



EAP EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER

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THE 66-DAY RESET: SETTING NEW HEALTHY HABITS

Why 66 days?

It takes approximately 66 days to form a habit. If you can make it through the first push, then you are settled in for the rest of the year. However, to effectively set and maintain these habits, you need to prioritize them. It's easy for people to tell you to prioritize your goals—but once you get back into your usual work, play, and sleep routine, it becomes much more difficult. You have deadlines, stressors, relationships, and personal issues that all start arising. Sometimes all it takes is one day of feeling like pizza instead of a salad, and you give up on the whole goal.

Overcoming setbacks and maintaining motivation can help you consistently strive to achieve your goals. But before you deal with these setbacks, you need to ensure the building blocks are stable. By prioritizing good habits, you can embark on a journey of progress and achieve your goals.

So, how do I actually set these good habits?

Creating good habits requires commitment, perseverance, and resilience. You can use a few handy hints to try and make it past the 66-day threshold, and set your habits into daily routine:

- **Link your new habit to an existing one.** For example, say your goal was to become more aware of global issues. When you wake up in the morning and check your phone to turn off your alarm, spend 10 minutes reading the top news headlines. Gradually, checking your phone will become associated with reading headlines, and you will begin to increase your awareness of global issues.
- **Share your new habit.** Tell people that you are trialling a new idea and changing your behavior—you can even ask them to check in with you. This consolidates the idea in your mind and leads to increased accountability.
- **Make yourself accountable.** Write your habit down, and check things off. Set follow-up dates—work on your new habit for a minimum of 30 days, with no exceptions. Then, try to extend this to 50 days, then 70. This takes you over the threshold of 66 days, and your new habit should be fully formed.



It's easier said than done... How do I prioritize these habits?

- Start a journal or use the notes app on your phone, and write down all of the tasks that you want to achieve that day.
- Take a minute to identify whether you'll actually be able to complete those tasks on that day. If not, make a second "ongoing projects" list.
- Put them in order of urgency for the day—considering if one task is essential for another to be completed, or if other people are waiting on specific tasks.
- Move the task you are least looking forward to doing first. Get it over and done with, and be proud of yourself for doing so.
- At the end of the day, write a list of things that you might not have gotten around to so you can start fresh the next day with another list of priorities. The tasks moved to the next day should be labeled "2" and continue to increase as the day does. Then, try to complete the highest numbers as they are the ones you have been putting off for the longest.

- Focus on one task at a time—it can be easy to get distracted when you hit a block at work. You might want to jump from one task to the other, but this can end up being detrimental to your end result. You are better off taking a small break and then returning to the same task.
- Remember that setbacks are all a part of the journey, but with consistency and motivation, you can make progress, achieve your goals, and form healthy habits. You've got this!

Source: Veretis. (2024, January 17). *The 66-day reset: Setting new healthy habits* (B. Schuette & E. Morton, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options (WPO).



FLOW AND THE SELF: HAVE YOU LOST YOUR OWN MOJO?

What is flow?

To be in a state of flow is to be utterly absorbed in an activity, with time seeming to pass in the blink of an eye. It is a mental state in which one's whole being is completely immersed, typically in an activity that one enjoys and is skilled at. While flow typically occurs when undertaking creative pursuits, it can also be found in physical pursuits, such as running, dancing, and playing sports.

The concept of flow was conceived by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a respected psychologist whose work focused on the psychology of wellbeing, achievement, and a meaningful life. When people engage in an activity that promotes a state of flow, they derive many benefits, including:

- Increased life fulfillment
- Increased happiness and joy
- Improved performance in that particular activity
- Further learning and development
- Feelings of serenity and a loss of self-consciousness

Lost your mojo? Time to find some flow.

It is not uncommon to feel like you have lost your mojo in life and question where your life is going at times. It might be that you got to where you thought you wanted, but now that you're there, you feel unsatisfied. At times, you might feel this way when outside pressures and other people's expectations have dictated where to go.

To find happiness in life and rediscover your mojo, you have to act instead of sitting down and waiting for it to come to you. Often a lot of where you need to go comes from looking at the past and looking for moments of flow that might already be occurring. Asking yourself the following questions might help you identify activities that procedure a state of flow:

- What actions energized you over the past year?
- What actions inspired you the most?
- When did you feel the proudest, and what were you doing?

If you are unsure about what makes you happy and makes you flow, it might be time to try new things. You might want to pick up a musical instrument, try new sports, read some interesting books, or just start writing and see where you go!

Tips for Achieving Flow

Goals

Once you've found an activity you enjoy and feel relatively skilled at, it's important to follow some simple rules to get the most out of it. These include:

- Setting clear goals as to what you are doing
- Eliminating any distractions (phones, etc.) to ensure your flow is not disrupted
- Adding elements of challenge (i.e. setting realistic but challenging goals)
- Selecting activities that provide immediate and unambiguous feedback



Incorporating Flow into a Meaningful Life

In his work, Mihaly wrote, "If a person sets out to achieve a difficult enough goal, from which all other goals logically flow, and if [they] invest all energy in developing skills to reach that goal, then actions and feelings will be in harmony, and the separate parts of life will fit together—and each activity will make sense in the present as well as in the view of the past and of the future. In such a way, it is possible to give meaning to one's entire life."

Mihaly's work ties in nicely with the work of psychologist Martin Seligman and his PERMA-V model. This model gives insight into how and what people need to be doing to be in a state of thriving and wellbeing, which ultimately lead to a flow state. Seligman's PERMA-V model includes the following:

- P—Positive emotion
- E—Engagement and connectedness
- R—Enhanced Relationships
- M—Meaning and purpose in their pursuits
- A—Sense of Achievement
- V—Vigour (vitality and energy through self-care)

Source: Veretis. (2021, November 17). Flow and the self – Have you lost your own mojo? (B. Schuette & E. Morton, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options (WPO).

HELPING YOUR CHILD BUILD POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is a person's evaluation of themselves—how they see their value and abilities. Positive self-esteem gives a child the confidence to try new things and persevere through challenges and frustrations. Positive self-esteem, along with empathy, kindness, and other positive qualities, is one of the building blocks of future success in life. It plays a key role in a child's motivation to learn, success in school, comfort in social relationships, and ability to deal with life's inevitable obstacles and setbacks.

Your child's self-esteem is built on a foundation of feeling loved and secure, starting at an early age, then it grows and is strengthened by feelings of competence as your child grows older. Here are some ways to help your child develop positive self-esteem:

- **Encourage your child to try new things and take reasonable risks.** You've probably done this naturally since your child was a baby—holding their hand as they first learned to walk, for example. As your child grows older, keep encouraging this exploration and experimentation—helping as needed, but more and more stepping back to let your child try new things on their own, even when that involves mistakes, stumbles, messes, and tears.
- **Allow your child to make mistakes and learn from them.** Protect your child from serious harm, of course, but avoid being overprotective and shielding your child from valuable new experiences. Children are naturally resilient, and they become even stronger and more resilient through having opportunities to make the missteps that come naturally with all learning. Coach your child through particularly tricky social situations, but also give them a chance to figure out how to recover from mistakes and setbacks and find new ways to deal with challenges.



- **Provide appropriate praise.** Praising everything your child does can backfire, undermining rather than boosting their self-esteem. Inaccurate and unfocused praise will only confuse your child. If they believe the praise, they can get a false picture of their abilities, only to have it shattered later by experiences outside the home. If they don't, they can begin to question your credibility. Instead, offer specific praise, stating what your child has done or how they've behaved that has impressed you. Make a point of praising their efforts as well as their accomplishments, especially their perseverance or creativity in solving a problem or dealing with an obstacle. Praise your child when they exhibit other qualities, too, such as kindness, generosity, patience, or the ability to regulate their emotions.
- **When giving criticism or correction, address the behavior, not the child.** It's appropriate and sometimes necessary to let a child know that they've behaved badly. It's never appropriate to call them a "bad" child (or a "lazy," "careless," or "stupid" child). When giving criticism, calm yourself and speak to your child with respect. Explain what they've done that bothers you, the consequences of their words or actions, and how you'd like them to behave in the future.

- **Focus on your child's strengths and encourage their interests.** Pay attention to what your child does well, and support them in further developing these strengths. Notice when they start showing an interest in something new, and help to fuel that interest. Give them the time to pursue it and help them learn more about it.
- **Encourage healthy friendships.** Teach your child that good friends support each other and make each other feel better, not worse, about themselves. Help them be that kind of friend to others. Encourage them to consider how their various friends make them feel, and to spend more time with the friends with whom they feel liked and valued for being themselves.
- **Let your child be helpful in useful ways.** Contributing to the activities of maintaining the household can help a child feel competent and valued. Assign your child age-appropriate chores. Let them help in reasonable ways with tidying up, cooking, setting the table, washing dishes, or other tasks. Encourage an older child to help in the care of a younger sibling, perhaps by reading them a bedtime story.
- **Show your unconditional love.** Through all of life's ups and downs, whether praising something wonderful your child has done or pointing out misbehavior, let your child know that you love them no matter what. Be careful not to give the impression your love must be earned with accomplishment, or that it can be withdrawn because of failure or disappointment. Guide your child to be the best they can be, but always do it with love.



Source: Morgan, H. (2023, December 18). Helping your child build positive self-esteem (B. Schuette & E. Morton, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options (WPO).