

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF **Self-Discipline**



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Introduction



Let me introduce you to two people: Janice and Letty. They both work for the same company, live in relatively similar circumstances, and make the same amount of money. They're very similar in many ways.

However, Janice quickly begins climbing the ranks in her company, while Letty stays in the same position. Suddenly, Janice has a better job and is making more money.

As if that weren't enough, Janice is much healthier than Letty, running three days per week and consistently eating healthy foods. As a result, Janice feels better than Letty and can participate in many more activities.

So what is the difference between Janice and Letty?

Self-discipline.

That's it. Janice simply has more self-discipline than Letty, and it's paying off in every aspect of her life.

Who would you rather be? Most of us would choose Janice because she's the one reaping all the rewards.

But if you want to be like Janice you have to act like Janice. In other words, **you need self-discipline.**

If you want to grow in self-discipline, you're in the right place. In this guide, we'll discuss what self-discipline is and why it's so important. We'll also talk about specific, concrete things you can do to help you grow in self-discipline.

Ready?

Let's get started.

What Is Self-Discipline?



Before we discuss the roadblocks to self-discipline and how to grow in it, we need to make sure we're all on the same page about what self-discipline is.

So what is self-discipline?

For the purposes of this guide, we'll define it in this way:

Self-discipline is the ability to control your thoughts, feelings, and actions to achieve a specific goal.

Let's break this down a little bit.

First, self-discipline is an ability. It is not something that happens automatically. It is a skill that requires practice and effort to develop. If you want to grow in self-discipline, you're going to need to apply yourself.

Second, it involves control. This means being able to harness your thoughts, actions, and feelings. These things don't need to master you. Rather, you are the master of yourself. **Self-discipline requires the willpower to consistently prioritize what matters most, even when faced with distractions or temptations.**

Third, it involves your entire person. Self-discipline is not just limited to your actions. Self-discipline also encompasses your thoughts and feelings. Ultimately, you'll never take action if your thoughts and feelings aren't aligned.

Lastly, self-discipline is focused on achieving a specific goal. It is not just about being disciplined in general. It is about directing your efforts toward a particular outcome. It's about pursuing the good things that you want to accomplish.

Olympian Jesse Owens had this to say about self-discipline:

We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.

In other words, if you want to do something great, you need a lot of self-discipline, and that self-discipline needs to be focused on a specific goal.

At its core, self-discipline is about developing the self-awareness to identify your goals and values, and the self-control to take action in alignment with them. It's not about brute force or denying yourself pleasure. Rather, it's about

making conscious choices that move you closer to the life you desire.

Self-Discipline vs. Willpower

What exactly is the difference between self-discipline and willpower? They seem to be very similar and the words are often used interchangeably. However, they are not the same thing.

Self-discipline is a broader concept that encompasses the ability to manage your impulses and behaviors over time. You could say that self-discipline is a lifestyle that applies to a large variety of situations, from waking early in the morning to limiting the time you spend on social media to eating healthy snacks.

Willpower, on the other hand, is much more situation-specific. It's that surge of mental, emotional, and physical strength you use to complete a particular task or resist temptation.

Willpower is a finite resource that gets depleted the more it is used. Over time, it becomes harder and harder to resist temptation. That final task you need to finish feels more and

more overwhelming. The last piece of cake becomes irresistible.

Think of willpower like a muscle. The more you use it, the weaker it gets. However (and this is crucial), you can increase your willpower just as you strengthen a muscle through exercise. And the more you increase your self-discipline, the stronger your willpower becomes. They all work together.

Self-discipline is a skill that can be developed and strengthened through consistent practice. By building your self-discipline, you'll have a greater reserve of willpower to draw on when faced with challenges.

The Benefits of Self-Discipline

There are so many benefits of self-discipline that it's hard to list them all. Self-discipline impacts almost all of your life, improving each area it touches. Here are just a few areas where self-discipline can transform your day-to-day:

Career

Want to grow your career and minimize setbacks? Then focus on developing self-

discipline. Self-discipline is essential for completing tasks, meeting deadlines, and achieving goals. It also helps you stay focused, motivated, and productive in the workplace.

Additionally, self-discipline helps you develop the skills necessary to succeed in your career. It's what drives you to earn additional certifications, attend training seminars, and take on new challenges.

Self-discipline can also help you manage work-related stress and avoid burnout. It's what enables you to leave work at a reasonable hour and avoid pulling all-nighters in order to meet deadlines.

Without self-discipline, your career becomes a series of hills and valleys, with little room for growth and development. But by prioritizing self-discipline, you can achieve greater success in your career and reach new heights.

Finances

Self-discipline is essential for financial security and achieving your financial goals. Financial temptation is everywhere, and it's not difficult to secure a credit card these days. Without

discipline, you may find yourself spending beyond your means and racking up significant debt.

Want to maintain a budget? It takes discipline. Want to save for retirement or a large purchase? That also requires self-discipline. By controlling your impulses and staying disciplined, you can make wise financial decisions and set yourself up for long-term financial success.

Self-discipline gives you financial peace of mind. It creates a path for you to follow, leading you toward financial security.

Health

Self-discipline is crucial for maintaining good physical and mental health. Discipline is what pushes you to exercise regularly, eat well, and get enough sleep. Without self-discipline, it's easy to give in to unhealthy habits that can negatively impact your well-being.

Additionally, self-discipline can help you overcome challenges related to health issues.

For example, if you have a chronic illness that requires a strict treatment regimen, self-discipline is essential for sticking to the routine and managing your condition effectively.

In terms of mental health, self-discipline can help you develop healthy coping mechanisms and manage stress more productively. It's also necessary to keep a positive attitude and avoid negative thought patterns that can harm your overall well-being.

A lack of self-discipline can wreak havoc on your body. It can lead to weight gain, chronic health problems, and a decline in mental health. By practicing self-discipline and making healthy choices, you can maintain good physical and mental health for the long run.

Personal Growth

You have so much potential. You may not know it but you are absolutely bursting with potential. You have skills, gifts, and talents just waiting to be unlocked. Self-discipline is the key to unlocking that potential and realizing your true capabilities.

Self-discipline enables you to set goals and work towards achieving them. It gives you the determination and perseverance to overcome obstacles and stay focused on your personal growth journey. It helps you develop new skills, improve existing ones, and reach new heights in all areas of your life.

What's more, self-discipline encourages self-reflection and introspection. By practicing discipline, you can identify areas of improvement, acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses, and make necessary changes to become the best version of yourself.

Relationships

You may not have realized it, but self-discipline is also essential for maintaining healthy relationships. It's only through self-discipline that you can be reliable as a friend. Few things are more frustrating than an unreliable friend, and self-discipline is what keeps you showing up again and again.

Self-discipline is what allows you to follow through on your commitments and be trustworthy. If you want people to take your word seriously, you need to have self-discipline.

You also need self-discipline to communicate effectively and work through conflict. By staying calm and collected, you can approach difficult conversations with a clear mind and find solutions instead of escalating the situation.

Additionally, discipline provides you with the tools you need to manage boundaries. With self-

discipline, you can set boundaries that are respectful to yourself and others. This helps maintain healthy relationships by ensuring that all parties involved feel respected and valued.

Committing Yourself to Self-Discipline

Hopefully, by this point, you can see the incredible benefits that self-discipline provides. It can literally change your life in so many ways.

But here's the thing. If you want to make self-discipline a central part of your life, you need to commit to it. As we noted earlier, self-discipline doesn't happen by accident. It takes conscious effort and dedication to develop the habit.

You need to make a choice to prioritize self-discipline in your daily life. What does that look like? We'll get to that in a bit. For now, just know that it's important to be intentional about making self-discipline a priority.

If you look at the life of almost any great man or woman, you'll see that self-discipline is an integral part of how they live.

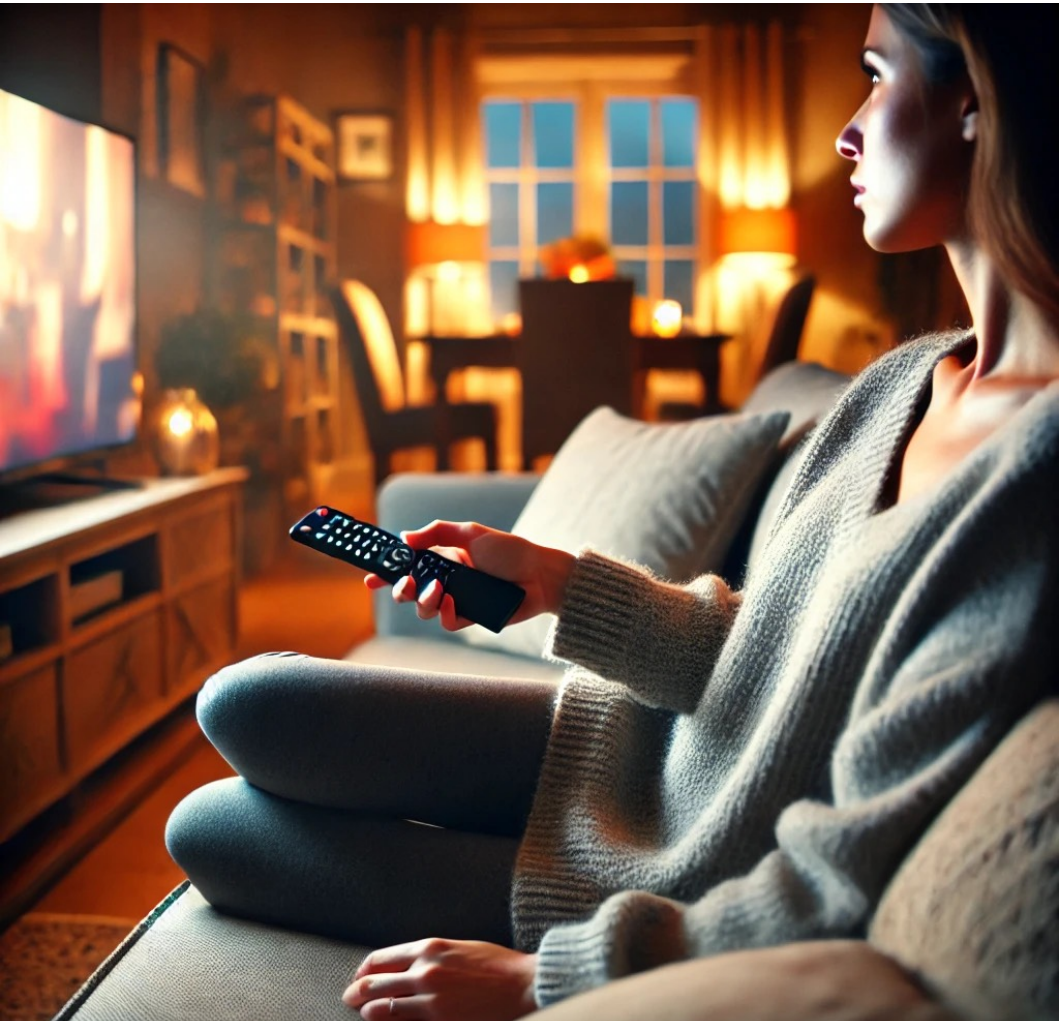
President Harry S. Truman said:

In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves... self-discipline with all of them came first.

Will you make self-discipline an integral part of your life? Will you achieve your goals or will you consistently find yourself falling short and frustrated?

The choice is yours. The good news is that no matter where you are in your journey, it's never too late to start developing self-discipline. It's a skill that can be learned and strengthened with practice.

The Enemies of Self-Discipline



If you want to be self-disciplined, you need to know the enemies you will encounter. These are the things that will try to derail you from your path. Some of the most common enemies include:

Procrastination

Procrastination is one of the biggest, hardest enemies to overcome. It can very quickly sabotage your self-discipline efforts and keep you from achieving your goals.

What is procrastination? It's delaying or putting off a task or action that needs to be done. It's promising that you'll do it later. It's choosing temporary pleasure over long-term success.

Why do we procrastinate? There are numerous reasons. For many people, it's because of fear. Fear of failure, fear of success, or even fear of the unknown. It can also be due to a lack of motivation or feeling overwhelmed by a task. When a task appears beyond your abilities or resources, you're going to be tempted to procrastinate.

If you want to develop self-discipline you need to be keenly aware of the temptation to procrastinate. You need to know what causes you to procrastinate and have strategies to deal with it.

The Inner Critic

Negative self-talk can be a powerful demotivator. You might hear voices saying you can't do something, that it's not worth the effort, or that you're going to fail anyway. These negative thoughts can come from past failures, doubts, insecurities, or even the expectations of others.

Negative self-talk will almost always self-talk will sabotage self-discipline. For example, say you're trying to lose weight. You see a piece of cake on the counter. Negative self-talk tells you that you're never going to lose weight so you might as well eat the cake. Your discipline goes out the window and you demolish the piece of cake.

You need to be able to silence your inner critic if you're going to be disciplined.

Distractions

We are bombarded by distractions. Every day we receive a thousand pings and beeps and alerts from our devices, tempting us to check them. Social media feeds us with endless content and notifications that pull us away from our tasks.

And there are always chores that "must" be done before we tackle our task.

We often use distractions as an excuse for why we're not getting things done. The truth is, we choose to be distracted.

It's easier to scroll through social media than it is to focus on a difficult task. It's important to recognize these distractions and learn how to prioritize and create boundaries to stay disciplined.

Lack of Clear Goals

Earlier we said that self-discipline involves harnessing your thoughts, feelings, and actions toward a specific goal.

So what happens when you don't have clear goals to strive for?

Your self-discipline can easily falter. Without a clear direction, it's easy to get lost in distractions and lose motivation. You'll find yourself asking why you're doing these things in the first place.

Setting clear and achievable goals is crucial for maintaining self-discipline. Whether it's a short-term goal or a long-term one, having something

concrete to work towards will help you stay focused and disciplined. It also gives you something to measure your progress against and celebrate once achieved.

Fear

Fear of failure is another factor that can hinder self-discipline. We may be afraid of trying our best and still falling short, so we don't even bother putting in the effort. We may also fear the criticism or judgment of others if we fail.

This fear holds us back from taking risks and stepping out of our comfort zones, which are essential for growth and progress.

Overcoming fear is essential for building self-discipline. You must be willing to risk failing. You need the guts to go forward even if you might fall short.

Unrealistic Expectations

We talked about what happens when you don't have clear goals. It's also a problem when you set goals that are unrealistic and nearly impossible.

For example, let's say you want to lose 30 pounds in a month. While it may be theoretically possible, this goal is not sustainable or healthy. When we set unrealistic expectations for ourselves, we're setting ourselves up for failure.

This can lead to feelings of frustration and disappointment, causing us to give up and abandon our efforts towards self-discipline.

Setting realistic, achievable goals goes hand-in-hand with self-discipline. The most disciplined people set realistic goals for themselves and then pursue those goals.

Stress

Stress can wreak havoc on your self-discipline. When we're stressed, our minds are constantly racing, making it difficult to focus and stay disciplined. It can also lead to emotional eating or other unhealthy coping mechanisms that sabotage our efforts towards self-discipline.

To combat stress and maintain self-discipline, it's essential to find healthy ways to manage and cope with stress.

How to Build and Maintain Self-Discipline



We've talked about what self-discipline is. We've discussed some of the roadblocks you'll encounter on your path to self-discipline. Now it's time to get into the nitty-gritty of how to build self-discipline in your life.

Here are some of the most practical ways you can build self-discipline:

Find Your Why

If you're going to be self-disciplined, you need to know why you're doing it. As we noted above, when you don't know why you want to do something, you'll quickly lose motivation.

What is your why?

Let's say your goal is to improve your health in the coming year. Why are you doing that? Maybe it's because you want to be able to spend more time with your kids. If you're healthier, you will have more energy to run around in the backyard.

When you're tempted not to be self-disciplined, think back on your why. Remember what got you started in the first place – that initial desire that pushed you to pursue self-discipline.

Identify the Obstacles to Self-Discipline

We've talked about the fact that self-discipline doesn't just happen. It requires lots of motivation and lots of work. You will encounter obstacles along the way, and it's important to identify what they are. You need to know the things that will push you toward laziness (lack of self-discipline).

So, for example, let's say you're seeking to eat healthier, and you've identified that one of your triggers is stress. Stress makes you want to eat junk food instead of cooking a healthy meal at home.

So, when you feel stressed, be on the lookout for it. Notice if you're starting to mindlessly reach for things in the pantry or fridge that aren't good for you.

Once you've identified the obstacles, you can create strategies for overcoming them. You need to have a game plan for coping with stress, or whatever your trigger is.

One way to cope might be to take a walk. For you, it might help to do some deep breathing

exercises or call a friend for support. Whatever it is, make sure you have a plan in place so you can face your obstacle head-on and continue to move toward your goal.

Substitute Old Habits With New Ones

Habits can be tremendously helpful when it comes to building self-discipline. Habits essentially allow you to do certain things on autopilot, without spending any of your precious willpower. They enable you to act without much or any effort.

For example, brushing your teeth is probably one of your habits. You do it every day at the same time without thinking about it. In fact, it's probably part of a bigger set of habits that make up a routine.

If you can replace old habits, undisciplined habits with new, disciplined ones, you're on your way to self-discipline.

So, going back to our healthy eating example. You can start by creating a habit of meal prepping on Sundays. This way, when you feel stressed during the week, you have healthy and nutritious meals ready to go.

It's not easy to change habits, so don't get discouraged if it takes some time and effort. It's all about being patient and consistent with your new habits until they become automatic.

Create a Discipline-Positive Environment

Your environment can help or hinder your pursuit of self-discipline. It can propel you forward or hold you back. It can make or break you.

Why is your environment so important?

Because your environment determines your levels of temptation, which determines how much willpower you need to exert. The more willpower it requires, the easier it will be to lose your self-discipline.

An example will help here. Say your goal is to lose 10 pounds over 4 weeks. You spend 8 hours every day in your office. In your office you have chocolate, and you love chocolate. Because of your environment, you must exert willpower all day to resist the temptation. The chocolate makes it tough to be self-disciplined.

But if you remove the chocolate from your office, or replace it with healthier snacks, you'll be less tempted and require less willpower to resist. This makes it easier for you to maintain self-discipline and stick to your goal.

So, take a look at your environment and see what changes can be made to make it more conducive to self-discipline.

Maybe that means decluttering your workspace, having healthy snacks available, or setting up reminders for yourself. Ultimately, creating a positive and supportive environment is essential in building self-discipline.

Beat Procrastination

Procrastination is one of the biggest discipline killers. One of the most important things you can do is to kill procrastination in your life.

But that's easier said than done.

To start, you need to identify the cause of your procrastination. Some of the most common causes are:

- Fear
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Lack of motivation
- Perfectionism
- Poor time management
- Distractions and interruptions
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Indecisiveness
- Lack of clear goals or priorities

Once you've identified what's causing your procrastination, you need to be ruthless in rooting it out. If your task seems overwhelming, break it down into smaller, more achievable tasks. If you're afraid, confront your fear directly. If you're a perfectionist, learn to settle for good enough.

The point is that you have to take action. Procrastination is one of those things that tends to grow the longer you let it go. So, take steps

every day to kill procrastination in your life. Don't procrastinate any longer.

Adopt Positive Self-Talk

One of the best ways to silence your inner critic is by adopting positive self-talk. This means reframing negative thoughts and replacing them with positive affirmations. For example, instead of saying "I'll never be able to do this," say "I am capable and determined to succeed."

Positive self-talk can help you stay motivated and believe in yourself. It also can enable you to keep a positive outlook even when facing challenges.

To make it a habit, start by paying attention to your inner dialogue. When you catch yourself thinking negatively, consciously replace those thoughts with positive ones. Over time, your mind will automatically default to positive self-talk.

Silence Distractions

Distractions tend to eat away at your self-discipline rather than destroy it in one fell swoop. Think about it, every ping or beep requires you to

use a small amount of self-discipline. You can't let that happen if you're working on an important task. You need to silence your distractions.

This might mean:

- Turning off notifications on your phone
- Closing unnecessary tabs on your computer, or even
- Finding a quiet place to work
- Shutting your office door
- Wearing noise-canceling headphones

Alexander Graham Bell said:

Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus.

Don't let distractions constantly nip at your self-discipline. Create a distraction-free environment for yourself and give all your focus to the task at hand.

Set Clear Goals

Goals give you something to strive for, a target to aim at. They can serve as motivators when you feel like procrastinating or you start to lose focus. However, not all goals are created equal.

To set effective goals:

- **Be specific.** Instead of saying "I want to lose weight," say "I want to lose 10 pounds in the next 3 months." You should know exactly what you want to achieve. There is no room for fuzziness here.
- **Make them achievable.** Setting unrealistic goals can lead to disappointment and a lack of motivation. Start with small attainable goals and gradually work your way up. So instead of saying "I'm going to write a 50,000-page book in a week" start with "I'm going to write 10 pages this week."
- **Write them down.** Writing down your goals helps you commit to them and hold yourself accountable. Put them in a place where you'll see them regularly, like on a Post-It note stuck to your mirror. Every

time you glance at the mirror you'll be reminded of your goals and inspired to pursue them.

- **Set a timeline.** Having a deadline can help motivate you to stay on track and make progress towards your goal. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish when facing a deadline.

If your goals are large, you may want to break them down into sub-goals that you can achieve more easily. You still apply all the above principles to your smaller goals, as well as your large goals.

Final Thoughts: A Fully Disciplined Life



We've covered a lot of ground in this guide. Specifically, we've discussed:

- What self-discipline is
- Self-discipline vs. willpower
- The benefits of self-discipline
- The need to commit yourself to self-discipline
- How to find your why
- Identifying the obstacles to self-discipline
- Substituting old habits with new
- Creating a discipline-positive environment
- Beating procrastination
- Adopting positive self-talk
- Silencing distractions
- Setting clear goals

It's important to remember that the ultimate goal is to integrate self-discipline into every area of your life. Rather than using it only during specific situations, your entire life can involve self-discipline.

With self-discipline, you can achieve almost anything. Want to get healthier? Improve your career? Strengthen your friendships?

Self-discipline is the key that opens all the doors.

NBA basketball coach Monty Williams said, *"Everything you want is on the other side of hard."* In other words, you can have anything you want if you're willing to be self-disciplined.

That thing you want is out there, just waiting for you to come and take it. Self-discipline will take you there.

So what are you waiting for?

Get started.