



W. R. Booker & Co.

# The Miracle of Discipline.

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Discipline can get you pips.

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The information contained in this ebook is designed to teach you forex trading strategies so that you can make money. Alas, you'll probably lose money. We all do at first. Rob's not liable if, based upon the information you read here, you lose money, make money, turn into a woodchuck, possum, or other furry creature.



## Prologue

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Have you ever exited a trade at a loss, only to find that the trade would have been profitable only a little while later? Have you ever exited a losing trade, opened one in the opposite direction, and then lost twice?

I have. I used to make those mistakes and many others.

Have you ever not stayed in a trade long enough to get the full amount of profit from it?

Discipline is the answer. Disciplined traders succeed and undisciplined traders fail. It's really that easy.

This isn't an ebook about forex trading, though – at least not directly. It's really about how you can learn to acquire greater discipline in your life, which will make you a better trader (*much* better). In fact, I promise that this book will make you a better trader, as long as you're willing to give some of my advice a try. Once you've acquired greater discipline in your life, I've got a bunch of forex trading strategies that you can use (or you can find many, many others elsewhere). But none of those strategies are worth anything without discipline, because...



The problem with most forex strategies is that they assume you already possess the discipline to implement them.

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I have read just about every forex strategy book out there – and hundreds of self-help books -- and all of them have impacted my life positively. I'm a better trader for having read them. However, for much of my life I struggled with a lack of discipline, and as long as I struggled with discipline, I was always *almost* successful at whatever I tried. So I was left with mountains of good advice and without the discipline to implement all of it consistently. After hundreds and hundreds of conversations with traders and successful people across the world, I realized that I wasn't alone, and for many people, a lack of discipline is standing in the way of both trading profits and the realization of their dreams.

I then knew that my successes and my failures could be traced to the presence – or absence – of one human quality: discipline.

**Having perfect discipline – not perfect strategy – was the key.**

This book is about how to achieve greatness. Not just in trading on the foreign exchange, although I hope that's what you achieve. Discipline, more than just a forex strategy, in fact, about the one way to achieve greatness. It's above



strategy. It's above tactics. I know that is a terribly presumptuous thing to say. I know you're thinking that I must be out of my mind. I promise you that I'm:

- a. Not lying to you.
- b. Have nothing to gain by lying to you.

I have freely distributed thousands of copies of this book in several editions, hoping that as many people will read it and comment on it. If I wanted to expose myself to ridicule, I could have done it in a much easier way by dropping my pants in the supermarket. I can't make any money from you unless you want to buy forex signals or advice from me, which doesn't cost you very much anyway. That said, I promise you that if you apply the principles in this book, you will achieve greater success in life.

I also want to let you know that I'm still working on disciplining myself. As I wrote this book, I was reminded of Robert Pirsig's insightful comment at the introduction of his book, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: that the book wasn't very accurate as far as fixing motorcycles was concerned, but the repairs to his bike were really just metaphors, anyway. I feel like I've written a book about discipline not because I was born with it, but rather because I've spent my life trying to compensate for my lack of it. My conversations with many others like me have made this journey not only fruitful but spiritually fulfilling.

Lastly, before you dive into this book, I want to encourage you to do a few things: write in the margins of this book. Take notes. Think this stuff through. Send copies to close friends and ask them to discuss it with you. I don't care how many times you copy this book and send it to friends as long as you don't change the writing *inside* of the margins or say that you wrote it. Think as many thoughts as you can on this subject. Then tell me what you've discovered.

Email me at: [rob@robbooker.com](mailto:rob@robbooker.com). I always answer every email that I receive.

Please let me know about your journey to become more disciplined.

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# 1

## DISCIPLINE IS THE GREAT SEPARATOR

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Discipline is what separates human accomplishment from human failure. It is what distinguishes bad from good. It is the Grand Canyon separating good from Great. Superior performance from mediocre accomplishment. A+ from C-. 10 pips up from 100 pips down. Discipline breathes life into every aspect of life; the lack of discipline sucks energy from all endeavors, characteristics, qualities, attributes, projects, goals, and people. Life can be led without discipline but it cannot be led well. This isn't something I believe because it sounds good. It's something I believe because I've lived **with** discipline and **without** discipline; I've



talked to hundreds (maybe thousands) of people who have done the same; in every case, the disciplined life was the happy life.

For a long time, I felt like a failure. I would try new trading strategies, new ways of thinking, new goals, new relationships – but I would never be satisfied. During this time of my life I **wanted** to improve. For every goal, I didn't lack desire. But things seemed to stall after a while. I lost interest in the goals, the commitments, plans, or relationships. By moving to the next project, I would re-energize myself temporarily.

Repeatedly, I'd set a goal (sometimes the same one) and then lose steam somewhere along the way. Or I'd begin a book and then fail to complete it. Or, I'd start a relationship and blow it because I wasn't disciplined enough to love unselfishly. Worst of all, I'd enter a trade, set my stops and limits, then completely forget about those stops and limits. I lost a lot of money that way. I was gambling with my trades, my relationships, and my life.

Inevitably, I'd start over, promise myself I wouldn't do the same thing again....

Life became for me a series of **next** followed by **next**. Most of the time, I didn't consciously move from one to the other; I usually skipped to the next project with the rationale that I had *finally found* what I was meant to do. With each *next*, I brought back the spark of life that I had missed. However, each *next* brought a smaller and less enduring amount of passion.

This process eventually became unbearable.

It became unbearable because I lacked the discipline to finish what I started.

Someone once said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. As far as I'm concerned, the person who said that was an idiot. Once I ate 14 scoops of ice cream in one sitting, but that didn't mean that I shouldn't eat ice cream any longer.<sup>1</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup> This happened on the day I "graduated" from 7<sup>th</sup> grade. My friends and I walked to the ice cream parlor, where I really did eat the 14-scoop Volcano. This was a disciplined success that I still treasure to this day.



*perfectly* okay for you to set the same goal over and over, as long as it's the right goal for you and you care deeply about succeeding. My life is proof that you can try things more than once (like relationships) and expect success every time, regardless and in spite of past failures. The problem with the search for discipline is that most of us are afraid to keep trying the same thing over and over – we quit too quickly, and therefore we proclaim ourselves sane because we accepted the apparent futility of our actions. Well, discipline is all about not giving up, and trying the same (right) thing over and over until you get it right.

I really believe that you and I cannot be exceptionally happy without discipline, in the same way that we cannot be exceptionally organized, wealthy, persuasive, or intelligent. We can be mediocre at *anything* without discipline (I have proven this time and time again). We can get through life just fine. We can be loved. We can enjoy our work. We can have a pleasant family life. If mid-level jobs, mid-level wealth, and mid-level happiness are acceptable to us, then acquiring discipline might not be worth the effort.

But I suspect that you're reading this book (and I wrote it) because we're unsatisfied with mediocrity. You're the kind of person who feels like they want more out of life and you're willing to improve any way possible. As far as the rest of the people out there – those who don't care if they improve – well, they're in good company! The nightclub of mediocrity is a great place to meet people. The majority of all humans unconsciously – or consciously – choose mediocrity. For a long time, I was a part of that mediocre majority.

Think quickly: who is the greatest person you have ever known? You can't answer that question and tell me that the person was mediocre. I'm not saying that the person was famous, or that the person didn't have any problems. I'm saying that you are impressed by that person because they were *more than ordinary*.

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It led to severe intestinal problems, but I always remind myself that every great accomplishment has its price.



And, more importantly, this person was extraordinary because they were – consciously or not – a disciplined person.

When I think of one of the greatest people I've known, I think of my aunt. She never played professional sports, ran a company, or appeared on television. She wasn't famous or rich. She was a psychotherapist in New York City. So, if she lacked fame and fortune, what made her great?

My aunt wrote her PhD dissertation on successful techniques of providing counseling to people with full-blown AIDS. These people had years to live (at most) and months to live (at worst). She counseled with these people. She helped them work through some of life's most painful issues: regret, sorrow, physical pain, and death. Most of her patients died before she completed her dissertation. I can't imagine the discipline that it required for her to finish this labor of love even as her patients passed away.

Without expectation of reward, she served these people selflessly and without judging them.

Here's an exercise for you:

Quick: think of that great person again. A person who has influenced your life for the better. Write in the blanks below why that person affected your life. Say more about that person:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I hope you'll feel comfortable sharing the story of this person's life with me. You can reach me at [rob@robbooker.com](mailto:rob@robbooker.com).



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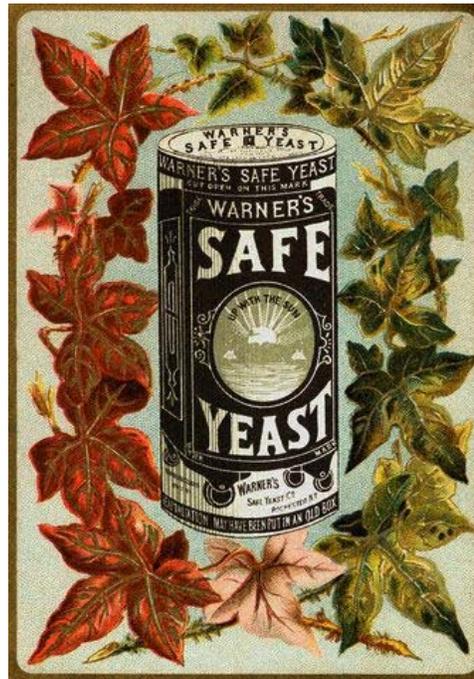
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Now that you've taken the time to think about this person's story, ask yourself a question: How many influential people, like the one above, do you know? Probably only one or two. Or very few. When I just wrote this question, I instantly thought of my aunt again, who worked with over 200 dying people in the late 1980's, comforting them, counseling them, without compensation. I have known very few people as unselfish as she.

She could have completed a dissertation of lesser importance. One that perhaps required fewer sorrowing experiences. But she made a choice to do something that her heart told her to do, and she disciplined herself to complete the research.

By refusing to accept the status quo, my aunt forever claimed a place in her nephew's life, and in the lives of those she served. Likewise, if **you** choose to reject mediocrity and settle only for superior performance from yourself, then you are putting yourself on the fringes of society. You are willing to do what your heart tells **you** to do, despite obstacles, sorrow, fear, distraction – all those things that would prevent us from succeeding. In a sense, you are willing to stand alone. Near the end of her research, as my aunt cried (and typed a bit of her dissertation), and then cried some more, she felt as alone as she had ever felt ... nearly every patient she had treated was dead.

To summarize, here's the paradox: Even though discipline is the great separator – and sets us apart from those who accept mediocrity, you'll also find that as you follow your heart with discipline, others will be attracted to you. You will influence the lives of others for good. You will be an example to those around you of the fact that all of us, no matter what, have a calling, and that you have the power to succeed.



## 2

### DISCIPLINE IS THE GREAT LEAVENER

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My wife, a pastry chef, tells me that when she bakes bread, she adds yeast as an ingredient – so that the bread will rise. In this way, yeast is a *leavener*.

She tells me that when she adds the yeast to the flour mixture, that the yeast begins to feed off the natural carbohydrates (sugars) in the flour. This produces carbon dioxide and alcohol. The carbon dioxide gives the rise – it forces the gluten structure (the flour mixture) to stretch and expand. The alcohol enhances the flavor.

Similarly, discipline is the great leavener of our lives. When added to our other natural attributes and our person ingredients, we stretch and expand.



Consider that every great accomplishment by our heroes depended on some human characteristic. Mother Theresa will forever be known for an overwhelming ability to love and care for others. Charles Lindberg will be known for his trans-Atlantic flight. Albert Einstein for the Theory of Relativity. Tiger Woods for his unrivaled talent as a golfer. Shakespeare. These are all examples that we're familiar with. None of these individuals were known, *per se*, for their discipline. They were known for other qualities or for their extraordinary accomplishments.

What allowed these people to expand on their natural talents and abilities to the point of becoming immortal examples of perfection in their chosen profession? What fueled the personal growth required to follow their dreams?

If we believed that these great people, including our personal heroes, were just *born* with the "natural" ability to succeed, we'd be missing 99% of what it took for him to do what he did.

Let's take Leonardo da Vinci as an example. I'm not saying that God had nothing to do with his creative talents. I'm not saying that he wasn't genetically wired for creativity, either. I'm not saying that the right side of his cerebral cortex wasn't more fully developed than yours or mine. But what I am saying is that his talents would have been completely irrelevant if he had never painted, sculpted, or written anything.

If Mother Theresa had never journeyed to distant lands to serve the poor, she would not have exemplified her natural charity for the less fortunate.

If Abraham Lincoln had never run for office (over and over) his picture wouldn't be on the penny, the map of the U.S. might look a lot different today, and you would never have heard mention of the Gettysburg address.

1%, or maybe even less, of what these people did, had anything at all to do with natural talent. I think it would be dishonest to say that these people weren't born with some degree of intrinsic ability. But it would also be a lie to say that you were born *without* any natural abilities. Whether you *use* and *develop* your abilities is the *only* relevant question.

Let me repeat that, because it bears repeating:



**Whether we discipline ourselves to use our talents should be the focus of our energy. Not whether we were born with more of a talent than someone else, or with the talents that we really wanted, or with any noticeable talents at all.**

Let's talk about trading for a moment. It's simply not relevant to ask *whether* you have any natural forex trading abilities. I can help you develop the ability to trade.

But, hey, once you throw yourself from the cliff and start trading on a live forex account, hopefully you've made a jump (safely) to the other side – not to the bottom. Hopefully, the strategy you took all that time to develop is going to be worth something. That's what this book is about. I want to talk to you about how to jump safely to the other side, and to do it better than anyone else.

Discipline will expand on your trading abilities. It will stretch you.

Thomas Edison, who patented 1,093 inventions, said that “Genius is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.” He failed thousands of times before succeeding at inventing the incandescent light bulb. Discipline drove him to succeed despite initial failures. His discipline – he often worked over 20 hours per day – stretched his natural abilities. I suppose there were many inventors as inspired or intelligent as Edison. History proves that few were as disciplined.

My first important job came during college when I interviewed to become a supervisor of Italian language instruction at my university. I needed the money. I had recently become engaged to be married, and I had no idea how I could go to school and support my family unless I received an increase in pay. When the supervisor's job opened, I knew I had to get it.

I already spoke Italian. I had been a good Italian instructor. But I didn't have the “natural” ability to supervise. I certainly didn't have the natural ability to interview for the supervisor's job. So what did I do? First I made a list of everything I needed to succeed in this interview. Here's the list I made:

Meet boss. Find out what he looks for. Practice what he looks for until it feels natural. Play the game to win.



For the week leading to the interview, I talked to every other language supervisor I could find. I talked to everyone. I talked to the individual whom I was meant to replace. Having gathered as much information as I could, I started practicing the interview. Every night, I would grab anyone I could find and I would practice the answers to my interview questions. Some of these people had no idea what I was saying in Italian. But I must have practiced at least 20 times before the day of the interview. By that time, I was ready.

I took that list and I disciplined myself to check off every entry. One night, I practiced in front of the same (poor) person at least 15 times. As I completed these tasks, I realized that my natural abilities were stretched. My comfort zone was expanding: I realized that I *could* interview for this job. That I did have the abilities necessary.

I aced the interview.<sup>3</sup> I got the job and I earned enough money to help support my small family.

Now let's talk about trading.

Before I started trading on the foreign exchange, I was in a similar predicament: the company I had founded wasn't doing well. My job was becoming unbearable at the same time that the company was headed into its 400<sup>th</sup> crisis. I had to make a decision on where to focus my efforts – I couldn't run the company *and* do something else. But I needed income, and I needed it right then.

I knew that if I focused, if I disciplined myself, I would be successful. I knew that if I spread out my efforts, I would fail.

I dropped everything and learned everything I could about the foreign exchange. Imagine stepping off into the dark, into the unexplored regions of your life, without a net. Well, that's what I did. A lot of people I was close to thought I was crazy. I knew that if I didn't dedicate myself completely, I wouldn't succeed. More on this later. For now, I want you to know that the first step in discipline is the following:

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<sup>3</sup> I am a famously nervous interviewee. I remember that when I interviewed for this job, I was smiling the entire time. I was happy to be there interviewing, because I had prepared. I'm smiling now as I remember it, because it was one of the only times in my life that I've interviewed for a job and not been sweaty-palms-nervous.



**A disciplined person knows he must be willing to dedicate himself 100% to the success of a chosen venture. No matter what it takes, he's willing to endure.**

Think of a time when you succeeded. Think of a time when you were able to accomplish something difficult, or important. How did you feel back then? How did you prepare for, or make it through, that moment?

Then ask yourself: What are you working on right now? Are you on the hunt for a job? A promotion? A better relationship? Whatever it is, discipline can help you expand and stretch your natural abilities. Right now, write down everything you would need to be successful at this endeavor:

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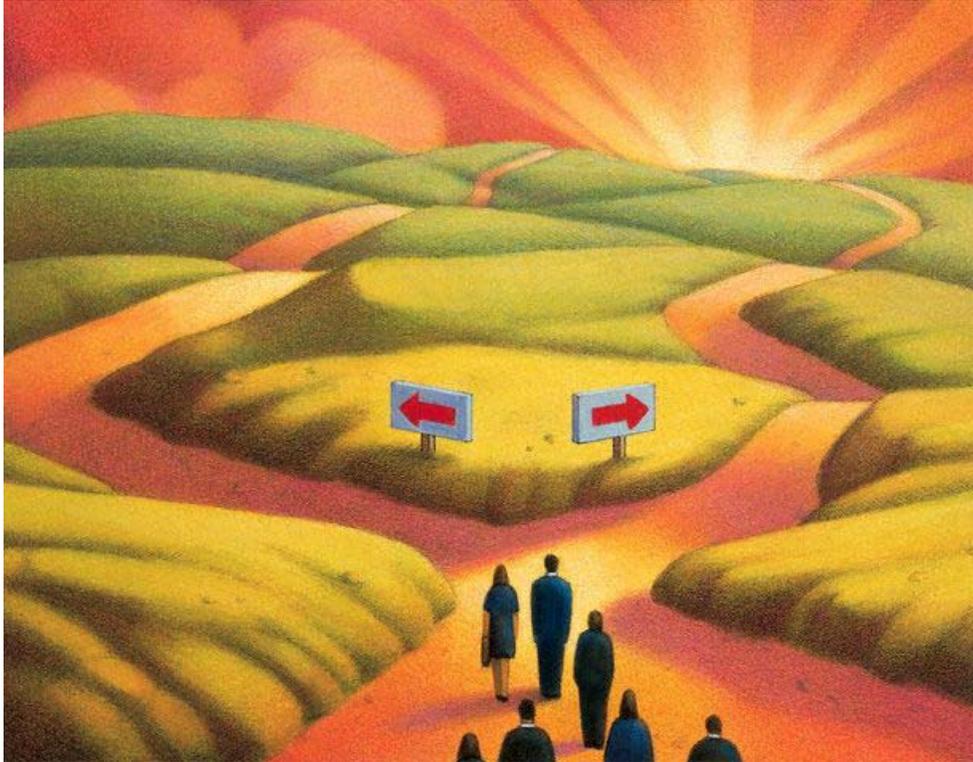
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Discipline will help you get all those things done. You might have to get up early, stay up late, or move out of your comfort zone. But as you do those things, you will realize that your talents are expanded.

If you make that list, and you dedicate yourself to doing everything it takes to accomplish your goal, your natural abilities will be stretched. And you'll be ready for the challenge.



### 3

## DISCIPLINE IS A CHOICE

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Often when I speak with people, they tell me, “Rob, I know I should be more disciplined. But just knowing it isn’t enough. I’m just *not a* disciplined person.” If you have ever felt this way, then this chapter is for you.

Discipline is a choice. There is no such thing as a person *born* disciplined. There are just people who choose to pursue a life of discipline and those who don’t.

Daniel Goleman, in his ground-breaking book, *Emotional Intelligence*, which you should read, discusses the “Marshmallow Experiment.” At an early age, a set of



children were told to sit at a table in a room for an hour, and were given one marshmallow. They were told that if they did not eat the marshmallow during that one hour, they would be rewarded with an entire bag of marshmallows. If they ate the single marshmallow, they wouldn't receive any more.

It turns out that the children, who at an early age had the discipline to resist the marshmallow, were more successful later in life in terms of financial wealth, education, and satisfying relationships.

When I first read this book (during law school), I thought to myself, "Well, so much for me. I'm sure I'd eat the one marshmallow *now*, let alone when I was five years old." I'll agree that, for some of us, it's not the most encouraging story.

But my message to you is that you feel like you can't resist the marshmallows of life, then you're in good company. Help is on the way. Take heart from this simple truth:

## It's never too late to learn discipline!

So, if you feel like saying, "I wasn't *born* with discipline," then I feel like saying: I wasn't either! We weren't born with the ability to eat without help. We didn't leave the hospital and go buy cigars for our dad's friends. We learned those things. Likewise, we can learn discipline. If you can read this book, you can learn discipline. In fact, the decision you made to read it in the first place is part of your decision to do anything it takes to become successful at disciplining yourself. The fact that you've made it this far in the book is another sign. Believe me, there are a lot of people out there who want to be successful but who aren't willing to do whatever it takes to get what they want.

So, to summarize, you'll find that all of us were born with the *potential* to discipline ourselves. I'll also remind you that I'm not asking you to have as much discipline as a Marine drill sergeant. I'm asking you to develop as much discipline as you are able. Your greatness is achieved by increasing your discipline, not by reaching Charles Atlas' level of discipline. This bears repeating:

**It's perfectly fine to emulate another's discipline, or learn from it. But you are not in a race or competition to acquire more of it than anyone else. You are only in a race against yourself. If comparing yourself to other people motivates you,**



**then by all means do it. But be warned that there will always be someone else who appears to have more discipline or less discipline than you. You will always be happier if you simply strive to improve yourself, measuring your progress against your own abilities.**

When my aunt completed her 400-page dissertation, one week before defending it, she breathed a sigh of relief and shut off her computer. The next day, when she awoke, she walked to her computer and – tried to turn the computer back on so she could print the dissertation.

And the computer bombed.

She gasped. Was the entire dissertation lost? Would she have to start writing all over? First tears, then fear.

What would she do?

Right there, she determined that she would borrow a friend's computer and start writing immediately. She faced all of those sorrows, all of those people she had treated – she faced them all over again as she started to write.

She finished on time. But she could have easily made a different choice.

My wife and I tried to have children for 6 years. Finally, one January evening, when we were just a week away from being certified to adopt by the state of West Virginia, we discovered that our greatest dream came true: she was pregnant. Two months later, the ultrasound showed that he was a boy. A month later, we decided him to name him after my father and I. We bought a crib, a stroller, clothes.

Five months later, we raced to the hospital at 1am because I couldn't detect a heartbeat when I leaned my ear against her womb.

An hour later we started to lose hope.

An hour after that the doctor told us that there was no hope for our son.

And later that same morning, on September 23, 2003, my wife had to give birth – naturally – to our dead son. Could she have chosen to give up? Sure. Would anyone have criticized her? Absolutely not. Instead of taking on a defeated attitude, my wife



bravely cried and pushed and cried and pushed. The doctor had told her that under the circumstances, her labor would last 12 to 18 hours.

It lasted 2.

It took discipline for my wife to simultaneously lose hope that her dreams would come true on that day, but still give birth. It took discipline for her to trust that another child would come and not become furious with me, or with God, or with the doctors. This doesn't mean that she wasn't heartbroken. What I'm saying is that she made a conscious choice to discipline herself under the most difficult of circumstances.

Choosing discipline isn't easy. But it's worth it.



## 4

### **DISCIPLINE: MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD**

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Discipline is a miracle more valuable than gold because it's what *gets* you the gold. We've all heard stories about the gold miner who was just a foot or an inch away from the vein of gold before he gave up.

**When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.**

- Harriet Beecher Stowe

In the end, I'm only writing and distributing this book so that I can help you, in some small way, to achieve what you want to achieve. If you look back on your life to



the most happy moments, and wish for that feeling again – but don't know quite how to get it – then read on. We're going to pick up the pace on the path to discipline right now.



## 5

### THE FOUR ENEMIES OF DISCIPLINE

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I think I've started a work-out program at least every year for the past 10 years. Now, that's not so extraordinary, is it? For sure, you know someone who has done the same. Failure at implementing an exercise regimen is commonplace. But what makes my failure in this arena so infuriating is that 12 years ago, I implemented an exercise program and lived up to it for 2 years! Somewhere along the way, I lost my discipline. I stopped working out.

One of the greatest questions in my life has been to understand not only why I never finished a project, completed a goal in the first place, but how in the world I can screw something up that *I've already proven possible before*.



Have you ever discovered a great trading strategy, implemented it successfully, and then one day just blown the whole thing to pieces by violating the strategy? I've done that before.

The problem lies in the lack of Discipline. And the absence of Discipline is always the result of the *appearance* of one of these Four Enemies.

## enemy 1: fear

Fear is the first enemy of discipline. We fear the ability to achieve what we set out to do, so we never try in the first place (failure from the start) or we simply give up along the way (failure mid-stream). Much has been made of the theoretical “fear of success” vs. the “fear of failure,” and frankly, I've experienced both kinds, plus some others for good measure. Understanding the different kinds of fear is an excellent way to identify which you struggle with the most.

**Fear of Failure.** This is probably the most common. This is the reason that salespeople fail to make their cold calls, and it's why shy people end up really lonely. If you struggle with a fear of failure, you're in good company. Fear of failure also includes instances when we just stop trading because we're afraid we've lost so much of our account value that the only way to stop losing is to not trade at all.

**Fear of Success.** This sounds a bit silly at first, but many of us live with a fear of what will happen if we succeed. One of the saddest moments in my life was when I realized that a person I love dearly was so afraid of having to accept success that she decided to sabotage her own victories. People who fight this fear often are worried that if they are successful, the world will expect more of them than they are able to provide.

**Fear of the Unknown.** Most of us have felt this when we get lost while driving. Once in high school, I summoned the courage to beat back fear of failure: I asked a beautiful, smart girl on a date. She accepted. On the night of the date, I was so afraid of



what to do on a date that I never even picked her up. When I saw her at school, I avoided her. I never spoke another word to her. Enough said about that experience.

When you're afraid of what you don't know, you're more inclined to *almost* implement a new trading strategy. For instance, you'll open a live account and then not quite follow through on everything you learned from the demo account experience. You're afraid of what will happen if you just let the strategy fly with real money. That's a good way to lose your live account.

There are many other examples of types of fears that we encounter. Succumbing to these fears gives one a sense of comfort. A salesperson, when he decides to not make a difficult cold call, feels more comfortable. Of course, he has succumbed to an enemy of discipline. In this way, each of us trades the chance for success each time we succumb to these fears.

Giving into these fears doesn't make you more comfortable in the long term, however. My first job after law school was my big introduction to the world of finance, as I worked as a headhunter for top-level financial professionals. I did very well at that job because every morning when I walked in the door to work, I picked up the phone immediately and started making as many cold calls as I could. Every evening I made a list of cold calls to make the next day. I was uncomfortable when I made the calls. I felt very comfortable when I closed deals *because* I had been willing to make those calls. On the other hand, in 9 months of work I watched the four people that sat around me fail miserably – they didn't make as many calls, and they eventually felt far less comfortable.

## **enemy 2: distraction**

Distraction is the experience of trading what you should be thinking about for what is more convenient or urgent. It's when you daydream when you ought to be driving (this is bad); it's *not* when you daydream while you're taking a Geometry test (this is completely natural *and* harmless).

Distraction is not bad all the time. I think allowing ourselves to become distracted on a regular basis has some merit; in fact, I find a lot of comfort in allowing myself to



play a couple of rounds of a video game in the middle of the workday. Letting yourself go for a while can be healthy.

But it can also be destructive.

After the fifth grade – and the year that I had decided, once and for all (at age 10) that I was going to be a writer – I promptly forgot everything that I had decided. I entered the sixth grade, I started having to switch classes. I discovered that girls existed (although they did a fine job of ignoring my existence for the next, well, forever). Instead of writing, which I still loved, I let the talent slip. For at least two more years I didn't pick up a pen and paper.

I lost critical time when I did that. When I became distracted and allowed myself to pursue other activities, instead of just writing for a few minutes a day, I established a precedent. During that time, I did **think** of writing. But I started to become used to other things. Over time, those other things commanded my attention. Writing was all but forgotten.

Distraction is especially bad for you if you succumb to it immediately after making an important decision. Sadly, we're all quite good at this. There are so many shows, people, projects, and goals that are competing for our attention. We don't always succeed in keeping our eye on the ball.

I have trained hundreds of forex traders across the globe, and not a few of them have bragged to me about what kinds of things they can do while trading – they play with the kids, balance the checkbook, work at a day job, or some other activity. In every case I have advised the trader to stop trying to do two things at once. For a while, putting one foot in the world of trading and the other someplace else won't be a big deal. But when the stakes get higher, you need to be focused. Because trading is Web-based, many traders succumb to online pornography while trading. This practice is not only repugnant, but it's destructive to your trading profits.

The exercises in this book will help you stay focused on what's important. And they won't interfere with your natural right to completely disregard responsibilities every once in a while.



### enemy 3: delay

They say that necessity is the mother of invention – that when we're under pressure to produce, we become more innovative. I propose that procrastination is the mother of regression.

As I've toured the country and spoken to traders, I've been told that procrastination is just a *system* that works well for some people. I've been told that sometimes, you just can't think clearly about a project until the very last minute. I accept that as valid. It's happened to me many times. At the last minute I seem to have the mental resources to complete a project.

If that's a valid point, then why would delay be an enemy of discipline?

Procrastination, or delay, is the act of avoiding what you know you must do. It doesn't build character. It saps you of character. It might bring out a lot of creativity, but it robs you of precious time, and you subject yourself to unnecessary pressure.

I'll put it as simply as possible: when you procrastinate, you might find a huge resource of energy to complete a project – but you don't have any time to review what you've done. I think you and I are prone to do some of our best work under pressure. I also think that we're sometimes prone to do some of our *worst* work under pressure.

Now, if you're absolutely, positively, motivated to do your very best work at the last minute, then I suggest that you follow the advice of Jerry Hirschberg, the designer responsible for many of Nissan's most innovative vehicles. He says that if you're motivated and inspired by tight deadlines, then you should set preliminary deadlines. I think it's a fantastic exercise, and we'll talk more about it later.

This applies to trading, too. There is a pervasive belief amongst traders (both equity and forex traders) that time of day matters little when trading – that you can make profits any time of the day. So, for U.S.-based traders, they decide that they don't have to get up in the middle of the night to catch the European and Asian markets. Well, this is a form of procrastination: trading sleep for profits. If you want to be successful at trading on the foreign exchange, you have to be willing to consistently get up and get going at the same time every day.

Worse yet, many traders I meet with have lost substantial amounts of money by staying in a losing trade for too long – procrastinating the exit. This can drain your



account faster than anything. It can tear you to pieces, too. If you have this problem, or the opposite (exiting too quickly), increased discipline will give you everything you need in order to make better, more profitable trading decisions.

## enemy 4: despair

There simply doesn't exist a more pernicious enemy to discipline. We are all susceptible to some form of despair, and we've all battled it. Some of us have been more successful than others. But when it gets hold of us, it saps of us of our discipline faster than anything else.

Here's a letter I received that makes the point better than I ever could:

I always dreaded coming home, but on the day that I received my 12<sup>th</sup> grade report card I was more fearful than ever. My dad expected the very best in me – this was the same man who resolved his problems with my mother by yelling, by breaking furniture, and by threatening to do things much worse.

I carried in my hand three Cs and two As. I knew that if I revealed the report card to my father, that anything was bound to happen. But I also knew that if I didn't show it to him, he was going to find out about it anyway.

I thought about running away from home that day.

Instead, I showed him the report card.

And he beat me. I let him hit me. He chased me down the steps of our house (no one else was home) and he told me that I was stupid. He said a lot of other things, but when he told me I was stupid, well, that hurt more than anything else. He chased me down the stairs and beat me with his boot.

I'll pause here and ask you: what would your reaction be?



When he was finished, he trailed off into the master bedroom and left me in the hall. He was still yelling at me from his room. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know if I should throw myself from my bedroom window, run to my friend's house, or call the police.

Instead of doing any of those things, I simply returned to my bedroom and studied. No one was going to call me stupid.

I have since graduated from medical school. My dad remained violent. He eventually lost custody of my brothers and sisters. But I seriously look back on the day I brought that report card home, and I realize that **he's** the one that failed. It turns out I *wasn't* stupid.

Our reactions to the bad things that happen to us are completely within our control. The things that happen to us – well, that's an entirely different story: sometimes we control our circumstances and sometimes, as in the letter above, we don't. Choosing to lose hope would have left the letter-writer with hardly the will to live. Now she's living a life of care – tending to the needs of the sick. We are all better off that she decided to reject the enemy of depression.

When you trade currency online for a living, you're going to get burned eventually. At times like that, it's easy to lose hope. When you lose hope, you lose everything. You've beaten yourself. The best solution to this is to get the help you need to improve your discipline and your trading abilities. It's not enough to just have a positive attitude, and falsely believe that everything will turn out okay. You have to get up and do something.

Discipline is the enemy of despair. You can do much to regain hope by engaging in the activities in this book.



## 6

### THE FIRST ELEMENT OF DISCIPLINE

#### *Choosing your path*

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Indiana Jones, in the movie where he goes on the quest for the Holy Grail, is obsessed with finding one of the world's ancient treasures. At the end of the movie, his arch rival beats him to the room where they must choose from between an array of chalices and cups. When they choose the wrong cup, and are, well, blown to pieces, the old man guarding the room states, "They chose *unwisely*."

I think we all feel sometimes, to some degree, that we've suddenly chosen the wrong path for ourselves and that impending doom awaits. Or we feel that we haven't chosen a path at all. The first element of discipline is to choose the right path for you.



To say that you should discipline yourself in every facet of your life – even in activities that have no value, or that do not support your long-term happiness -- would be to say that you should just go ahead and stop breathing now, because you'd kill yourself trying. Once you meet me, and I hope we get the chance to talk in person – you're going to realize that I'm not the most organized person in the world. Or you're going to recognize that I struggle with a tendency to interrupt other people. If you got to know Einstein, you'd realize he didn't even know his own phone number.

When asked why he never bothered to memorize his number, he said that he didn't know it because he rarely needed to call himself on the phone and, if he did, he could always just look up his number in the phone book.

The Miracle of Discipline all starts with Einstein's thought. We all have to stop and think about where we're going to start on this journey. To put it one way, are you trying to memorize all the numbers in the phone book? Don't start by trying to discipline yourself in every aspect of your life. You'll only find that:

1. You don't know what things are really worth disciplining yourself for.
2. You might become very good at replacing the toilet paper in your bathroom, and then miss out on your life's calling completely.

Your development of discipline is really going to be a wild goose chase unless you stop and think about what the object of development will be.

For example, once you determine your calling in life – what really inspires and motivates you -- you'll have the opportunity to pursue that calling successfully, by applying the principles of discipline.

That said, the *second* half of this book – still to come – centers on finding your life's mission. Before we get to that, though, we're going to concentrate on acquiring the basic talent of discipline.

I'm going to assume, for the purposes of this book, that you've already decided that you are happy becoming an expert forex trader. If that's not true, and if you're trading just to make money, you might want to reconsider. Trade because it's what you want to do, not because it's what might make you money.



# 7

## THE SECOND ELEMENT OF DISCIPLINE

### *Following Through: The basic talent of discipline*

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The activities in this chapter will sometimes be difficult, and I encourage you to start with the easier ones and move on to the more difficult ones. There is a great advantage in developing discipline step by step: you ease yourself into behaviors and attitudes that may represent a 180 degree shift in your present lifestyle. I only promise that these exercises have helped many, many others. If you apply them to your life, you will



develop discipline. You'll notice that none of them have anything specific to do with trading currency. That's intended – discipline isn't something that you can compartmentalize into one area of your life. You have to develop it *generally* before you can implement it *specifically*.

Remember the first time that you asked someone on a date. Or the first time that you opened a forex account. Or the first time you negotiated your salary.

Just doing those things required you to:

1. Make a decision.
2. Take action to implement the decision.

Doing those two things, in fact, is the Miracle of Discipline. It's just a two step process: one, you make a decision. Two, you implement the decision. Perhaps what you did when you negotiated your salary wasn't a big deal; well, that's the Miracle. It's not as difficult as we sometimes make it. Of course choosing a breakfast cereal isn't difficult – but it requires discipline (Make a decision. Implement.).

Because you're so used to doing some things, the “discipline” to do them comes naturally. You make a simple (unconscious) decision to breath, then you do it. It's done with little or no effort.

The following activities will help you acquire what I call the basic talent of discipline, which, when masters, allows you to follow through with anything you decide to do.

Once acquired, this basic talent for self-discipline will positively impact every facet of your life – especially in discovering and pursuing your calling in life.

The first exercises tackle discipline in general – learning to resist the marshmallow. These exercises take very little time (at the most, three days for the most complex of them). They'll form the foundation of your capacity for self-discipline. Whenever you run out of steam in the future, on a major project, goal, or commitment – you should return to these activities. They're over so quickly that you hardly knew they happened.

The second set of exercises helps you take your plans – your talents, your goals, your desires – and use the Miracle of Discipline to achieve superior performance. It's the



most powerful talent that you can learn. It's the energy that will propel you to greatness in whatever you choose to do.

## **DISCIPLINE 201: TALKING TO YOURSELF**

Perhaps the greatest example we have of discipline are those soldiers who during war were interrogated, imprisoned, and tortured. Many of these men were able to resist defeat because they continued to tell themselves that they could make it through. Those soldiers endured some of the most excruciating torture that any of us could possibly imagine.

A lot of people believe that self-affirmation is not cool. Come to think of it, they probably spend some amount of time telling themselves it's not cool. There may be a connection there. Instead, I'm going to side with those who made it through the terrors of torture in wartime. I think you should too, and here's the first exercise that is absolutely essential:

Start telling yourself today that you are a disciplined person.

You should repeat to yourself that you can be disciplined, that you are disciplined, that you are not going to give up in your efforts to be disciplined, and that you're not going to become discouraged, ever, no matter what. I think you can come up with some very good language on your own, and that you should write down your thoughts on a 3x5 card that you carry with you. You should read it often. You should memorize it. You should change the language as time goes on.

Here are some affirmations that have been sent to me by readers:

**I'm a disciplined person, dammit! Nothing is going to get in the way of me becoming more disciplined. I'm going to make a lot of mistakes along the way but I'm not giving up, and I refuse to accept mediocrity. I am able to discipline my life and achieve my goals.**



**I am a positive person. Even though I don't like my job on some days, I can be disciplined enough to achieve my goal of advancing my career, getting a raise, and moving out of this department. I won't let others bring me down. I make the decisions about how I feel, and I choose to feel excited about my plan to become disciplined.**

And then, here's the one I'm using right now:

**You can do anything. You can get up early. You can work out every day and eat right. You can repay others for the kindnesses they showed you. You can be disciplined in your journey to achieve these things. You do not have to give into grief.**

The examples above might not work for you, but that's okay. I encourage you to write your own affirmations, and *use* them. I encourage you to say them out loud, not just in your head. If you say them out loud, you run the risk of having someone else hear you. I think it's really important that you don't feel any fear about having other people know that you're striving to become more disciplined. Once someone else is part of your journey (something we'll talk about below), there is more incentive for you to accomplish your goal of becoming more disciplined.

In the end, it's simply critical that you do this, whether you read the 3x5 card, or say something out loud in front of your mirror, or repeat this in your mind while you carpool to work or while you exercise. Many people I know tape their thoughts and then listen to them while they walk or exercise. I think that's a great idea!

### **DISCIPLINE 301: GET A COACH!**

When I long ago first decided to embark on a journey to develop discipline in my life, I seriously considered joining the military. Why? I thought that if I attended boot camp, then I'd be put through enough training in discipline that it would change my life forever for the better. But, in the end, I realized that full time military service wasn't for



me. Was I doomed to failure? Of course not! But I could certainly still learn from the techniques used by the military. I could still appropriate from them parts of the system they use in order to discipline new recruits.

When you recruit a Discipline Coach for yourself, you automatically and immediately increase your discipline. Having a coach is like having a personal drill sergeant, only without all the yelling (unless that's what works for you, I suppose). This is the person to whom, for a limited time, you're going to hand over some control over your life. I know that sounds really freaky to some of you, but I'm not asking you to engage in something evil or kinky. I'm just inviting you to allow another person that you trust to follow up on you on a regular basis. You're going to find that there a lot of benefits to doing this.

First, you're going to have to answer to someone. You'll be responsible to reporting to someone besides yourself. This is important because we all break commitments to ourselves. If you're perfectly honest with yourself all of the time, then forget what I just said (and you probably don't need to read anything further). But if you're like 99.9% of the human population, you give yourself a bit more slack than you sometimes deserve. I think you should recruit a Coach – and commit to be 100% honest with them – and ask them to follow up on you. Tell them it's not going to take a lot of their time (but realize that if they're not willing to at least take a little bit of time for you, then you might be asking the wrong person).

James Collins, management guru and author of the excellent book “Good to Great”<sup>4</sup>, encourages goal-oriented people to set catalytic mechanisms in their life. “Catalytic Mechanism” is a complicated way of saying that you should put a system in place that makes it harder for you to mess up on your goal. For example, you might tell your Discipline Coach that if you achieve your weekly goals for developing discipline, or complete on of these exercises, then you will be allowed to reward yourself with something that you really want. Or, if you don't make your goals, then you'll be penalized. I think the only reason I finished this book on time is that I engaged my wife as my Discipline Coach. If I didn't finish each chapter on time, then I owed her \$500,

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<sup>4</sup> Chapter 6 in Jim's book is a wonderful discussion of how a Culture of Discipline inside of a company can lead to superior performance for the entire organization. The principles he discusses can, with little effort, be applied to your personal life.



which she could take right out of the business bank account. Needless to say, I finished some chapters early, because I really, really, didn't want to give up \$500, plus explain to my business partner why \$500 was missing from the account.

Just as easily, I could have taken money out of the system – for example, I could have told my wife that if I didn't finish a chapter on time, then she could have given me a wedgie in public. Or shaved a Mohawk in my hair while I slept. The point is, give your coach some power. Is this a game? Of course it is! Is it silly? Of course it can be. The point is that if discipline were something that came naturally to you, then you wouldn't be reading this book and I wouldn't have written it. Catalytic Mechanisms, used with your Discipline Coach, can be very powerful.

Second, you're going to have someone close to you that can give you feedback on your progress. How are you going to know how much progress you're making? Ask your coach on a weekly basis to talk to you about your progress. Ask your Coach if you're making any real stupid decisions that are detracting from your ability to be disciplined.

A Coach is particularly helpful with your trading account. People pay me to be their Coach, because I've been doing this for a while and I can help them learn discipline and trading skills all at the same time. But you could use your spouse or sibling or roommate or your children as Forex Coaches. Just report back to them every day on your discipline, whether you followed your trading strategy: if you didn't, make sure it hurts. If you followed through on your strategy (even at a loss), then give them the power to reward you.



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# We now interrupt this e-book

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Stop and consider what you've just done with the first two exercises. You'll find, that as you complete them, that you are already more disciplined in some other areas of your life – areas that you didn't plan on changing at first. This is a natural effect. You're going to find a lot of a power in being disciplined enough to use self-affirmations and get a coach. Don't be surprised if you're already seeing positive benefits in other areas of your life. Don't be surprised if your Coach helps you r

emember to exit trades when you're supposed to, or set appropriate limit orders on your trades.

But beware! The thrill of these first victories will fade unless you raise the bar. And that's what we're about to do.



### **DISCIPLINE 401 : WAKE UP REALLY, *REALLY*, EARLY.**

If you're already upset with me, then you need to know that I'm not going to apologize to you. I'm only asking for you to do it for one day. That's not so hard, is it?<sup>5</sup>

Tomorrow, wake up three hours early. If you only get three hours of sleep per night, then don't go to sleep. **I'm serious.** I think you should use some judgment here – like, not trying this if you're a bus driver on the day before a cross-country trip for a group of elementary school children. But, also, I'm serious when I say that you shouldn't wimp out on this one. Really give it a go.

Here's what you should do:

Set an alarm outside your sleeping area. Make it very loud. Or, get your Discipline Coach (if possible) to splash water or hot coffee on you. Or, as a safer alternative, have the coffee pot start brewing a lot earlier than usual. Do what you have to. But do it. After you're awake, take a shower. If you don't take a shower every day, then shame on you. Take one, and your associates will thank you for it. (My grandpa used to say that when he was growing up, his mother made him take a bath every week, whether he needed it or not). Or get dressed right away. Or eat breakfast. Just do whatever it is

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<sup>5</sup> If waking up really early *is* too hard for you, for medical reasons, then just wake up a little early. But talk to your doctor first. I'm not a doctor. I, frankly, don't even know how to spell doctor.



that you're used to doing as soon as you get up. Keep your regular schedule. Here's what is going to happen:

Tomorrow, you're either going to feel like crap, or like a million bucks. On this exercise, there is rarely a middle ground on reactions. Your body might reject his exercise and scream at you all day long about what an idiot you are (remember the affirmations). Or, you're going to get to work three hours early, finish a ton of stuff, and you're going to feel wonderful. You might finally have time to exercise, or watch television. But either way, and this is the point, you're going to have achieved something that is very difficult for you to do.

You're going to get a much better picture of the forex market if you wake up early and just watch the market. Without trading, just watching the market can help you understand the ebb and flow of price changes. It's something I ask my students to do every time I coach them. It's one of the first exercises because it teaches discipline (especially when you see a price spike and you are told that you are *not* allowed to trade).

I can prove the benefits of this exercise statistically, based on everyone I've ever coached. *Getting up early requires an enormous amount of discipline.* Most people have trouble simply getting up on time, let alone three hours early. The magic of this, however, is that it can be done even if you don't have a lot of discipline right now (see my techniques above for getting you out of bed). So, to put it more simply, this is an easy way to get some discipline real quick. And you only have to do it for one day!<sup>6</sup>

For now, at least.

## **DISCIPLINE 501 : EAT BETTER!**

The Onion, my favorite news source, broke this story in its 6 April 2000 issue:

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<sup>6</sup> People ask me all the time about my sleeping habits. If you're not interested, I understand. For those of you who are, here's what I do. I go to bed at about 11 pm and wake up at about 2:30 am. On Fridays I take a nap in the afternoons. On Saturdays I sleep in. When the baseball playoffs are on, I go to bed later.



## Funyuns Still Outselling Responsibilityuns

DALLAS—Funyuns, the world leader in artificial onion-ring-flavored and -shaped snack-food items, continues to enjoy an "overwhelming sales lead" over competing brand Responsibilityuns, the trade publication *Impulse Purchase Quarterly* reported Monday.

Responsibilityuns, launched last May in a bold attempt to challenge Funyuns' dominance of the faux-onion-ring snack market, have done "little to no damage" to its rival's sales through the first quarter of 2000.

"I just don't understand what went wrong," said James Connell, CEO of Delayed Gratification Foods, the Dallas-based maker of the sober, salted snack. "Everybody knows that responsibility and self-reliance are virtues which, with patience and persistence, bring rewards far greater than the fleeting pleasure of instant gratification. And, frankly, that is all our competitor has to offer. We felt sure that customers would respond to our product's image of hard work and long-term stability."



Responsibilityuns is not the only Delayed Gratification product to fail to connect with consumers. Also faring poorly are Proprie-Teez Fruit Chews, touted as "a blast of fruit flavor that maintains a basic level of decorum at all times"; Homework-First Nut Clusters, "the candy you only enjoy after buckling down and investing in your education and future"; and, perhaps most disastrously, Reputables, the "pre-wrapped snak-pak for churchgoing folk with a position of good social standing to maintain... in the home, the workplace, and the community at large."<sup>7</sup>

Obviously this article was a joke. But I encourage you to, as an experiment, take responsibility for your diet. I'm not asking you to go *on* a diet, although you might choose to think about a diet (but not yet – wait until we get to the life planning section of the book). I'm just asking you to watch what you're eating.

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<sup>7</sup> Copyright 2000, The Onion. For a subscription to the Onion, which will make you laugh, go to [www.TheOnion.com](http://www.TheOnion.com)



One of the reasons it's hard for most people to get up early in the morning is that they don't feed their body the types of things that it requires. If you put orange juice in your car and gasoline in your body, then neither your car nor your body is going to function properly. You and I both know that you can't feed yourself garbage constantly and expect to feel great.

So, the next exercise is a three day-er, and it's about the food you eat.<sup>8</sup> Right now, if you're like 100% of people, and I think you are, you have a 5% chance than you're eating 95% of the foods that 100% of nutritionists believe you should eat. If that's too complicated a way of saying it, then here it is:

You should eat fruit, vegetables, a little meat, and some carbs for the next three days. No junk food. Lots of fruits and veggies. No candy, McDonald's fries, or banana splits.

I challenge you to adhere to those three-day diets, at all costs. Because I'm asking you to do something over a three-day period, I believe you're going to need your Discipline Coach to help you. Here's how you can make this work:

First, determine what you're going to get if you succeed in sticking to this diet; or set an appropriate punishment (I dislike that word, but maybe it works for you) if you fail to succeed. I suggest, for this exercise, that you set a reward rather than a punishment. Here are some examples:

A sensible dessert. Perhaps a Volcano 50-scoop sundae.

Buy yourself something nice and inexpensive that you've been wanting. Perhaps a Volcano 50-scoop sundae.

You get the idea. Go ahead and treat yourself to something you love to eat at the end of this exercise. The reward of a Disciplined Diet is that you have a few calories to spare at the end. This exercise isn't meant to make you mad, or sick, or angry. I promise that in the end, it will make you more disciplined and happy.

Second, get your coach involved. On the Web site, I provide a form for listing / planning out your meals, and for reporting on what you actually ate. Here is the real-life chart from the first time I tried this exercise (and I am not making this up):

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<sup>8</sup> By the way, I'm not a doctor. So don't eat something that you're allergic to, even if it is supposed to be good for you. And don't ever eat snails. I don't care if the French eat them. You should not.



**Monday**

<b>PLANNED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>
Yogurt Granola Cottage Cheese Bananas	1,000,000 – calorie breakfast sandwich from unnamed national fast-food chain
Tuna fish sandwich Apple Juice	Nothing
Salad Chicken breast Steamed vegetables Potato	2,000,000 – calorie “hamburger” from unnamed national fast-food chain

As you can see, my day didn't go as planned. Gosh, does that sound familiar? Have you ever planned to stay on some kind of healthy diet, only to find that some *other* menu found its way into your stomach?

Why should you even attempt this exercise, then? Because it's difficult, and if you can get through it, you will prove to yourself that you can overcome something tough. It will build your discipline.

Personally, this is probably the hardest exercise in the entire book for me. I still try it every month or so, and I'm astounded at how good I feel if I can do it. It's tough for me because I absolutely love fast food. Hey, it's prepared by highly "trained" professionals, it's cheap, and, well, it's very tasty and fattening. (There, I said it.)

The reason I showed you my first chart is because you ought to expect this exercise to be tough. Eating right, as far as I'm concerned, is a lifelong effort. I'll post some thoughts on the Web site on the subject of creating a healthy eating plan for the rest of your life. But for now, just take the three day challenge.



Don't give up until you've really done it!

If it takes you more than three times to finish the program, send me an email with your phone number. I'd like to call and talk to you about what it took for me to get through this one.

Incidentally, you'll have a clearer outlook on trading when you follow this exercise. You'll be more alert, attentive, and you'll make better trades. I guarantee it.

## **DISCIPLINE 601: HAPPINESS IS A CHOICE**

If you've ever met someone who seems to be happy no matter what, then, like me, you've probably marveled at how they're able to keep a good attitude no matter what happens.

People who are happy have chosen to work at it. It's as simple as that. People don't just "get happy" for any long period of time because of external forces. We choose to react to every situation in our life – and sometimes we choose wisely.

So here's your exercise:

For the next three days, you're going to go on a diet. Not a diet keeping you from eating bad foods, but a diet from bad thoughts. This one was more difficult for me than the above Discipline Diet.

The next 72 hours of your life is now going to become free of negative thoughts. If you are tempted to dwell on a negative thought such as the ones below:

**Gossiping**

**Criticism of self or others**

**Vulgar language**

**Hate**

**Envy**

**List some of your own now:**

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Then you will have ten seconds to rid yourself of the thought. The best (and sometimes only) way to get rid of a negative thought is to replace it with a positive thought. Since you've got your affirmations listed out, then you should depend on those thoughts to replace what you're feeling.

On this exercise, please don't think that any of your personal circumstances make this impossible for you. You can accomplish this, even if it takes two weeks. They will be two of the best weeks of your life, and you will learn an incredible amount of discipline as you free your mind from the poisonous effects of negative thinking. That's the challenge – to cleanse your mind from negative thoughts.

If you mess up, then start over. So, if you're ten minutes into this activity, and you dwell on a negative thought for longer than 10 seconds, then you should start the clock again. People around you might think you're nuts (which is what happened to me), but they're going to like you a lot better.

As with other exercises, this one will improve your forex trading skills. Have you ever lost money and then felt a slight twinge of despair, anger, or frustration? Well, those attitudes have to be channeled. If you're upset about having lost money, you have to focus on what you're going to do about it, not on the fact that you lost it in the first place, or that you'll never get it back, or that trading currency just isn't for you. Get your thoughts in order, discipline your mind, and you will be a better trader.

## **DISCIPLINE 701: STOP PROCRASTINATING**

By now, if you've completed the other exercises, then you've got enough of what you need to complete this next one. I think a lot of us try to overcome procrastination before we learn some small degree of self-discipline. Because of that, I think most of us fail in our attempts to overcome procrastination.

This is a simple exercise, not meant to heal you of your procrastination – once again, this book isn't really about specific habits, but rather about generating the strength



within yourself to acquire good habits and quit old ones. With that in mind, I'd like to invite you to do the following:

**Pick a project, commitment, goal, or job that, if you fell behind on, would cause major stress and lots of problems.**

Take a moment to think about that project, answering the following questions.

- 1. How far along are you? How much work is left to be done? If the answer is less than a day, then here's my challenge to you: Get up early for the next four days and get the damn thing done. You've already learned to be disciplined. Get it done!**
- 2. If it's something you can do right now, then put down this book and do it. You will feel much better!**
- 3. If it's something that, in order to finish, causes you a great amount of anxiety (asking for a raise, making a cold call), stop worrying about yourself and get back to work. Stop dorking around. You're going to feel like a trillion Yen if you do this now.**
- 4. If the project is a long one and it will take many months to complete, then break it up into pieces. What can you do right now? Then see #2.**

When I travel around the world, no matter how many times I've done it, I get really nervous when I'm lost. I feel, at those times, reluctant to ask for help.

I was lost in Argentina one day. In the middle of Buenos Aires, I got turned around and realized that a) I didn't speak Spanish; 2) Even if I did, I didn't understand any of the reference points in order to understand the directions anyway.

I have a reputation for getting lost.

I asked for directions, anyway, and a complete stranger walked me back to the street I was looking for. What I found was that if I turned to the first stranger I saw in the morning, and talked to them, then I wasn't nervous about it for the rest of the day. Even if I didn't speak Spanish, I would talk to the news man outside our apartment



every morning for the two weeks we lived in Buenos Aires. For the rest of the day, I had no problem talking to people in broken Spanish – for directions, for menu recommendations, or for more directions.

The payoff in completing this exercise is twofold: first, you will learn some discipline, and it will serve you later. Next, you're going to be close to finishing an important project before it's due.

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# We now interrupt this e-book (again)

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If you want to learn a whole lot about overcoming procrastination, then I direct you to Michelle Tullier's superb work, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Overcoming Procrastination."<sup>9</sup> In the case that you have a project already, and you're really far behind, then I'd like to at least offer some advice that I've collected over the years from others like you and me. Skip this next part if it doesn't apply to your present situation.

**Pick a project, commitment, goal, or job that you report to someone else on, and for which you are behind schedule.**

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<sup>9</sup> Dr. Tullier would tell you and me that when we're in the middle of a procrastination problem, that we should "Stop, Look, and Listen." Her advice is truly extraordinary. I highly encourage you to read her book. And no, she's not paying me to say that. And when you "stop, look and listen," don't stop for too long, because that would end up as more procrastination.



Now, if you're like me, and if you've picked a serious issue, you could feel a lot of stress about this. You might be tempted to feel the pressure is too much to bear. That's how I used to feel, too.

First, you need to remember everything you've learned up to this point. If you've neglected to do the exercises, pretend for a moment that you have (especially if you're reading this book cover to cover and plan to do the exercises later).

1. **Your affirmations will come in handy.** Pull them out and remind yourself that everything is going to work out okay. Remember, too, that if you're stressed and unhappy, you're still you. If you're happy and positive, you're still you. So...remember the affirmations.

2. **Your coach is ready to help you.** Call your coach and tell him or her that you are, right now, in some deep doo-doo and you're going to need all the strength you can muster. Your coach might have some specific advice about this particular project. But I strongly encourage you to benefit from your disciplined decision to enlist a coach!

3. **Get up early and work on the problem.** You've already learned that it's possible to get up early. If you get up three hours early tomorrow, then you've got that much more time to work on the project. Or strategize with your coach. In any case, even if three hours isn't enough to help you, then you should get up early anyway and do your best. Just getting up early will remind you that you can do things that are really difficult (like finishing overdue projects).

4. **Eat good food.** Your body is going to be really stressed. You have the power to input some great fuel into your system! Eat lots of fruit, vegetables, and grains. If food is a motivating reward, then plan a reward snack for when you complete this project.

5. **Plan to have a good time.** After all, you're on the road to finishing this project!

Last of all, determine at this point – before you do any work – if you can get an extension on your deadline. If you can, then make a call right now, leaving a voice mail if necessary, and get yourself an extension.



There are three possibilities.

1. **You are behind because you took on a commitment that was too much for you to handle.**
2. **You are behind because you've been lazy, or you're in way over your head.**
3. **You are behind because something unexpected happened, and now you're saying to yourself "I'm *totally* screwed."**

You can ask for more time more easily if #1 or #3 is the case. But having more time is the key. Go get an extension if you can.

If you can't, then remember to do everything you've done up to this point, that we've already summarized. And go back to work. Cycle through the list of the disciplines you've already mastered – getting up early, talking positively to yourself, eating right, staying happy – and you'll be just fine. Whatever happens, never lose hope.



## **DISCIPLINE 801 : THE ELEVATOR PITCH**



Talk to the next person you stand with in an elevator. While I was writing this book in the library of a major U.S. university, I rode the elevator up and down between floors for 10 minutes just testing this out. Just as I entered the car, a young girl came running towards the elevator, yelling, “Stop, hold on! Hold on!” Now, by itself, the yelling unsettled my companions who were already in the car (we were in the library).

One of them actually pressed the “close door” button!

I held the door open, and the young girl jumped inside. Instantly, she began speaking to the rest of us.

“Wow. Barely made it!” She looked around, but didn’t receive eye contact from anyone.

She continued: “Thanks for holding it.”

I restrained myself from speaking, waiting to see what the other two in the elevator would say. They just looked at the ceiling. I could tell that the others in the elevator were nervous.

Finally after we had traveled upwards for a couple of floors, I decided to try an experiment to break the unsettling silence.

I hopped up and down twice.

I swear, if the girl to my left could have thrown herself from the car, she would have. And all I had done was a little hopping. Sure, the elevator bounced a bit, but it was no reason for alarm. The young, talkative girl smiled at me. Soon we were all out of the car.

How can we expect to get what we want out of life without involving other people in our cause?

So, here’s your exercise:

Break the silence in the elevator. It’s easy, it’s painless, and you’ll move one step closer to conquering the enemy of fear.

## **DISCIPLINE 901: THIS SPACE RESERVED**



## **DISCIPLINE 1001 : IT'S HARD TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY.**

Tell someone that you're sorry, even if it wasn't your fault. Or tell someone that you strongly dislike that you're sorry for harboring negative feelings about them. Be honest about those feelings, but apologize for storing up negativity about them.

You might not enjoy this exercise. You should do it anyway, because once you do this, you'll feel better about yourself, and there will be a lot of other things in life that you can accomplish, knowing that this exercise was more difficult.

This exercise, combined with the exercise about affirmations, is meant to cleanse your mind of anything that would obstruct your ability to trade with absolute mental clarity. You need to be focused. Focus requires discipline.

## **DISCIPLINE 1101 : TAKE IT ONE DAY AT A TIME**

This is one of the most insipid phrases in all of mankind: that you should take one day at a time. I mean, what do people think? That you'll take two Mondays and just move right on to Wednesday?

Regardless, it is true that some of us live so completely in the future that we don't concentrate on what we're doing. This is a form of distraction, and it will rob you of the discipline you need to finish a project.

When you find that you're distracted – and thinking too much about the future (the result of asking for a raise, the way your book will be received by the public, the end of the game you're playing) – I encourage you to follow these steps:

- 1. Stop!** Stop what you're doing. Take a break. If you're in the middle of a project, and you're consumed by distractions, just put down your work and take a deep breath.

- 2. Notice.** Notice your surroundings. Notice where you are. Think about what you're doing in *that* moment. Go back to thinking about what you need to do *now*.



Think about the future only if it's going to help you. But stay in the moment. Stay where you are.

Take your projects, your games, your relationships one step at a time. You'll learn that the discipline you acquire by staying within the moment will help you deal with stress, and fears, down the road.

Don't ever try to make a trade for 100 pips of profit. That's like trying to do 10 days of work in one trade. This never ends good; in the long run, you get greedy, and greed will kill you. It will sap you of your strength and discipline.

### **DISCIPLINE 1201 : SET SOME DEADLINES!**

If you get your best work done right before the expiration of a deadline, then start setting deadlines for yourself that precede the actual deadlines for your projects. Or ask your boss to set deadlines for you, but not tell you when the actual ones are – leaving you to wonder if you have more time – or no time.

Sometimes my creativity is only brought to the surface when I stare a deadline in the face and finally confront it. Until then, my brain is working on the project in the background. This is wonderful, but it's also a killer! If you don't tame the enemy of delay, you might find that all the creativity in the world can't save you if you've missed the deadline.

### **DISCIPLINE 1301 : GO ON A RETREAT.**

I have a friend whose father sits on the city council of a 100,000-citizen city in the Western U.S. He rejects the notion that he and his fellow council members should have to “retreat” in order to do their work. When it was suggested that the council adjourn for a few days and spend time at a regional resort to brainstorm solutions to the city's problems (some of which were substantial), he was the sole dissenting vote. He found no purpose in retreating. According to him, he felt the voters expected him to think creatively – and work diligently – right there in the city where he served.



Unfortunately for the rest of the council – and for most of us – we’re sometimes given projects that we just can’t finish without a break in the action. Or, sometimes, we simply can’t finish the work we’re assigned to do in our present surroundings.

Here’s another example. When it came time for me to write this book, compile the interviews, bring together the conversations I’d had with hundreds of people across the country, I simply couldn’t sit at my desk at work and write. The words just didn’t come. The phone rang, or a coworker would stop by to chat. Instead of doing what I knew I wanted to do, and instead of being able to “buckle down” and complete a very, very fulfilling project, I sort of gave up for a week or two.

The research sat on my desk. And sat.

Finally, I realized that if I stayed where I was, the book would never be written. There were too many distractions. The discipline I needed to finish the project wasn’t just going to come to me. I had to reach out and get it.

So here’s what I did: I bought a ticket to fly to California, where I golfed with my father for a week. How much did I think about the book while I was there? A lot. But I didn’t write a word. I just enjoyed myself. I rewarded myself for the research I’d done. And, when a week of golf passed by, I flew to another state, where I sat in the library of a major U.S. university, and wrote. And wrote.

And I finished the book. My retreat allowed me to focus. It deleted the distractions. I felt energized and mobilized by the absence of my regular surroundings.

So here’s your challenge:

If you’re stuck, and you’re in a rut, then take a retreat. It can be just a few hours (read the wonderful book [Fish!](#) and you’ll learn what just a couple of hours outside the office might lead to. The book is so short you can just sit in a bookstore and read it there.). It can be for a week. Please don’t think that you have to spend several thousand dollars on a getaway vacation. Just take some time for yourself. Relax a bit, and think about your project. But eliminate the distractions in your life.

You *can* battle the enemy of distraction. Or you can just run away from it! Here are some cheap retreats:

- 1. Go to Central Park, or your community’s closest park, and walk around.**



2. Go camping with your family or by yourself.
3. Take your project to a local or distant library and park yourself there and work on it.
4. Move all your important stuff to a different department in your company's building. Work there, where no one will find you.
5. Grab your team and commander a room at a local restaurant. Order your food backwards. Throw things at each other. Get back your sanity. Then get back to work.
6. Take your work home with you. Call in sick the next day(s) and work from there, if you have to.
7. Drive somewhere you've never been. Work there.

When you change your surroundings, two things happen: first, the ordinary distractions vanish. Second, if you're in a strange enough place, you won't have time to meet the locals and waste a lot of time. You'll have the time you need, and without the distractions, you'll have the discipline you need, to finish.

## CHAPTER 7 ROUND-UP

The first chapters were meant to help you understand that discipline is the fuel of accomplishment. It's what powers your performance. Once acquired, it's a ark-of-the-covenant advantage for you. Certainly you can lead a happy, mediocre life.

But you can lead a supremely happy life if you discipline yourself. There's more to life than pips. What else is out there for you besides trading profits?

The exercises in this first section are obviously just a start. If they've helped you increase your discipline, even just a bit, then great!. And that's going to be important – in fact, it will be more important than almost anything else – as you set out to follow your path in life.

But now:

**how do you find *your* path?**



## 8

### *Finding your path.*

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Now that you've completed the first set of exercises, it's time to talk about what you really want in life.

If you've been doing the exercises, you've already increased the amount of discipline in your life. And that should lead to better trading performance. But just waking up early and getting 10 pips isn't going to be enough for self-fulfillment. The previous exercises have a lot of potential to help you, but they are really just games. They're just ways for you to teach yourself how to be disciplined, to show you that it's possible.

But what do **you** really want out of your life? If you were the most disciplined person that you could be, what would you be able to accomplish? Consider this conversation that I had with my grandmother when I was seven years old:



“You can accomplish anything that you want, Robbie,” she told me.

I wanted to believe her because she was offering a compliment. “How, though?” I asked.

“You set your mind to it,” she said, and that was the end of the conversation.

“Setting your mind to it,” as you and I both know, is easier said than done. Setting our mind to our goals, however, is really the only way to accomplish them. Once again, it’s about discipline.

The activities in this section will guide you through the process of thinking about what you really want, and setting you on the path to accomplishing your goals. You do have a calling in life. You do have something important to accomplish. Whether you do or not is really a matter of whether we can, together, help set your mind on the task, and help you follow through to the end.

If the discovery of your calling in life is a topic that interests you, I direct you to the follow *superb* books on the subject of determining your life’s calling:

Do What You Love and the Money Will Follow

What Color is Your Parachute

What Should I Do With My Life, by Po Bronson

Please read these books. They’ll help you work through some of the issues surrounding finding your true calling in life. I do believe that you have one. I think we all do. But beware, these books don’t spell out your calling for you. They all require a disciplined approach to finding what you are truly meant to do. What you are about to read is how you can acquire the discipline you’ll need in order to accomplish just that. These books are an excellent companion to the activities in the second half of this book.



I also suggest that you take as many personality tests and aptitude exams that you can. These tests are a marvelous way to discover your natural abilities, preferences, and talents. I'm not saying these tests are conclusive, but they are eye-openers:

Myers-Briggs test

Gallup's "StrengthFinder" test

All of these resources will make your life richer and more meaningful. The more we understand about ourselves, the better we understand how we fit into the world. The application of discipline is really only meaningful when it's applied to an activity of true value. Discipline, when activated for the purpose of pursuing your true calling in life, brings true happiness and peace of mind.

If you find more tests, more books, or more articles, please let all of us know about them. Email me at [rob@robbooker.com](mailto:rob@robbooker.com).

## **YOUR LIFE PLAN**

**Today is the tomorrow**

**That you dreamt about yesterday.**

**What did you do with your dreams?**

There was a time in my life when I felt a lot direction. It was just before I graduated from college. I couldn't wait until the day I could graduate, and move on to bigger and better things. From the time I was 18, I had a life plan that, as a centerpiece, included graduation from a top-tier law school. Nearly everything that I did from the day I started college, until the day I finished, centered around that one goal.

The goal to enroll in a first-class law school fueled the discipline I needed to complete my undergraduate degree in 3 years. I spent a lot of time keeping in contact with the admissions directors of various law schools. I involved friends and family – and especially my wife – in my plans. They were my coaches. I slept for about 5 hours



each night, awaking at 4:50 am to study, and retiring to bed at midnight, after work and a short visit with my wife. My diet supported my discipline.

In the fall of my senior year of college, after exhaustive preparation, I sat for the LSAT, the Law School Admissions Test. I had started my preparation for the test six months earlier, with a practice score so low that my Kaplan testing center couldn't even give me a percentile ranking.<sup>10</sup> Undaunted, I had spent six months practicing until I had taken every test they had in their library. I'm not sure I could have done more to prepare myself.

Why was I disciplined enough to do my best back then? Because I had a goal that energized me. **Goals represent one of the most powerful ways to discipline yourself.** When your goals energize you, then you're willing to do almost anything to achieve them.

That's what this section is about. It's about your goals. And the first requirement is that *you have them*. That's simple enough to understand – and you've heard it all before. But, just having goals isn't enough to help you reach long-term discipline. You've got to have the right goals **for you**. Let me explain.

I did improve my LSAT score a great deal, and I did enter a good law school (not a great one, but better than I could have imagined on the day of that first practice test). My wife and I moved to the San Francisco area, and I began my studies.

But then something happened.

I tanked in law school. My grades were horrible. I dreaded attending classes. My focus was gone. My goal was still there – to enter and excel in law school. But the drive, the motivation, the energy: they were gone. Just getting myself out of bed became difficult. Once again, I still had the goals. I still had a life plan. But I realized very early in law school that my life plan wasn't congruent with who I was.

Early in my law school career, I interviewed at a large central California law firm. I had the personality they were looking for. I had the ability to perform excellent legal

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<sup>10</sup> For those of you who are familiar with the LSAT, my first practice test was a 139. Kaplan prides itself on offering a free do-over of the course if they can't increase your LSAT score by five points. The Kaplan people, recognizing my incompetence (and smelling a refund), asked if I was sure I really wanted to go to law school.



research. I was a great people person. But – and this was the key – they knew, and I knew – that I didn't have the grades.<sup>11</sup>

After a day of interviews, they thanked me for my time. They were cordial. But I knew I wouldn't be returning. I knew they wouldn't be hiring me. I stared reality in the face. And I started to cry.

I'm not much for crying. And that day I let it all out. I sobbed in the car. My wife was shocked. I'm sure she didn't know what to do – this wasn't something that I did often (or ever). But the full weight of one single realization came crashing down on that day:

**My goals weren't moving me in the right direction. The more I strove for something that wasn't right for me, the harder it became to succeed. In fact, the harder it became to live with myself.**

This came as a shock. It was terribly depressing. It affected my relationship with my wife. We were going into debt to get a degree that didn't seem to have any relevance to my calling in life. We were spending money together on expensive dinners and trips to get away from the unhappiness that we felt (mostly because of me). Spending money wasn't solving anything, however. It was just making problems for later. And inevitably, after dinner or a vacation, we always settled back into the life that we were leading before we spent the money.

Simply realizing these things didn't solve my problems, either. What was my calling in life? I was living without a safety net. I could improve my grades, I could network with law firms, I could bust my butt and I would, eventually, get a job with a law firm. But I knew then, right in the middle of it all, that such a path was only going to bring me unhappiness.

All of this also affected my ability to excel in my studies. I was living out a goal, but the goal was sucking the life out of me.

I knew then that I had to do something drastic.

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<sup>11</sup> In the world of legal careers, you can be as socially inept as a bag of hammers, and if you have excellent grades, you're going to get a fantastic job at a top law firm. This really bothered me at first (see above). But I later realized that I couldn't change the system. I also realized that I didn't **want** to change the system, because my life's calling really didn't involve working for a big law firm.



That's when I returned to the basics. I found myself having to repeat the simple steps to achieve discipline. I had to start small – with affirmations. I had to start getting up early again. And I had to, with no small degree of discipline, start thinking about my life's calling all over again. While in the middle of a path that I knew was not right for me, I had to chart a different course.

The wake up call came, but only after I disciplined myself to hear it.

And even then, the journey wasn't over.

### **THINK ABOUT YOUR LIFE**

Are you on the course that is right for you? Take a moment and consider what you're doing every day. Is it fulfilling? Are you reaching the goals that you dreamt about yesterday? Is the future you envisioned when you were young anything close to what you live now? How much different is it? In what ways?

Stepping back from your life and thinking about these things doesn't mean that you should walk out the door of your office, or that you should visit the student services center and drop out of school. Maybe it's right for you to do those things – but just be careful when you do.

What you really need to do is focus back on what makes you truly happy and brings you peace of mind.

The rest of my story might help explain.

### **MRS. HOLMES AND THE MEANING OF LIFE**

Mrs. Holmes was my fifth grade teacher. She asked us to write a story once a week. I think the minimum was two pages, but usually I wrote five (or more; I had trouble stopping when I started). She picked three of the best stories each week and read them in front of the class.

Every week, she picked my story.

How lucky! I had discovered, at age 10, what I was meant to do! From that moment on, I knew that I would be a writer. Although my parents were skeptical that I could make a living as a writer (and judging from the quality of those stories,



I think they had a point), I ignored their comments. They were never very happy people back then, anyway, so their opinions mattered less.

By the time I was in college, I had started and stopped writing at least four books. To my dismay, I had never published anything. And I found myself lacking the discipline to take my talent and turn it into a fulfilling career.

Early in my life, I realized that writing was my release, it was my calling, and that it brought me true happiness and peace of mind. It never brought me any money (which we'll get to later), but the process of writing was so fulfilling that money never even mattered. All that mattered was having the opportunity to do more writing.

So what the hell was I doing in 1995, enrolled in a law school on the West Coast?

That's what I needed to find out.

In 1995, in the second semester of law school, I realized that I had gone four months without waking up early. My diet was off. I never exercised. When my lifestyle is undisciplined, my life goes off-center, which is exactly what I began to realize. Just knowing that I wasn't where I wanted to be wasn't enough. The realization of your unhappiness, in other words, isn't the most inspiring of thoughts. For me, I just became more and more depressed as I realized I was spending thousands of dollars for an education that was preparing me for an unfulfilling career.

## **THE SUICIDE NOTE**

Around that time, as I was clerking for a law firm in downtown San Francisco (a job I had obtained by disciplined networking<sup>12</sup>), my aunt from New York sent me a note, together with a clipping from the Wall Street Journal. It discussed, and I'm paraphrasing here, that:

**Suicides of lawyers are on the rise. As these attorneys realize that their jobs are unfulfilling, and that they are stuck in a lifestyle that can only be maintained**

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<sup>12</sup> This was a job that I can only describe adequately by referring to Dante Alighieri's Ninth Circle of Hell. More entertaining details about my short-lived career as an extremely inept summer associate, and lessons that can be applied to forex trading, appear in an upcoming ebook.



**through the practice of law, they increasingly turn to drugs, alcohol, and suicide for support.**

Now I've got lots of friends who practice law, and they're not going to kill themselves. But I did realize at this time that unless I changed the course of my life, I would be prone to all of the addictions and depressions exhibited by unfulfilled attorneys. Reading that article first made me angry (I'm not going to do those things! Who does my aunt think that I am?). Then it caused me to reflect (I might do those things! Who does my aunt think that I am?). Then it caused an awakening:

**Who do I think that I am?**

I walked down Montgomery Street at lunch that day, clutching the article so tightly in my hands that it became wet with the sweat from my palms. I wanted to throw away the article, and at the same time I wanted to throw away my plans for a legal career. The timid part of me wanted to just paste the article in my office at work and wait until the partners fired me.

As I thought about the question, *Who do I think that I am?* I realized that I thought I was a future lawyer, when in reality I was a future writer living out a faked existence as a future lawyer. I'd been acting in the role for so long that I had forgotten what made me happy. During my college studies, every time that I wrote, I took the peace of mind and happiness and stored it away in my emotional bank.

Then, in the first four months of law school, I withdrew every last penny of that happiness and peace of mind. I had left myself emotionally broke. Instead of spending that currency on disciplined writing – that would lead to more deposits into my emotional bank account – I had spent it like the prodigal son, on things that had no true future value to me.

Broke (emotionally) and nearing the time when the law firm would certainly fire me for an increasingly flippant attitude about my job<sup>13</sup>, I had reached my own rock-bottom,

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<sup>13</sup> At one point in my summer clerkship, I became so convinced that we were arguing on the wrong side of an asbestos case, that I considered wrapping up the evidence against our client and sending it to the opposite side. I never did. We won that case, and before the final judgment was returned, the plaintiff, a 35-year veteran of the ship-building industry, died of the effects of asbestos inhalation.



where there were no emotional deposits to sustain me in an emotionally draining lifestyle.

Breaking out of this spiral required discipline that I didn't have. At least that's what I thought at first. How was I going to leave a job that was paying for our living expenses in San Francisco? Where would I go? How would I have time to choose a new path – and pursue it – without the resources necessary? I fearfully wondered what would happen if I failed at my new path? Doubt set in. If I'd been so poor at choosing a career path once, what was to say that I wouldn't be so stupid again?

My sleep patterns got out of whack, as my fears got the best of me. I started falling asleep in class and finding it difficult to stay awake during work. And that's when I discovered that I didn't need to have enough discipline to start a new path and figure out the rest of my life. I just needed enough discipline to change my sleeping habits!

With the help of my wife, and some medical help, I started sleeping normally. I changed my diet. I started talking to my wife and family about my doubts, about my desire to take a different path. One step at a time, I got myself to a point where I could start thinking about my life again.

And at the same time I started writing in a journal again. Just the act of writing something non-legal awoke my memories of writing. I remembered how I felt when I was 10 and Mrs. Holmes read my stories in front of the class. I recalled when I wrote the screenplay for a television show in high school, and how the only compliment I received from the prettiest girl in the school came when she said that she was sure she would one day pick up a book or watch a television show that I wrote. I remembered the notes that my university professors wrote on my historical fiction. I spent a lot of time, while I wrote, remembering the specifics about how I felt at the times when I wrote.

I realized that if I wanted true happiness and peace of mind, then I was going to have to start making deposits into my emotional bank account again.

So I started to write. I wrote so much that I started skipping class and my assignments. In just a couple of months, I prepared the first chapters of a book and sent those pages to a publisher that I had carefully selected. A short while later, an editor



wrote back and told me that she wanted me to complete the manuscript and submit it for publication.

I was ecstatic, and with one huge deposit into my emotional bank account, I had the energy to discipline myself for the rest of the journey to re-plan my life. How I charted a new course for my life, and how you can too, follows in these final chapters.

## **HOW MUCH IS IN YOUR ACCOUNT?**

How much is on deposit at your emotional bank account? Are you overdrawn? If you are, I encourage you to follow the life-charting exercises in these final chapters. Even if you already have a life plan, or feel you're a disciplined person, I encourage you to spend some of that emotional currency to look over your plan – or create one now.

Your life plan is the brightest outlook that you can imagine for your future. What would you plan if you knew that you could not fail? Realize that your future is wide open: you have new choices, new opportunities, all waiting for you.

If right now you're feeling a bit of excitement about charting a new life, then you're depositing something bank into that bank account. Take that energy, and use it to complete some of the activities at the beginning of this book. Those activities will increase your energy for discipline. The beauty of the exercises in this book is that as you expend energy to complete them, you're rewarded with an increase of energy above and beyond what you put into them.

## **HOW I DID IT**

Back in law school, when I was beginning to put my life on track, I purchased a big roll of butcher paper and a bunch of markers. I laid the paper out across the floor of our San Francisco flat, and went to work charting my life.

I started with my earliest memories, and I documented them year by year, just like a timeline. I put red stars next to times in my life when I felt a lot of energy and happiness. I circled in black the times when I felt the absence of peace of mind.

While I focused on major events, I really did my best to remember everything I could about each year. The process was invigorating. I realized how many times I'd felt happy. I realized what kinds of experiences had withdrawn too much from my



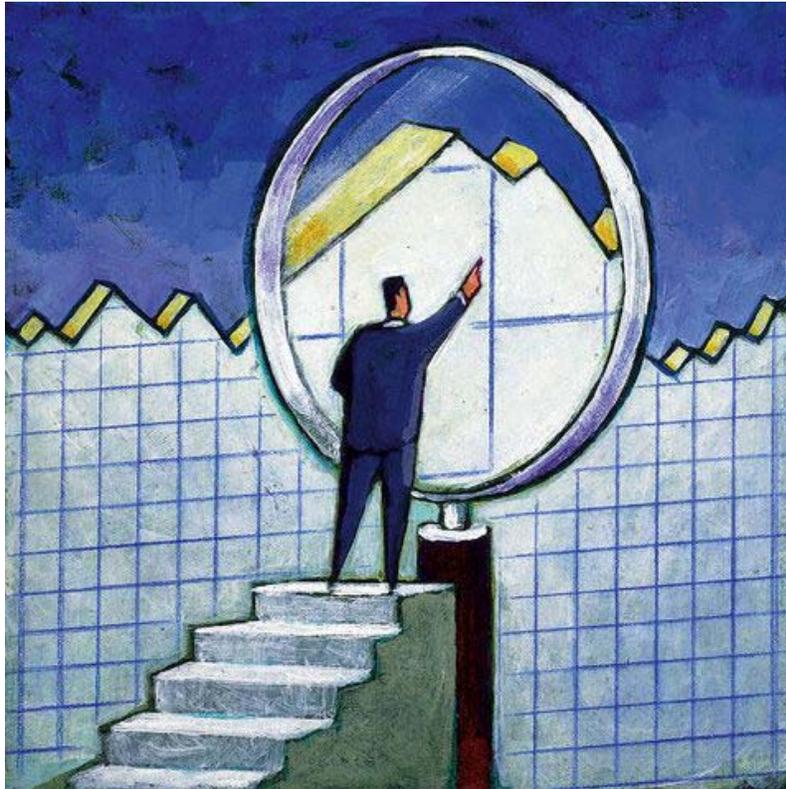
emotional bank account. I also realized that in my early years, I had energy and excitement, but it wasn't because I was young. It was because I felt that I was young. I felt that all sorts of possibilities were open to me. It was irrelevant that I could have been hit by a bus at any time. What mattered was that I believed that I had all the time in the world to explore and fulfill my dreams.

When I was finished with the timeline, I had charted my life across 10 feet of butcher paper, ending with May 20, 1995. And when my wife returned from work, we charted the rest of my life – together and separately – and we talked about what I wanted to accomplish, what would bring me true happiness and peace of mind during the years to come.

We drew pictures of the family we wanted to have, the house we wanted to live in, and the jobs I thought would bring me more fulfillment.

I was so excited when we finished that I spent the rest of the night, until morning, working on my novel. Just the act of charting my life had brought back the discipline I needed to make progress towards my goals.

I was back on course.



## 9

### How to chart your life.

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You can use 8 x 11 paper, or a whiteboard, or in the margins of this book.. It's not important what materials you use. I used butcher paper because I wanted more space, and I wanted to take notes and draw pictures, and see my life layed out in as big a form as possible. But I encourage you to do what works for you.

Here's what you should focus on:



1. **Experiences that unnecessarily withdrew too much from your emotional bank account.** For me, checking my grades in my first semester of law school represented one of the largest withdrawals of all time from my account. For you, it might be a divorce, the loss of a loved one, or a disappointing experience at work. It might be the worst day ever trading currency. Don't dwell too long on this – ten minutes max. If you're not done in ten minutes, then just stop. There are bigger and better things to work on.

2. **A list of ways you could have avoided these withdrawals.** Sometimes, as with the loss of a loved one, we can't prevent the experience from happening, but we can still choose how to deal with it. So I'm asking you to list how you could have avoided the situation completely (if possible), but more importantly, how you could deal with negative experiences in a more resourceful way. At the very most, a sentence will suffice (I shouldn't have told my friends to throw a kitchen stove off the 9<sup>th</sup> story roof of my college dorm).<sup>14</sup>

3. **Experiences that brought you true happiness and peace of mind.** These are the ones that you want to recall with as much detail as possible. It helped me to draw pictures for this one – including a little picture of my 5<sup>th</sup> grade school. The more vivid the memory, the more energized I became: just the memory of these good experiences brought back the feelings associated with them. I also believe that the feelings associated with positive experiences build up over time, so that good memories are sometimes more powerful than the experiences themselves.

4. **Feelings you want to have in the years to come.** These are not necessarily things you want to accomplish; more importantly, these are feelings that you want to have. If you want to experience happiness in your middle years and a feeling of financial security in your later years, then write that down! Your goals should be an outgrowth of the feelings you want to have...not the other way around. Once you get the feelings

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<sup>14</sup> Don't ask.



down, you can start to set some goals. Don't focus on pips or trading profits – focus on what you want to feel about trading, about your family, about your life.

5. **Goals.** Draw a picture (or cut out a photo) of the house that's going to give you the feeling of security that you said you wanted to have. Write a number that represents the amount you want to have in your retirement portfolio that will allow you to feel financially secure. Keep doing this for your personal life, your family life, and your work life. As you do this, periodically reflect on the positive experiences from your past: are these goals congruent with your past positive experiences? Are you off track? Are you veering off into goals that you **think** will bring you happiness, instead of setting goals that match with experiences in the past that brought you the feelings you want?

6. **Imagine How You'll Feel as You Work to Achieve your Goals.** Picture the happiness and peace of mind that you're going to feel. If memories are just thoughts, and those thoughts can bring you emotions, then there's no reason you can't experience **now** the happiness of events still to come in your life.

When you're done, keep the chart in a prominent place. Keep the chart out in the open. You'll be working with it later.

## A QUICK THOUGHT ON GOALS

For a long time, I set goals, but I never compared those goals to:

1. **My past experiences**
2. **The feelings I wanted to have**

The reason that both of the above mistakes are so dangerous is because if you embark on a path that is totally incongruent with your true self, you're going to find that the discipline to achieve your goals just doesn't exist. At some point you're going to run out of steam and you're going to be so sapped of energy that you won't proceed. This is true for some traders – they got stuck trading, but they know deep inside that they're



meant for something else. Or for people like me who were stuck in a legal career, knowing that trading was their true calling.

The second mistake happens when you assume that a certain career path, mate, or church, will automatically cause you to have certain feelings. Things don't make you feel great. You feel great when you choose to feel great. That's why I encourage you to remember times in your life when you were truly happy – before you set your goals. It will help you remember to set goals that help you maintain that happiness, rather than detract from it.

## **SO WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH DISCIPLINE? AND WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH TRADING?**

This activity has everything to do with discipline. The central message of the second half of this book is that if you choose the right path in life, and continually adjust your progress to stay in alignment with your true calling, that you'll find that discipline to achieve your goals comes much, much more naturally.

However: you're going to hit some snags, and the discipline you felt when you set your goals might dissipate when times get tough. That's when you need to tinker with your plan a bit (or a lot), or you need to return to the activities in the first half of this book to help you stay on track.

Remember that the successful life isn't one that never hits a snag, it's the one that keeps moving ahead. The Miracle of Discipline is that as you keep moving ahead, the journey becomes the reward. Peace of mind is a product of constantly adjusting your life to stay in alignment with your most important feelings, goals, people, and experiences.

This is also all about trading. Trading is just one aspect of your life. Too many traders don't have a balance life. I promise you that trading profits are easier to come by when your life is balanced, when you're on the way to accomplishing important goals, feeling the things you want to feel, and experiencing success above and beyond trading profits.



## **DISCIPLINE 3001: AFTER YOU'VE CHARTED YOUR LIFE**

There is a massive amount of literature on the subject of life-goals and plans that contain a lot of wonderful advice on the subject of “what’s next” after you plan out the new course of your life.

I think you should read as many of the books and articles on the subject of success as possible. There are people out there who have dedicated their lives to the study of setting and achieving goals. Their advice is of enormous worth to you and me if we apply discipline to the implementation of their methods.

That said, here’s what happened to me after I charted my life – and what might happen to you.

### **THE CHART THAT FAILED**

I charted a life that put me right where I needed to be: a writer, living in a small town, making enough to support a large family but (realistically) not in a life of luxury. I was energized by the plan. My wife was excited for us both. She was excited that we had charted our life together and that we could look forward to setting in motion the plans that would bring all of this about.

I realized that I was spending more time hanging out with my wife at her job (she worked in the financial industry) and talking to brokers, bankers, hedge fund managers, mutual fund execs, because I had a natural interest in the financial markets. I knew that if I could find a way to mix my love of writing and the financial markets, I would feel much more fulfillment.

But I was in law school. I had debt. I had school loans and credit cards. The financial pressure wasn’t just going away because I had charted a new life. It would have been naïve to believe that I could simply take my butcher-paper chart to Key Bank and ask to retract law school loans that had already been spent.

All of the sudden, the four enemies of Discipline set in. Fear of financial failure was the strongest. Confusion on how to take the first step was nearly equally debilitating. But I also felt the desire to Delay – to procrastinate -- especially since I’d just finished planning my life, I felt such a sense of achievement from having re-charted my life.



These were all natural sentiments that battled against the natural enthusiasm for implementing what I knew was the correct path of my life.

Most of all, because I was in law school, I had a job, and I was married, I felt an almost overwhelming number of Distractions. This was the biggest enemy of the Discipline necessary to implement my plan. I realized that something had to give.

So I decided that I should quit law school.

I thought I would just walk into the records office and told them that I was dropping out of class. But that's not what I did.

Instead, I did the next best thing: I simply stopped concentrating on law school. I stopped checking my grades. I went to class most of the time and completed most of my assignments. But my priority was implementing a plan that would lead me to a life of true happiness and peace of mind.

So, I didn't quit **going** to law school. I just stopped making it the center of my life.

Why didn't I quit outright?

Law school was my insurance policy, in the same way that your current job is what gives you the resources to support your family and start the plan for your future. I knew that I needed a bit of a safety net, so I stayed in school. I probably shouldn't have, but I did. This book isn't about whether you should quit your job outright, so let it suffice to say that I let the Distraction of staying in law school conquer (temporarily) my life plan.

It took me five more years of Distractions, of Delays, of Fear and Depression to get me to securely on the path. But I got there. You can do it, too.

## **HOW YOU CAN DO IT, TOO**

You should realize from the outset that you've got a plan and that you're not going to let anything stand in the way. You should also realize that none of us is perfect, and that if you are temporarily sidetracked, then you should pick yourself up, and get back on the path of Discipline.

Keep plugging away at the strategies and activities in this book.. Keep them a prominent part of your life. The quest for Discipline is a lifelong pursuit. The achievement of the happiness and peace of mind that you seek is dependent on your



ability to start all over again if you have to. You've learned the strategies for re-acquiring lost discipline.

Keep plugging away. And remember to stay in touch. I always answer every email I receive.



## Epilogue.

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**The Discipline to Be Honest is the most powerful attribute that you can ever possess.**

Most of us are liars. Most of us tell white lies, to ourselves or to other people. It's a fact of life that we don't tell the truth. A lot of people feel uncomfortable when I say it, but, I'm not going to make any excuses.

Have you ever been tempted to exaggerate your trading profits? Hide information from a loved one? Cheated on a test? We've all lived less honestly, at times, than we should. I want you to know that discipline can be gained quicker through honesty than by any other strategy. Trading profits are tied to discipline. Discipline is connected to honesty. You get the connection.

Brad Blanton, best-selling author of "Radical Honesty," told me:

**As a clinical psychologist, working with highly successful but anxious or depressed people for over 30 years, I have found that not only is lying the primary cause of most depression and most anxiety, but that the most pernicious form of lying is simply withholding. You just don't say what is really going on. Keep quiet. Keep your mouth shut. Keep secrets. Hide. It is not only a bad idea. It will kill you.**

Brad's right, and our last exercise is, without any doubt, the most difficult one. It will open your heart, and it will teach you more discipline more quickly than anything that I could ever ask you to do. I'd say that 50% of the people who attend my seminars and read this ebook – at least 50% -- never complete this exercise.

I'm not exaggerating when I say that. I'm also not exaggerating when I tell you that, although the rest of what I've said is important, it's really worthless to you unless you



stop withholding from yourself. Until you stop lying to yourself, you will never have the discipline to be great.

Decide today, decide that forever, that you will be 100% honest with everyone. It's not enough to be honest with yourself and a liar to everyone else.

I'm not talking about just being honest on the "big" things. What I'm proposing is that you tell you people exactly what's on your mind. Don't beat around the bush.

You can start today by being completely, 100% honest about everything in your life. I promise that this is the most difficult and most powerful exercise that you can ever do.

You will learn more discipline quicker from this than from anything else you can do – because it's so hard for us to be honest. Once you learn to be honest at all times, you lose almost all your fear. You gain a lot of confidence, that you are right with the world. That you deserve to be successful, and that you can confront head-on all the obstacles that prevent you from trading profits and from reaching your goals.



**P . S .**

If this book has bothered you, or if you've got a bone to pick with me, then I welcome your comments. I understand that there are many writers more talented than I. If you can help me improve, then please do.

More importantly, if you have something to add to the discussion of discipline, I invite you to share your feelings with the entire Miracle of Discipline Community.

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I always respond to every email I receive. Thanks for reading. I look forward to hearing from you.



## Conclusion

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You can succeed in the forex market.

As a day trader, you can be paid more handsomely than doctors, lawyers, and just about everyone else. But if you want to be a member of the elite class of highly successful forex traders, then you have to put the time in. You can't expect profits to come easily.

Just having discipline – alone – will get you further in life, and in trading, than anything else. I know you know what it's like to trade without discipline. I want you to feel what it's like to trade *with* discipline.

But you can do it. Please write me at [rob@robboker.com](mailto:rob@robboker.com) and let me know how you're doing. I always answer every email I receive.

Rob Booker