

10/8/2023

Welcome – Prayer

Habits – there's different kinds of habits

- Daily – Brushing teeth, tying shoes
  - Behavioral – actions & behaviors that become automatic thru repetition
  - walking, exercising, practicing a musical instrument
- Emotional – reactions to our external world
  - stress → anger
  - stress → eating junk food (comfort foods)
- Cognitive Habits – thought patterns / mental processes that form over time
  - overthinking
  - perfectionism
  - negative self-talk
- Social Habits – involve interactive behaviors
  - Maintain eye contact when talking w/ someone
  - Showing empathy or
  - Listening intently when someone is talking vs ([FarvaNotListen.mp4](#))

neural pathways. When we perform a habitual action, a neural pathway is activated, creating a connection between a cue or trigger, the routine itself, and the resulting reward. This process is known as the habit loop.

This loop can be created, and if it's a 'bad' habit this loop must (and can) be broken.

We gave the example of the drunk in Proverbs 23 that gets the cue, does the drinking routine, feels the rewards, then wakes up and follows the cue again, repeating the cycle.

Harvard says <https://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2018/dopamine-smartphones-battle-time/>

- Adults spend ave 2-4h / day on social media tapping away
- feel the vibration of their phone when they don't even have it on them

Do you think "they" – social media companies and gadgetry manufacturers try to get us addicted to their products for our good?

Does this addiction transfer our wealth and the control of our lives over to them?

NOOOO that's a conspiracy theory

Because we work every day and have never given this a moment's thought.

But some people who have PhDs DO think about this stuff, all their lives, for the above stated purpose.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4826767/>

It's called Dopamine reward prediction error coding

It's a neurological feedback system that corporate interests have exploited in social engineering the masses for their own gain and control. And you are the lab rat.

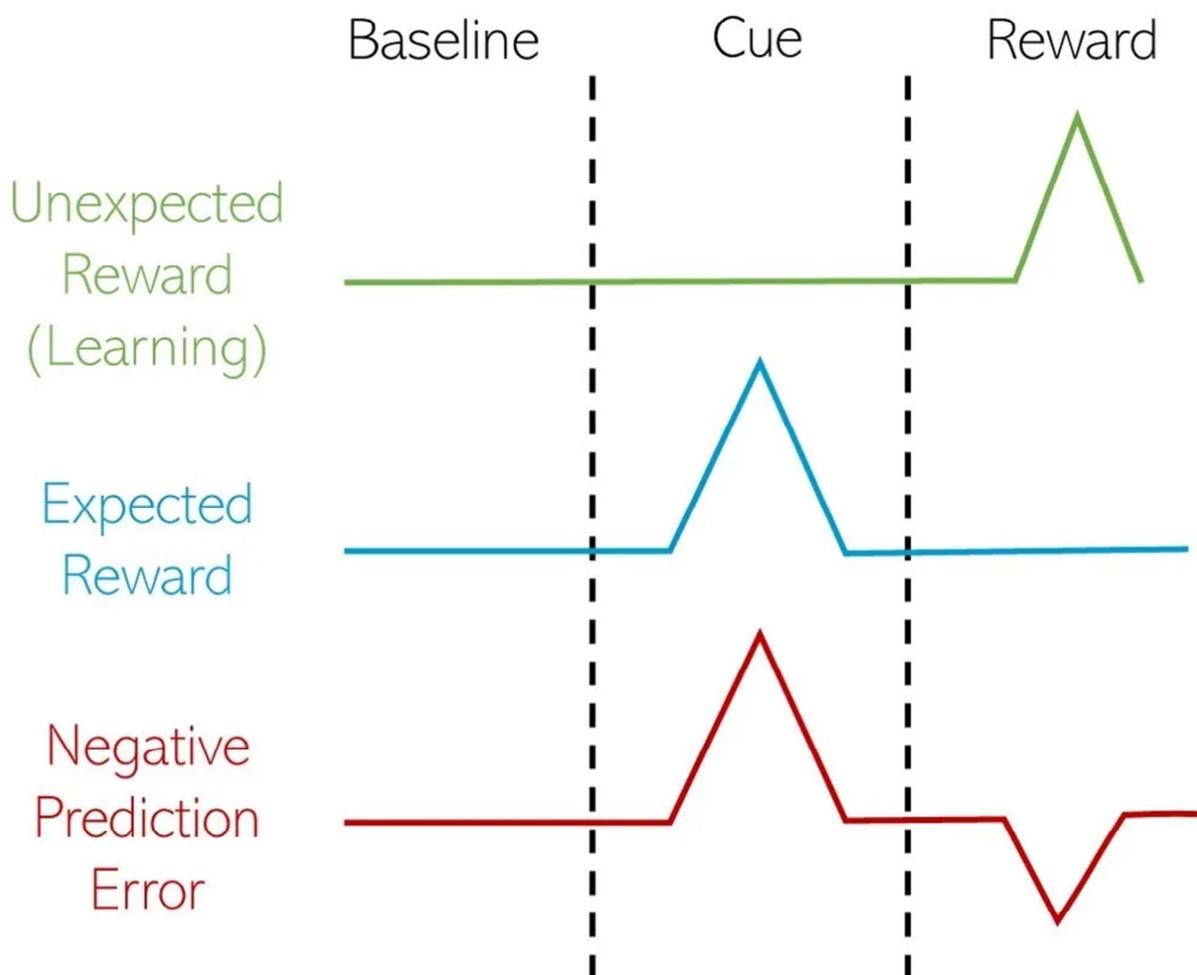
Casino owners have done this forever

(below)

**Green** Line – unexpected rewards – (from NIH study) you're in front of a Japanese vending machine w/ 6 soft drink cans but you want a certain Black Currants drink. You're pretty sure you won't get it, so you pay/press and the wrong one comes out.

- Then a 2<sup>nd</sup> time, but the right one comes out – SURPRISE!!! – you have a dopamine spritz that teaches you which button to push. You'll definitely be back!
- The blue line – From then on, you know to press the 2<sup>nd</sup> button to get your reward. Upon cue (you're thirsty) you press and it comes out but you KNOW you'll get the right can so there's reward right there.
- The red line – 2 weeks later you knowingly (cue) press the 2<sup>nd</sup> button but some buffoon restocked the machine wrong and a horrible flavor comes out (negative reward). You pay/press until you find where the Black Currant juice is and you're back on track. Like a mouse in a maze.

## DOPAMINE ACTIVITY



psychologist B.F. Skinner in the 1930's studied & introduced the concept of Variable Reward Schedules he found that mice respond most frequently to reward-associated stimuli when the reward was administered after a varying number of responses, precluding the animal's ability to predict when they would be rewarded. Humans are no different; if we perceive a reward to be delivered at random, and if checking for the reward comes at little cost, we end up checking habitually e.g. a gambling addiction. If you pay attention, you might find yourself checking your phone at the slightest feeling of boredom, purely out of habit. Programmers work very hard behind the screens to keep you doing exactly that.

60 Minutes interview with Tristan Harris, fmr Google Product Mgr, given by CIA Agent Anderson Cooper entitled *What is "brain hacking"? Tech insiders on why you should care*

Instagram's notification algorithms will sometimes withhold "likes" on your photos to deliver them in larger bursts. So when you make your post, you may be disappointed to find less responses than you expected, only to receive them in a larger bunch later on. Your dopamine centers have been primed by those initial negative outcomes to respond robustly to the sudden influx of social appraisal. This use of a variable reward schedule takes advantage of our dopamine-driven desire for social validation, and it optimizes the balance of negative and positive feedback signals until we've become habitual users.

Are habits good? Are they bad? Explain

How long does it take to make or break a habit?

- Book - *Do It For A Day – How to make or break any habit in 30 days*
  - There is some debate as to how long it takes to make or break a habit. Estimates range from 21 days to 254 days.

Is a habit in one area, or does the effect of a habit live in isolation or is there spillover into other areas of your life? (can a habit in one thing affect your lives in other areas you weren't expecting?) (discussion)

How habits spill over into other areas of our lives

- I read a few books on habits.
- Not like scripture which always = 100% silver & gold
- Extrabiblical books aren't BAD, they're just 10# sand to find 1 lb gold or silver  
Ecclesiastes 12: 11The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. 12But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.
  - **Why? Ec 1:18** Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain.

Slight detour – the words of the wise are like what??

What is a goad? What's its purpose?

- for thick-skinned animals that won't respond to the gentle prodding you & I (physically) would
- It sticks in the animal, deep enough to cause discomfort
- it's purpose is to change its position / get it to move

This is a metaphor. **Why might this metaphor have been chosen?**

Because the Word of God – (sharper etc) through the power & influence of the Holy Spirit can cut/prod us to get us to change our position.

Heb 10:24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds

Is this word 'stimulate' like a quick backrub to make you feel better so you go bring the trash can back from the curb?

Cognate: 3948 parokysmós – a provocation which literally jabs (cuts) someone so they "must" respond

