

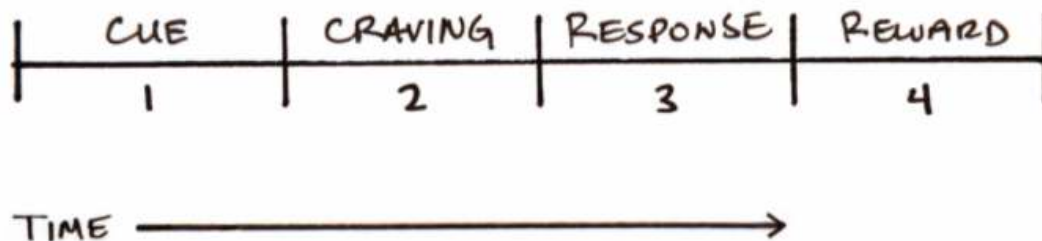
What is the difference between a habit and a norm?

A: Generally speaking, a habit is a personal action that is done regularly with some sense of compulsion, and a norm is a societal standard that governs our behavior choices.

Habits:

Sociologists have identified 4 stages of habits: Cue, Craving, Response, Reward

THE FOUR STAGES OF HABIT



Cue - a piece of information (event, observation, sound etc) that triggers the brain to notice

Craving - a desire to change your internal state

Response - what you do in response (thought, action)

Reward - at its most basic, it relieves the tension of the craving. It can also be its own benefit (eating food when you're hungry, going for a run can improve health)

What causes a [habit](#)?

Habits are built through learning and repetition. A person is thought to develop a habit in the course of pursuing goals (such as driving to a destination or satisfying an appetite) by beginning to associate certain cues with behavioral responses that help meet the goal (turning at certain streets, or stopping at a drive-thru with a familiar sign). Over time, thoughts of the behavior and ultimately the behavior itself are likely to be triggered by these cues.

What is a habit loop?

A "habit loop" is a way of describing several related elements that produce habits. These elements have been called the cue (or trigger), the routine (or behavior), and the reward. For example, stress could serve as a cue that one responds to by eating,

smoking, or drinking, which produces the reward (the reduction of stress—at least temporarily). It's important to note- the response behavior does not *itself* cause the reward/relieve the tension. In that eating when you are stressed does not *inherently* reduce stress. It's a *behavior* one has turned to to relieve stress, and thus, as part of the habit loop, it serves that purpose. Any behavior could be substituted.

For a deeper exploration, look at the [bonus materials](#).

Norms:

Social norms can be divided into 3 categories: Folkways, Mores, Taboo/Laws

- 1) Folkways, also called “customs”, are standards of behavior that are socially approved but not morally significant. Polite vs rude behavior- raising your hand to speak, not burping at the table, ignoring strangers in public (in big cities)
- 2) Mores are norms of morality, to which offenders will risk moral judgement by their society. Right vs Wrong behavior. (norms of gender roles/oppression, sexual expression. Often religiously dictated)
- 3) Taboos are behaviors that a culture absolutely forbids, and engaging in them will bring swift punishment or exile. Most taboos have laws written to forbid them (incest, cannibalism are the classic extremes). Laws are generally written to protect what is perceived as the common good.

The Jewish concept of “minhag” (MIN-hahg), usually translated as “custom”, can also be placed on this spectrum. Minhagim (pl) can run the gamut in Jewish ritual life, from being a folkway to a more and can even take on the import of a law (think: Ashkenazim not eating rice/kitniyot on Passover)

Other reading:

[Thought Co.](#)

[Mores](#)