



The Little Book of Big Change: The No-Willpower Approach to Breaking Any Habit

Amy Johnson , Mark Howard (Foreword)

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Little changes can make a big, big difference! In *The Little Book of Big Change*, psychologist Amy Johnson shows you how to rewire your brain and overcome your bad habits—once and for all.

No matter what your bad habit is, you have the power to change it. Drawing on a powerful combination of neuroscience and spirituality, this book will show you that you are not your habits. Rather, your habits and addictions are the result of simple brain wiring that is easily reversed. By learning to stop bad habits at the source, you will take charge of your habits and addictions for good.

Anything done repeatedly has the potential to form neural circuitry in the brain. In this light, habits and addictions are impersonal brain wiring problems that result from taking your habitual thinking as truth, and acting on that thinking in the form of doing your habit—over and over. This book offers a number of small changes you can make in your everyday life that will help you stop your bad habit in its tracks.

If you want to understand the science behind your habit, make the decision to end it, and commit to real, lasting change, this book will help you to finally take charge of your life—once and for all.

The Little Book of Big Change: The No-Willpower Approach to Breaking Any Habit Details

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BIBLIOMANIAC MJ says

This gem not only gave me the much needed insight I needed about my habit that seemed to be taking over my life, but it also opened my eyes to so many other life truths, giving me the tools to apply these principles to all areas of my life, not only to negative behaviors, but also to thoughts and emotions that don't contribute to my well-being.

Thank you Dr Amy for opening my eyes to a whole new way of approaching my unwanted habits, thoughts and emotions.

Sara says

This was better than I expected, and jibes with/reinforces a lot of things I've been discovering in my own life lately. I appreciate that it draws the focus away from the burdensome business of drawing up strategies and techniques, and acknowledges the role of patient waiting in effecting personal change.

The New Age/pantheistic stuff gets a little thick and goopy in some chapters, and it doesn't sit well with my religious beliefs. I found it helpful to mentally translate terms like "your true self" into references to the Imago Dei or innate human dignity.

Donna says

I really loved this book and will definitely be reading it again. It truly presents a new way of approaching our "habits." The idea that our thoughts are not us is radical to me. Of course I was taking my thoughts very seriously, spending lots of time thinking about my thinking! How could my thoughts not be me? Read the book and find out! It's a game changer.

Rebecca Kellner says

Whether or not you subscribe to the spiritual content (spoiler - it's not very specific and applies to all humans of all faiths) it is absolutely full of helpful information regarding habits one might like to address. It's kind and funny and easy to understand. I loved it.

Khuey40 says

"Free won't" & "Urges are just thoughts." All thought is temporary & fleeting." "All human experience comes to us via the creative gift of thought." "The basis for all habits is thought." "Your habit isn't personal."

"Thought is the underlying source of all habits." "You need insight, not information." "The only thing that can ever make you do your habit is acting on the urge (the thought) to do your habit." "The only thing that determines your habitual behaviors is the way you relate to the thoughts that pass through your mind." "We can't necessarily control our thinking but we can see that the old thoughts is constantly being washed away, replaced by new thought, we only have to wait, and our experience will change." "It's not 'your' thought, it's simply 'thought.' You can take it or leave it. Even if you choose to leave it there is nothing you have to do. It will leave you." Children bounce back so quickly b/c "they don't think about their thinking." "Willpower is the wrong tool." "All thoughts fade."

Kirsty 📚📖♥? says

I really struggled with this book and in the end couldn't finish it. It seemed really good in principle but the sheer amount of New Age consciousness and science just overwhelmed me and I found a lot of it repetitive. I don't like leaving low scores but this time it was just too heavy for me.

Kate says

This book is about so much more than the title suggests. It's really about being human & learning how to relate to your thoughts. It is simplistic and repetitive in ways that I found really helpful. Plus there are a couple great metaphors that will really stay with me.

It's almost like a more practical version of an Eckhart Tolle book. Certainly not for everyone, but it was a perfect read for me right now.

Brandon Beard says

Great Book for anyone familiar with Rational Recovery and AVRT

Great Book for anyone familiar with Rational Recovery and AVRT. There is a spiritual part of this book that was very vague but the author did a good job of letting you realize you didn't have to understand that part to benefit. The reason I give it 4 stars instead of 5 is because although it helps with anxiety, it did not address things like being stressed due to trauma (ptsd). However, the first step in processing those challenges is to find out what's eating you. And a lot of time in trauma situations, one cannot recognize what is bothering them, they just get the symptoms. I believe this book, coupled with basic knowledge in thinking errors (cognitive distortions, automatic thoughts as seen with CBT) and something like EMDR to find those suppressed pain events will work wonders!

Kevin says

As a disclaimer, I received a copy of "The Little Book of Big Change" from the publisher.

A lot of what this books covers seems similar to an approach I've read about previously called "cognitive behavioral therapy." Essentially, if you don't like the thoughts you're thinking, change the way you think.

Rather than call it that, the author breaks it down into a more simple explanation with personal examples. This is a good thing as it may be less scary sounding than "cognitive behavioral therapy." What I couldn't get behind was the "spirituality" angle to this book in which we're all tied into some kind of supermind that knows and wants what's best for us if we only listen to that voice rather than the one that says it's okay to eat an entire cheesecake. (After all, clearly the Universe *wants* me to eat an entire cheesecake or else why would I be in the right time and place to do so?) (It should be noted that, at this time, the Universe does *not* wish this as there is no cheesecake. Alas for this reviewer.) In all, "The Little Book of Big Change" gets credit for at least putting the responsibility for making changes on the person who sees that changes need to be made.

Andrea Norton says

I received a copy of The Little Book of Big Change from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I don't like writing reviews like this. I don't like giving low star ratings. Authors work so hard on their books, and while I can see that Ms. Johnson worked hard on this book, the content just fell short for me.

Like most readers, I wanted to check this book out because I have a habit to break. Unfortunately, I'm a smoker. I started in December 2011 when my first marriage ended. My best friend was a smoker, she had a pack of cigarettes, and I was on the verge of a breakdown. I asked her for one and she reluctantly gave it to me. Fast forward to February 2016, and here I am, a full blown smoker. Sean, my husband, also smokes and so do my parents. We talk about quitting all the time, and clearly have gotten nowhere.

We've all heard or read about ways to break this or that habit, and most of those ways employ the same strategies. I'm all about trying new things to see if it will work or help, or do anything that won't leave me more frustrated than I was when I started out. When I saw The Little Book of Big Change was available, I was all over it - a new way to try to kick this awful habit? Count me in!

No, count me out. This book is going to overwhelm a lot of people who don't know a thing about the New Age movement. With it being a growing thing, I've looked into New Age to learn about it, so I wasn't completely caught off-guard with the whole Universal Mind concept. I know what it means and what people who follow this movement believe. The average reader isn't going to know that stuff unless this book is listed as New Age, Alternative, something like that. I really don't think you can introduce any of this without thoroughly explaining it, and that wasn't done here.

The idea behind Universal Mind, Thought and Consciousness was not well explained in this book, and because of the system involved, it should have been. I see other reviews talking about not having any idea what any of that meant, and I have to agree with them. I asked Sean to read a few paragraphs in this book and then asked him if he understood it. He had no idea and was put off by a lot of it. I imagine that will happen with a lot of readers as well.

I really feel that the description of this book is misleading. There is not a lot of science in it, and referring to the reptilian part of the human brain as the "lizard" brain is not what people who are looking for scientific answers want to see. It seems as though Ms. Johnson almost "dumbed it down" for the reader, expecting that her audience wouldn't be educated like she is. This isn't for you if you are looking for any science behind habits.

The amount of repeating in this book is at a hypnotic level. I read this book one time, went to bed, woke up and went about my day, and then finally wrote my review. I can recite the majority of the book from memory because it was repeated so much. The length could have been cut in half if the repeated sentences and concepts were either removed altogether or at least kept at a minimum.

A worry I do have is people addicted to hard drugs - that they're going to pick this up, read it, believe that your habit is actually just a misunderstood thought and then just stop the drug. People try to stop drugs all the time and end up going into cardiac arrest because they shock their systems. The forward of this book talks about addiction. It seemed that habit and addiction were implied to be the same thing, and in some cases they are. However, there are things people can't just stop or try to stop without medical help. You can't mind-over-matter certain things, and I can't stress that enough. A shopping habit could possibly be broken here. Heck, maybe even my smoking habit could be broken using this method (although after reading this, I won't be trying it). If your habit/addiction affects your body on biochemical level, like a drug habit, this is not the route to take to break that habit. I remember my first class at Emory about drug addiction physiology. We were all told that if any of us happens to be addicted, do not ever try to stop without medical help as we'd hurt ourselves and possibly do irreversible damage. Yes, I just used the word 'habit' and 'addiction' interchangeably here.

I wish I could recommend The Little Book of Big Change, but I can't. Things were not explained, it seemed dumbed down, and the idea that your habit is just a misunderstood thought are all things I just can't get behind. If this book does help someone, that makes me happy, and I hope it does help people. It's just not a book I can support or recommend.

Laura says

The great thing about this book is that the teachings and ideology can be applied to a vast majority of situations and behaviours in life. Any habit that needs changing, be it a physical habit such as smoking, or an emotional habit such as self-criticism, can be modified with the help of this book.

The book is split into three sections, firstly understanding your habit, secondly ending your habit, and finally ensuring lasting change. Each section is split into chapters, breaking down habits into the bare bones, allowing you to understand your behaviours before working on them. It is so much easier to break a habit once you understand the whys and wherefores behind them, which is why I really enjoyed the first section in particular.

The book has a focus on the more spiritual side of things, which will work well for some people and not for others. I am more inclined to science and evidence-base rather than the less well-supported spiritual element to self-help teachings such as Johnson's book, but I truly believe this is a highly valuable self-help manual which most people can find use for. Given that there are so many chapters, this is a good book to dip into for a chapter at a time as and when you have enough time to do so. I can imagine this being very helpful for those trying to give up smoking, as it breaks down the myths as to why people feel they can't break the habit.

Nick Jones says

I received this book for free through Goodreads Giveaways, and acquiring free books is something that I

would be happy to make a habit of. See, it's a topical joke, because this book is about breaki... eh, never mind.

This book is essentially one simple concept repeated over and over for two-hundred pages. It postulates that your real self is some sort of undefined thingy that is tuned in to a magical "universal mind," with any bad habits or negative thoughts being the product of your inferior non-magical "lizard brain," so just dismiss those thoughts and everything will be fine and dandy. Now, mixed in with that new age weirdness and pop psych pap are some vaguely interesting ideas about retraining your brain, but I doubt that most people who are addicted to chewing khat (or whatever) are going to find the author's suggestion to just tell the lizard brain to bugger off quite as effective as suggested.

Anney says

There's much to see here

If you're ready to see beyond what you think you know about your habit, if you're ready to learn something different about what you've been told, than this book will shed light all over you and that habit. It's helpful to know how something works and how it doesn't, when you see something differently your show up differently, you respond differently and somehow the habit overtaking you doesn't seem to be so ridiculous and overwhelming. You may even notice it's lessened it's grip and becoming a thing of the past.

Anne says

I recently read Habit by Charles Duhigg and this is on a similar vein but has more emphasis on how to change the habits you have - and don't like. The narrative is a bit repetitive but I can see that the point is to keep hitting the neural pathways with the facts Ms Johnson wants you to take in. I enjoyed the book though I did find it a bit simplistic at times. I think it is a good place to start if you genuinely want to change the way you do something but it might not be enough on its own. I was given copy of this book by Netgalley in return for an honest review.

comfort says

Not what I was expecting, but did not give it very long. I may have another go a bit later.
