

BADASS HABITS

CULTIVATE THE
CONFIDENCE, BOUNDARIES,
AND KNOW-HOW
TO UPGRADE YOUR LIFE



JEN

21-DAY
GUIDE TO
MAKING HABITS
STICK

SINCERO

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF

YOU ARE A BADASS

ALSO BY JEN SINCERO

You Are a Badass Every Day: How to Keep Your Motivation Strong, Your Vibe High, and Your Quest for Transformation Unstoppable

You Are a Badass at Making Money: Master the Mindset of Wealth

You Are a Badass: How to Stop Doubting Your Greatness and Start Living an Awesome Life

The Straight Girl's Guide to Sleeping with Chicks

Don't Sleep with Your Drummer

BADASS HABITS

CULTIVATE THE AWARENESS,
BOUNDARIES, AND DAILY UPGRADES
YOU NEED TO MAKE THEM STICK

JEN SINCERO

PENGUIN LIFE

VIKING
An imprint of Penguin Random House LLC
penguinrandomhouse.com

Copyright © 2020 by Good Witch, LLC

Penguin supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin to continue to publish books for every reader.

A Penguin Life Book

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020943738

ISBN 9781984877437 (hardcover)
ISBN 9781984877444 (ebook)
ISBN 9780593296509 (international edition)

pid_prh_5.6.1_co_ro

To Mother Earth

CONTENTS

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[CHAPTER 1. Who You're in the Habit of Being](#)

[CHAPTER 2. Healthy Boundaries: The Unsung Heroes of Successful Habits](#)

[CHAPTER 3. Shapeshifting into the New You](#)

[CHAPTER 4. 21 Days to Badass Habits](#)

[CHAPTER 5. The Audacity to Be Yourself](#)

[ACKNOWLEDGMENTS](#)

INTRODUCTION

When I first decided to write a book about habits, the topic seemed like such a natural follow-up to the other Badass books. In the original *You Are a Badass*, I mentioned this little truism: *Our thoughts become our words, our words become our beliefs, our beliefs become our habits, and our habits become our realities*. Habits are the only piece of the equation I had yet to delve into deeply, and I couldn't wait to get crackin'. That is, until the following conversation with myself crawled up and sat on my chest:

Me: Habits! Of course! Why, they're the very sculptors of our realities! I'm going to write the fuck out of this book.

Me, enjoying a tower of onion rings, a few days after giving up fried food: Are we going to write about how to purchase a gym membership and never use it? Or how to not stop cursing? Because we could write the fuck out of that.

Me: Oh my God, that's so true. My habits suck. What the hell am I thinking? I have the self-discipline of a toddler.

I began listing all of the reasons why I was unqualified, unable, and unauthorized to write this book; how I was about to tank my brand, insult my readers, and inspire my publisher to ask for its money back. Then I realized, *Oh look, I'm excelling at a habit right now, that most unsavory of human habits: focusing on the negative. I'm blowing past the fact that I haven't touched a cigarette in over two decades even though I love smoking more than I love most people; that I'm a highly accomplished flosser, hydrater, gratituder, writer, bed maker, meditator, and show-up-on-timer; and that I'll take a backpack and a high alpine trail over a stinky*

gym any day. Cursing and fried food, however—there's still work to be done around cursing and fried food.

I bring this up because if you're reading this book with any skepticism about your stick-to-itiveness when it comes to habits, I want to remind you that nobody is perfect. And that we really can do anything we set our minds to (including things we've fake-set our minds to in the past). And that we all tend to sell ourselves short and focus on our failures instead of celebrating our victories. Even people who are successful beyond belief admit to occasionally letting negativity and feelings of inadequacy push them around. I've heard some say that every once in a while they'll forget how much they love what they do, ignore the standing ovations and rave reviews they receive from the outside world, and focus all their attention on that one stink-bomb hater on Instagram who thinks they suck, hand him the bullhorn, and let his opinion drown out the cheering crowds.

Mastering the powerful, positive mindset that's required to keep upping your habits game is all about staying aware, shifting your focus when you catch yourself wandering down Woe-Is-Me Lane, and consciously thinking thoughts that are aligned with where you want to go and who you want to become. When it comes to building great habits and ditching lame ones, your commitment to staying focused on who you're becoming *regardless of where you are/who you are right now* is the mightiest power you've got.

Contrary to popular belief, habits are more about who you're being than what you're doing.

One of the main reasons we don't stick to the habits we'd love to adopt, or permanently give the heave-ho to the habits we'd love to lose, is that we focus on taking action—which is important—but we don't get on board emotionally and mentally, which is more important. Then, when our new habits get challenging or boring (a favorite pastime of most habits thanks to the fact that they're so repetitive), we abandon them for something easier. Or something more fun. Or something that offers more immediate gratification. Or something that tastes really good with ketchup on it.

For example, let's say you've tried over and over to break your habit of spending more than you make. You've got a well-paying job and you put part of each paycheck toward your credit card bill and a little into your savings account and you carefully map out your budget each month. Then, in spite of your careful planning, you find yourself going on trips and forensically investigating furniture sales and jovially shouting "Drinks are on me!" and before you know it, your savings account is a ghost town and you're pleading on the phone with Pat at the collection agency again. Chances are excellent that deep down you're scared to stop overspending because you're trying to fill an emotional hole with stuff and experiences. Or maybe you come from a family full of spenders and you subconsciously worry you'll be judged and/or abandoned by them if you break with tradition and get your financial act together. It's essential when building good habits to focus on the whole enchilada—your head, your heart, and your hands—otherwise the meditating stops; the fingernails start being bitten again; your calm, sober repose at yet another passive-aggressive family gathering turns into "All right, I've had enough. Who wants to play Tequila Truth or Dare?!"

My hope is that this book offers some fresh perspectives on proven habit-forming processes and helps you dethrone whatever obstacles you've allowed to lord over you in the past. I also hope that it makes the whole habit-building-and-busting experience easier by boiling down a seemingly complex process and doling it out into manageable, bite-sized exercises that you implement one day at a time. I want you to get rolling and figure out which tools work best for you so you can start seeing real results—the kind of results you've yet to behold—that actually stick around. I'm a coach, not a scientist, so while ensmartening you is a goal, nothing gets me all teary-eyed and verklempt like the hallelujah of a dream realized. *You see? You see that black belt you just karated your way into? YOU did that. Here, hold my snacks. I've got to get a picture of this.*

I'll start by briefly explaining what habits are and how they work. I'll help you become aware of the habits you've already got (the good, the bad, and the ugly) and figure out which ones have got to go, which new ones you'd like to create, and who you need to start being in order to pull this all off. I'll also get you good at setting no-nonsense boundaries so you can alert your tribe, and yourself, that your needs are now a priority, that you're creating the space—

emotionally and physically—to allow yourself to fully flourish, and that yes, this being good at setting boundaries thing is a habit you’re going to keep (perhaps amid the indignant screams and protests of all those who are being booted out of first place).

Once we’ve got your heart and head on board, I’ll help you pick one clearly defined habit to work on for the rest of the book. I’ll walk you through a powerful 21-step process to either anchor in your new habit or permanently banish an old one, depending on what you choose. Ideally you’ll take the process day by day over the course of three weeks in order to keep the beast of overwhelm at bay, give your new habit time to take hold, and keep the work as interesting as possible. The goal here is to have an interactive experience. I want you to hit the ground running and start becoming the person you’re excited to become *while you’re reading this book* instead of just becoming someone who now has a lot more information about what habits are. Or who understands the science behind how habits work. Or who knows how it feels to fall asleep with a book about habits lying on your face.

Please get a new notebook and dedicate it exclusively to the work we’re about to do (no grocery lists), and start cultivating your new habit with a clean slate, focusing on the exciting new life that awaits you, as opposed to letting failures you’ve experienced in the past cloud your confidence. Who you desire to become is not only available to you but you’re meant to become this upgraded version of yourself, otherwise you wouldn’t have the desire in the first place and you sure as hell wouldn’t be bothering with this book. Trust that each new day holds untold possibilities and remember:

In every moment, you have the profound ability to make choices that will completely change your habits and your reality, either right away or over time.

Making powerful, life-altering choices is simply a habit, a habit that you’ve already started mastering.

GAVE UP BEING A LAZY ASS AND GOT IN SHAPE, JULIE, 60

My doctor told me I was headed for type 2 diabetes and that I needed to move more and try to lose some weight. I didn't like the sound of needing to be on meds my whole life and I also didn't like having a solid ten to fifteen pounds of extra blub in my club. So I decided that rain or shine, I could manage to exercise every morning before work on a yoga mat in my living room for at least fifteen minutes. How hard is that to do for my health?

I found a great online workout that was a combo of yoga, stretching, muscle strength, and cardio. Every morning I pulled that yoga mat out of the closet and I found that after stretching and doing some basic yoga moves, I was awake enough to do a little more. I did some strength-training exercises using my own body weight, and thought, *Geez, if I weighed less it wouldn't be so hard to hoist my petard off this mat!*

Three push-ups led to five to ten and now my daily routine is about thirty minutes total. As soon as I started doing this I began to feel better about myself.

The thrills from the little wins will keep you rolling toward victory.

I felt stronger. It kept me motivated and I now look forward to doing my workout at least five days a week.

At the same time, I started an online diet and health program that taught me about the psychology of why I eat and how to change my lifelong habits. This was an eye opener. "Mindless" eating versus "mindful" eating was huge. I learned to actually look at the food I was eating, not at the TV, to take a moment between bites and really taste what I was eating, not just chuck it down my gullet. I also learned to understand my personal hunger scale. When I wanted something to eat I would ask myself, *Am I actually hungry or just bored, stressed, sad, or agitated?* Another tip was not waiting until I was at Code Red-level starving on my hunger scale, because that means you grab anything from a vending machine or dive into the leftover donuts from the morning meeting. I learned other strategies and hacks. A big one was to always have healthy, yummy snacks in my bag, at work, and at home. If you're planning to eat dinner out, go online and look at

the menu ahead of time and figure out what the best choice is and stick with it. Because otherwise, you'll see what everyone else is ordering and fly off the calorie rails.

The other big change of behavior for me was to start writing down everything I ate every day to be more mindful of what I was eating. And weighing myself every day. Sounds hideous, but it worked. It's now two years later and I've lost fifteen pounds (albeit slowly), but more importantly, I've kept it off. I continue to weigh myself every day and track my daily food. I have learned that this is what works for me. Of course there are days I go way over my calorie target for the day, but I don't get upset about it. I just adjust the next day. Believe me, I love food. And I still eat what I want. I just monitor my portion sizes and always try to tap into mindful eating, not mindless eating.