



# Rifka Schonfeld **STRATEGIES**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

## **Will Power! Use it! CHANGE YOUR LIFE!**

Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter will discuss the topic of will power and how it can change your life.

Rifka Schonfeld  
**STRATEGIES**

### **QUESTION:**

It's so easy to figure out how to train your physical body, but how do you train your brain? How do you ensure that you can start things and stick to them? I wish there was a science to that too!

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**ANSWER:**

In their recent book entitled *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, psychologist Roy Baumeister and *The New York Times* science writer John Tierney explain just how important self-control is: "When psychologists isolate the personal qualities that predict 'positive outcomes' in life, they consistently find two traits: intelligence and self-control. So far researchers still haven't

learned how to temporarily increase intelligence. But they have discovered, or at least rediscovered, how to improve self-control."

### Exercise your Willpower

So, how can you improve your willpower and improve your life? Below I've put together a few quick tips:

- **Start small.** Even small, day-to-day acts of self-control such as maintaining good posture can reinforce longer-term self-control in activities that have nothing to do with your posture. Therefore, choose a few small areas that you'd like to work on: writing out full sentences in text messages, eating a healthy breakfast, or brushing your teeth after drinking coffee. Then, flex those willpower muscles!
- **Sleep well.** Just like your arm muscles need sleep to recharge and rest, your willpower needs the same. Therefore, get enough sleep so that you aren't constantly using your willpower to remain alert during the day and not having any left over for other tasks.
- **Eat well.** Eat lots of slow-burning foods such as whole grains, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables. If you aren't resisting the urge to eat, you'll be more likely to have self-control in other areas.
- **Imbibe some sugar.** This one is a bit tricky if you would like to use your willpower to eat better, but sometimes your willpower can be revived by a quick shot of sugar, just like a regular muscle.
- **Don't do too much at once.** If you try to pump up your willpower all at once, you just might not be strong enough to continue. Start small and work your way toward bigger goals.
- **Avoid temptation.** This way you won't have to use up your willpower resisting it. "People with low willpower," Baumeister says, "use it to get themselves out of crises. People with high willpower use it not to get themselves into crises."

Perhaps this all goes back to the wisdom of *Pirkei Avos*, "Who is strong? One who overpowers his inclinations." Let us build that strength and ultimately live happier, more successful lives!

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