

Stay On Track And Don't Fall Off!

Master Self-Discipline For Ultimate Success

EAC Andrews

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Introduction

Are you stuck in a rut? Do you have a tough time turning your plans into reality? Does it seem like no matter how hard you work; you always manage to end up at the same place? Does it feel like you're just going around in circles, chasing your tail? If any of these apply to you, you are hardly alone.

Most people have faced these questions, at least one point in their lives. They find themselves in the same place as you. Interestingly enough, your problem is not due to lack of intelligence, bad luck, or terrible circumstances. In most cases, your issues don't stem from some group of people who have it in for you. There's no conspiracy working against you to try to hold you down.

Still, it seems that the days just blur into each other. Regardless of how much effort you put into your plans, nothing seems to work. You may have your hopes and dreams, but it seems that they just don't pan out.

The good news is, if you're like most people, the solution to your issues might precisely be self-discipline. This is a mostly overlooked virtue nowadays. Don't get me wrong, people do acknowledge its importance. People know its role in personal success. However, people do not emphasize it; they think of it in passing. They often treat it as an afterthought.

This should not be a surprise. Our modern culture is in a rush. There are only 24 hours in a day. We feel that time is a luxury. Self-discipline is often sidestepped for quick payoffs and faster results. After all, we are living in a time of 15-minute pizzas and instant downloads.

Next time you try out a new app, and you experience a hiccup or a slowdown in downloading and installing that app, how do you feel? Most people feel frustrated because your expectation is that once you click on that button, that app will be downloaded and installed. Same goes for pizza, if you are hankering for some, you expect it to be at your door 15-minutes after calling for delivery, or it's free.

Considering the cultural and personal mindset surrounding these situations, it's no wonder that most people are having a hard time with the concept of self-discipline. It's one of those personal virtues that we'd like to say is a good thing. We pay a lot of lip service to it. However, the problem is, when it comes to actually applying it to our lives, we find a reason not to. It gets in the way of all sorts of conveniences and creature comforts.

Still, if you want to take your life to the next level, and you want to achieve a peak level of personal performance, you need to rediscover this "lost virtue." Otherwise, you will remain stuck. Despite all your best efforts, all that planning and hoping, things won't pan out as you want to. Why? You simply lack discipline to turn hopes, dreams, and ideas bouncing around in your head into reality. Self-discipline is the key.

This book explains why self-discipline is important and its role in attaining any kind of success. It also discusses the most common roadblocks to building self-discipline. Finally, it walks you through the process of not only rediscovering this virtue, but taking action so you can get started on a process of continuously building your level of self-discipline.

Chapter 1

Self-Discipline is Crucial for Any Kind of Success

Self-discipline is the cement holding together any kind of personal success. Whether we're talking about your education, career, relationships, or other areas of personal growth, self-discipline is required. To motivate you to develop a high level of urgency in building up your level of self-discipline, here is a quick rundown of how self-discipline impacts important aspects of your life.

Self-discipline and your education

In any kind of educational process, you're not given an instant reward. You don't just show up to school and the next day; you are handed a diploma. It doesn't work that way. At the very least, you're going to have to work through several months or typically years to get your ultimate reward: a diploma.

This diploma is not just a piece of paper. It opens a lot of doors, precisely because it is an outward indicator of your level of focus and discipline. It tells potential employers or graduate school admission committees that you are a person who can start a project, stick to it, sacrifice, and continue until you achieve your objective.

Education requires consistent attention because there are just many different things competing for your attention. This is especially true once you get to high school and college. There are many distractions that can throw you off track. The fact that you're capable to go through the process and end up with a diploma in our hand, speaks volumes about your ability to stay focused. It also highlights the fact that you are able to keep your eyes on the big picture of your educational plan.

The big picture is not only to go to school and meet members of the opposite sex; nor is it just to learn certain facts here and there. It is becoming a different person because of the consistent sacrifice, focus, and attention to detail required by any higher level academic environment. These are precisely the things that future employers and advanced educational programs are looking for. They look at the diploma as a proxy or external indicator of deep, internal personal qualities. To make it through that process, you need self-discipline. There are just too many distractions, and you need to stay focused; self-discipline enables you to do that.

Self-discipline and your career

Unless you are a child of a multi-billionaire or someone who is extremely well-off, chances are you are not going to start at the top. It's just not going to happen. If you are like most people, you're going to start from the bottom. This is how careers get started. You get paid less, you have to work more hours, and you have to pay your dues.

To complicate matters, you also have to deal with setbacks. Projects that you participate in may not pan out. People might start looking for team members to blame. Somebody has to take the hit. Similarly, in any type of teamwork in a team environment, you are going to run into people who are difficult. These people rub you the wrong way or maybe say the wrong things. Whatever the case may be; you have to put up with those people and learn how to work around them.

On top of all these, you have to take scary risks with your career. People who become successful in their careers, rarely stay at the same place. They are able to leapfrog many different levels in the corporate hierarchy because they are able to bite the bullet and take serious risks with their careers.

Self-discipline enables you to have a stellar career. Why? Being the most disciplined among your competitors and peers makes you more attractive to your employers. They get a sense of assurance that you are trustworthy; that you can get stuff done. You are able to focus on a goal and keep pouring your time, effort, and attention to that goal until it's knocked out, until you tackle the next. Your employers love this. They are looking for people who have proven track record of taking larger and larger projects and assuming greater levels of responsibility.

This requires discipline. Other people are easily sidetracked, or would take the path of least resistance; most would rather coast. If you're the one who's willing to sacrifice now for the promise of a greater reward in the future, you are automatically more attractive to the eyes of employers and superiors. Self-discipline opens more doors and leads to greater and greater career opportunities.

Self-discipline and your relationships

This is where things hit very close to home. While self-discipline's impact on education and career may not be that big of a deal to certain people with values, most people would agree on its importance as far as relationships go. In any kind of relationship, whether you're dealing with a parent, romantic partner, or friends, you're going to have to deal with each other's issues. That's the bottom line.

In families, this is particularly touchy because while you can select your friends, you cannot choose the family you're born into. You are stuck with their issues. Self-discipline is required in your relationships because you have to learn how to deal with the issues of the people closest to you. Either you deal with them directly or work around them.

In many cases, you need to have the discipline to be able to take the time to wait for others to mature. There are situations where you cannot get somebody to change. It's hard enough for you to change; can you imagine trying to change somebody else? It's very difficult; you're just left to wait for them to mature. Throughout all this time, you have to be supportive and be there for them.

When there are conflicts in relationships, you often have to take the high road. This means not following what your emotions are telling you; like choosing to blow up at people or cutting them out of your life. Taking the high road means taking the hit. You have to swallow your pride. This, again, takes discipline.

Undisciplined people would take the path of least resistance and just lash out to say what's at the top of their head. You know that in these cases, you will be burning bridges. How many times have you had a nasty argument with somebody very close to you, and really harsh words were exchanged? It takes quite a bit of discipline to take the high road and focus on healing and reconciliation, instead of just defending yourself and pushing back. The bottom line here is that discipline is required whenever you find yourself in a situation where you can get explosively emotional. This is crucial.

In a romantic relationship, it's always easier just to bail out. For example, you're with somebody who has a temper problem or loves to nag. Regardless of what you tell them, they just can't seem to change. Similarly, they might have spending problems. No matter how much money you earn, you're still in debt because your partner just can't turn down a deal. In those situations, you need to have a high level of self-discipline for your relationship to survive. Otherwise, it's too easy to hit the panic button and bail out of your relationship.

Self-discipline and your personal growth

As far as your own personal journey through this world goes, self-discipline is also required. A lot of people think that they can just coast through life, or dabble in a few things here and there. They think that they can stroll leisurely through life's peaks and valleys. I wish that was true, but it doesn't work that way.

You see, every single day; you're going to be faced with challenges. These challenges either push you forward to the next level of your personal mastery or they drag you down. They can keep you at the level of constantly taking the path of least resistance until you become habitually lazy. You always end up taking the path that is less risky and requires less work. As you probably already know before you even cracked open this book, where there is less risk, there's also less reward.

There's a reason why the vast majority of people on this planet are struggling at some level or other. They're struggling because they're not doing things that have a high payoff. They're not taking the right risks. Unfortunately, risks are very scary to most people. This is why, as far as your personal growth goes, you end up feeling stuck. Despite putting in the work, you feel that you're not getting the results or rewards you deserve.

You can only grind your gears for so long until the natural tendency to quit becomes overwhelming. Once this happens, it's too easy to resign yourself to a life of mediocrity. You end up feeling that your best years are behind you, or you're not really capable of any kind of high-level success or happiness in your life. You just instinctively settle for the middle ground; you become mediocre.

Self-discipline also impacts other areas of personal growth, like overriding your tendency to comfort eating. A lot of people develop weight issues because they eat to make themselves feel good. They are suffering from low self-confidence or self-esteem. They eat to overcome that feeling. It requires discipline to change that habit.

When it comes to achieving higher levels of productivity, you have to go through the pain of change. It's too easy to get so stuck in your ways that any kind of change is automatically scary. It requires self-discipline to overcome all of these.

The same applies to being more consistent with your efforts. If you want to grow on a personal level, you need self-discipline. You will be required to put in work while it seems that you're not getting any kind of reward. You will be required to put in work continuously, and wait for what seems to be a ridiculously long period of time, until you see some changes. Personal growth means overcoming impatience. Sadly, we live in a society and a modern world where we are being rewarded for being impatient.

If self-discipline is so important, then why do most people lack it?

If self-discipline is such an important trait, why don't we hear about it more often? Why is it not being championed or even promoted on mass media? Why aren't schools teaching it as a specific subject? Believe it or not, schools actually taught self-discipline as a virtue as recently as five to six decades ago. However, as the modern society evolved, the social emphasis on self-discipline as a trait to be taught and explicitly promoted fell between the cracks. Chapter three explains why.

Chapter 2

Self-Discipline: Easier Said Than Done

By this point, you should have a clear idea of just how important self-discipline is. As I've mentioned, self-discipline is some sort of personal "cement" holding together a lot of the significant things in your life. It makes things impossible. It is the raw ingredient that you need to achieve great progress in many areas in your life.

As important as it is to appreciate its value, it's too easy to look at self-discipline as an intellectual construct. For example, people talk about love, but unless they have fallen in love, they wouldn't know what love is. It's easy to talk about gravity, but unless you've fallen out of your chair, you wouldn't know what gravity is. You wouldn't know its implications, its impact, or what it truly means to you.

This is why self-discipline is easier said than done. Discipline is great, but seriously, most people look at it as something that's nice, but they feel that they don't really have the time to cultivate it fully. This should not be a surprise. After all, life is what happens when you make other plans. Despite your best-laid plans, life has a way of springing surprises on you. If you don't believe me, tell yourself, "Tomorrow I'm going to be more disciplined. I'm going to take steps to build up and develop my sense of self-discipline."

The problem here is it's too easy to get derailed. Why? Most people instinctively take the path of least resistance. It's not because you're lazy, it's because your mind thinks in a very efficient way. It's always looking for the shortest straight line from point A to point B.

Generally speaking, there's nothing wrong with this. For the most part, efficiency is commendable. We should be efficient. We should maximize the value we get for every ounce of effort we expend. We should also maximize the amount of return we get for every second of time we put into something or some activity.

Unfortunately, the path of least resistance usually doesn't lead to optimal rewards. How come? Well, think about it, this is basic economics. Since the path of least resistance is what most other people take, you are left in a situation where you're simply competing for scraps. There are a lot of people doing the exact same thing you're doing. Not surprisingly, the rewards available are thinly distributed. There is very little reward because everybody is doing what you're doing. You end up taking what's left over.

Does this sound familiar? If your career doesn't seem to be going, if you feel that you're not making the money you should be making, this should explain it. You took the path of least resistance and avoided taking heavy risks; and now, you are left settling for and resigning yourself to lower rewards.

The sad reality

What makes this so unfortunate is that we often feel we just don't have the time for self-discipline. We feel that building self-discipline involves this monumental personal task. It's just too big for us; it may take too long. It seems like it's some sort of massive process that would take up too much of our focus, attention, and time. Instead, we'd rather look for instant payoffs now. Besides, other people are not disciplined. You only need to look around you and realize that this is the case.

Since this is what everyone else is doing, is it really that bad? Why rock the boat? As appealing as

this may seem on an emotional level, keep in mind that lack of self-discipline is infectious. If you hang out with people who lack discipline, it's only a matter of time until you adopt their values. To make matters worse, eventually your lack of discipline becomes a mental habit.

Just how bad is this? Try asking a smoker if they can quit smoking tomorrow. Chances are, they'd tell you they'd love to, but they feel that it's simply impossible. It's too soon or it takes too much effort. The same applies to mental habits. In the same way that we know smoking is bad for us, and we should drop the habit; we know that certain mental habits are corrosive, toxic, and unproductive.

We know that we should be more disciplined; we should look at the "long game." Even so, it's just too hard. We don't have the time for it right now, and we're set in our ways. Not surprisingly, we fall back time and again to the path of least resistance and to what we're already doing. Again, self-discipline: easier said than done.

Chapter 3

Self-Discipline: Modern Society's Unpopular Virtue

A big part of the reason why it's so hard to focus actively on self-discipline and cultivate it in your life is because it seems the rest of the world is working against you. It may seem like this, and it's not just in your head. What you're detecting is actually true. Here are the reasons why:

Self-discipline is not a socially promoted virtue because of economics

There's a big difference between social appreciation and promotion. As a society, we appreciate the power of self-discipline. In fact, if you read the biographies of famous political figures, captains of industry, and other social titans, they talk about the importance of discipline, either explicitly or by implication.

Society, as a whole, appreciates discipline. However, it doesn't value it to the point that it actually promotes it. Why? Simple economics. Modern economies are about promoting consumption. We're pushed constantly through all the ads and media programming, that we're bombarded with, to enjoy life now, and pay for it later.

In fact, most Americans buy their purchases with a credit card. A credit card implicitly involves spending money that you do not have at the present. Having a credit card means the ability to pay with "future money." Our modern economy would go off track and possibly completely derail if we start promoting self-discipline as the highest social virtue. You can't just encourage people to hold off because our consumption driven economy works in reverse. It's all about pushing people off the fence to make that purchase now.

We live in an instant gratification society

The key driver to this economic orientation is the concept of instant gratification. You owe it to yourself to get results now. You owe it to yourself to get the things and services you desire in the here and now. Why wait? This is reinforced by the internet, as well as our other social values. For example, in the internet, you no longer have to wait to use software. Before the world wide web, you would have to open a catalog, pick up the phone, order software, wait a few days for the package to arrive, take the disk or CD out of the box, pop it into your computer, wait a ridiculously long time to load up the software, and then install it. Once you've gone through that process, you can enjoy the software features and capabilities you paid for. The internet has destroyed all that. Not only is software instantly downloadable and usable, in most cases, a lot of software that you had to pay for before are now completely free. They are paid for by advertising.

Since the internet has impacted our consciousness in such a dramatic way, it has also changed our expectations. We expect things to be delivered faster. We expect things to deliver instant benefits and results. The whole concept of having to wait or go through a process has become alien to us. Every time you interact with a downloadable media or content, your mind is being trained to have a shorter and shorter attention span. Your expectations are being trained to demand instant results. This spills over to other areas of your life.

One readily identifiable impact of the internet culture is fast food delivery culture. When was the last time you've ordered pizza from a pizzeria that told you your pizza is going to be delivered in an hour? Chances are; you would want to avoid such a pizzeria. One hour? That's ridiculously long. Pizza shops are furiously competing with each other to shrink the delivery time to be as little as possible. As recently as a few years ago, a 30-minute wait was pretty standard. Now, consumers

expect that they shouldn't wait more than 15 minutes.

The internet and our delivery culture work with each other because they serve to reinforce assumptions and expectations. This has a tremendous spillover effect on other areas of our life. For example, take the case of becoming a millionaire. Several decades ago, one could only expect to become a millionaire once they're well into their 40s or 50s.

Now, thanks to the Dot-Com culture, it's not uncommon for people to expect somebody in their mid-20s to have a few 100-million dollars of net worth under their belt. The thinking is, if you can become a millionaire overnight, why wait? Not only is this an aspiration, it has become an expectation.

This is especially true in areas like the Silicon Valley, where people who are in their 40s are looked at as rather curious, if not weird, for not achieving a six-figure net worth. We are stuck with a society that is all about instant gratification. We are bombarded with the assumption and expectation that we should not wait, which leads me to a very sad conclusion below.

Modern society made lack of self-discipline a virtue

I know that this might seem like a stretch, but considering the way our modern economy works, lack of self-discipline and patience had become virtues. Brashness and impatience are admired; while people who stick to a job for a long time are considered "lifers," and often suspected of being losers. Since we have become so impatient, our focus is more on hacks. These are quick, small, incremental improvements, instead of long-term innovation or paradigm changes; where the latter requires a tremendous amount of discipline.

Since we have turned the lack of self-discipline as a virtue, it's not surprising that our society, as a whole, tends to focus on short-term gains. If you need a good example of this, look at how investors in the stock market operate, especially "activist shareholders." They couldn't care less about long-term value, or the grand objective of a company. Instead, their focus is on whether the company would make enough money and profits in the next quarter to justify a quick gain of several percentage points for their shareholders.

Companies are now running this way. Multi-billion dollar companies that should be focusing on reshaping the future and laying the foundation for future prosperity are left chasing after expected short-term upticks in share prices instead. Make no mistake about it. Our reduction of impatience and lack of self-discipline into social virtues impacts all areas of our lives and these assumptions, then in turn, reinforces our existing mental and social programming. Not surprisingly, people's attention spans have been shrinking.

Chapter 4

Building Self-Discipline Starts with a Proper Definition

To achieve something, you have to properly define it first. It's like going on a trip. If you have a very broad idea of where you wish to go, chances are you're probably not going to get there in the most efficient way possible. In fact, it's highly likely that you will simply go around in circles.

This happens all the time because people keep defining themselves out of arriving at their definition. For example, if you say to yourself, "I'm going to lose weight," then it's anybody's guess whether you've succeeded in your plan when you lost 5 pounds, 10 pounds, or 25 pounds. It seems that any kind of weight loss will get achieve your objective.

This can get really frustrating because let's face it, building self-discipline is not a sprint; it's a marathon. It takes a long period of time. It going to take a lot of hurdles and obstacles that you will have to overcome.

Now, if you have a very fuzzy definition of what your end goal is, then it's very easy to simply give up. It's very easy to just declare victory and go home. If you want to develop real self-discipline, you have to properly define it. Bad definitions lead to bad planning. Ill-defined goals lead to faulty success tracking. You just don't know if you've achieved your goal because you have not fully defined it. Similarly, the plans that you've come up with might not be optimal because of improper or vague definitions.

Self-Discipline Means Choosing to Do What's Right Instead of What's Quick and Easy

One key definition of self-discipline is that it is the ability to stick to your principles regardless of what is easy or convenient. As I have mentioned before, people always take the path of least resistance. Discipline at its most basic level is all about resisting that often overpowering tendency to take the path of least resistance. You are choosing to take action based on what you think is right. You are choosing to act based on principle instead of expediency, convenience, and comfort.

This is also very risky, because in most cases doing the lazy thing, avoiding responsibility, and chasing after pleasure pay off immediately. Discipline, on the other hand, often involves discomfort, feeling left behind, feeling that you're missing out. There's all sorts of negative feelings that you have to overcome as you put in the work day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year.

The bottom line to all of this is discipline is the ability to delay gratification. You find the willpower not to eat your cake now because you know that if you sacrifice now, you will have a bigger cake to enjoy in the future. It all boils down to learning the ability to look several steps ahead instead of just focusing on what's immediately in front of you.

Discipline Means Hanging on and Remaining Energized for a Long Time

In addition to acting based on your highest principles instead of falling for what's quick and easy, self-discipline also means putting in the effort over a long period of time. It means doing something repeatedly day after day despite the fact that you're not getting instant payoffs. Despite the fact that the rewards don't seem to come, you are still able to persist with your efforts.

Let's put it this way. It's like running a marathon. The marathon is over after 26.2 miles. The normal human tendency is to quit the race the moment you feel a cramp, the moment you feel heated, the

moment you feel thirsty, or the moment you feel some sort of discomfort. The most common and most basic human impulse is to simply give up.

Discipline involves your ability to resist easy fixes or wanting to give up. Instead, you gain the focus to continue what you're doing over a really long period of time.

Self-Discipline Means Keeping Your Eye on Ultimate Goals and Outcomes

As I've mentioned above, success is something that happens in the future. Success is something that is built up after you've put in the work. This work often takes quite a bit of time. It rarely occurs after a quick investment of effort. You have to have the ability to look past immediate pleasures and fast results, for long-term, bigger gains.

For example, in high school it's very easy to just refuse to do homework because you'd rather have a good time now. You'd rather go out with your friends, see a movie, play sports outside, and do a thousand other things besides doing homework. Homework, however, pays off in the future. By doing your homework, you do better at tests and you get better grades. Better grades then lead to better colleges and universities. A diploma from the right institution with the right grades lead to better jobs. A better job leads to greater opportunities. You see how this works?

You see the timeline involved. Some people would rather dispense with the timeline. They'd rather blow it and they just focus on the instant results. Why wait for the future when you can enjoy yourself now?

Self-discipline is all about looking at the end of long processes and ultimate goals. Self-disciplined people also understand that the longer the preparation time and the more risks taken, the greater the eventual reward. There's a reason why a tiny fraction of the world own most of the resources. Believe it or not, unequal distribution is not because of theft or some sort of unfairness. By and large, this is due to the fact that some people just have a longer time horizon than others.

The bottom line here is that discipline is the ability to continue trying despite no immediate results. If you're able to frame your rewards in the future, then you will be able to enjoy greater payoffs after a tremendous investment of time.

Self-Discipline Means Sticking to Your Values Instead of Letting Circumstances Shake You

In the course of any relationship, there are always going to be very trying situations. Harsh words may be exchanged. People might end up doing things that hurt you or enrage you. It seems that despite what you do, the people closest to you don't seem to want to change. People with very little self-discipline are more prone to click the reboot, reset, or off buttons on their relationships.

Self-disciplined people, however, learn to stick to their values. They know that they're in this relationship due to certain values. As a result, they do what's right over a long period of time. They stick to their relationships as much as possible. They keep their word, they stand their ground, and they continue to give and give and give, despite the fact that they're not getting much in return. In many cases, this ability to hang on enables the other partner to mature enough to start carrying their side of the bargain.

As you can tell, not everybody has this level of discipline. But if you were to work on your self-discipline as it pertains to your relationships, you would have more meaningful, more fulfilling, and more rewarding relationships.

Keep these definitions in mind when working to build up your level of self-discipline. Keep a laser focus on the traits and personal behavior a higher sense of self-discipline brings to the table. This is your reward. The rewards of building up discipline is discipline itself. While making more money, increasing your net worth, and establishing more rewarding relationships are great and everything, the real victory in building self-discipline is self-discipline itself.

Chapter 5

Now for the Good News!

After reading chapter 4, you're probably under the impression that self-discipline, as awesome as it is, is probably a personal trait that some people are just lucky to be born with. Most of us have simply missed out.

Well, I've got some great news for you. Iron self-discipline is not inborn. It is learned behavior. While some people have a genetic predisposition for higher levels of self-discipline and self-control, most of us who do not have that predisposition can still get there. It can still get to that same level of mastery.

How? By choosing to learn how to be self-disciplined. Put simply, if other can do it, you can do it, too. Here is how it works:

Unlock the Power of Modeling

Who you are as a person right now can be traced to your earlier influences. What you choose to think about, who you think you are, your values, and the key aspects of your character were actually modeled after other people. Believe it or not, you picked this up as you were growing up. In some cases, they were conscious. In most cases, they were unconscious. Regardless, you picked them up from somewhere. You were not born a fully formed person. You developed over time, thanks to your exposure to other people.

This process of shaping your identity and consciousness is called modeling. By being conscious about this process and being purposeful in who you choose to emulate and pick up lessons from, you can turbocharge your efforts at building self-discipline. Here are the steps.

First, identify successful people you know and pay attention to how disciplined they are. Look at what they're doing. Look at what they've achieved. What do those achievements, capabilities, goals, and personal powers say about their level of discipline?

Second, read up on successful people. Maybe you don't know any widely successful people in your close circle of family and friends. No problem. Read up on successful people and see what you can pick up from their biography. Read up on Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, or Warren Buffet. It should quickly dawn on you that people who are tremendously successful exercise a very high level of self-discipline.

Let's put it this way. If Warren Buffet's investment is for quick and easy profits, he probably wouldn't be one of the richest men on this planet. It takes discipline to have a "long game" investment philosophy. It would seem that everybody else around you is making lots of money investing in trendy stocks, and here you are investing in solid-value long-term companies. It turns out that a lot of those quick investment gains made from high-flying tech stocks and trendy companies get wiped out easily when there is a massive market correction.

All told, when looking at a long enough timeline, Warren Buffet's strategy beats most other investors on the planet. That takes a tremendous discipline and focus. He could have easily just given in to the temptation of cashing in for millions of dollars every single day due to quick moves. Instead, he looks at the long game.

You can pick up quite a bit of self-discipline lessons by simply reading up on the biographies of

famous successful people. Most importantly, you get an emotional spark from them.

Very Important Notice

Don't just focus on the techniques that the people you're trying to model use for self-discipline. Instead, focus on being emotionally engaged by their story. Let their story unlock your sense of urgency regarding what you need to do to become a truly disciplined person. Focus on developing a sense of emotional engagement.

You have to remember that while it's easy to intellectually understand the need to become self-disciplined, you're not going to make much progress unless it becomes an emotional reality for you. For most people, things only become real when their emotions are involved. Get emotionally engaged by stories of people you know or people you read about. Unlock your sense of possibility and sense of achievement. Your sense of achievement, of course, is all about bridging the reality of other people and your personal reality. Put simply, if they can do it, you can do it, too.

This high level of emotional urgency leads to a tremendous reservoir of personal curiosity. People who become successful in life are curious. They don't just focus on a recipe or a checklist for success. Instead, they push the boundaries. They look at the back of the book, so to speak. They look at alternatives. They try to pull things apart and put them together to understand the principles underlying the success that they want to achieve. This sense of curiosity is what separates truly successful people, and people who just follow the recipe.

Now, don't get me wrong. You can make quite a bit of money by simply following a recipe or somebody else's script. But there's a limit to that. If you want to achieve breakthrough success and become unstoppable, you have to feed your natural sense of curiosity.

Unfortunately, as we get older, our sense of curiosity is the first casualty of "maturity". We start restricting ourselves into neat little boxes. We start restricting what's possible and taking comfort based on things that are expected from us or things that are easy. Ultimately, the walls of our comfort zones start caving in and we find ourselves trapped in an invisible prison.

It doesn't have to be this way. By always entertaining your sense of curiosity, you will find yourself pushing against the walls of your comfort zone. You're always pushing the envelope as to what is possible. This enables you to live a life of constant, consistent victory.

Ask Yourself: Do You Want Discipline Badly Enough?

Here's a real problem. You're reading this book and you're reading all this amazing stuff about discipline. You know that it's crucial for any kind of personal success. You can get all that on an intellectual level.

But as I've mentioned above, unless it becomes an emotional reality for you, it's not real enough. What I mean is, this is real, but it's not real enough for you to take action on it. You know that it's something that you'd like to do. It's something that would be nice if you focused on it. The problem is it's too easy to believe that you don't have the time and the energy. What you're really doing is you're just making excuses for yourself.

This is why it's really important to unleash your sense of emotional urgency. When you are operating on a high level of emotional urgency, excuses melt away. Justifications go away. Remember, in any kind of self-improvement and self-development project, it doesn't take much effort to find an excuse not to start. It doesn't take much work to find an explanation that would

take away the urgency of what you need to do. You know you need to do this. You know you need to change, but the problem is it's too easy to kick the can down the road and say, "I'll get to it when I get to it."

I need you to start looking at self-discipline as something different. It's not just something that "would be nice to have". Instead, it's crucial.

There's an old story of a young man who wanted to make a million dollars. He came upon this old man who told him, "I know the secret of making a million dollars. Meet me at the beach tomorrow morning." The young guy showed up at the beach because he wanted to make a million dollars. He was thinking to himself, "What the hell does showing up at the beach have to do with making a lot of money?" Still, he wanted that money badly enough that he showed up at the beach.

Sure enough, the old man was there. The old man then took him into the water until they were hip-deep. The young man then asked the old man, "What does this have to do with making a lot of money?" Then the old man took the young guy by the neck and put his head under the water. The young guy was just flailing in the water, and right before he was about to pass out, the old man pushed him up. The old man then asked him, "How badly do you want to succeed? If you do not desire making those millions of dollars in the same way as you desired continuing to breathe, you will fail."

You have to develop a sense of emotional urgency regarding self-discipline. It's not just something that you read about. It's not just something that can explain certain things that are going wrong in your life. No, it's something that is crucial like eating, breathing, or having sex. It's something that is fundamental to your existence as a human being.

If you're able to view self-discipline with that level of necessity, then you will be operating on a high sense of emotional urgency. You won't be tempted to kick the can down the road. You won't be tempted to fall for excuse after excuse after excuse. Instead, when the opportunity to establish and practice self-discipline appears, you knock it out of the park. You get on top of it and you beat it down until the next opportunity occurs. And you do it again, and again, and again.

You may be thinking, okay, this all sounds great and everything. But how does this relate to my life? How do I trigger that sense of urgency? I know I'm supposed to look at discipline as something crucial like eating, drinking, or sex, but how does this relate to my life?

Well, here's a very simple mental exercise. Focus on what your life would be like if you do not work on your discipline. Chances are your life will be worse than it is now. Maybe you're making \$5,000 a month and you feel that it's not enough. Maybe you're living in a small house and you feel like a loser. Whatever the case may be, I'm telling you: Without self-discipline, what little you have will be taken away from you. It's that bad.

Let's face it. The path of least resistance gets stronger and stronger the more we take it. We develop mental and emotional habits that get harder and harder to resist and reverse over time. You need to put your foot down now. You need to make the decision to break these old habits now. Your life will be shit if you give it enough time.

Feel that burn. Feel how miserable that would be. Feel the pain of having all these amazing dreams and never getting around to achieving them. Feel the pain of always feeling envious and jealous of other people who seem to do something great with their lives. Feel the sting and pain of having lived your life, and only having managed to fill it with regrets.

You were put on this planet for a reason. You were put on this planet for a destiny. And it's not your destiny to lose. It's not your destiny to be just another face in the crowd. Your destiny is to make something out of yourself. And unfortunately, that requires discipline. Feel the bitterness of a life wasted.

Once you get to this emotional state, I need you to direct your attention to what you can gain. Don't just focus on what you can lose, and believe me, you can lose a lot. Focus also on what you can gain. What can discipline bring to the table? What dreams can it make possible? How would you feel once you're standing on top of that mountain of personal achievement? Isn't the feeling of being truly alive worth it?

Regardless of What You Do, STOP WAITING!

The normal human tendency is to get all excited about a project. It's like showing up at a work meeting and your boss gives a pep rally and everybody's all pumped up, but the moment the boss leaves, everybody calms down and it's back to the same old grind.

You do the same with yourself. When you read an inspirational story, you get all emotionally caught up and you're pumped up. However, when enough time passes, things go back to normal. You still feel stuck in a rut. You still feel that nothing much is happening with your life.

The secret here is simple. Stop waiting. Stop giving yourself the excuse, "Tomorrow, I will start becoming a more disciplined person." Don't give yourself that luxury because believe me, tomorrow will never come. You're just going to make another set of excuses so you wait another day, and that day comes and you make another set of excuses, and it never ends until you find yourself dead in a box.

The bottom line is simple: you are responsible for making your future happen. Let it happen right here. Let it happen right now.

Chapter 6

The 8 Steps to Powerhouse Discipline

To unleash personal discipline, you have to follow 8 steps. These steps are interlocking. You cannot achieve ultimate discipline if you skip out on a step. If you find one step too hard, too difficult, or requires too much sacrifice, and then skip it, you're not going to develop the kind of discipline you need to truly succeed.

If you want to be unstoppable, you have to allow yourself to go through the process of taking all these 8 steps in succession. What follows is an overview of the coming chapters. They clue you in on the steps that I'm going to fully flesh out in the coming chapters. This is just an overview.

Step #1: Unlock the Power of Belief

As the old saying goes, if you believe, you will achieve. Simply put, what you assume to be true will become true. Your mind is always engaged in self-fulfilling prophecies. Wouldn't it be nice if this process worked for you instead of against you?

Step #2: Find the Opportunity in Your Present Problems

Most people instinctively run away from their problems. This is why a lot of people fantasize. They think that success and happiness are things that are completely different and divorced from their present reality. What they don't understand is that the problems they're facing are problems precisely because they're not disciplined. These "problems" can actually be springboards for opportunities for greater personal growth. You have to focus on your most obvious challenges and unlock the opportunity they contain.

Step #3: Remember: Discipline Is a Skill, Not a Destination

This step mentally reprograms you. Most people program themselves to think that success is some sort of destination. As a result, by the time they achieve their goal, they fail to become happy. Why? They defined happiness and success as something else entirely. Most people are like horses with a carrot dangling in front of their face. Regardless of how hard they push forward, they never get to eat the carrot.

In step 3, I'm going to help you reprogram your mind to look at discipline as more of a process. It is process-driven instead of goal-driven. By allowing yourself to live within the process, you become engaged enough, pushed enough, and challenged enough to properly scale what you learn to eventually go to where you need to go. Again, this is a process, not some sort of fixed destination going from point A to point B. You become a completely different person when you go through this process. That change, in of itself, is the destination.

Step #4: Simplify and Stick to the Script

Did you know that when given a lot of choices, most people simply just freeze up? This is very natural, this is instinctive, and sadly, this also explains why most people live mediocre lives. By allowing yourself to live within a process governed by a simple script, you maximize your chances of success. The simpler your list of things to do when building discipline, the more you'll stick to it. The more you stick to this list, the faster you'll get used to it and then you would scale up to greater and greater levels of achievement.

Step #5: Keep Your Eyes Fixed on the Present Moment and the Next Step

While it's important to keep your eyes on the prize and have some sort of overall map for your efforts, you also need to focus on the present moment. As far as your actions go, focus on where you are now and the immediate next step. This enables you to retain this sense of emotional urgency you need to go through the process. At the very least, this prevents you from starting something then failing to complete it.

The reason is simple. Instead of intimidating yourself by focusing on the long timeline ahead, you focus on the moment and get motivated by it enough to take the next step, and then the step after that, and so on and so forth.

Step #6: Make it Personal

Your level of discipline is a reflection of your value as a person. I know this is unpleasant news for a lot of people. Many people would rather not phrase the issue this way, but this is the absolute truth. Your level of self-discipline reflects what values you have. You focus on the easy, you focus on the short cut, you focus on cutting corners. Or are you the type of person that is willing, ready, and able to put in the work, take on risks, and overcome obstacles to achieve some sort of higher goal? Like it or not, this reflects on your values as a person, as well as your overall social value.

Step #7: Measure Success the Right Way

A lot of people who have a tough time with self-discipline are not stupid. They're not dumb, they don't have low IQs, many of them don't even have low EQs either. Where do they fall short? They use the wrong success metric.

Think of it this way. If I was going to build a multibillion dollar company from scratch, do I measure my success based on how many millions I've made the first month the business is on operation? I'm telling you right now, if I did that, I would get so demotivated that I would eventually give up. Unfortunately, that's the kind of thinking most people engage in. They don't allow themselves to feel good based on what they achieve at the specific stage of their journey. They keep looking at the ultimate reward and they keep feeling defeated.

Step #8: Push, Master, Scale Up!

If you study the lives of successful people, you would quickly detect a pattern. They actually follow a routine. When they take on projects, they face obstacles and they overcome many problems. They then reach a point where things get easier for them because they've mastered a particular process or a particular environment. What do they do? They don't sit on their laurels. Instead, they scale up. They look for something bigger and better, and they try to take things up to the next level.

This is the way of turning discipline from a simple productivity hack or a shortcut strategy or tool into a lifestyle and habit. People who push, master, and scale up do this instinctively. They don't even think about it. It's part of who they are. It's part of their lifestyle. The good news is if they are able to do that, you can do it, too.

Chapter 7

Unlock the Power of Belief

What you assume to be true will become true. Did you know that your senses and your consciousness, meet together and reinforce each other? Your mind is always trying to make sense of the world, and whenever it perceives stimuli from the things that you see, smell, taste, hear, and touch, your mind assembles meaning from these sensory points. These are all data points that your mind reassembles into what is perceived as reality. Sounds good so far, right?

The problem is if you have the wrong mindset, your mind will assemble reality in the wrong way. It will assemble reality in a sense that it works against you. You assume the worst. You think that you are powerless when you're not. You think that people are laughing at you or are angry at you when they're not. In other words, you perceive the world as a victim when in reality, you can choose to perceive it as a victor and achieve victories.

This is how powerful assumptions can be, because what you assume to be true will impact how you process reality. And guess what? Your worst fears will become true. How does this work? How does this enable you to achieve higher levels of self-discipline?

Believe and You Will Achieve: Not Just a Bumper Sticker

You've probably seen many bumper stickers that say "Believe and you will achieve." They sound really great, and they definitely make for great pep talks, but in reality they're like pieces of mental candy. We just eat them up and then chew them out. They don't really have much of an impact on our lives.

But you better believe it. The idea of believing and achieving is real. It's not just a bumper sticker idea. What you choose to believe about your capabilities, you will live up to.

There was a research study involving teachers where they were told that 20% of their students were geniuses. These teachers then proceeded to teach the kids for a whole semester. After the semester, the students were given IQ tests. It turns out that the students were actually randomly selected. They were not geniuses. The 20% never existed. Interestingly enough, after the IQ test was administered, the classes monitored by the study showed a tremendous increase in IQ.

This highlights the power of expectations. The only thing that changed is the expectation of the teachers assigned to those classes. The teachers assumed that 20% of their students were geniuses. Accordingly, they treated them like geniuses. They expected more from them, they gave them hard assignments, and they encouraged them like they would a class of gifted students. This highlights the reality that you live up to other people's expectations.

Keep this in mind because this applies to how you think of yourself as well. What you choose to believe about your capabilities, you live up to. People with a very healthy level of self-confidence start behaving like beautiful people if they believe that they are beautiful. Objectively speaking, they might not be all that attractive, but it doesn't matter. They carry themselves like beautiful people, and they have the high self confidence they would expect from a beautiful person. Not surprisingly, other people start treating them like they are very attractive people.

What you choose to believe about your capabilities eventually become reality because you live up to them. Similarly, what you choose to believe about a certain situation, limits, or challenges, is what pushes you to perform.

A guy in college invited this girl to his room. This girl has always been off limits to him. She's always been giving him the cold shoulder. But after hanging out and being friendly with her for a long time, she decided to hang out with him and spend some time doing homework in his room. The guy, after 30 minutes, leans in and kisses the girl. She returns the favor, and now they've been married for 20 years. It turns out that the guy only made the move because he thought the girl said she is going to kiss him if she goes to his room. For some reason, he's picked this up somewhere. But when he got that idea in his head, he became more confident. He became more relaxed. As a result, he became more attractive to the girl.

What you choose to believe about any kind of situation you find yourself in either limits you, robs you of power, or pushes you to perform. You might not have been able to do it before without that belief.

What Do You Need to Believe about Self-Discipline in Your Life?

To unlock the power of belief so you can achieve what you need to achieve, as well as push beyond your limits, you need to focus on three points.

First, you need to believe that you actually need self-discipline. Now, this might seem pretty strange because you're already reading this book. Obviously, you need it enough for you to spend a few dollars to buy this book. Well, that's not the kind of belief that will work. That belief is more of an intellectual acknowledgment that you need self-discipline. Anybody can get that. That's not going to move the ball forward.

You have to emotionally believe that you need this self-discipline. Go back to my story in the chapter before of the young man who had his head dunked in the water. You need to get that same level of emotional urgency. You have to actually need it. It has to be a life or death situation for you. Otherwise, it's going to be too easy for you to just kick the can down the road and say to yourself that you'll get to it when you have time. The problem is you will never ever have the time because something else will show up in your life that seems to be more of a priority. You see how this works?

You have to believe that you need self-discipline. This belief has to be emotional in nature. I've already said that for most people, unless a concept is emotional, it is not real.

The second thing that you need to believe about self-discipline is that you already have it. I know this is probably a shock. I know this might even seem ridiculous. After all, you obviously believe that you need self-discipline, that's why you're reading this book. But I'm telling you, for you to achieve whatever level of success you've achieved up to this point in your life, means that you have at least some semblance or element of self-discipline. What's important is you need to realize the building blocks you have and then reposition, repackage, and repurpose it in such a way that it leads to an unstoppable level of victory.

The third and final belief that you need to wrap your mind around is that you have the ability to scale up. You have the ability to achieve self-discipline. Once you overcome a challenge, you can overcome even more increasingly intense challenges.

It's like walking up a staircase. Every step up takes you higher and higher. You have to believe that this is possible. You have to assume and expect that for every obstacle you overcome, you learn things and methods that will push to a higher and higher level of achievement and success. This is called the power of momentum.

Whenever you try something new, it seems like it's pulling teeth. It's just really difficult, it's a hassle, and it takes a long time. This is perfectly understandable because this is the first time you did it. But the second time you do it, it's a little bit easier. The third time, it's even easier. You reach a point where it becomes second nature. If you have this mindset with riding a bicycle, why can't you adopt this same mindset when it comes to self-discipline?

They operate based on the same principle: the power of momentum. Momentum really is all about reaching that point where stopping something takes a lot more effort than starting it. The good news is the more you do something, the better you get at it.

Believe these three points about self-discipline. Otherwise, you're not going to make progress. You might as well close this book because it's not going to benefit you in any way. I'm sorry, but that's just the way it is. You have to allow yourself to believe. Belief is the cornerstone of any kind of achievement.

Chapter 8

Find the Opportunity in Your Present Problems

A lot of people spend a lot of time running away from their problems. They view their problems as essentially sources of pain. These are things that are to be avoided, these are the things to delay, these are the things to deny. Whatever the case may be, these are the things you simply try to get out from under. You'd rather not be bothered with them because they bring discomfort, if not outright pain.

The thing is, your problems actually contain the keys to greater levels of self-discipline. In many cases, the reason why they seem so oppressive and ominous is because you've chosen to think of them as problems. Problems, again, are things that you wish to avoid.

Now, what if you looked at your problems as opportunities? What if you looked at them as puzzles that yield important benefits once you solve them? At the very least, they produce skills that would enable you to tackle greater and greater obstacles in the future. What if you have that mindset?

This is precisely the mindset that you need to master self-discipline. Those problems that give you so much grief? They're actually opportunities for you to practice higher and higher levels of self-discipline. They are problems precisely because you're not disciplined. Since you're not disciplined, they can only bring pain, discomfort, and frustration.

The good news is by tackling them head on and using them as raw materials for greater and greater levels of deep interpersonal strength, you turn them into gateways of opportunity for greater personal growth.

Stop Thinking in Theoretical Terms

Now, all this sounds awesome, right? It seems like on paper, this makes all the sense in the world. The problem is there are many things that look and sound great on paper, but are quite problematic in reality.

This is precisely how people approach the whole project of finding opportunities in their present problems. They look at this objective in purely theoretical terms. They look at their problems as these massive overarching clouds that are so complicated and confusing, that they feel like unless they tackle those big problems, they won't be able to master self-discipline.

Well, here's a tip: stop thinking in broad terms. Stop thinking in terms of theory. Instead, focus on the specific challenges in front of you right now. Focus on the here and now. For example, are you having a tough time paying the rent? That's a problem you can work on. Are you having a tough time paying off your credit card bills? That's a problem you can work on. Do you have a tough time putting up with your significant other's nagging and complaining? That's a problem you can work on.

Stop looking at your challenges in broad, theoretical terms that have deep, philosophical, or spiritual roots. That's not going to help you. If anything, that's just going to rob you of the sense of emotional urgency you need to take a chainsaw to the problems you are facing in the here and now. Focus on the most tangible manifestations of the challenges you're facing.

Meet Your Challenges and Become More Disciplined

It doesn't get any simpler than deciding to list down the issues you are facing in their most concrete form, and tackle them head on. For example, you can always say, "I have serious financial discipline problems." That is too broad. You need something concrete. The right answer would be, "Every single month, my credit card statement comes and I cannot pay the minimum payment." Define your challenges in practical terms.

Once you're able to do that, engage them. What do you need to do to pay the minimum amount due on your credit card bill? Do you need to sell something? Do you need to take a second job? Do you need to work online? Do you have to spend less money? What do you need to do? Actual, direct engagement is crucial. Thinking in broad, theoretical terms is not doing anybody any favors.

When you focus on tightly-defined practical problems, your problem solving skills are engaged. You are actually moving the pieces of the puzzle. You are taking action on something that truly exists. This increases the likelihood that you will achieve something tangible.

You're not just running around in circles, thinking about your big challenges and groping for intellectual enlightenment or some sort of quasi-spiritual "revelation". That's not going to work. That's not going to put food on the table. That's not going to keep your landlord from evicting you. You need to focus on concrete problems and identify the opportunities for self-discipline they contain.

Break Down Your Current Challenges into "Engagement Goals"

You need to sit down and list the concrete and specific challenges you are facing. And then, in the next column, put down what you did to engage them. For example, the credit card bill came in and it's a few thousand dollars over your monthly income. What do you do? Do you kick the can down the road? Do you consolidate or reschedule the debt?

Next, track the results. What were the results of the actions that you took? Did it lead to the overall debt load declining, or did you simply just kick the can down the road? You just postponed the inevitable financial catastrophe awaiting you. Which is it? Look at what you actually did and see if there is any room for improvement.

The end goal here is to knock out the problem. The end goal is to reach a point where you no longer break out in a cold sweat when the credit card bills come. Which course of action would lead to that happening? You would quickly realize that when it comes to finances, you either have to work another job, spend less money, sell stuff, or do all three.

Whatever the case may be, it's only these types of proactive actions that which would provide real, substantive relief. Everything else is window dressing. Everything else is just cosmetic. It's just superficial stuff. You need to set up engagement goals. Did I really deal with my problems, or did I just kick the can down the road? Did I just punt?

Sort Your Challenges and Knock out the Small Ones First

Now that you have a list of challenges and engagement goals set up, the next step is to arrange things in a way where you maintain your high level of emotional urgency. This is called setting up emotional feedback loops.

When you set up your problems with the easiest ones at the top, chances are quite good that you would be able to knock out those small ones permanently. Your engagement goal is to take them on and effectively deal with them so they don't come back.

When you knock these out and work your way to more difficult items, you don't feel like the wind got knocked out of you. Instead, you get a second win because there's a tremendous emotional high that you feel when you knock out smaller problems. You feel that you're doing something about your life. You feel that you're achieving something. This gives you the energy you need to come up against more difficult challenges.

Compare this with attacking a formidable challenge first, wasting a lot of willpower, feeling emotionally drained, and then tackling smaller goals. You're won't have much energy left. If anything, you might have such little energy that you won't be able to make much of a difference.

Personally, I learned this through complete trial and error. Usually, I would work on the most challenging stuff on my to-do list. I realized this takes so much time, willpower, and focus, that even if I were to make a small dent on them, I won't have much willpower left. Even stuff as simple as returning email feels like a chore.

Things only started changing for me when I evenly distributed challenging and not-so-challenging tasks. I would get an emotional high from knocking out an easy project, and then this would give me enough energy to take out a more challenging one. I would then recharge my willpower and personal focus by knocking out another smaller task. By using this method, I found the willpower I need to knock out my complete to-do list day after day.

Now, when you're dealing with your current challenges, you obviously will not be able to knock them out in one day. Not by a long shot. But, by strategically structuring your time between easier problems and more challenging ones, you get the emotional push you need to knock out challenging problems that you would otherwise would want to avoid.

What's happening when you're doing this? That's right. You are exercising an increasing level of self-discipline. This is due to the fact that you built an emotional feedback loop. The more you knock out smaller challenges, the more capable you feel. This ever increasing presumption of personal capability gives you the sense of power and focus you need to knock out even more difficult challenges. When you take these out, you get a tremendous sense of accomplishment, but you feel drained. You then recharge by knocking out smaller stuff and resuming your upward trajectory.

Try this. It doesn't matter how small the task is. As long as it's a challenge, you will get an emotional lift out of it.

Chapter 9

Remember: Discipline is a Skill not a Destination

It's very tempting to look at building self-discipline as some sort of fixed point in time and space. What I mean is that you work towards self-discipline and once you reach a particular point in time, you can safely say that you have self-discipline.

It's understandable why most people think of self-discipline this way because otherwise, it seems too open ended. People would rather have a map in front of them so they can work towards some fixed point that would tell them that they have succeeded.

While having a map - as I have mentioned in the definition section of this book - is a good idea, you don't want to take mapping to extremes. You don't want to take it too far because otherwise, you are not going to get there.

As I have explained before, it's a better idea to focus more on the process of becoming self-disciplined instead of thinking that there is some point in time and space where you can say you are self-disciplined.

The process is actually more important than the "destination" of self-discipline. You ran the risk of turning it into some sort of "end goal" or "end stage". Why is this a problem? Why does this lead to issues? How can this derail your efforts at becoming self-disciplined?

Well, if you look at your project of achieving a higher degree of self-discipline as some sort of fixed goal in the future that has a definite end, it's too easy to be intimidated by the distance between where you are now, and where you need to go.

If you have such an idealized goal of self-discipline, it might seem so distant that it borders on being impossible. What makes this really problematic is that you end up scaring yourself. You may end up saying, well, this is where I am, and that is where I need to be. There is no way I can make that distance and put in all that time to get from here to there.

Thinking in terms of "end stages" is very intimidating and scary. The worst part of all of these is that you are the one intimidating and scaring yourself based on your unrealistic or at the very least an unhelpful picture of building self-discipline.

Not surprisingly, you end up taking a shortcut the first time it shows up. It's too easy for life to throw you a curve ball. It is too easy for all sorts of emergencies, life issues, and other excuses to pop up and rob you of your attention. Ultimately, you would give yourself excuses for slowing down and later on giving up on your project of attaining a higher level of self-discipline.

Allow Yourself to Measure Success Based on Where You Are in the Process

The better approach is to look at self-discipline as a skill involving a process, instead of a fixed destination. This way you would realize that there is a beginning, a middle, and end stage of the process. You then apply the appropriate metric to where you are in the process.

For example, if you are just starting out with knocking out a checklist of things to do every single day, then the proper metric would be to measure whether you have done these to do list items every single day.

You don't measure yourself based on how much money you made because you are more disciplined. You don't measure your success on how happy your relationships are because you have achieved self-discipline. You focus on where you are in the stage of the process.

The problem is, most people apply the wrong metric to the wrong stage of the process and they end up feeling like they are the world's biggest losers. They end up feeling that building self-discipline is fine in theory, but is really impractical and damn near impossible. What you're really doing is you're just kicking the can down the road because you are looking at this goal as a destination.

Let me tell you the story of Bob, so you can see how this works. When Bob was in high school, he thought that once he got to college, he will be happy because that's where the cool people are, and college night life is amazing. He worked hard in high school and he ended up in the right college.

Was Bob happy once he was in college? Absolutely not. By the time he got into college, Bob was thinking that he would be really happy once he got out in the working world and started moving up the corporate ladder. After all, by the time he gets his first corporate job, he would get a nice car, live in a big house on the right side of town, and so on and so forth.

Bob finished college. He did really well and worked in a great company. Was Bob happy? Again, absolutely not. Why? By the time he was working in the corporate world, he started thinking that he would be really happy once he retires and travels the world on his leisure time. Do you see how this works?

You keep redefining yourself out of happiness. The same applies to self-discipline. You end up pushing the point in time where you achieve your goal. You are never happy. You never stop and smell the roses, to understand where you have been.

Focus on the process and on who you become while you undergo the project of becoming more disciplined. Ultimately, it doesn't really matter how disciplined you get. It also does not matter whether you reached that idealized "end goal". What matters is that the process changed you enough to the point where you are able to turn more of your dreams into reality. To make this happen, focus on the here and now.

There's No Shame in Getting Excited Over Baby Steps!

Focus on where you are in the here and now. Take baby steps. No matter how small are the steps that you take, still, you are going forward. You are going in the right direction. Enjoy yourself in the moment. Allow yourself to feel happy and content with the fact that you are doing something that you were not doing before.

Back then, you were just putting things off. You were making excuses. You try to explain away why you are not working on your self-discipline and why you are not tackling the challenging tasks you face. Now, you are making progress. It may be small and painfully slow, but you are making progress. Allow yourself to enjoy that. Give yourself that victory.

Your Goal is Emotional Urgency Now

Your goal is to savor the fact that you are disciplined enough to handle a small stage in the long road ahead. Get excited about where you are and the future steps that you are going to take. Be creative, and see how you can be more efficient and effective at this stage.

There are a lot of things you can fix at this stage. You can work on time management, or

maximizing your return on effort. There's just so many things that you can tweak, revise, or improvise to take your game to the next level. Get excited about mastering your current stage.

Allow me to let you in on a secret. You are never going to master anything in your life unless you are curious and excited about that thing. If you want to be more disciplined, then stop fearing the tasks and the problems that you have to deal with.

Face them head on and focus on mastering them. How can you do things faster? How can you work more efficiently? Are there any third party solutions? Try to imagine yourself trying to get inside the building.

First, you would try to knock. If they won't let you in, you will try the side door. If that's not available, then you should try the back. Still, if you can't get in through the ground floor, maybe you should tunnel under the house or break through the roof, or the window for that matter. Do you see how this works?

When it is hard to get across, try digging underneath, try the sides, and the top as well. Look at it as a puzzle, where there is no penalty for getting the wrong answers. There is a penalty, however, for giving up. If you think along these lines, then it's more likely that you would get excited about mastering the current stage of where you are in your project.

Chapter 10

Simplify and Stick to the Script

If you are having a tough time sticking with the routine to produce great results, maybe you should simplify the things that you do. For example, if you are having a tough time at work and you feel that you are not paid enough, maybe it is because you are just spinning around in circles and trying to do a lot of things while failing to get good at any of them.

This happens all the time. You have to remember that your employer is not an idiot. He or she will only pay you as much money as profit allows your employer. For example, if your employer gets 10\$ out of productivity from you, then it does not make any sense for your employer to pay you 10\$ an hour.

Even if your employer pays you \$7.50, that might still be a little bit tight, because you have to remember, your boss has an overhead to worry about. They have to pay rent, electricity and other expenses. They have to worry about costs. So, what's the way out of this situation?

Try to maximize your value by simplifying the list of things that you do and getting good at them. Instead of running around trying to do all sorts of stuff and getting crappy results, ask to focus only a handful or maybe three tasks and do a great job with them. Boost productivity, and increase the overall quality of your work.

Once you are able to do that, then it becomes so much easier to convince your boss that you deserve a raise. Why? The dollar value your employer gets out of you on an hourly basis is much higher because you are specialized and you are more efficient.

The same logic applies to simplifying and sticking to the script of all the problems that you are trying to tackle in your daily life. The simpler your initial list is, the more you stick to it. The more you stick to it, the faster you will get used to it. The faster you get used to it, the sooner you get better at it. The better you get at something, the sooner you master. When you master, you then move up to the next level. Do you see how this works?

This process can be utilized all across the board. You can apply this to things that you do at work. You can also administer this to your tasks and problems at school. This is definitely relevant to your relationships.

The Bottom Line: Complexity Trips, People Up

The bottom line here is simple. When you are running around in circles trying to do all sorts of things, you make them more complicated than they need to be. Not surprisingly, you are only able to invest a certain portion of your time in these many different things on your to do list.

What do you think will happen? Well, you are probably going to do a mediocre job on them. What you are going to do will not be an excellent job. You are just going to go through the process. In many cases, you might just go zip through the process and go through the motions.

Too Many Choices Will Make You Freeze Up

In a psychology experiment run by a university, students were asked to make a decision among many different items. The students took a long time to decide and many of them could not finish the test. The researchers then reduced the list of choices to a handful and they got favorable results.

What this shows is that our will power is finite. We only have so much will power in any given day. When we are faced with a tremendous amount of choices, it eats up our will power and we are not able to process too many tasks requiring judgment after our will power is depleted.

This is why it is important for you to start with a simple script every single day. These are the things that you will do like clock work. This has to be a short list so you can focus your personal firepower onto these items and knock them out very quickly. Also, the more focused you are, the higher the likelihood you would master these tasks.

Stick to the Essentials

When coming up with the list of tasks you want to tackle everyday to build up your self-discipline, it is crucial that you pay attention to return on effort. Make sure that you get maximum value for the effort that you put in. The best way to do this is to focus on the most important stuff first.

Ask yourself, will this task produce a lot of value for me? Will it move my career forward? Will it lead me to academic excellence? Would it lead to something very positive? Try to sort your to do list items based on return. Small stuff, like checking email, messing around with social media and other tasks are actually "leaks" of your will power.

If you do those things first, you won't have much will power left to do the more important stuff. Remember, will power is finite. You only have so much to work with every single day. Use it wisely. This is why it makes a lot of sense to focus on the most important stuff first.

These are the things that you usually want to avoid. These things seem so big and require so much time, that you'd rather postpone them. Tackle these. The payoff is increased self-discipline. You are able to stick to these really tough tasks until you knock them out. That is self-discipline.

Make Discipline Easier for Yourself and Simplify Your List of Tasks

Keep the lists small. Don't trip yourself up with a huge number of tasks that you probably will not get to anyway. Understand that if you leave items on your to do list, you are actually sending yourself a negative message. You are telling yourself that you are not capable. You are not able to do this and it is perfectly okay to keep stuff on the to do list.

It then becomes easier for you to adapt the mindset of "I'll get to it, when I get to it". That is the reverse of self-discipline. Keep your list small. Maybe three or four items per list. Whatever these items may be, they have to lead to big goals.

Now I am not saying that you should not do small tasks. They should only be lowered in priority. Maybe you should have a dedicated hour to email after you have done all the heavier stuff. Keep the list focused. Everything on your list must have a heavy impact on your self-discipline. The items must test your willpower.

Stick to the Script

Whatever you do, stick to the script. Remember, there are only three items on your to do list. Knock those items out. Don't allow yourself to rest until you completed those. The good news is that, given enough time, you will get used to knocking things off your list. It's going to be very hard at first, but like I said earlier, as long as you stick to the script and accomplish them, you will be used to the process.

Don't stop until you finished the list. It would be nice if you budgeted enough time for it. However, even if you did not, don't allow yourself the luxury of "being saved by the bell". You should not care if you have to leave the office or the gym at nine. Go through your list. Knock that out. Remember, you are trying to prove something to yourself here.

When I was in junior high school, we were made to repeat this again and again. The reward here is the process that you are becoming a new person because of it. This is how you will eventually win. You have to plant the seeds now, no matter how unpleasant it may be.

I remember when I was in junior high school, I had a history teacher who was a Vietnam veteran. He was giving us a slideshow of photos he took during the war. One picture really haunted us because it showed this hill that had this weird aura about it. He said to the class that during the first month of his tour of duty in Vietnam, he knew that the United States would lose.

He said that his platoon was assigned to defend that hill. It was one of hundreds of hills scattered all over South Vietnam. Every single night, guerrilla enemy forces would try to storm it. My history teacher's platoon would beat them back. Oftentimes, there were lots of casualties.

This happened every night. He told us that since they were able to do that night after night, regardless of how many people they lost, he knew that it was only a matter of time until they were out of there. I am not sure whether he meant that story to be one about the power of relentlessness, but that's what I got out of it.

The guerrilla forces storming up that hill night after night, had only one thing in mind: nothing is going to get in their way to victory. Either that hill moves or they do. Based on my history teacher's actions, apparently the guerrillas thought that it wasn't them who will be making the move.

That is the kind of relentlessness you have to adapt. Repeat the task on your script day after day and stick to it. You might be thinking that you are spinning your wheels or that you are just running your place. You are wrong. Make repetition your reward. The fact that you are able to hit and complete all the to do items on your list, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, is a victory.

Why? That is because you are able to tackle big things that seemed so intimidating or begged shortcuts and you took them on directly. Allow yourself to get emotional out of accomplishing your daily script. "I did it", I kept moving forward. Remember, the reward is the process. You become a new person. The more you stick to the script, the more you look for ways to master what you are doing and the more you step up your level of achievement.

Take Comfort from the Power of Momentum

The more you do something, the better you get at it because you get used to it. You know what will happen next. You can spot it a mile away. You are able to figure it out and eventually, you become more efficient.

You will try to connect the dots and make things go smoother by either streamlining some or all of it. This can boost your productivity, as well as your effectiveness because when you are able to do things faster, you free up enough time to pay attention to the quality of your work.

Take comfort from the power of momentum, because it is always in play. It is either active, or it is in its potential form. There is always potential for momentum. The good thing with this is you only

need to stick to the script to unlock its power.

Chapter 11

Keep Your Eyes Fixed at the Present Moment and the Next Step

I have already alluded to this in the previous chapter. When you look at your journey towards peak self-discipline, it can get really intimidating. You are where you are right now. You probably don't have much self-discipline presently. You then look to where you need to go and the kind of discipline you wish to achieve and you get scared.

I can't say I blame you. There is a big gulf between who you are and the person you wish to become. This is perfectly understandable. Accordingly, it makes a lot of sense to focus on where you are. Keep your eyes fixed at the present moment and the next step.

While it is important to be aware of the big picture, and to keep your eyes on the prize, you need to source your happiness and sense of fulfillment in the here and now. Don't fall for the trap of thinking that once you reach some sort of future point, you will allow yourself to be happy. It's not going to work out that way. It's not going to pan out as you had planned.

The bottom line here is that long timelines scare people and you just end up intimidating yourself. It becomes easier for you to make excuses and explain away your decision to fail at becoming more self-disciplined.

The Power of Focus

Where you choose your focus to go, your energy will flow. Keep this in mind. Your focus directs your mental, emotional, and physical energy. The bad news is, focus, is finite. There's only so much of it to go around. You can't assume that it is infinite. This is going to be a problem when you look too far ahead.

You Lose Focus When You Look Too Far Ahead

While it is important to keep your eyes on the prize so you can have a map of where you need to go, most of your focus should be on where you are right now. When you are too busy focusing on something far off, your mind tends to dwell on something you can't directly affect from where you are.

Your focus is dissipated and will then start to dwindle. You find it too easy to lose emotional urgency. Sure enough, you become more and more impatient. Impatience, of course, is the opposite of self-discipline.

The Solution is Simple: Focus on What's in Front of You

Focus on your checklist. Zone in your attention to the script that you are following now. Feel it. Allow yourself to be emotionally engaged. Concede to your sense of possibility to be preoccupied. Let your curiosity burn bright. Be in the moment. Focus your consciousness on trying to master whatever it is that is in front of you. Make it your life for the next 30 minutes to several hours. Wrap your mind around it. When you are this focused, you get more strength. Why do you need the strength?

Get More Strength to do the Following

By closely focusing you boost your energy levels and your power of attention. You have the energy

to do the following:

First, you get the strength and will power required to stick to your daily checklist. Remember, it is a list of big stuff that have been simplified to their most basic points. But it's still big stuff.

Bear in mind that this is stuff that you would rather kick down the road. This is something that you would rather postpone. You need strength to tackle this. Focus, gets you there.

Second, you need strength to stick to what is important. This is extremely crucial when it comes to relationships. There are all sorts of drama going around. There are so many small things to get hung up on, but when you have strength due to your focus on the project in front of you, you are able to stick with what is important. You are able to take the high road.

Finally, you will need strength to stick to your values. These values are, of course, ideas that you believe define you in the best way possible. These are the things that you choose to define your life with.

Unfortunately, considering how chaotic life can be, it's too easy to just abandon our values. It's too easy to just respond based on emotions. Somebody pushes you, push them back. If somebody makes you feel hurt, return the favor. That is taking the easy way. That reaction is taking the path of least resistance.

When you focus on your script and on what is in front, you will be able to stick to your values. You will be inclined to choose the proper way to act. Instead of simply giving in and reacting on impulse, you take the high road. You act based on how you are supposed to act as defined by the character you want to establish for yourself.

Chapter 12

Make It Personal

You have to remember that if you want to succeed at anything, you have to have an emotional stake in the outcome. You can't just look at your objective as something that "would be nice if it happened." Worst of all, you can't think of your desired outcome in purely intellectual terms. You can't just look at it as simply a product of your intellectual curiosity. While important, it's not really at the top of the agenda. Do you see how this works?

I keep going back to the point that life is what happens when you're making other plans. Unless you have an agenda item that you are highly emotional about, the rest of your life will find a way to push that item further and further down your list of priorities. Keep at this for a long enough period of time and it's going to drop off your list of priorities altogether. That's just how things work out. As exciting as building self-discipline can be, it can grind on you.

Remember, there is no one defining moment where you do something and all of a sudden you are a highly disciplined person. This is not the movies. This is real life. It takes a long time and it takes consistent effort. It's too easy to get bored during this process. After all, there's just so many other things you can focus on or invest your time in.

To ensure that you ultimately achieve your objective, you have to make things personal. You have to view your effort at building self-discipline as some sort of reflection on your value as a person. How do you make this happen? How do you turn this effort into something that is hard wired into your personality so as to trigger a high degree of emotional urgency day after day? Pay attention to the following.

Remember How It Hurts to be Insulted

Do you remember when you were a kid, when people say mean things about you? Do you remember a particularly bad experience where somebody talked behind your back, or better yet, insulted you to your face? Character attacks cut to the bone. These insults attack you directly. They attack your value as a person. They attack what you're about.

It's one thing to criticize what somebody did, it's another to condemn the person directly. These are two totally different things. What you do is not a part of you, especially if you did not intend the effects. On the other hand, when somebody attacks you directly, they are marginalizing you. They are judging your character. Character attacks cut to the bone because they get to the heart of who you define yourself to be.

There was a kid who was always told by his father that he was worthless. Ever since the kid was born, his dad would come home drunk and in frustration point to him and say, "I wish you weren't born. You made my life a living hell. I wish I didn't have to work so hard to put food in your gut. You are worthless." What do you think happens to a person who grows up in that environment?

Remember that the kid is not being criticized because he did something wrong. He isn't criticized based on an action or a bad decision. Instead, his character is being judged. His value is being judged. What do you think will happen to a person that grew up in such an environment? Well, that kid grew up to beat up women unfortunate enough to become his romantic partners. He became an equally verbally abusive father.

We tend to pass on what we've been given and, unfortunately, what he has been given is a belief in his inherent worthlessness. These family patterns don't come out of nowhere. They're not random mutations. They are passed on. This is learned behavior. If you've been told throughout your life that you are worthless, then you will act worthless. Why? Because you feel worthless.

Remember how it hurts to be insulted and have your character dismissed, judged, diminished or marginalized. It cuts to the bone. It burns you up. People who hurt a lot of people are able to do that because they themselves are hurting. I need you to tap into those negative experiences so you can see how much it hurts inside when your character is being attacked. I need you to focus on that intense negative emotion.

Turn This to Scale Up Your Discipline Training

Now that you have a clear idea of how nasty it feels to be told that you are worthless and that you failed, I need you to direct that negative energy to the consequences of what you're trying to do. You're trying to build up your level of discipline.

Remember that there are high stakes involved. What is involved? Your conception of who you are as a person. As much as it hurts when other people criticize you, remember that it hurts twice as bad when you believe them by acting accordingly. What would failing or refusing to stick to your script say about your character? What would you like people to say about you at your funeral? These are things that are at stake.

This is a big deal because it's your character that is on the line. This is not just a matter of convenience. Discipline is not just a project that you can pick up whenever you have time for it. Building self-discipline is a crucial component of your life's entire project. You have big goals, you have big dreams, you have a lot of things you'd like to achieve. Discipline is the bedrock of all of that. Without that bedrock, things simply won't be possible. At best, you would produce mediocre results.

I need you to feel that emotional intensity of being judged because you failed due to lack of discipline. What does this tell you about the character that you're defining for yourself? You are the only person that can shape your character because, to paraphrase Eleanor Roosevelt, nobody can make you feel miserable without your permission. Flip this around to mean that, you won't have a lousy character unless you choose to. That's exactly what's going on when you drop your efforts at building self-discipline and allow yourself to believe that it's too hard, that it takes too much time, and that it's too much of a hassle.

Remember, your character is who you really are. It doesn't matter who's looking, it doesn't matter if people can see you, it doesn't matter what people say, it is who you really are. You know your character and unfortunately, every time you take the easy path, every time you cut corners, every time you take shortcuts, you undermine your character because you are not sticking to the script. You are not taking the disciplined path.

I need you to feel that sense of emotional urgency. I need this to burn because without that deep, personal impact, it's just too easy to dismiss your effort at building self-discipline as either an intellectual exercise, a remote self help project, a hobby, or some other low priority item. This is a matter of life and death. It's your emotional life that's involved.

Are you going to let yourself down? Are you going to allow your critics to be right? Are you going to allow your inner critic to be right? Feed off this energy. Instead of having this negative emotional energy from past traumas work against you, make them work for you. Use the sting of that memory

to remind you that there is something extremely important at stake here. We're talking about a judgment on your character.

Chapter 13

Measure Success the Right Way

Building self-discipline is a process. Every process has stages. There is the beginning stage, the middle stage, and of course, the "end stage." Allow me to let you in on a secret, the end stage is illusory. It's an illusion. You never really get there. It exists in theory, but you never really get there.

Building self-discipline instead is a process. The "destination" is the process. The more you go through the process, the more you're changed. That should be your goal.

While you should keep your eyes on the prize as far as the greater picture of self-discipline and its benefits go, you also have to remember that you are changing while you go through the process. Unfortunately, most people sabotage themselves while they go through the process of increasing their level of self-discipline.

Most People Make it Unnecessarily Harder on Themselves

How do most people sabotage themselves when they're building up their self-discipline? Well, the most common way is that they measure their success at an earlier stage by referring to "end stage" rewards. End stage rewards include making a lot of money, having a lot of people look up to you, living in a large house, driving an expensive luxury car, you name it.

When you measure your success in terms of ultimate rewards, it's too easy to lose motivation. Why? You're in an earlier stage, you're not at the end stage. At that earlier stage you're on, there are successes, but they're not the ultimate rewards. Since you are essentially measuring yourself against things that come at a later stage in the process, it's not surprising why you feel like such a failure. It's not surprising why you feel like this is just a total waste of time. Stop doing this.

When you use the wrong measurement for success, you lose motivation. The only thing you're succeeding at is discouraging yourself. The better alternative is to allow yourself to feel good and feel rewarded based on where you are in the process.

What are the other measurements of success? Well, you can measure success based on your ability to hang on. You can measure your success on your way to greater and greater levels of self-discipline by paying attention to your ability to put in required work day after day. You can also measure based on your ability to take risks now so you can get a reward in the future. Finally, you can measure by looking at your ability to scale up your efforts. These are the things that matter at this stage in the process.

Stop using "end stage" rewards to measure your success. Learn to base your rewards in the moment you're in. This way, you maximize your level of effort, focus and energy where you are. That's exactly what you need to do because you need the strength, focus and attention to detail to tackle big tasks that you would rather put off.

Maximize your current stage. Allow yourself to enjoy your victories. Always understand that you're only as good as your last victory. You can't coast and you can't just run on fumes of past victories. In many cases, trying to build up self-discipline is like a shark moving. Either a shark is moving or it's dying. You have to keep moving, you have to keep pushing forward.

Again, define your rewards based on your ability to hang on, put in the required work, take risks now, and scale up your efforts. If you're able to do this then you stop sabotaging yourself. Instead,

you increase the amount of focus, energy and emotional urgency you need at the present time to take you to the next level.

Chapter 14

Push, Master, Scale Up

You need to follow a certain progression for you to establish a rhythm in achieving anything. This advice actually applies to anything you try in life, not just building self-discipline. It follows the logical progression involved in any kind of project. You tackle a challenge, you push hard, you get used to it, figure things out to the extent that you master it, then you scale up. This is the way you turn discipline from a simple hack or strategy or tool into a lifestyle habit and personal system.

Systems vs. Hacks

Systems will always win out when it comes to hacks. Hacks are small incremental improvements that solve small specific problems. Hacks may be good here and there, but ultimately, they don't matter all that much without systems. A system involves operating in a way that your previous efforts contribute to your future successes. You're constantly figuring things out based on the lessons from past experiences and things get progressively easier or more predictable in the future.

Let me tell the story of two competing armies. In one army there are well-known heroes. These people are known by villagers far and wide. These men have proven themselves in battle. Lots of dramatic songs were composed about their bravery. They can kill a lot of enemies and they take on a lot of risks. These guys are really brave and will go down in history.

The other army, on the other hand, has no heroes. However, they practice and drill all the time. They also have a protocol they follow when fighting against opposing armies. They drill through all sorts of coordinated movements to either defend or attack. When you look at these individual men, they're not as buff, muscular and brave as the first army. In fact, they are not very remarkable at all. They all have standardized weapons, they're all nameless and faceless. It seems that the second army is very bureaucratic and focuses primarily on just consistent movement and predictable protocols.

If you were to pit these two armies against each other, what do you think will happen? Well, I just described the contrast between "barbarian" armies fought by Rome and the Roman army. The Roman army of the classical world was very bureaucratized and focused primarily on consistent professional military drills and training. They were very systematic, if not seemingly boring. Still, in the broad scope of the Roman empire's history, as boring and bureaucratized as the Roman army and its legions were, they won more often than they lost against armies led by heroes.

In many cases, the typical battle waged against the Romans played out in a very predictable way. The heroes would rush out, they would dispatch a lot of soldiers, but ultimately, the opposing army was disorganized. It was every man for himself. I don't care whether you are the bravest person on the planet, but if you don't closely collaborate with the rest of your army and have a system in place, you're going to get beaten down. And that's precisely what happened with the vast majority of the military forces that went up against the Roman army.

The bottom line is it doesn't matter how awesome your hacks may be, systems will always win out. This is why it's important to focus on the push, master, scale up progression. It's a simple system, but it works!

Focus on Mastery

By this point you already have taken the steps to be able to push consistently forward. That should come easy to you at this point. The next step is to focus on mastery.

How do you master the previously intimidating tasks that you used to automatically postpone? Very simple. You allow your natural sense of curiosity to take over. I don't care how jaded you are, I don't care how many things you've seen throughout your life, but there is always that little 8 year old child locked within you.

We all have this sense of childlike wonder within our beings. Unfortunately, as we mature and get older, we suppress our childlike nature. Instead, we focus on the routine, we focus on the predictable. Not surprisingly, we start drawing our range of possibilities ever so tighter and we get so comfortable within our routine that we forget that we actually have this tremendous capacity for curiosity within us.

The old saying of "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" is a lie. Even the oldest person can learn something new if he or she allows themselves to. That is the problem. We constantly fall into the thinking that, "I've seen that before. Tell me something that I don't know yet." We're constantly writing things off, we're constantly defining things in stereotype and predictable ways so we can take control over them.

When you were a child you didn't do this. The world was an open book to you and it was a lot of fun because there's just so many things to explore. This is why kids look forward to the holidays every single year because there's something new.

You need to tap into your natural capacity to be curious if you want to master the problems that you're facing. Your curiosity gives you the power to experiment, to break things apart and put things together again, to explore relationships and connect the dots.

Mastery is all about figuring out how to do things better, faster and produce higher quality. If you feel at home at your stage of disciplined level, you lay the groundwork for the surge you need to go to the next level.

Pushing Ahead

By mastering what you know, you build up energy and curiosity to surge ahead to the next level. You learn from your setbacks, you feel good about the fact that you tried and tried and tried. You try again and you feel good. You keep trying and you don't lose your focus. You keep recalibrating until you successfully scale up to the next level as you push for higher and higher levels of discipline. This is where things get really visible as far as your power of self-discipline goes. However, the stage is not possible unless you go through the mastery stage.

Chapter 15

Don't Just Do It for Success...

It's easy to look at the whole project of building self-discipline primarily in terms of "end rewards" like a higher net worth, increased income, material toys, status symbols, you name it. But if that's your only motivation, it's too easy to just run out of steam.

Believe me, building self-discipline can wear you down if you are relying on improper motivations. You should focus on something that doesn't rot. You should be motivated by something that doesn't go down in value or fades into dust. I'm not talking about any spiritual motivation here, although that can be a good option. Instead, I want you to consider pushing for higher levels of self-discipline because you want the right character for yourself. Do it for your character.

Character seems like it's set in stone. It seems like it's something that you just develop over time and you cannot erase. Absolutely wrong. You choose your character. Character, of course, is who you really are. Compare this to reputation, which is what you're known for or what people see you as.

Your character is who you really are. You act, think and say things in such a way, regardless whether people are looking. You may be in a dark room and you still think and talk a certain way because that's your character. Do yourself a favor and establish a high level of personal discipline as part of your character. Make discipline part of your character.

Just how important is character? There's a famous quote attributed to the classical Chinese philosopher Confucius. According to the quote, Confucius said that if you sow a thought, you reap words. When you sow words, you reap actions. When you sow actions, you eventually reap habits. When you sow habits, in turn, you reap a character. Finally, when you sow a character, you reap a destiny.

Do you see the line of progression here? Do you see the connection between the thoughts you choose and the destiny you're up with? Your personal destiny is not something that is cosmically chosen at random for you. It's something that you choose through your thoughts. It's something that you have a direct hand in. But the key is the character that you choose. It is your character that determines your destiny.

Discipline is a core component of a solid character. People of character throughout history possess discipline. People who have changed history possessed a tremendous amount of discipline.

You have to look back to when game changers were told that they were crazy. They were told that it won't work. Armies were assembled against them. Their families turned their back against them. They lost so much and they took a lot of risks. Many even faced death, but they persevered. They hung on. They found the power needed to keep pushing forward to achieve ultimate victory and change the game.

What was the secret? Discipline. You, my friend, have that power. You just have to choose to put in the work to develop discipline. Discipline to make your life what you want it to be. You can have the discipline to leave a mark in the lives of people that know you and your community. You can achieve the discipline needed to make a difference. Finally, this little difference can eventually change the world.

You might be thinking, well, I'm just a small person living in just one point on the global map, how much of an impact can I make? Well, we're always planting seeds into each other's lives. You

would be surprised how far and wide your influence goes. After all, there are only 6 degrees of separation separating any two people on this planet.

I leave you with that thought. You do have an impact. The good news is the more discipline you have, the greater your impact.

Conclusion

You owe it to yourself to be more disciplined. Seriously. Discipline is not one of those things that will happen automatically without your input. You have to choose it. You have to adopt the right mindset for it to take place. If you don't believe that you can improve your self-discipline, it's not going to happen. This really is too bad because you owe it to those who depend on you.

Your level of personal discipline is your gift or contribution to the world. Why? It can be a crucial part of your character. If you want to develop the right character, then you need to focus on discipline. Remember, character is what matters most and discipline is crucial to forming the right character for ultimate success in whatever you do. Your success and easy victories in the future are just icing on the cake.

Your ultimate victory is that you overcame your natural default attitude and became disciplined! I wish you nothing but the greatest success.