

[Habits: The Why and The How](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on September 27th, 2012

Do you have you a workout habit? When I practiced law in Dallas, I got up at 4:30. got my coffee at 4:45 and at 5:00 AM I entered [Cooper Aerobics Fitness Center](#) to work out. I loved that habit because I felt energized when I got to work and I missed the morning rush hour traffic.

I no longer have the workout habit, but I need to get it back. Last week my orthopedic surgeon and I decided I would get hip replacement surgery. Because I won't be able to travel for sometime thereafter, I have scheduled it for December.

I searched on the internet for ideas to help prepare me for this surgery. I learned it is important to exercise **before** the surgery. So, my plan is to get up earlier every morning at 5:30 and be on the recumbent bike at the fitness facility by 6:00 every day I am in town. I plan on losing one pound per week by this increased exercise and cutting calorie intake to no more than 1500 per day.

Why am I telling you this and what does it have to do with habits? I am telling you because that will greatly increase the chances I will actually workout every morning and eat no more than 1500 calories. You can harass me and hold me accountable. I started Monday. (As you can see, I am not very photogenic early in the morning.)



Here is what it has to do with habits: We all have habits whether they are conscious or not. Now, we automatically put on our seat belts when driving. Years ago it was not a habit, Now, we don't think about it.

Client development may be a habit for you. I became one for me, but only over time. So, what can you do to help make client development at habit?

I am currently reading [The Power of Habit](#) on the Kindle App on my iPad. Here is a New York Times review: [Can't Help Myself 'The Power of Habit,' by Charles Duhigg](#)

I learned a little more about the "science" of habits. I learned about the habit loop. First, there is a cue, a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode and which behavior to use. The there is the routine, which can be physical or mental or emotional. Finally, there is the reward. According to Duhigg, the reward is by far the most important.

In my case, my alarm going off at 5:30 will be the cue, my brain will go into automatic mode and I will get dressed in workout clothes, get my cup of coffee, get in the car and drive to the workout facility. My reward will be the thought of feeling better that day, feeling I will have a more successful recovery from hip surgery and feeling I had the discipline to stick with this routine.

Do you have client development habits? If not create a habit loop. What will be your trigger? Your routine? Your reward?

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.