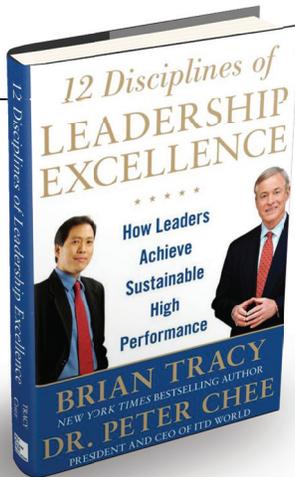


12 Disciplines of Leadership Excellence

How Leaders Achieve Sustainable High Performance

by Brian Tracy and Peter Chee



McGraw-Hill

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SUCCESS Points

From this book you'll learn to:

- Develop important leadership disciplines
- Program a new discipline into your mind
- Launch your new discipline
- Fight the temptation of the path of least resistance

No Excuses

Take Control of Your Life and Your Business

QUICK OVERVIEW

Contrary to popular belief, no one is a “born leader.” Leadership is an acquirable skill. In *12 Disciplines of Leadership Excellence*, Brian Tracy and Peter Chee outline the essential habits, skills and character traits necessary for achieving sustainable high performance as a leader.

In each chapter the authors focus on a discipline, explaining why it's important and providing action steps to help you identify what you need to do to acquire it. They present their information in a style broad enough to apply to virtually all readers, yet specific enough to be truly useful. Overall, their book is interesting, and most important, effective, as much for the authors' thought processes as for their top-notch content.

APPLY AND ACHIEVE

Tracy and Chee encourage readers to pick a discipline to master and then to give it a strong “launch.” “Resolve never to allow an exception until it becomes permanent,” they write. Decide that quitting isn't an option and determine to start over immediately if you find you've “fallen off the wagon.”

To help you stay on that wagon, the authors advocate telling others about your dedication to developing a new discipline. The theory is that you'll be motivated to adhere to your plans if you know your friends and accountability partners are watching you.

Determine what leadership discipline you need to develop. Then select someone with whom to share your decision—ideally, someone whose motivational style complements your needs. For example, if you are encouraged by gentle prodding, identify a friend who has a manner consistent with that. But if you know you'll make excuses, pick an associate who will call you on them.

SUMMARY

12 DISCIPLINES OF LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

Self-discipline is the essential quality for success in any endeavor. After 22 years of interviews and research into the 500 richest and most successful men in America, Napoleon Hill concluded that self-discipline was the “Master Key to Riches.” With self-discipline, everything is possible. But without self-discipline, virtually nothing is possible.

The 12 Leadership Disciplines of Excellence are learned qualities that require tremendous determination and persistence to develop and maintain. The good news is that each of these disciplines is learnable with repetition and practice. As Goethe wrote, “Everything is hard before it is easy.”

For some people it will be easier, and for others it will take more time and effort. But each person has the inborn ability to shape his or her character and personality in a positive way by being clear about his or her future intent and determined enough to press forward through the inevitable difficulties, resistance, and setbacks.

THE DISCIPLINE OF CONTROL

The discipline of control, of self-control and self-responsibility, is the true mark of the leader and of the exceptional person in every area. The fact is that you feel *positive* about yourself to the degree to which you feel in control of yourself and of your life. You feel negative about yourself, and stressed in your work when you feel you are not in control, or that you are controlled by other people or circumstances. Psychologists refer to this “sense of control” as what happens when you feel largely able to handle what happens to you.

Responsibility and Control

The central issue in leadership and feelings of control is the concept of responsibility.

People can be organized on a scale from 1 to 10 based on how much responsibility they accept for their lives, and in how many different areas. Those who score 10 accept 100 percent responsibility for their lives and for everything that happens to them. Those who score 1 accept no responsibility for themselves or their situations, and blame everything that happens to them on other people, the past, or outside factors. Everyone is located somewhere on this scale, moving up or down based on each decision made.

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An Irresponsible Attitude

The opposite of accepting responsibility is an attitude of irresponsibility. Irresponsible people manifest this attitude in four ways:

1. They continually *make excuses* when they fail to perform. They see themselves as victims and are often saying the equivalent of “It’s not my fault.”
2. They *complain* continually about people and circumstances. They see themselves as victims of things that have happened.
3. They *criticize* other people on a regular basis, usually behind their backs, and tend to gossip regularly about people in a negative way.
4. Worst of all, irresponsible people *blame others* continually, past and present, for all their problems. They are never at fault. They are never responsible.

Taking Control

How do you take complete control over yourself, your emotions, and the quality of your thinking? You begin by going over each part of your life, like examining an inventory sheet, and then accepting 100 percent responsibility for every person or situation in your life that causes you any negativity or aggravation. Instead of using your mind to think of reasons why other people are at fault, you use your wonderful powers of reasoning to determine why and how you may personally be responsible, even partially, for the negative situation. And these reasons can always be found.

Build the Discipline of Responsibility in Others

Once you have developed the discipline of taking complete responsibility for yourself, you then teach this to others. The fastest way to build confidence and competence in people is to give them more

Discipline and Your Mind

Once you have chosen a discipline to develop, begin to think about how you would behave if you had this discipline or habit already. See yourself acting or reacting in a situation where you want to practice this discipline.

Then, create a positive affirmation for yourself to continually reinforce the new discipline. You will actually *become* what you say to yourself about yourself over and over again.

For example, you could repeat the affirmation "I am always early for every meeting and appointment." Each time you think of a meeting or an appointment, or find yourself delaying, repeat those words over and over again; "I am always early for every meeting and appointment." You could also say, "I stop, pause, and think before I reply." In each meeting or discussion, say these words to yourself to remind yourself to think before you say anything.

responsibility. You grow them by giving them freedom to perform, and then by supporting and encouraging them when they make a mistake.

Your goal as a leader is to be a role model of personal responsibility, and then to encourage everyone else to accept higher levels of responsibility themselves. Continually tell people, "You are responsible," and then help them to take charge of their decisions and actions. The essence of self-control is self-responsibility.

Responsibility and control are essential to high performance in management and in leadership.

In business, it seems that the people who experience the highest levels of stress are middle management. The people above them, the senior executives, feel a high level of control over their decisions and actions. The people below the middle managers, their staff and employees, feel a low burden of responsibility for results. It is the middle managers who are controlled by their bosses, who exert only a limited control over their staff, and who are expected to perform and get results regardless, and consequently, they are the ones who experience the greatest amount of stress in the world of work.

Your goal as a leader is to take complete control over yourself, your emotions, and your work. You increase your sense of control by developing the habit of automatically accepting responsibility for your life and your situation. Even if something negative has happened that has nothing to do with you, you are still responsible for the way you react and respond to the situation.

THE DISCIPLINE OF COURAGE

Leaders throughout the ages have been studied in an attempt to determine the qualities that make them exceptional in their time and situation. More than 50 leadership qualities have been identified. But of all of these qualities, the two that all leaders seem to have in common are vision and courage.

Leaders formulate a clear vision of where they want to take their organization in the long term. Being able to articulate this vision clearly is the key to motivating and inspiring others to work with them to make that vision a reality.

The second leadership quality that all the studies found in common was courage. Leaders have the courage to do whatever is necessary to achieve their vision. The development of courage in a leader is essential to realizing his or her full potential. Fortunately, courage can be learned and developed over time by engaging in certain behaviors over and over again.

Everyone Is Afraid

The fact is that everyone is afraid; the only difference is in the things we are afraid of and with what degree of intensity. For you to be a great leader, you must develop the quality of courage

The central issue in leadership and feelings of control is the concept of responsibility.

and use it to deal with the trials, tribulations, and turbulence of leadership, especially in today's business environment.

The two greatest fears we all share are the fears of failure and loss on the one hand, and the fears of criticism and rejection on the other. Many other fears include poverty, embarrassment, ridicule, loss of love, loss of security or status, and so on. But all of these fears fall under one of the two umbrella categories mentioned: failure and rejection.

What is the difference, then, between the brave person and the coward? Both are afraid, but the brave person forces himself or herself to act in spite of a fear. Emerson wrote, "Do the thing you fear, and the death of fear is certain."

The only way to free yourself from fear is to do what you fear. It is for you to move *toward* the fear-inducing circumstance or person and as you do, the fear actually becomes smaller and more manageable. But if you back away from the fear, if you avoid the fear-causing situation or person, the fear grows larger and larger and soon dominates your thoughts and feelings.

Identify Your Biggest Goal

One of the questions we often ask in our seminars is, "What one great goal would you dare to set for yourself if you knew you could not fail?" If you were absolutely guaranteed success in any one thing in life, big or small, short or long term, what one great goal would you set for yourself?

Another question we ask is, "What have you always wanted to do but been afraid to attempt?" Often, your answer to this question indicates what you are really meant to do with your life. The things that you have been afraid to attempt in the past may be in the area where you could enjoy the greatest success and happiness, if you could just overcome your fears in that area.

Where Courage Is Required

Courage is required, and even demanded, in several areas of business life. The first area is in decision making. It takes courage to make important decisions that involve the irrevocable commitment of money and resources, especially when the outcome cannot be guaranteed.

Leaders do not like to fail. They do everything possible to avoid failure by minimizing risk. But they know that failure is inevitable and

unavoidable in the pursuit of sales and profits. It is impossible to succeed without failing, sometimes over and over again, until you learn the vital lessons necessary to succeed at a high level.

The key is to "fail forward," which means using trial and error to enable you as a leader and your organization to learn and move forward. As Herodotus said, "There is no shame in failing; only in not rising again."

Types of Decisions

Decision making is a key skill and responsibility of leadership. It is important to recognize what type of decision you need to make:

1. *Decisions that you have to make:* These issues are your chief responsibility. No one else can make these decisions. If you don't make them, others cannot act. The system slows down and then stops.
2. *Decisions that you don't have to make:* Sometimes you can simply remain neutral, or buy time, rather than making a decision you cannot then get out of.
3. *Decisions that are not yours to make:* These decisions are the responsibility of someone else, who then becomes responsible for carrying out the decision. One of the best ways to build competence and confidence in people is to delegate decision making to them, and then work with them to learn and grow through the process.
4. *Decisions that you cannot not make:* In the absence of a decision in this area, nothing gets done. Progress stops, and no advancement is possible.

If you are experiencing fear about making decisions, it is important to recognize that one of the main causes of fear is ignorance. It is fear of the unknown. You can greatly reduce this fear, and this block to decision making, by doing more research, by gathering more information.

Taking Risks

Another area where courage is required is in the area of risk taking. The fact is that every action or decision entails risk. We never have any guarantee that an action or decision will be successful.

SUMMARY

12 DISCIPLINES OF LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

Many people believe that entrepreneurs and business people are “risk takers.” But the fact is that successful business people and entrepreneurs are really “risk avoiders.” They do everything possible to minimize the risks involved in the pursuit of sales and profitability. They engage in due diligence and conduct careful research. They get as much information as possible to reduce the possibility of loss, both of time and money.

As a leader, you face several types of risk:

1. *The risks you have to take:* No progress is possible without moving forward into the unknown.
2. *The risks that are not yours to take:* They are the responsibility of someone else, like hiring a new person.
3. *The risks that you can afford to take:* The upside can be especially positive, the costs are low, and the downside is small.
4. *The risks you cannot not take:* These risks involve possible loss, but the upside for you and your company are so great if you succeed that you must take this type of risk.

Analyze each risk and determine into which category it falls. This process of assessing the actual risk reduces your fears and increases your courage.

Two Parts of Courage

The first part of courage is the courage to *begin*—to launch, to step out in faith, to “go boldly where no man has gone before.” The second part of courage is the courage to *endure*—to continue, to persist in the face of the inevitable short-term failure and temporary setbacks. This part of courage is called “courageous patience”; it is the ability to hang in there, to be resolute and determined, particularly in the period between when you launch a new product or endeavor and when you experience any results or success.

“Stay the course!” has always been an excellent piece of advice. Often it is too early to tell whether your decision is going to succeed. It is amazing how many people lose heart and pull the plug on an initiative just before it succeeds. As Ross Perot said, “Many people quit just before succeeding. That’s not the time to quite, but the time to exert even greater effort.”

The development of courage is essential to your success as a leader. You can eventually become fearless and unstoppable by practicing some of these ideas until they become entrenched habits and disciplines of both mind and action.

Develop the Discipline You Desire

The process of developing a leadership discipline is simple, though not easy. Nothing worthwhile is easy.

First, decide upon the one discipline that can be most helpful to you in your career at the moment. Don’t try to change several things about yourself at one time or to develop several disciplines for yourself simultaneously, no matter how attractive and desirable they may be.

Your basic need is to focus and concentrate on the development of a *single* discipline until it is locked in and becomes a part of your personality. Then you can move on to the development of the next discipline on your list.

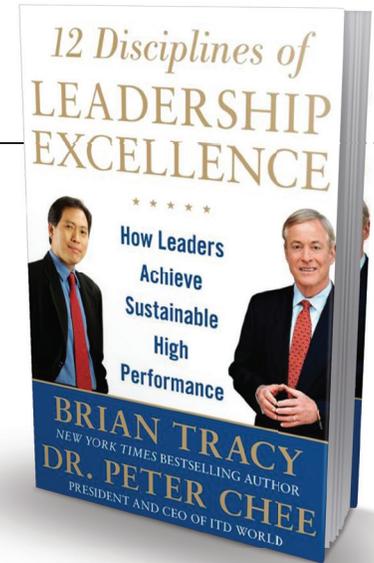
The good news is that every act of discipline strengthens and reinforces all your other disciplines. At the same time, every weakness in discipline weakens your other disciplines. You must be vigilant. *Everything counts!*

Your first discipline could be something as simple as *punctuality*, or pausing before immediately replying in a conversation or a meeting. It can be as simple as flossing your teeth each day, or arising early and exercising each morning before you begin your day. The cumulative effect of developing small disciplines enables you to develop larger, more important disciplines later.

About the Authors

Brian Tracy has authored 56 books and over 500 audio and video programs—many of them best-sellers. With a focus on business leadership and achievement, he has consulted for more than 1,000 companies and addressed over 4,000,000 people in 4,000 talks and seminars in more than 40 countries.

Peter Chee is accredited by both the Jack Canfield and John Maxwell leadership programs, and has spent 26 years training and developing leaders in 80 countries. Chee developed the Situational Coaching Model, and has co-authored books with Jack Canfield and Dr. William Rothwell, in addition to this latest book with Brian Tracy.



Action Steps

Get more out of this SUCCESS Book Summary by applying what you've learned. Here are a few questions, thoughts and activities to get you started.

1. Identify the areas of your life and work where you feel the greatest sense of control.
2. Identify those areas of your life where you feel that you have little or no control, where you feel that you are controlled by other people or circumstances.
3. Resolve today to accept 100 percent responsibility for every part of your life; think about how and why you are responsible for your situation and for everything that happens to you.
4. Refuse to criticize, complain, or blame others for anything. You are the leader. You are in charge.
5. Set an example by telling others that you are responsible when things go wrong, rather than making excuses.
6. Encourage others to accept greater responsibility for their actions and for getting results in their work.
7. Identify one area or situation in your life where fear may be holding you back. Resolve today to confront that situation and deal with it.

Recommended Reading

If you enjoyed the summary of **12 Disciplines of Leadership Excellence**, check out:

Goals! by Brian Tracy

The Twelve Absolutes of Leadership by Gary Burnison

Coaching for Breakthrough Success by Jack Canfield and Peter Chee

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