

Positive connections establish EVERYTHING.

The verb "connection" means to bring together, into contact so that a real link is established, or to provide access.

In life, our connections affect our relationships, our religion or belief in God, the food we choose, our exercise, and even our habits.

Do we connect TO or connect WITH these things? Well, both. The average adult has 41 fewer synaptic connections in the brain than a newborn.

Why?

Because of a phenomenon called "synaptic pruning." Our brains cut out the things that don't serve us or don't get used often enough. (Ever wonder why you don't remember much from those years of piano lessons as a kid? It isn't bad memory- it's just been too long since you last practiced!)

Coffee is an example of a strong connection. When you drink coffee every morning, the neural pathways are strengthened and it becomes difficult to start your day without a cup of joe.

This can be especially helpful when you use an established connection to add in a new behavior that you want. I often refer to this as piggy-backing or habit stacking, although BJ Fogg calls them Tiny Habits.

There are two rules to follow when it comes to piggybacking your habits:

1. Only piggyback on well-established habits. (for example, drinking that morning cup of coffee)
2. Only add more to the stack when the first piggyback is well established.

It can be useful to include a trigger or cue, in other words, placing things to remind yourself if you're trying to create or dial in a habit. For example, I leave my thyroid meds on my nightstand to remind myself to take them when I first wake up.

I wanted to create a workout trigger so I moved my workout clothes downstairs, created my workout plan the day before, and made sure to do it before going upstairs for the day.

If you wanted to create a relationship trigger you could set a lovely table, ask questions, and hold back on the unloading.

Make sure these cues are highly actionable and that they require you to do something. For example, setting mail on a desk chair seat will encourage you to deal with it before allowing yourself to sit.

Be specific and intentional! Piggybacking your habits and creating actionable triggers and cues will make you feel good and accomplished. Your environment will always trump your willpower.