



# JIM HARSHAW, JR.

*Clarity of Action. Peace of Mind.*

Success for the Athletic-Minded Man Podcast

Action Plan Episode #487

## **How to Break Bad Habits and Build Better Ones in 30 Days**

Imagine raising your kid next to a chimp, thinking that it will learn human habits—only to realize your baby starts acting like the chimp instead.

Wild, right?

That's exactly what happened in an experiment and it's proof of one powerful truth: *our environment shapes us more than we think.*

In this episode of "Success for the Athletic-Minded Man" podcast, I take that lesson and flip it into an action plan for *breaking bad habits and building better ones*— in just 30 days.

From the science of the cue-routine-reward cycle to the surprising role of your environment (spoiler alert: it might be holding you back), I'll walk you through the seven steps you need to transform your habits— and your life.

We'll explore why understanding your "*why*" matters, how to use friction to your advantage, why surrounding yourself with the right people can make or break your progress, and more!

By the end of this episode, you'll have a clear, actionable plan to kickstart your habit transformation— and a free worksheet to help you stay on track.

Whether you want to boost your fitness, focus on your goals, or just feel more in control of your day, it all starts here. Ready to make your future self proud? Let's dive in!

### **Top Quotes From This Episode**

*"Lower your goal. Start small. Make it winnable. [Because it] builds traction, it builds confidence, it builds momentum."*

*"Commit to something. Don't wait until you feel like doing it. Just make the damn commitment."*

*"If you want to break old habits, get around people who are doing the right habits."*

## Show Notes

This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:

- **Fundamentals of Habits (3:00):** Discover the essential principles of habits, including the cue-routine-reward cycle explained in "The Power of Habit" by Charles Duhigg.
- **The Surprising Power of Habits and Environment (7:29):** What happens when a child is raised alongside a chimpanzee? This experiment reveals how deeply our habits and environment shape us.

### Seven Strategies for Breaking Bad Habits and Creating New Ones

1. **Understand Your Why (9:38):** Identify the deeper motivation behind your desired habit change. Are you doing it for better health, to set an example for your kids, or to feel more confident at work? Defining your "why" will keep you grounded and motivated when challenges arise.
2. **Start Small (11:44):** Many fail to change habits because their goals are too ambitious from the start. Instead, lower the bar to something manageable. For example, if you want to start running, commit to a five-minute jog instead of a full mile. These small wins create confidence and momentum, making it easier to scale up gradually.
3. **Replace Old Habits (13:21):** Instead of simply trying to stop a bad habit, replace it with a better one that fulfills the same need. For example, if you typically unwind with alcohol after work, swap it with kombucha, tea, or sparkling water. This substitution satisfies the cue and reward of the original habit without the negative consequences.
4. **Use Friction to Your Advantage (14:34):** Adjust the "friction" in your environment to either discourage bad habits or encourage good ones. For example:
  - Increase friction for bad habits: Store junk food out of reach or delete social media apps from your phone.
  - Decrease friction for good habits: Lay out your workout clothes the night before or place a water bottle on your desk to remind you to hydrate.
5. **Commit to Something (16:48):** Stop waiting for the "right time" or the perfect mood to start. Whether it's signing up for a marathon, joining a class, or setting a goal with a friend, making a firm commitment creates accountability and forces action.
6. **Invest in Yourself (18:28):** Sometimes, spending money or resources can significantly boost your chances of success. Buy a gym membership, hire a

coach, or invest in tools like habit-tracking apps. The financial or emotional investment creates a sense of responsibility and raises the stakes, making you more likely to follow through.

- 7. Surround Yourself With the Right People (20:19):** Surround yourself with people who already practice the habits you want to adopt. Being around like-minded individuals makes it easier to stay motivated and inspired. Over time, their positive habits will influence you by osmosis.

### **List of Resources Mentioned in the Episode**

["The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business"](#) by Charles Duhigg

["Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones"](#) by James Clear

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