

Insights from *Discipline Equals Freedom* by Jocko Willink

We all want freedom: Financial freedom. Free time. Freedom from chronic pain. The freedom to work where we want and when we want. But where do those freedoms come from? **"The answer is the opposite of freedom,"** Jocko says. **"The answer is discipline."**

- If you want professional freedom, you need the self-discipline to resist distraction, execute hard projects, and challenge yourself to learn new skills.
- If you want freedom from chronic pain caused by poor lifestyle choices, you need the self-discipline to exercise and avoid inflammatory foods.

Jocko has learned a valuable lesson about self-discipline: *the more self-discipline he displays in the morning, the more self-discipline he has during the day.*

When you wake up early to work out (not because you're forced to, but because you choose to), you'll find the willpower to do difficult projects, avoid junk food, and go to bed early to get a good night's sleep. When you start the day with discipline, you're less likely to procrastinate or waste time on social media because before doing so you'll think, *"Why would I ruin a good day?"*

"Discipline begets discipline. Will propagates MORE WILL." – Jocko

Jocko relies on three keystone morning habits to generate discipline for the entire day:

1. Wake up before dawn (for Jocko, this means waking up at 4:30 AM every day, including weekends).
2. Workout.
3. Work on a task he doesn't want to but knows will be good for his career/business.



If you adopt these three morning habits, you're likely to experience more discipline during the day and ensure future freedom. But getting out of a warm bed, completing a workout, and finishing a challenging work task before most people start their workday is much easier said than done. That's why Jocko has provided a series of morning tactics:



Tactic #1: Berserker mode

An invisible enemy is trying to steal your freedom. Jocko calls this enemy *"Weakness."*

Weakness attacks with subtle suggestions, like, *"Just spend a few more minutes in bed,"* or *"Do this task later."* When you hear these weak thoughts float into your mind, get angry because the enemy is trying to drag you down the easy path and rob you of future freedom. Use your anger to trigger *"berserker mode."* Like a bull who sees red, charge toward the workout like a man or woman possessed, hell bent on letting nothing stop you.



Tactic #2: Radio silence

"People sometimes ask me what I say to myself when things get hard. What is my internal dialogue? What do I think about? The answer is simple. Nothing. When things are tough... I don't say anything to myself. In fact, I turn off my brain and let my body function independently. It knows what it's supposed to do." - Jocko

Before you go to sleep, write down the sequence of actions you'll take when you get out of bed. What clothes will you put on? What exercises will you do? In what order? What work task will you complete first? Then, when you wake in the morning, turn your brain off and let your body execute the plan. Imagine you're like a Navy SEAL silently approaching your target. You know the mission, so unless an unexpected event occurs, maintain radio silence and don't alert the enemy.



Tactic #3: Laughter

"Laugh at suffering, hardships, and challenges because they can't stand it when you do." - Jocko

When you laugh at a bully, that bully gets frustrated and feels powerless. Likewise, when you laugh at the weak inner voice encouraging you to take the easy path, it quickly goes silent. The next time you have the urge to sleep in and abandon your plan, smile and think, *"Haha, nice try weakness!"*



Tactic #4: Not today

There will be mornings you'll wake feeling terrible and desperately want to skip your morning routine. When this happens, tell yourself: *"I'll rest tomorrow, not today."*

Jocko says, **"I don't like procrastination, but if you feel like you need a break - this is the one thing you should procrastinate. And if - when tomorrow comes - you still feel like you need rest or you need a break - then go ahead: Take it. (But) chances are you will realize that the desire to rest was just weakness. And by going through the motions, you overcame that weakness and you stayed on the righteous path - the discipline path. Right where you know you belong."**

"Discipline can seem like your worst enemy. But in reality it is your best friend. It will take care of you like nothing else can. And it will put you on the path to strength and health and intelligence and happiness. And most important, discipline will put you on the path to FREEDOM." - Jocko