

Revelations

Willpower Woes: How a Rotten Resolve Can Hurt You

Willpower. We all want it. We all need it. But far too many of us just don't have what it takes to stay resolute and determined when the going gets tough.

I connected with the author of *Life Rehab: Don't Overdose on Pain, People and Power*, Kanika Tolver—a Certified Professional Coach and thought leader who helps individuals realize career, business, life, and spiritual success. She offered this simple yet insightful 3-step exercise that can help individuals develop better willpower through practice, progression, and patience:

1. Practice:

- Brainstorm all of your weaknesses—as many as you can think of—and write them down. When you identify your weaknesses on paper, it initiates the process of acknowledgement and acceptance. We all have weaknesses, whether it's procrastination or being a “pushover” and the like, that are undermining our ability to be happy and successful. However, thinking comprehensively about our shortcomings and confessing them on paper produces a cathartic sense of awareness and urgency. While any scrap of paper will do, it's best to invest in a simple journal where you can keep an ongoing log of your flaws and faults that are likely working against you at work, at home and in social circles.
- Cultivate a list of adversaries. As with your list of weaknesses above that related to your own personality and character traits, it's also advisable to identify those people and other aspects of your life that challenge your willpower. This can include specific people in your professional and personal life, your job itself, or things like food, alcohol, television, the gym, etc. Keep a running log of these as well so that you remain mindful of exactly what aspects of life you seek to improve. Even try to put this list from most to least important or impactful, with the areas you need the most work on, and that will impact your life most significantly, at the top.
- Set small, achievable goals for turning your weaknesses into strengths. For each weakness, set small incremental goals. Setting unrealistic goals can lead to disappointment, which often leads to self-sabotage and self-doubt—all of which undercut your efforts to develop stronger willpower. Most of us have spent years repeating a bad habit or suffering a bad relationship. With this exercise, it's now time to make a conscious choice to make small changes to negate the damage done. A collection of successful small changes will likely lead to big changes, which can lead to life changing transformations. Reward yourself for even the smallest of victories along the journey. Revel in each achievement, however tiny.

2. Progression:

- Now that you are aware of what about yourself you need to “fix” and in what circumstances, journal your daily progress—both wins, losses and challenges—and your feelings in relation to each. Over time, you will be able to analyze the “data” and discern patterns, including where you fell short, in what circumstances you remained steadfast, and what made you uncomfortable (and which way that ultimately swung). This will expose ways to better apply willpower and manage situations to your benefit. Progression requires transparent hard work and constant self-evaluation. But the prospective payoff is immense.

- Surround yourself with people who have experience and overcame the same struggles you have. Associating with people who can give you good, proven advice that can be validated with personal anecdotes and insights is priceless. One great strategy is to find an “accountability partner,” support group, mentor or professional coach who can provide valuable objective perspectives and help guide and advise you when challenges present.

3. Patience:

- Patience is indeed a virtue because all too few of us have it. But, if you can effectively exercise patience, it can vastly strengthen your willpower. In fact, the two are entirely intertwined. We are a culture of instant gratification, and when the universe does not deliver immediately we tend to get disappointed, which can lead to a “giving up” or “giving in” mentality—either of which are the enemies of willpower.

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Somatic Psychology

Energetic Grounding for Enhanced Health and Well-Being

The human body, comprised of nearly 70 percent water, is an excellent conductor of energy. People who have been struck by lightning or who have experienced electric shock can attest to the dynamic power of electricity to flow through the body in its attempts to ground and discharge. As a safety measure, electrical appliances include ground wires and other conductors to ground erratic or leaking energy, thereby reducing the risk of shock or electrocution. Our bodies, as electrical entities, also benefit from grounding. When we consciously ground our energy, we are actively connected to the Earth and to our bodies. From this anchored state, we are able to live with increased mindfulness, embodying the “now”, as opposed to living at the mercy of thoughts based in the past and/or future.

Holistic health practitioners have long recognized the importance of grounding one's energy for optimal health and well-being. Multiple tools can assist in grounding, including meditation and visualization, spending time in nature, and mindful-based bodywork. Used alone or in combination, these techniques assist us to “land” in our bodies and our experiences, consciously anchoring us to the Earth and her infinite wisdom. As we enter into a deeper state of groundedness, we are more present, focused, and dynamic. Our minds become increasingly attentive, our vision more clear, and our personal boundaries become fortified. As anchored beings, we are able to stand on our own two feet and move forward in our lives with confidence and clarity.

Yet, to be grounded runs counter to the manner in which most of us conduct our lives. Living in a modernized world, we navigate high-stress environments that require juggling multiple roles and responsibilities. Frequently, we live in our heads, negotiating multiple demands, often to the exclusion of our bodies. As we become increasingly ungrounded, our thinking becomes clouded with dreaminess or confusion, impeding our ability to focus our thoughts and attention. Repetitive, fear-based thoughts may consume much of our energy. Our bodies may present physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle spasms, excessive perspiration, difficulties with breathing or digesting, or abnormal heart rates. Indeed, in this state, many of us look like “live wires”, spinning out of control, in desperate need of grounding.

When you find yourself feeling ungrounded, consider incorporating one or

more of the following anchoring supports into your day:

Meditation and visualization: Placing both feet on the ground, inhale, allowing the energy to move up from the Earth through the right foot and up the right side of the body. On the exhale, envision the energy flowing down the left side of the body, out the left foot, returning to the Earth.

Spending Time in Nature: Whether walking on the beach, swimming in the ocean, or hiking in the mountains, our interactions with nature positively impact our emotions and re-orient us to the here and now. Walking barefoot outdoors, also known as “earthing”, has been shown to decrease chronic stress,

inflammation, pain, poor sleep, and autonomic nervous system dysfunction.

Mindful Bodywork: The healing arts can help bring us into relationship with our bodies through the mirror of another's educated touch. Bodyworkers trained in mindfulness and visualization can assist in the release of muscle tension and emotional blockages while providing gentle, experiential coaching to expand one's breath, and ground the energy so that we may more fully inhabit our bodies.

Integrating daily grounding techniques into our lives provides a conduit to effectively anchor into the inherent intelligence of our bodies and the Earth. When we operate from a place of groundedness, we are more present, more focused, and more fully equipped to navigate modern life challenges.

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