

“Selfdiscipline”

Of all the attributes required by people and entrepreneurs lack of discipline in all things becomes the one catalyst that can contribute to destroying everything else. All the motivation and commitment in the world behind an excellent achievable and well researched goal can fail if the discipline is lacking to continue with persistence to follow though

Self discipline is a basic requirement in any career. The drive required to start new ideas in business will nearly always meet the strong resistance of entrenched forces. Vested interests and ways of doing things have become a habit and the uncreative mind sees any change as a challenge to their own comfort levels. Any innovation that challenges this bureaucratic situation or threatens the comfort levels of the existing system will be resisted.

The innovator must be disciplined by an absolute belief in the new system and willing to commit all his resources to overcome this obstacle. Once the innovator is rebuffed and lacks the discipline to follow through on his excitement and commitment to attain the immediate goal, natural resistance to any innovation might completely overcome the entire venture.

Discipline should not be confused with conformity. The problem psychologically with rebuttal within a system is that some educational systems and some rigid conformist societies do not encourage independent thinking. This tends to dampen non conformist thought among the young who are not encouraged to think beyond what that society regards as norms. This creates a youth that have their creative, intellectual and financial thinking stunted by dogma. The unfortunate result is that the discipline of thinking is held captive and not allowed to innovate. This is not only a factor in conservative societies but also in conservative families. The unfortunate result of this thinking is that when there rebellion comes against the shackles from a creative and driven entrepreneur there is the danger that the rigidity of discipline

is also lost. Deep in the subconscious is buried the desire to break from the rigidity of negative discipline. This negative discipline must be replaced with positive discipline.

One of the greatest problems facing many of the youth is the factor of teen self-esteem. If a teenager grows up in an environment of lack of trust where the role models lack ethics, goals or commitment to a values system, they can only become part of the problem. Teens might also be discouraged from innovation. If they observe the system all about them as dysfunctional it must be very difficult to believe that they can change anything. Yet it is vital for the young to be able to believe that they can decide what they want to be in life. Once this idea takes root they can start building the vital self esteem that is essential to self motivation.

Self motivation starts with self esteem, an ambition to make a difference or achieve a goal, and to start on the road to achieve it with the correct positive attitude and the discipline to drive the desire and achieve the goal.

Pillars of self discipline

- 1. Do not hate anyone**
- 2. Do not look for elegant clothes**
- 3. Be indifferent to where you live**
- 4. Accept everything just like the way it is**
- 5. Do not need many weapons**
- 6. Do not go away from the Way of Sword**
- 7. Do not hate yourself**
- 8. Do not retain old tools**
- 9. Do not desire lust**
- 10. Do not be greedy**

The Five Pillars of Self-Discipline

The five pillars of self-discipline are: Acceptance, Willpower, Hard Work, Industry, and Persistence. If you take the first letter of each word, you get the acronym “AWHIP”—a convenient way to remember them, since many people associate self-discipline with whipping themselves into shape.

Each day of the series, I'll explore one of these pillars, explaining why it's important and how to develop it. But first a general overview....

Self-discipline is the ability to get yourself to take action regardless of your emotional state.

Imagine what you could accomplish if you could simply get yourself to follow through on your best intentions no matter what. Picture yourself saying to your body, “You’re overweight. Lose 20 pounds.” Without self-discipline that intention won’t become manifest. But with sufficient self-discipline, it’s a done deal. The pinnacle of self-discipline is when you reach the point that when you make a conscious decision, it’s virtually guaranteed you’ll follow through on it.

Self-discipline is one of many personal development tools available to you. Of course it is not a panacea. Nevertheless, the problems which self-discipline can solve are important, and while there are other ways to solve these problems, self-discipline absolutely shreds them. Self-discipline can empower you to overcome any addiction or lose any amount of weight. It can wipe out procrastination, disorder, and ignorance. Within the domain of problems it can solve, self-discipline is simply unmatched. Moreover, it becomes a powerful teammate when combined with other tools like passion, goal-setting, and planning.

Building Self-Discipline

My philosophy of how to build self-discipline is best explained by an analogy. Self-discipline is like a muscle. The more you train it, the stronger you become. The less you train it, the weaker you become.

Just as everyone has different muscular strength, we all possess different levels of self-discipline. Everyone has some—if you can hold your breath a few seconds, you have some self-discipline. But not everyone has developed their discipline to the same degree.

Just as it takes muscle to build muscle, it takes self-discipline to build self-discipline.

The way to build self-discipline is analogous to using progressive weight training to build muscle. This means lifting weights that are close to your limit. Note that when you weight train, you lift weights that are within your ability to lift. You push your muscles until they fail, and then you rest.

Similarly, the basic method to build self-discipline is to tackle challenges that you can successfully accomplish but which are near your limit. This doesn't mean trying something and failing at it every day, nor does it mean staying within your comfort zone. You will gain no strength trying to lift a weight that you cannot budge, nor will you gain strength lifting weights that are too light for you. You must start with weights/challenges that are within your current ability to lift but which are near your limit.

Progressive training means that once you succeed, you increase the challenge. If you keep working out with the same weights, you won't get any stronger. Similarly, if you fail to challenge yourself in life, you won't gain any more self-discipline.

Just as most people have very weak muscles compared to how strong they could become with training, most people are very weak in their level of self-discipline.

It's a mistake to try to push yourself too hard when trying to build self-discipline. If you try to transform your entire life overnight by setting dozens of new goals for yourself and expecting yourself to follow through consistently starting the very next day, you're

almost certain to fail. This is like a person going to the gym for the first time ever and packing 300 pounds on the bench press. You will not

look silly.

If you can only lift 10 lbs, you can only lift 10 lbs. I recall when I began working with a personal trainer several years ago, on my first attempt at doing a barbell shoulder press, I could only lift a 7-lb bar with no weight on it. My shoulders were very weak because I'd never trained them. But within a few months I was up to 60 lbs.

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Similarly, if you're very undisciplined right now, you can still use what little discipline you have to build more. The more disciplined you become, the easier life gets. Challenges that were once impossible for you will eventually seem like child's play. As you get stronger, these same weights will seem lighter and brighter.

Don't compare yourself to other people. It won't help. You'll only find what you expect to find. If you think you're weak, everyone else will seem stronger. If you think you're strong, everyone else will seem weaker. There's no point in doing this. Simply look at where you are now, and aim to get better as you go forward.

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Let's consider an example.

Suppose you want to develop the ability to do 8 solid hours of work each day, since you know it will make a real difference in your career. I was listening to an audio program this morning that quoted a study saying the average office worker spends 37% of their time in idle socializing, not to mention other vice that chew up more than 50% of work time with unproductive non-work. So there's plenty of room for improvement.

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Perhaps you try to work a solid 8-hour day without succumbing to distractions, and you can only do it once. The next day you fail utterly. That's OK. You did one rep of 8 hours. Two is too much for you. So cut back a bit. What duration would allow you to successfully do 5 reps (i.e. a whole week)? Could you work with concentration for one hour a day, five days in a row? If you can't do that, cut back to 30 minutes or whatever

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you can do. If you succeed (or if you feel that would be too easy), then increase the challenge (i.e. the resistance).

Once you've mastered a week at one level, take it up a notch the next week. And continue with this progressive training until you've reached your goal.

While analogies like this are never perfect, I've gotten a lot of mileage out of this one. By raising the bar just a little each week, you stay within your capabilities and grow stronger over time. But when doing weight training, the actual work you do doesn't mean anything. There's no intrinsic benefit in lifting a weight up and down — the benefit comes from the muscle growth. However, when building self-discipline, you also get the benefit of the work you've done along the way, so that's even better. It's great when your training produces something of value AND makes you stronger.

Self-discipline, the art of being able to step out of your comfort zone and stop making all your decisions based only on your comfort level. Is that a good description? I think so, or as a matter of fact I know it is that way based on my own experiences and what I have heard from other entrepreneurs, most of them working from their home.

By stretching beyond our comfort level we are able to really get things done that need to get done and by that we are also boosting our confidence in what we do. Most of us know what needs to be done and are actually able to do it, but a lot of people, including myself, sometimes find it hard to discipline ourselves above the level of what is comfortable at the moment, and with this our companies do not perform what they should if we would give 100% to get our job done.

Because of this we all really need to have a look at this, and what can be done to change this set of mind to the better. How do we stretch ourselves over to the next level out of the comfort zone? There are a couple of steps to help you improve.

Your Responsibility

A first step to take is to acknowledge your responsibility. You got to see what you have to do to be successful with your venture and admit to yourself that you are sitting around doing nothing and that it is your own fault if you do not succeed when doing this.

Define your purpose

What do you want to accomplish? That is a question that helps you determine a cause of why you are doing what you are doing. A part of this process is setting goals and realizing the importance of goals.

Do not feel stressed

It may take some time to get things done, but do not feel stressed over work, try to find the balance and allow things to take the time it needs. My article on stress management can be a great additional read to this article.

Schedule work

If you are really having a hard time getting a good structure in your work, setting up a schedule with work sessions is an excellent tool. As a self-employed you should still work at least 8 hours a day if needed, and if you are working at home you can be more flexible so if you need you can spread your work sessions over the day. But if you are really having problems with your discipline you should not divide your work sessions in more than two 4 hour sessions.

Except from scheduling the hours you should also set up a priority list, with what you have to do today and what should be finished during these work sessions. When something has been done, strike it off the list.

Avoid distractions

As I discussed in my article, Importance of a separate workspace it is very important to find a place to work at where a minimum of distractions are available. This includes family members, TV's and other stuff keeping you from 100% focus on your task.

As with everything you need to do you will be tempted to not do it from time to time, to make up excuses for yourself why you should not do it. Do NOT fall for that. Instead offer yourself some incentives and think of what you can do, when the money comes rolling in. Maybe a cruise in the Caribbean's or a new bike? On what level you put it is up to you, but it sure helps to motivate you.

There is no short cut to this, it is all about hard work, but with the steps above you are able to set your mind to this and start your journey to success.

When you have set a higher level of self discipline you will be able to do almost anything, the only one that can stop yourself from doing something is you.