

# Self-Discipline:

The art of saying no to one's self.

The ability to do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, whether you feel like it or not.



Tapas: in Hinduism, ascetic practice voluntarily carried out to achieve spiritual power or purification.

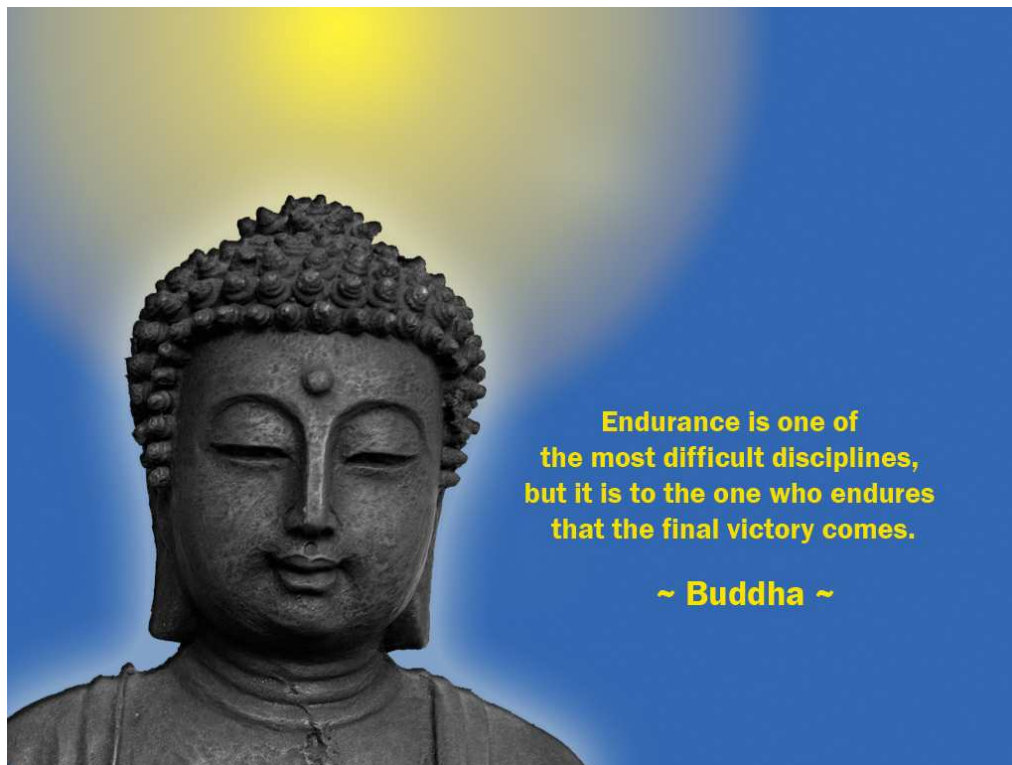
A “standing baba” has taken the vow not to sit or lie down for twelve years.

Self discipline means deliberately aligning our energy with our values and priorities. Through mental practice we focus in on a task before us and let other temptations and distractions pass us by.

Self-discipline asks that we endure frustration, disappointment, and pain in the service of a higher goal. It means being willing to push ourselves to the limits of our will and endurance if that is what is needed for success.

Self-discipline need not be harsh; it can take the form of a quiet resolve or determination that then directs our choices. It is exacting, but is rarely served by our being self-critical or self-denigrating. Self-discipline allows us to make use of whatever power and capabilities have been given us, to be all that we can in the service of our dreams.

(<http://www.wisdomcommons.org/virtue/115-self-discipline/proverbs>)



The difference between a savior and a sinner is this: that the one has perfect control of all the forces within him; the other is dominated and controlled by them.

(James Allen)

## Why Self-Discipline is Essential for Success on the Spiritual Path:

An intending disciple said to Dhu-L-Nun,  
the Egyptian mystic:

“Above everything in this world I wish to enroll in  
the Path of Truth.”

Dhu-L-Nun told him: “You can accompany our caravan  
only if you first accept two things.

One is that you will have to do things which you do not  
want to do.

The other is that you will not be permitted to do things  
which you desire to do.

It is ‘wanting’ which stands between man  
and the Path of Truth.”



You have to decide what your highest priorities are  
and have the courage - pleasantly, smilingly,  
non-apologetically - to say “no” to other things.  
And the way to do that is by having a bigger “yes”  
burning inside.

(Stephen Covey)

# Will Power and Self Discipline

By Remez Sasson

The possession of willpower and self discipline or their lack, play an important role in everyone's life. For example, you wish to go for a walk, knowing how good it is for your health and how wonderful you feel afterwards, but you feel too lazy, and prefer to watch TV instead. You might be aware of the fact that you need to change your eating habits or stop smoking, but you don't have the inner power and persistence to change these habits.

Does this sound familiar? How many times have you said, "I wish I had will power and self-discipline"? How many times have you started to do something, only to quit after a short while? We all have had experiences like these.

Everyone has a few habits they wish they could get rid of, such as smoking, excessive eating, laziness, procrastination or lack of assertiveness. To overcome these habits or addictions, one needs a certain degree of willpower and self-discipline. Their possession makes a great difference in everyone's life, bringing to the fore inner strength, self mastery and decisiveness.

## Definitions of Will Power and Self Discipline

Will power is the ability to overcome laziness and procrastination. It is the ability to control or reject unnecessary or harmful impulses. It is the ability to arrive at a decision and follow it with perseverance until its successful accomplishment. It is the inner power that overcomes the desire to indulge in unnecessary and useless habits, and the inner strength that overcomes inner emotional and mental resistance for taking action. It is one of the corner stones of success, both spiritual and material.

Self-discipline is the companion of will power. It endows the one possessing it with the stamina to persevere in whatever he or she does. It bestows the ability to withstand hardships and difficulties, whether physical, emotional or mental. It grants the ability to reject immediate satisfaction, in order to gain something better, but, which requires effort and time.

Everyone has inner, unconscious, or partly conscious impulses, making them say or do things they later regret saying or doing. On many occasions people do not think before they talk or act. By developing these two powers, one becomes

conscious of the inner, subconscious impulses, and gains the ability to reject them when they are not for his/her own good.

These two powers help us to choose our behavior and reactions, instead of being ruled by them. Their possession won't make life dull or boring. On the contrary, you will feel more powerful, in charge of yourself and your surroundings, happy and satisfied.

How many times have you felt too weak, lazy or shy to do something you wanted to do? You can gain inner strength, initiative and the ability to make decisions and follow them. Believe me, it is not difficult to develop these two powers. If you are earnest and are willing to become stronger, you will certainly succeed.

There is a misconception in the public mind regarding will power. It is erroneously thought to be something strenuous and difficult, and that one has to exert and tense the body and mind when expressing it. It is a completely wrong concept. This is one of the reasons why people avoid using it, though they are conscious of its benefits. They acknowledge the fact that the employment of will power in their life and affairs will greatly help them, and that they need to strengthen it, yet they do nothing about it.

Will power gets stronger by holding back and not allowing the expression of unimportant, unnecessary and unhealthy thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions. If this saved energy is not allowed expression, it is stored inside you like a battery, and it becomes available at the time of need. By practicing appropriate exercises, you develop your powers the same way as a person who trains his/her muscles in order to strengthen them.

## Developing Will Power and Self Discipline

An effective method for developing and improving these abilities is to perform certain actions or activities, which you would rather avoid doing due to laziness, procrastination, weakness, shyness, etc. Doing things that you usually do not like to do or feel too lazy to do, you overcome your subconscious resistance, train your mind to obey you, strengthen your inner powers and gain inner strength. Muscles get stronger by resisting the power of the barbells. Inner strength is attained by overcoming inner resistance.

## Benefits of Possessing Will Power and Self Discipline

You need these skills to control your thoughts, improve your concentration, and to become the boss of your mind. The stronger these skills are, the more inner strength you possess.

Being the master of your mind you enjoy inner peace and happiness. External events do not sway you, and circumstances have no power over your peace of mind. This might sound too unreal for you, but experience will prove to you that all the above is true.

These skills are vital for achieving success. They give you more control over your life, help you change and improve habits, and are essential for self improvement, spiritual growth and meditation.

([http://www.successconsciousness.com/index\\_000006.htm](http://www.successconsciousness.com/index_000006.htm))

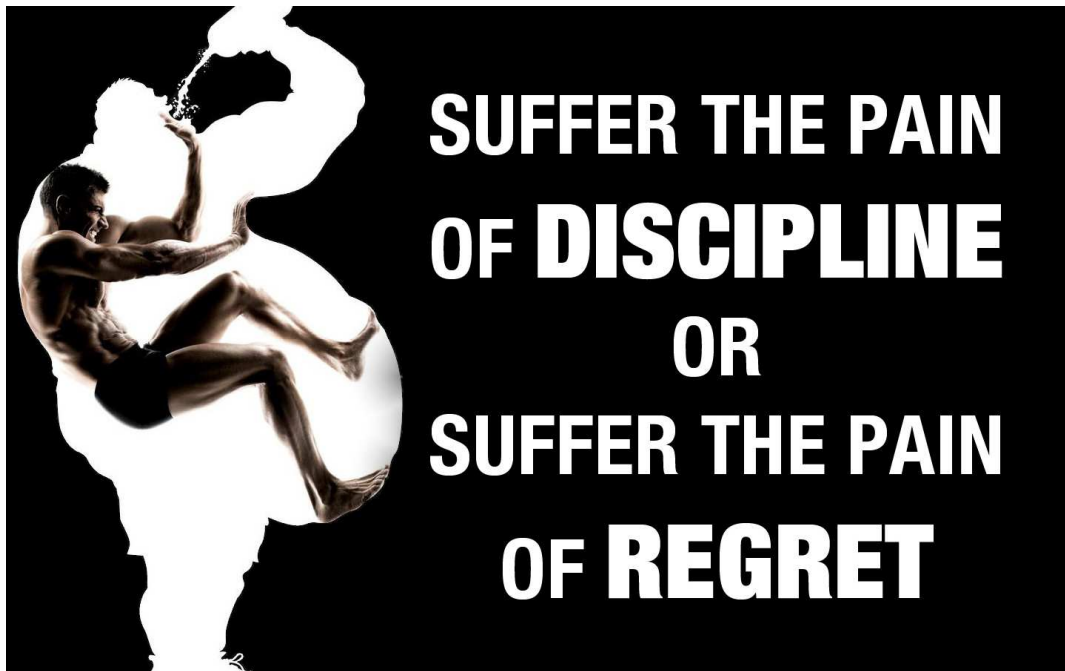


Self-discipline is the assertion of willpower  
over more base desires.

**"Self-discipline is an act of cultivation. It requires you to connect today's actions to tomorrow's results. There's a season for sowing a season for reaping. Self-discipline helps you know which is which."**

**-Gary Ryan Blair**

Brother, stand the pain;  
escape the poison of your impulses.  
(Rumi)



Without suffering the pain of self-restraint,  
no recompense can follow.  
(Rumi)



## The Power of Love

I believe in self-control, not coercion.  
Coercion is based on oppression, and results in fear and hatred.  
Self-control requires courage, and may be induced by Love.

We will do many things for those whom we Love which we would not ordinarily do - which we would not ordinarily have the strength of mind and power to do.

How many habits have we been able to break through Love,  
which we would never have had the strength to break without Love?  
(Meher Baba)



Sant Kirpal Singh

Because of Your love I have broken with my past.  
(Rumi)



In order to overcome our desires and to renounce all those things, our love and inclination for which are wont so to inflame the will that it delights therein, we require a more ardent fire and a nobler love—that of the Bridegroom.

Finding her delight and strength in Him, the soul gains the vigor and confidence which enable her easily to abandon all other affections.

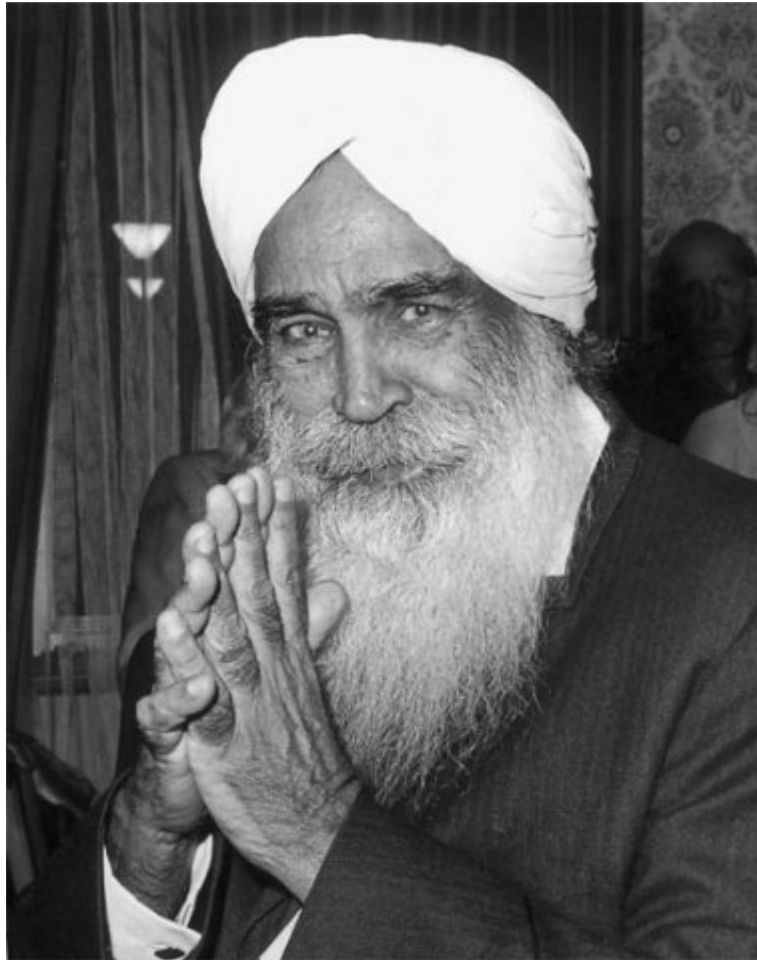
It was necessary, in her struggle with the attractive force of her sensual desires, not only to have this love for the Bridegroom, but also to be filled with a burning fervor, full of anguish.

If our spiritual nature were not on fire with other and nobler passions we should never cast off the yoke of the senses, nor be able to enter on their night, neither should we have the courage to remain in the darkness of all things, and in denial of every desire.

(Saint John of the Cross)



I once had a thousand desires,  
but in my one desire to know You all else melted away.  
(Rumi)



Self-respect is the fruit of discipline;  
the sense of dignity grows with the ability  
to say no to one's self.  
(Abraham Joshua Heschel)

## **Feeling Good: But Not Necessarily About Ourselves**

Leon F. Seltzer, Ph.D. (excerpts — Part 1)

I think it's safe to say that whenever we feel good about ourselves, we feel good, period.

Our most potent safeguard against life's ups and downs is developing the most positive sense of self possible. Thus protected against the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," we can almost always feel good—regardless of what's going on in the day-to-day drama of our lives.

Too many of us unconsciously assume that the best way to foster happiness is to partake in as many experiences as we can that will promote feelings of euphoria. By nature, we're impelled to avoid anything painful and pursue (and maybe become addicted to) anything pleasurable.

Unless our values and priorities have evolved beyond this elemental pleasure principle, we'll remain more or less "bounded" by this fundamental biological disposition. Natural-born hedonists, we'll follow any "feel good" path that presents itself, and be seduced by any immediate promise of pleasure.

And this basic motivation will exist independent of any reflection as to whether what, momentarily, makes us feel good will actually be good for us in the long run—that is, will actually contribute to our feeling good about ourselves.

What I'd like to illustrate is that pleasure pursuits fail to provide anything in the way of self-nurturance. Finding ways to get high might look like an effective way to "inject" more joy into our lives, but such pleasure-seeking really has nothing to do with the fundamental nurturance of self, pivotal to achieving an enduring state of well-being.

As opposed to self-indulgence, self-nurturance fosters both the physical and psychological health requisite to our happiness. Here we're not "treating" ourselves to something that in the moment makes us feel better but ultimately is bad for us. We're not looking for a quick fix to alter our mood or consciousness so as to escape the boredom, drudgery or pain of our existence, or to drown out nagging doubts we have about ourselves. Rather, we're addressing our inborn needs for self-succor—but in an adult, responsible fashion.

Obviously, acting in a self-indulgent fashion is virtually synonymous with choosing things primarily on the basis of how good they'll make us feel.

Also intimately linked are self-nurturing behaviors and behaviors consciously contrived to foster good feelings about oneself.

**I'd like to describe how we can increase the likelihood that our choices--regardless of how much they may specifically make us feel good in the moment--will increase the likelihood of our ending up feeling better about ourselves generally. Additionally, I'll be discussing how to decide against doing those things that won't, and can't, promote these more lasting feelings of self-satisfaction--despite how much they might help us feel good in the present.**

**Generally speaking, we can distinguish between actions that make us feel good vs. those enabling us to actually feel good about ourselves--by considering their aftereffects.**

For typically, whatever we employ as a shortcut for feeling "up" brings us back down in accelerated fashion as well. When the initial high has worn off, we're right back where we started--if not a little bit below our personal baseline.

Our feeling good has had almost everything to do with something outside us. Consequently, when our "drug of choice" has worn off, we're no happier than when we started. The permanent form of whatever "fix" we received from without continues to elude us from within.

**The true "object of our desire" is to have a self-affirming, unconditionally loving relationship with our self--the one relationship that's absolutely vital to an enduring state of well-being.** And although this relationship to self may not yet exist for us, it is (whether we're aware of it or not ) precisely what we all long for.

**If we're dependent on alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, or any other drug that alters our mind or mood (and such a "drug" may also include food, prescribed medication, or tobacco), it's safe to assume that our reliance on it keeps us from applying ourselves to--and ultimately achieving--the growth and change we require to feel really good about ourselves.** ([psychologytoday.com/blog/evolution-the-self/200905/feeling-good-vs-feeling-good-about-ourselves-part-1](http://psychologytoday.com/blog/evolution-the-self/200905/feeling-good-vs-feeling-good-about-ourselves-part-1))

## **Focusing Less on Feeling Good and More on Feeling Good About Ourselves**

Leon F. Seltzer (excerpts — Part 2)

Once we recognize what allows us to feel good only temporarily, we can start searching for more satisfying alternatives.

Generally, the path toward feeling really good about ourselves requires much more reflection, self-restraint and discipline than we may have demonstrated till now.

And developing these qualities begins with an almost spiritual commitment to self that previously may have eluded us—the commitment to becoming the best, most complete and “realized” person we can be.

**Here our fundamental concern is with liking ourselves more, being prouder of who we are, more self-accepting, respecting, and nurturing**—and, of course, more empathic, compassionate and understanding toward others as well.

Finally, learning to feel really good about ourselves is a major part of what personal growth and evolution is all about. And our progress in this venture requires us to become more adult in our thinking.

Most of what I address links intimately to the core concept of self-esteem. And my key recommendation on how to give up pursuing transient feelings of euphoria and instead seek out those things that culminate in far-more-lasting positive feelings about self is one that will also boost our self-esteem. And it will promote a self-love that is totally separate from any mere narcissistic gratification.

Here, simply put, is my “recipe.” And let me add that while it’s easy enough for me to articulate, it may be (certainly at times, will be) anything but easy to implement—or rather, commit yourself to implementing.

For this formula might fly in the face of unconscious but firmly entrenched defenses you’ve adopted over the years to protect yourself from emotional distress.

**The behavioral principle I’m advocating is this. Before taking action of any kind, ask yourself whether it’s likely to make you feel better about yourself—or worse.**

**Your sole criterion for determining whether to go ahead with any particular behavior is deciding whether doing so is in line with the more positive self-regard you're striving to cultivate.**

**So, independent of how pleasant or gratifying the behavior under consideration might be, if you evaluate it as not likely to contribute to your feeling good about yourself, you're obliged to rule against it.**

This could mean saying "no" to any number of behaviors that are enjoyable but can offer only immediate satisfaction (while leading to regrets later on).

When you rise above your reluctance to doing something that's good for you--despite initially not being inclined to do it, or feeling afraid to do it--what you'll notice is that with each positively evaluated action you take, you'll feel better about yourself.

**If we're finally to transcend these internal barriers and elevate how we see ourselves, we simply must determine to choose our behaviors on the basis of how--not immediately but ultimately--they're likely to make us feel.**

And, frankly, to be honest with ourselves this way takes considerable discipline and fortitude. But it offers considerable rewards as well.

**Whenever we can disallow ourselves the option of taking the easy way out and do what--deep down--we recognize as best for us, we can experience a trust, appreciation, and liking for ourselves that far exceed whatever "highs" we might derive from focusing primarily on feeling good right now.**

Getting into the habit of choosing to do whatever helps us grow and expand--as well as deciding against behaviors that ultimately keep us stuck--virtually guarantees that we'll be on the right path to feeling better and better about ourselves.

It will assure that over time we'll be able to say farewell to old fears--those nervous anxieties and apprehensions that may have governed too many of our actions in the past. And taking leave of these ultimately self-defeating behaviors will enable us, finally, to feel consistently good about ourselves.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/evolution-the-self/200905/feeling-good-vs-feeling-good-about-ourselves-part-2>

The spiritual path is a difficult one  
and requires a rigorous self-discipline.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, [ruhanisatsangusa.org/receptive.htm](http://ruhanisatsangusa.org/receptive.htm))



While we sojourn in this dark region of matter, we have to deal with the negative power. With him we must contend in our struggles for spiritual freedom. It is his duty to try to hold us here, while it is our duty to try to escape. The resulting struggle purges us and makes us strong, and fits us for our homeward journey. This everlasting fight, this struggle in a welter of pain and blood and heart cries, is designed by the supreme Father to purge us and make us clean, ready for our homeward ascent. Let us never become discouraged. All of this is designed by the Father for our benefit. It is much as if one enters a gymnasium to take exercise. If we meet these difficulties in the right spirit, we shall greatly profit by them. The idea of pain and struggle is to purge us and inspire in us a longing to rise above the regions of pain and shadow. (Julian Johnson, *The Path of the Masters*, 259)



## Discipline

(Henepola Gunaratana – Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist monk)

Discipline is a difficult word for most of us. It conjures up images of somebody standing over you with a stick, telling you that you are wrong. But self-discipline is different. It's the skill of seeing through the hollow shouting of your own impulses and piercing their secret.

They have no power over you. It's all a show, a deception. Your urges scream and bluster at you; they cajole; they coax; they threaten; but they really carry no stick at all. You give in out of habit. You give in because you never really bother to look beyond the threat. It is all empty back there. There is only one way to learn this lesson though. The words on this page won't do it.

But look within and watch the stuff coming up – restlessness, anxiety, impatience, pain – just watch it come up and don't get involved. Much to your surprise, it will simply go away. It rises, it passes away. As simple as that.

There is another word for self-discipline. It is patience.



Next begins a rigid system of self-control, enforcing the rule in every detail of life. We are constantly beset by five foes - passion, anger, greed, worldly attachments, and vanity. All these must be mastered, brought under control. You can never do that entirely until you have the aid of the Guru and are in harmonic relations with the Sound Current. But you can begin now, and every effort will be a step on the way.

(Sawan Singh, Spiritual Gems, 339)



Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji

It is a path of love, discipline and self-control. After the initial spiritual experience given at the time of Initiation, the rest depends on relentless regular practice as enjoined by the Master.

(Sant Kirpal Singh, The Teachings of Kirpal Singh, v. 3, 52, 53)

Let's ask God to help us to self-control:  
for one who lacks it, lacks His grace.

(Rumi)



The intelligent desire self-control; children want candy!

(Rumi)



If men live decently it is because discipline saves  
their very lives for them.

(Sophocles)



Freedom is not procured by a full enjoyment of what is  
desired, but by controlling the desire.

(Epictetus)

The first and best victory is to conquer self.  
To be conquered by self is, of all things,  
the most shameful and vile.

(Plato)



Remember that there is always a limit to self-indulgence, but none to self-restraint.

(Mahatma Gandhi)



There never has been, and cannot be,  
a good life without self-control.

(Leo Tolstoy)



A horse that resists the reins, a car without brakes  
and a person with no self-control, are all equally  
headed for disaster.

(Sathya Sai Baba)



Self-discipline is your golden key;  
Without it, you cannot be happy.

(Maxwell Maltz)

## Ultimate Fulfillment May Require You to Make Many Painful Sacrifices.

(Leon F. Seltzer, Ph.D. excerpts)

Surrendering to immediate, self-indulgent attractions or enticements inevitably leads to your becoming subservient to them. And as a consequence, the likelihood of achieving longer-term goals is seriously undermined.

Self-discipline is what reflects your commitment to hold fast to certain values and priorities--whether it's a pledge to follow through on a promise, fulfill an obligation, or promote some personal or professional interest.

At any moment your actual desire to do what you know should be done may be minimal. In these instances the only thing enabling you to drive yourself forward is your word to yourself, your core principles, and your determination to act responsibly--regardless of your present mood or disposition.

Self-control and self-discipline are indistinguishable. Without them, the behavior you might be prompted to engage (or indulge) in will almost certainly culminate in later regret.

I believe it can actually be quite gratifying to deny yourself some immediate enjoyment in that you've demonstrated to yourself sufficient strength to "achieve" this denial. As ironic as it may seem, realizing that you were able to show really good judgment--and restraint--in refusing to pay the overly high price of partaking in a particular pleasure can be unusually satisfying.

Doing what you've pre-determined is best for you--rather than permitting yourself to constantly get sidetracked by what immediately seems more pleasurable--will grant you far more satisfaction and joy in the long run.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/evolution-the-self/201111/self-discipline-can-it-verge-masochism>

**Self-discipline: a willingness to do whatever it takes to reach personally valued goals and objectives, independent of whatever challenges, or unpleasantness, may be linked to the process of attaining them.**

(Leon Seltzer)

No one is free who is not master of himself.  
(Shakespeare)



Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.  
(Seneca)

Self-discipline, or self-control, means  
taking possession of your own mind.

The power of thought is the only thing  
over which any human being has complete,  
unquestionable control. We have the  
power of self-determination, the ability  
to choose what our thoughts and actions  
will be. If you direct your thought and  
control your emotions, you will ordain  
your destiny. Take charge of your life.  
You are what you think!

What lies in our power to do,  
it lies in our power not to do.  
(Aristotle)



No conflict is so severe  
as his who labors to subdue himself.  
(Thomas a' Kempis)

## Character – The Essence of Self-Discipline

“I recently heard a story told by Cavett Robert, a well known public speaker, describing how he learned about strength of character during a college class.

‘Dr. James picked up the roster. I knew that he was getting ready to call on me and I wasn’t prepared. I saw there were only five minutes to go. He’d been discussing character so I raised my hand and said ‘Dr. James, just a minute. Would you please give me a definition of character that I could write down?’ He looked at me and then he looked at the clock. He knew that I didn’t really care what character was, but he was a kind gentleman.

I remember he put his hands behind him. He walked around the room. Then he stopped right in front of me, dropped his finger on my shoulder, and he said this, ‘Young man, I don’t know. I’m not sure. But I’m going to give you a definition of character that I want you to keep, until you can get one better.’ Now that’s been about forty years ago and I’ve never found one half as good or one that has helped so much in my work.

He said, ‘Character is the ability to carry out a good resolution long after the mood in which it has been made has left you.’

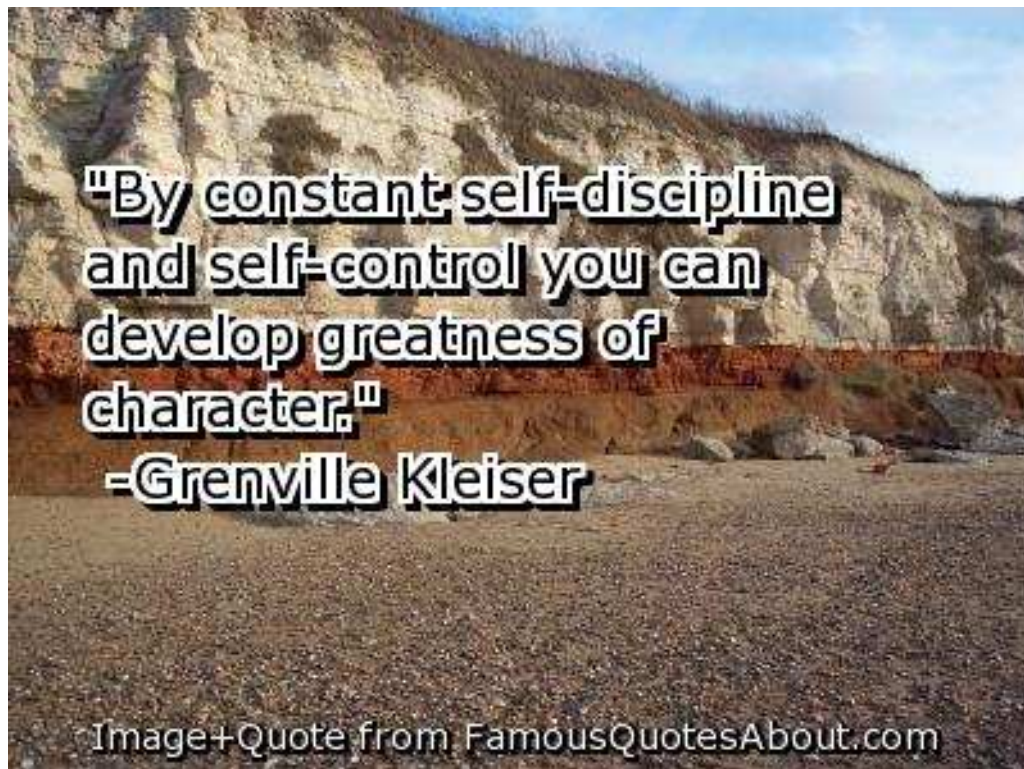
He then said, ‘I didn’t say it was just the ability to carry out a good resolution; we all have our moments of supreme dedication...but how few of us can carry out that resolution when the mood has left us and the tides of temptation have come sweeping in!’

He went on, ‘Now you have a test in the morning. And you are going to get up in the morning and study for it. And at night when you go to bed you are going to get up. But, in the morning when the early hour comes, the alarm clock goes off and you put your foot out on the cold floor...by then the mood has left you. So character is that which you have within yourself to substitute for the mood. It will make you get up anyway.’

You know those five minutes have burned very brightly through the last forty years. Many times I have committed myself to some project or some assignment when I was in the mood. I was swept along by the compulsion of the moment. And then the mood would leave me and the task would seem drab. No glory of attraction. And then I would try to remember that which I have within myself to substitute for the mood.”



Mental toughness is many things and rather difficult to explain. Its qualities are sacrifice and self-denial. Also, most importantly, it is combined with a perfectly disciplined will that refuses to give in. It's a state of mind - you could call it character in action.  
(Vince Lombardi)



He who lives without discipline dies without honor.  
(Icelandic Proverb)

# How to Build Self-Discipline

(Peter Clemens)

**Discipline is freedom.** You may disagree with this statement, and if you do you are certainly not alone. For many people discipline is a dirty word that is equated with the absence of freedom. In fact the opposite is true.

As Stephen R. Covey once wrote, “the undisciplined are slaves to moods, appetites and passions”.

**Self-discipline involves acting according to what you think instead of how you feel in the moment. Often it involves sacrificing the pleasure and thrill of the moment for what matters most in life.**

If you struggle with self-discipline, the good news is that it can be developed. The following are what I have found to be the five traits of self-discipline:

## 2. Self-Knowledge

**Discipline means behaving according to what you have decided is best, regardless of how you feel in the moment.**

Therefore the first trait of discipline is self-knowledge. You need to decide what behavior best reflects your goals and values. This process requires introspection and self-analysis.

## 2. Conscious Awareness

Self-discipline depends upon conscious awareness as to both what you are doing and what you are not doing. Think about it. If you aren't aware your behavior is undisciplined, how will you know to act otherwise?

As you begin to build self-discipline, you may catch yourself being in the act of being undisciplined. Developing self-discipline takes time, and the key here is you are aware of your undisciplined behavior. With time this awareness will come earlier, meaning rather than catching yourself in the act of being undisciplined you will have awareness before you act in this way. This gives you the opportunity to make a decision that is in better alignment with your goals and values.

### 3. Commitment to Self-Discipline

If you struggle with commitment, start by making a conscious decision to follow through on what you say you're going to do – both when you said you would do it and how you said you would do it. Then, I highly recommend putting in place a system to track these commitments. As the saying goes, “What gets measured gets improved”.

### 4. Courage

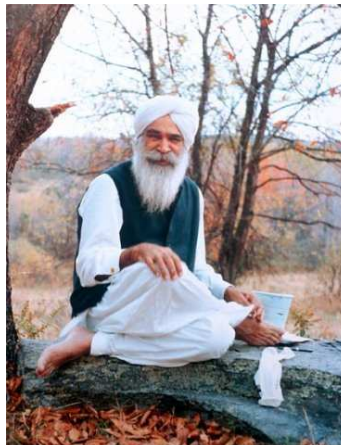
Self-discipline is often extremely difficult. Moods, appetites and passions can be powerful forces to go against. Therefore self-discipline is highly dependent on courage.

Don't pretend something is easy for you to do when it is in fact very difficult and or painful. Instead, find the courage to face this pain and difficulty. As you begin to accumulate small private victories, your self-confidence will grow and the courage that underpins self-discipline will come more naturally.

### 5. Internal Coaching

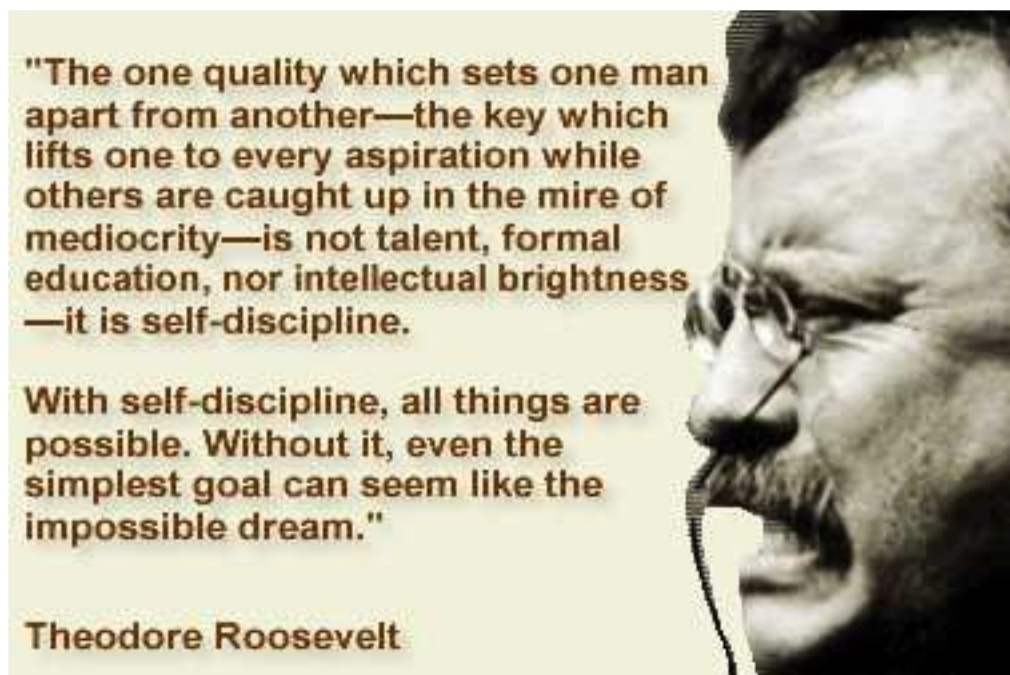
Self-talk is often harmful, but it can also be extremely beneficial if you have control of it. When you find yourself being tested, I suggest you talk to yourself, encourage yourself and reassure yourself.

After all, it is self-talk that has the ability to remind you of your goals, call up courage, reinforce your commitment and keep you conscious of the task at hand. When I find my discipline being tested, I always recall the following quote: **“The price of discipline is always less than the pain of regret”**. Burn this quote into your memory, and recall in whenever you find yourself being tested. It may change your life. (<http://www.pickthebrain.com/blog/self-discipline/>)



The strong man is the one who is able to intercept at  
will the communication between  
the senses and the mind.

(Napoleon Bonaparte)



He that would be superior to external influences  
must first become superior to his own passions.

(Samuel Johnson)

## Addictive Voice Recognition Technique: How to Overcome Addictive Behavior

Observe your thoughts and feelings, positive and negative, about drinking or using drugs or any other addictive behavior. Thoughts and feelings which support continued use are called the Addictive Voice (AV); those which support abstinence are you.

When you recognize and understand your AV, it becomes not-you, but "it," an easily-defeated enemy that has been causing you to engage in addictive behavior. All it wants is pleasure.

"I want a drink," becomes, "It wants a drink." Think to yourself, "I will never drink again," and listen for its reaction. Your negative thoughts and feelings are your AV talking back to you. Now, think, "I will drink/use whenever I please." Your pleasant feelings are also the AV, which is in control.

Recovery is not a process; it is an event. The magic word is "Never," as in, "I will never drink/use again."

Recognition defeats short-term desire, and abstinence soon becomes effortless. Complete separation of "you" from "it" leads to complete recovery and hope for a better life.

The only time you can drink is now, and the only time you can quit for good is right now. "I will never drink/use again," becomes, "I never drink now." It's not hard; anyone can do it.

AVRT is an insight into the nature of addiction which places you in complete control over the decision to drink or use drugs (or engage in other addictive behaviors).

Although AVRT is very, very simple, you have to know what you're doing, and learning it can be tricky at first. This is because your AV uses your own intelligence and personality in order to remain concealed from you. It is ruthless in its pursuit of pleasure, but it can also be quite subtle, forceful, seductive, persistent, patient, and has many other qualities. (<https://rational.org/index.php?id=36>)

## The Structural Model of Addiction

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The Structural Model of Addiction is unique to Rational Recovery. This simple idea helps make sense of your addiction and shows you why you have been behaving so stupidly. Ridding yourself of disease-thinking can help you recover from substance addiction.

There is no evidence that addiction is or is caused by a disease. To the contrary, addiction is a natural function of a healthy, human body. The disease concept of addiction has become quite popular, mainly because it is the nature of addicted people to dignify their deplorable conduct. The disease concept of addiction is an example of the Addictive Voice concealing the actual reason people drink/use while it discourages individual initiative.

Brain chemistry, genetics, and personal “issues” are irrelevant to addiction and recovery. Our 2-part brain model, below, is simple, but for our purposes, not simplistic. There are no hidden causes for your addiction; you drink because you love to drink. You use because you love the way it feels.

When the disease concept becomes part of your Addictive Voice, you will feel like a victim of circumstances rather than someone who is responsible for becoming addicted, for staying addicted and for immediately quitting your addiction – right now, for good.

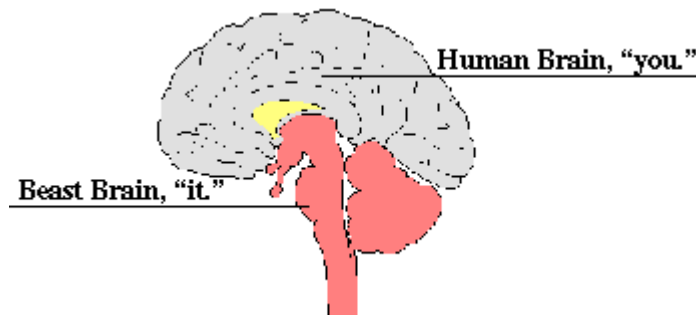
In effect, you have two separate brains within your head — a human brain, which supports consciousness, and an animal/beast brain which supports life itself. The beast brain generates survival appetites which drive the rest of the body toward what it demands, such as oxygen, food, sex, and fluids.

These survival needs are all associated with physical pleasure, i.e., the better something feels, the more necessary it seems for survival. Alcohol and other drugs feel better than anything else, including food, sex, even breathing. Your survival drive has become a death drive in search of physical pleasure.

Your survival appetite is aimed at the wrong stuff, to be sure, but addiction is more a reflection of health than of a mysterious disease. The desire for pleasure fades among sick or diseased people, further suggesting that addiction is a reflection of health rather than a disease process. In RR, some call the human midbrain “the party center,” because of the bond between pleasure and addiction.



Of course, it is often quite stupid (self-defeating) to act on healthy desires or impulses, as in substance addictions.



We call your desire for the pleasure of alcohol and other drugs **the Beast®**. The Beast of Booze, or the Beast of Buzz, is ruthless in getting what it wants because it is about survival. It cannot speak, it cannot see, it has no arms or legs, and it has no intelligence of its own.

The Beast is utterly powerless to act on its own. Instead, it uses your thoughts and intelligence, sees through your eyes, creates strong feelings, and persuades you to use your hands, arms, and legs in order to obtain its favorite substance. It must appeal to you to get alcohol or drugs into your bloodstream.

Although your beast brain has no language ability, it uses your language and thinking centers to get what it wants. It is an animal mentality that can talk in your head. For example, if you wisely decide that drinking is bad for you, and that you will stop, you will soon hear that old, familiar voice telling you why you should continue drinking. You may even imagine a picture of what you want to drink. That is your Addictive Voice, the sole cause of addiction, expressing the Beast's demand for alcohol/drugs. Addictive Voice is to Beast as bark is to dog.

There are two parties to your addiction - you and your Beast, "I" and "it." You can easily recognize your Addictive Voice using the following definition: Any thinking, imagery, or feeling that supports or suggests the possible future use of alcohol or drugs -- ever.

AVRT allows you to become acutely aware of Beast activity and dissociate from it so it can no longer instigate action. Then you may confidently decide you'll never drink again, and feel the grand relief of knowing your addiction is finally over.



## Meher Baba on Addiction

The value of sense-objects is great or small according to the intensity or urgency with which they are desired. If these lusts and longings increase, the corresponding objects assume greater importance. If they subside in their intensity or urgency, the objects also lose much of their importance. If the lusts and longings appear intermittently, those objects retain possible value when the lusts and longings are latent, and actual value when they are manifested. All these are false values because they are not inherent in the objects themselves.

When in the light of true knowledge all the lusts and longings disappear completely, objects vested with importance through the working of these lusts and longings immediately lose all their borrowed importance and appear meaningless.

Now just as a coin which is not in current use is treated as false, though it has a kind of existence, so the objects of lusts and longings when seen in their emptiness are treated as false, though these objects might continue to have some kind of recognition. They are all there, and they may be known and seen, but they no longer mean the same thing. They hold false promise of fulfillment to an imagination which is perverted by lusts and longings, but to the tranquil and steady perception they are seen to have no importance when they are considered separate from the soul. (<http://discoursesbymeherbaba.org/v3-140.php>)



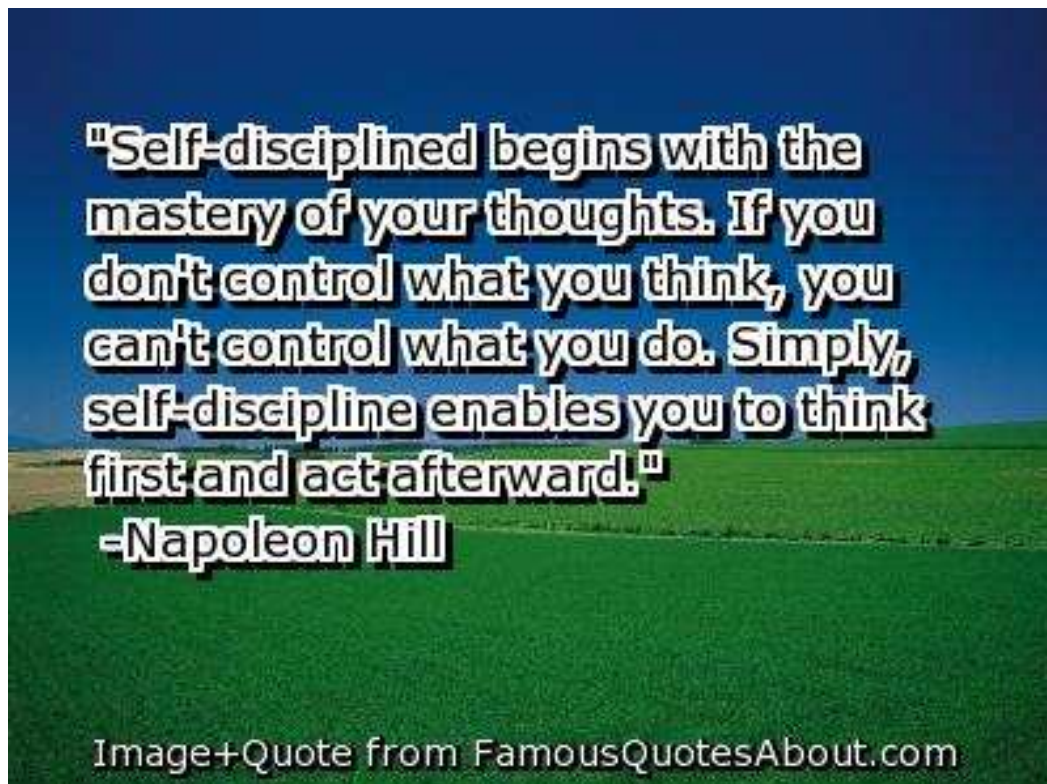
After half a century in psychiatric practice,  
I know without a doubt that the source of addiction is  
spiritual deficiency. Irrespective of whether we are  
religious or atheist, all human beings are spiritual by  
nature and spirituality is the cornerstone of our recovery.

(Dr. Abraham Twerski)



For an addict any excuse is a good excuse.

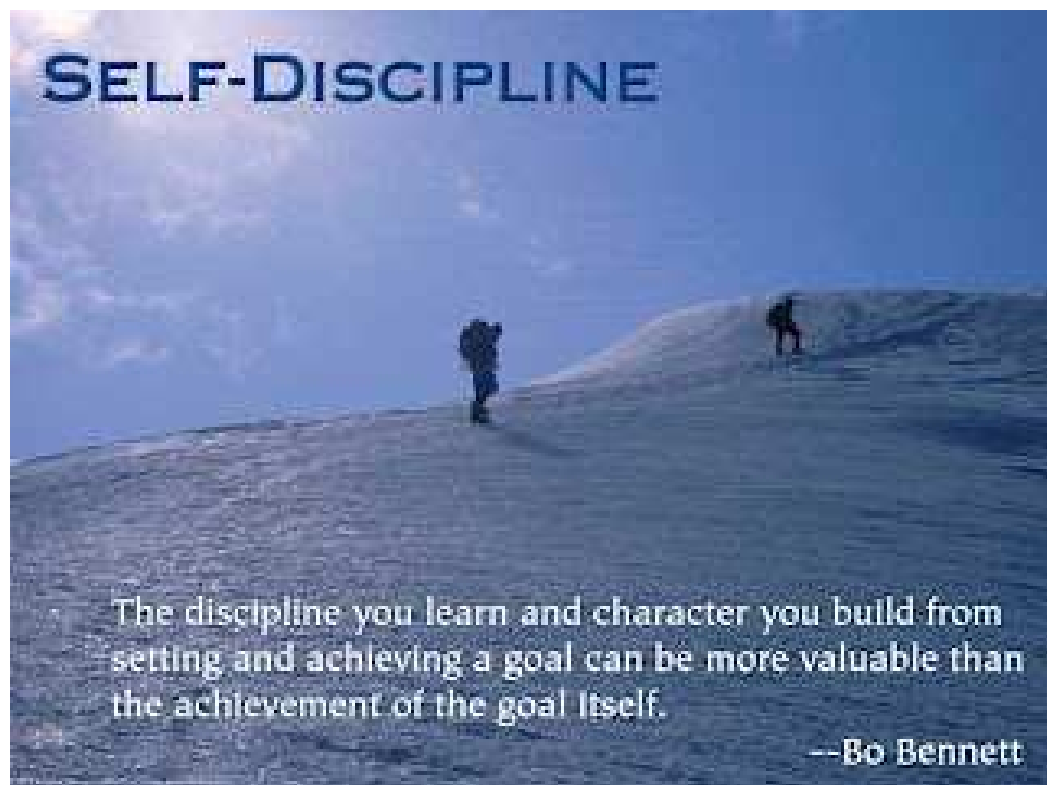
Discipline is remembering what you want.  
(David Campbell)



The successful person has the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.  
(E.M. Gray)

It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons, heaven or hell.

(Buddha)



Some form of self-discipline is necessary to transmute material desires into spiritual aspirations.

(Paramahansa Yogananda)

My face is overrun with wrinkles;  
My head is marked with gray.  
My limbs have gone flaccid;  
Craving alone keeps its youth and vigor.  
(Vairagya-Shataka; Hindu scripture)



May your soul be happy;  
journey joyfully.  
(Rumi)

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