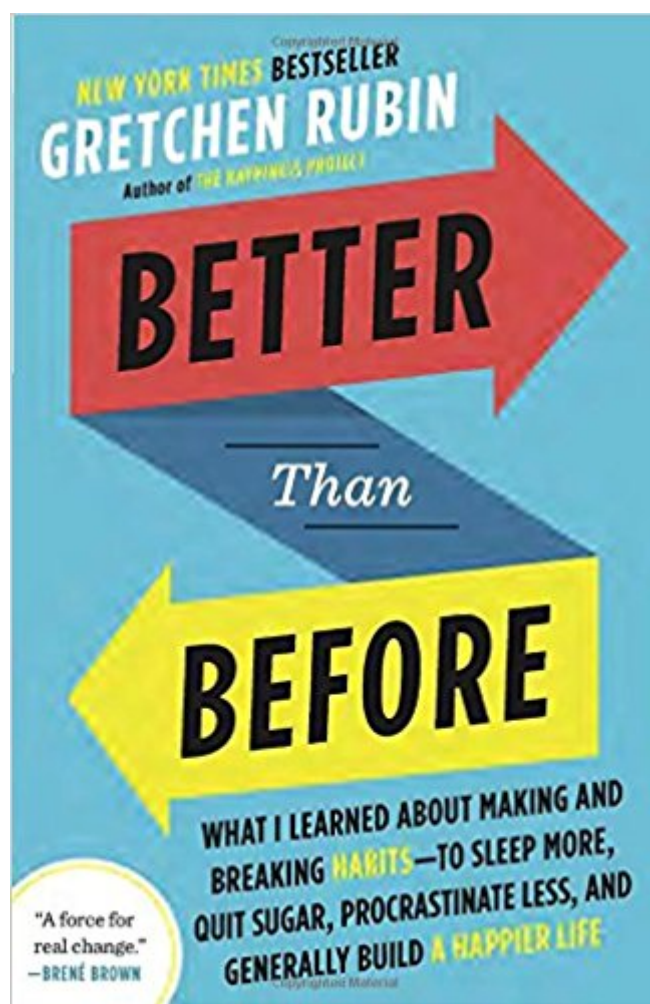


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# Better Than Before: What I Learned About Making And Breaking Habits--to Sleep More, Quit Sugar, Procrastinate Less, And Generally Build A Happier Life





## Synopsis

New York Times Bestseller • A Washington Post Bestseller • The author of the blockbuster New York Times bestsellers, *The Happiness Project* and *Happier at Home*, Gretchen Rubin's answer: through habits. Habits are the invisible architecture of everyday life. It takes work to make a habit, but once that habit is set, we can harness the energy of habits to build happier, stronger, more productive lives. So if habits are a key to change, then what we really need to know is: How do we change our habits? *Better than Before* answers that question. It presents a practical, concrete framework to allow readers to understand their habits—and to change them for good. Infused with Rubin's compelling voice, rigorous research, and easy humor, and packed with vivid stories of lives transformed, *Better than Before* explains the (sometimes counter-intuitive) core principles of habit formation. Along the way, Rubin uses herself as guinea pig, tests her theories on family and friends, and answers readers' most pressing questions—oddly, questions that other writers and researchers tend to ignore: Why do I find it tough to create a habit for something I love to do? Sometimes I can change a habit overnight, and sometimes I can't change a habit, no matter how hard I try. Why? How quickly can I change a habit? What can I do to make sure I stick to a new habit? How can I help someone else change a habit? Why can I keep habits that benefit others, but can't make habits that are just for me? Whether readers want to get more sleep, stop checking their devices, maintain a healthy weight, or finish an important project, habits make change possible. Reading just a few chapters of *Better Than Before* will make readers eager to start work on their own habits—even before they've finished the book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“We are totally comfortable calling Gretchen Rubin’s new book, *Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives*, life-changing. Better Homes & Gardens “If anyone can help us stop procrastinating, start exercising or get organized, it’s Gretchen Rubin. The happiness guru takes a sledgehammer to old-fashioned notions about change. Parade “It’s exciting to find a self-help book that’s not only full of eye-opening insight but also provides practical tips to help you procrastinate and stress less, exercise and eat more healthfully, and spend time on activities that matter. We’re really glad that Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*, decided to investigate her affinity for habits, because in the process she’s come up with a great guide to help us lay the foundation of a more satisfying life. Best of all, *Better Than Before* is a really fun read. Rubin’s friendliness, candor, and humor mirror a lively conversation with a best friend. Apple iBooks “The *Happiness Project* lays out life’s essential goals. Her new book, *Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives*, serves as a kind of detailed instruction manual on how to achieve them. New York Times Sunday Book Review “In *Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of Our Everyday Lives*, Gretchen Rubin picks up where [William] James left off, integrating a wealth of insight from psychology, sociology, and anthropology in an illuminating field guide to harnessing the transformative power of habit in modern life. Brain Pickings “Change can be good. Particularly if it helps us live longer, healthier, indeed, happier lives – the objective of Rubin’s latest project. “A. “Chicago Tribune “Author Gretchen Rubin says most people fall into one of four motivation types. Knowing yours is key to taking on new habits. “A. “Lifehacker “Gretchen Rubin [is] lighthearted and inviting – full of insights that sound familiar and advice that sounds less like what you should do and more like what you want to do.... With her focus on taking first steps and creating early successes, this is a refreshing take on how to change stubborn patterns that limit what we can enjoy about our lives. “A. “Audiofile Magazine “Do you have a bad habit you’re trying to shake, or a good one you wish you could cultivate? Gretchen Rubin is one

of the most charming and erudite authors of her generation. Here, she uses her gifts to help you eat right, sleep well, stop procrastinating, and start enjoying all that life has to offer.

—Susan Cain, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Quiet*

“Gretchen Rubin combines deep research and observations from her own life to explain how habits emerge and—more important—how they can change. It’s indispensable for anyone hoping to overhaul how they (almost unthinkingly) behave.”

—Charles Duhigg, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Power of Habit*

“Filled with insights about our patterns of behavior, *Better Than Before* addresses one of life’s big and timeless questions: how can we transform ourselves? In a way that’s thought-provoking, surprising, and often funny, Gretchen Rubin provides us with the tools to build a life that truly reflects our goals and values.”

—Arianna Huffington, founder of The Huffington Post and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Thrive*

“Is there a habit in your life you’d like to change? If so, here’s your first step: Read this book. It’s loaded with practical, everyday tips and techniques that will guide you to success.”

—Dan Heath, *New York Times* bestselling coauthor of *Made to Stick*, *Switch*, and *Decisive*

“Almost everyone wants to be—better—slimmer, smarter, better looking, more interesting, more productive—and we want to know we’re improving, we want the reinforcing evidence. *Better Than Before*, Gretchen Rubin’s new masterpiece, shows us how. Unlike other books on habits, Rubin’s book gives us the specific tools and a blueprint for getting back on track—the fast track.”

—Brian Wansink, Ph.D., *New York Times* bestselling author of *Slim by Design* and *Mindless Eating*

“With bold and original insights, Gretchen Rubin reveals the hidden truths about how to change our habits—from resisting junk food and hitting the gym to ending procrastination and saving money. *Better Than Before* is a gem, and the first habit you should form is reading a chapter every night.”

—Adam Grant, Wharton professor and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Give and Take*

“Gretchen Rubin’s superpower is curiosity. Luckily for us, she’s turned her passionate inquiry to the topic of making and mastering habits. Weaving together research, unforgettable examples, and her brilliant insight, *Better Than Before* is a force for real change. It rearranged what I thought I knew about my habits, and I’m better for it.”

—Brené Brown, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Daring Greatly* and *The Gifts of Imperfection*

Gretchen Rubin, a member of Oprah's SuperSoul 100, is one of the most thought-provoking and influential writers on the linked subjects of habits, happiness, and human nature. She's the author of many books, including the blockbuster New York Times bestsellers, *Happier at Home* and *The Happiness Project*. Rubin has an enormous following, in print and online; her books have sold more than a million copies worldwide, in more than thirty languages, and on her popular daily blog, [gretchenrubin.com](http://gretchenrubin.com), she reports on her adventures in pursuit of habits and happiness. Her podcast "Happier with Gretchen Rubin" was an iTunes "Best of 2015" pick. She was chosen for the 2016 Oprah Super Soul 100 list. Rubin started her career in law, and was clerking for Justice Sandra Day O'Connor when she realized she wanted to be a writer. She lives in New York City with her husband and two daughters. From the Hardcover edition.

I have loved all of Gretchen Rubin's books and pre-ordered this one with great anticipation. It is interesting and can be insightful, but as someone already familiar with habits after reading *The Power of Habit* (highly recommend!!), this had two major flaws for me and I would recommend reading other books on habits first. First, Rubin attempts to break down people's personalities to ascertain what methods will work best for different people, which would be incredibly helpful if her framework of the Four Tendencies worked. For me, it fails because people don't easily fall into those 4 categories - I think it might be more correct to say that in some situations people need external commitment (Obliger), and in other situations those same people are going to reject any rules (Rebel). But I think it's very, very unusual that one person is one "Tendency" in all situations and for this reason, her constant reference to the framework in many ways detracted instead of helped me think about habits and how I might apply the various strategies. As she notes herself, Rubin is a very unique person and I think the fact that she is an Upholder in all situations is probably the exception, not the rule. My second critique is that because Rubin herself is so unique and as a person completely without vice, she isn't able to clearly demonstrate the power of habit. Her method of writing is to combine research with personal stories. In her Happiness books, I found that method to be very successful. Here, however, she can't use herself as a guinea pig because she has few major habits to change; somehow she does not struggle at all with food, sleep, alcohol, exercise, etc. in the way many people do. So instead she uses her strategies to change small habits, which didn't come across as very dramatic to me because they aren't as difficult to change. Had she been able to point to at least one major habit to change and demonstrated the process and the challenges and ultimate success of doing so, it would have been much more compelling. It is as not

hard to set an alarm every day to make yourself meditate as it is to completely change your diet (for most people, that is. For her that somehow was not a struggle). If you are really interested in habits, and you should be because habits are fascinating, I would start with the Power of Habit.

In this book I read things I already knew, but I learned new stuff about creating and establishing habits, too. The author uses an autobiographical style to tell about what she learned through research and experimentation with herself and with others, like her sister. Like other reviewers have said, there is a lot of the author writing about herself which I skimmed over after a while. I wanted to find the nuggets that would be helpful to me, which I was able to do. This book was a worthwhile read. I learned about myths of making and breaking habits, ways that work for some and not for others and why, and new outlooks about how to make habit creating more successful. If you seriously want to break or create habits in your life, this book can give you background information to help you do that.

not what I expected - hoped for some actual tips on mastering habits. She talks about herself the whole time - I made it through 1/2 the book. P-U

If I get anything at all new out of a book it's at least a 4 star read. This one really made me realize something, two things at the very least, that nearly kicked me through the goalposts of life. Not saying what, not going to disrespect the author's work. You have to read it and see if you get something out of it. Before reading this book I was doing affirmations. That was working but some areas were intractable. I had a project to complete, I couldn't get any traction on working on it and I needed to cultivate some habits yesterday if not sooner. I learned self hypnosis. When the affirmations aren't really cutting it I put a habit I need to cultivate on my list for self hypnosis. It's all working nowadays, I'm working on the project and it's coming along fine. I think that Gretchen's book broke up the logjam in my subconscious for me and got me going in a good direction.

I have mixed feelings about this book. On the upside, there are a lot of interesting insights and helpful 'customizable' frameworks that can help you build healthy habits... Such as the Upholder/Obliger/Rebel/Questioner and Abstainer/Moderator concepts. However, all this could be summed up in a dozen pages or so and the takeaway messages would be much more clear and crisp. Unfortunately, personal examples and anecdotes are (over)used for every point. I know way more about Gretchen's life, thoughts, and feelings than I want to... In fact, sometimes it felt like I was

reading her personal diary (at one point she reminded herself of her Number One Commandment: "Be Gretchen"... Come on!) which was uncomfortable and a huge waste of time... so I ultimately had to scroll through pages at a time to just get back to the core messages that could help the READER work on their habits -- and not waste time on hearing how Gretchen and her friends and family were so successful in forming/maintaining their own habits. Not sure if I'd recommend buying the book and wasting your time reading all of it or if I'd just recommend reading reviews and articles that cut through the cr\*p and just explain her basic but very helpful habit forming frameworks, which are truly insightful and applicable to everyday life.

Excellent book to help you form and keep good habits. I love the four tendency framework that Gretchen provides; it really helps to understand why we may struggle to maintain good habits and also identifies habit-forming strategies based on your tendency. The Happier Podcast Gretchen and her sister, Elizabeth Craft, do is a great companion to this book.

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Wake up Refreshed How to Grow More Vegetables, Ninth Edition: (and Fruits, Nuts, Berries,  
Grains, and Other Crops) Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land with Less Water Than  
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