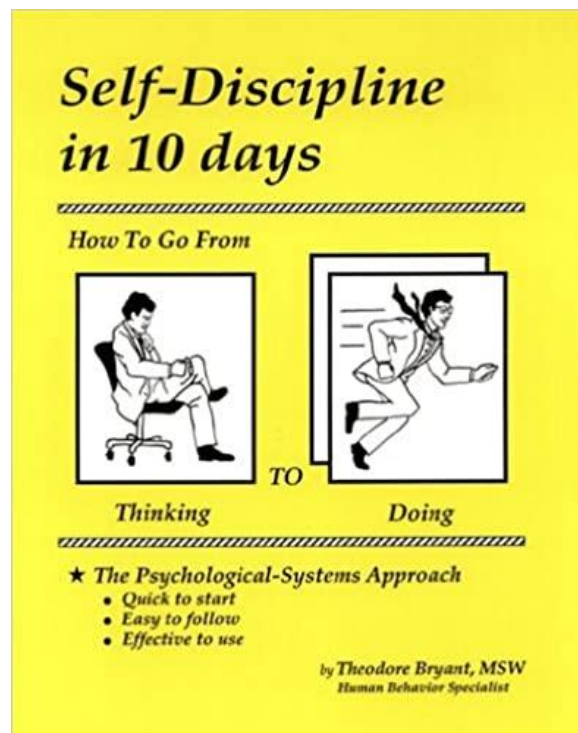


# SELF-DISCIPLINE SMART TIPS

Smart Tips for Attaining Freedom Through Self-Discipline©  
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For many of us, while we were growing up, the word “**self-discipline**” was used as a way to express shame and disappointment when we didn’t do our homework. “**You lack self-discipline**” is something most of us heard from our parents or other authority figures. So, the word became synonymous with doing something unpleasant: homework.



Self-discipline is so much more than that. It means investing in your future by putting off immediate gratification in favor of a longer goal and a greater prize. It means conditioning yourself to finish projects consistently, to be able to constantly adapt to change, to train your mind and body to be agile and flexible, usually through training. Rather than being a task-master, self-discipline means you are in control of your life instead of the other way around.

You desire this freedom from chaos in your life, and so, decide to become more self-disciplined. That’s great! As you get started building a more self-disciplined life, here are some things to put into place to make it easier and improve your chances of success.

### **Know Your Why**

Self-discipline thrives on **why**. Generally speaking, there are two reasons why people want to improve their self-discipline: either they are motivated, or they are inspired.

Someone who had a heart attack, for instance, might be very motivated to become healthier, to eat better and exercise more. If the person you look up to just graduated from college, you might be inspired by that to study harder.

Whatever the reason for the change of heart or to get the self-discipline on track, keep reminders of that everywhere. Look back to these mementos when the energy is flagging, and you don't want to take that next step or do the next thing on the list.

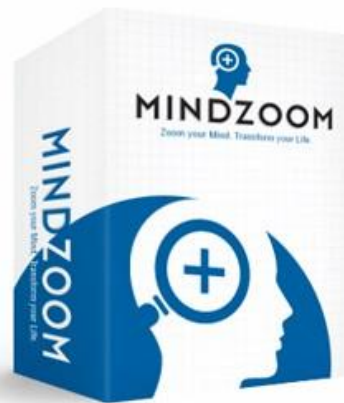
Someone once said that if you want it badly enough, there is nothing that can stop you. Conversely, if you don't want it badly enough, there's nothing that will make it happen. It's all about keeping your **"why"** to the front of your mind.

### **Don't generalize**

One of the biggest pitfalls to gaining more self-discipline is in not having a measurable goal of success. Deciding you want to **"be healthier"** is **not** measurable. Just getting up once in a while and taking a short walk will make you **"healthier"** but might not be enough to make you **"healthy."** That goal is not clearly defined, and you have no idea how close you are to achieving it. If your goal is to lose 20 pounds, you can measure the result, figure out how much you've lost and how far you have yet to go. You phrased the goal in a language you can understand.

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## Write it down

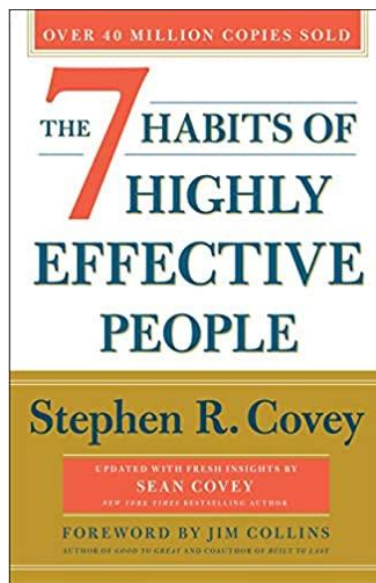
Start with describing the person you want to be. For example,:

- Do you want to be a person that jogs every day?
- Do you want to be the person that others come to with problems?
- Do you want to be more visible at work?

Write down, not your goal, but a description of the person you will become. Now think about where you are and outline the steps you need to go through to become that person.

Next, think about the habits your future self has that you don't.

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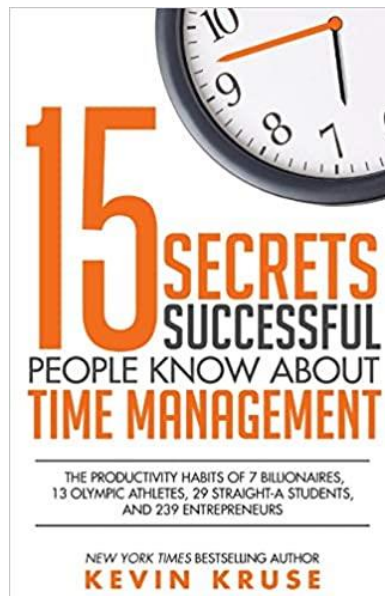
What mindset or outlook will your future self have that's different from the way you are now?

Work on that mindset today to get where you want to go easier and faster.

Lastly, map out a plan.

Choose what habits or traits you will need to have to become the person you want to be and write that down as well. That's where you'll focus your energies.

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### **Do some research**

Being aware of what obstacles you may encounter as you develop more self-discipline is an important part of success.

Once you know what stresses trigger you to overeat or smoke, for example, you can determine how you will handle the situation before it even occurs.

Make a list so you can make a plan that you can turn to when you need support to overcome temptation.

Now research what resources are available to you.

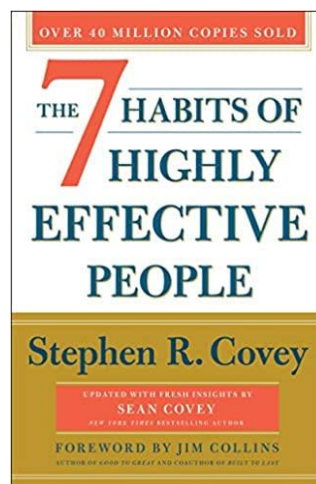
### **What's out there that can help you?**

Some apps can help with self-discipline for everything from diabetes control to drinking enough water during the day. There are groups for support.

List all the resources you can find and then add them into your plan for overcoming the obstacles you listed.

Then when you feel weak, like it would be easy to give into temptation, you already have a plan worked out to see you through.

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### **Remember you're not alone**

Find a group or someone who has been through this before. Don't be afraid to use them as an example, as your inspiration. Ask them how they got through the

tough parts. They might even be willing to assist you when you need accountability and support. Mentorship doesn't make self-discipline any less valid.

Self-discipline brings freedom, but it won't always be an easy path. Here are some tips on how you can stick to your self-disciplined routine so you can gain the freedom you desire.

### **Accountability**

If someone lives alone and their desire for self-discipline is strong, they may begin with the energy and enthusiasm required. But without accountability, no one will know when they stray - when that piece of chocolate gets eaten or that bottle of wine is drunk.

But they would know. So, the first step in accountability is self-accountability, being able to admit to straying off the desired path. That also means being able to correct yourself, to find a way to get back on the path and either find a way to discipline yourself or forgive yourself for not being perfect.

It's easier and more binding when you are accountable to others. Having a sponsor is a large part of what makes many programs centered around addiction recovery work. Having someone you are responsible for answering to will go a long way toward helping keep you on the path.

**As a side note:** You will achieve the most effective and efficient results when you are both self-accountable and have an accountability partner.

### **Penalties and Rewards**

If you've ever had to train a dog, you know that the best way to house train them is to be angry and loud when finding a yellow puddle and to be cheerful and excited when he asks to go outside to use the grass. Rewards and penalties are the best and most efficient way of learning something, especially something that goes against the natural inclination to have immediate gratification.



For example, having snacked in the afternoon when the diet you're on says "no" might mean that there is no dessert tonight after dinner. On the other hand, not snacking during the day merits a reward of dessert later. That is how you train your brain and your body to a new process.

### **Remind yourself how you got here**

If you lack self-discipline, remind yourself that you're trying to improve this part of your life because you no longer find your current life acceptable. The way things have turned out isn't where you want to be. You are not the person you want to be.

Ask yourself what kind of person you want to become. There's not usually a huge change required to be that person. More often than not, you'll be focusing on a certain part of your life, a change in health management or a certain aspect of your job or certain parts of your interactions with others.

### **What *exactly* do you want to change?**

In what part of your life do you not have the self-discipline you need? Where are your current strengths and where are your current weaknesses?

And maybe you don't need to change completely, but incrementally.

- If so, what are your goals?
- What are you willing to accept from your current way of doing things?
- How much of where you are now is okay?

Most importantly, ask yourself what you refuse to keep:

- What parts of your current life are you adamantly not willing to continue?
- How resolved are you to affect the change?

- What will you do when you go back to the old patterns of behavior?

Dig deep!

If you can start the change with a solid commitment, then you're much more likely to continue when things get difficult.

### **You have someone to beat**

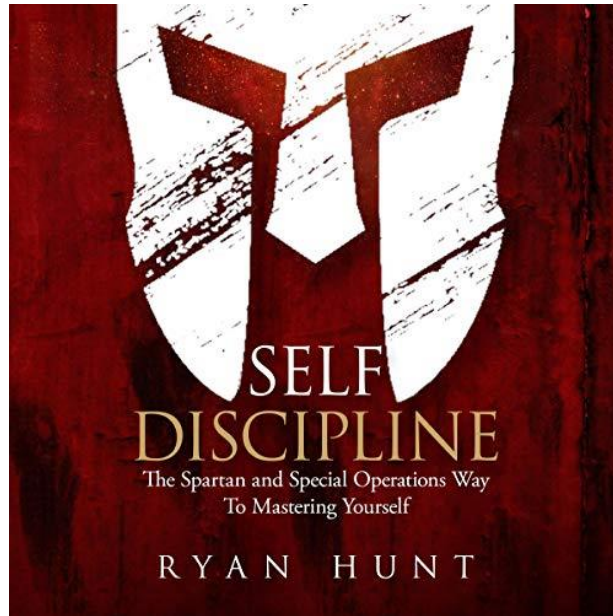
No matter your goal, there is one person you find you want to do better than - Yourself. For example, many people who quit smoking and have tried many times. Occasionally, they can go for extended periods by going "**cold-turkey**," or they have whittled the number of cigarettes down to only a few each day. But, you need to beat yourself. If you've gone two days before without smoking, then you need to shoot for three.

You are your fiercest and **only** competition. While it is often helpful to join with someone else and have a friend go through these tough times together, you rely on them more for support and inspiration, rather than competition. You're the one with the record you need to beat. Strive to do just a little bit better than your old record and remember to reward yourself when you match and beat the last record.

You can do this. It's a matter of training your brain to become the person you want to be. Like housetraining a puppy, it takes a little time and a lot of patience. But once you strengthen your self-discipline muscle, you'll be able to apply it to anything in your life.

Now *that* is freedom!

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