Applaud your willpower

One powerful way to achieve self-discipline and build willpower is to reward yourself.

Pg 03

PRECIOUS HOURS

Time management tips to make the most out of the limited time you have.

Pg 05

RELENTLESS PURSUIT

From physics to photography, commercial photographer Ming Thein shares his journey.

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SUIT UP

Searching for wardrobe tips for the corporate world? Take some cues from Suits.

Pg 09

SHORTCUTS SHORT-CHANGE

EMBRACE THE VALUE OF TIME TO REACH YOUR PEAK

PAGES 6-7


LILY SAYS

DON'T WAIT TO FEEL IT

WE’re well into 2014 now. Resolutions and goal-setting aside (I hope our previous two issues helped you to articulate your goals), let’s talk about self-discipline.

self-discipline is defined as “the ability to control one’s feelings and overcome one’s weaknesses” and “the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon it”.

Essentially, it’s about leading your emotions and not letting them lead you. Why is it so hard? It’s because our feelings have such a loud voice. At times, they offer us necessary signals, such as fatigue as a sign to slow down.

Other times, in scenarios where we know it’s right and necessary to push forward, feelings can tell us to back down, retreat in fear, or just be indifferent.

Feelings are horrible advisers, and if we fall into the trap of only doing what feels good, we won’t be able to go very far.

Think about some leaders you admire and I’ll venture to say self-discipline is one characteristic that they work hard on. They go beyond what is “easy” and “comfortable” in order to make decisions that command the respect of those they lead.

So while we’re still in the first month of 2014, why not let our pullout this week lead you on a journey of self-reflection.

Consider how self-disciplined you are. Think about how you perceive and use time, and read on for further insights on how our pullout this week lead you on a journey of self-reflection.

WHERE are you right now in your journey of self-discipline?

TUNE IN

Want practical tips for success on your way home from work? We’re on CAPITAL FM 88.9FM in the Klang Valley every Tuesday from 6pm to 7pm.

QUOTES:

George Washington

“Nothing can be more hurtful to the service, than the neglect of discipline; for that discipline, more than any other, is the true bond of the service, than the neglect of discipline.”

Robert Kiyosaki

“Confidence comes from discipline and training.”

Clint Eastwood

“It takes tremendous discipline to control the influence, the power you have over other people’s lives.”

TRY THIS!

BUILDING DISCIPLINE
ONE STEP AT A TIME

WHAT is self-discipline? It’s about acting rationally rather than following your feelings at any given time. It is about being methodical in the way you do things, and having a plan that you follow.

Sometimes, undoubtedly, it’s good to let go and follow your gut feeling. Many great achievements have been attained by people who did just that.

However, discipline can help us to a large extent, especially when we have to take on long-term projects that are bound to have their ups and downs and not keep our enthusiasm to the seventeenth heaven all the time.

Building discipline is a process, really. No one can be disciplined from the outset, and it requires hard decisions and sacrifices at times.

1. SELF-KNOWLEDGE

And the first step to that is self-knowledge. Why? Well, you first have to decide on your values and goals. What is important to you? What do you need to do to live life according to your values and pursue the goals you have set?

Writing a mission statement may help. It keeps you accountable to your values and makes it easier for you to stick to the plan.

Self-reflection and introspection are crucial, in order to set the foundation, and the rationale of having discipline.

If you catch yourself being undisciplined – sleeping late, procrastinating, avoiding the gym, or avoiding tackling a problem at work, you are one step closer to correcting the problem.

After all, if you don’t realise you are doing something wrong, you will not be able to correct it.

Discipline takes time, and eventually this awareness will lead you to tackling the situation before you start doing something “wrong” – like eating that cake or not going for a run.

2. CONSCIOUS AWARENESS

The next step would have to be conscious awareness. Being aware of what you do and what you don’t – when you are disciplined and when you are not, is a crucial component of building your discipline.

If you know what you are doing wrong, you will be able to correct it.

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Building discipline is a process, really. No one can be disciplined from the outset, and it requires hard decisions and sacrifices at times.

3. COMMITMENT

Commitment to self-discipline is also another important component. You need to make a commitment, and find a way to keep yourself accountable to this – for some, it may mean involving others and sharing your plans with them.

The most effective way, however, is to find a way to really commit yourself, and measure your progress along the way.

Measuring the progress will give you data that cannot be questioned, and indicate how well you are actually doing.

Finally, courage and internal coaching will ensure you stay sane, and you follow through – talk to yourself and stay motivated, and dare to go the distance. Rome was not built in a day – so be patient, and you will eventually master the power of a disciplined you.

For advertising and advertorials, contact ian.lee@leaderonomics.com - 016 974 7087

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

Until next week. Best wishes,

Lily Cheah

myStarjob.com, Saturday 18 January 2014
By ROSHAN THIRAN

Last week I read about one of the secrets of billionaire Warren Buffett’s success. He claims his success is that he “just sits in the office and reads all day.”

In fact, Buffett estimates that about 80% of his working hours are spent reading. Buffett believes his brilliance is a direct result of reading and once urged someone to “read 500 pages like this every day. That’s how knowledge builds up, like compound interest.”

As I was sharing this piece of Buffett’s advice to a few of my friends, they asked me how many books I read a week.

I started thinking about it and answered “about two to three books a week.” The next question posed was “how do you find time to read?”

I quickly answered “discipline.” You just have to make time and discipline yourself to do it. But as I further pondered I realised that discipline required giving up many things.

Before we start to do something, we need to stop doing something else. If you want to get healthy, it’s a good idea to stop eating fatty foods before you start exercising.

Discipline is as much about stopping as it is about doing. For me, to ensure I read a few books a week, I needed to stop watching TV, stop playing computer games and wasting time on unproductive activities.

Discipline is a concept everyone is aware of, but few truly understand. The most successful people in life exert discipline on a daily basis.

It is critical to every living being and without it, the world around us would be in disarray.

Restrain is a big part of discipline. Not giving into something you want is a sign of strength.

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Right after the 2012 Olympics, I met up with Datuk Lee Chong Wei and Pandelela Riong, the medal winners from Malaysia at the London Games.

As they spoke of their journey to greatness, there were constant references to sacrifice, hard work and discipline.

In fact, the “discipline” they describe is really mental toughness. Mental toughness is the key to pushing yourself hard in practice and forcing yourself to go through agonising training sessions.

A key component of mental toughness is delayed gratification. Delayed gratification is the ability to suspend gain now to gain a bigger and better gratification for sacrifice.

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Tests conducted amongst pre-schoolers more than 40 years ago give us some insights into the power of delayed gratification.

In the late 1960s, researcher Walter Mischel tested the willpower of hundreds of four-year-olds by placing them in an empty room with a tasty marshmallow.

They were given an option to eat the “treat” immediately or wait 15 minutes and they would get two special “treats” instead of one.

Some children said they would wait but many didn’t even last a few minutes. The moment the researcher left the room, they gobbled their marshmallows.

The four-year-olds that actually managed to last 15 minutes and get two “treats” distracted themselves from the treat by focusing on something else.

What was most interesting about the test was the follow-up studies conducted years later.

They found that the four-year-olds that were good at delayed gratification were much more successful in life, including having better academic results with numerous health and behavioural benefits.

Discipline requires us to trade instant gratification for sacrifice and discipline to achieve success.

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment, and instant gratification derails this bridge.

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THE TURTLE AND THE HARE SEQUEL

By CINDY YAP
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

The fable of “the Tortoise and the Hare” has been read and re-read to my six-year-old son with the typical ending being “slow and steady, wins the race.”

Recently however, my son asked why his team didn’t win the spoon-and-egg race despite the lesson being that the hardworking, consistent and steady-paced always emerge champions.

How did the Tortoise triumph over the Hare despite circumstances not being in his favour? It wasn’t the slowness that won him the race. It was diligence, discipline, patience and perseverance to make up for limited physique, lack of skills and speed.

While pondering further why “slow and steady” may not accurately exemplify the best approach to attaining our goals, I came across a lengthier version of this age-old tale which offered an alternate ending with a whole new perspective.

Here is the continuation to the story. Part two takes place after the Tortoise’s win. Hare does some thinking to understand why he lost.

He concludes that he lost because of several things: over-confidence, carelessness, complacency, distraction and being lazy.

Hare then challenges Tortoise to another race. This time, Hare runs relentlessly without stopping from start to finish and wins.

The moral of part two is “Being slow and steady is good, but being fast, skillful and consistent is better”.

The story doesn’t end there. In part three, Tortoise realises there is no way he can beat Hare with Hare’s superior form. He racks his brains for a solution and suggests a rematch on a different route.

Hare takes off and runs consistently at top speed, until he comes to a river between him and the finishing line.

While Hare wonders what to do, Tortoise breaks on, swims to the opposite bank, continues unflinching and finishes the race victoriously.

The moral of part three is “Identify your core competency, then change the playing field to suit your core competency”.

TEAMWORK AND HARNESSING CORE COMPETENCIES

This adaptation of the timeless classic doesn’t end there. By now, Hare and Tortoise have become good friends. They have developed mutual respect for each other and recognise each other’s differences and strengths.

Realising the last race could have been run much better, both decide to race again, but this time as a team.

The race starts with Hare carrying Tortoise to the riverbank. Then, Tortoise takes over and ferries Hare across the river.

On the opposite bank, Hare again carries Tortoise. They cross the finishing line together in record time, which they could not have achieved individually.

The real moral of the story? It’s “good to be individually brilliant and to have strong core competencies, but unless you’re able to work in a team and harness each other’s core competencies, you’ll always perform below par because there will be skills which you lack but are possessed by someone else.”

With these new sequels to the story, we can derive several key takeaways for achieving success:

Get up and keep going
After their respective failures, both Hare and Tortoise take the time to reflect on how they could have done better.

Hare identifies the causes of his downfall and overcomes them to emerge triumphant in part two, while Tortoise changes his strategy and takes on his opponent by utilising his ability to swim in part three.

Both have one similar key trait. They never gave up in their pursuit for success. Successful people do stumble, but they pick themselves up and move forward. They learn from adversity and through trial and error.

Teamwork
At times, it’s necessary to sit back as a supportive team member and let another person with the relevant core competency take the lead.

It is all about situational leadership and letting that person lead in order for the team to advance further.

Learn to collaborate with those who possess traits that we do not in order to achieve greater things collectively.

As quoted by professional basketball player, Michael Jordan – “Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

CONGRATULATIONS
Graduates, Go make someone else’s life extraordinary. Remember, “When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world.” – George Washington Carver

Congratulations on learning something about your brain today. The Brain Bulletin is committed to help you do just that. Always remember: “You are a genius! Enjoy your brain.”

Terry Small is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that anyone can learn how to learn, smarter, faster and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can develop. To interact with Small, email mystarjob@leaderonomics.com
T

TEAM MORALE IS NEVER A TEAM ISSUE

All morale starts and ends with the individual – in the case of a team, the morale originates and emanates from the team leader.
Team members come and go, the mood of the members may fluctuate but the character of the team leader must be stable and rock-solid.

WHITHOUT CONSISTENCY, THERE IS NO BASIS FOR LEADERSHIP

So, the one who complains about team morale may very well be the one who holds the key! Just as poor morale can be contagious, enthusiasm is also contagious but it requires a whole lot more effort – effort that cannot be expected from followers.
This form of effort is expected only from leaders. Leaders must always be one notch above their followers when it comes to morale.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IS ALWAYS ABOUT PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

It’s simple to find out the state of a family – talk to the parents. It’s simple to find out the state of a class – talk to the teacher.
It’s simple to find out the state of the team at work – talk to the supervisor or the manager. There are three powerful principles at work when it comes to improving team morale:

The “One-Up” Principle
When it comes to behavioural change, we are influenced by our leaders. For example, whenever I conduct character training, inevitably someone will ask – “Has my boss attended this training yet?”
Unlike technical training, when it comes to the matter of character development, we are inspired by role models – especially those who are above us.
So, if you expect the team’s morale to improve, then the leader’s morale must first be in line. This is the “one-up” principle – the one above all “leads the way.”

The Principle of Personal Accountability
We may not be able to initiate world peace but we certainly can benefit the person who lives down the street.
The team’s morale is a cumulative “product” of individuals who take accountability for what they can do in their own “neighbourhood.”
If others do not change and the company culture remains the same, we can still be accountable for my own “personal culture,” i.e. to carry myself, the words I speak and the attitude I display.

When each individual embraces personal accountability, then improvement in morale becomes a natural by-product. Accountability is the cause, morale is the effect.

The Principle of Clear Visioning
Without a clear vision, the team has no motivation to exercise self-restraint and self-control.
Human nature is such that, in the absence of a motivating vision from the leaders, the default mode is confusion, not conviction.
The decline in team morale can often be traced to a leader who fails to communicate clear goals and measurable objectives.
Communicate, communicate and communicate – so far, I have not heard complaints about leaders who over-communicate.
On the contrary, complaints are usually about the lack of communication.

As you can see, team morale is not the real issue. It is symptomatic of the real cause, which is the lack of personal leadership effectiveness in the area of personal example, personal accountability and personal communication. Think about it.

Joseph Tan is a trainer that aims to equip leaders to achieve consistent results at work, at home and in life through the development of personal character and the discovery of unique strengths. If you are interested in attending one of his courses, email people@leaderonomics.com

PLAN AHEAD, BE THE MASTER OF TIME

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Johnny Miller, a Colonel Sanders impersonator, works inside a fried chicken restaurant in Yuma, Ariz. Colonel Sanders launched Trucker's Transit on the first day in 1926, at the age of 62. Since then P&G has grown to operate in more than 25,000 locations worldwide.

Lily Cheah is an aspiring journalist who has been pondering on different approaches to the 24-hour day and how one can come to a conclusion.

My grandmother embraces time as a life-long friend and a necessary conduct for achieving growth in life in any form. She knows peace with time.

She is the other hand, to tell Mr. Time as a source of frustration in any form. She is trying to come from day to day. She is the other hand, to tell Mr. Time as a source of frustration in any form.

Her love and respect for time has no bounds. She is always better.

KFC has grown to operate in more than 15,000 locations worldwide.

Mystarjob.com, Saturday 18 January 2014
WHEN commercial photographer Ming Thein was asked about what he considered to be the biggest failure in his life, he paused. He initially wanted to say that it was his struggle to be a photographer despite the failures he faced but, after deep thought, he gave a different answer.

“I don’t think my failure to be a photographer at the initial stages is the case, because each time it did not work out, I learned something and used it in my next attempt. And eventually, it did work out. On hindsight, my biggest failure would probably be my corporate career because I spent 10 years doing it and in the end, I left. In some ways, I do feel like it was a waste of time,” he says.

A Malaysian who moved overseas at the young age of two, Ming grew up in Australia and New Zealand. He graduated from Oxford with a masters in physics at 16. He then went into chartered accountancy.

“However, I have always been armed with a camera since I was 16. Photography is beyond a job for me – it’s a passion.

“Actually, until early 2012, it was a full-time passion and a part-time job; I’ve shot commercial assignments on and off for the last eight years, but I went full time just recently,” he says.

THE CORPORATE WORLD

Upon completing his education, Ming worked in the UK, scoring his first job at KPMG in London.

“I was an audit trainee and was handling the usual routines such as chartered accountancy, client work and audits – I hated that as it was the most boring thing I’ve ever done,” he shares.

Then, in 2005, Ming was headhunted by the Boston Consultancy group to join the Kuala Lumpur office of KPMG Chartered Accountancy Audit.

Ming had never felt at home in London and came back to Malaysia every year to visit his extended family.

Kuala Lumpur felt quite like home so when the offer came, he decided to give it a go. That was nine years ago and he has been here since.

THE CLICKING JOURNEY

“That’s half the story. The other half of the story is that I’ve been photographing part-time since 2003.

“I’ve been taking assignments on and off for the last eight years. After KPMG, I was editor of Click magazine for five years. I tried to be a full-time professional photographer three times before this.

“The first time was in 2005 and I think I wasn’t really sure what I was doing at that time. The second time around was in 2007.”

Ming took a sabbatical for three months. The third time, he thought he had nailed it. It was 2009 when his wife was in London completing her Masters. Ming followed her for a few months thinking he had it all figured out.

“I’m going to be a specialist at one thing, which is photorealism. I’m going to do a lot of cold-calling and knocking on doors and everything to try to get opportunities,” he told himself.

“And guess what, the whole time that I was in London I think I made £300 from photography which was not worth it. You can’t live off that but of course photorealism is another dying breed, with the proliferation of people having iPhones and the social media, there’s no demand for it anymore; it doesn’t pay.

“Well, that was round three. My final attempt at photography yet again was last year and now here we are, 12 months on, so far so good,” he explains of his interesting, long-winding journey.

THE VOCATION

Ming is a commercial photographer specialising in product photography on location and corporate reportage.

He is also a creative consultant and director who ensures consistent visual look and feel across all aspects of a campaign, including videos/commercials, printed materials, exhibitions and lighting design.

For Ming, it’s not just about the visuals, it’s about the experience and emotions as well. He boasts an extensive and diverse international client base that includes Nissan, Jaeger Le-Coultre, Van Cleef & Arpels, Michès du Temps, Richemont, the Swatch Group, Hijjas Kasturi Architects, Tange Associates Architects, Sunway Group, Maybank, Eastern & Oriental, the Boston Consulting group, several Michel star chefs including Fergus Henderson and Bruno Menard, The City of London and Moon Travel Guides.

LESSONS LEARNT IN LIFE

Although Ming regrets wasting precious time in the corporate world, he feels that it is a blessing in disguise as it exposed him to many experiences.

“I feel that, if I had not spent that time in the corporate world, I would not have the network and I would not have a lot of friends.

“I wouldn’t have the ability to deal with clients at a very senior level. Generally, I’m dealing with directors or CEOs, thus my previous experiences come in handy when I am liaising with them,” says the go-getter.

For Ming, the two things that separate failure from success is popular perception. He believes that you must always be happy with what you are doing and the outcome of your decision, without the influence of people’s perceptions towards your venture.

If you’re not happy with the outcome of your venture, even if you’ve made yourself a millionaire out of it, it won’t work.

“If you try to do something 99 times and you die without achieving it, people are going to call you a failure. However, if you try 99 times and you succeed on the 100th try, everybody’s going to say that’s dedication.

STAYING STRONG AND POSITIVE

It was his love for photography that urged Ming to keep going despite his earlier failed attempts at it. For Ming, it is all about confidence and faith in one’s self.

“You have to give your best when you do something. Of course, your ego takes a blow and you feel depressed when it fails but you have to pick your self up and go on.

Sometimes, you have no choice but to just go on and eventually, you find a way to make it work. When things got difficult for me, I say, ok, I have no plan B, so I’ve got to make this work and that I believe, led me to my success today.”

However, Ming says that it is not just the not-giving-up attitude that spurs one’s success. It should be accompanied with commitment and responsibility as well.

He adds that one should not be shy to ask questions when unsure about things. Asking questions will help increase knowledge and get you nearer to your dreams.
caught my goddaughter engrossed on her Mac one afternoon. With her headphones firmly secured over her head, and a sly grin on her face, it would have taken her a full hour before she'd realized I had passed out on the couch. “Who’s the hero?” I asked. “Harvey Specter,” she said, smiling. Harvey Specter. Interesting name. Curious, I clicked on the pilot episode. Bad move. In 10 minutes, I was hooked.

For the next two weeks, Suits season one to three became my daily staple. I have always had this “thing” for lawyers. (My first internship job was at Lim Kean Siew, one of Penang’s top law firms.) Heavily influenced by Paper Chase and LA Law probably.

With suits, what captivates me, apart from the interesting plot, intriguing characters, and of course Specter himself is the way the TV series cleverly crafts each character by way of wardrobe selections. Try watching the show without any sound. Before long, I bet you can tell who’s the boss and who’s not. Suits is one show that I’d strongly recommend every corporate executive to watch. Here’s why. It teaches you how to differentiate between ranks by looking at what they wear. It also shows you how the way the characters style their hair, wear their clothes and choose their accessories to support and emphasise the personalities that they are portraying. For those who work in the professional sector, take a few cues from the characters from Suits.

Louis Litt

Another great supporting actor is Louis Litt, a junior partner at Pearson Hardman. Litt is a talented lawyer, a highly dedicated worker with strong work ethics. Power hungry, he is also bitterly jealous of Specter’s success. Beneath his well-cut suit, Litt is overweight, perhaps to project a bigger frame. His spread collar shirt is always with an expensive looking tie, knotted to perfection. Beneath his well-cut suit, Litt is overweight, perhaps to project a bigger frame. His spread collar shirt is always with an expensive looking tie, knotted to perfection. His thick eyebrows, Litt plays his role to the hilt. With strong work ethics. Power hungry, he is also bitterly jealous of Specter’s success.

Jessica Pearson:

And for you corporate ladies, look out for Jessica Pearson. Pearson is Specter’s boss, a talented big shot lawyer whom you do not want to cross. She proves that woman can be substance! An excellent lawyer, Pearson is one of my personal favourites. She is a firm believer in working hard and striaght at the same time. Smart, witty and at times eccentric, Pearson is one unique person that Specter can’t function without. Unlike Pearson who is always cool and composed, Paulsen is one drama queen who will cry crocodile tears to get her way.

Donna Paulsen:

And let’s not forget Donna Paulsen, one of my personal favourites. Paulsen is the executive assistant to Specter, someone you want to hug and strangle at the same time. Smart, witty and at times eccentric, Pearson is one unique person that Specter can’t function without. Unlike Pearson who is always cool and composed, Paulsen is one drama queen who will cry crocodile tears to get her way.

WHAT SPECTER WEARS:

Three-piece suit with peak lapels, often in navy pinstripes, spread collar shirts with a Windsor-knotted tie. Specter is the top closer of his firm, and his power suits convey his status at his firm perfectly. Everything in Specter’s look evokes strength.

WHAT ROSS WEARS:

Button down shirt, slim tie, no vest, a more understated suit with a slim notch lapel. This is no doubt a common fashion statement, as I see it happening very commonly with our young Malaysian graduates. But it doesn’t really showcase success. Ross also slings a messenger bag and commutes to work on his bicycle.

To further emphasise the importance of one’s appearance in the corporate world, in one scene, Specter comments to Ross, “Get your skinny tie out of my face and get to work.” And in another, we see Ross frustrat ingly ask, “What does it matter how much I spend on suits?” to which Specter retorts, “People respond to how you dress, so like it or not, this is what you have to do.” Specter then sends Ross to his tailor to look more like the part of the Harvard graduate en route to becoming a partner at a New York law firm.

I guess this aids in the development of Pearson’s character as well. She appears to be cold – hence the all structured, corporate suits; yet deep down she has a soft side in her, evident in her addition of statement necklaces and soft shawls in her outfit.

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What Paulsen wears:

■ Outfits that shape the contour of her body.
■ Soft dresses that are at times sleeveless or with plunging necklines.

Her wardrobe choices however, may not always be the most office-appropriate. But you see here how Paulsen always uses her body movements, and how Suits’ stylists cleverly use body hugging dresses for Paulsen to portray her feminine charm. However, I’d like to put in a word of caution here – Suits is make-believe. We live in the real world. With body hugging and revealing clothing, people may misconstrue the message you are sending. So, unless you have red hair and know every secret in your company, don’t do a Paulsen.

Suits is now in its fourth season. Even if you don’t adorn a jacket or any suit for that matter to work, watch it. Apart from lessons in wardrobe management, Suits has witty dialogues, interesting characters and a good storyline. Enough reasons for you to spend a lazy afternoon with. Or you can just tune in and watch how Specter struts. Definitely worth your while.

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**SELF-DISCIPLINE COMES FIRST IN LEADERSHIP**

Most parenting guides also assert that the best way to teach children such vital skills is to exhibit them first themselves. In many ways, the family setting is not very different from that of a work environment. There is so much potential for children to adopt many qualities at home, which will eventually groom them to be successful leaders.

Starting with self-discipline, parents can purposefully teach children - of any age - its value. Here’s how:

- **Set solid limits**
  - Children are constantly exploring and that is not a bad thing. But children also need boundaries and parents need to send a clear message on this. Often, parents cave in when children throw fits and often lose the battle.
  - That would be one of the biggest mistakes as children will soon learn to manipulate limits, only to find that the rules of the grown-up world may not be as easy to deflect.

- **Link decisions with implications**
  - Parents should take time and explain to children the consequences of decisions and actions. Also, ask pointed questions to give children the opportunity to analyse the situation and learn to come up with a favourable outcome for everyone.
  - Reward them when they display positive attitudes and at the same time, firmly let them know why bad behaviour is not to be tolerated.

- **Get children engaged**
  - Encourage children to get involved in a variety of activities that will create avenues for them to develop self-discipline.
  - This includes engaging them in certain family decisions as well as interactions with peers like sports, games and classes.
  - Good communication is also closely related to self-discipline as it teaches children how to be aware of how their decisions may affect others.

- **Be consistent and set a good example**
  - The very core of self-discipline requires reinforcement, as do all learning processes. Give children the opportunity to practice the right behaviour in different situations.
  - Above all, realise that all children look to their parents to teach them. As the saying goes, “children are great imitators, so give them something great to imitate.”

**ANY CHILD COULD BE A GREAT LEADER**

Without self-discipline or patience, children risk moving into adulthood without emotional maturity and tend to resort to childish behaviours like sulking, whining and throwing tantrums to influence others.

Such negative, destructive approaches will not likely establish a sense of respect or esteem, let alone help them accomplish goals effectively.

It is imperative that parents are invested in developing self-discipline in their children. Consistency is key in nurturing and cultivating this attribute, starting from young, in addition to guidance, love and encouragement.

Whether or not a child becomes a formal leader in the conventional sense, leadership qualities give every child a head start in life. In order to take charge of their own lives, self-discipline is the right place to start.

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**By SU-ANN CHEONG**

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**THE ART OF SELF-DISCIPLINE**

The term “self-discipline” is thrown around a lot and appears in various forms. Simply put, its very definition is the ability to make oneself do things that should be done in spite of incoherences or hardships.

In other words, it is about having self-control or self-regulation to avoid negative consequences or for the sake of improvement.

Actor Michael J Fox summed it up as “doing something the right way whether anyone's watching or not”.

Self-discipline is the art of doing something that one may not necessarily want to do. Nevertheless, he knows it needs to be done for a long-term benefit and on top of that, is able to deny certain impulses or diversions that may throw him off-track. Children, by nature, are impulsive and part of the solution is to learn self-discipline.

It is important to note that in order for parents to instil self-discipline in a child, it does not necessarily mean imposing verbal or physical punishment.

To discipline, in essence, means to teach. It is about showing children the right behaviour, setting limits, enforcing habits and helping them tolerate unfavourable outcomes when necessary – all this without breaking their emotional state of mind.

Instead of opting for punishment, which often focuses on what the child has done wrong, parents should practise positive discipline.

The latter works on the principle that children learn better when they understand the connection between their decisions, actions and consequences.

Punishment may correct a child’s behaviour, but more often than not, only because they fear the penalty itself.

Discipline is not meant to humiliate, belittle or cause pain, but to teach appropriate behaviour and to establish the fact that for every action, there is a consequence (theaionparent.com).

**START THEM YOUNG**

Many parents struggle to determine when discipline begins. However, for those who understand positive parenting and are aware of the fact that it is not about punishment but about teaching and guidance, it can start as early as infancy stages.

Of course, a baby “misbehaving” would not be intentional, but “setting limits is a critical part of a responsibility as a parent”, says Claire Lerner, director of parenting resources at Zero to Three.

A study in New Zealand tracked a group of people born in 1972 and 1973 until the age of 32 and evaluated their level of self-control – such as conscientiousness, self-discipline and perseverance – at various ages (Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, 2011). They found that children who struggled with self-control as pre-schoolers were three times more likely to have difficulties as young adults.

On the other hand, children who demonstrated more self-control were more likely to have fewer health and financial problems when they reached their 30s.

A classic study by Stanford psychologist Walter Mischel, referred to as the Stanford marshmallow experiment in the late 1960s, focused on delayed gratification children as young as four.

Each was given a choice between one marshmallow immediately or waiting 15 minutes to get two. In follow-up studies, it was discovered that children who were able to wait longer tended to have better life outcomes, as measured by their SAT scores as well as educational attainment and body mass index.

In another recent study, researchers found that parent child generally have brighter futures (The Local, Oct 2013).

Quite similar to the marshmallow test, grade six children who picked a 1,000 kroner-payout in five years “do better later in life than their peers who chose one-third of that sum straight away.”

The study followed the children’s development over four decades and showed a clear correlation between a child’s level of patience and how well they performed academically.

These experiments demonstrate that children who develop self-discipline and patience early on are more likely to be motivated in school and eventually, in their careers.

The ability to wait, as highlighted in numerous studies, teaches self-discipline.

They clearly demonstrate the ability to think before they act, weigh out options carefully and understand potential consequences.

In a career setting, children equipped with self-discipline will then tend to fall into leadership roles with more ease.

With work, they would be able to focus on goals, channel effort into their jobs and even more likely to show up for work on time.

In terms of social skills, the ability to think before reacting helps them act less impulsively, more diplomatically and resolve conflict peacefully and effectively.

**DEVELOPING SELF-DISCIPLINE**

Children, typically, find it harder to grasp concepts with verbal explanations. Experience is a much better teacher than mere words and this is where parents play an essential role. Nurture and positive modelling are significant influences in shaping a child’s self-discipline.
IT PAYS TO PERSEVERE

**By HYMA PILLAY**
hyma.pillay@leaderonomics.com

O NCE upon a time, a king made an announcement that anyone who wanted the post of a personal assistant must meet him. Many people gathered at the palace. The king led them to a pond and said, “The one who can fill water from this bucket will be chosen for the post. But remember, you may only fill once from the bucket.”

Some people left without trying at all, after hearing the last statement. Some gave it a shot once and then said, “The king has already chosen someone else. Let’s go.”

But one man kept filling the bucket with water patiently. He filled the water in the bucket from the pond and came to dry land. However, within a few minutes, the water leaked. He kept doing this for a long time till eventually, the pond became dry. The man found a diamond ring at the bottom of the pond and he gave it to the king. The king said, “This ring is a reward for your patience and hard work. You are fit for the job.”

This was a story I remembered from my childhood days. Back then, patience seemed like such an easy word. It was much easier to tell ourselves to be patient and persevere through “hard times” (our problems back then largely revolve around not being able to watch TV on school days).

These days, most of us are often expected to fill hole-ridden buckets, and it can get very frustrating. It is always easier to be the majority and say, etc. It’s easier to be the majority in that story, and walk away from what we deem to be impossible and a waste of our time and energy. So how do we persevere through frustrating times? One way is by looking at the big picture. Here are three tips to help you focus.

WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

**By CHONG KEAT LIM**
keatlim.chong@leaderonomics.com

Against my will, of course.

MY parents used to enforce discipline on me when I misbehaved as a kid. My will, of course.

During school days the most feared person title seemed to always fall on me when I misbehaved as a kid. Against my will, of course.

MY parents used to enforce discipline on me when I misbehaved as a kid. Of course, knowing is merely the first step. Then there’s the applying of the knowledge.

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っていく。あなたの最大の資産である人材を、労務環境を改善し、その人々の福祉を向上させることが可能である！

決定。力強い人々を休ませる/退社させる。これは非常に良いことが、非常に良いこと。力強い人々を休ませる/退社させる。

顧客は人間だから、彼らを影響し、アドバイスし、指導する。

彼らの人々。ある時、彼らの人々が選択を下し、それが大きな部分で「保護」の

人生（家族の生活）。

職場での話題として「遅く作業」、「過労」の

 Attempting to meet expectations or not for your career advancement?

 With the advent of social media, many issues related to job stress have been discussed openly. The plus points are that employees now know who they want to work for and they can tap social media networks to find out about work cultures.

 The downside of this is that everyone has a view and a lot of noise is created. Upon my last check, Mita's case has generated close to 700,000 plus message threads on Google.

 My take on her case is — working long hours is not peculiar to the advertising sector but it is a sector that has been known for it. There are many other businesses that are known for pushing for long hours. It's the nature of the business.

 There are a few ways of achieving work-life balance on the personal front:

 1. Self-management: many of us have the option of being more productive at the workplace. Reduce breakfast and lunch breaks, and also push for shorter meetings so that there are more hours to complete tasks.

 2. Use your public holidays and annual leave to manage your household and also personal finances.

 3. If you are married with children and also have aged parents, keep activities simple and economical and manage expectations of your loved ones.

 4. Having a positive balance sheet on your personal finances also helps career professionals to perform better.

 Employers on the other hand have many opportunities to promote work life balance:

 1. Through better leave management and encouraging both the human resources function and line managers to promote better utilisation of leave. A lot of analysis work can be done here to find out which employees is taking leave and the burnt-out ones.

 2. Infuse work culture by working with managers and supervisors — promote shorter meetings.

 3. Develop policies that promote family time and also personal well-being.

 In my company, we have many of such policies which promote work life balance such as career breaks, educational assistance programmes that enable time off to pursue professional examinations, birthday leave, and three months maternity leave for first-time mothers.

 For advertising and advertorials, contact ian.lee@leaderonomics.com - 016 974 7087

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