



DEVONHARRIS

KEEP ON PUSHING



Discipline

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We know that without a clearly defined goal we stand little chance of reaching it. However, having well defined goals is only the starting point on our long journey to success. Intelligence, talent, good communication skills, a supportive team, and the ability to persist are a few of the other essential tools that we will need along the way.

However, when we take a detailed inventory of these attributes, few of us can deny that we possess them in sufficient amounts and yet we find ourselves nowhere near where we want to be in our lives. Discipline, it would seem, is the missing component that dogs us every step of the way. They say that if you can kick the person responsible for most of your troubles, you wouldn't be able to sit down for weeks. Personally, I know that to be a fact. The lack of discipline, the inability to work methodically and steadily toward a desired outcome until it is realized, has proven to be the downfall of many would be super successful people. Complemented by the right mix of talent and skills developed over time, discipline is undoubtedly the master key to success.

Although discipline plays such a key role in achieving worthwhile and complex goals in both our personal and professional lives, it is a tough thing for us to practice because it is not an innate characteristic but rather something we must work on daily. The lack of discipline has relegated even the most talented and ambitious of us into wanna be's and could have been's.

As Theodore Roosevelt aptly puts it, "The one quality which sets one apart from another - the key which lifts one to every aspiration while others are caught up in the mire of mediocrity - is not talent, formal education, nor intellectual brightness; it is self discipline. With discipline all things are possible. Without it, even the simplest goal can seem like the impossible dream"

Over the next few months I will spend some time discussing what I consider to be the key aspects of discipline; commitment, focus and a positive attitude. My goal is that by the end of the series, you will have gained some insight into how you can be more disciplined and, more importantly, apply these principles so that you can be more effective in the pursuit of your goals.

Maybe because we were often "disciplined" by our parents and teachers in our youth we subconsciously associate discipline with punishment, lack, denial and self-sacrifice. The truth is, that being disciplined does not confine a person to a life void of fun, continuous self-punishment and never-ending sacrifice. And while I agree that we must forgo immediate pleasure in pursuit of long-term objectives, the sacrifice pales considerably to the experience of joy, sense of accomplishment and elation that flows from achieving a worthy goal. Have you ever noticed the

smiles on the faces of athletes as they march in the opening ceremony or the college graduate walking across the stage to receive her diploma? It is one of sheer exhilaration.

The undisciplined, on the other hand, loses sight of the intended prize and quickly racks up a litany of pleasures, but little else. They are the first to accuse those who succeeded as being lucky. Little do they know that had they exhibited some restraint in a few key areas they would have been just as "lucky."

Here are a few more rewards from being disciplined.

Higher productivity

The good news is that we all have the potential to succeed at whatever we choose to do. The bad news is that the rewards in life do not come from potential; they come from performance; and peak performance comes from self-discipline.

Harvard Business School conducted a study to determine the common characteristics of top performing salespeople and found that most salespeople can be top sellers if they are willing to study, concentrate and focus on their performance. The disciplined will always achieve more in everything they do as well as achieve a greater sense of satisfaction from getting the extraordinary done.

Enhances reliability

Discipline and reliability are inextricably linked because the disciplined person focuses on tasks and deadlines and does everything in their power to ensure that they meet them. Simply put, disciplined people are reliable and, as a result, develop a reputation of reliability and credibility. It is the reliable employee that gets the promotion, the reliable salesperson that eventually gets the order and the reliable businessperson that gets the contract.

Improved problem solving

People have a general tendency to avoid challenges until they fester and their situation becomes worse. Partly because of a lack of discipline, we arrive at a superficial solution in order to save time and energy. The disciplined person will invariably focus on the problem, spending the necessary time and energy to find a solution.

Additionally, it is important to note that every opportunity comes with challenges. Some people see these stepping-stones to their goals not as challenges but as problems. The disciplined person will work through these challenges with a positive attitude, eventually becoming comfortable with the challenges that inevitably lie in the way of achieving their goals. The undisciplined engages in what I call stinking thinking. Their negative attitude causes them to shut out opportunities because all they can see are problems that are too daunting to surmount.

Start today. Evaluate your level of discipline and get ready to reach higher levels of effectiveness and bigger and bigger goals faster.

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