Lynne Cunningham’s  
Book Review  

_I just read a great book that I think should be added to your Leadership Library._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Book</strong></th>
<th><em>Better Than Before</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>Gretchen Rubin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pillar of Excellence</strong></td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Publisher’s Book Description** | Habits are the invisible architecture of everyday life. It takes work to make a habit, but once that habit is set, we can harness the energy of habits to build happier, stronger, more productive lives. So if habits are a key to change, then what we really need to know is: How do we change our habits? *Better than Before* answers that question. It presents a practical, concrete framework to allow readers to understand their habits—and to change them for good. Infused with Rubin’s compelling voice, rigorous research, and easy humor, and packed with vivid stories of lives transformed, *Better than Before* explains the (sometimes counter-intuitive) core principles of habit formation. Along the way, Rubin uses herself as guinea pig, tests her theories on family and friends, and answers readers’ most pressing questions—oddly, questions that other writers and researchers tend to ignore:  
- Why do I find it tough to create a habit for something I _love_ to do?  
- Sometimes I can change a habit overnight, and sometimes I can’t change a habit, no matter how hard I try. Why?  
- How quickly can I change a habit?  
- What can I do to make sure I stick to a new habit?  
- How can I help someone else change a habit?  
- Why can I keep habits that benefit others, but can’t make habits that are just for me? 

Whether readers want to get more sleep, stop checking their devices, maintain a healthy weight, or finish an important project, habits make change possible. Reading just a few chapters of *Better Than Before* will make readers eager to start work on their own habits—even before they’ve finished the book. |
| **Gabi Garrett Review** | Gretchen Rubin takes her third plunge at happiness research after completing her first two books “The Happiness Project” and “Happier at Home”. Rubin explores the depths of her research in the best way in *Better than before*. Rubin’s main principle in writing this book is that habits rule our daily lives, and by understanding ourselves better we can master our habits, therefore our lives. I fell into the category of Questioner, one who upholds tasks and activities only when they make sense to them. Questioners also love research. This category fit me well and helped me understand how to create obligations that align with my personal set of beliefs and therefore create better habits for my better life. I strongly recommend *Better than Before* to... |
What a great, insightful book. It was fun to read and helped explain how we develop habits and can adopt new habits. In a healthcare environment in which change is the new normal, Rubin’s approach to habits can help each of us adapt and cope. The book provides solid research into how to communicate the importance of changing habits and how to hold yourself and others accountable for their habits.

Lynne suggests that you pay special attention to some of these features in the book.

Habits are the invisible architecture of daily life. We repeat about 40 percent of our behavior almost daily, so our habits shape our existence, and our future. If we change our habits, we change our lives.

In ordinary terms, a “habit” is generally defined as a behavior that’s recurrent, is cued by a specific context, often happens without much awareness or conscious intent, and is acquired through frequent repetition. Habits make change possible by freeing us from decision making and from using self-control.

Essential Seven

1. Eat and drink more healthfully
2. Exercise regularly
3. Save, spend and earn wisely
4. Rest, relax and enjoy
5. Accomplish more, stop procrastinating
6. Simplify, clear, clean and organize
7. Engage more deeply in relationships

Everyone falls into one of four distinct groups:

- Upholders
- Questioners
- Obligers
- Rebels

A list of simple, straightforward questions to help know yourself better.

Habits in four areas do most to boost feelings of self-control:

1. Sleep
2. Move
3. Eat and drink right
4. Unclutter

Just because something is fun for other people doesn’t mean it’s fun for me – and it’s a lot easier to stick to a habit that I honestly enjoy.

To be effective, the Strategy of Scheduling often must be paired with the essential Strategy of Accountability. It’s not enough to schedule a habit; we must actually follow that habit. Accountability means that we face consequences for what we’re doing – even if that consequence is merely the fact that someone else is monitoring us.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>115</th>
<th>Even an unhappy change can be a chance for a fresh start.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>122+</td>
<td>The Lightning Bolt is a highly effective strategy, but unfortunately, it's practically impossible to invoke on command. It's something that happens to us. In an instant, we quit cursing or become vegetarian or begin a prayer practice or give up alcohol or stop using plastic shopping bags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>I can strengthen good habits by making them more convenient, I can squash bad habits by making them less convenient. This is the Strategy of Convenience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>A loophole is an argument for why we should be excused from following a good habit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall rating**

Excellent and FUN!! There is great material in the book for leadership development and training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher and Year Published</th>
<th>Crown</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>$26</td>
<td>Discounted at <a href="http://www.amazon.com">www.amazon.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended by</td>
<td>Gabi Garrett, Studer Group, who has led our support team at Studer Group through the book and its exercises.</td>
<td>Available as a Kindle book</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>