

DO IT FOR A DAY

DAY 16 – MAKE DECISIONS AGAINST YOURSELF

“Everything is permissible,” but not everything is beneficial.” –1 Corinthians 10:23

In 1972, a psychologist named Walter Mischel conducted a series of studies on delayed gratification, known as the Stanford Marshmallow Test. It took place at the Bing Nursery School with children between the ages of three and five. Each child was asked to choose between a marshmallow and a pretzel. If he could wait a certain amount of time, he could eat his preferred treat. If not, I had to eat the other one."

"A hidden camera allowed the researchers to observe the way in which the children responded to the situation. Some took the treat as soon as the researcher left the room. Others mustered as much willpower as possible by using a wide variety of techniques. They sang, played a game, covered their eyes and even tried to fall asleep.

Years later, a follow-up study determined whether children's ability to delay gratification was correlated with long-term academic achievement. The academic records of the children who participated in the study were monitored throughout high school. When longitudinal results were compared with time to delayed gratification, the researchers found that children who had delayed gratification longer had higher academic achievement.

On average, they scored 210 points higher on the SAT [Standardized College Admissions Test in the United States]. The marshmallow test was twice as powerful an indicator of academic achievement as IQ. Children who had delayed gratification were more self-sufficient and socially competent. They took initiatives more frequently and handled stress more effectively. Four decades later, another follow-up study revealed higher incomes, stronger marriages, and more rewarding careers.

Countless studies have confirmed what the marshmallow test indicated. Delayed gratification is the key. The key to what? Of almost everything! And most definitely from habit formation. It has another name: willpower. It is mind over matter. It's nutrition over nature. It's the old saying that goes: where there's a will, there's a way."

One way to swallow the toad is by not eating anything. It's called fasting. There are a lot of physical benefits to intermittent and short-term fasting. Reboots the immune system. It purifies toxins, especially if you drink water or bone broth. Recalibrate your metabolism and renew your appreciation for food when you eat it again.

Fasting has physical benefits, but the biggest payoff is willpower. **If you can give up food, you can give up anything!** It is right? Few things are more difficult than resisting hunger pangs. In that sense, fasting exercises willpower.

There are two Greek words that are translated as "power" in the Old Testament, Dunamis is the power to do things beyond your natural ability. That's where the word dynamite comes from. Exousia is the power of not doing something that is within your power. It takes dunamis to lift two hundred pounds (90 kg). It takes exousia to eat just one Oreo cookie!

When it comes to willpower, Jesus sets the bar. Not coincidentally, the first temptation he faced involved food. **Jesus fasted for forty days**, and the enemy hit him where it hurts. He told Jesus to turn the stones into bread, which seems to be a harmless thing. Jesus used every ounce of willpower he had. **He resisted the temptation by identifying the impulse and interrupting the pattern. He went to the Scriptures: "Man does not live by bread alone".⁷**

"Everything is allowed", but not everything is profitable.⁸

The distinction between allowed and helpful is the difference between good and wonderful. If you settle for what is allowed, you will never hit your potential. The enemy of the good is not the bad; is "good enough".

Two decades later, I reconnected with Jack at a pastors' meeting in the DC area. Already in his 80s, he shared a secret to his longevity, productivity and, I might add, integrity.

His secret ingredient? Make decisions against you. Well, that doesn't sound like much fun! I know you don't, but listen to me. Making decisions against you **is making decisions for yourself.** It's just as counterintuitive as breaking down muscles to make them stronger, and just as effective. The good news? Nothing earns compound interest like delayed gratification!"

Is there something you have to say no to? In many cases, abstinence is easier than moderation. Why? It requires less willpower because you trust a strong previous decision. Moderation is slippery ground. In my experience, it's harder to eat just one Oreo than none at all! If you feed the craving, it grows. If you starve it, it atrophies. If you want to break a bad habit, try abstinence.

For two hours, Jack detailed some of the defining decisions—hard decisions—he had made. Some were right or wrong decisions, like resisting a temptation. They wouldn't have been wrong for other people, but they would have been wrong for him. **Why? It would have compromised his convictions. In a way, determining decisions are equivalent to an Old Testament vote.** They are voluntary, not mandatory. But once you do, it's inviolable. It is similar to the commitment mechanism used by the marathon monks on the hundred and first day of the thousand day challenge.”

“When Jack was in his forties, he decided to stop eating chocolate.

Jack was the first person to say that there was nothing wrong with chocolate. Can we take a moment to thank God for chocolate? Praise God for the hot chocolate, the chocolate bonbons, and the molten chocolate cake!

For more than four decades, Jack Heyford abstained from eating chocolate. For some reason he felt that God had asked him to avoid it. He made a decision against her and it had a ripple effect. How is that? **If you can say no to chocolate, you can say no to almost anything! Am I or am I not in**

When you exercise willpower in one area of your life, it sets off a chain reaction of domino effects. Physical discipline conceives spiritual discipline and vice versa.

If you want to get out of that debt, you have to make a decision against you in the financial area. **It's called making a budget.** **If you want to lose weight,** you have to make a decision against yourself in the physical area. **It's called dieting.** **If you want to write a book, get a college degree** you have to make a decision against you in the chronological area. **It's called having an agenda.**

You can't find the time. You have to procure it. I eat? By setting the alarm clock a little earlier each morning.

What decision do you have to make against yourself? What are you waiting for?" Do you remember my thesis? Almost everyone can achieve almost anything if they work hard, consistently, and smartly. **The key is delayed gratification. It's making decisions against you.** When? Today. Why? Because that way you can get the profit tomorrow! It takes starting power, but it also requires staying power, which is a function of willpower.

HOW DO I MAKE IT INTO A HABIT?

Make your body!

As a child, Teddy Roosevelt suffered from severe asthma. Of course he didn't have the salbutamol inhaler handy like I did. Asthma limited his outdoor activities. So how did

he become such an advocate for physical activity? The turning point was the heavy hand. It often is, isn't it?

When Teddy was young, Theodore Roosevelt Sr. threw a gauntlet at him and told his son, "Theodore, you have the mind, but you don't have the body." Teddy's father changed the script and challenged him. "Without the help of the body, the mind cannot go as far as it should. I am giving you the tools, but it is your turn to prepare the body". Those three words—prepare the body—changed the trajectory of the life of, he said, "I will prepare my body!" From that day on, Teddy Roosevelt began to do a regular exercise routine that included boxing, wrestling, walking, and horseback riding. He started playing tennis. He even tried jiu-jitsu, never qualifying."

You have to continue to make decisions against you until the day you die!

Gerald Schattle is the Director -Kenneth R. Knippel Education Center, has battled obesity most of his life. A few years ago he weighed in at 397 pounds (180 kg). At that moment, he set a goal the size of God: run a marathon. When he reached his target weight, he began prayer runs around the eighty-two college campuses in his school district. Not only did he run the marathon, he lost almost half his weight. And in the process, he inspired his students to pursue their goals!

With the correct daily habits it is not impossible. **It's unavoidable! Will you need willpower? Definitely. But if you do the natural, God will do the supernatural.**

Make decisions against yourself!"

Excerpt From

Do

It For A Day: How to Make or Break Any Habit in 30 Days

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