

The Willpower Instinct Meditation Book Group Meeting 1
Saturday, April 7, 2012

Welcome to our exploration of movement, meditation & Kelly McGonigal's The Willpower Instinct. You are welcome to visit my web-site:

<http://dharmaworks.net/DharmaTouch/> to review a summary of what we cover in each class, find the homework suggestions and other resources you might find helpful.

The following outline is a list of suggested homework. Please try to realize the benefits of building your awareness and willpower by practicing some or all of these steps every day.

1. Homework Suggestions

- a. *Get 8 hours of sleep (or the number of hours you need to feel truly rested)*
- b. *Meditate for 5 minutes in the morning & evening*
- c. *Reflect and journal about this week's explorations under the microscope & try some or all of the exercises concerning your WP challenge in Chapter 1.*
- d. *Reading*
 - i. *The Willpower Instinct Chapters 2, 3 & 4*

2. Self Reflection Investigations & Exercises: Chapter 1

- a. *Take the time you need to choose a willpower challenge worthy of your time and energy. Does it have "want" (motivational) power? She suggests that you work with one challenge throughout the course.*
- b. *Kelly invites us to place make ourselves the subject of inquiry; by putting ourselves under the microscope. Imagine facing your willpower challenge. Consider what is hard about it; what makes it so difficult; how you feel when you think about it.*
- c. *Describe your competing minds: your impulsive self and your wiser self. Consider giving your impulsive self a name.*
- d. *Kelly states that developing more self-awareness is the first step toward more self-control. Notice when you are making choices*

related to your willpower challenge. Track these choices for a full day and then reflect on the decisions you made that either supported or undermined your goal.

- e. Commit to observing how your process of giving in to impulses unfolds. Notice thoughts, feelings and situations that prompt an impulse. What do you think or say to yourself that makes it more likely that you'll act on impulse.*

3. Kelly's Advice

- a. Please remember that everyone struggles in some way with temptation, addiction, distraction and procrastination. These are not individual weaknesses that reveal personal inadequacies. They are universal experiences . . . part of the human condition. See the common humanity of willpower struggles.*
- b. Don't concern yourself with being "bad" or "good" at meditation. Pay attention to not just how well you focus during meditation but also how well you focus and make choices during the rest of your day.*

4. Extra Credit

- a. Read Kelly's Psychology Today blog entry: Are You Sure You Want a Habit?*
- b. Watch her amazing presentation to the Habit Design Meet Up Group. Find both at:
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-willpower/201203/are-you-sure-you-want-habit>*