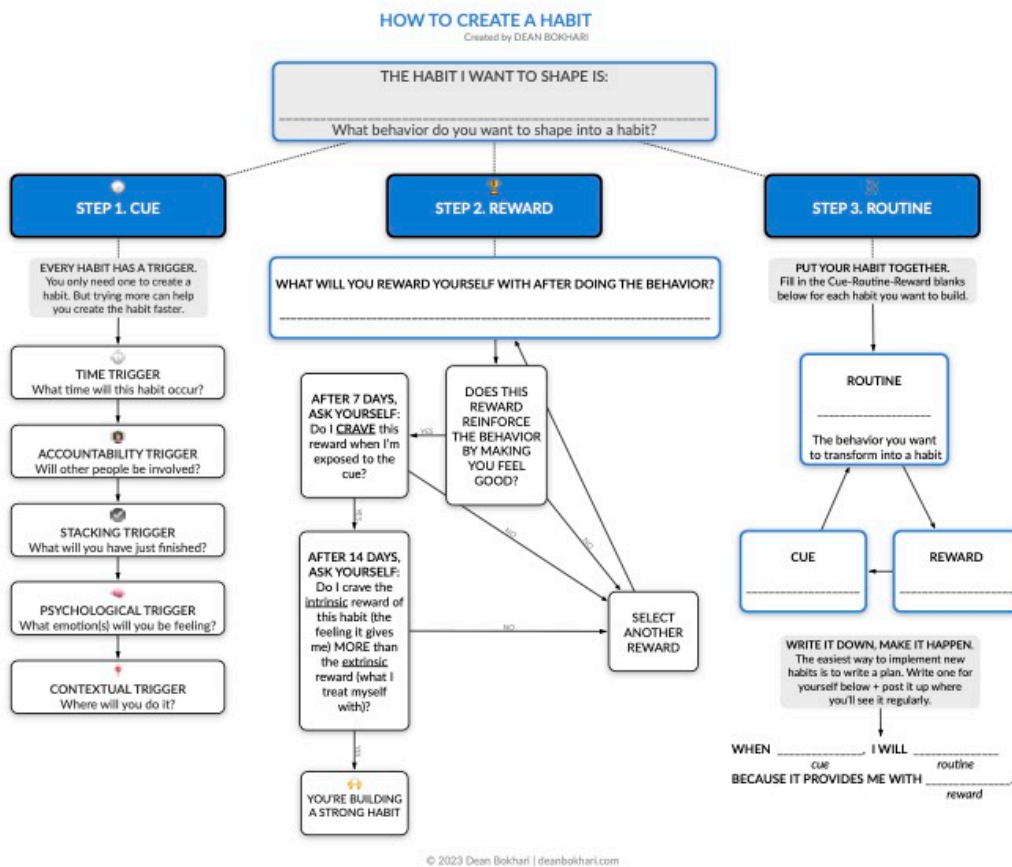
my alarm clock goes off at 6am ←cue

I WILL

jump out of bed + drive to the gym to exercise for 60 minutes ←routine

BECAUSE IT PROVIDES ME WITH

a healthy lifestyle, fit physique, and an energetic start to my dday ←reward



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Target Habits → Tiny Habits

TARGET HABIT	→	TINY HABIT
Example: “Exercise for 60 minutes a day, 5 days per week.”		Example: “Exercise for 5 minutes a day, 5 days per week.”

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