

How to Have More Self-discipline

By Chris Palmer and Angeli Gabriel

The start of a new year is often the time for taking stock, making resolutions, and looking ahead. All this takes self-discipline, which is one of the most important character strengths leading to success and fulfillment in life. It is the mastery of mind and body and the pursuit of increased inner strength.

Despite the benefits of having self-discipline, it is also one of the most difficult traits to develop. Indulgences and fleeting desires can easily pull you away from making smart, healthy decisions. But by taking a few simple steps, you can gain control over your life and move closer toward greater personal fulfillment.

Some examples of how you can have more self-discipline are taking small steps toward achieving a larger goal, starting a routine to help you grow accustomed to new ways of living, listing and prioritizing tasks, and using a planner to manage those tasks and the time it takes to accomplish them. Following these steps will increase your motivation and confidence to tackle whatever life throws at you.

Nothing kills motivation more than the intimidating prospect of starting a long and arduous project. To counter this intimidation, break the project down and start small. For instance, if your goal is to eat a healthier diet, make gradual changes by replacing just one meal a day with a healthy alternative and then work your way to changing your entire diet. Being able to see the good work and progress you made with one meal will motivate you to make further adjustments to the rest of your meals. When you take small steps like this, large and intimidating projects will be much more manageable.

Another helpful way to have more self-discipline is to start a routine. By devoting a part of every day to accomplishing a goal, you grow accustomed to overcoming tendencies like laziness and procrastination during that particular time frame. This frequency of a routine will make beginning and accomplishing tasks much easier. One example is setting time aside every day to exercise. This will be especially difficult to do at first, but once your body becomes accustomed to exercising each day, it will actually end up craving that activity – so what was once a tedious task becomes desirable and routine.

With so many tasks to take care of during the day, it can be very easy to be overwhelmed; however, you can combat that by creating a list of those tasks and prioritizing them. Creating a list provides a visual and more tangible representation of what needs to be accomplished, and prioritizing them allows you to gain control by first addressing the more important ones. If you have numerous projects at work, for example, write each one down and rank them according to factors like time sensitivity. As you cross off each completed task, the list of what needed to be done becomes a fulfilling and motivating representation of accomplishments and progress.

A planner will combine the aforementioned ways to have self-discipline, since it will allow you to have a running record of your To Do lists and routines. Most importantly a planner will help you master a crucial element of developing self-discipline: time management. With a planner, you will learn how to schedule when certain projects need to be accomplished and how much time will be devoted to working on them. In doing so, you will be able to map your day in a way that is most easily navigable for you. Being able to manage your time and tasks will make you feel more in control over your life and reinforce the self-discipline that helped bring those feelings to you.

By following these simple steps, you will be able to accomplish tasks much more quickly and efficiently. No longer will you fall victim to laziness, fear, or procrastination; instead, you become more productive, more courageous, and more in control of your life. By working toward having more self-discipline, you can achieve these feelings of empowerment and secure a more successful future.

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