TRAINER NOTE

This exercise is focused on the inner game of self-management, a core factor in leading your life with self-respect, centeredness, control, and with a reputation of integrity.

With self-discipline you accelerate your ability to control the direction and execution of your goals and dreams. There will always be circumstances and situations to challenge you, but you are the centerpiece of everything that goes on in your life. You may not be able to control everything around you, but you can control yourself and the things within you.

The serenity prayer says, “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”. That quote is appropriate in that the most fundamental thing you can change is your inner self. It is where you have the most leverage.

In the midst of challenging situations (such as a relationship disagreement), or a profound emotional disruption (like the death of a loved one), or ongoing daily annoyances (such as an overly busy work schedule), it is important that you use your own ability to be centered and steady on your mission.

“The first and best victory is to conquer yourself”. It is the gateway to excellence, professionalism, and success. It requires thinking through priorities and making certain sacrifices. Anyone who does what he must do only when he is in the mood or when it’s convenient is not going to be successful. In order to stay on plan and on point you get to sacrifice convenience for the higher priority of fulfilling your dreams.

Self-discipline cannot be a one-time event. It has to become a lifestyle. As another notable philosopher often says, “You must do it until it becomes embodied”. Once it becomes part of you, it is natural to the way in which you operate as a person in life.
The inner game of self-discipline requires you to also look in the mirror at your stories and excuses, and dismiss blame of others and be accountable for your own experiences, actions, and results. It even demands that you stop the story that you cannot be self-disciplined. This will give you more inner strength and confidence, and allows you to go to the next level of your success.

Self-discipline is the act of regulating your own habits and practices. One of the habits you might consider is to interrupt your self-talk, especially when it is self-defeating and negative. Otherwise you delve into the realm of self-pity instead of self-discipline. Rather than focusing on negative self-talk, focus on the result you want and the benefits it would bring.

Reward yourself when you have exercised self-discipline and it will increase. For instance, if you like to goof-off instead of getting on with what must be done, withhold rewards and celebrations until the work is done. In other words, “give yourself desserts only after you have eaten your vegetables”. This habit or practice will help you develop focus, which will lead to greater accomplishments.

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR SELF-DISCIPLINE

• **Sort out your Priorities.** Think about what matters to you. Sort out a few areas of your life that are most important, and write them down, along with the disciplines you would need to develop to grow and improve in those areas. Do the disciplines until they become embodied practices.

• **Focus on the Value.** Eliminate all the reasons you cannot be or do something that matters to you and, instead, write down all the reasons why it would benefit you to discipline yourself to achieve your priorities. Keep these written values posted in a nearby place so they remind you to keep going and keep growing.

• **Don’t Make Excuses – Get Accountable.** When you find yourself making excuses for why you cannot be or do what matters to you, come up with a bigger and better solution to over come it. Operate form “Failure is not an option”.

• **Keep Your Eye on the Prize — Stay Focused on Results.** Manage your mind, to manage your energy. Energy flows where the mind goes. Anytime you concentrate on the difficulty of the work, instead of its results or rewards, you are likely to become discouraged. If you dwell on it too long, you’ll develop self-pity instead of self-discipline.
• Celebrate Your Success — Reward your Efforts.
Stay focused on the end results, and reward yourself after your tasks are done, not before. “If you lack self-discipline, you may be in the habit of having dessert before eating your vegetables.”

There are numerous ways to develop and embody the practices that can lead to greater self-discipline and accomplishment. We have given you a few key ways to start, and to create them as a lifestyle. Now we will do an exercise where you may learn even more to add to your repertoire from your peers.

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EXERCISE

First, the trainer tells the participants that they are going to look into areas of their life where they can develop more self-discipline so they can accomplish more of their dreams. Regenerate the conversation on the value of self-discipline and bring it alive. You might want to give some general examples and personal examples of how self-discipline has benefitted you over the years and how it works in your life today.

The first part of the exercise is to be done alone and the next part is to be done in Triads (3 persons).

Set up the training space with a reflective ambiance. Moderately soft music in the background might enhance the clarity and focus.

Each individual is to sit alone in silence and write for 15-20 minutes on the five suggestions below. (Invite everyone to be thorough and act as if they are creating their own future).

**Instruction:** First, get everyone centered. Tell them to sit upright with a relaxed straight spine, feet on the floor, and hands relaxed on lap. Tell them to close their eyes; then breathe in on the count of 5 through nose and filling stomach and chest with new air; hold for 5 seconds; and then release on the count of five through the mouth with lips slightly open. Tell them to repeat this process for at least 5 times. After the breathing-centering process tell them to open their eyes and get ready for the writing exercise. Tell them to write their responses to the following suggestions:
1. Identify the top three areas of life that are most important to you.

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2. Write down the disciplines that you must develop to keep growing and improving in those areas

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3. Write down the benefits for practicing the disciplines you just listed.

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4. Write down the main reasons why you might not be able to follow through with your disciplines.

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5. Dismiss the reasons you wrote for not following through on the disciplines as excuses and stories. Then write down Solutions to overcoming those reasons.

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Now form Partners or Triads (3 persons).

- One person takes a turn for 2 minutes, and shares what they wrote.
- The other two persons asks clarifying questions about what was shared, with the intention of clarifying areas where self-discipline can be enhanced for the sharer.
- For 3 minutes, the other two persons share new ideas that may support the sharer to be more self-disciplined.
• Then the speaker takes 2 minutes to write down any new ideas they will commit to put into practice. The other listeners are to also write down the suggestions shared with the speaker (just in case the speaker could not write everything down that was given to them). Afterwards, the other two persons pass their notes on to the sharer.

Repeat the above four steps for each group member. After all partners have shared and give the notes to the speakers, give the groups a few minutes to debrief by sharing what opened up for them and what’s next. And then give them a chance to acknowledge each other for their participation and contribution.

WRAP UP

Wrap up on Self-Discipline and encourage people to do the Life Quests on Responsibility.

Finally: Tell members to be sure to post their results, questions, issues, concerns, recommendations, etc. for their peers on the private Facebook Group in the Heroes Hub. And comment on other members’ posts. Activate and Enliven the online Heroes community.