

Brain Hack Makes New Year's Resolutions Stick

In this episode, MC shares the necessity of understanding how our brain works and of shifting what we have always done to introduce a new way of thinking about ourselves with intention. Using neuroplasticity and dopamine processes, we can make those small changes daily to embrace who we are and recognize that each step we take moves us towards a fuller expression of our uniqueness.

Here's the four-step protocol to make that happen.

Step 1: Let Your Breath RULE!

Before you can build a new path, you have to get off the old one. That means quieting the stress response that keeps you stuck. We have to turn off the "fight-or-flight" system so our brain's CEO, the prefrontal cortex, can get back to work. When your nervous system is regulated, your PFC can plan, focus, and learn new things effectively.

The hack is ridiculously simple: controlled breathing. For just three to five minutes a day, practice box breathing. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and hold for 4. This simple act tells your body it's safe, shifting your brain out of survival mode and into a state where it can actually change.

Step 2: Define and Visualize Your Destination

An abstract goal is invisible to your brain. We need to make it concrete. Don't just say, "I want to get fit." Say, "I will go to the gym on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning for 45 minutes." That's a specific, measurable plan your PFC can lock onto.

Once you have that concrete goal, you need to show your brain what success looks and feels like. For five minutes each day, close your eyes and vividly imagine yourself executing your plan. This isn't just daydreaming. Mental imagery activates many of the same brain pathways as actually doing the thing. You are literally running a simulation of your future success, priming the neural circuits for action and making the new path feel familiar before you've even taken the first step. Adding a reward is a bonus.

Step 3: Lay the Path with Action and Language

Now it's time to start physically building that new neural pathway. This happens through two simple actions: writing and doing.

First, write down your specific intention every single day. Something like, "Today at 6 PM, I will go for a 20-minute run." This act of writing engages multiple senses and helps sear the intention into your memory, priming your brain to follow through.

Second, you have to act—but the action needs to be almost laughably small at first. This is key. If your goal is to meditate for 30 minutes, start with one minute. If you want to write a book, start with just one sentence. This "tiny habits" principle is crucial because a small, repeatable action requires little energy from your PFC. It's easy to do even on a bad day, but it's enough to start strengthening that new neural pathway.

And as you do this, talk to yourself in the present tense. Instead of "I **want** to be a person who works out," say, "I **am** a person who works out." It might feel a little weird at first, but it reduces the mental

friction of holding two conflicting beliefs. You're starting to shift your self-identity to match your new actions.

Step 4: Hack Your Reward System

Finally, we have to solve that dopamine problem. We can't wait for the big payoff at the end; we have to create a steady stream of rewards **along the way**. And the secret is to reward the **effort**, not just the outcome.

At the end of each day, take two minutes and write down one small win related to your goal. Did you do your one-minute meditation? Please write it down. Did you just put on your running shoes, even if you didn't go for the run? Please write it down.

This act of acknowledgment and celebration is not fluff—it's neurochemical engineering. It triggers a minor release of dopamine, which reinforces the action you just took and makes you more likely to do it again tomorrow. You are manually creating an upward spiral of motivation, teaching your brain to love the process, not just the final destination.

Section 4: Putting It All Together - Your Daily Plan

So, what does this actually look like? It's a simple, 15-minute daily routine.

- ****First, 3 minutes of box breathing**** to calm your nervous system and get your PFC online.
- ****Next, 5 minutes of vivid visualization.**** See and feel yourself succeeding in today's specific goal.
- ****Then, 5 minutes of journaling**** Write down your specific, tiny action for the day.
- ****And at the end of the day, 2 minutes of gratitude.** Write down that small win, no matter how tiny, and let yourself feel good about it.

Every week, take 20 minutes to review what's working, adjust your tiny habits, and create simple "if-then" plans. For example, "IF it's raining at 6 PM, THEN I will do a 15-minute workout video at home." This pre-planning takes the pressure off your brain when life inevitably gets in the way.

So this year, don't just make another resolution. Start a process. MC calls hers my Morning Manifestation Time (MMT). Stop fighting your brain and start giving it a new path to follow. Regulate, visualize, act, and reward. That is how you Hack Your Brain into a new reality.

Be well, my friends, we have this one precious life, let's live it intentionally.

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