

# Will Power and Self-Discipline

By Remez Sasson

Sometimes, you wish to go for a walk, knowing how good it is for your health and how wonderful you feel afterwards, yet, you feel too lazy, and prefer to watch TV instead. You might be aware of the fact that you need to change your eating habits or stop smoking, yet, you don't have the inner power and persistence to change these habits.

Does this sound familiar? How many times have you said, "I wish I had will power and self discipline"? How many times have you started to do something, only to quit after a short while? We all have had experiences like these.

Everyone possesses some addictions or habits they wish they could overcome, such as smoking, excessive eating, laziness, procrastination or lack of assertiveness. To overcome these habits or addictions, one needs to have will power and self discipline. They make a great difference in everyone's life, and bring inner strength, self mastery and decisiveness.

## Definitions of Will Power and Self Discipline

**Will power** is the ability to overcome laziness and procrastination. It is the ability to control or reject unnecessary or harmful impulses. It is the ability to arrive to a decision and follow it with perseverance until its successful accomplishment. It is the inner power that overcomes the desire to indulge in unnecessary and useless habits, and the inner strength that overcomes inner emotional and mental resistance for taking action. It is one of the corner stones of success, both spiritual and material.

**Self-discipline** is the companion of will power. It endows with the stamina to persevere in whatever one does. It bestows the ability to withstand hardships and difficulties, whether physical, emotional or mental. It grants the ability to reject immediate satisfaction, in order to gain something better, but which requires effort and time.

Everyone has inner, unconscious, or partly conscious impulses, making them say or do things they later regret saying or doing. On many occasions people do not think before they talk or act. By developing these two powers, one becomes conscious of the inner, subconscious impulses, and gains the ability to reject them when they are not for his/her own good.

**Will power and self-discipline help us to choose our behavior and reactions, instead of being ruled by them.** Their possession won't make life dull or boring. On the contrary, you will feel more powerful, in charge of yourself and your surroundings, happy and satisfied.

How many times have you felt too weak, lazy or shy to do something you wanted to do? You can gain inner strength, initiative and the ability to make decisions and follow them. Believe me, it is not difficult to develop these two powers. If you are earnest and are willing to become stronger, you will certainly succeed.

In this article you will find some exercises and techniques for developing these abilities. These simple, but effective exercises, can be performed everywhere and at any time. Go slowly and gradually, and you will see how you get stronger and your life start improving.

There is a misconception in the public mind regarding will power. It is erroneously thought to be something strenuous and difficult, and that one has to exert and tense the body and mind when expressing it. **It is a completely wrong concept.** This is one of the reasons why people avoid using it, though they are conscious of its benefits. They acknowledge the fact that the employment of will power in their life and affairs will greatly help them, and that they need to strengthen it, yet they do nothing about it.

Will power gets stronger by holding back and not allowing the expression of unimportant, unnecessary and unhealthy thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions. If this saved energy is not allowed expression, it is stored inside you like a battery, and it becomes available at the time of need. By practicing appropriate exercises, you develop your powers the same way, as a person who trains his/her muscles in order to strengthen them.

## **Developing Will Power and Self Discipline**

An effective method for developing and improving these abilities is to perform certain actions or activities, which you would rather avoid doing due to laziness, procrastination, weakness, shyness, etc. By doing something that you do not like doing or are too lazy to do, you overcome your subconscious resistance, train your mind to obey you, strengthen your inner powers and gain inner strength. Muscles get stronger by resisting the power of the barbells. Inner strength is attained by overcoming inner resistance.

Remember, strengthening one of these abilities, automatically strengthens the other one.

### **Here are a few exercises:**

1) You are sitting in a bus or train and an old man or woman, or a pregnant lady walks in. Stand up and give up your seat even if you prefer to stay seated. Do this not just because it is polite, but because you are doing something that you are reluctant to do. In this way you are overcoming the resistance of your body, mind and feelings.

2) There are dishes in the sink that need washing, and you postpone washing them for later. Get up and wash them now. Do not let your laziness overcome you. When you know that in this way you are developing your will power, and if you are convinced of the importance of will power in your life, it will be easier for you to do whatever you have to do.

3) You come home tired from work and sit in front of the T.V. because you feel too lazy and tired to go and wash. Do not obey the desire to just sit, but go and have a shower

4) You may know your body needs some physical exercise, but instead you keep on sitting doing nothing or watching a movie. Get up and walk, run or do some other physical exercise.

5) Do you like your coffee with sugar? Then for a whole week decide to drink it without sugar. You like to drink three cups of coffee each day? For a week drink only two.

6) Sometimes, when you want to say something that is not important, decide not to say it.

7) Don't read some unimportant gossip in the newspaper, even if you want to.

8) You have a desire to eat something not too healthy. For the sake of the exercise refuse the desire.

9) If you find yourself thinking unimportant, unnecessary, negative thoughts, try to develop lack of interest in them, by thinking about their futility.

10) Overcome your laziness. Convince yourself of the importance of what is to be done. Convince your mind that you gain inner strength

when you act and do things, in spite of laziness, reluctance or senseless inner resistance.

Never say that you cannot follow the above exercises, because you certainly can. Be persistent no matter what. Motivate yourself by thinking about the importance of performing the exercises, and the inner power and strength you will gain.

Trying to attempt too many exercises when you are still a beginner, might end in disappointment. It is better to start training yourself through easier exercises at first, and gradually increase the number and difficulty of the exercises. Practice will improve and increase your power, giving you a lot of satisfaction.

**Most of these exercises can be practiced anywhere, anytime.** You do not have to devote special times for them. Believe me, they are very effective. Practicing them enables you to be strong and exercise will power and self-discipline in everything you do. This power would become available whenever needed.

If you practice weight lifting, running or doing aerobics, you strengthen your body. When you need to move something heavy, you have the strength for it. By studying French each day, you will be able to talk French when you travel to France. The same thing happens with will power and self-discipline. By strengthening them, they become available whenever they are needed.

It is important to remember not to choose exercises that might affect adversely your body or health. Deny and give up what is not necessary, futile or is harmful, but not what is vital for your well being. Always use your reason and common sense, so that you do no damage to yourself.

If for the sake of an exercise, you stop doing something that you usually do, and overcome the inner resistance concerning it, you may resume doing it, if it is not harmful. For example, if you love drinking orange juice, and for the sake of an exercise you switch to drinking apple juice, after doing so for some time and after it makes no great difference to you, you may go back to drinking orange juice, if you still like it. The point here is to develop inner strength, not making life difficult for you or continue doing things you don't like to do.

## **Advantages of Possessing Strong Will Power and Self Discipline**

You need both of them in order to rule your thoughts and to be the boss of your mind. The stronger they are, the more control you have over your thoughts, and consequently your powers of concentration get stronger.

When you are the master of your mind you enjoy inner peace and happiness. Outer events do not sway you, and circumstances have no power over your peace of mind. This might sound too unreal for you, but experience will prove to you that all the above is true.

These abilities are essential for self growth, spiritual growth and meditation. They give you control over your daily life, help you improve your habits and behavior, and they are the keys to every success.

Practice the exercises presented here earnestly and persistently, and you will go really far.