

WILLPOWER
VS.
THE POWER OF
WILLINGNESS

BY DR. ERIC M. STOFMAN

VOL. II

Willpower vs. The Power of Willingness

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PART 1

STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE

What if you climbed to the top rung of the ladder, only to find out that the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall?

What if you were clearly the fastest runner in the race, but you ran in the opposite direction of the finish line?

What if you've been pushing onto a door trying to escape a jail cell, only to find out that the door actually swung inward, and had been unlocked the whole time?

What if you were lost, trying to find your way around Philadelphia, and you were relying on a map of Chicago?

If you let them really sink in, I know these four "What ifs" will give you pause.

A positive mental attitude will not fully help the ladder climber. Daily affirmations will not ease the journey of the misguided runner. Extra workouts, and stronger muscles will not support the efforts of the jailed prisoner. Deep breathing and meditation will not bring lasting peace to the lost orienteer.

Don't get me wrong, I am a huge proponent of positive psychology, affirmations, physical fitness training, deep breathing and meditation. However, when there is a disconnect between the underlying structure of a situation and the strategy being used to solve it, the result is always filled with resistance, disappointment, frustration and exhaustion.

How much easier would it be (meaning, how much less WAISTED TIME and ENERGY would be used) if the ladder was *simply* placed against the correct wall... if the runner *simply* faced the right direction... if the prisoner *simply* took a step back and pulled on the door... and if the lost traveler *simply* held in his/her hand, the correct map?

Overcoming those challenges would not only require less time, energy and effort... but now, *ALL* of these efforts, would actually lead to the desired outcome.

So, what's YOUR desired outcome?

What would be an EXTRAORDINARY outcome?

What do you REALLY want?

I found that most people have not only never been asked those questions, if they had, they've never given the answers much thought.

Now that you have been asked THE ULTIMATE question of, *what do you want?* Know for sure, that you are stronger than your challenges and bigger than your excuses.

Know also, that your story is going to be such an inspiration to others, but it's going to take a series of quality decisions to get there.

From this moment forward, it is imperative to jettison *Willpower* as a strategy.

Why? Because willpower is lose-lose.

Let's tease this out... If you use willpower to *not* eat the chocolate cake, and *it works*, you can be left feeling deprived of something you enjoy. So, you lost.

Likewise, if you use willpower to *not* eat the chocolate cake, and *it doesn't work*, you can be left with the feelings of defeat, guilt, failure, disappointment, etc. So, you lost.

All of these emotions (deprivation, defeat, guilt, failure, disappointment, etc.) emerge from an “up one-down one” structure. A structure that is steeped in, and has the tendency to create and perpetuate,

dependency: Parent-Child, Doctor-Patient, Boss-Employee, Teacher-Student.

The parent (the one on top of this structure) says, “Clean your room.”

The doctor says, “Take this pill.”

The boss says, “Work more for less.”

The teacher says, “Read the book that is assigned.”

The one on the bottom of this familiar structure, only has two choices: to comply, or to defy.

This structure is often accompanied by a ‘carrot and stick’ extrinsic motivational reward system. If you comply, there is a reward. If you defy, there are ‘consequences.’

This structure is always oscillating, like a rocking chair. Do it for a while and then don’t do it. Lose the weight and then gain it back. Pay off the credit cards and then open up a new one. Sound familiar?

Remaining in this oscillating, up one-down one structure, leads to illness (instead of wellness), disempowerment (instead of empowerment) and angst (instead of joy). If we want to break this cycle (ensure that our ladder is finally leaning against the correct

wall, etc.), it would behoove us to catch ourselves *in the exact moment of oscillation* and begin the fundamental shift.

So, how can we catch ourselves in the moment of oscillation?

The structure we are in is very often revealed by the vocabulary we use. If you find yourself using words like cheat day, guilt, should, have to, diet, *willpower*, ought to, and job; know that in that moment, you are trapped in an up one-down one, dependent, oscillating structure. *Stay tuned. Soon, we'll lay out exactly how to build an underlying advancing structure for creating what you want...*

In the meantime, if you have your antenna up, and you hear yourself, or others using words like: choice, freedom, chose to, *willingness*, feedback, optimal health plan, and joy; know that in that moment, you have moved from “up one-down one” (dependence/codependence) to “reciprocal mentorship,” (independence/interdependence). In this new structure, ***you can connect with others authentically and cultivate trust.*****

PART 2
THE FINE LINE
THAT'S AS BIG AS THE
GRAND CANYON...

From Willpower to Willingness:

It this new empowering structure, the individual has “taken A.I.M.” (Acquired Intrinsic Motivation/also called, *In*spiration). They know what they want, and why they want it. They are *willing* to do what it takes to get there. They find joy in the journey. They experience abundance (win-win relationships) and empowerment. Where willpower always functioned like a battery that was fully charged in the morning, only to lose its charge by lunch time, willingness works as a self-charging, bottomless well of energy. Where willpower seemed to depend on limited *resources*, willingness finds and unleashes unlimited *resourcefulness*.

Those that are willing, stop trying to fix what’s wrong. They start creating what’s right. They don’t try to course correct from the past. They don’t engage in problem-solving. ***They lead from the future, and act in the now.*****

PART 3

**TAKING 100% RESPONSIBILITY
FOR YOUR I.T.F.A.R.**

Are you willing to take IT FAR and lay the foundation for an advancing structure? Combine the strategy of Willingness and the structure of I.T.F.A.R., and the sky's the limit.

Disclaimer: Each one of these steps in the advancing structure could be a 12-hour weekend retreat, in and of themselves. In fact, separately, each one could be a course of study in a PhD program. For the sake of this minibook, however, a paragraph or two will suffice. With that said... Master each step with 'caution.'

*Why? What if I told you that if you master just one of these, you'd increase your chances of producing what you want by 5%? What if I told you, that if you master and ADD each one of the steps to the next, you'd increase your chances by 25%? What if I told you, that it actually wasn't linear... that it wasn't $5+5+5+5+5$? What if it were EXPONENTIAL, and by mastering each step, you multiplied your chance of manifesting what you want by $5x5x5x5x5$? Would you be willing to **awaken this potential and transform masterfully? *****

Input.

We live our lives through our nervous system.

Our five senses are perceiving our environment and processing our responses every second we are alive. We, however, control the filter! We get to choose ‘what comes in.’ We become the average of the five people with which we hang around most. We get to choose what books we read, to which radio/TV stations we listen, what seminars we attend, which websites we browse, etc. While the sum-total of human knowledge is available in an instant, in the palm of our hand, it bears repeating...We get to choose ‘what comes in.’

Who is on your ***Board of Directors?**** Who are your mentors?

If we are willing, we see that ‘what goes in’ our mouths, likewise, is 100% within our circle of influence. Do you have a willingness to...

- Eat a balanced ratio of protein and carbohydrates?
- Eat a small portion of food (9-inch plate) every three hours?
- Eliminate or significantly limit the consumption of sugar, grains and dairy?
- Increase vegetables and fruit?
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water each day?

Those who are *willing* reap the benefits. Those who are not, do not.

Give yourself a score on a scale of 1-5 (5 being best) on how *congruent* your CURRENT INPUT(s) is(are), with what YOU say YOU want.
“ _____ ”

Thoughts.

It is said that we think thousands of thoughts each day, and the vast majority of those thoughts are the same exact thoughts we had the day before. If that is true, most people remain trapped by a self-generated “loop” of a “*tape* running over and over in their heads.” *Pivotal moments* (growth experiences) in our lives, then, can only happen, if and when, those moments are preceded by a new thought. These moments are made possible every day when we ***seek growth and embrace obstacles as the way.***** Pivotal moments in human history, likewise, are always preceded by a new collective thought.

No, the Earth was never flat. (For or a long, long, time, however, to paraphrase Shakespeare’s Hamlet, *thinking DID make it so.*)

The most powerful thoughts we have, can be identified by the phrase, “I am...” Be very careful what you place after the *I am*. (Compare, “I am a winner.” & “I am a loser.” Compare, “I live in an abundant universe.” & “I am the one who always gets the short end of the stick.” Be careful of the labels that you attach to yourself. Labels are judgments, and labels create barriers to growth. Remember, a thought, thought over and over, becomes a belief. A deeply held belief gives rise to emotions/feelings. How we feel about a situation, often drives our behavior/actions. Behaviors/actions repeated again and again, are called habits. Habits practiced, day in and day out, produce our results. (More on that, later.)

Give yourself a score on a scale of 1-5 (5 being best) on how *empowering* your CURRENT THOUGHTS are. _____

Focus.

Energy flows where attention goes. Since energy and matter are interconnected, we are drawn to behave and manifest in our lives, proportionally, and in direct accordance with our most dominant thought. It is a core principle of those that utilize willingness over willpower, that they focus on what they want, not

what they don't want. We get what we focus on, whether we want it or not.

A GPS analogy holds true here, down to the last detail. The moon-shot mission was single-minded in its focus to get human beings to the moon (and back). If the goal was to “leave the earth's surface by breaking the pull of gravity”, or “get into space,” neither of those goals would have had enough specificity of focus to get the full job done. Those who use willingness over willpower, have a very clear understanding of where they are in the present moment, and simultaneously, have a clear vision/focus of where they want to go. Steadfastly holding a vision of what “you don't want” doesn't do the trick either. If you are in Philly, and you desire to get to Chicago, putting in “I *don't* want to be in Philly” into your GPS, is not only not “focused” enough, it is also framed in the negative. If you start driving (taking action) under these circumstances, you'll appear busy, but the chances of getting to Chicago are slim-to-none.

How we feel, each and every moment (our emotions), drives our behavior. Emotions, however, are not causes, in and of themselves. Emotions are the effects of our Thoughts and our Focus.

Your emotions/feelings will reveal if your focus is on the past, stuck in the present, or attached to what you want, in the future.

If a person gets really emotional about their hopes/dreams/desires, their actions will manifest what they want. If a person gets really emotional about their current reality, they will remain stuck right there. If a person gets really emotional about the past, they can never move forward.

This is why the front window of your car is 95-times bigger than the rear-view mirror and the dials on the dashboard. Our focus needs to be on what's out ahead of us, at least 95% of the time. This is called, living your life as art.

Give yourself a score on a scale of 1-5 (5 being best) on how *steadfastly* you FOCUS on your VISION of WHAT YOU WANT (*taking responsibility and 'playing above the line*, goal setting, dreaming, masterminding, journaling, meditating, vision-boarding, etc.), RATHER THAN WHAT YOU DON'T WANT (worrying, stressing, complaining, pee-in' & moanin' {*Yeah, I said it.*}, judging others, etc.). _____**

Actions.

Handling the first three steps empowers us to know exactly how to behave (take action) appropriately, each moment in our lives.

It is said that there are four possible levels/categories of action...

- No action
- Retreat
- Normal/average levels of action
- Massive action

Massive action is the only choice that ever “works.” For someone to be considered a Master, they have to spend over 10,000 hours in the “do-ing” of that activity. It seems the world is changing and moving faster than ever before. No action, retreat, and average levels of engagement leave us further and further behind. Of the three, the average level of engagement is actually the most dangerous of all. It’s fool’s gold. It makes us appear like we’re “busy,” but the result is often bigger and bigger piles on unfinished “stuff” on our desks.

As Yoda famously said, “There is no try, there is only do, or do not.” Half measures avail us nothing.

Your mindset may be spot-on. Your GPS may be properly set. There may even be fuel in the tank. If you don't turn the key, and put your foot on the accelerator, however, nothing happens. You find yourself continually in the same place..stuck. Einstein said it: "Nothing happens until something moves."

On this journey, there will be resistance, distraction, procrastination, criticism, etc. Overcoming those obstacles and becoming the most dominant force in our own life, requires massive action.

Give yourself a score on a scale of 1-5 (5 being best) on how *fully committed and all-in* your CURRENT ACTIONS are. _____

Results.

There is no reality, there are only results. Circumstances don't define us, they reveal us. The world we experience with our five senses, in the present moment/NOW, is merely the sum total of all the choices we have made. The Result is simply the tip of the iceberg, manifesting from the massive underlying foundation of Input, Thoughts, Focus, and Action. The Result is simply, the fruit at the tip of the

branch. There'd be no fruit without the roots, trunk, a primary branch, and secondary branches.

This concept holds true in the *micro* of our own lives, as well as the *macro* of the entire world... writ large. All the choices we, as a human race have made, in time immemorial, have led us to this point. I know that's "deep," but stay with me here. Fully grasping this concept, frees us to create a new and different future... to be the most dominant force in our own lives... to live at cause, rather than at effect... to be fully "self-actualized," as Maslow called it. We can peacefully choose, 1) to live Independent of the *Good Opinion of the Other People*, and 2) be Detached from Outcome (the Current Result).

When we get our blood work test "results", or our SAT score "results", or our employee quarterly review "results" ... is that "real," or are those the "results?" By the time it takes us to receive the results, things may have changed. If, and only if, WE ARE WILLING, we could already be experiencing new and more *congruent* Input, thinking new and more *empowering* Thoughts, honing in on a new and more *steadfast* Focus, and taking new, more *fully committed* Action.

If we are willing, what do you believe the chances are of us experiencing and delivering new, ***extraordinary results, all the while, serving to better mankind?******

Give yourself a score on a scale of 1-5 (5 being best) on how well you are currently manifesting the RESULTS you SAY you WANT. _____

Total your scores.

Input. _____

Thoughts. _____

Focus. _____

Actions. _____

Results. _____

Total. _____

What's next?

If you scored anywhere between 5-25, and you are *willing* to find out how to improve your score every 3 months for the rest of your life, text or call me at 856-649-4516, *friend* me on Facebook, send me a PM, connect with me on LinkedIn, *or* send me an email at emshealthcoach@comcast.net.

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