

John dewey habits and will

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Would Dewey's advice for correcting a bad habit work for you? How would you go about reforming one of your habits? According to John Dewey, Habits are inevitable. We are empowered by both good and bad habits. In his essay, " Habits and Will", Dewey states that we envision bad habits as such acts of " foolish idling, gambling, addiction to liquor and drugs", and we associate good habits with skills such as walking, playing a musical instrument, and typing. We see bad habits as desires and good habits as abilities that " exist far from our impulsive desires".

Bad habits are not deliberately formed and are also hard to break. Dewey explains that will power alone is not enough; one must follow a specific method to turn habits around. I feel that I, someone who tends to get distracted easily and procrastinate, should benefit from Dewey's habit-breaking method. Dewey writes that a friend of his remarked that there was a superstition among persons that believe that if one is told what to do, if the right end is pointed to them, all that is required in order to bring about the right act is will or wish on the part of the one who is to act.

According to them, if a man who slouches is told to stand up straight, all that is needed is an effort by him, and the problem is fixed. Dewey's main argument in his essay is that this method does not work. Instead, he suggests that in order to fix or undo our bad habits we must replace them with another habit that is of goodness; you must have more than solely will power to defy a habit. I think that I can benefit from Dewey's method and start a new habit to break my habit of procrastinating.

Every day, I feel that I am easily and frequently distracted when doing schoolwork, which causes me to procrastinate. Every day, I try to break this habit and am unsuccessful. Sitting and thinking “ don’t get distracted” does not work because in doing so, I get distracted by thinking about not getting distracted, instead of actually working. My problem is not struggling to sit down and take my homework out. My problem is getting distracted frequently and taking forever to make progress- especially when I know I have time to spare.

When time is running out, I tend to work much more efficiently. My bad habits of getting distracted and procrastinating counteract my good habit of taking out my homework as soon as possible. I am well aware of my habits, and know that I would feel less stressed if I could correct them. Also, every day, I have to listen to my parents tell me constantly to hurry up my work and get to bed, when I obviously want to do just that, but cannot. If I use Dewey’s method, I need to create a flank movement that will form a good habit which will aid me in breaking my bad habits.

These flank movements that Dewey speaks of are some action that prevents the bad habit and leads you in the direction of something else. Instead of solely relying on willpower alone, I could think of a way to make myself concentrate better and feel an urge to get my work done as soon as possible. One idea I thought of is changing my environment, and instead of sitting at my desk to work, I can move somewhere else, less distracting, such as the library. If I work there, I will feel more rushed and obliged to work efficiently.

I will set a goal to get a certain amount of work completed during my time at the library. I do not want to and cannot spend all afternoon and evening at the library, so and I will desire to get my work done speedily, and I will work as if it was late at night. In " Habits and Will," John Dewey says, "[A habit] makes us do things we are ashamed of, things which we tell ourselves we prefer not to do. " He elaborates on the fact that we are our habit. Dewey forces us to admit that our bad habit is a fundamental part of our self.

He insists that a bad habit can't be overcome by will alone. We need to forget the bad habit and find an alternate activity (a flank movement) that can attract us and that we can focus on. He repeats that a bad habit can't be overcome by will alone, contrary to popular belief, but only by picking up a flank movement. So in order for me to abolish my procrastination, or at least minimize it, I need to find an act that is different from my usual routine. I have to make the completion of this new action my new goal, and focus on reaching it.

If I do not, I will continue to do the same thing over and over again, like I have done for years. All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. Our " self" is the interpenetration of will and desire and habit and action. Our selfhood isn't what we think, but what we do; the way we act. we never intend to become an alcoholic or addicted to cigarettes. These habits come from a weakness within us all. We are too self-loved and too stubborn to face facts which leads us to the excuses of somehow and evil power has overcome our certain abilities.

Thirdly, he believes that bad habits are created from our feeling of a lack of purpose and the desires that come shortly after in attempt for immediate solutions. It would take a experience in life that enables something purposeful about us to truly appreciate the importance of ridding of the bad.

<http://www.alexandercenter.com/jd/johndeweyhabits.html> <http://www.nashvillegreatbooks.com/2009/11/john-dewey-habit-and-will.html>
<http://www.ljhammond.com/phlit/2005-11c.htm>