

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Thank you to Joanne Holman

As I observed the people I consider highly successful in their lives and professions, I tried to avoid the issue of discipline. It does not sound like fun, and I certainly did not find the idea attractive. But, I couldn't avoid the truth. Highly successful people do the things that need to be done. They keep their promises. They tackle the hard jobs, and then finish what they start. They do the things that less successful people avoid.

So, I was stuck with this dreadful concept of self-discipline.

Then, I got a great idea! I looked in the dictionary to see what it really meant! Hallelujah! To my amazement, I discovered that it refers to (are you ready for this?) FREEDOM!

Discipline is obviously related to "being a disciple", and that refers to following after or following the principles of someone you admire. From that, comes the idea that discipline is about choosing the future we truly want! "Self-discipline" refers to being self-directed and autonomous! Who knew? What a relief!

It turns out that self-discipline is directly related to following a vision. For highly successful people, self-discipline is primarily a matter of commitment. They are committed to their vision. They are able to make difficult choices, to say YES to what ever takes them where they want to go, and to say a firm NO to all distractions. Synonyms for this type of self-discipline include words like: focus, clarity, determination, simplicity, and desire.

Previously, I associated the phrase, "self-discipline" with a kind of Spartan regimentation, the kind of structured life I associate with military or with workaholics. It certainly was not associated with fun or freedom!

But, in fact, self-discipline is precisely focused on the things that bring ultimate pleasure and ultimate freedom! It's about doing the things that bring true success, satisfaction, achievement and gratification. Self-discipline is the ability to finish what I start. It's about being in charge of my own life!

Without self-discipline, or self-direction, we remain slaves to other people, to their agendas, their preferences and their ideas of how we should spend our time and our lives. Like a ship without a rudder or a destination, we are at the mercy of whatever wind happens to catch our sails.

Self-discipline puts us in charge. It empowers us to direct our own lives. With a highly developed ability to define our choices and prioritize our activities, we become the masters of our fate, the captains of our destiny.

Self-discipline is the ability to say, "I will", and to follow-through. It's the ability to say, "Yes" or "No" to the alternatives that come our way, and to live responsibly (and consistently) with our choices. Isn't that, truly, one of the keys to super-success? Integrity, Vision, Self-discipline. Success is built on these.