

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "New Habits."

JUST HOW DID WE GET ALL THESE BAD HABITS?

As a new year begins, many people want a fresh start. Their minds are full of good intentions of all the resolutions they will keep. Resolutions are resolutions or solutions that one will try again. So how come we need to find the solution a second, third, or thirty-seventh time? Habits.

Accepted definitions of habit include: a constant, often unconscious inclination to perform some act, acquired through frequent repetition; and, an established trend of the mind or character. What stands out in these definitions is that we don't think about our habits, rather they are rote!

You may unconsciously tug at the sleeves of your sweater because as you were growing up, the sleeves were too short during your rapid growth spurts. Now, you repeat the same action when you start to feel self-conscious about something unrelated to gangly arms. Take a moment and identify the little habits that you possess as well as reminisce about how that habit got there in the first place.

Thinking is the key to unraveling habits. Applied thought takes the habit out of its realm. If you are actively thinking, then you can control or replace your habit.

Frequent repetition of any action or thought creates the habit in the first place. It may take seventy repetitions for a habit to take root. The encouraging note here is that it takes some time! Think about what you are doing during this impressionable time and you can catch a behavior before it becomes an ingrained habit.

The definition that says habits are trends of the mind or character is truly insightful. What this means is that our habits are a reflection of what is going on inside of us. Whatever is on the inside comes out. By watching a person's habits, you may be looking into their soul.

What are your habits saying about you? If you don't like the message, take some action. To break old negative habits, make sure you:

- Take a good look at it. Know exactly what you are doing.
- Ask someone to help you recognize when you are performing the habit. You may be amazed to know just how frequently you repeat it.
- Praise yourself when you catch yourself in the habit. Remember that detection is half of the game.
- Replace the old habit with a counter-habit. If you twist pens while you talk, plan to keep your hands apart and relaxed while you speak.

- Make visible signs to remind you to break the trend.
- Reward yourself breaking the trend. If you eat candy and cookies without thought and don't remember the joy of taste because you simply ate it out of habit, put them out of your reach. Limit your intake. When you have accomplished this for a certain time, be good to yourself.

So you got these old bad habits by repetition and then they became unconscious. Reverse the trend by thinking and planning the action you will take.

IN THE NEWS: Season Tickets Seminar - February 18th at the Chattanooga



Get Results Through the Power of Questions!

Control conversations instead of controlling people. Have you ever heard the saying, "There is no such thing as a bad question"? Regardless of how true this might be, we believe that a lot of our questions can be improved. How important is getting the most updated accurate information? How many times are you the liaison in gathering and transferring what was said? What are the advantages of knowing what to ask and how to ask it? Remember, "The person asking the questions controls the conversation!"

Since we are asking questions constantly, let's do it right! In this seminar, you will learn how to:

- Use the five basic guidelines of question improvement.
- Initiate a conversation to get more information.
- Get an answer from a hesitant or reluctant communicator without appearing pushy.
- Smoothly steer a person who is off topic back on track.
- Establish rapport and get credit for being a great conversationalist.
- Confirm understanding and ensure agreement.

Call Don Wheeler at 423-622-8255 and reserve your seat today!



JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ARE YOU A WORRYWART?	2
GOALS vs. WISHES	2
TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF	3
HABITS TO MAKE IN 2005	3
FEATURED SERVICE: SEASON TICKETS	3
CEO CORNER: "The Good Side of Habits"	4
ASK THE EXPERTS	4

LOOKING AHEAD:

- ♦ Cultural Differences in Business - the focus of the March issue of the Exchange.

LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the [02/2001](#) edition: **Enthusiasm and Passion**.

**We are what we repeatedly do.
Aristotle**



Helpful Hints:

- Write down your new goals and keep them visible.
- Reward yourself frequently in the beginning of establishing a good habit.

If you can't sleep, then get up and do something instead of lying there worrying. It's the worry that gets you, not the lack of sleep.

Dale Carnegie

Four of the saddest words in the world are "I wish I had..."



To learn more about it, click here!

ARE YOU A WORRYWART?

One of the most damaging habits that people have is to spend time worrying. This relentless and unconscious action can rob you of your time, sanity, and physical health. In 2005, make a plan to stop being a worrywart!



What is worry? It is a negative visualization that you play in your mind. Some event in your life has kicked it into action. Let's say you made a comment in a meeting and no one responded. You go back to your desk and replay the comment in your mind. In this visualization, you can see the people who were at the meeting, you hear your comment, and when there is no response you actually can feel the color rise to your cheeks or feel your stomach tighten.

The right hemisphere of the brain does not know the difference between reality and visualization. The latter is recorded as a memory just like the actual event. If you relive this meeting ten times during the next hour, your brain thinks you have made a bad comment ten times! It's even worse: your brain thinks you have made the same bad comment ten times! No wonder you go home tired with a stress headache vowing to remain silent at the next meeting.

How do you stop worrying? For some people, to worry is automatic; they don't even stop to think about what they are doing. You may not have any choice to what thoughts come to your mind. You do have a choice as to what you do with those thoughts.

When the negative or limiting thought starts to play like a bad movie in your head, turn off the projector! Stop the film. Say to yourself, "Stop! Stop!" If this "head movie" has left you feeling depressed or anxious, repeat a positive verb over and over until you feel the effect. At TLC, we call these Power Words[®]. For instance, if someone you love is late coming home and you have just imagined a car wreck, after you say, "Stop! Stop!" say, "Relax. Relax. Relax. Relax." This will work for a few minutes until you look at your watch for the 100th time and that old habit of worry returns. What do you do? Simple: do it again. Stop the movie and command to your brain to relax. Before you know it, your loved one will be home and you will be in a much better state of mind to greet them.

Do not let the paralyzing fear of worry

destroy your present moments. Most of your worrying never comes to pass. This means you made yourself miserable for nothing. Short-term effects can include stress headaches, indigestion, or heartburn. Long-term effects include cardiac arrest and strokes.

John F. Kennedy once said, "Face your fear and it will be the death of it." Face the fear of worry by recognizing and proving that you have power over it. May 2005 be a year free of worry for you.

GOALS vs. WISHES

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

When it comes to making commitments about the New Year, I have discovered two things. First, from January 1 – January 31, people are fully committed, and second, by February 1, they are fully forgetful.

What happens to all that January steam by June? The answer, their goals were non-specific. Non-specific goals are vague and lack planning and measurements. Specific goals include deadlines, measurements, and check points.

For example, rather than say, "This year, I am going to save more money to take a trip to Jamaica," say, "On the 25th of each month, I am going to put a \$50 dollar bill into an envelope marked No problem – Mon!"

The difference between planning and wishing can be measured in the results you acquire. Think of a person who says, "I wish I had a new car. It sure would be nice - if only I could afford it." Even if this person "wished" for a new car for two years, at the end of two years, they would still be wishing and no closer to a new car than they were two years ago.

That same person could make a specific plan:

1. I'll search for what cars I can afford.
2. I'll make a chart of how much I'd have to sacrifice to buy it.
3. I'll look at what adjustments I can make in my lifestyle.
4. I'll begin allocating an amount to set aside from each pay period.
5. I'll schedule a date that I should have enough to afford the down payment.

This process could take months, or even longer, but the alternative is to keep assuming there is no way to afford a new car.

Sometimes, we are vague about what we

continued on page 3

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

"This year I'm going to..."
 ___How many times have we **heard** that? How many times have we **said** it?



Every January creates for us a time to reflect on our past and form optimistic visions about our future. For many of us, making New Year's Resolutions has become a tradition. We vow to implement better habits by "turning over a new leaf." What does turning over leaves have to do with forming new habits?

In the 16th Century, pages in workbooks were referred to as "leaves." Several pages, or leaves, were used to solve a problem or capture an idea. Since erasers, whiteout, and backspace buttons were not yet invented, if you made any mistakes, you would turn the page to a new blank page or "turn over a new leaf" for a fresh start.

If this is the year that you want to lose that weight, get that degree, save that money, take that trip, finish that book, complete that project, increase those sales, etc., remember that habits (bad or good) are things we do often that come naturally. Even if it is tough at first, if you want to change something, KEEP at it! "Turn over new leaves" to fill your "workbook" with beautiful pages.

GOALS vs. WISHES

continued from page 2

want. We give ourselves vague timeframes such as, "next year", "next week", "later on", "when I have more time", "as soon as I get more money", etc. Be specific about what you want to accomplish by using the following tips:

- Be realistic with yourself. Spend and live within your means.
- Develop realistic new habits to meet your goal. If you love sweets, don't give them up completely, just cut back on how often you eat them.
- Anticipate the tough times. Make a plan of what you can do or who you can talk to when things get tough. Just knowing you have a workable plan for the hard times can make the overall process easier.

If you want to develop new habits that are permanent and positive, be specific and accomplish your goals!

What Our Clients Are Saying

"Thank you again for working with me. The coaching you provided and the tools you have shown me are being used daily."

Gil Francis, Chattanooga, TN

FEATURED SERVICE: Season Tickets with TLC

Beginning in February of 2005, TLC will provide top-notch seminars at The Chattanooga the third Friday of each month. Each program provides six hours of training, a continental breakfast, a superb buffet lunch, and customized materials to enhance learning. See the schedule below for a listing of the entire year's program topics.

Companies may purchase as many Season Tickets as they desire. Each ticket admits one person to all twelve 6-hour training sessions. A different person may attend each month for each Season Ticket purchased. Call today to qualify for charter membership and receive 40% off the season price. Materials, refreshments, and lunch are included. This program can also be brought in-house and customized for a company.

February 18, 2005

Get Results Through the Power of Questions

March 18, 2005

Customize Your Communication

April 15, 2005

Understand What People Are Trying to Say

May 20, 2005

Reducing Defensiveness

June 17, 2005

Intuitive Interviewing

July 15, 2005

Presentations That Get Ovations

August 19, 2005

L.E.A.R.N. as a Team

September 16, 2005

Understand Your Leadership Capabilities

October 21, 2005

Find a Better Way to Say It

November 18, 2005

Meetings That Matter

December 16, 2005

S.O.S. Success Over Stress

January 20, 2006

Listen for Success

Call Don Wheeler today at 423-622-8255 to get your Season Ticket!



Remember to...

- Tell everyone when you are giving up a bad habit.
- Tell only supportive people when you are striving to create a new habit.

Bad habits are easier to abandon today than tomorrow.

Yiddish Proverb

The best way to break a bad habit is to drop it.

Leo Aikman

Each year, one vicious habit discarded, in time might make the worst of us good.

Benjamin Franklin



The law of harvest is to reap more than you sow. Sow an act, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit, and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

I keep the telephone of my mind open to peace, harmony, health, love, and abundance. Then, whenever doubt, anxiety, or fear try to call me, they keep getting a busy signal - and soon they'll forget my number.

Edith Armstrong

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CEO CORNER: "The Good Side of Habits"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

Habits are getting a bad rap lately. When you hear the word, what images come to your mind? I automatically think about picking at my cuticles and twisting my hair. I heard on the radio that the most frequent habit that drivers have been observed to do while stopped at a traffic light, is to pick their nose! Habits really are getting a bad reputation.

I like to think there is a good side of habits. Think of the many things you do automatically that are helpful. Maybe you refill the office coffeepot instead of leaving a small puddle in the bottom of the carafe. Perhaps you open the door for someone who is laden down with boxes or briefcases.

I asked people that I work with to jot down my good habits and my bad ones. I wasn't surprised about the negatives ones. They pegged me fairly well. I was surprised about some of the positive habits they credited to me. I realized that I did some of those things yet I did not know they had become such a part of me that people would see them as habits. I added up the two lists and I received twice as many good habits as bad ones.

Now perhaps you think that they were just being nice. Or maybe I am just a very nice person. I think we are much more attuned to our bad habits than we are our good ones. For instance, one of my good habits noticed by others was that I ask questions before giving my opinion or advice. I was thrilled to know that someone saw me do this enough to consider it routine.

It is important to identify your good habits to ensure that you value and keep them. One Saturday a few weeks ago, I got up and put on some comfortable clothes and my gym shoes. I walked out the front door to retrieve



the Saturday paper from the driveway. My standard poodle had slipped out the door with me and was wiggling like a fish out of water. I told him to chill as I noticed he kept looking at my hand inside my coat pocket. Then it dawned on me. He thought we were going for a walk and was looking for the evidence of his short leash in my pocket. This good habit of five years had slipped away due to all the travel I did this past fall. While I had forgotten all about it, my dog was expecting it because it was a former

habit.

I encourage you to make a list of your good habits. Be sure to keep them active so they continue to be something that you do without a great deal of thinking. If you do not use them, you may lose them. I think I will take my dog for a walk tomorrow morning – regardless of the 'whether' – whether I want to or not. I want that good habit back. Identify your good habits. Keep them. Live your dreams!

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

My boss always plays with his lip when he is no longer listening. I wish he would just say something. I feel like I have to continue talking, but I know I'm wasting my time.
Talking Head

Dear Head,

He is saying something – with his body language. While your boss may not be aware of this habit, you are. When he starts playing with his lip, ask him a question to pull him into the conversation. It is an advantage to know when his mind is starting to wander so that you can re-engage him.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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