Charles Duhigg masterfully combines cutting-edge research and captivating stories to reveal how habits shape our lives and how we can shape our habits. Once you read this book, you’ll never look at yourself, your organization, or your world quite the same way.

—Daniel H. Pink, author of #1 New York Times bestselling Drive and A Whole New Mind

“The Power of Habit is not a magic pill, but a thoroughly intriguing exploration of how habits function. Charles Duhigg expertly weaves fascinating new research and rich case studies into an intelligent model that is understandable, useful in a wide variety of contexts, and a flat-out great read.

His chapter on ‘keystone habits’ alone would justify the book.”

—David Allen, bestselling author of Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity

“Charles Duhigg’s thesis is powerful in its elegant simplicity: confront the root drivers of our behavior, accept them as intractable, and then channel those same cravings into productive patterns. His core insight is sharp, provocative, and useful.”

—Jim Collins, #1 bestselling author of Good to Great and Built to Last

“William James once observed that 99 percent of human activity is done out of mere habit. In this fascinating book, Charles Duhigg reveals why James was right, documenting the myriad ways in which our habits shape our lives. Do you want to know why Febreze became a best-selling product? Or how Tony Dungy gets the most out of his football players? Or how the science of habits can be used to improve willpower? Read this book.”

—Jonah Lehrer, bestselling author of Proust Was a Neuroscientist and How We Decide

“[Duhigg’s] clear, colorful, fast-paced book explains why the science of habit formation (and disruption) has ‘exploded into a major field of study.’ Duhigg exposes the tactics that marketers use to inculcate new habits in us—and how we can best resist them.” —AARP Magazine

Marketers at Procter & Gamble study videos of people making their beds. They are desperately trying to figure out how to sell a new product called Febreze, which is on track to be one of the biggest flops in the company's history. Suddenly, one of them detects a nearly imperceptible behavioral pattern—and with a slight shift in their advertising campaign, Febreze takes off, and goes on to earn a billion dollars a year.

A young woman walks into a laboratory. Over the past two years, she has transformed herself from a debt-ridden, unemployed, overweight smoker to a successful professional who owns a home and runs marathons. As her behaviors have shifted, neurologists discover the patterns inside her brain have fundamentally changed.
An untested CEO takes over Alcoa, one of the largest companies in America. His first order of business is attacking a single pattern among his employees—how they approach worker safety—and soon, despite stockholder uneasiness about his unorthodox plan, the firm becomes the top performer in the Dow Jones.

What do all these people have in common? They achieved success by focusing on the patterns that shape every aspect of our lives. They succeeded by transforming habits. In THE POWER OF HABIT: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business (Random House Hardcover, On Sale February 28, 2012), award-winning New York Times investigative reporter Charles Duhigg takes readers to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed.

On its most basic level, a habit is a simple neurological loop: a cue (my mouth feels gross), a routine (I should brush my teeth), and a reward (ahhh, minty fresh!). Backing out of the driveway, replying to emails, choosing what to munch on at 3:00 PM, running before work—many of our most basic daily actions are not, in fact, the products of well considered decision-making, but outgrowths of habits we often don't even realize exist.

Duhigg’s interest in habits was first sparked while covering the Iraq War in 2000. In Kufa, a town about 90 miles south of Baghdad, he met a U.S. Army officer who was conducting an impromptu experiment. By removing food vendors from popular yet volatile gathering areas, the officer eliminated the reason the crowds hung around, and then grew restive—and as a result, the rights stopped. As Duhigg illustrates, tweaking even one habit, as long as it’s the right one, can have staggering effects.

In THE POWER OF HABIT, we discover how habits were crucial to the success of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, the growth of Starbucks, and the momentum of the civil-rights movement. We go inside Target superstores, Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church, NFL locker rooms, top 40 radio stations, and the nation’s largest hospitals to see how implementing so-called keystone habits can earn billions and mean the difference between failure and success, even life and death. Full of compelling narratives that will appeal to fans of Michael Lewis, Jonah Lehrer, and Chip and Dan Heath, Duhigg puts forth an exhilarating argument: the key to losing weight, raising exceptional children, becoming more productive, building revolutionary companies and social movements, and achieving success is understanding how habits work.

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About the Author

CHARLES DUHIGG is an investigative reporter for The New York Times. He is a winner of the National Academies of Sciences, National Journalism, and George Polk awards, and was part of a team of finalists for the 2009 Pulitzer Prize. He is a frequent contributor to This American Life, NPR’s NewsHour, and Frontline. Duhigg has spoken to audiences as varied as MIT (where he keynoted the 2010 engineering conference), the SC Johnson Company, and the Pasadena Art and Science Festival. A graduate of Harvard Business School and Yale College, Duhigg lives in Brooklyn with his wife and two children.
Charles Duhigg is available for interviews and can discuss:

- The brain science that illuminated the three-step neurological loop that causes habits. Every habit is comprised of a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode; a routine, which can be physical or mental or emotional; and a reward, which causes the habit to form in the first place. Over time, this loop creates a neurological craving, and a habit is born.

- How Target knows what you want before you do. As featured in the upcoming February 19th issue of *New York Times Magazine*, Charles unveils how Target – based on shopper's buying habits – not only pinpoints which female customers are pregnant, but which trimester they are in. By tracking things like how many washcloths and lotions they buy, Target knows which coupons are most likely to cause them to spend more.

- How Michael Phelps won eight gold medals – and survived a goggle failure during an Olympic final – by focusing on his race-day habits.

- How signing your child up for a soccer team at age 5 can create a fifth grader who can start his homework on time. When children and adults exercise willpower (the single most important keystone habit for individual success) and strengthen those muscles in one part of their lives—in the gym, or a money management program, or for a small child sticking to a weekly piano lesson—that strength spills over into what they eat, how hard they work, or how focused they are during their homework time.

- How a man named Claude Hopkins made Pepsodent – and tooth brushing – an American habit. When the government started drafting men for World War I, so many recruits had rotting teeth that officials said poor dental hygiene was a national security risk. Hardly anyone bought toothpaste because, despite the nation's dental problems, hardly anyone brushed their teeth. Hopkins focused on tooth film, a naturally occurring membrane that builds up on teeth regardless of what you eat or how often you brush. Hopkins created an advertisement that claimed Pepsodent removed the film. In fact, you can get rid of the film by eating an apple, running your finger over your teeth, brushing with or without toothpaste, or vigorously swirling liquid around your mouth, but Hopkins exploited that craving to create a habit. Following the ad campaign, the demand for Pepsodent exploded and it would remain America’s best-selling toothpaste for more than thirty years, earning billions. More importantly, before Pepsodent appeared, only 7% of Americans had a tube of toothpaste in their medicine chests. A decade after the ad went nationwide, the number had jumped to 65% and by the end of WWII, the military downgraded concerns about recruits’ teeth because so many soldiers were brushing every day.

- How Starbucks uses the science of willpower habits to transform employees. When Starbucks began plotting its growth strategy, executives realized they needed to train employees to have self-control. Paying four dollars for a macchiato demands a cheery server. So they focused on teaching workers habits for specific cues, such as a screaming customer. Today, Starbucks is, in some sense, one of the largest educators in the nation, and they’ve discovered how willpower becomes a habit.

- How radio DJs turned the song “Hey Ya!” from a flop into a hit by making it feel familiar. Radio listeners don't want to make a conscious decision each time they are presented with a new song. Instead, our brains want to follow a habit. Much of the time, we do not actually choose if we like or dislike a song. It would take too much mental effort. Instead, we react to the cues (“This sounds like all the other songs I’ve ever liked.”) and rewards (“It’s fun to hum along!”) and without thinking, we either start singing or reach over and change the station. By making an unfamiliar song feel familiar, radio DJs made “Hey Ya!” into the Grammy-winning, 5.5 million album-selling tune we’re familiar with today.

- The valuable lessons researchers have culled from Alcoholics Anonymous. Faculty at Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago, the University of New Mexico, and dozens of other research centers have found a kind of science within AA’s practice of how alcoholics’ cues and rewards can be transferred to new routines.

- Why “grit” matters more than physical aptitude, grade point averages, military abilities, and self-discipline in the likelihood that a West Point student will excel and how grit emerges from keystone habits adopted once they are at the school.

- How to stop having that candy bar at 3:00 PM every day. If you want to lose weight or stop eating a daily unhealthy snack, study your habits to determine why you really break for a snack each
day, and then find someone else to take a walk with you, someone to gossip with, or a group that tracks their weight-loss goals together.