

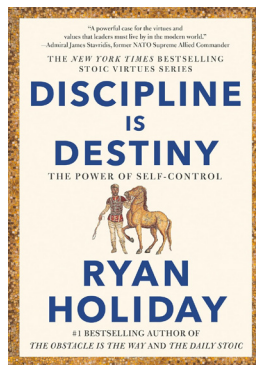


DISCIPLINE IS DESTINY

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THE BOOK



Discipline is Destiny

By Ryan Holiday



INTRODUCTION

Modern Stoicism expert Ryan Holiday, author of *The Obstacle is the Way* returns with another in-depth guide to living your best life.

Discipline is Destiny is the second book in Holiday's series on the stoic virtues of courage, temperance, justice and wisdom. With its focus on temperance, *Discipline is Destiny* is about self-control and how it can make your life more worthwhile.

Full of anecdotes and stories from famously successful people throughout history, *Discipline is Destiny* is a guide to mastering your emotions, thoughts and actions. After all, you can't master anything else until you master yourself, and mastering yourself takes self-control.

Containing a mix of ancient wisdom and modern science, this book is a highly readable guide to living a temperate and worthwhile life that will bring happiness and satisfaction.



5 BEST QUOTES

"But that's what the greats do, they don't just show up, they do more than practice, they do the work."

"We don't need accomplishments to feel good or to be good enough. What do we need? The truth: not much! Some food and water. Work that we can challenge ourselves with. A calm mind in the midst of adversity. Sleep. A solid routine. A cause we are committed to. Something we're getting better at. Everything else is extra. Or worse, as history has shown countless times, the source of our painful downfall."

"We don't refrain from excess because it's a sin. We are self-disciplined because we want to avoid a hellish existence right here while we're alive—a hell of our own making."

"It takes discipline not to insist on doing everything yourself. Especially when you know how to do many of those things well. Especially when you have high standards about how they should be done."

"Don't be frustrated that you're not constitutionally calm or perfect. Because no one is, and no one is expecting you to be! If your standards are so high that you give up when you fall short of them, then actually you don't have high standards. What you have are excuses."



11 BIG IDEAS

1. TEMPERANCE

The stoics held that there are four virtues from which everything else derives:

1. Courage
2. Temperance
3. Justice
4. Wisdom

Discipline is Destiny is the second book of Holiday's series on the stoic virtues and it focuses on temperance. In a time of plenty when people arguably have more options available than in the vast majority of history, temperance is becoming a particularly challenging virtue to maintain.

Holiday describes the virtue of temperance in more contemporary terms as self-discipline. He says self-discipline allows you to:

- Work hard
- Say no
- Practice good habits and set boundaries
- Train and to prepare
- Ignore temptations and provocations
- Keep your emotions in check
- Endure painful difficulties

2. THE EXTERIOR

Holiday says that the place to start when nurturing and growing temperance within yourself is with the 'exterior', or, in other words, the body.

The body is the source of many temptations, so mastering your body is the best place to start strengthening self-discipline. If you don't take control of your body yourself, then you are open for other forces to dominate you instead. As we have all experienced, outside forces like laziness, adversity, entropy or atrophy are all competing to take over!

3. RULING OVER THE BODY

As a paragon of physical self-control, Holiday presents the case of Lou Gehrig, the legendary US baseball player. Gehrig had a streak of 2,130 consecutive games and this stood as the record for more than 50 years. He managed this through force of will and physical temperance.

Not only did he push on and continue playing in instances where most would give up (broken fingers, for instance), Gehrig also practiced self-discipline in his life outside the pitch. Unlike his hard-drinking and heavy-eating friend, Babe Ruth, Gehrig abstained from living a hedonistic life. His remarkable streak was the result.

Holiday writes that if you say you love what you do, you must prove it. Put in the work and produce a streak like Gehrig, and people will see your self-discipline in action.



11 BIG IDEAS

4. QUIT BEING A SLAVE

Of course, Holiday is not talking about literal slavery but the figurative kind.

As an example, he talks of Dwight Eisenhower. The 34th US president was a slave to cigarettes. After close to a lifetime of battles won, Eisenhower set out to conquer his addiction to smoking. He quit cold turkey and never smoked again.

This is an excellent example of someone who had achieved so much but still found themselves enslaved. Don't allow this to happen to you. Whatever it is that has you figuratively in chains.

5. THE INNER DOMAIN

Holiday says that the body is only the starting point. The inner domain, that is, the temperament, is equally as important.

History is replete, says Holiday, with people who were masters of their bodies but a complete mess elsewhere. He says that discipline over eating, waking hours and other bodily temptations means little if you are still easily distracted, at the mercy of bad moods or driven by impulses.

Mastering the temperament is the next step to a fulfilling life.

6. RULING OVER YOURSELF

Holiday uses the example of Queen Elizabeth II as a paragon of self-rule.

Over her unprecedented reign as queen of England, the Queen almost never took time off or let her decorum slip. Holiday says that while Lou Gehrig's streak is one thing, it is really nothing compared to the Queen, who worked tirelessly for decades.

The advice here is not never to stop working, but rather, never to stop striving for a better and stronger temperament. In the Queen's position, she had no choice but to work. She said, "Most people have a job, and then they go home, and in this existence, the job and the life go on together because you can't really divide it up."

Holiday suggests you treat building temperance in the same way the Queen approached her job.

7. DO YOUR BEST

Everyone always says they do their best, but can you truly say this is the case?

Holiday says that truly doing your best at all times is another major factor in success. When you always do your best, you can never fail because you will always have the moral victory. Even if you fail, you will know that you did everything in your power. Failing when you did all you can is no failure because you never had the chance of winning in the first place.



11 BIG IDEAS

8. PERFECTIONISM

One caveat to doing your best is not to fall into the trap of perfectionism.

Holiday calls perfectionism a vice. It is a form of arrogance that can stop you from ever producing new work. Do your best and get this work finished, and you will produce the chance for your next work to be your best. Stop forever because you don't think it'd be perfect, and you rob yourself of any future work.

To quote Martha Graham's musical director, Louis Horst, as Holiday does in *Discipline is Destiny*, "The Sixth Symphony followed the Fifth, but without the Sixth we could not have had the Seventh. One cannot know what one is leading into. Transitions are as important as achievements."

9. THE MAGISTERIAL

The final piece in the puzzle is the magisterial, the soul. As much control as you have over your physical self and temperament, you are still not a fully-rounded human being until you also master your spirit. Holiday says that when the body, the mind and the spirit come together successfully, that's when you really show what you are made of. It's about finding more to give, more to draw from yourself, when the going gets tough and when others need you.

10. FLEXIBILITY

Famous Japanese samurai of the Edo period, Miyamoto Musashi, knew the importance of flexibility. The master duelist often threw off his opponent by acting in unexpected ways. More than this, though. He knew that to be truly great, he must work on more than his swordsmanship. Musashi also studied art and poetry, deliberately pushing himself out of his comfort zone, and is now revered as one of Japan's most legendary historical figures. Not only is he remembered as the greatest samurai of his generation, but he is also known as a philosopher, a strategist and a writer. He achieved this through flexibility.

Holiday writes that you should cultivate your capacity for change. Be constantly ready to shift and change little things day by day as needs must. Rigidity is fragility, and flexibility is growth.

11. MAKING THE CHOICE

Ultimately, the choice is in your hands. Choose self-control to better your life, or let whims and impulses get the better of you. Holiday says you have this decision to make not just once but a thousand times in life. He says:

"What will it be?
Dependence or independence?
Greatness or ruin?
Discipline is destiny.
It decides.
Will you choose it?"

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. START WITH YOUR BODY**

Much temptation starts with the body. Begin by mastering your body.

This isn't about developing a 6-pack or avoiding all physical pleasure but about developing the fortitude to go on when the going is tough.

2. NEXT YOUR MIND

With a healthy physical body, you need to master your mind.

Holiday says, "History is replete with talented people who had complete command of their physical form but were profoundly a mess everywhere else."

Fortifying the mind is as essential to your well-being as fortifying the body.

3. FINALLY YOUR SOUL

In talking of the soul, holiday refers to the civil and civic duty of being a benefit to the society around you.

Fortifying your soul takes you to the next level as a well-rounded and valuable human being.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of Discipline is Destiny is that it takes self-control to make the most out of your life.

Great people in history have shown temperance in many different ways, and it has been the making of them. If you fail to grow and nurture self-control, you will not be able to reach your full potential.

Become self-controlled and temperate, and you will have the best chance of living your fullest life.



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