

# Discipline Needs to Be Learned, Not Taught

*Written by T.K. Coleman.*

There is no inherent value to being disciplined.

The willingness to do something difficult is only meaningful if it's exercised within the context of a worthy goal.

We often force students to do all sorts of things that don't matter to them in the name of teaching them the virtue of discipline. Students don't need to learn discipline. Students need to learn how to identify their preferences, how to assess their priorities, and how to think in accordance with principles.

When a person understands what they want, knows how to reason about the cost & benefits involved, and understands the implication of their choices, they can decide for themselves if discipline is useful or not in any given situation.

No matter who you are, life is going to teach you about the necessity of discipline. How do I know that? Because we're all creatures of desire. Every single one of us will continuously experience the universal phenomenon known as "wanting something that isn't easy to obtain." And when that happens to you, me, or anyone else, we will be forced to either forego our desires or exercise some form of discipline.

The people with the most discipline in the real world are the ones who know what it means to believe in something deeply enough to fight for it at all cost.

True discipline is nothing more than the combination of conviction and determination. And if you try to teach people to be determined without taking their genuine desires to be the rightful starting point, you'll just make them experts at feeling guilty, resentful, and stressed out.

If you're afraid that your students won't ever work hard, you can relax because the combination of desire and difficulty will give them plenty of lessons on the topic of discipline.

If a person doesn't want a particular thing, then it's pointless for them to exercise discipline in relation to that thing. If a person truly does want something, however, they will learn to be disciplined as long as you don't swoop down and save them.

If you really want to teach people how to be disciplined, then discipline yourself enough to let them struggle when it's good for them. Discipline yourself enough to stop rescuing them

and bailing them out every time life tries to make them work hard for something they sincerely desire.

Originally published at [TKColeman.com](http://TKColeman.com).