

# Exploring Leadership

## PERSONAL LEADERSHIP: SELF DISCIPLINE

Every day we deal with distractions, struggle to concentrate, and do our best not to procrastinate. Whether we're trying to study for a test, lose weight, kick a bad habit, or work toward a future goal, Self-Discipline always plays a part.

### CONVERSATION STARTER:

- Regarding the Marshmallow test (linked in the "What You'll Need box), would you be able to wait? What if you knew you'd get more later? Would that same action apply to another incentive?

Self-Discipline has a more significant positive impact on academic success than intelligence -- the more Self-Discipline you have, the better your grades! Not only that, but if you exhibit Self-Discipline, you have a reduced risk of obesity in adulthood, better muscular and aerobic fitness, lower likelihood of engaging in risky or criminal behaviors, and greater occupational and career achievement in terms of income and job satisfaction.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Identify behaviors that indicate Self-Discipline.
- Practice Self-Discipline.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Computer/projector to show the following YouTube video:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX\\_oy9614HQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ)

## EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Body Part Mix Up Instructions: Most people have heard the children's song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes," which is used to teach the body parts to small children. They touch the appropriate part of their own bodies as they sing the words with the group. (Like this.) This game is a variation that requires Self-Discipline.

### FACILITATOR TIP:

- If no video is available, you could just describe the marshmallow experiment and substitute marshmallows with another desirable incentive agreed upon by the group.

- Assign a leader who gets to call out body parts (let's stick with the G-rated ones). The leader also has to perform the motions with the group.
- After one round of standard play, change one rule: When you hear "head," touch your toes and vice-versa. (This requires you to stop and think about your actions, which is Self-Discipline.)
- Example: If the leader calls out "knees, head, elbow". You should touch your knees, TOES, and elbow. Get it?
- Switch leaders and add another new rule. (E.g., When you hear ears, touch your nose instead and vice versa.)
- Continue switching leaders and changing rules until everyone is completely confused. End by performing your new version of "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes."



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Why is it difficult to touch your toes when the leader says touch your head? What long-established habits does it require you to stop and think about?
- How did you do compared to others in the group? Do you have more or less self-control than most people?
- When you were the leader, what was the hardest thing you had to do? Why?

## APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- In real life, what is something that requires your Self-Discipline?
- How could a well developed sense of Self-Discipline serve you well in the future?



## CONCLUSION:

This was a simple activity about impulse control, but it illustrates an important part of the long-term life skill of Self-Discipline. Long-term Self-Discipline cannot be illustrated in a short session such as this, but impulse control (which is a part of Self-Discipline) can be. There are so many advantages to Self-Discipline that you should make it a point to develop and practice it.

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## REFERENCES

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- <https://www.consulting.com/self-discipline>
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