

## Picking self-pleasure over self-discipline

How many times have we done something, knowing that it is not the best thing for us? Yet because of the initial pleasure we receive from it, we continue. It's lure overrides our cognitive judgment to do the right thing, even if we are aware of the risk of unpleasant or painful consequences.

Although life is not easy our physical being can have a low tolerance for this and we may tend to seek pleasurable things such as, food, alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling, internet, spending money, etc. to cope or feel better.

Self-discipline requires us to value ourselves enough to make choices that are for our highest good. It requires us to practice delay tactics when we have impulsive cravings. It requires that we persevere through difficulties and remain open to learning new ways of doing things. It requires taking responsibility to follow through with promises and staying committed to goals. Being self-disciplined is a sign that we have reached emotional and spiritual maturity.

Here are some tips for increasing self-discipline:

1. **Start with a daily goal.** For example: A) just for today I won't overeat.
2. **Come up with a realistic and effective plan on how to achieve the goal.** For example: A) Just for today when I get an impulse to eat I will wait 60 seconds before giving into my craving. During that 60 seconds I will distract myself by doing something with my hands other than feeding my face, like doodling, writing, tapping etc. Just for today I will not have foods that I typically overeat accessible to me, but instead I will choose food that I have never overeaten (spinach!). Just for today if I do overeat I will not put myself down or berate myself with my thoughts. Instead I will tell myself "It is ok, just start over now. I know that with continued practice you can achieve this goal for a day."
3. **Never give up on yourself!** Self discipline requires consistent practice and lots of self-encouragement as a reinforcement. Once you master reaching your daily goal, then make another goal that can be realistically accomplished. Keep practicing, without giving up on yourself until you can master it, one goal at a time. Even long-term goals, such as getting a college degree or paying off a house all get reached by staying the course one day at a time.
4. **Believe in yourself!** It does NOT matter if other people believe in you, because you are the only one who can complete the action required for you to reach your goal (s). One way to increase your belief is through 'visualization.' Close your eyes and see yourself in your imagination achieving your goal. Do this at least once a day.

Although self-pleasure offers the reward of immediate physical gratification, it is temporary. Self-discipline offers us a long-term reward of achieving desired life goals. Something we can look back on with a sense of accomplishment!

YOU CAN DO IT!