Willpower

 Research Paper

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Abstract

The paper reviews the subject of will power in individuals. It primarily focuses on the regulation of self-control and determination. The willpower individual requires to function effectively in society. The lack of self-regulation is mirrored in the execution of emotions, behaviors and the patterns of life experience. It incorporates the ideals of immediate gratification and the level of inner strength one can encompass in their functioning. It further encompasses the cognitive relationship with the restraint and exercise of impulse. The paper also finally comprehends the ways in which willpower can be attained to achieve measurable willpower in individuals.

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**Introduction**

Willpower is the ability to make decisions while having the power to control oneself. It refers to the use of delay in gratification to make longterm beneficial decisions. It is almost synonymously used with words like determination, regulation, and drive. It is very often known as the science of self-control. The fluidity of willpower in an individual is a common occurrence. Willpower helps one make productively and healthy decision in life with higher returns. The American Association of Psychologists found in their ‘Stress in America’ report that stress was proportionally linked to lack of healthy decision making in the individuals, they concluded that willpower was identified as one the leading causes of reluctance or inability to make healthy life choices (Survey, 2014). Willpower is however conditioned with the ability and the capability to abstain from temporary and short term temptations by fighting impulse. Willpower is a conscious effort to regulate oneself. The higher levels of self-regulation on emotions and behavior are proportionally associated with achieving long-term goals by a person. Some people argue that willpower is inherent while others suggest that willpower can be learned behavior as well. Willpower’s resonance with the happy, peaceful, informed and satisfied life makes it an important factor in one's life.

**Discussion**

**Challenges to willpower**

Apart from stress, another factor that hinders the willpower is self-criticism. Self-criticism is the lack of trust and confidence an individual has on themselves. The guilt factor adds to self-criticism, constantly blaming oneself for their inabilities to take effective decisions or exercise self-control all add to weakening one's willpower. Therefore it is concluded that people who criticize themselves are less likely to feel motivated and not able to self regulate themselves (Leary, 2010). The brain has an automatic reaction to the reward-seeking mechanisms. It releases dopamine which stimulates the need for immediate fulfillment of an impulse. The subliminal environments enable these neurotransmitters to take instant charge on the attainment of temptations that surround them e.g. attractive advertisements for food products (Bradley M.Appelhans, 2016). There are certain social factors that also deplete the will power in a person. The societal disapproval of certain volitions also diminishes the self-control to pursue a certain desire. The psychologist through of a number empirical studies showed that the ultimate impulse or desire is not the only driving factor for the willpower to exercise, sometimes people may be driven by other emotional patterns such as boredom and fatigue to take certain volitions.

Ego depletion is a leading cause of diminishing self-control consequently leading to lesser willpower. Ego depletion reflects the consumption of self-control that and the individual can no longer exercise beneficial decision making (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998).

Sleep deprivation is also a leading cause of the reduction in the willpower and to regulate oneself. The idea follows that when an individual is exhausted they usually prefer a decision that is easily executed without exercising much restraint and undertaking long-term goals (Matthew T. Gailliot, 2007). There are a number of factors that consume the power to exercise willpower and contain its ability.

**Building Willpower**

The fact that an individual knows himself makes him more aware of the choices they make in their life. The studies show that most of one's decisions are taken unconsciously by an individual. Therefore one of the foremost aim to change one pattern of unconscious decision making is self-awareness, it helps identify, process and wit rationality hence making more beneficial choices in life. Meditation to will power helps reduce stress and complications in life. Psychology suggests that practicing a certain set of behavior can lead to the strengthening of neural behaviors which lay path whenever the unconscious takes charge regarding decision-making. Meditation is practicing certain behaviors regarding certain choices and then concentrating on possible outcomes and how they can be benefiting towards. Will power is often synonymous with the stamina increase, therefore exercise can also help us endure and resist certain choices which may not be beneficial for us (McGonigal, 2011). Resisting temptation definitely affects our mental process to cope and struggle with unwanted temptations. Taking stress is one of the basic barriers to healthy cognitive decision making. Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system that deals with the bodies reaction to perceived threats. When this happens one is left with anger and anxiety as the heart rate goes up leading to impulsive behavior without much self-control. The willpower is however enabled when one is calm and in the arelaxed state of mind, which activates self-control. The stress impedes with the process of achieving long term benefits, individuals in stress lack the ability to foresee long term effects of the decision it usually prefers the temporary and short term attainable goals out impulse. The elimination of stress can, however, makes one capable of seeing the rewards attached to resistance and motivated. And Lastly, an enabling environment that encourages particular goals helps an individual resist temptation and exercise restraint to achieve the ultimately better decisions in life.

**Benefits of Willpower**

Will power helps inculcate a sense of achievement in an individual. The strength and the ability to exercise self-control and attain will power, helps one gain a conscious sense of gratification. The will power reflects the ability to develop and identify our strengths. Self-control makes an individual recognize problem solving and rational decision making. This also helps them comprehend the patterns of thoughts and if they are healthy or need to be eliminated. The everyday functioning of an individual becomes more purposeful and towards the achievement of the focused goal (Roland Bénabou, 2004). Willpower is only achieved through the elimination of stress from life. This has an overall beneficial effect on the health and progress of a person. The individual exercising will power can achieve a better insight towards his personal growth and development. This increases a complete level of perseverance and endurance to live's problems with a productive and beneficial approach.

**Conclusion**

The willpower is a conscious resolve towards personal progress and success, which can be achieved through constant regard of an individual’s healthy and productive life choices. Willpower is constantly related to positive and better outcomes in the personal growth of an individual. There are however a number of challenges bar an individual to achieve self-control and regulation such as stress and the temptation. The failure of willpower hence leads to grave consequence on the cognitive and physical abilities of a person. The self-regulation can thereby be built through initiatives like meditation, being self-aware, exercise and other initiatives which increase the ability to endure and address problems with a measurable approach.

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