

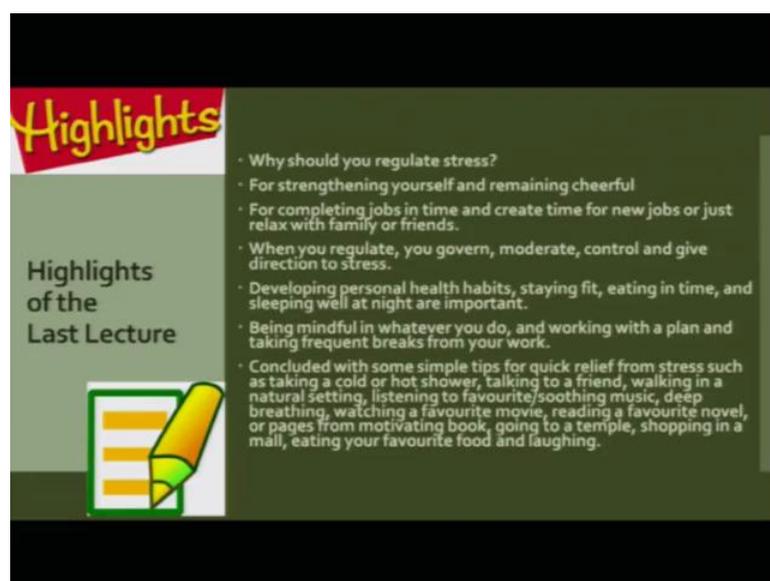
Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture - 13
Habits: Guiding Principles

Hello everyone. Welcome back to my course on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. I am giving this course through NPTEL mooc. We are on the third week and this is the first module. And overall if you look at we have completed 12 lectures and this is the 13 lecture.

This week is going to be another interesting week, another exiting week for you because as I said in the beginning I am found of telling stories and I am going to tell you more stories this week. The reason is that I think that stories are going to make you understand some concepts very clearly not only making you understand them clearly, but it will also not make you forget them so easily. So, that is the reason why I am going to use some interesting (Refer Time: 01:01) and examples. Now what is the topic for this week? This week we are going to discuss about habits to begin with. And then at least three lectures I am just going to focus on the basic concepts of habits and then I just want to continue it how to stop or how to break bad habits and then how to develop good habits.

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Highlights

Highlights of the Last Lecture

- Why should you regulate stress?
- For strengthening yourself and remaining cheerful
- For completing jobs in time and create time for new jobs or just relax with family or friends.
- When you regulate, you govern, moderate, control and give direction to stress.
- Developing personal health habits, staying fit, eating in time, and sleeping well at night are important.
- Being mindful in whatever you do, and working with a plan and taking frequent breaks from your work.
- Concluded with some simple tips for quick relief from stress such as taking a cold or hot shower, talking to a friend, walking in a natural setting, listening to favourite/soothing music, deep breathing, watching a favourite movie, reading a favourite novel, or pages from motivating book, going to a temple, shopping in a mall, eating your favourite food and laughing.

Now as usual before I begin this week's lecture, let us just quickly go back to the last lecture of the last week and then just try to identify what I discussed in the last week. The last week we focused on stress and then I was trying to in pinch on your mind that stress regulation is one important soft skill you need to develop and that will make you very highly demandable either in personal or professional success. And then towards giving you some suggestions and tips about regulating stress. And I overall told you that in order to regulate stress. So, you need to do certain things and then I give you tips, and why should you do that? Basically you regulate stress for strengthening yourself and remaining cheerful, it is ultimately for you not for fighting or learning how to fight with the other people and then resolve conflicts and then reduce your stress; it is about you.

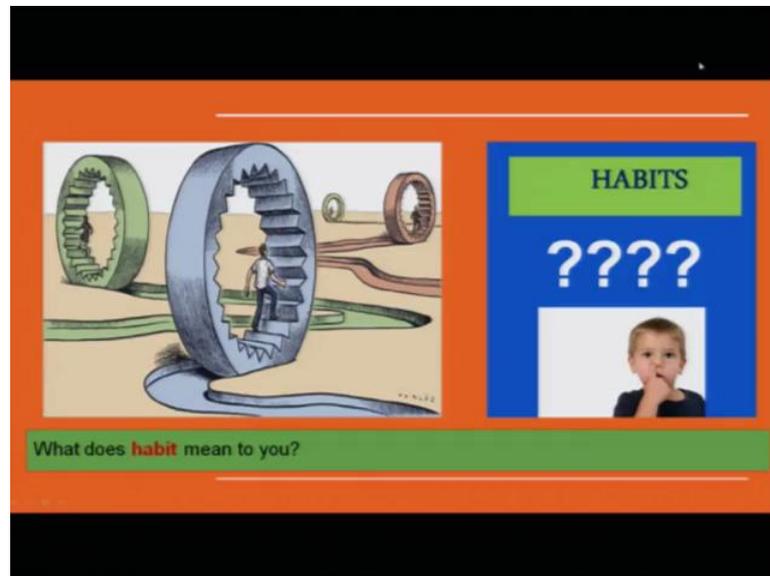
And then it also helps you in terms of completing jobs in time and creates time for new jobs or just relaxes with family or friends. When you regulate have did not want to use the word like breaking stress or killing stress, but I wanted to give emphasis to the fact that you govern, you moderate, you control and give direction to your stress. Developing personal health habits are prompts just when you are able to control stress, you will stay fit you will be able eat in time and you will be able to sleep well at night. And these are all very important aspects of regulating your stress.

I also said you should try to be mindful in whatever you do and you should worked with the plan and then you should take frequent breaks from you work also. Both in the sense that when you work for 24 hours leaving that 8 hour for sleep, suppose you stretch yourself for 13 hours and all that so at least you should give break at least 10 minutes in between just go out have a cup of coffee or even just go out take a slow walk somewhere in the lawn or just even just stand on your balcony and take view on the nature that is outside; it will refresh you come back and then continue with your work. So, the breaks will actually try to regulate stress or not accumulates stress you are mind.

Now, I concluded with some simple tips for quick relief from stress, such as taking a cold or hot shower, talking to your friend working in a natural setting, listen to favorite soothing music, deep breathing, watching a favorite movie or reading a favorite novel or pages even for motivating books some of which I have been discussing in the course throughout, going to your (Refer Time: 04:23) place it could be temple or place where you can meditate. For some people it could be even shopping in a mall for some more it just eating their favorite food and overall nothing will be stress just, but laughing. So,

keep laughing and make people laugh also so. So in that way you will try to balance stress in both your personal and interpersonal relations.

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Now, coming to our main topic habits for this week and this week in particular we will look at how I want to define habits or rather how I want you to understand habits in terms of looking at this as part of our developing soft skills and personality and why do we need to address this at this point time. And then the way I am going to look at habits once again is not the way it is been discussed in general psychological books. But then it is like with lot of practical wisdom and how we need to deal with this habit both for channelizing our positive energy as well as per controlling the negative think that is in every human being.

Now in this one as I said will try to identify define habit and then particularly try to understand how we can identify good and bad habits. Now to begin with what does habit mean to you, think about it, think about what kind of habits you have and what does it mean to you. To me whether it is a good habit or it is the bad habit I like the picture that I got from internet it was may be published sometimes in New York Times or some other newspaper. Now if you look at the picture that is there its look likes it is something that you keep going on in the kind of rut, a kind of path beaten track where you keep moving and then without any change, but at the same time you have a feeling that you are

making some kind of movement you are claiming stairs, but often this movement is without any progress.

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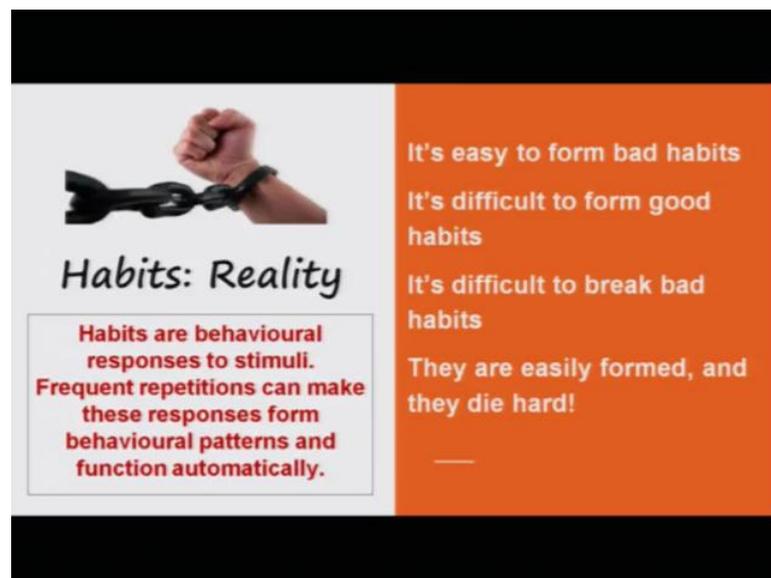


So, let us look at habit and then I would like to tell you that for some of you or for most you for most people habit is something they do normally, spontaneously, regularly, without paying attention, without thinking or bothering about it. Sometimes it just completely unconsciously you do not even know that you are doing something out of habit. It just shares habit that you are formed and then its making you do something which even you do not know.

Some examples look at the pictures for example, biting a nails sometimes you do not do it consciously psychologist would attribute certain thinks like nervousness or lack of interest so many thinks can be attributed. But whatever psychological reasons are being attributed to that biting nails is actually a habits. And so is picking once nose. Again sometimes people do it deliberately; sometimes they do not know that they are doing it in public and before others. Some kids, why some kids most of the kids and kids in general they cannot resist eating chocolates. Even if they have a tooth ache it will be very difficult for them to control it. A small theft at home starts with stealing chocolates or stealing cakes or stealing this kind of tasty eatable. Now habit is something that you do thinking that you are rather in control, but you actually do it most of the times without any control unconsciously.

Most of the times people think that they can form a habit as well as break it easily; they also presume that breaking a habit can be done as and when they wanted. Now I should tell you is a presumption and because of these presumptions we are actually forming habits good or bad. But what do I want you to think about habit let me come to it.

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Habits in reality or easy to form; particularly it is easy to form in terms of bad habits. Before I tell more about that let me try to tell you; what are habits, how can we define habits? Habits are behavioral responses to stimuli that means, the way your body your verbal nonverbal movement as expressed in terms of behavior and how it is responding to some kind of stimulus something that is induced from the environment, how are you responding to that. Now what is interesting about habit is that frequent repetitions can make these responses form behavioral patterns and functioned automatically. This means initially you start forming some habits and then after sometime the habits starts functioning automatically. Whenever it sees a stimulus and then there is something is triggered in your system in your brain and then it is giving a response or a reaction.

Now that is habit in reality, but as I have put in the figure its rather chaining you to certain behavioral pattern, is there an escape or no escape so that we will think about in terms of good habits and bad habits. As I said it is easy to form bad habits, but it is difficult to form good habits. It is difficult to break bad habits, minds to it easy to form

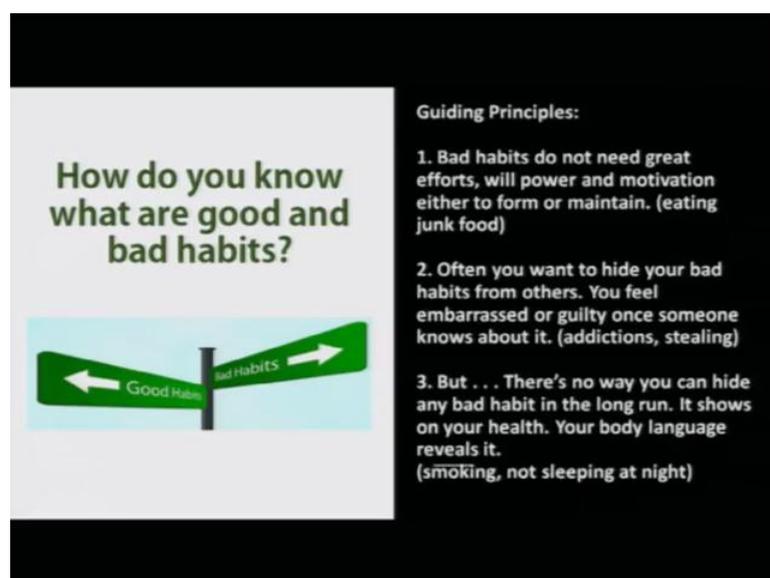
bad habits, but difficult to break bad habits. And they are easily formed, but it is the bad habits they die real hard; they do not go from you so easily.

So take for example smoking, it is just starts as a fun in a school days or college days and then it continues, let say even till the time of marriage. And then before marriage so the boy has actually fallen in love with the girl then the girl tells the boy like until and unless you stop this habit I am not going to marry you. Now this is one situation where the person actually thinks that he will give it up but if finds the very difficult, but because of a very emotionally compulsive situation let say he stops it.

But, they are married, they have a baby, and then he once meets his old friends and then they are in a party and then somebody tells him oh now everything is settle for you your happy why not you have some cigarettes. Now this is the point where it will be difficult to break some old habits which die hard particularly the bad habits. Most likely the person is tempered and then he supposed to take it and then continue with the kind of bench smoking. So previously let us say he smoke two cigarettes but he may now go ahead with smoking 5 6 cigarettes as if to compensate the times that he missed smoking this.

So, these bad habits particularly the die hard and then they may surface out and then the stay like the ice berg for quit sometime, so we have to deal with that.

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How do you know what are good and bad habits?

Good Habits ← → Bad Habits

Guiding Principles:

1. Bad habits do not need great efforts, will power and motivation either to form or maintain. (eating junk food)
2. Often you want to hide your bad habits from others. You feel embarrassed or guilty once someone knows about it. (addictions, stealing)
3. But . . . There's no way you can hide any bad habit in the long run. It shows on your health. Your body language reveals it. (smoking, not sleeping at night)

Now before we go to bad habits as such what kind of bad habits am I talking about or am I thinking about something that is ethical or moral or what kind of thinking I have a good bad. And how do you know what are good and bad habits. I am not giving any kind of religious or moral or any connotations to what is good or what is bad, but then we can have some guiding principles to identify what makes good habits and what makes bad habits.

Now some principles I identified look at the first one, bad habits do not need great efforts, will power and motivation either to form or maintain. It means compare to good habits which need great efforts, which need will power and motivation either to form or maintain bad habits do not need such efforts. Take for example; eating junk food, you can eat junk food without any issue. For example, any kind of junk food chips for example when you watch movies. It is easy for you to eat French-fry or any oily stuff and especially when you talk to somebody, when you are interestedly engaged in some activity you do not even think that you are eating the junk food. So, it is easy to form and then slowly you develop an appetite for eating it and then it continues.

Look at the second principle that I have talked about; often you want to hide your bad habits from others. Compare to good habits, in terms of good habits you rather want to boast about your good habits. Let say that because of your hard work you became distinguish student in your college and then you won some medals and then you want display the medals, you want to tell people look I worked hard and then I benefited I developed this habit of studying for 12 hours in a day continuously. And then I cracked this medical exam, I cracked this GE exam, I won this first prize. Now all these good habits that you developed you would like to display, but whereas with regard to bad habit you feel very embarrassed or guilty once someone knows about it.

Take for example, your addictions somebody drinks without the knowledge of the mother or the spouse. Now when the mother or the wife comes to know about it he actually would like to tell a lie or to pretend that he just went somewhere, but the friends were doing it. But having taken some alcoholic drinks, so while entering the home he wants to eat something so as to cover up that he has not actually drank. Now, any kind of addiction not only drinking, most of that times if you or thinking that it is something that you should not be doing and you know that it is a bad think and its one principle is that you generally want to hide it from others.

Stealing for example, so people steal but then if only they know that somebody is watching as in the case of lifting something the shop. I heard of shops, so what they do the only punishment they give is like when they lift they have hidden cameras and then they capture the person and by the time the person reaches the counter they catch the person and with the photo they display it in their front notice board or they send it to newspaper. So that is the punishment they give. So, this actually embarrasses the person, it actually make the person even feel guilty. So, bad habits or something for which you actually feel guilty, whereas good habits you do not feel guilty about it.

Now, look at the third principle; there is no way you can hide any bad habit in the long run. Take for example, initially you may think that I am stealing I am an expert guy and then people will not know, but the day will come you will be caught red handed. Take other examples for example, if you are smoker and then chain smoker so initially you can hide it for some time but after sometime people will smell it from your face, people will also look at your health they will know that you are coughing frequently you have some symptoms that indicates that actually this smoking is killing you, more than that your body language will also revealed most of the bad habits that you have.

The simple example is let say if you are not sleeping continuously for two three day at night so morning itself people will see either for some people the face will become bulky for some it will shrink either way they will notice that there is a huge difference. So, eyes are sunken, so they are not able to see clearly they are blurry, so face itself gets more wrinkles. Especially there is this kind of curve below the eyes all indicating that the night was a troublesome night for the person for some reason just by watching TV or whatever it is the person is not slept. So, each bad habit that you form can be seen in the long run very easily by others.

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Now, look at some more examples that I have given. So, bad habits are very easy to form, whereas good habits are very difficult to form. Now bad habits they are like the dress that you throw it on a chair or on a bed or on a table or like the papers you throw it on the table. So, initially you just throw one and then you think that throw one more it does not matter, throwing two more it is does not matter until it becomes big file and then unless and until you devote your whole chunk of your time it becomes very difficult to clean it. Habits are like that. The papers that you keep filing upon your table or the dust that is accumulating on the fan without your knowledge if you do not clean it regularly, so it keeps accumulating and then it (Refer Time: 19:58) there.

And then you need to if you keep cleaning let say once in a week does not take much time, but then if you keep cleaning at once in 6 months or a year, so you need to remove it and then take more time to actually clean it. So, habit is like this slowly formed gradually continued but then it stays with you for a long time with regard to bad habits.

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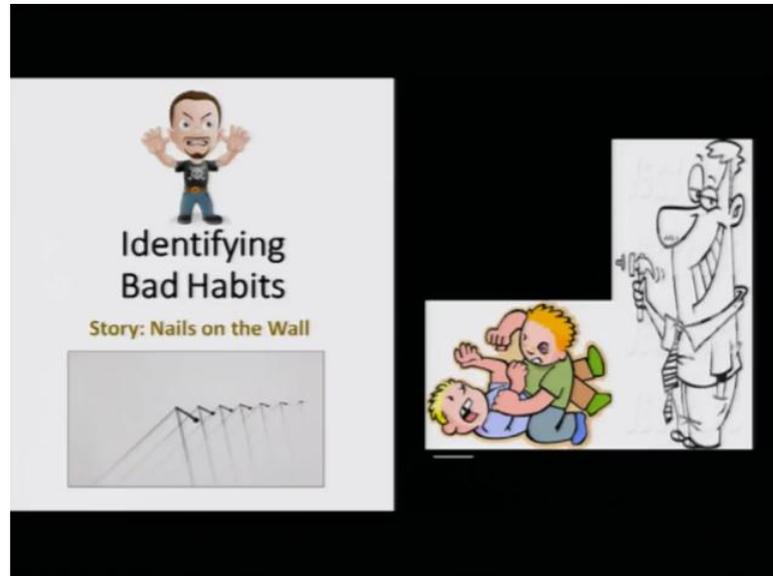
Now, what about good habits? I said good habits are very difficult to form. Look at the examples like good habits are rather like purifying gold. When you purifying gold what do you do, you purify that by actually burning you put that into the farness you burn it so that the impurities are cleared. And then you make them into pure biscuits. Now this purification is for a human being is rather painful, when you start developing a good habit that is as like a golden habit it is really a very painful task difficult task to start. But then as I compared it with gold it is going to give you much reward later.

You can compare good habits in terms of forming it very difficult by comparing it even to the making of diamond from coal. So, diamond is not just made from coal just like that so they need to (Refer Time: 21:29) it they need to polish it, so they need to beat it. So, they need to make it to that particular shape so that you get that precision of diamond and its purity. So, is forming a good habit.

In order to form a good habit you have to undergo lot of this pressure and painful difficult times, but then once it is formed it stays like the gold or the diamond with you. And just like silver you need to polish it and like I am comparing with noble metals, but that is the case with any other metal if you want to compare that with good habits it is just like let us say even copper or anything you need keep it polished, you need to maintain it. So good habits they are really golden, they are really like diamonds, but still it needs maintenance you need to polish it and keep it clean so that it looks good, but

none the less it is never going to lose its value even if it is not going to polish it and clean it regularly.

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Now, I will conclude this by telling you one small story and then will continue it in the next one, it is about identifying bad habits. This is a story that happen between son and a father now what the son did he was a very mischievous boy and you can say the bad boy from the childhood and then he was doing lot of misdeeds. So, he started biting other, he started using abusing words, he started stealing, he started doing all kind of misdeeds that normally a father will not tolerate. But this father in order to make the son realize what he is doing what he did each misdeed, each bad thing that the son did the father went and then he just took a nail and hammered it on a wall; one room he the store room wall he kept it free and then on the he was nailing each time the son was making a mistake or making a misdeed or any bad activity.

Now, the son grow up and he grow up in doing lot of other misdeeds, he almost murdered somebody and then a lady who refuse to reciprocate to his love he very aggressively went a molested her. And then that was the point his father interfered and then he said that he is not doing nice thing and then he saw his father going and fixing the nail on the wall. Then he asked him what are doing? Then the father said that each misdeed that you did for each of your bad habit I was fixing one nail on the wall. So, the son was too overwhelmed, so he was painfully take a back because the wall was

complete with nails, so then he ask the father have I done this much yes of course, every small thing that you did which is wrong which is bad I had fixed one nail.

So, the son realized that yes he has done so much in terms of misdeed. So, he asked his father is there a way out. So, the father said you can do one thing if you really feel about it and then if you want change I would say you do each good thing, you indulge in good deeds so every good habit that you will form I will try to remove. So, you replace your bad habit with the good habit; replace your bad deed with the good deed. So, I will remove the nail one by one.

So, days passed by the father was removing one by one the son changed he stop telling lies he stop corralling with others he became very good and in fact he changed, he became a very good officer then he developed and then he became a CEO, and then he went to the same girl whom he molested he apologized he took her forgiveness. So, she realized that this guy has completely changed she accepted him he married her and then they had a child also and then from the beginning he thought that he will not grow the child like him. And then he spent lot of money on charity, he constructed a hospital, he built a temple and then like the entire country came to know about this person and then the father was very happy and the son also thought that yes completely made amendments to whatever bad thinks that he did.

And then he asked his father, father how many nails are removing he said that son the last time you constructed the temple I removed the last nail oh he said let us go on take a look and then they went and took a look and again the sun was rather shocked because although the father has removed the nails the holes were still remaining.

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The wall still carried the holes of the nails which were fixed and still they were looking with ugly.

Now, the son ask the father; father I completely changed, I did lot of good thinks to mankind and then I do not think I have any bad habit left in me any more I cannot even think about those thinks I am completely transformed person. But what does this indicate so father said son what it indicates is once you form a bad habit and then you act accordingly you perform your action based on your bad habit and then you want replace that by good habits that is the different think, but the bad habits that you did committed in terms of misdeeds, so those deeds will remain there forever. You can try to replace that with some other of good deeds, but you cannot erase the marks completely.

So, bad habits leave an indelible mark. You cannot leave that completely. So, the marks still reminds there and it is very important that is why whenever you form a bad habit and you cannot think that later I will change that I will change that by a good habit but the act that you might have committed with that bad habit that is likely to remind there and you cannot change that. So that scar, that mark of the bad habit will remain and that cannot be removed. So, keep that in mind.

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With that in mind I am ending this lecture by asking you to look at yourself and then introspect identify the bad habits that you have got and you think you should stop. In fact, you sit alone and then just note down how many bad habits that you have, and how many good habits that you have, and how many good habits that you can adopt also.

Keep this kind of thinking and then identify in the next lecture will continue more with identifying more in terms of good habits and bad habits. And the identifying this bad habit in you is the first step and the next step is to convert them in terms of good habits. So, think about that I will meet you in the next lecture.

Thank you.