



A lot of the most successful people we know share a common characteristic – they are disciplined. Whether they prevent or stop themselves from speaking unwisely, or doing something potentially embarrassing – or – even more importantly, discipline themselves to do what they need to do when they need to do it, disciplined people experience less regret and accomplish what they set their minds to do.



# What is Discipline?

*Choosing behaviors to help  
me reach my goals.*

CHARACTER  
**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

Discipline takes practice. But the good news is, the more you practice discipline, the easier it becomes. When someone says something that causes you to react and you can manage to keep control over your emotions and thoughtfully respond rather than blurting out your first impulsive words, it helps you develop the strength to do the same the next time. Each time you control your reaction or motivate yourself to do what you need to do, you become stronger and more intentional in your behavior. Instead of being ruled by your emotions, you develop the ability to make wise choices.

**Opposite:** reactionary, out of control, unstable, unwise, agitated, rash

**Related Concepts:** self-control, being intentional, wisdom, self-motivation, thoughtfulness, dignity, constraint, balance, reserved, stability

**Summary:** Having control over your actions and reactions.



*“With self-discipline most anything  
is possible.”*

—Theodore Roosevelt

CHARACTER  
**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

**Theodore Roosevelt** (October 27, 1858 – January 6, 1919), was an American statesman, author, explorer, soldier, naturalist, and reformer who served as the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States from 1901 to 1909. As a leader of the Republican Party during this time, he became a driving force for the Progressive Era in the United States in the early 20th century. A war hero and dedicated naturalist, one of his most lasting contributions to the American people was the creation of the National Park system (Wikipedia).

**Other Discipline Quotes:**

“We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.” - Jesse Owens

“If you set goals for yourself, and you’re like a lot of other people, you probably realize it’s not that your goals are physically impossible that’s keeping you from achieving them; it’s that you lack the self-discipline to stick to them. It’s physically possible to lose weight. It’s physically possible to exercise more.” - Daniel Goldstein

“Respect your efforts, respect yourself. Self-respect leads to self-discipline. When you have both firmly under your belt, that’s real power.” - Clint Eastwood

“By constant self-discipline and self-control you can develop greatness of character.” - Grenville Kleiser

“Everybody starts at the top, and then has the problem of staying there. Lasting accomplishment, however, is still achieved through a long, slow climb and self-discipline.” - Helen Hayes

“With self-discipline most anything is possible.” - Theodore Roosevelt

“I think self-discipline is something, it’s like a muscle. The more you exercise it, the stronger it gets.” - Daniel Goldstein

“Self-discipline is an act of cultivation. It requires you to connect today’s actions to tomorrow’s results. There’s a season for sowing a season for reaping. Self-discipline helps you know which is which.” - Gary Ryan Blair

“In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves... self-discipline with all of them came first.” - Harry S Truman

“Long-term, we must begin to build our internal strengths. It isn’t just skills like computer technology. It’s the old-fashioned basics of self-reliance, self-motivation, self-reinforcement, self-discipline, self-command.” - Steven Pressfield

“Instilling a sense of self-discipline and focus when the kids are younger makes it so much easier by the time they get into high school.” - Amy Chua

“The only discipline that lasts is self-discipline.” - Bum Phillips



# 1. Pause and Think Before You Act

Give yourself time to take control  
of your thoughts.

CHARACTER  
**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

Giving yourself time is important in order to have control over your responses. When confronted with a situation, take a moment and think through what is happening and consider possibilities. When you have had sufficient time, then decide on your response. You will be more in control and more intentional in your reaction.



## 2. Control Your Emotions

Rather than letting your emotions rule, decide for yourself how you will respond.

CHARACTER  
**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

Emotions can be very powerful. Sometimes we let them determine our reactions and responses. However, you are the one who decides how you will feel about a situation and how you will react. Identify what is causing you to experience strong emotion – by doing this, you will be able to respond in a more rational manner.



### 3. Build Healthy Habits

Developing discipline takes practice.

CHARACTER  
**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

Just like working out helps you develop muscle strength, practicing self-discipline makes taking control of your emotions, responses, thoughts, and actions easier over time. Being a disciplined person is more than just controlling responses, it is also having the mental strength to do things you may not feel like doing at the moment. Whether it is waking up early to exercise or pushing through on a task until completion, the disciplined person has gradually built, over time, the habit of doing what needs to be done.

# Discussion Starters

1. What are some things or comments that upset you? What is typically your first reaction?
2. What are some things you know you should do but you would rather not do? How can you motivate yourself?
3. What are some things you can do to help yourself calm down?

## Additional Discipline Discussion Starters:

Think about a time when something was upsetting. What are some things you can look for in your emotions or physical state that might indicate you need to take a step back?

In a recent time when you were faced with a decision, how did you come up with options to choose from? Did you ask for advice? Did you think through the consequences? Who are some of the people you trust that you can ask for help deciding on a course of action?

How can you tell when you are becoming emotionally upset?

Can you think of a time when you made a hasty decision because you were upset? What happened? What was the outcome?

How can calming your emotions help you think more clearly and make a better decision?

What are some ways you can motivate yourself to do something you need to do but you may not want to do?

Sometimes when you really don't want to do something, you need an accountability partner – someone who will help you fulfill your responsibilities. Who is someone you might be able to ask to be your accountability partner? If someone asks you to help them in this way, what are some things you can say to encourage them?

Think of something you used to not want to do but now doing it is routine (jogging, working out, making healthy food choices). What are some things you did to build better habits?

CHARACTER<sup>1</sup>  
**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

© 2016 Strata Leadership  
[www.strataleadership.com](http://www.strataleadership.com) | 877.357.0001

Thank you for making your workplace and community a great place to be!