



# “Willpower”

by Roy Baumeister and John Tierney

## About This Package

You will not find a summary of Roy Baumeister and John Tierney’s “Willpower” within these pages. Instead, we have created some basic overviews and tools to help you remember and more importantly put into practice the ideas shared in the book.

One question we’re often asked is if a book is worth the time to read it. Let me assure you that if we go to the effort of creating this package of tools ... it’s worth it.

That said, here’s how we feel about “Willpower” ...

This is an important book, one which if read, digested and put into practice could change the life of more than a few people. It’s also a good read that keeps the reader engaged and interested.

If you’ve been struggling against yourself trying to get things done or overcoming a difficult habit in your life ... read this book. It won’t automatically solve all of your problems, but you will certainly come away with some strategies and ideas to head down the right path.

For more posts and information about “Willpower”, visit the book specific category on CuriousPursuit.com at ...

<http://www.curiouspursuit.com/category/book-tools/willpower/>

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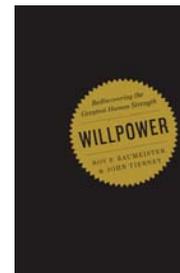


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In a word: **Willpower**

There are reasons self-discipline sometimes fails and there are ways to increase it as well.



## Four Categories of Willpower

### Some interesting research observations ...

... Students who keep a clean room also tend to not get their homework done as regularly as "messy" room scholars!

... Having a mirror increases willpower! Doing almost anything while you can see yourself in a mirror will increase your odds of self-discipline. This seems to be due to the power of "self regulation" and the idea that the more something holds in our awareness, the more likely we are to be disciplined about it.

... Generally, self-discipline decreases across "strength building" activities during stressful times such as exams, project deadlines and the like.

### Control of Thoughts

The general ability to maintain control of the many formed ideas running through your head.

### Control of Emotions

The ability to control and influence your emotional state.

### Impulse Control

This is related to temptations ... food, pleasure, sin (if you're religious).

### Performance Control

The ability to hold yourself to a high performance standard and effort. This type of control is the main focus of the book.

Willpower (or ego) depletion happens anytime we are required to use it. When it is depleted we are much less likely to exhibit self-control even in areas unrelated to what initially depleted our willpower.

Willpower as a force and presence in our lives does exist and is highly correlated with success and happiness in life.

One way of identifying willpower depletion is to notice an increased intensity of emotions. It could be visible through more frustration or annoyance than usual and could also be seen as more elated or "giddy" than you would normally be in a similar situation.

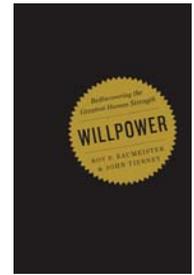
Most of popular psychology emphasizes self-esteem but self-control is far more important by almost any measure.



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Sheet Topic: Getting Better



Big piece of advice ... focus on only one thing (change, improvement, project) at a time. Not taking this advice results in worry that diminishes willpower, you get far less done and your physical and mental health suffers.

Willpower is related to glucose and it's healthy presence (stronger willpower) or lack (weaker willpower) in the body. Ways to rebalance glucose ...

... Don't skip meals and avoid "simple sugar" foods, instead choose "slow burn" items with a low glycemic index.

... Get plenty of rest.

... Illness forces glucose to vital immune functions, so you have little reserve and need to get rest.

Beware of "hyperbolic discounting" where you imagine a distant temptation won't bother you, but the moment it's immediately available you lose all control.

The "every day" ethic of effort and habit creation works in every area. Example: writers who write every day for a few minutes are more successful and prolific than those that go in huge spurts and explosions of random effort. This holds to pretty much any endeavor including sports, professional development, relationships, etc.

Establish "bright lines": black & white demarcations the crossing of which is unacceptable. This can be very useful when used under the appropriate circumstances.

Willpower is worth expending to establish long term, discipline bearing habits. After the habit is established you will have greater self-control and will be able to make other changes more easily.

"Gamification" of activity and effort can produce very real results. Allow people to participate in a "quest" and "level up" while doing what needs to be done.

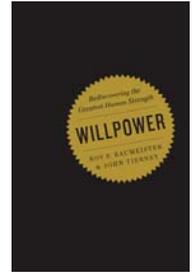
Go on the offense in life! Stop procrastinating and deal with issues, problems and circumstances while you can more easily handle it and have a reservoir of willpower to accomplish what is needed.



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Sheet Topic: Conclutory Tips!!!



"The Deadline Test" ... Don't procrastinate. Give yourself a hard deadline if one doesn't exist to get yourself going.

"Know Your Limits" ... Understand that tough decisions and tests of will deplete your willpower. You need to recognize that and plan in "rebuild" time when needed.

"Watch for Symptoms" ... Pay attention to your emotional state. If you are uncharacteristically annoyed, frustrated or even elated ... you are probably willpower depleted. Beware!

"Pick Your Battles" ... Know where you want to go (know your aspirations and make goals) in life and spend your willpower on those things that will get you there. Don't waste your effort on things not related to your progress.

"Make a To-Do List ... or at Least a To-Don't List" ... Having a plan and keeping track of what needs to be done will mollify your mind and allow you to get back to work.

"Beware the Planning Fallacy" ... You need to have a plan (as mentioned above), but a plan will only get you so far. Expect the need to change and adjust and be prepared to deal with it.

"Don't Forget the Basics" ... Eat right, get plenty of rest. These will build long term self-discipline and keep you moving forward.

"The Power of Positive Procrastination" ... Tell yourself that you will "indulge" after you have done what truly needs to be done.

"The Nothing Alternative" ... Use this simple trick: Do what you need to do or nothing at all. Set an appointment with yourself that you will write (or whatever else) during that time or do nothing ... meaning just sitting there. You really can't do anything else, though. No web surfing, reading, sleeping, etc.

"Keep Track" ... Self-monitoring is highly effective in staying disciplined. Keep records of those changes and improvements you want to make.

"Reward Often" ... Give yourself incentive to keep moving forward and staying disciplined.

## "Willpower": Quotes

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"We can ignore temptations when they're not immediately available, but once they're right in front of us we lose perspective and forget our distant goals."

"You could sum up a large new body of research literature with a simple rule: The best way to reduce stress in your life is to stop screwing up."

"Religion also improves the monitoring of behavior, another of the central steps to self-control. Religious people tend to feel that someone important is watching them. That monitor might be God, a supernatural being who pays attention to what you do and think, often even knowing your innermost thoughts and reasons, and can't be easily fooled if you do something apparently good for the wrong reason."

"Instead of bemoaning [games and video games] hold over children, we should be exploiting the techniques that game designers have developed. They've refined the basic steps of self-control: setting clear and attainable goals, giving instantaneous feedback, and offering enough encouragement for people to keep practicing and improving."

"[People with high self-control] have less need to use willpower because they're beset by fewer temptations and inner conflicts. They're better at arranging their lives so that they avoid problem situations."



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## Wallet Cards

The following pages are meant to be printed, folded and stuck in your wallet or purse for regular and “always on” reference. You can even cut them out fold one direction and then laminate before folding and storing. This will serve a dual purpose, first it will lengthen the life of the card and second ... it’s just plain cooler when they feel all “slick” from the plastic!

There is one wallet card associated with this tools package. The card has some of the more important points found in the book.

The more you refer back to these wallet cards, the more the concepts and ideas contained in “Willpower” will sink in and be useful to you. The wallet card will even act as a form of “self-regulation” and a type of “mirror” to help you do a better job of actually making the change!

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Fold Here

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