

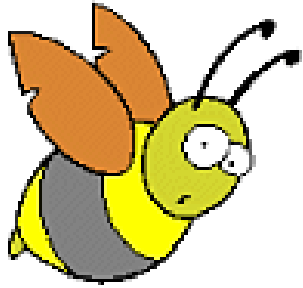


# How to Build Better Behaviors— Successfully

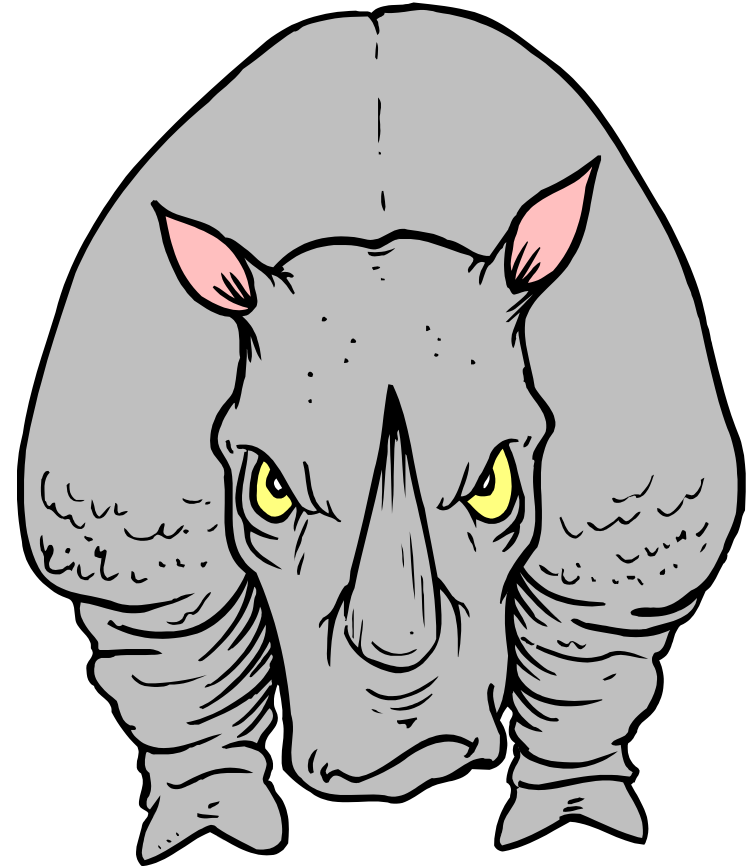
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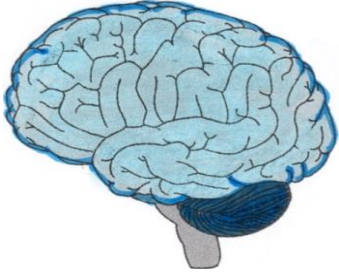


9-18



***My Mum says we  
can grow up to be  
whatever we choose?  
How come you chose  
to be angry and  
out of shape?***



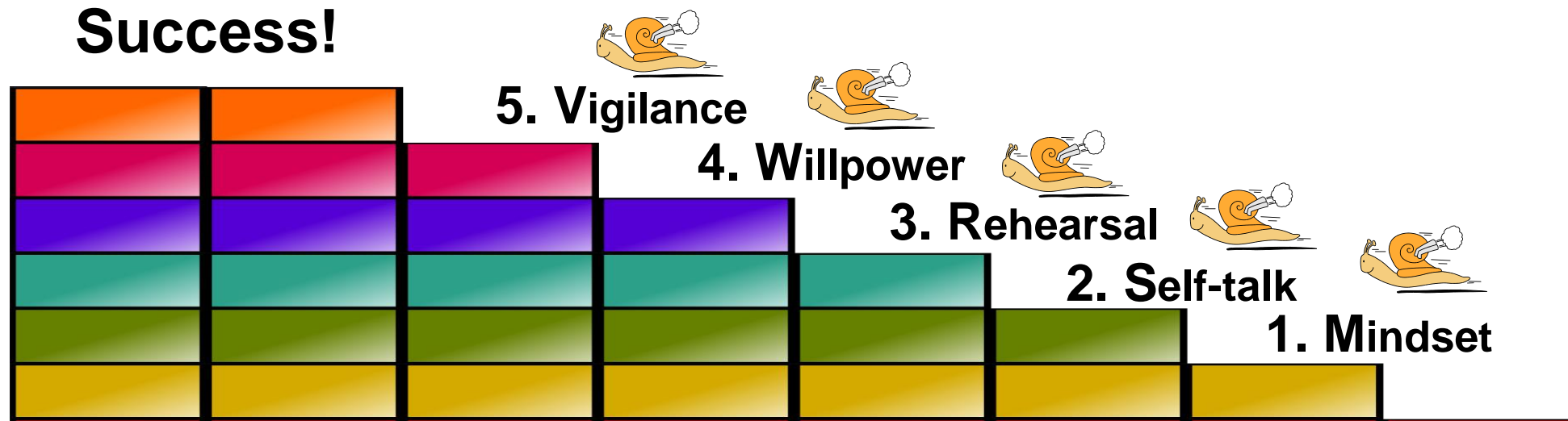


**Many fail to create better behaviors because they misunderstand underlying components and key steps—even when they do understand they often fail to use willpower to be consciously and consistently successful**

**Everything involves choice; some *choose* by default, taking the easy way and failing to develop a growth mindset and positive self-talk patterns—all of which is a type of choice**

***If you can say it and see it, you can achieve it***

# 5 Steps to Building Better Behaviors— Successfully!



*‘My Snails Race With Vigor’*

**Step #1: Mindset** - a mental attitude that predetermines your responses; a set of opinions about something that strongly influences your inclinations

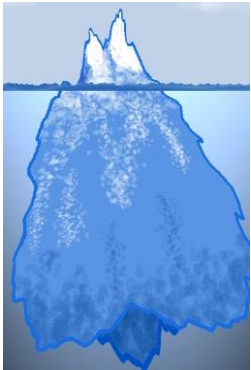
Your mindset establishes your direction, tells you where you're headed on the map of your life, and gets your brain on board



Everything starts in the brain—it begins with a mindset

**“If you can see it you can achieve it”**

**Think of your conscious mind as the 10-20% of the iceberg that sticks up out of the water and your subconscious mind as the larger portion submerged below**

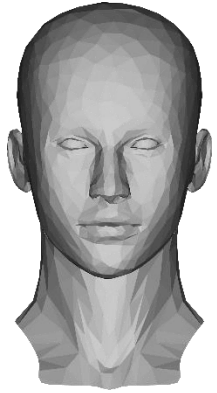


**Your massive subconscious mind (80% of brain tissue plus your body) is always thinking and has an uncanny sense of whether you're really serious**



***If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right***

**If you think you can, your brain mobilizes its considerable resources to help you; if not, it does nothing . . .**



***FIXED* mindset:** individuals think that who they are is carved in stone—when they perceive failure, they feel unlucky, worthless, blame others or circumstances, and often give up

***GROWTH* mindset:** individuals believe that improvement is possible; they learn information, practically apply it and turn it into knowledge, rehearse, learn from their experience, are aware and vigilant, course-correct as needed—and improve



***Having a growth mindset doesn't force you to pursue something. It just tells you that you can develop your skills—it's still up to you whether or not you want to.***

**—Carol S. Dweck PhD, *Mindset***

**You develop your mindset early in life from:**

- **What people say *to* and *about* you**
- **What you observe your care providers actually doing (their actions and behaviors)**





Teacher said to 4-6 year olds: “You choose: you can redo an easy jigsaw puzzle or you can try a harder one.”



Children with a **Fixed-mindset** chose to redo the same puzzle because they wanted to succeed and look smart

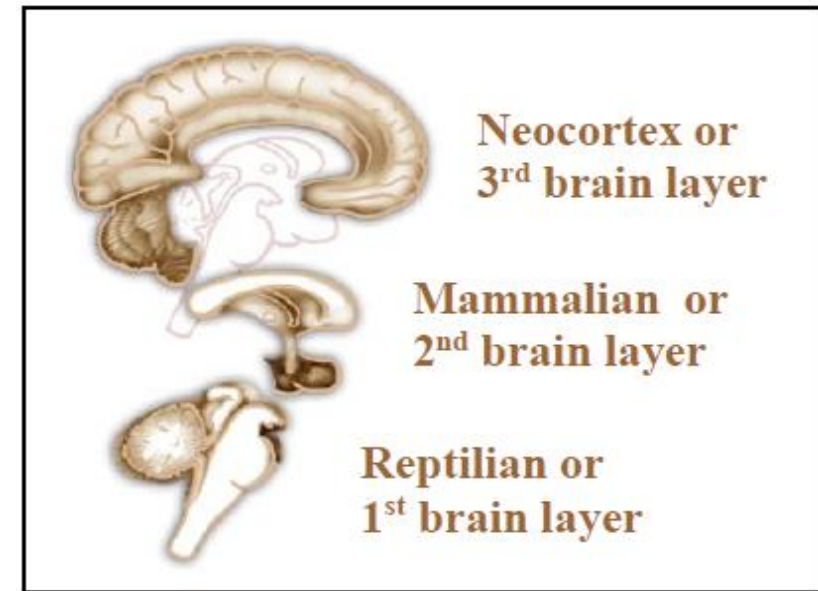
Those with a **Growth-mindset** chose the new harder puzzle so they could stretch themselves, learn, improve, and become smarter



## **Step #2: Self-Talk – How you tell your brain what to do**

**The neocortex or 3<sup>rd</sup> brain layer “thinks” in pictures based on the words you hear or use, silently or aloud**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> brain layers do not use language, per se, but they do perceive the pictures created by the 3<sup>rd</sup> brain layer—and they tend to follow the picture that was created first**



# ***“Don’t think about the white bear”***



- 1. What is the instruction?**
- 2. What is the mental picture?**
- 3. How do you follow the instruction?**
- 4. What is it you really wanted to have happen?**

**A representation of a white bear goes into your brain’s working memory and you will likely think about it even more frequently . . .**

**—Daniel M. Wegner, PhD *White Bear Phenomenon***

**Negative words and instructions are a 2-step process!**

**If the brain understands “don’t,” it may try to convert the 1st picture into a “what-to-do” picture—but if it’s an abstract statement (*“Don’t be such an idiot!”*) it may fail to create an accurate replacement picture**

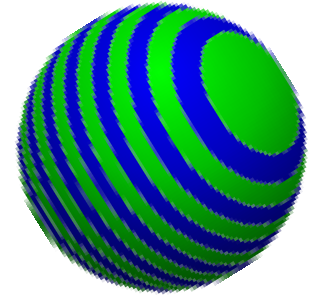
**If the brain misses the *don’t*, it follows the first picture it created**

***“Don’t touch the stove!”***



**Positive words and instructions are a one-step process  
("Don't" versus "You are giving. . .")**

**They tell you what *to do* and what you "see" in  
your mind's eye is more likely what you'll get**



***Your brain can only do what it thinks it can do***

**—Tanzi and Chopra, *Super Brain***

- **The Lord's Prayer tells you what to do —Scripture**
- **Whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and  
of good report.... think on these things —Apostle Paul**

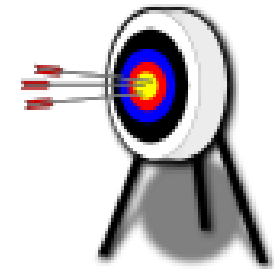
Which “word picture” is likely to be more effective?

Sam, don't yell at the children! Or -  
*Sam, speak kindly to the children*



I don't want to keep drinking sodas! Or -  
*Paul, you drink water and feel good*

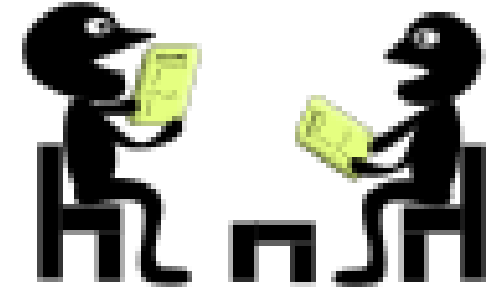
Don't forget your homework! OR –  
*Mary, remember to take your homework with you*



Don't miss the target! OR -  
*Jim, you are hitting the bull's eye*

How do you talk to yourself?

How do you talk to others?



- **Use short, positive, present-tense words**
- **Stop talking about what you do not want to have happen and only say what you want to have happen**
- **Speak as if the desired behavior is already in place and happening right now—this is critical for altering behavior**

**Ethan Kross, PhD: Participants had 5 minutes to prepare and give a 5-minute speech (½ used “I” and ½ used their “given name” and “you”)**



**Kross found that using ‘I’ and ‘me’ subjectively hooks into your ego and self-esteem level; while using a ‘*given name*’ and ‘*you*’ empowered participants, so that what others saw as a threat, they saw as a challenge**

**Your brain is a ‘sponge’ — ‘*given name*’ and ‘*you*’ helps depersonalize things slightly and indicates that you are directing your brain and mind**

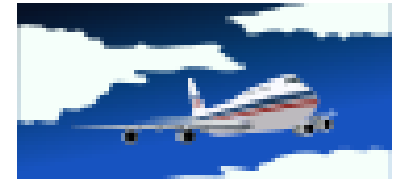


# Step #3: Rehearse



**Life-boat drill is actual rehearsal**

**Airline video is virtual rehearsal**



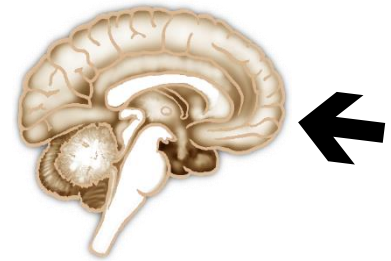
**Reinforce actual rehearsal with virtual rehearsal to speed the learning process**

**Use virtual rehearsal to prepare in advance and enhance the likelihood of success when actual rehearsal is impossible or impractical**

**Mirror neurons** in the prefrontal cortex fire (activate) when you perform an action personally AND when you watch or observe – watching *changes* your brain

**Mentally picturing yourself doing the behavior can speed and reinforce learning**

- **Real piano practice for 2 hours a day for 7 days reshaped the brain's motor cortex**
- **Imagining playing (2 hours a day for 7 days) caused the same reshaping**

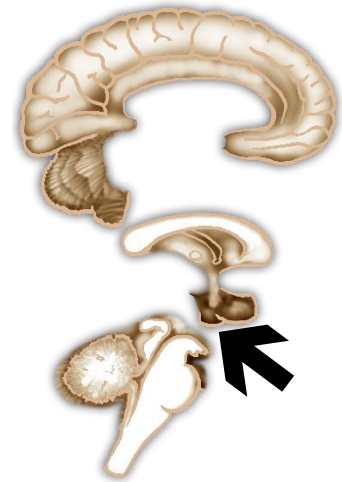


**Step #4: Willpower** - provides energy and perseverance to help you attain a specific goal—a function of the prefrontal cortex that matures by the mid- to late-twenties

Although it may be easier to access willpower after that age and implement it consistently from that point onward, hopefully you've been developing and honing your decision-making and willpower skills since childhood . . .



Willpower RARELY if ever works well to *deprive* yourself of something you already do for gratification—like trying to stop a habit that is resulting in negative outcomes, especially one that involves addictive behaviors by triggering the brain reward system



Willing yourself NOT to do something puts the thing you don't want to do in working memory and you think constantly about it, which tends to increase the behavior

—Daniel M. Wegner PhD

**Consistently exhibit the new behavior for 12 weeks—mark it off on a calendar—by then the behavior is usually firmly in place**

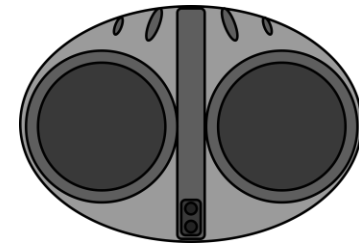


**If your new behavior was a replacement for an old behavior that was resulting in negative outcomes, eventually the replacement behavior can become as strong or stronger than the old behavior—then just keep on keeping on . . .**

**Note: the outline or memory of the old behavior may never completely disappear and can be reactivated ...**

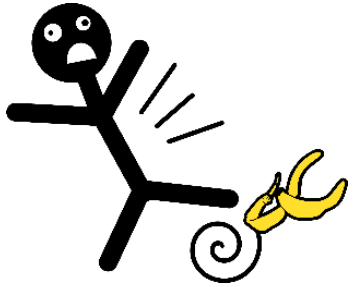
**Step #5: Vigilance** - Train yourself to be aware of your behavior quickly, as it is happening, if not before, and not six days or weeks or months from now

Remove anything from the environment that is unhelpful to your new behavior (e.g., avoid sugar and yet your freezer is stocked with ice cream); keep only what will help you stay on track in your home, office, or vehicle



*Awareness is the first step on the continuum  
of positive change* —Oliver Wendell Holmes

**Mindful awareness (vigilance) is the price of success—it is very simple although not always easy**



**If you slip off your chosen path, get right back on it—not tomorrow or next week but *NOW*—and course-correct as necessary**

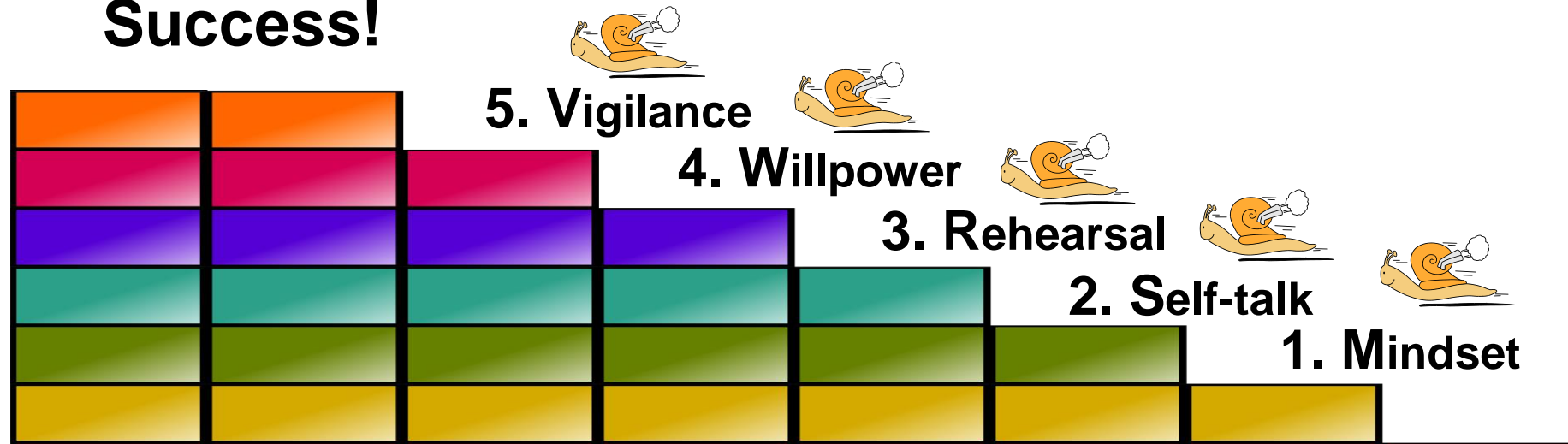
**Continually affirm and thank your brain for helping you develop and maintain the new behavior**

***Arlene, you are thankful your brain is helping you ....***

***Health is not a chance; health is a choice—  
and only you can choose it***

**—Raymond Francis**

**Success!**



***'My Snails Race With Vigor'***



# I Am Habit!

**It is mighty hard to shake me, in my brawny arms  
I take thee, I can either make or break thee—**

**I am habit**

**Through each day I slowly mold thee, soon my tightening  
chains enfold thee, then it is with ease I hold thee—**

**I am habit**

**I can be both good and vile, I can e'er be worth  
your while, or the cause of your decial—**

**I am habit**



Of t' I've proved myself a pleasure, proved myself a  
priceless treasure, or a menace past all measure—

**I am habit**



Harmless though I sometimes seem, yet my strange force  
is like a magnet, like a great and greedy dragnet—

**I am habit**

Though you sometimes fear or doubt me, no one yet has  
lived without me, I am present all about thee—

**I am habit**

Choose me well when you are starting, seldom is an easy  
parting, I'm a devil or a darling—**I am habit!** —Anonymous