
THE POWER _{of} DISCIPLINE

**HOW TO USE SELF CONTROL AND MENTAL
TOUGHNESS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS**

DANIEL WALTER

THE POWER OF DISCIPLINE

*HOW TO USE SELF CONTROL AND MENTAL
TOUGHNESS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS*

DANIEL WALTER

THE POWER OF DISCIPLINE: How to Use Self Control and Mental
Toughness to Achieve Your Goals
by Daniel Walter

© Copyright 2020 by Daniel Walter

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Disclaimer: This book is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. By its sale, neither the publisher nor the author is engaged in rendering psychological or other professional services. If expert assistance or counseling is needed, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

ISBN: 979-8631735408

CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Your Free Gift](#)

[Chapter 1: Self-Discipline - The Biological Argument](#)

[Chapter 2: The Benefits of Self Discipline](#)

[Chapter 3: The Status Quo Bias - Why We Resist Change](#)

[Chapter 4: A Reality Check - The Dunning - Kruger Effect](#)

[Chapter 5: Daily Habits to Improve Self -Discipline](#)

[Chapter 6: Tips For Building Better Habits](#)

[Chapter 7: What is Hindering Your Discipline](#)

[Chapter 8: Get Comfortable With Being Uncomfortable](#)

[Chapter 9: Focus on the System](#)

[Chapter 10: Zen Philosophy and Goal Attainment](#)

[Chapter 11: Meditation for Self-Discipline and Focus](#)

[Chapter 12: Why You Should Never “Try and Do” Anything](#)

[Chapter 13: Winner or Loser, Which One Are You?](#)

[Chapter 14: Fall in Love With the Process](#)

[Chapter 15: How to Make Your Negative Emotions Work For You and Not Against You](#)

[Chapter 16: The Pareto Principle and Sturgeon’s Law](#)

[Chapter 17: How to Avoid Burnout](#)

[Conclusion](#)

INTRODUCTION

Join a gym, start a healthy eating plan, save more money, stop smoking—the list of New Year’s resolutions is endless, but how many of them are ever accomplished? According to Scranton Psychology Professor John C. Norcross, Ph.D., less than 10% of New Year’s resolutions are achieved. If you are reading this book, there is a good chance that you fall into the large percentage of people who have spent years failing to reach their goals. What is the reason for this? Why is it that the majority of us are incapable of sticking to anything worthwhile? Is failure a natural human tendency? The answer is a simple one—a lack of self-discipline!

This book is about taking full responsibility for where you are now and where you want to be in the next five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years. You will develop the most important skill required to achieve the life you desire—self-discipline.

Kurt Kopmeyer has spent over 50 years researching and studying success principles and has written several books about the secrets of success. One day during a meeting, success coach Brian Tracy asked Kopmeyer to explain which principles, out of all those he has discovered, was most important for success. He responded, *“There are 999 other success principles that I have found in my reading and experience, but without self-discipline, none of them work.”*

Self-discipline is like a key—it unlocks the door to personal fulfillment and opens the door to the life you have been dreaming of. With self-discipline, the average person can rise further than intelligence and talent alone will take them, and the ordinary person can become extraordinary. On the other hand, an educated, talented person without self-discipline will rarely rise above mediocrity. My desire is that this book will help you do the following:

- Build habits that will transform your life
- Gain a better understanding of self-discipline and how important it is in your life
- Take control of your habits so that you can take control of your life

You are the only person capable of changing your life—no one can do that for you. The easiest way to change yourself is to change the things you do each day. If you are stuck in a rut, with the same story of failure on repeat year after year, this book will get you out of that rut if you apply the recommended principles.

If you want to achieve something remarkable but you are not sure how to get started on this journey, this book will serve as a manual for how to get there.

If you have attempted to change your bad habits and adopt good ones only to keep falling back into what you know is keeping you stuck, I will teach you how to break the cycle.

If you are unsatisfied with life, you are in a great place because the disgust that you feel for your current circumstances is an indication that you know you are not where you are supposed to be, and you want to change that. Although we don't equate the word "*disgust*" with positive action, being repelled by your life can serve as the motivation you need to turn things around.

For example, seeing a picture of yourself stuffing a piece of pizza into your mouth with your stomach hanging over your trousers can disgust you so much that you throw your hands up in surrender and vow to get in shape. Having your electricity cut off because you failed to pay your bill can disgust you so much that you make the decision once and for all that you are going to become financially stable.

You can have everything you want in life if you are prepared to put in the work, and everything you need to get to your destination is hidden between the pages of this book. If you are ready to stop wasting time on unproductive activities that are leading you in the opposite direction from where you want to go in life, apply the principles you are going to read and expect to experience a major turnaround in your current circumstances.

JOIN OUR PRODUCTIVITY GROUP

In order to maximize the value you receive from this book, I highly encourage you to join our tight-knit community on Facebook. Here you will be able to connect and share productivity strategies in order to continue your growth.

It would be great to connect with you there,

Daniel Walter

[>> Click Here to Join Our Productivity Group <<](#)

YOUR FREE GIFT

As a way of saying thank you for downloading this book, I'm offering the eBook *The Art of Minimalism: A Simple Guide to Declutter and Organize Your Life* for FREE. It was written by a close friend of mine named Olivia Telford, who has kindly allowed me to share it with you.

With *The Art of Minimalism*, you'll discover how to be happier with less, declutter, and simplify your life. People who practice minimalism experience clarity, peace of mind, stronger relationships, and true lasting happiness. You too can experience the amazing benefits of becoming a minimalist by getting this FREE book now!



[>> Tap Here to Discover the Secrets of Minimalism <<](#)

ALSO BY DANIEL WALTER

[Take Back Your Day: How Simple Daily Actions Can Change Your Life](#)

[The Productivity Blueprint: 2 in 1 Bundle: 10 Minute Focus and Take Back Your Day](#)

[10-Minute Focus: 25 Habits for Mastering Your Concentration and Eliminating Distractions](#)

DOWNLOAD THE AUDIO VERSION OF THIS BOOK FREE

If you love listening to audiobooks on-the-go or would enjoy a narration as you read along, I have great news for you. You can download the audiobook version of *The Power of Discipline* for FREE just by signing up for a FREE 30-day Audible trial!

Coming Soon

CHAPTER 1: SELF-DISCIPLINE - THE BIOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The assumption is that some people are endowed with self-discipline and others are not, but this is not the case. There is a science to self-discipline, and if you want more of it in your life, it will help you get a better understanding of its biological basis. In this chapter, you will learn about the biology of self-discipline and how you can target certain areas of the brain to improve it.



The human brain contains an estimated 100 billion neurons, the minuscule cells responsible for our behaviors and thoughts. Neuroscientists Todd Hare and Colin Camerer conducted a [study](#) in 2009 in which they used functional magnetic resonance imaging machines (fMRIs) to record the brain activity that takes place when people are engaging in tasks that require them to use self-control and discipline. The participants were given a choice between accepting a small financial reward at the immediate conclusion of the study or a larger financial reward at a later date. The researchers induced the classic battle between delayed gratification and willpower. They discovered that there was a high level of activity in two areas of the brain called the ventral medial prefrontal cortex and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex when participants were making decisions based on the choices made immediately or in the future. The activity in these regions

of the brain was higher when choices were made that would benefit them in the long term.

The study concluded that some people find self-discipline easier than others based on the activity and the structure of their prefrontal cortex. The findings of this research are very significant because they highlight the fact that we cannot decide to become more self-controlled and expect to be successful if we haven't developed the skill previously. When you make healthy choices, self-discipline is strengthened; on the other hand, making unhealthy choices diminishes self-discipline. If you find it difficult to say no to sweet treats, you can't stick to an exercise routine, or you can't stop scrolling through YouTube to do something more productive, don't worry, there is still hope for you because you can improve your self-discipline.

DELAYED GRATIFICATION

In 2011, the participants of the Stanford Marshmallow experiment were re-evaluated. The [Stanford Marshmallow Experiment](#) took place in 1972, and it was discovered that the participants who found it easier to delay gratification experienced increased activity in the prefrontal cortices. There were also differences in the ventral striatum (the area of the brain linked to addictions) when they were using self-control to make a decision between healthy and unhealthy options. It was also found that the participants who were able to delay gratification were more successful in all areas of life in comparison to the participants in the immediate gratification group. The study revealed that a decision as simple as choosing whether to eat a marshmallow immediately or later determined the way they made decisions in adulthood.

The evidence from studies on self-discipline does not point to genetic predisposition as to why some people have higher levels than others. However, we can conclude that self-discipline is a skill you can master if you are willing to put the work in. Weightlifting strengthens the body, and if you target the areas in the brain mentioned in the studies, they will increase in strength.

If you are reading this book, there is a chance you are struggling with self-discipline. I would like to encourage you not to feel saddened by your current circumstances. There is no denying that any skill is easier to master during childhood; however, that does not rule out the possibility of improving your self-discipline now. When exercised consistently, willpower and self-discipline will improve, and you will experience lasting results. All skills operate under the

same principle—the more you practice, the better at it you will become.

FOCUS AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Your level of focus will affect the extent of your self-discipline. Neuroscientists believe that your ability to focus is determined by your “executive functions,” including working memory, cognitive flexibility, adaptability, and impulse control. Discipline requires you to set goals, filter distractions, control unhelpful inhibitions, prioritize activities, and pursue the goals that you have set. Research states that these functions operate in a number of brain regions, including the anterior cingulate cortex, the orbitofrontal cortex, and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. You can improve these brain functions by targeting them. Self-discipline and focus work simultaneously. You can’t master one without the other because discipline is the ability to focus on one course of action until that goal has been accomplished.

WILLPOWER FATIGUE

In the same way as the body gets tired after it has been put through a strenuous workout, willpower and self-discipline also lose strength when they have been put to work and worn down. Since there is a biological basis to these skills, the brain of a person who said “no” to a slice of cake 10 times is different from the brain of the person who eats the slice of cake each time it is offered to them. This means that even if an individual is extremely self-disciplined with a lot of willpower, it will eventually run out if they are continuously faced with temptation. In the same way it is impossible for a person to lift weights for 24 hours without a break, it is also impossible for a person to exercise their willpower for 24 hours without taking the time out to replenish it.

In 1996, psychologist Will Baumeister conducted a [study](#) in which he evaluated a phenomenon known as willpower depletion. The study involved leaving 67 participants in a room with freshly baked sweet treats and bitter radishes. One group was allowed to eat the sweet treats, while the other group was told to eat the bitter radishes. They were then taken to another room where they were asked to solve a puzzle to evaluate their persistence. The radish eaters did not have the strength of mind to resolve the puzzle and gave up before the group who had eaten the sweet treats. The radish eaters’ inability to focus on the task resulted from the fact that their willpower had already been depleted in the previous task, and now they wanted to take the path of least resistance.

WILLPOWER PROTECTION

The main priority for the brain is survival. Today we have enough knowledge to know that temporary low sugar and low energy levels are not life-threatening. However, because of the biology of the brain, it does not know this, and as soon as it receives a warning message that something in the body is out of alignment, it protects you by going into survival mode. When the brain is operating in survival mode, it begins to crave instant gratification, which leads to binge eating and other negative behaviors linked to a lack of self-discipline. Therefore, the best way to build self-discipline is to remove yourself from temptation. For example, if you are struggling with your diet, replace your cupboard of unhealthy foods with healthy choices and meals. When you go grocery shopping, stay away from the aisles selling sweet treats and immediately make your way to the aisles stocking healthy foods. By using these strategies, your willpower is only tested during the time you spend in the store, as opposed to trying to resist the temptation to eat your stash of cookies in the cupboard every evening over and over again.

Another way to protect your willpower is to go shopping after dinner. You won't be hungry because you've just consumed a filling healthy meal, which means you are less likely to buy a bag of chips to hold you over until dinner. What you are doing here is creating conditions in which your vulnerability is not used against you, and you are not forced to use self-discipline. Even if you don't struggle with healthy eating, you can use the same strategies for any areas of your life where you lack self-discipline.

Stress is another biological factor that contributes to willpower. When we are under pressure, the body protects itself by going into 'fight or flight' mode. In this state, we are more likely to act on impulse and do things without thinking. The prefrontal cortex malfunctions when we experience stress, and the brain is only capable of functioning on short-term outcomes. When the prefrontal cortex is not operating at its full potential, we are more likely to make bad decisions.

The principle of discipline is simple—as a mentally stable adult, you know the difference between right and wrong. You understand that if you choose to watch Netflix instead of working on your goals, you will never achieve them. Discipline is about doing what you know you've got to do even when you don't feel like it. But for your efforts to make a difference, you must be consistent. Slacking off every other day isn't going to get you to your destination any more quickly. Consistency builds momentum and that's how dreams become a reality.

When you are aware of what discipline demands, you are more likely to choose to do the right thing.

Remember, there is a biological process to discipline, and similarly to any other habit, the brain is programmed to accept it as the norm the more you practice it. There are several benefits associated with self-discipline that I will discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: THE BENEFITS OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

Self-discipline is required for every area of life, but most people don't realize it because society has taught us to float through life on autopilot. I believe that one of the most underrated reasons for the breakdown of the family is a lack of self-discipline. If your partner is cheating, or exhibiting other issues, one of the underlying causes is their inability to control their urges towards the opposite sex. If your partner is running up credit card bills or has other financial issues, one of the reasons is their inability to control their spending habits. In other words, your level of self-discipline will control your level of success in your place of employment, relationships, finances, academics, etc. There are many benefits associated with self-discipline.



RAISES YOUR SELF CONFIDENCE

A lack of self-discipline contributes to low self-esteem. There are many reasons people suffer from low self-esteem, and one of them is that they are not where they need to be in life. People set goals all the time, especially at the beginning of the year, but by the second or third month, they have lapsed back into old habits and their goals are forgotten. Most people fail in life because they don't do what is required for success. The person who wants to lose weight sits on the

couch eating burgers, flipping through magazines, and wishing they could wear a bathing suit on vacation. You will never get into a bathing suit sitting in front of the TV dreaming. You want to start earning more money but can't find the motivation to start learning about being self-employed. Inactivity leads to one place—failure. And when five and ten years pass us by in the blink of an eye and we are still stuck in a place we know we don't want to be, a feeling of worthlessness sets in.

A self-disciplined person is confident because, regardless of where they are at that moment, they know that they are the best version of themselves. They are eating properly, exercising, and working towards their goals. They feel good about life because they are in the driver's seat, and they know exactly where they are going.

BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

One of the main reasons friendships break down is because people do not do what they say they are going to do. You confide in someone only to find out that your entire office now knows your business or a friend borrows money and never pays it back. Friendships and relationships are about trust. A person with self-discipline is always going to live by their word; if you ask them to keep a secret, they will. They are often the same person in private as they are in public because they value integrity. These are rare traits and the world values them; therefore, a disciplined person is more likely to have a strong network of personal relationships because they are trustworthy.

YOU WILL STOP BEING OFFENDED

When people are easily offended, it's because they are not self-assured; they don't know who they are or what they stand for, and so they view criticism (even when it is constructive) as an attack on their character and become deeply offended. Self-disciplined people don't have this problem. They are confident, calm, and self-assured, and so it's easy for them to take insults and criticisms on the chin. Self-disciplined people can handle constructive criticism—in fact, they value it because it pushes them to become better.

AVOID RISKY BEHAVIORS

Behavioral theories attempting to explain risky and unhealthy behaviors often evaluate the role of self-control. For example, Hirschi's and Gottfredson's [self-](#)

[control theory](#) states that criminal behavior is due to an individual's inability to control their desire to engage in such behavior. Obviously, there is more to committing crime than a lack of control, but the point is that when morals and the fear of incarceration are removed from the equation, most people would rob a bank instead of work for a living. But the average person has enough self-control not to take that path.

In a 2012 [study](#) conducted by Ford and Blumenstein, it was found that American college students with a high level of self-control were less likely to abuse prescription medication, binge drink, or use cannabis.

Research also suggests that there is a relationship between a lack of self-control and impulsive sexual behavior. The participants in the Ford and Blumenstein study were more likely to engage in deviant sexual activity with people who were not their primary partners, all of which increase the risk of sexually transmitted disease and unplanned pregnancy.

There is more to self-discipline than goal attainment, and exercising a consistent high level of self-control will benefit you in many areas of life. You purchased this book because you want to know how to increase your level of self-discipline; however, before we get to that, it's important for you to understand why you find it so difficult to make positive changes in your life.