You 10 Years From Now

How To Kill A Bad Habit, And Start A New System

By Dan Wilt

Add 10 years to your life. How old will you be? Now, look at your current habits in one area of life that is continually not working out how you want it to. Multiply your current habits in that area times 10 years. Do you like what you see?

If you don't like what you see, today is the day to – literally – kill the habits that are dragging you down.

Killing A Habit – The Example Of Health

I'll start with an example. I've been wrestling with weight loss for some time now, and a trajectory in my family line toward diabetes, heart-disease, and other issues that rise and fall on daily eating and exercise choices.

I've tried and failed in many ways, and the truth is, most of what I do is half-hearted.

So let's call any habit this is not helping me arrive at who I want to be in 10 years "bad."

Related to my health, I have some bad habits (and bad attitudes that keep them going). Ready for honesty?

Today's bad habits (and attitudes):

- I sneak foods more often than I am aware that are packed with sugar
- I hate exercise, due to itchy skin, tiredness in the morning, and a bum foot, so I skip days and weeks (using work and trips as an excuse)
- I order "reward" foods at restaurants because I think I deserve them because I work so hard
- I conveniently forget that the only way to lose weight and get healthy is a one-two punch of both counting calories (really, it's 101) and constant exercise

In 10 years, I'll be 62. Here are my results if I keep up the above:

- I will have gained a lot more weight as my metabolism slows even more, and maybe get diabetes because of my genetic pre-disposition
- I will potentially have skin and musculoskeletal issues, as well as hip and feet issues, and be even less flexible than I am now (I see a cane in that future)
- I'll just get heavier and heavier and keep kicking myself – 10 years later – for having so little self -control (by the way, the time I most usually tell myself I can stop eating badly is right after I've eaten badly and it's in my blood making me happy)
- I'll keep up the insanity of trying to exercise without watching what I eat, or watching what I eat without exercise (which is actually better for weight control at least)

"It's game on. Our bad habits kill us if we don't kill them first. #systemsbeatmoods" - Dan Wilt

In 10 years, who I want to be is:

- A 62 year man who doesn't sneak foods because he has some self-control within (rather than relying on the size of my gut or my wife to tell me I'm off the rails)
- A 62 year old man who is flexible, physically fit, walks regularly and lifts trimming weights, and has solid balance
- A 62 year old man who is maintaining a good, healthy weight (and is happy with the way his gut looks and shirt fits)
- A 62 year old man who is no longer entertaining the insanity of thinking I don't have to watch both my eating habits and exercise habits at the same time.

The New Math To Move Forward

The "you" that you want to be in 10 years is on the other side of the following equation.

Old Bad Habits – New Good Habits + 10 years = The Unhappy, Wishful Thinking, Exacerbated Issues You

New Good Habits – Old Bad Habits + 10 years = The Preferred, Joyful, Energized You

The rocket science is this – you and I must **kill and replace the current bad habits immediately and without mercy**, with new transforming, incremental, and healthy habits that will yield the 10 year you that you want to be.
You and I both know it – tomorrow is not the time to break the bad habits, or after the next big trip or event.

Today is the day we break the bad habits by replacing them with **a system of new, good habits**.

New Habits (And Friend Accountability) Just Work

Using our example, it is easy to gain weight, and really, really hard to lose it. The best choice is not to gain it in the first place, of course. But if I have, new habits will do the work without me focusing on the weight.

A good system beats our mood and feelings and craving hands down, every time. #systemsbeatmoods is my hashtag for that.

So, write down the new habits that will replace the old ones. If you don't replace the old bad habits, you'll go back to them.

For our example here is a list of the new habits, and the accountability that goes with them.

"New habits and accountability are the 1-2 punch for change. #systemsbeatmoods" - Dan Wilt

They are a 1-2 punch, and usually don't work without the other.

Dan's New Habits (and attitudes):

- I have a radar for sugar, carbs (which convert to sugar), and calories, and I track the latter till I get it (straight up – if I eat carbs like breads and bagels or oats or sweet coffees, or even sugars like fruits and bars for breakfast, my insulin hit will kick in and I'll be hungry all day – especially for sugary things; that's why protein and fat and veggies are my right choice)
- I choose to love the results of exercise, so 5 days a week, traveling or not, I have a planned regimen that I follow that will, in the end, yield the results I want (make sure you have one, or you'll be random and it won't work, Dan)
- I have eaten all the happy foods I've wanted all my life; I will now order the healthiest options at meals out, focusing on protein and vegetables (and kicking potatoes, breads, starches, and desserts out the door, except for once per quarter special occasions)
- I will do both exercise AND watch what I eat, planning both out daily and stopping relying on my moods (#systembeatsmood).

Dan's New Accountability (and habit breaking patterns):

- If I can find friends or family to do this with me, great. I will text them daily for the first 3 months to tell them how I did each day. No kidding. If I can't, I will start a Facebook group with strangers
- I will ask my wife to help me keep the house free of the "bad habit" foods that are killing my goals
- I will be absolutely honest about my sneaky tricks in the first area, so they are out in the open and I have to tell someone. Until the habit is broken

The Time To Change Is Now

We need to stop faking ourselves out, and making excuses for why we keep failing. #Systemsbeatmoods hands down, every time. It's time to create your system.

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Question: What are some "new systems" you've implemented in one area that have really worked for you?

Bio: Dan Wilt, M.Min. is an author, communicator, and innovative voice in the fields of Worship and the Arts. He is the creator of the Essentials In Worship Video Training Course for worship leaders and teams, and is the Founder of the 35K member WorshipTraining.com. Dan serves as the Director of Communications & Resources for Vineyard USA, and his ancient-future worship leadership blog offers weekly tools and team encouragements at DanWilt.com.

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