

# Willpower

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## **DEFINITION**

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines willpower as “the strength of will to carry out one’s decisions, wishes, or plans.” The decisions, wishes and plans are all in the form of thoughts in our brain.

## **HOW THOUGHTS GOVERN WILLPOWER OR THE LACK OF IT**

Before you do anything, even impulsively you think about it first. If you keep thinking about doing something, you will eventually do it. So if you keep thinking about wanting to learn to play the piano, you will eventually find a way to accomplish that. If you think about dropping out of school, you will eventually do that. If you think about eating healthy, you will find ways to learn about it and do it. And if you think about eating chocolate or pizza, you will do that.

Thinking definitely drives our actions. When you think of doing something, your brain starts thinking of ways to accomplish it, or excuses why you should or should not do it. It is almost as if you were preparing to defend your decision to your loved ones or in open court. Actually, you are talking to yourself.

If willpower is the determination or strength of will to carry out one’s thoughts, then all we have to do is to make sure that we have the right thoughts in our mind, and the determination will take care of itself.

## **THOUGHT AND ACTION REPETITION LEADS TO HABITS**

As you go through life, you repeat some thoughts and actions until they become unconscious habits. Some of those are beneficial, such as “exercise a little each day,” and some are not, such as “I have to have some cocaine.” Some people will tell themselves they “have to eat vegetables” and others tell themselves, “I have to have some chocolate” or “I have to have a cigarette”.

The bottom line is, if you keep telling yourself something, you will sell yourself on the idea. When you feel your willpower is strong, you will be telling yourself to do the things you decided to do. When you feel it weakening, you will notice that you dropped back to your old thinking habits.

To change your thinking patterns or habits, you simply pay attention to what you are thinking and change it! It is not so hard, I will teach you how.

## **BREAKING THE BAD THINKING HABITS BY INTRODUCING COMPETING THOUGHTS**

When you attempt to stop eating certain things because they have no nutritional value you will find your imagination flooded with thoughts of those food items and how good they taste. Your mouth will water as you think of them. Pretty soon, you will find yourself making excuses about why it's good for you to have this item. If you are shopping, it's for the kids, the people at the office, or in case company comes. To stop this process, you simply introduce competing thoughts – "I hate cookies, I hate donuts, I hate ice-cream, and I hate chips" several times until it drowns out all the old thoughts. Not to worry, you will not hate those foods; you are simply trying to control your thinking to stop becoming a slave to those old thoughts which are responsible for you overeating on those items. Actually, you will become indifferent to those items. As you practice the competing thoughts, you will be able to go through the cookie aisle of the market and look at the packaging, as colorful bags without the old thoughts.

When you attempt to stop drinking alcohol, because drinking got you into bad trouble, you will find your imagination being flooded with memories of good times involving alcohol, you will toss and turn, unable to sleep, while your mind calculates how much money you have and where the nearest liquor store is. Or you will find yourself in the liquor aisle when you were there to shop for steak. To stop this undesired thinking you introduce a competing thought – "I hate alcohol". Repeat this to yourself several times, until you think about something else. If you find yourself daydreaming about situations related to alcohol or face to face with it, repeat the competing thought "I hate alcohol" several times. Not to worry, you will not develop a hatred of alcohol – just an indifference to it, a lack of interest. It will stop being the focus of your thoughts and desires – the habit will be broken.

You would use the competing thought method to stop smoking. When you catch yourself thinking about cigarettes, you introduce the thought "I hate cigarettes" several times, until you start thinking about something else.

**USE COMPETING THOUGHTS AND WILLPOWER WILL BE YOURS TO KEEP**

Failure of willpower is nothing more than failure to clean up your thinking and getting yourself on the right track. Just remember, thinking leads to action, if you want to be in charge of your actions all you have to do is be in charge of your thinking.