

EPISODE 14 // TRANSCRIPT

THE IDENTITY HABIT HACK

(Being vs. Doing)

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Have you ever found yourself wondering why, no matter how hard you try, some habits seem downright impossible to change? Like when you try to lose weight, for example, and you find yourself slipping back into your old eating habits, reaching for that four o'clock snack, or that extra glass of wine after dinner, before you've even completed the first week of your new healthy meal plan.

And it's frustrating, right? Because without changing these habits, reaching your goal becomes near impossible. And logically, you know this, and you do really want to reach your goal. So why then is it so hard to let go of your old habits and stick to the new ones that will help you get there? Well, the key to making lasting change might surprise you because it's not about what you do or don't do. It's about who you be.

In today's episode, I'm sharing the powerful link between your identity and your habits, and why who you be is your secret weapon in mastering them.

Welcome to The Self-Creation School podcast, for women who are ready to ditch mediocrity, step up and get more of what they want, and finally say YES! to a life that sets their soul on fire. I'm your host Leanne Letica, Self-Creation Coach, founder of The Self-Creation School AND Queen of YES!. If you're ready to play life by your own personal rule book, and give yourself permission to say YES! to yourself and your wildest dreams, this podcast is the place for you.

Hello and welcome to another week of The Self-Creation School podcast. For those of you who are listening in for the very first time, this is a space where you're invited to say YES! to you and your dreams, one episode at a time, one YES! at a time. And of course, if you're joining me again, a warm welcome back to you, my friend.

I'm delighted to have you join me today for a conversation that might just change the way you look at your daily routines. I think we're all familiar with the frustration of trying to introduce new habits into our lives or trying to break old ones, only to find ourselves right back where we started in no time at all.

Yet, your habits are an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to achieving the goals you set for yourself, because it's likely your habitual way of doing things, or at least some of your habitual way of doing things, isn't going to support you in taking the action you'll need to take to get to where you want to go. It's also likely you'll need to create some new habits that do.

Here's the thing, letting go of old habits that don't support you in reaching your goals, and adopt the new habits that do, doesn't need to be all that hard. In fact, it can be really easy. But as long as you focus solely on the doing part, you'll rely on sheer willpower and white knuckling your way through the process of habit change, and it will absolutely be very challenging.

And the reason why relying on willpower and white knuckling your way through is so challenging is because willpower is a finite resource, and it runs out.

Tackling habit change through action alone requires a conscious effort to take that action, and it's action that is being taken from a surface level place in your thinking that isn't being supported by an intrinsic drive to take that action. In fact, it's often in direct conflict with the action you would naturally take.

So what happens is, your mental and emotional energy reserves, your willpower, has to work very hard and it gets quickly depleted by the effort required to consciously keep taking that action, and to fight against the intrinsic action you would naturally take. And the more consciously forced the action needs to be, the more you need to fight to take it, the faster you'll drain your willpower resources.

Now, once you run out of willpower, that's when you'll find yourself totally defenseless against your familiar and ingrained habits, and you'll revert back to the comfort of them. And every time you revert back to them, you collect more evidence to support why you can't make this change that you seek to make, and why you'll never achieve what it is you want to achieve, and so on and so forth. It becomes a vicious cycle that supports your limiting beliefs, and it will keep you stuck.

Focusing on external actions, on what you do, will only ever tackle habit change at a surface level. It doesn't engage with the deeper aspects of your identity that truly drive your behavior. Those aspects of you that naturally and freely take action because it's simply who you are and what you do. This is why the magic of habit transformation lies in shifting from focusing solely on what you do to who you be, the identity you choose for yourself. It's about creating your habits from the inside out, not from the outside in. It's not "I do this, therefore I am this kind of woman" it's "I am this kind of woman, therefore I do this".

So today I'm going to share with you how to use your identity as a powerful habit hack to remove willpower and white knuckling from the equation

altogether and transform your habits faster, more easily, and with the long-term results you need to help you achieve what it is you want.

Let's dive straight in.

And the first thing I want to talk a little more about is this concept of identity versus action to make sure we are really on the same page here. Because when we talk about changing habits to reach our goals, most of us do default to focusing on the actions we need to take or stop taking. That's where we most commonly start, not on who we need to believe ourselves to be to take those actions. So I really want to highlight the difference in these two approaches and the outcomes. And the best way for me to do this is to give you some examples.

Let's say you set your sights on a mountain that you want to climb. Now, I live in the Pyrenees Mountains, so this may or may not be a real-life example. So, you choose a date that you want to climb this mountain. You plot the course, you pack your gear, and you set the alarm for an early start. You're taking action that all points to climbing the mountain, right? And initially, taking this action feels like you're making great progress. You are so doing this.

The problem with this is, if you see yourself as someone who dislikes hiking, or doubts in your ability to reach the summit, maybe even you see yourself as someone who doesn't do early starts, like me, your efforts to keep taking the action you need to take becomes infinitely harder and you are highly likely to give up before you even start the climb, let alone complete the climb.

You'll press snooze on the alarm clock once, twice, maybe even three times. You'll look outside and decide maybe today isn't the day, the weather looks like it might turn. You'll feel a headache coming on, maybe you should rest instead today. Basically, you will self-sabotage your efforts to climb the mountain because your default self-concept is of someone who doesn't climb mountains.

Forcing yourself to take action, drawing on all your willpower to keep pushing through, will only take you so far. And so, as I've already said, this is why the secret source to lasting habit change is not found in the steps of the journey itself. It's not in the action you take, but in how you view yourself as you take those steps.

Let's consider the example of becoming a runner. Now this is definitely not a real-life example on my behalf, but let's imagine two individuals, both with a goal to run a marathon. The first person says, "I need to run every day because I need to be fitter to complete this marathon" while the second person says, "I am a marathon runner". The first statement focuses on the action, running as a means to an end. The second statement is identity-focused, it reflects a fundamental belief about oneself. The difference might seem subtle, but it really is quite profound.

The first person sees running as a task, something external that requires effort and motivation each day. If the only time of day they can run is early in the morning and they're not an early morning person, well, you know how this might go, right? The second person sees running as a part of who they are. It's not a task, but an expression of their identity. When their alarm goes off early in the morning, they won't even think twice about getting out of bed and going for that run. It's just what they do because it's part of who they believe themselves to be.

When you shift your focus from what you need to do, to who you believe you are, the actions you take will follow more naturally and with far less resistance. Because like the person who says, I am a marathon runner, the actions that align with your self-concept feel less like obligations and more like expressions of your true self.

Here's another example. Someone who identifies as a healthy eater will find joy in choosing nutritious foods, not because they have to, but because it's who they are. They're not constantly battling temptation in the same way as

someone who is on a diet that restricts the kind of food they can eat, because in their mind, they're simply living out their identity. Eating the sugary 4pm snack or having the extra glass of wine just isn't what they do because it's not what they identify themselves with.

The key takeaway here is that by changing your self-perception, you can change your habits. So the first thing to ask yourself if you've been struggling to stick to new habits is "who do I need to believe I am for these actions to feel natural?".

And I want you to know here that this doesn't mean pretending or wishing you were someone else. It also doesn't mean you need to change who you are because there's something wrong with the way that you are being. It's about recognizing that there is a different version of you, who more readily supports what it is you want to achieve, and then gradually shifting your self-concept to align with this version of you so that you naturally adopt the habits you want to adopt.

Here's one more example for you before we move on. If your goal is to write a book, start seeing yourself as a writer. Writers write regularly, not because they're always inspired, but because it's who they are. They see the world through a lens of stories and words, and so writing is as natural to them as breathing.

Now, I want to take you a little deeper into why using your identity is just so powerful in changing your habits. And this brings me to a fascinating cycle that I like to call the Identity Habit Loop. It's a concept rooted deeply in psychology that suggests not only do our habits reflect our identity, but the repetition of these habits further cements this identity in our minds, and so creates a reinforcing loop. This loop is why aligning your habits with your identity is so much more effective than relying on external actions alone.

Let me unpack this for you with another example.

Imagine someone who wants to adopt a plant-based diet. And so they start to see themselves as a person who deeply cares about their health, about animal welfare, and perhaps environmental sustainability. Now, adopting a plant-based diet is no longer just about deciding to eat more vegetables. It's about adopting an identity as someone who lives by these values. When they choose a salad over steak, it's not a forced decision made begrudgingly, it's a choice that feels right at the very core of who they are. It feels natural and in harmony with who they are.

And each plant-based meal they choose reinforces their identity as someone who prioritizes health and sustainability, making the next decision to stick with this habit even easier.

Here's where the loop comes into play. As this individual continues to make choices that align with their identity as a health conscious, environmentally aware person, their commitment to their identity deepens. This strengthened identity then makes it easier to maintain their plant-based diet, which in turn further reinforces their self-concept. It's a powerful self-reinforcing cycle.

And this loop applies to any habit you're looking to form or break. Suppose you want to become more financially responsible. The moment you start seeing yourself as someone who is wise with money, each decision to save rather than spend, or to invest rather than squander, reinforces that identity. You're not just someone trying to save money, you are a financially responsible person. Then each wise financial choice you make, strengthens your identity and makes it more likely you'll continue to make such choices in the future.

What's truly magical about the Identity Habit Loop is that it highlights the power of internal motivation, your intrinsic behavior. When your habits are an expression of your identity, you're no longer relying on external factors like willpower, motivation, or simply white knuckling your way through. All of which, as I shared earlier, are finite resources and can and do fluctuate. Which means

so too will your results. Instead, you're driven by something much deeper and so much more stable, your sense of self.

So how can you create this powerful Identity Habit Loop in your own life? My friend, I'm so glad you asked. Let me share three steps with you to help you start reshaping your identity to align with your desired habits, so you can take advantage of the Identity Habit Loop to make a long-term habit change.

Number one is to define your desired identity. Start by getting really clear on who it is you want to be.

To do this, set some time aside, grab your journal and ask yourself, "what identity do I want to embody?". Think about the aspects of yourself that you want to nurture or change and visualize yourself as a person who has done this. Remember here the focus is on who you are being as this version of you, not what you are doing to become this version of you.

So, for example, if you'd like to change your weight, instead of thinking about all the things you need to do to lose the weight, visualize yourself as the woman who is at your ideal weight and who she is being in her everyday life. What does she value? How does she think about herself? Who does she believe that she is? What does she believe is possible for her?

Then, once you have a picture of who she is at her core, what her essence is, then, and only then, consider the habits that a woman with this identity would have. What would she do differently than you're doing right now? How would she approach her day? What decisions would she make? Why would she make one decision over another? How does she approach her life?

If at the core of your identity is a woman who values being strong, fit and healthy, so that she ages powerfully and maintains her vitality for life, your habits might be starting a day with stretching, a yoga class, or Pilates perhaps. It might include adding a collagen-based protein shake into your morning

routine. You might start taking the bus to work each day to increase your time walking. You might plan out your meals every Saturday morning before you do your weekly grocery shop. You might value taking time out every weekend for outdoor activities like hiking or playing pickle-ball with newfound friends who share the same identity. You see where I'm going with this, right?

And I like to bring all of this together into an I AM affirmation statement that reflects the identity you want to embrace. For example, if this new part of your identity is being someone who is fit and healthy, your I AM statement might be, "I am a strong, fit and healthy woman, who nurtures my body and mind with activities and foods that energize and replenish me".

Then leave this I AM statement in places where you can read it regularly throughout your day, particularly in strategic places that will help you take the action you want to take. It might be a reminder that gets triggered on your phone every morning as your alarm goes off, encouraging you to get up and go to your Pilates session. It might be a note on your fridge to remind you of the choices you make when you open the door because of who you are choosing to be. Environmental cues are very, very powerful.

Okay, so step number two is to practice daily visualization. Set some time aside every day, to visualize your day as this new version of you.

Now, I know I talk a whole lot about visualization, and it is something I suggest often in my practical tips. That's because it is a free, easily accessible and highly powerful tool. Honestly, it may seem like it's too simple to have any real effect, but the power of visualization simply cannot be overstated. I really do encourage you to add this into your toolkit as something you draw upon often.

So spend just a few minutes, every morning, every evening, or ideally both, visualizing your day as the woman who already naturally does the things you want to do, who has the habits of your new identity.

If you see yourself as a best-selling author, visualize your daily routine. See yourself getting up early before everyone else in the household to savor the quiet time for writing. See yourself grabbing your morning coffee, feeling the excitement of turning on your computer to write, the satisfaction of hitting your word count before breakfast. And the joy that comes from sharing your ideas with the world, knowing that your words can make a difference.

In fact, this particular visualization would be very powerful as part of your evening wind down ritual, as the last thing you do before you sleep to plant the seeds for the following day's early start.

This practice of visualization, whether you decide to do it in the morning, at night, or both, which I really do recommend, not only helps to solidify your identity in your belief system, but it also primes your brain to make choices that align with this visualization throughout the day. Your brain will actively start to look for ways it can make this visual information that you're feeding it a reality. So it really does help to set you up for success.

Lastly, step number three is to take identity-affirming actions and collect evidence of them.

So take small daily actions that align with and affirm your new identity and use your journal at the end of each day, for example, to acknowledge the actions you've taken throughout the day that support who you want to be. This part really helps to build a bank of evidence for how you are in fact being this new version of you and it reinforces your new belief about who you are.

In terms of identity-affirming action, again if you're embracing the identity of a writer, your action might be to commit to writing daily, no matter what the word count is. It could be as simple as jotting down a few sentences in your journal, or as committed as writing a full chapter of your book. The key here is consistency, not volume. Each word you write is evidence that supports your identity as a writer. If you're stepping into the identity of a woman who is

strong, fit and healthy, your daily action might be choosing to take the stairs instead of the elevator or swapping out one unhealthy snack for a piece of fruit.

These actions, while small, are powerful affirmations of your identity and contribute significantly to the Identity Habit Loop. And I want you to remember, this is not about overhauling your life overnight. Aim for gradual, consistent change that builds and reinforces the woman you want to become.

And know that you won't get it right every day, so it's important to have patience and self-compassion. What I can promise you though is, each action, no matter how big or small, that you take in alignment with who you want to be, rather than in opposition of who you currently are, is a powerful step forward into naturally being the type of woman you want to be and living out each day accordingly.

When you focus on BEING first, so that what you do is just a natural part of who you are, the habits that no longer fit with this identity will drop away and the habits that do will take hold. BE the change you want to see. It's the ultimate habit hack, my friend, and it's freely available to you right here, right now.

And so as I wrap up this episode, I hope you can see that changing your habits to support you in reaching your goals isn't necessarily about adding more to your to-do list or relying on willpower and white knuckling to see it through. Focusing on who you be is much easier and a far more effective way to say YES! to you and your dreams.

And listen, if you find yourself slipping back into your old identity, as we all do, gently remind yourself of who you are becoming. There's no need to beat yourself up. Simply go back over the three steps I shared with you today and strengthen your vision of this new version of you, recommit to being her, and then simply start taking those small actions one-by-one again.

Every moment of your day is a new opportunity to start again. Remember this process is not about perfection. It's not about an all-or-nothing approach. It's about making progress. It's about evolving, one day at a time, one YES! at a time, into the fullest expression of yourself and your life.

Thanks so much for taking the time to join me in this episode today. If you enjoyed it, please consider leaving me a review and in doing so, know that you are inspiring other women to listen in and to benefit from the insights, tools, and practical tips I share right here on The Self-Creation School podcast. I'll be here next Wednesday with another episode.

Until then, my friend, be the woman who says YES!

Hey, have you joined my FREE mini-workshop the Week of YES!?! This powerful five-day workshop will help you take your foot off the brake and start saying YES! to more of the life you crave. Isn't it time you created a life you're beyond excited to wake up to? It all begins with saying YES!. Head over to <https://selfcreationschool.com/weekofyes> and get started on your YES! story today. I'll see you there.