

Now more than ever, people realize that willpower—the ability to control their attention, emotions, and desires—influences their physical health, financial security, relationships, and professional success.

Introduction

One thing the science of willpower makes clear is that everyone struggles in some way with temptation, addiction, distraction, and procrastination. These are not individual weaknesses that reveal our personal inadequacies—they are universal experiences and part of the human condition.

Research shows that people who think they have the most willpower are actually the most likely to lose control when tempted. For example, smokers who are the most optimistic about their ability to resist temptation are the most likely to relapse four months later, and overoptimistic dieters are the least likely to lose weight. Why? They fail to predict when, where, and why they will give in.

They expose themselves to more temptation, such as hanging out with smokers or leaving cookies around the house. They're also most likely to be surprised by setbacks and give up on their goals when they run into difficulty.

According to the American Psychological Association, Americans name lack of willpower as the number-one reason they struggle to meet their goals.

The Willpower Challenge

"I will" power challenge: What is something that you would like to do more of, or stop putting off, because you know that doing it will improve the quality of your life?

"I won't" power challenge: What would you like to give up or do less of because it's undermining your health, happiness, or success?

"I want" power challenge: What is the most important long-term goal you'd like to focus your energy on?

Over the last decade, neuroscientists have discovered that, like an eager student, the brain is remarkably responsive to experience. Ask your brain to do math every day, and it gets better at math. Ask your brain to worry, and it gets better at worrying. Ask your brain to concentrate, and it gets better at concentrating. Not only does your brain find these things easier, but it actually remodels itself based on what you ask it to do. Some parts of the brain grow denser, packing in more and more gray matter like a muscle bulking up from exercise.

Focus of Will

Neuroscientists have discovered that when you ask the brain to meditate, it gets better not just at meditating, but at a wide range of self-control skills, including attention, focus, stress management, impulse control, and self-awareness.

People who meditate regularly aren't just better at these things. Over time, their brains become finely tuned willpower machines. Regular meditators have more gray matter in the prefrontal cortex, as well as regions of the brain that support self-awareness.

One study found that just three hours of meditation practice led to improved attention and self-control. After eleven hours, researchers could see those changes in the brain. The new meditators had increased neural connections between regions of the brain important for staying focused, ignoring distractions, and controlling impulses.

Meditation

Another study found that eight weeks of daily meditation practice led to increased self-awareness in everyday life, as well as increased gray matter in corresponding areas of the brain

It may seem incredible that our brains can reshape themselves so quickly, but meditation increases blood flow to the prefrontal cortex, in much the same way that lifting weights increases blood flow to your muscles. The brain appears to adapt to exercise in the same way that muscles do, getting both bigger and faster in order to get better at what you ask of it.

Self-control is one of mankind's most fabulous upgrades, but it's not our only distinction. We also possess self-awareness: the ability to realize what we are doing as we do it, and understand why we are doing it. With any luck, we can also predict what we're likely to do before we do it, giving us ample opportunity to reconsider. This level of self-awareness appears to be uniquely human.

Without self-awareness, the self-control system would be useless. You need to recognize when you're making a choice that requires willpower; otherwise, the brain always defaults to what is easiest.

To have more self-control, you first need to develop

<p>Willpower</p>	<p>Level of Awareness</p>	<p>more self-awareness. A good first step is to notice when you are making choices related to your willpower challenge.</p> <p>To have more self-control, you first need to develop more self-awareness. A good first step is to notice when you are making choices related to your willpower challenge. Some will be more obvious, such as, "Do I go to the gym after work?" The impact of other decisions might not be clear until later in the day, when you see their full consequences.</p> <p>Commit to watching how the process of giving in to your impulses happens. See if you can catch yourself earlier and earlier in the process, noticing what thoughts, feelings, and situations are most likely to prompt the impulse. What do you think or say to yourself that makes it more likely that you will give in?</p> <p>Science also points us to a critical insight: Stress is the enemy of willpower. So often we believe that stress is the only way to get things done, and we even look for ways to increase stress—such as waiting until the last minute, or criticizing ourselves for being lazy or out of control—to motivate ourselves. Or we use stress to try to motivate others, turning up the heat at work or coming down hard at home. This may seem to work in the short term, but in the long term, nothing drains willpower faster than stress.</p> <p>Relax to restore your willpower reserve. Lie down, breathe deeply, and let the physiological relaxation response help you recover from the demands of self-control and daily stress.</p>
	<p>Purity of Intent</p>	<p>Studies have found that committing to any small, consistent act of self-control—improving your posture, squeezing a handgrip every day to exhaustion, cutting back on sweets, and keeping track of your spending—can increase overall willpower.</p>  <p>Dilts Model</p>
<p>Quality of Character</p>	<p>Quality of Character</p>	<p>When dopamine is released by one promise of reward, it also makes you more susceptible to any other kind of temptation. For example, erotic images make men more likely to take financial risks, and fantasizing about winning the lottery leads people to overeat—two ways daydreaming about unattainable rewards can get you into trouble.</p> <p>Studies show that people who order a main dish advertised as a healthy choice also order more indulgent drinks, side dishes, and desserts.</p> <p>Although their goal is to be healthy, they end up consuming more calories than people who order a regular entrée. Dieting researchers call this a health halo. We feel so good about ordering something healthy, our next indulgence doesn't feel sinful at all.</p> <p>Look for marketers try to trigger the promise of reward. Make it a game when you go to the grocery store or watch advertisements. What do you smell? What do you see? What do you hear? Knowing that cues have been carefully chosen to tempt you can help you see them for what they are and resist them.</p> <p>Desire is the brain's strategy for action. As we've seen, it can be both a threat to self-control and a source of willpower. When dopamine points us to temptation, we must distinguish wanting from happiness.</p> <p>But we can also recruit dopamine and the promise of reward to motivate ourselves and others. In the end, desire is neither good nor bad—what matters is where we let it point us, and whether we have the wisdom to know when to follow.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Straight Talk 2. Demonstrate Respect

The 13 Behaviors (Speed of Trust) 

- 2. Demonstrate Respect
- 3. Create Transparency
- 4. Right Wrongs
- 5. Show Loyalty
- 6. Deliver Results
- 7. Get Better
- 8. Confront Reality
- 9. Clarify Expectations
- 10. Practice Accountability
- 11. Listen First
- 12. Keep Commitments
- 13. Extend Trust