

Building Reading Habits

So, you want to read more...

But you're finding it hard to sit down and read. I get it, I've been there. After so much reading in college, my enjoyment of reading took a hit, and it's taken years to build it back up. Add on a busy life, a child, chores, other hobbies... it's easy to see the limits of my time and abilities. Here are a few ways I re-evaluated my time and created habits to increase my reading.

- **Evaluate Time**

The first step is to simply evaluate your time. Be honest with yourself and truly break down how you use the time in your day. Where is there space? Sitting in the pick-up line at the school, scrolling aimlessly before you go to bed, doing the dishes in the evening. All this time can be redeemed. What are you spending time on that you don't want to be? Instead of watching a tv show before bed, why not exchange that for reading? Consider what your goals are, and adjust your schedule accordingly.

- **Medium of Reading**

As you go through your time, consider how you can consume books best. If you have a long commute, consider reading more audiobooks. If you have a baby, consider ebooks to make reading while nursing them manageable. Reading does not have to mean only physical books, be creative in how you can find different ways to consume books.

- **Set Appropriate Expectations**

You're a working mom with three kids all involved with sports... don't expect to read thirty books a month. Be realistic with your expectations. Now that you have a good grasp of your time, and where you can find more reading time, be realistic with your expectations. How fast can you read? Do you mind skimming? Do you want to annotate? You're only going to frustrate yourself if you are a slow reader and want to keep the pace of a fast one.

- **Set a Schedule**

Once you've evaluated your time and decided how you can add more reading time, set a schedule to keep to that. Be disciplined. If you want to read a half hour before bed, then set an alarm to remind yourself and go and do that. Before the habit has set in and feels natural, physical reminders (like an alarm or a checklist) can be helpful reminders. With time, fitting the reading into your schedule will feel more natural and become easier.

- **Set Aside Electronics**

Arguably, the biggest obstacle most of us face to reading is social media. It's easier to scroll than reading, and in doing so we have trained our brains not to focus on something for very long. When you know you want to read, set aside your phone, your computer, your tv, or any

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screen except your e-reader! Put it out of easy reach, the further away it is, the more reading you will get done when you want to be reading.

- **TBR or No TBR**

Some people may find having a set TBR helpful, they know what they are going to read and can move from one book to the next. Others may find a TBR detrimental, a chore rather than a help. If you're the TBR type, then create yours and stick to it! If you're not, don't be afraid to read whatever strikes you.

Remember, habits are not created overnight. You may find what works for you last month, doesn't this month. Adjust, keep at it, and enjoy reading!