

WILLPOWER: CAN YOU JUST SAY NO?

*Strength does not come from physical capacity.
It comes from an indomitable will." ...Mahatma Gandhi*

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ The most frequently reported New Year's resolutions for 2012 were improving health or financial status; lack of willpower was the top reason for failing to achieve goals
- ❖ Willpower has been defined as the ability to resist short-term temptations to meet long-term goals, the ability to delay gratification, the ability to override an unwanted thought or impulse, and the regulation of the self by the self
- ❖ It has also been defined as the ability to overcome laziness and procrastination and is one of the main ingredients of success
- ❖ Willpower has been theorized as a "cool" cognitive system where thoughts and knowledge have control over the "hot" emotional system consisting of emotions and impulses that respond to triggers that have no thought of consequences
- ❖ In a 2011 survey by the APA about stress, 27% of people responding said that lack of willpower was the most significant obstacle to change
- ❖ Studies have shown that students with high self-discipline have higher grades, better school attendance, and are more likely to be admitted to competitive programs
- ❖ And higher self-discipline was more important than IQ in predicting success in school
- ❖ Developing good self control as children tends to prevent substance abuse and other problems in teenagers and adults
- ❖ Trying to accomplish too many things at one time can lead to willpower depletion; it is better to focus on achieving a single goal at a time
- ❖ Some researchers believe that willpower can be depleted due to constant and frequent decisions to resist impulses leading to feelings of exhaustion
- ❖ Willpower depletion has become quite frequent in today's online society where one can easily give in to impulses to shop, gamble, and spend a lot of time playing games
- ❖ Willpower depletion and not bad moods is the cause of emotional eating
- ❖ One of the most effective techniques to strengthen willpower is to avoid temptation
- ❖ Another technique is "implementation intention" where one has a pre-thought out plan of what to do when faced with temptation
- ❖ Combining regular use of willpower with physical exercise leads to stronger willpower
- ❖ Doing the things one usually does not like to do develops inner strength which overcomes inner resistance
- ❖ Maintaining blood-sugar level in the brain by eating regularly or several small meals a day helps to restore depleted willpower levels

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ To strengthen will power, focus on one goal at a time, monitor your behavior toward your goal, and seek support from others whom you trust and will help you succeed
- ❖ Build up self control by exercising it regularly by saying no to temptations
- ❖ Recognize the signs that your willpower is waning; don't try to do too much at one time
- ❖ Don't crash diet but establish good habits and routines
- ❖ Organize and create effective to do lists
- ❖ Seek professional help if you are unable to maintain or increase your willpower

WE CAN HELP!

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