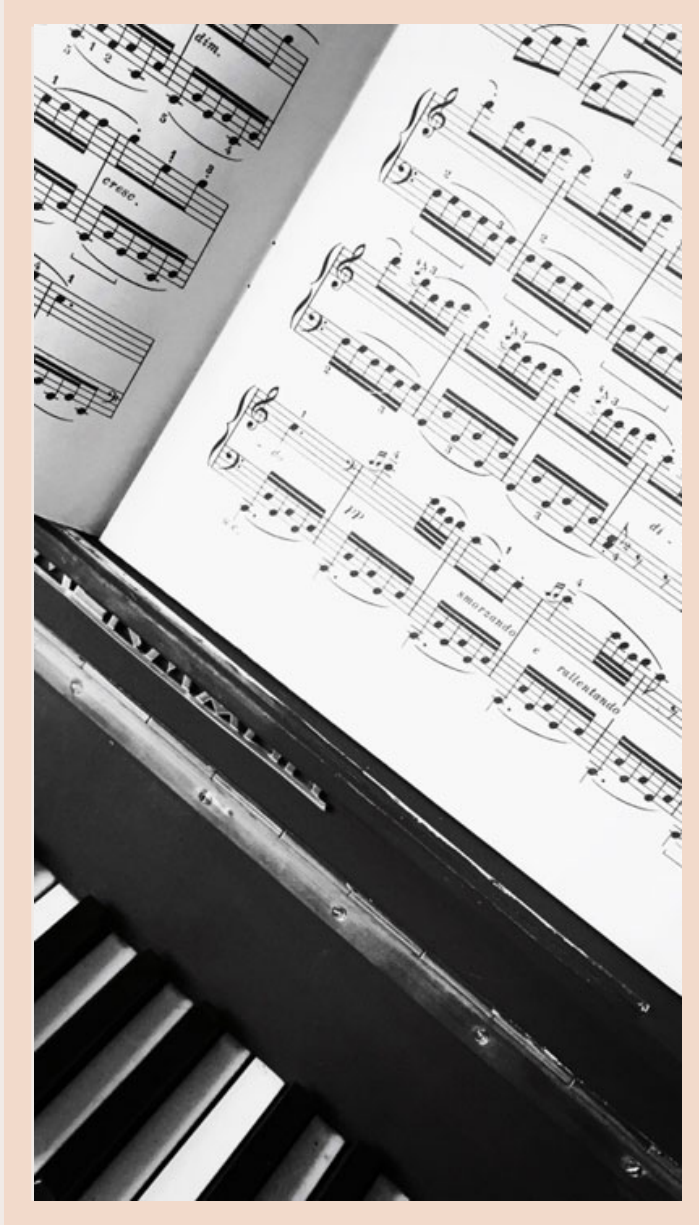


Elegant Alchemy

Life Coaching
with Rima Nouri

Module 5

Consistency



Transcript Lesson 2:
A habitat for
your habits



Change Your Home, Change Your Life!

M5 LESSON 2 Transcript: A Habitat for Your Habits

Bonjour, dear ladies! Welcome to Lesson 2 of Module 5 – Consistency. Today, we are going to explore how your home can become a really hospitable habitat for your habits.

In lesson 1, we established the role of habits and of course how to shape your habits with the help of your home. We talked about your habits like species in a zoo, for which you, as the architect, need to create an environment in which they can thrive!

Now, let's break that down a little bit more: as a rule of thumb, like attracts like. If you want stable and predictable habits, you need to create a stable and predictable environment. So, what's the first thing you need your home to be for your habits to thrive? Well, remember that lesson when we talked about lightness and ease? And we asked how easy is it for you in your home, whatever it is you want to do. That's because nature always gravitates towards easy.

And we humans might tell ourselves that we have to live with categorical imperatives but in the end, we are all bipeds, quadrupeds we are all inherently lazy. And that is actually, I'm not saying the ultimate motivation, but a major and a real, true motivation behind everything we do. And you can call that laziness optimization or return on investment. It sounds better. But why am I breaking into a diatribe against laziness and subsequently ease? It's much more elegant to harness that concept and to set up your home in such a way that it's really easy to do the things you want to do.

So, let's go back to the zoo. And let's take as an example for a species – lions. Fantastic example – really lazy animals and they will not budge unless they absolutely have to. So, whatever it is you want your lion to do you better make sure it is easy to do. In a zoo, what you want your lions to do is be outside where the public can see them. That is the whole point of the zoo, right? For that, you have to make it really easy for them to go to the spot where you want them to be and to stay there. If the lions have to make a huge detour on their feet and walk on uncomfortable ground to get there, well, why would they even bother? So you have to make sure that the lions really have basically, a very smooth passage to wherever it is they want to go.

And you also have to make sure that the lions don't even think twice about where you want them to park their butt. For example, a muddy patch of grass might not be so obvious for them. But if there is a nice, big rock, then they might get it. Maybe you want several rocks of different shades, some attractive you know, like really shapes and forms. You need to make the features in the environment really, really obvious so that the habit gets it "That's where I want to go."

Let me share with you another example that comes to mind. A friend of mine commented on my children, when they were young and were eating so much fruit and her child didn't like fruit. And I asked, "Well, how do you do that at home?" And she said, "Well, after each meal I ask him if she wants a fruit" and he does "Nah!" And I said, "What about the fruit for the rest of the day? Where is it? Where do you store your fruit?" – "It's in the fridge." – "Can the child access the fridge?" – "No."



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“Well, no wonder. It’s not obvious enough, it’s not easy enough. Place the fruit bowl, the big one in a conspicuous place where the child basically doesn’t even think twice before he grabs a fruit.”

That’s what I mean by easy and obvious.

But sometimes you need even more than that. You need to make it even more attractive. So, you need to maybe, I don’t know, cut it into funny shapes or put some coloured sticks in it or make a fruit salad or something like that. For our lions, that would mean maybe you make the rocks really smooth and maybe put in several levels so that they think, “These are attractive rocks.”

Another thing you can do to make your environment more attractive, that is, to connect the environment where you want the habit to happen to an already existing habit that is perceived as attractive. In combination, the new habit will appear much more attractive than it really is. Just stay with our examples.

For example, for children to eat fruit, well, a chocolate fondue, when you dip the little pieces of fruit into it, your fruit bowl will go down like that. Now, of course that is not something you do every day.

For our lions, it might be that you put their dinner on the rocks. Suddenly, they will find the rocks really, really attractive.

But habits, much like lions, are divas.

So, you make sure it’s easy for the lion to get to the rock, it’s a very obvious rock, it’s an attractive rock for a lion, especially when he lies in the sun and sunbathes. So naturally, as the zoo’s architect, you make sure that your rocks fulfill all these criteria. It’s easy, they can go there obviously, it’s nice to sunbathe and visitors can see them. (Again, that’s the whole point of a zoo or your habit). But a lion (read: a habit) you don’t really give a fig about the zoo. All the lion cares about is his enjoyment of lying on the rock.

And, as it turns out, the rock itself is sometimes not attractive and satisfying enough. When you are a lion, freezing your butt off on a rock in November just to please the director of the zoo – is not likely a habit you are going to develop.

The solution: change the environment. For the lion, that means “I’m going back inside when it’s warm and cozy. No one can see me but I don’t care.” As a zoo director, you have a situation here. You can’t force the lion to stay outside, not if you care for his well being.

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So the solution is to make the environment you choose even more attractive and satisfying than what the lion would naturally choose for himself. So the solution and this is actually what they have in the zoo in Paris and many other zoos too: fake rocks which are heatable.

Now, when the lion lies on the rock, he has his belly nice and warm and cosy even in November. So, he has every reason to go there. Visitors can see him and everyone is happy. And that is instant gratification which makes a new habit satisfactory.

And that my friends is how you create a sustainable habit with the help of your environment.

Let's take your worksheet and see how you're going to make that habit in your home. But before you do that, some of you might ask, "That's all very well and good...when I want to create a new habit but what about the habits I want to get rid of?"

Well, it's actually very simple. You just do the exact opposite. You make your environment such that it is really difficult to do that habit. It is the contrary of obvious, it is invisible and really disagreeable and costly to continue with this habit! And you can become as creative in creating a cold wet swamp with sharp stones on the ground and iced rocks to make sure your lion will never, ever ever go there.

But I'm not choosing to dwell on that because you might have noticed that we focus here as elegant alchemists much more on what we want and what works. In most cases, that is way much more elegant and beautiful and simple to get rid of anything unwanted. Remember the example we have with a flowerbed? In a flowerbed full of roses, there is only so much space for a few sad weeds.

Right? Let's go and let's dive into the practical work. Take your worksheet. On a scale of one to ten, you have your one habit, the one you chose in the last lesson, what makes it easy in your home to practise that habit? Give it a number. Write down what works already. And figure out what would be needed, what would be different if your home was one point higher in terms of ease. Then do the same exercise - what in your home suggests that it is the obvious thing to do? What would be different if your home were one point higher? Now, we come to attractive.

What in your home is a mouthwatering feature for your habit? Something that your habit really gets attracted to, excited to, that triggers a sort of automatic response, a sort of George Clooney - Nespresso combo, if you see what I mean.



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And finally what in your home makes executing the habit really satisfying? What kind of immediate reward or instant gratification can your home provide for that habit?

Well, enjoy creating a wonderful heated rock for your habits. We have been looking at creating quality FOR your habits and in the next lesson we are going to look at the quality OF your habits and how that can inspire to uplevel your home - because our work here is always a dance between your life and your home.

