

The Numbers Game

Have you noticed the glut of self-help books which have a number in the title? It's a marketing ploy which has been around a while and doesn't look like it's going away anytime soon. I wish it would, though. Putting a number on a concept is a cheap way of trying to fool readers into thinking whatever theory is being touted is easy or workable in a limited amount of time.

Here's a sampling of what I mean:

101 Ways to ____

365 Days to ____

40 Days of ____

8 Keys to ____

7 Habits of ____

7 Secrets of ____

6 Rules of ____

Yeah, I know, the list reads like *The 12 Days of Christmas* song – ? **5 GOLDEN HINTS!** ? The basic premise of most of these books is: *if you do this for X amount of days or follow X amount of rules, your life will change for the better*. Not that I'm discounting the theories these books propose; it's just that changing your life is a radical thing. It's a daily choice for the rest of your life to follow truth, to act in positive ways, and to have a good attitude no matter your circumstances. Unless you incorporate these ways/keys/secrets/rules/habits into your life for *real*, for *good*, they're just gimmicks.

Keep in mind that it does take time to change, hence why gimmicks don't work. Ever heard of the saying, "It takes 21 days to break a habit"? Not true. It actually takes 30-66 days. Why? Because overcoming a bad habit and adopting a good one causes physical changes in the brain. This change is called myelination. Myelination occurs when the brain grows sheaths around the neurons connected to habitual thoughts and behaviors. These sheaths speed up the functioning of that particular neural network. Thus a habit feels comfortable and normal because it's ingrained in the brain. However, when you change your mind and form new habits, the new neural network doesn't have as much sheathing and speed. It's still forming physically in the brain which is why it doesn't feel normal. It isn't ingrained yet. The ingraining process takes anywhere from 30 to 66 days.

So, the next time you read a book which promises 1001 Ways to Clean Your House without Lifting a Finger, remember your physical brain and not just your intellect must adapt to the changes. Your mind becomes unhinged as old habits are released and new ones are

connected. Your house may remain messy for a while before your brain fully grasps those 1001 ways. Anything worth having is worth waiting for, so go easy on yourself, give yourself plenty of time, and enjoy life while it slowly changes for the better.

<http://www.publetariat.com/book/export/html/632>