

Willpower

Rediscovering the greatest human strength

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Intro

- We need to understand how Willpower works in order to be able to use it to our greatest advantage. This book will address that
- It's Not just about willpower but about how to outsmart ourselves so that we don't depend exclusively on willpower to succeed.
- Depending on willpower to succeed is a bad strategy

Big Ideas

- Laws of Willpower
- 4 kinds
- When to use Willpower
- What Strengthens it
- What depletes it
- Outsmarting yourself

Laws

- It is like a muscle
 - We must build it
 - But it depletes with use through the day.
- You have a finite amount of willpower
- No matter what you use your willpower for, it comes from the same bucket of willpower

4 kinds of willpower

- Controlling our thinking
 - Just trying to control our thinking like 'not to think of a white bear' will reduce our willpower
- Controlling our emotions
 - Effort to control emotional reaction while watching a movie depletes willpower as evidenced in an experiment
- Impulse Control
- Performance control
 - Perseverance
 - Managing time/commitments
 - Planning

When to/ not to use willpower

- To create good/keystone habits
 - Success doesn't come from heroic effort once in a while
 - Success comes from good habits built over time
 - One keystone habit at a time
- To break bad habits
- Don't use it all the time
 - Use it on biggest bang for buck. Intelligently.
 - Save it for using it on your Habits (building/breaking)

Strengthening it

- Food
 - Low GI diet. No Blood Sugar swings
- Sleep
- Exercising it
 - Exercising self control in one area seems to improve self control in all areas of life.
 - You don't have to have a lot of willpower to start with. As long as you do some kind of willpower exercise... It will improve.

What depletes it

- Decision Fatigue
 - Make it as automatic as possible
 - Zuckerberg, Obama, Steve Jobs
- Stress
- Using it through the day on various issues

Outsmarting yourself

- Right Environment
 - Right People
 - Clean your home of temptations
- Pre-Commitment
 - Financial Stakes
 - Social Pressure
- Setting Proximal Goals v/s Distal Goals
 - Proximal = Work on part of the problem every day for 1 hour for next 6 weeks
 - Distal = Finish 6 problems in 6 weeks
- Outsource the job of monitoring
 - Public Monitoring of your behavior
- Using High Level thinking – Tapping into emotions
 - Finding your why. Finding purpose
 - Finding Emotions to trigger you (Rider v/s elephant)