

5 Critical Keys to Breaking Negative Habits in Your Life

Have you ever noticed a pattern in your life that you can't break out of? Maybe you deal with insecurities and over the years you've just learned to carry them with you. We all have things we need to grow into (or out of) but it's not always as simple as one might think. Maybe you're not even aware of the patterns you're in, but know that you're not living truly fulfilled in life? So much of this has to do with the invisible things we don't always think about. We create ecosystems and patterns with our thought lives, but because it's our "normal" we don't even stop to think anything different. Today I want to speak hope over you that you can break out of negative cycles and live a prosperous life!

What Is an Ecosystem? (And Why Do They Matter?)

Everything that is sustainable has an ecosystem, be it good or bad. So if you notice a pattern in your life, good or bad, chances are it's caused by an ecosystem, which you're likely unaware of. Ecosystems are systems that sustain life, for example: humans breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Trees and plants absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. It's a pretty cool cycle. But ecosystems don't just exist in nature; they exist in our own lives too.

Let's take a look at some ecosystems of the soul. When it comes to managing our inner world, what we cultivate dominates. Think of somebody who deals with feeling unworthy. Usually the ecosystem, or pattern, will look something like this: "I feel unworthy; therefore, I feel ashamed. When I feel ashamed, I hide. When I hide, I feel disconnected. And then when I am disconnected, I feel unworthy again," and so the cycle continues!

The same sustainability exists in the ecosystem of rejection:

“I feel rejected, so I get angry. When I get angry, I lash out. When I lash out, people reject me. When people reject me, I feel rejected, so I get angry again,” and so the ecosystem continues to sustain itself. My point here is that negative ecosystems can turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. Any of these sound familiar?

Spiritual Ecosystems

Not all ecosystems are bad. In fact, we’re created to live the abundant life that Jesus came to give us! The Bible lays out several ecosystems that you can cultivate in your inner world. Romans 5:3-5 says, “We also boast in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces patience, patience produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Here Paul lays out the ecosystem of hope: tribulations bring perseverance. Perseverance brings proven character, which brings hope.

Ecosystems of the Mind

Did you know that what’s on your mind is dictating your destiny? The things you choose to focus on are the things that produce fruit in your life. So, you can’t change your life, but if you will change your thoughts by renewing your mind (Rom. 12:1-2), God will change your life.

5 Steps to Transforming Your Ecosystem

You may be thinking, “OK, Kris, so how do I get out of bad patterns and start cultivating good ones?” Well, I’ll tell you:

1. If you want to change your life, change your attitude.
2. If you want to change your attitude, change your thoughts.
3. If you want to change your thoughts, change your belief system.

4. If you want to change your belief system, change your thinking habits—what you give attention to.
5. If you want to change your thinking habits, change your will.

Now, I want to stop here for a second because we don't live in a culture that recognizes the power of your will. Rather, we live in a world that says, "If I feel it, then I am it." I'd like to propose to you that your feelings are your slave, not your master. You get to tell your emotions what to do, not the other way around.

It's not your wants, but rather your will, that determines your future. So what happens when temptations for negative patterns come in, which usually start in the mind? The Bible says there is no temptation except for what is common to everyone. We all know what it's like to be tempted, but to want something and to will another is what makes us noble. At the end of the day, it's not your wants that change you; it's your will!

Will Yourself Into a Transformed Life

So the next time you realize a pattern in your life that isn't in alignment with God's heart for you, I encourage you to will yourself into the truth. By making a conscious choice of your will, over time you'll change your thinking habits, then your belief system. I bet then you'll notice that you start thinking differently about yourself. For example, the "unvaluable" thoughts will be replaced with your new belief system about yourself. Then your attitude will reflect that, and at the end of the day you'll live a life of valuing yourself, your strengths and the amazing way God created you!

Next week, I'll be sharing some other tools for breaking out of negative ecosystems. For now, I'd love to know: Do you recognize negative ecosystems in your life? How do you break out of them? Tell me about it in the comments below! {eoa}

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