

The Willpower Instinct Meditation Book Group Meeting 2
Saturday, April 14, 2012

Welcome to our exploration of movement, meditation & Kelly McGonigal's The Willpower Instinct.

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 the sleep and rest you need*
- b. Meditate for 5-10 minutes in the morning & evening*
- c. Try "slow" breathing your way into more self-control*
- d. Reflect and journal about this week's explorations under the microscope & try some or all of the exercises concerning your willpower challenge in Chapter 2 & 3.*
- e. Reading Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 7*

2. Self Reflection Investigations & Exercises: Chapters 2 & 3

- a. Kelly suggests that focus meditation is one of the easiest ways to improve the biological basis of willpower. She suggests that we can immediately enhance our willpower reserves by slowing our breath down to 4-6 per minute. A few minutes of practice can help us control and handle cravings or other willpower challenges. (Ch. 2)*
- b. Besides short bouts of moderate exercise Kelly suggests a 5-minute "Green Willpower Fill Up" – go for a walk! (Ch. 2)*
- c. Kelly describes how sleep deprivation impairs our body's ability to absorb nutrients effectively and can, ultimately, shunt nutritive resources away from the prefrontal cortex. She suggests catching up, storing up or napping.*
- d. Kelly suggests that doing 5-10 minutes of progressive relaxation can build our willpower reserve and increase our*

heart rate variability by shifting our bodies into a state of repair and healing. (Ch. 2)

- e. Kelly suggests that we nourish ourselves with foods that provide lasting energy. Notice what foods affect your willpower. What does a willpower diet look like for you? (Ch. 3)*
- f. Kelly suggests building our willpower muscles with willpower workouts. Use “I Will”, “I Won’t” or Self Monitoring practices to build your willpower strength. (Ch. 3)*
- g. When your willpower is running low, renew strength by tapping into your want power. (Ch. 3) Consider:*
 - i. How will you benefit from success?*
 - ii. Who else will benefit from your success?*

Imagine:

- iii. the challenge will get easier over time if you’re willing to do what is difficult now.*
- iv. what your life will be like and how you’ll feel about yourself when you succeed.*

3. Kelly’s Advice

- a. To succeed in meeting your will power challenge find or cultivate a state of body/mind that puts energy toward self-control versus self-defense. This means giving ourselves what we need to recover from stress.*
- b. Kelly writes that sometimes our strongest motivation is not what we think it is or think it should be. Notice whether you’re trying to change behavior to please someone else or be the “right” kind of person. Consider whether there is another “want” that holds more power for you.*

4. Extra Credit

- a. Try using my Guided Relaxation recording to help you restore*
- b. Read Thanisarro Bhikkhu’s article, The Dignity of Restraint*