

# Mastering your self

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*Here is a something that has helped me.*

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# 1 - INTRO

*"No man is free who is not master of himself." -- Epictetus.*

What does it mean to be the master of yourself? Certainly, each one of us has demands that pull him or her one way or the other, until it seems that we are stretched in all directions. Does being the master of oneself mean that we ignore those demands? Does being master of yourself mean that you never listen to your spouse, your family, or your mother-in-law?

Nope. Being master of yourself goes deeper than that. It all has its root in attitude.

Being the master of yourself goes deeper than getting up when the alarm goes off, although that's an important first step. It means more than controlling your spending or eating habits, although that too is essential. It means more than exercising, even when you don't feel like it, or mowing the lawn when you would prefer to sit in front of the TV and eat cheese puffs.

It means, deep down, and to the core, a control -- a mastery -- of your basic emotions that drive your behavior.

## 2 - Self-doubt

**First off, we must control self-doubt.**

Many of us doubt ourselves, even though we are loath to admit it. "In his private heart, no man much respects himself," Mark Twain, an adept judge of human nature, wrote. Alexandre Dumas, author of such celebrated classics as *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*, put it even plainer: "A person who doubts himself is like man who would enlist in the ranks of his enemies and bear arms against himself. He makes his failure certain by himself being the first person to be convicted of it."

Self-doubt is a cancer that limits our future. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy, that forever limits us.

### 3 - Our-self

Second, we must control our view of ourselves. [Robert Burns](#) wrote the following (loosely translated): "Oh, that some power give us the gift to see ourselves as others see us." (The original is "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us to see oursel's as ithers see us." I think I did pretty well.). [Herb Cohen](#), who is billed as "The World's Greatest Negotiator," had an interesting take on this. Herb said in his tape series on negotiation that he tends to downplay his failures, or possibly blame them on other people. While it is important for us to keep a reasonably accurate view of our life and our abilities, it's also important for us to not shortchange ourselves, and we are wont to do. Keeping a positive spin on our abilities can make a major difference.

The decisions we make in life are largely determined by the filters we use to judge reality. Few of us will ever be able to take a totally unbiased view of our abilities, because few ever can detach ourselves from our past. If we were able to judge ourselves by the same standards that we apply to our friends and family, we might be able to gain a better viewpoint. The Scottish poet

Only when we can make a reasonable, positive view of our abilities, will we ever gain the upper hand.

## 4 - Be fair

**Third, we must be fair with ourselves.** Being fair with an employee, doesn't mean constant praise. Sometimes, being fair means that correction where a change is needed. So we need to be fair with ourselves, even though that fairness may mean a rational set of changes that need to be made. Few of us are ever fair with ourselves.

## 5 - Practice

**Fifth, to become a master, we must practice.** By its very nature, Mastery requires practice. It requires work. It requires dedication, change, sacrifice.

## 6 - Self-pitty

Sixth, remember to protect yourself from self-pity [Helen Keller](#), who had every reason to engage in self pity. "If we yield to it, we can never do anything wise in the world.". "Self-pity is our worst enemy," said

## 7 - Self-renewal

**Seventh, practice occasional self-renewal.** Like a blighted neighborhood, sometimes, you've just got to tear old things down in yourself, and build up something new. Too often, we let the dust of the world clog up the life of our soul. Sometimes, we've just got to do some dusting.

## 8 - A push

**Eighth, give yourself a push.** Set goals to work on the parts you want to master first. Choose the one area that is most standing in your way, and goal for a change. Set a specific, detailed goal, a date for achievement, then plan out your path to success.

## **9 - like yourself**

**Ninth, learn to like yourself.** "I don't like myself," said Mae West. "I'm crazy about myself."

## 10 - Last

**Last**, remember Gibson's final rule of life: "Don't take yourself so damn seriously."