

Build Self-Discipline: 7 Simple Ways (Banish burnout—for good)

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Look:

There are plenty of tools to build self-discipline.

Are these tools enough? Not so much.

Consistency is key.

We can be self-disciplined for a while, but it's the long run that makes the difference.



What's in this post?

In this post, you'll learn seven of **Natalie Wise**, author of **The Self-Discipline Handbook**, "simple ways to cultivate self-discipline, build confidence, and obtain your goals."

The idea behind **The Self-Discipline Handbook** is that you develop your own self-discipline program.

In the end, you'll build self-discipline and keep it.

But First . . .

Let's remove the punishment associated with the use of discipline

There's a negative connotation about discipline. According to **Merriam-Webster dictionary**, "The earliest known use of discipline appears to be punishment-related; it first was used in the 13th century to refer to chastisement of a religious nature, such as self-flagellation."

Punishment as part of imparting discipline has been passed down through generations. As we grow up, we don't need help any longer, we use self-discipline to punish ourselves.

New generations with a healthier educational system, beyond punishment and reward, won't go through this predicament.

Stay with me here:

There are parents and teachers who use Positive Discipline to educate children.

I find these Positive Discipline ideas by [Dr. Jane Nelsen](#) thought-provoking:

“Punishment does work in that it usually stops misbehavior immediately. But what are the long term results? We are fooled by immediate results. Sometimes we must be aware of what works when the long term results are negative. (resentment, revenge, rebellion, and retreat)”

“Positive Discipline advocates tools that are both kind and firm and that teach valuable social and life skills.”

What if we apply the same approach to ourselves:

If we have grown within this system of punishment and reward, chances are we have these behaviors ingrained in our brains.

What if we understand that in the long run punishment leads to resentment, revenge, rebellion, and retreat.

We don't need to do that to ourselves now that we have grown up.

We deserve to treat ourselves with kindness and firmness at the same time.

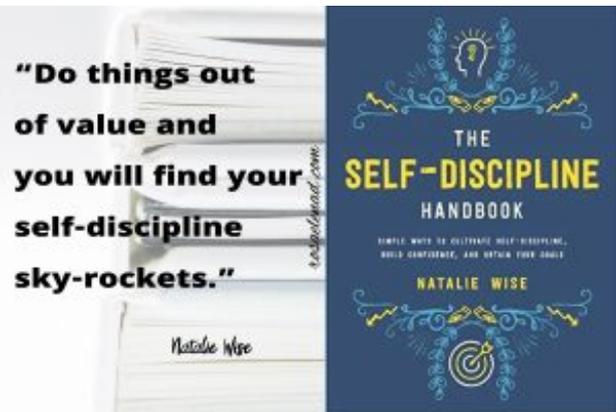
On the other hand:

Embrace discomfort

Out of your comfort zone doesn't necessarily mean pain. It could be more about being a beginner, and beginnings can be messy, but rewarding.

The comfort zone is familiar to you. However, it doesn't always equate happiness.

If you're growing you're for sure out of your comfort zone. Embrace being uncomfortable. Otherwise, you are not growing, you are in the same place. Fooling around, but not getting ahead.



Recommended: *The Best Simple Mind Hack to Get Things Done*

How do you develop and maintain self-discipline?

1. Root yourself

Firm foundations are vital. If not we are moved by circumstances, and the people involved.

How to root yourself:

Create a **road-map**. This road-map can have plenty of forms.

For example, vision boards, goals, resolutions, whatever system works for you.

I have used an **intention mandala** for the past five years, and I'm pretty happy about this system.

Any system you choose starts with checking your values.

Values

I agree with **Natalie Wise** "Your values will define your choices and your path, which may very well be different than someone else's choices and path-even someone you respect."

Wise recommends:

"Dig deep and be honest with yourself, remembering that no value is inherently bad. Also, keep in mind that values change as we grow and mature, so what you used to value may not still hold true.

"Then, order them from most important to least important.

"Pick the top 3 to focus on. Any more than 3 and we tend to get overwhelmed. These will be your guiding principles in everything you do."

Five years ago, I picked 5 concepts according to Janet Conner system. Conner recommends between 4 and 8 conditions or values. So, choose the magic number that works for you.

For example, my 5 main concepts that complement each other as **values** are:

- Here and Now
- Be grateful/to receive (my heart's desires)
- Self-love/True to myself
- Fun/joy
- Consistency/Trust (intuition)

Our values help us to hold a course and are gatekeepers of our heart's desires if we choose to act accordingly. We can achieve whatever we set as our goals, but unless they are our heart's desires, we won't be happy. At last, we will only please the status quo.

When our values and actions are aligned, our values let us enjoy our day-to-day activities, which lead to extraordinary experiences because "small positive choices set us up for success."

However, in the process of becoming the path can get rough, that's when "values inform self-discipline. Values keep you going when the going gets tough. Values help you pull from deep reserves of strength you didn't know you had because you want to, you have to, you can, and you will for the things you value."

Knowing our "why" makes us consistent and self-disciplined, "Do things out of value and you will find your self-discipline sky-rockets." Also, It's important to choose a strategy which helps you work smarter not harder.

Keep in mind that a balance between play, work and rest is essential.

Recommended: 8 Simple + Powerful Questions to Make You More Productive

2. Curiosity – Asking questions

In order to move forward, we have to embrace a sense of wonder, and curiosity opens the door. After that, we need the self-discipline to keep going, "Curiosity doesn't make things happen in and of itself. Self-discipline does that."

The right mindset accepts that we don't know it all, "Curiosity means accepting that you don't have all the answers, all the tools, all the ideas."

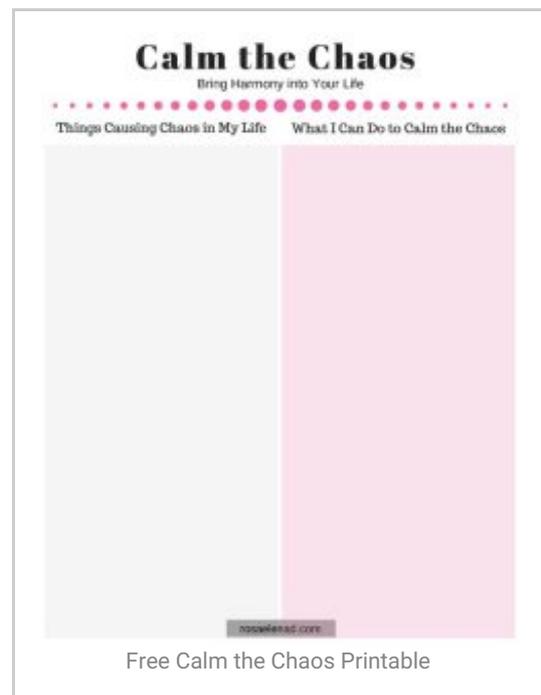
Asking the right questions:

To open to different scenarios start your inquiry with what if, "What if is such an enticing phrase, such an open-ended beginning."

Use this question by **Tim Ferris** to work smarter not harder: "What would this look like if it were easy."

Suggested Action:

Try something new, “Be disciplined in trying new things, because new things spark new ideas. Things get flowing in a new way, new neurons get firing in our brains, and we are suddenly filled with energy.”



3. Build your pack

First steps are taken alone.

But, you won't go far alone or with the wrong people. We're pack animals.

There are more than 7 billion people in this world. There's someone for you, "Look close (friends, family) and look far (mentors, inspirational figures.) Purposefully connect."

4. Milk momentum

Wise conveys "momentum, in my vocabulary, is hard work paying off and paying forward."

What starts momentum?

Consistent baby steps towards our goals, "Even the tiniest step begets momentum, and it turns into a baby step, then two baby steps, and eventually leaps and bounds."

Also important is to know what to do when the goal you are working towards arrives.

For example: If you're a blogger, what to do when your blog post goes viral. Search what others have done when they experienced what you are working for to milk the momentum.

5. Automate as much as you can

"Automation oils the gears of momentum."

- Automation is part of working smarter not harder.
- It makes everything easier.

- It helps to keep yourself on track.

Evaluate your processes. Create systems, and check how much of that can be automated.

There are plenty of tools to help automate our processes, and some of them have free options. For example:

Nozbe: The automated to-do list.

This App shows how long it will take to accomplish all the tasks I want to. That keeps me realistic.

Nozbe shows me how long I've been postponing a task, usually when I'm creating a new habit.

Asana: It helps me to organize all the blogging process. Easy to generate step-by-step lists, and get them out of my mind.

Evernote: An easy way to keep my research in one place.

Even though it's not automated, I like to use a **bullet journal** to keep my statistics on track.

These tools help us to make the most of our time, to free mind space for creative work, rest, and play.

6. Celebrate and keep going

"Self-discipline does not negate celebration."

We wait for milestones to celebrate, but there are small events that deserve a celebration, "We aren't accustomed to celebrating small things. But by capitalizing on the small things, and in essence making the small things bigger things, we're building encouraging motion and gathering creative capital."

After enjoying the big celebration, well deserved for sure, it's time to move on, "Acknowledge the work that got you to this podium. Let yourself feel the weight of it. Your discipline has paid off. Cry a few tears for the late nights and the muscling through I know it took to get you here. Then cry a few happy tears because you did it. You did it. . . But each laurel has its time limit. Laurels are only shiny so long, only fragrant for a little while. Once they become dry and dated, they are crunchy, itchy, and absolutely terrible to sit on."

There's an ugly truth about success "no matter how well earned and deserved they are, there will be some other people who will not like it. They might not cheerlead you. In fact, they might even boo you. Success threatens them. . . Other people just don't like the fact that someone else can manage the self-discipline they can't. "

On the other hand:

Our success open doors. We meet great people on our way to our next level of success, keep these people around ". . . Shining people have something going on that's working, so stay close to them."

7. When it's too much – Burnout

Working twenty hours a day it's not a path to success, it's likely that you'll collapse in the process.

For example:

According to Time.com, "A 31-year-old woman in Japan who put in more than 150 hours of overtime in a month died of congestive heart failure after working too much. . ."

Wise recommends to avoid **burnout**:

"Build in margins of error. Pad time and cost estimates to manage expectations, both your expectations and those of others."

Create systems to prevent burnout: "Schedule breaks. Schedule yoga, massages, time with friends, schedule downtime and dream-time. Schedule brain-dumping sessions and brainstorming sessions, to get rid of the old and create the new."

Delegating: "Delegating tasks or outsourcing them is an effective tool for creating balance in business and life. We all need to delegate or outsource tasks. No one, no matter how self-disciplined, can do all the things all of the time. We must focus our vital energy (the very best we have to offer) on the things that require it. Hiring others to do tasks that are not an effective use of our vital energy is critical for preserving momentum and not getting mired in details. Trust others, and move forward."

Be aware of addiction to self-discipline, "There is a very thin line between self-discipline and self-destruction."

Conclusion

Building and maintaining self-discipline are two different things. Consistency is key.

Get punishment out of self-discipline. Kindness and firmness will serve you better.

Work in all the elements that complement self-discipline: Choose your values, build your pack, keep a sense of wonder with intention.

Work smarter not harder, and enjoy the fruits of your labor. Find out how others have milked the momentum, and keep those ideas close to when yours happen.

Celebrate! You deserve it. And then after a while, keep going.

Be aware: There is a point when too much of a thing is harmful. Too much self-discipline can lead to self-destruction.

Keep a balance between work, play, and rest.

Author Natalie Wise

The Self-Discipline Handbook: Simple Ways to Cultivate Self-Discipline, Build Confidence, and Obtain Your Goals

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