



PYT Weekly Training & Support

Lesson #36 **Sharpening Your Willpower**

by Jim Katsoulis

Welcome to this week's lesson, and I want to talk about sharpening your willpower. Now, you've probably heard me in a lot of lessons and in a lot of the teaching materials I've put out there that I don't believe in willpower.

But what I'm talking about, specifically, is that relying on willpower exclusively to get you to change your body is a very poor strategy because willpower is primarily a conscious activity which means that we need to be focused, we need to be aware, and we need to have energy in order to exert it, and in order to use it.

And what we're always looking to do is make our new behaviors unconscious so that we automatically and naturally want to eat better foods and exercise. But, at the same time, we do want to use willpower. We want to use everything at our disposal.

And so, what I want to talk about today is how to use willpower more effectively and how to enhance it in yourself because, again, you want to think of it almost as a muscle that the more you work it out, the more powerful, the bigger and the stronger it becomes.

And so, we want to use willpower as one more way to get what we want and to get ourselves to do the behaviors that are going to get us the results that we're looking for.

So, the easiest way to do this is ... there's a practice I use which is to use my willpower throughout the day but I'm not using it on huge things. Let me explain what I mean. Oftentimes, people use willpower for big events. So, what I mean by that is they could go to a restaurant, maybe their favorite restaurant, and they say, "Okay, I'm not going to order my favorite dish." This is a monumental task because you really want that food and you're trying to use this willpower to stop you, and maybe it works that time.

But then, the next day, you try it and use it to get yourself to eat well and you find it's depleted. So, again, if you use the muscle metaphor here, if, all of a sudden, you went into a gym and you try lifting the biggest weights, you might not be able to do it. You might be able to lift them one time and that's it, but then you've depleted your energy.

So, this is how you want to think about willpower; it's a muscle that you're building and it's something that you can deplete very quickly. So, again, that's why we want to use the unconscious changes ... that's where we want to keep our focus.

So the way to build up the willpower is to change little things in your day. You pick little things. We start small. Just like with exercise, you start with the smaller weights and work your way up. We want to think of willpower as the same thing. It's not an all or nothing.

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So, [inaudible] **02:32** make this mistake where they say, "I've not willpower." Of course, you have willpower, and you can enhance it. It's not like you were born with two arms and that's what you have. Willpower is something that you can influence and grow.

And so, one of easiest ways to do this is to start with things that aren't a big deal; you could, for example, get yourself to brush your teeth with your other hand. You won't want to do it. Actually, it will help you realize the difference unconscious and conscious behaviors.

Unconsciously, you don't want to brush your teeth with the other hand because it feels weird and it takes more energy. It feels a little awkward and unusual. And so, you're used to just doing it with the hand that you normally do it with.

But if you use your willpower in that moment to get yourself to do something that's not a huge deal but it is a little bit of effort, then, again, you're going to begin to strengthen your will. You're going to get used to that feeling of "that's what I said I was going to do and I did it."

See, that's what we want to start doing. We want to start building that up because, so often, people do the opposite. They tell themselves, "Oh, I told myself I was going to work out for two hours everyday for a year straight, and I didn't do it so I don't have any willpower." They make this ridiculous demand for themselves.

Let's start small with it. And it can, literally, be anything because all we're looking to do is just constantly reinforce this idea that you do have willpower and that you do have the ability to decide, make a choice, do it, and follow through with it.

And no matter how small it is, I promise you if you keep stacking all of these positive experience and successful experiences up, your willpower starts to feel stronger so that when you get to a restaurant, you say, "I'm not ordering that food; I don't want it," then you have more power. Remember, this is something that you can generate.

So, it can be literally anything that you do. You can tell yourself, "This normal I usually eat at, I'm going to sit in this chair." It's always changing the routines within your day because, again, don't look at the huge routines you need to change to get your new results. Don't say, "I have to eat this way" or "I have to exercise this way," these big, big changes.

Let's just look at the little changes because those big changes are just part of those little changes. They're just the accumulation of it.

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So, again, picking a different place to eat, watching TV in a different spot, going to bed a little bit earlier, going to bed a little bit later, anything that changes things up for you because, all of a sudden, it becomes a conscious activity.

Now, again, let me flip back for a second. If you think about brushing your teeth, when you usually do it, you won't have to think about anything. It's a total unconscious behavior. You just kind of do it, you're zoned out, and you're not even thinking about it. Sometimes, you finish and you feel, "Oh, I've got to brush my teeth" because it's so automatic.

Once you change it, all of a sudden, it becomes very conscious. It's kind of like the first time you drove a car. It's a very conscious thing. You're thinking about so many things all at once consciously.

So, this is going to increase your willpower, this ability to take on more conscious activity, and this is what's going to help you when you get into another situation where you say, "I'm going to go exercise. I'm going to go do this. I'm going to eat this way. I'm not going to eat that."

Now, the flipside is what we always want to do. When we go to a restaurant, we say, "I don't want to eat that. I'm not going to eat that." The willpower is nice but we'd also like to do a little bit of programming where we change the associations we have of that food.

So, remember, we're always using everything at our disposal and different things work better for different people. So, this is really always about a process of discovery and experimentation for what works for you.

Let's face it, if you can build up your willpower, then it's a very, very powerful tool to be able to use because if you can just make up your mind, that feeling of making up your mind and having it be set in stone, that's a muscle. And if you can build that up to the point where you say something and, all of a sudden, you have all these congruent beliefs within yourself that that's what you're going to do, and then you do it, it becomes very, very powerful. You can, literally, articulate exactly how you want your life to go.

It's never that cut and dry because we get into moods, we get low energy, high energy, frustrations, and all the rest of it, and that takes up our willpower energy. So, we need to also, again, focus on unconscious behavior but it's a very powerful thing to use.

So, I want you to start doing this. I want you to think about it. You want to make a note for yourself so you remind yourself to do this because you will forget if you don't because it's not part of your regular routine.

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So, make a note for yourself. Work on willpower – willpower exercises. And throughout your typical day, look at your patterns, look at your routine behaviors and just change them up a little bit, the littlest way; it doesn't matter.

Like I said, you're just stacking up successful changes and successful willpower behaviors. And I think you're going to be amazed at what ends up happening because it changes the internal dialogue in your head. It balances out the idea that you can't just say what you're going to do and do it. You say things all the time and you never do it. That's a lot of the tape people have going through in their minds and you want to change that so that you believe when you do something, that's what you do.

So, it's not about huge things. It's about little things that you're actually doing. "I'm going to do this," and you do it. "I'm going to do this," and you do it.

So, practice that, and I'll talk to you next week.

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