



Module #5 of 10—*Short Version*

*UK Extension's*  
**Universe of**

# *Possibilities*<sup>™</sup>

**SKILLS FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND BLESSING OTHERS**

## *The Freedom of Self-Discipline*

**W**e often shy away from self-discipline, thinking that it takes the spontaneity and fun out of life. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is only through self-discipline that we can fully enjoy life, optimally express our creativity, and experience the satisfaction of unconditional love.

Like playing basketball or learning a foreign language, self-discipline involves drawing upon a set of skills. It takes effort and real-life practice to learn the skills and to continue exercising them so we don't lose our edge. Fortunately, life abounds with creative opportunities, both large and small, that allow us to practice and improve our self-management abilities. Be playful and courageous in building the muscles of self-discipline. Greet life's little challenges as a game in which you enjoy testing how well you can employ your growing skills of self-discipline.

To remain silent rather than strike out at another person or spread negative gossip; to follow through on your exercise and dietary goals; to stop rushing and overworking so that you can enjoy the moment; to devote yourself wholeheartedly to a process of spiritual enrichment; to put aside distractions and listen with complete respect, openness, and attention to a loved one or co-worker—such are the freedoms and pleasures afforded by self-discipline.

**Target of Life.** Look at the Target of Life symbol that appears at the upper left side of this page. Put yourself on the Target in the center of the heart. Notice that the heart of the Target is clear, unobstructed, full of light. From there, you see clearly and make choices that are good for you and those around you. You feel peaceful, energetic, creative. Your reflexes are sharp, your immune system strong. You stumble and fall less often, and you handle life's inevitable challenges with more confidence and skill. You are naturally more sensitive to others—more patient, generous, and understanding. The more deeply centered you are in the heart of the Target of Life, the more love you feel and share. You are at your best—physically, mentally, and spiritually.

However, when difficulties arise and things don't go your way, you're likely to be pulled off center into the darker areas of the Target. You say and do things you regret. Your immune system weakens and your productivity declines. You lose touch with what's really important to you. Unhealthy stress increases and your sensitivity toward others decreases. And the further away from the center you move, the worse it gets! You experience more heaviness and darkness, more fear and negativity. That's why it's so important to catch early signs of stress and to use all of your creativity to stay as centered as possible.



## 7 Core Principles



- 1 The skills of self-discipline are like muscles: If you exercise them intelligently, your self-management ability will grow steadily in strength and flexibility, always ready to serve your highest good and that of all others.
- 2 Building our muscles of self-control does demand effort and patience; but far from being happiness-killing drudgery, self-discipline is the doorway to true freedom, strength, creativity, service, love, and joy.
- 3 Self-discipline involves three key components: calmness, intuition, and willpower—the calmness required to hear our intuitive guidance and the strength of will necessary to follow through.
- 4 Practice being more inwardly calm; tune more deeply into your intuitive sense of insight and guidance; and enjoy gradually strengthening your willpower.
- 5 As appropriate, when you are inwardly prompted to do something or to stop doing something, act immediately.
- 6 Make it a game: See the little difficulties of life as events that test your self-discipline, and take pleasure in skillfully meeting challenges and learning from them.
- 7 Remember, the more centered you are on the Target of Life, the greater your well-being, the wiser your choices, and the more effective you are in everything you do.

**H**ere's the most important thing you need to remember about self-discipline: If you are reading this paragraph, if you get out of bed in the morning, if you've ever accomplished anything, you have successfully exercised self-discipline.

In other words, ***you already are a self-disciplined person!*** You've had at least some basic successes, and now you're like an athlete who is trying to take his or her talents to the next level. This publication will give you some tips for doing just that.

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*Self-discipline is when your conscience tells you to do something and you don't talk back.*

W.K. Hope

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***We're all in school; life is one great big course in self-discipline.*** In everything you think, say, and do, you are either strengthening or weakening your self-management skills. The inability to manage yourself results in lost opportunities and all kinds of problems. ***Self-discipline—the art of following your positive tendencies***—opens the door to achievement, enjoyment, and new possibilities. Approached in a creative manner, learning self-discipline is much less difficult and more pleasurable than most people realize.

### **THE LITTLE WAY OF SELF-DISCIPLINE**

Whether you are tackling a major world problem or you merely want to improve your eating habits, you may find "The Little Way of Self-Discipline" helpful.

It's based on several simple but effective guidelines:

- ◆ **Pay close attention to the little things that make such a big difference**—the little smile that means so much to your child, the little extra effort at the last minute that wins the big game, the little touch of creativity that makes your project shine.
- ◆ **Break large jobs into little tasks and take one small step at a time.** Can't tackle that big report right now? Why not start with the cover page and a draft of the introductory paragraph?
- ◆ **Remember that minutes are more important than hours.** With appreciation and concentration, spend each moment well. Little moments well spent can make a world of difference.
- ◆ **Don't waste time on insignificant matters.** Avoid spending time on things of little importance that, in the long run, have no bearing on what you value most. Use your precious time and energy wisely.
- ◆ **Say no to negative temptations as soon as they pop up.** If you even consider acting upon temptations, they will grow in strength and size and have more power over you. Instead, get into the habit of immediately saying yes to the positive promptings of your heart.

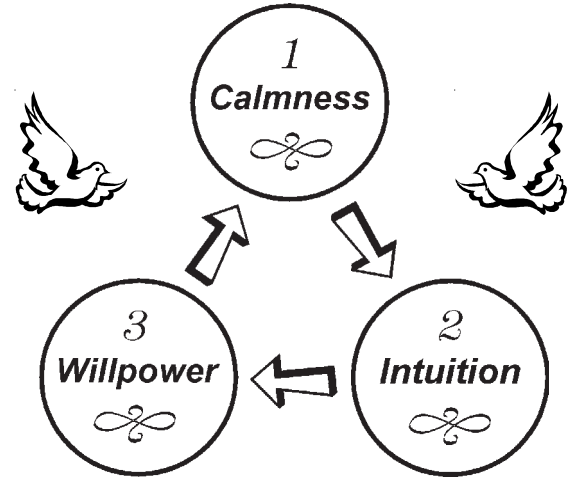
*Obstacles cannot crush me; every obstacle yields to stern resolve.*

Leonardo da Vinci

- ◆ **Realize that your little daily thoughts shape your self-discipline and your life.** Refuse to feed doubts and worries with your attention. Focus on the positive. If you really understood the creative power of your mind, you would avoid negative thoughts altogether.

### DON'T BE FOOLED

The Self-Discipline Process in the column to the right is very powerful. The more you understand it, apply it, and make it second nature, the more your skills of self-discipline will grow. Don't pass over this information too quickly or be fooled by its simplicity.



## Self-Discipline Process

**Calmness** is feeling peaceful inside. **Intuition** is the inner guidance that shows you what is best. **Willpower** is the strength to make things happen. Self-Discipline is as simple as 1, 2, 3.

1. *Be calm within.*
2. *Pay attention to your intuitive guidance.*
3. *Use your abundant willpower to follow through on what you are inspired to do.*

**The Self-Discipline Process is like breathing; it should be happening all the time.**

**Calmness:** Whether you are playing your favorite sport, caring for a loved one, or dealing with a major problem at work, if you are calm within, you'll feel better and be far more effective. Make inner peace a constant habit. **Intuition:** When you are unruffled and at peace, it's so much easier to sense those all-important intuitive signals arising from your body, mind, and spirit. Strive to be always receptive to your intuition's wise guidance. **Willpower:** Trust your intuitive signals and immediately act on them, knowing that you have enormous untapped strength within you. Through regular practice, keep your muscles of willpower in tip-top shape so that you are always ready to back up your inner knowing with skillful action.

*We ask for strength and life gives us difficulties, which make us strong.*

Native American saying

## MORE SELF-DISCIPLINE TIPS

**Do it now.** As soon as you realize it's time to get up, to be quiet, or to begin that project, do it! Don't delay. It's when you postpone action and allow your mind to start rationalizing that your will is weakened and trouble sets in.

**Challenge yourself.** Walk an extra mile. Sit next to that person who in the past has threatened you or "gotten on your nerves." Use everyday situations to boost your skills of self-discipline.

**Celebrate your strengths.** Write down some of the many ways in which you already are self-disciplined. Then make a list of all your positive qualities, your special talents, and compliments that people have paid you. A good friend can help you identify your strong points.

**Find a coach.** Invite someone you respect to be your personal coach—a person who will listen to the desires of your heart, assist you in setting tangible goals, challenge you to overcome your weaknesses, and provide encouragement and guidance to keep you on course. A reliable, upbeat friend may be an ideal coach, or you may wish to hire a trained professional.

**Create your own mental movies.** Using all your senses, see and feel yourself achieving your goals. If there's something you want, mentally see it repeatedly in vivid color, right in front of you. If there's a habit you want to get rid of, visualize it in a shabby gray color and see it quickly moving away from you, getting smaller and smaller until it completely disappears. Behold in your mind's eye only what you truly believe in and love.

**Put others first.** Without neglecting yourself, look for opportunities to put others' needs and interests first. Inconspicuously give the best to someone else; don't take the best seat or the largest slice; let the driver behind you have the most convenient parking place. This is an excellent way to bless others while building your muscles of self-discipline.

**Learn from outstanding examples of self-discipline.** Listen to and watch disciplined people whom you admire. Seek out new heroes—great leaders, visionaries, teachers, saints, and mature athletes. Zero in on their secrets of success and make them your own. Always be ready to admire and learn from the positive traits of those around you.



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## 10 Educational Modules

*UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities™: Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others* is an educational series containing 10 modules. Each module is accompanied by a Macromedia Flash® movie, a PowerPoint® presentation, and other teaching tools. All these resources, along with a Facilitator's Guide, are available free-of-charge in camera-ready format at the following website: [www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities](http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities).

1. **Your Vision Map**
2. **Making the Growth Choice**
3. **The Way of Peace**
4. **Heart Intelligence**
5. **The Freedom of Self-Discipline**



6. **Embracing This Present Moment**
7. **Accepting and Loving Your Body**
8. **Healthy Relationships**
9. **Unleashing Your Creativity**
10. **Gifts of Gratitude and Blessing**