

DO IT FOR A DAY

DAY 24 – TAKE OFF YOUR CAP

Tie them to your hands as a sign.

Deuteronomy 6:8

In 1931, the United States was mired in the Great Depression. A young entrepreneur named Conrad Hilton and people weren't traveling, and his hotel chain was taking a hit. At that time he ran into a photographer from the Waldorf Astoria in New York City.

The Waldorf Astoria, an icon of luxury, with forty-seven stories, was classified as the tallest and largest hotel in the world from 1931 to 1963. It had six kitchens, two hundred cooks, five hundred waiters, and two thousand two hundred rooms. It even had its own private hospital and train station!

After cutting out the photograph of the Waldorf Astoria, Hilton placed it under the glass of his desk and it seemed that the photo looked at him every day. I don't know who insured his hotels, but that photograph ensured he never lost sight of his God-sized goal.

Remember the habit cycle? start with an impulse, a trigger that flips a switch in your brain, and it reacts automatically. **The second step is a pattern** (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual or relational). **The third step is the reward.** The higher it is, the more sacrifices you will be willing to make and the more risks you will take.

For Conrad Hilton, the Waldorf Astoria was the big payoff. Not only did he have photography at the center of his priorities, but also every time he passed by in his car, he would remove his cap as a sign of respect.

Do you remember John Heywood, the English playwright? He was famous for saying: "Rome was not built in a day." He also said this other phrase: "Eyes that do not see, heart that does not feel." **And this is key when it comes to habit formation.** The technical term is "**object permanence**".

Object permanence is understanding that things still exist even when we cannot see them. Young children do not have this ability fully formed until they are eighteen months old, which is why the game of hide and seek is so much fun for them. Children over time develop object permanence, but we never outgrow the tendency to forget what we don't have in a place of prominence. That is why we must crop the photo and take off the cap."

If you ever go inside the SpaceX headquarters, you will see two posters of Mars. One shows a cold and barren planet. The other resembles the Earth. That second poster represents Elon Musk's life purpose: to colonize Mars. "I'd like to die on Mars," Musk said, "just not in an impact."⁷ If that's not shooting for the moon, I don't know what is! That poster is Elon Musk's way of doffing his cap toMarte. "

At this point, let me make a little reminder. "What is the use of gaining the whole world if you lose your life? Or what can be given in exchange for life?" Jesus said.¹⁰ Receiving ten million dollars is not worth a penny if you lose your soul in the process. Having clarified this, I add what Aristotle said:

"The soul never thinks without an image."

Remember habit 1, change the script? If you want to change your life, change your story. When you are in the process, change the paint you are painting. Setting the clock is all about imagining the reward, and imagery is a powerful way to do that.

A simple snapshot has the power to jolt your memory and release a cascade of emotions. You can also exercise your imagination by painting a picture of your preferred future. Somehow you have to find a way to focus on your goals...**Remember that our habits have to be measurable, significant and sustainable."**

One way to create or break a habit is by taking the example of others. Do you know why I get up early in the morning? Because of my father-in-law, Bob Schmigdall. He had the habit of praying early and I want to imitate him. I was also inspired by a paragraph from the biography of **D.L. Moody. He felt a pang of guilt if he heard the blacksmiths hammering before he read his Bible in the morning.** What is my goal? On weekdays I get up before the sun rises.

Whose habits are you trying to imitate? As a follower of Christ, I imitate the person of Jesus Christ. I copy their habits to change mine. I take example of his life, death and resurrection. When I have a hard time forgiving someone, I think about what Jesus said about those who nailed him to the cross: "*Father, forgive them because they dont know what they are doing*". (Lucas 23:34)

If Jesus could forgive those who crucified him, I can also forgive those who hurt me or said wrong things about me. The way to take your hat off in front of Jesus is to be "inoffendable", forgiving seventy times seven.

I recommend that you establish a routine in the morning or in the afternoon or both. There is no better way to take your hat off before God—and goals that are his size—than to have a regular rhythm of prayer.

If it helps, use a few simple rules. Kneel down when you get out of bed in the morning or before you go to bed at night. Turn off your cell phone and end your day. Read the Bible before checking your phone. Each of those acts can interrupt the pattern and keep you focused on the reward!”

HOW DO YOU TRANSFORM IT INTO A HABIT?

Writing your priorities on a poster!”

The shema is an ancient prayer which the Israelites recited twice a day. It starts like this: *“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord”*. (Deut 6:4)

The shema functioned as a reminder; the first words were spoken in the morning and the last ones at night. **It was a reaffirmation of God's rule**, and the way in which a practicing Jew received the kingdom of heaven on a daily basis.

The opening prayer is followed by the command to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength. **The original context of the shema also imagines the reward.** God promised the Israelites that they would have houses they had not built, wells they had not dug, and vineyards they had not planted. Between the push and the reward, God gave them explicit instructions regarding their daily routines. Once again, **Forming habits and sharing them are not new things! They are as old as the shema.**

You must put posters of your priorities, images of your goals and pictures with your values. You can do it on a t-shirt even. You can put it on a wall. You can write it down on the bathroom mirror or on the computer screen. Somehow, arrange them to have those things visible and handy.

Take off the cap!

Excerpt From

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