



ACTIVITY: SETTING RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

- Creating a habit is a difficult endeavor. There are so many opportunities for failure that it is important that we remove as many barriers to success as possible.
- One of these barriers are second-order decisions. Those detailed decisions that can create paralysis to change, if we allow it.
- This activity will help concretely answer your secondary questions and give you a rule to follow as you begin your journey to create a new habit.

ESTIMATED TIME

10 minutes

MATERIALS

Required:

- A. Paper
- B. Pen

Background

- Shawn Achor writes in *The Happiness Advantage*, "Whether you're trying to change your habits at work or at home, the key to reducing choice is setting and following a few simple rules. Psychologists call these kind of rules "second-order decisions," because they are essentially decisions about when to make decisions, like deciding ahead of time when, where, and how I was going to workout in the morning." These second-order decisions are the ones that typically paralyze us and prevent us from making lasting change in our lives. By setting rules of engagement there is no decision to be made, we must commit. These rules are a perfect compliment when trying out a new self care habit, be it physical, emotional, or spiritual.
- For example, if you want to spread more positivity in your department you may be questioning when, what, how, and with whom should I be more positive. Setting the rule: "Before starting a meeting I will thank a co-worker for something they have done." will guide you on a path to success.
- Remember that sometimes rules are made to be broken. Once your habit begins to self actualize, think about how you can change the rule to expand your comfort zone



Activity

1. Ask participants to think of a new self care habit they want to begin and write it down. (You may want to reference self care activity from class) This habit can be physical, emotional, or spiritual.
2. Ask participants to share their self care habit with a partner.
3. Considering their new self care habit, ask participants to write one steadfast rule of engagement that they will follow as they begin their new journey.
4. Ask participants to follow their rule.

Discussion Questions/ Key Points

- What habit did you choose, why?
- What area of self care did you choose? Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Other?
- Do you believe your rule is realistic?
- How will you celebrate success of following your rule?

Let's Try This!

Share your rule with at least 3 other people.

Follow-up

Meet again and ask the group how they are progressing with their rule. If people have failed, present it as an opportunity to try a new rule that may be less ambitious.