

Hello everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI where *We Build Better Contractors*.

This week I want to talk about a terrific book, *Atomic Habits* by James Clear. It is a hugely successful book. Before I get too far into it though, we've got coming up this year for Boot Camp, Dallas, Denver, Toronto, and Raleigh. So, there'll be some notes below that you can check into it. Contact Charlotte for more information. Boot Camp's a bigger success than we ever dreamed it would be, so enroll your high potential folks now.

Let's start off talking about the British cycling team. The British cycling team was notorious for poor performance. Now, what about this is important to you? Cycling? Atomic Habits? What about this is important to you? Well, according to research, about 40 to 50% of what you do, what I do, what your employees do is habit. It's not the product of conscious thought necessarily. It's habit. It's not quite as involuntary as breathing, but habit nonetheless. Okay? And Clear says that small changes in habits over time add up to huge results.

Back to the British cycling team. In 2003, they hired a man named Dave Brailsford to be the coach. And at that time, no British cyclist had ever won the Tour de France. They had not won a Gold Olympics medal in over a hundred years, and it was so bad that the top bike manufacturers wouldn't sell equipment to them because they thought it would hurt their brands. I mean, that's pretty bad.

Dave Brailsford comes along, and he believed in something called the aggregation of marginal gains. And what he meant by that was 1% improvements all over the place. They looked at everything. They changed the seats, they changed the bike tires, they provided heated shorts for the cyclists so their muscles would be heated to the optimum temperature for peak performance. They experimented with different fabrics of the riding clothes, different kinds of massages to give the riders faster recovery times. They went so far as to paint their team van White on the inside so they could see any minute particles of dirt that might somehow get into the gears and cause a teeny tiny deceleration or a lack of improvement.

It was amazing. In five years, they dominated the 2008 Olympics. They won 60% of the gold medals, and then in 2012, four years later, they set nine Olympic and seven world records. They won the Tour de France five of the next six years. Not the team, but British cyclists. In five years, he took a team that was a joke. Manufacturers would not sell them equipment, and he turned into the best team in the world. And nothing big. He didn't have a great superstar come along. He used marginal improvements in the aggregate to make this team transformation.

James Clear says that if you get 1% better each day throughout the year, you end up the year 37 times better. If you get 1% worse each day during the course of the year, your performance declines to nearly zero. You've got this curve and you've got this curve. I mean, which would any of us rather have? So focusing on these small habits each day produces huge results.

Now, let's define habit. This is James Clear's definition. "It's a reliable solution to recurring challenges in our environments." Well, that's pretty simple. Reliable solutions. Golly, we all like that. The conscious mind is a bottleneck. The conscious mind can only handle one thought at a time. I know in this audience we have people, and they say they can multitask. No, you can't. Not even computers can multitask. They just task faster than we do. They give the appearance of multitasking, but they do not. Computers can't do it. I can't do it. You can't do it. The conscious mind can only hold one thought at a time. That's why we have habits. Habits, free up, mental capacity. They give you the opportunity for better thinking and more of it, so they basically clear up clutter so that your conscious mind can be more free and more active.

This book offers, Clear says, a step-by-step plan for building better habits, and he absolutely does. In fact, it's just chock-a-block with ideas. He says, one of the big things in changing habits is that we start too big. So, you say, you know what? In 2023, I'm going to run a marathon, having not run a step in 10 years. Or you say in 2023, I'm going to write a book, having not written anything since you left school.

He gives you the two-minute rule. I really like this one. The two-minute rule. When attempting to change a habit, any new behavior should take less than two minutes to perform. Right? A marathon might take four hours. Forget four hours. Two minutes, that's what you're focused on. Okay, I want to run a marathon. What's my two-minute habit? Well, I'm going to put my running shoes and my socks right beside the bed so that when I get up in the morning, my feet almost go into the shoes. Okay? That's way less than two minutes of prep. Okay, but that'll get you started. I want to write a book. Okay, every day I'm going to write one sentence. Guess what happens? One sentence turns into one paragraph turns into one chapter, and that's how you do it. 1% improvements every day produce huge results.

The next time I want to continue to talk about Atomic Habits, and I want to talk about the Showtime Lakers and the power of written plans. Let me know in the comments what you think. What 1% improvements have you made over time that have produced big results for you and your company? This is Wayne Rivers at FBI.