# Understanding the Science Behind How Habits are Formed

Forming a new habit isn’t easy, but we know that creating a new habit or breaking a bad one is crucial if we want to improve ourselves. If you're going to create a new habit in your life successfully, then you need to understand how habits are formed. According to Charles Duhigg, a Pulitzer-prize winning reporter, the creation of habits involves three components, a cue, a routine, and a reward.

**The Cue**

The cue is what triggers you to carry out your habit. Cues typically fall into five different categories:

* Emotional state
* Time of day
* Sight
* Location
* Another person

The cue is an incredibly important part of the habit loop because our subconscious mind responds to it automatically. Unfortunately, it takes a lot of effort to counteract this response, which is part of the reason why it is so challenging to change our habits. Most of the time, we are entirely oblivious of the cue that triggers our habits.

**The Routine**

The routine is the action that you carry out when the cue has been triggered. It is part of the habit that you want to encourage or replace. When it comes to your bad habits, many experts think that replacing the bad routine with a healthier one is a lot more effective in breaking the habit than trying to eliminate the routine. This means that you will have an easier time removing the routines that lead to bad habits if you have something to fill the void.

**The Reward**

While it might not seem obvious, every habit that you have ended in a reward. Even the habit of brushing your teeth every night has a reward, which is the freshness you feel in your mouth. If a reward is positive, your mind will remember the habit and want to repeat it. A reward can be anything but is most commonly associated with a feeling, milestone, or something else tangible.

**The Craving**

When you repeat a habit over and over again and are consistently rewarded, your brain will start to develop a craving. The craving is essentially the fuel for the habit loop and is what makes the habit stick for the long term. When the habit loop isn't receiving the craving, it requires more effort for it to be completed.

You can use this habit loop framework to deconstruct any habit that you have, both good and bad, and use the information to either eliminate the bad ones or create new good ones.