

Tact, Watchfulness, and Persistence.—For example, and to choose a habit of no great consequence except as a matter of consideration for others: the mother wishes her child to acquire the habit of shutting the door after him when he enters or leaves a room. Tact, watchfulness, and persistence are the qualities she must cultivate in herself; and, with these, she will be astonished at the readiness with which the child picks up the new habit.

Stages in the Formation of a Habit.—'Johnny,' she says, in a bright, friendly voice, 'I want you to remember something with all your might: never go into or out of a room in which anybody is sitting without shutting the door.'

'But if I forget, mother?'

'I will try to remind you.'

'But perhaps I shall be in a *great* hurry.'

'You must always make time to do that.'

'But why, mother?'

'Because it is not polite to the people in the room to make them uncomfortable.'

'But if I am going out again that very minute?'

'Still, shut the door, when you come in; you can open it again to go out. Do you think you can remember?'

'I'll try, mother.'

'Very well; I shall watch to see how few "forgets" you make.'

For two or three times Johnny remembers; and then, he is off like a shot and half-way downstairs before his mother has time to call him back. She does not cry out, 'Johnny, come back and shut the door!' because she knows that a summons of that kind is exasperating to big or little. She goes to the door, and calls pleasantly, 'Johnny!' Johnny has forgotten all about the door; he wonders what his mother wants, and, stirred by curiosity, comes back, to find her seated and employed as before. She looks up, glances at the door, and says, 'I said I should try to remind you.' 'Oh, I forgot,' says Johnny, put upon his honour; and he shuts the door that time, and the next, and the next.

But the little fellow has really not much power to recollect, and the mother will have to adopt various little devices to remind him; but of two things she will be careful—that he never slips off without shutting the door, and that she never lets

the matter be a cause of friction between herself and the child, taking the line of his friendly ally to help him against that bad memory of his. By and by, after, say, twenty shuttings of the door with never an omission, the habit begins to be formed; Johnny shuts the door as a matter of course, and his mother watches him with delight come into a room, shut the door, take something off the table, and go out, again shutting the door.

The Dangerous Stage.—Now that Johnny always shuts the door, his mother's joy and triumph begin to be mixed with unreasonable pity. 'Poor child,' she says to herself, 'it is very good of him to take so much pains about a little thing, just because he is bid!' She thinks that, all the time, the child is making an effort for her sake; losing sight of the fact that the *habit* has become easy and natural, that, in fact, Johnny shuts the door without knowing that he does so. Now comes the critical moment. Some day Johnny is so taken up with a new delight that the habit, not yet fully formed, loses its hold, and he is half-way downstairs before he thinks of the door. Then he does think of it, with a little prick of conscience, strong enough, not to send him back, but to make him pause a moment to see if his mother will call him back. She has noticed the omission, and is saying to herself, 'Poor little fellow, he has been very good about it this long time; I'll let him off this once.' He, outside, fails to hear his mother's call, says, to himself—fatal sentence!—'Oh, it doesn't matter,' and trots off.

Next time he leaves the door open, but it is not a 'forget.' His mother calls him back in a rather feeble way. His quick ear catches the weakness of her tone, and, without coming back, he cries, 'Oh, mother, I'm in *such* a hurry,' and she says no more, but lets him off. Again he rushes in, leaving the door wide open. 'Johnny!'—in a warning voice. 'I'm going out again just in a minute, mother,' and after ten minutes' rummaging he does go out, and forgets to shut the door. The mother's mis-timed easiness has lost for her every foot of the ground she had gained.

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“Habit Plan” Template

Habit and Objective	
What Do Things Look Like Now?	
Why Is this Habit/System Important? What is the inspiring idea?	
What Does the Successful Implementation of this Habit Look Like?	
How Will You Teach/Introduce It?	
How Will You Gradually Release Responsibility?	

What Happens
When We Don't
Obey?

- Moments of Ignorance?
- Moments of Weakness?
- Moments of Rebellion?