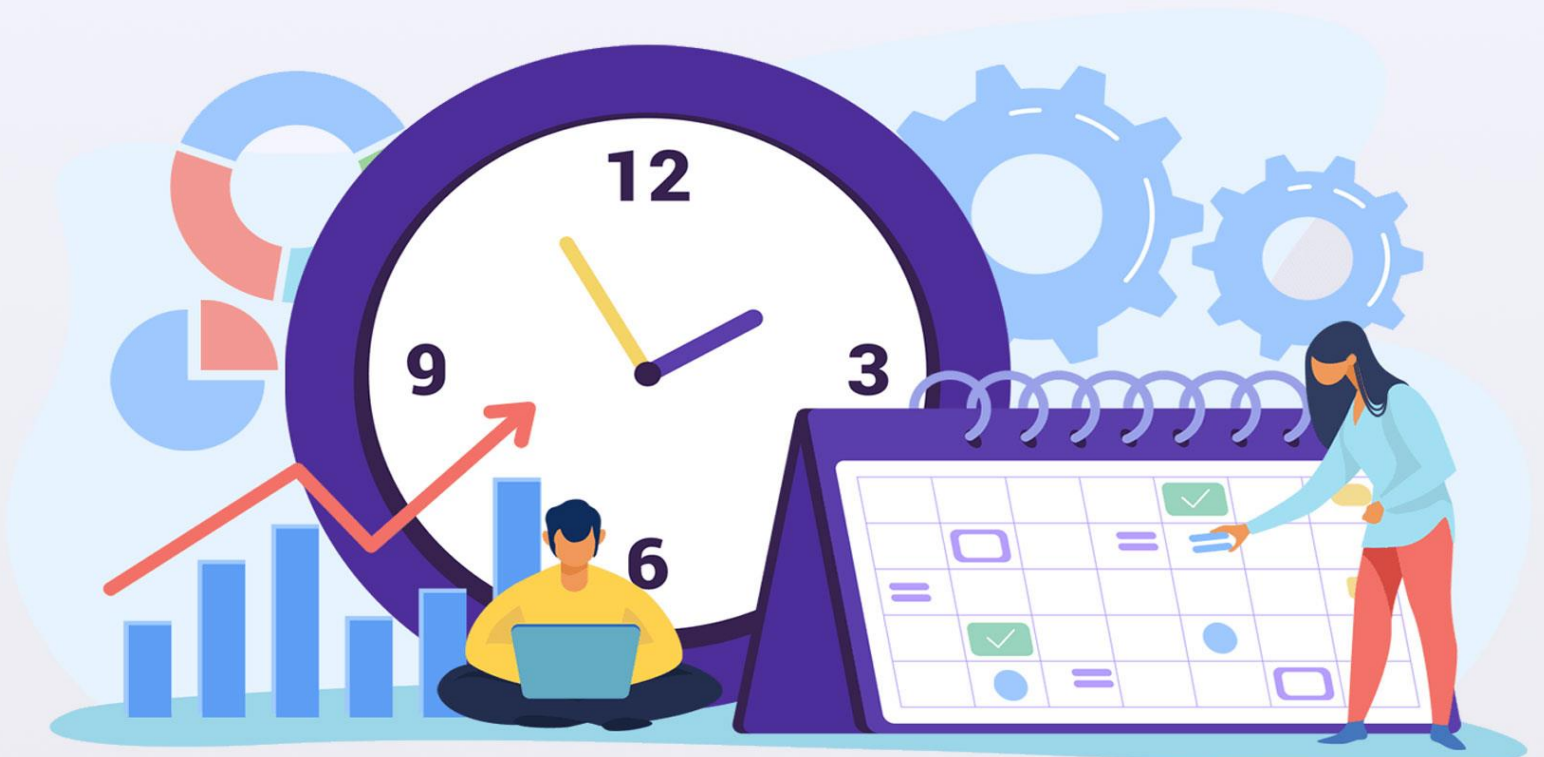


DISCIPLINE FROM DREAM TO REALITY

WHEN YOU HAVE FRIENDS WITH POOR DISCIPLINE



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Are you a leader or a follower? Can you measure the magnitude of your impact and say for sure that you are one of those whose presence can be felt in an environment versus them who watch from the terraces while things happen? That is the question you ought to ask yourself and answer ever so honestly when standing on the crossroads of what to do concerning your friends who lack discipline. You want to know whether to change them or to change them, what I mean is you may need either to change and get new friends or influence your current friends causing them to change their approach to life and their behavior. Knowing yourself is one of the most important ingredients necessary for your success in mastering self-discipline.

Do you do a good job making yourself heard among your associates or are you ever listening to them and keeping your beliefs and philosophies to yourself? Are you bold to disagree when something doesn't sit well with you? Do you find yourself abandoning some good virtues of yours when something you heard keeps ringing in your head causing you to doubt the necessity of these? When cornered to explain yourself are you calm and logical or do you erupt into an emotional wreck? These and many more questions and their answers will help you determine whether you are the head or the tail in your relationships.

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If you find that you are capable of influencing your companions with little or no hustle then go ahead and help them see the importance of self-discipline. Graciously let them in on your routines that establish and ensure your orderliness. Take them on this beautiful journey with you, you could even act as their mentor as you assure them that your door is always open as are your ears to them for assistance. If you are the sort of person that can stand his ground firm, this should prove not to be difficult.

If you however realize that you rank very low when it comes to influencing your friends then it may be a good idea for you to take steps back away from them. I know a Christian guy who desired to establish the habit of regularly attending church every week but was surrounded by people who not only didn't share his beliefs but would openly challenge and discourage him from exercising it himself. Time after time he recalled what they did and proclaimed that he would one day convince them to join him but the end-result was him growing faint in his faith, randomly missing church services until he stopped going altogether.

Knowing yourself takes some concentrated effort but the results are marvelous. Nothing beats the confidence of telling someone they are wrong in their assumptions about you instead of being tossed about by other people's opinions about you. When you can confidently state your strengths and even weaknesses you are miles ahead in your journey. Take time therefore to find yourself out, challenge your belief systems, and change your philosophy if need be. Once you know how strong your influence is then can you know exactly how to use it.

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The next important thing you need to be clear on is how far in your journey to self-discipline you are. A newly planted tree can easily be uprooted or destroyed by pests while a seasoned one stands a much better chance to survive. When you are starting, learning and unlearning things and still rising and falling trying to establish those good habits, it is better for you to focus on that and to keep away from ill-disciplined people as they can be like weeds suffocating your progress. In due time, after you have helped yourself, you can help them also.

While standing on an uplifted platform, try this with somebody of similar strength and built: with all your power, attempt to bring them up to you while they use their strength also to pull you down to their level. Even as you imagine this exercise you can already see how this will unfold. You will be pulled down as a result of one thing and that is gravity. It is a natural phenomenon that causes earthly bodies to be drawn towards the ground at all times unless extraordinarily huge forces are intelligently applied to them as is the case with airplanes. This explains why it proves much more difficult to influence and bring people up than it is to be brought down.

You love your friends and want the best for them, don't you? Well, it is much easier to serve them when you are your best so don't be afraid to lose them for a season just so you can work fully on yourself. Love yourself enough also to break friendships that aren't beneficial to you. Be free to outgrow some and make new ones according to where you need to get to.