Atomic Habits Cheat Sheet

The four laws, their four inversions, and one caveat that belongs next to them

TO BUILD A HABIT

1ST LAW (CUE)

Make it obvious

Write the time and the place. Not later, not more often.

2ND LAW (CRAVING)

Make it attractive

Pair it with something you already want to do.

3RD LAW (RESPONSE)

Make it easy

Shrink it to a version that takes two minutes.

4TH LAW (REWARD)

Make it satisfying

Get something immediate out of it, and be seen doing it.

TO BREAK A HABIT (INVERT EACH LAW)

1ST LAW (CUE)

Make it invisible

Take the trigger out of the room, not out of your mind.

2ND LAW (CRAVING)

Make it unattractive

Name out loud what it actually costs you.

3RD LAW (RESPONSE)

Make it difficult

Add steps. Distance beats willpower.

4TH LAW (REWARD)

Make it unsatisfying

Put a person, a cost or a record between you and the slip.

Write the replacement, not the refusal.
A plan in the form "when X happens, I will not do Y" was tested against a replacement plan and against no plan at all. It produced an ironic rebound: the habit came back stronger, and the effect was most likely in the people whose habit was already strong. Adriaanse, van Oosten, de Ridder, de Wit and Evers, 2011, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 37(1), 69-81.

The four laws and their inversions are quoted from Atomic Habits by James Clear (Avery, 2018).
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