

*Living on WELL Street Blog: “Fix the Feedback Loop and Break Bad Habits”*

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It does not take an Einstein to figure out that, if you keep doing what you've been doing, you will keep getting what you've been getting. Actually, it did take Albert Einstein to say: “Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results.”

Dr. Deepak Chopra suggests in a recent blog (“The Conscious Lifestyle: Rising Above Routine” – link: <http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20121016010515-75054000-the-conscious-lifestyle-rising-above-routine>) that “*routine*” is an “*obstacle to living consciously*” – being self-aware and present in thought and action. Dr. Chopra is not talking about the habits and practices that we consciously choose and which contribute to our health and wellbeing. No, he is challenging the thinking, or lack thereof, that leads to routine actions that fill much of our day.

Dr. Chopra's reasons for avoiding thoughtless routine include:

- It conditions neural circuits in the brain to follow the same familiar patterns, making change difficult.
- It puts us in “auto-pilot” mode where we do not have to think about or reflect on what we're doing.
- It leads to spending large amounts of time “reacting” to all the To-Do's that fill our days.
- It dulls the brain and creates low expectations.
- It compartmentalizes our lives - routine tasks versus what I would rather be doing.

Chopra argues that unless we change the input of, what he calls, our mind's “feedback loop”, we will get stuck in the kind of routine living that denies us the opportunity to be fully conscious and actively pursuing our dreams. He suggests that the kind of positive input that leads to a conscious lifestyle should be: “*fresh, unexpected, surprising, delightful, challenging, inspiring, heartfelt, spontaneous, curious, creative, vital, selfless, and expansive*”. The opposite input: “*repetitive, predictable, conformist, unadventurous, automatic, reactive, dull, boring, exhausting, unchallenging, numb, uninspired, selfish, and mechanical*” leads to routine or a reactive rut.

What to do? Reflect on how you spend your day. Identify if, and when, you typically get into a routine rut. Identify what kind of input is going into your feedback loop. If it needs to be more positive, change your actions/behaviors and your thoughts will follow.

Live WELL!

Michael