

Developing Discipline by Brian Tracy

H.P. Liddon said, "What we do on some great occasions will probably depend upon what we already are, and what we are will be the result of previous years of self-discipline." I believe that with all of my heart. Discipline is doing what you really do not want to do, so you can do what you really want to do. What makes it hard is that in our own human nature, we do not want to do certain things, and so therefore, what happens is we have a tendency to be undisciplined in the areas that we do not care to do.

Three areas to develop discipline:

1. Disciplined Thinking.

George Bernard Shaw said, "Few people think more than two or three times a year. I have made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week."

One of the major differences in this discipline of thinking is that people that think their way to the top have the ability to do what I call "sustained thinking." They have the ability to think on an issue for a long period of time, until that issue becomes clear on the decision that should be made. People who do not think their way to the top have the unwillingness of discipline to master sustained thinking. They will think about something for a while, and then they will get off it and go on to something else.

They have never learned how to discipline their thoughts by writing them down. I always keep a pad with me of things that I am thinking. I write thoughts down so that I can stay concentrated and disciplined in that area.

2. Disciplined Emotions.

We have choices when it comes to our emotions

–We can master them, or

–They can master us.

I was playing golf the other day at East Lake Country Club, a great golf course here in Atlanta. It is known for being the links where Bobby Jones played. As you may or may not know, he is a legendary golfer who won a major tournament at twenty-one. By age twenty-eight, he had already won the grand slam and retired. Jones had an uncle who said that by the time he was fourteen, Bobby was probably already the best golfer in the world. He certainly was popular. However, Jones was also known for his temper because he would throw his clubs when he got irritated. Jones's uncle sat down with him and said, "Bobby, your problem is you've mastered the game of golf, but you haven't mastered your emotions; and until you master your emotions, you'll never be a champion in golf."

3. Disciplined Actions.

I call the two actions of initiating and closing the "bookends of success" because I really think they are. I know some that can initiate but they can never close; I know some people that can close but they can never get it cranked up. You have to kick start them every time. When you can do both, initiate and close, you have the bookends to success.

Allow me to leave you with this closing thought about developing discipline: you cannot give what you do not have, and self-improvement precedes team improvement. The only way that I can keep leading is to keep growing. The day I stop growing, somebody else takes the leadership baton. That is the way it always is.