

MARTIN MEADOWS

# 365 DAYS WITH SELF-DISCIPLINE

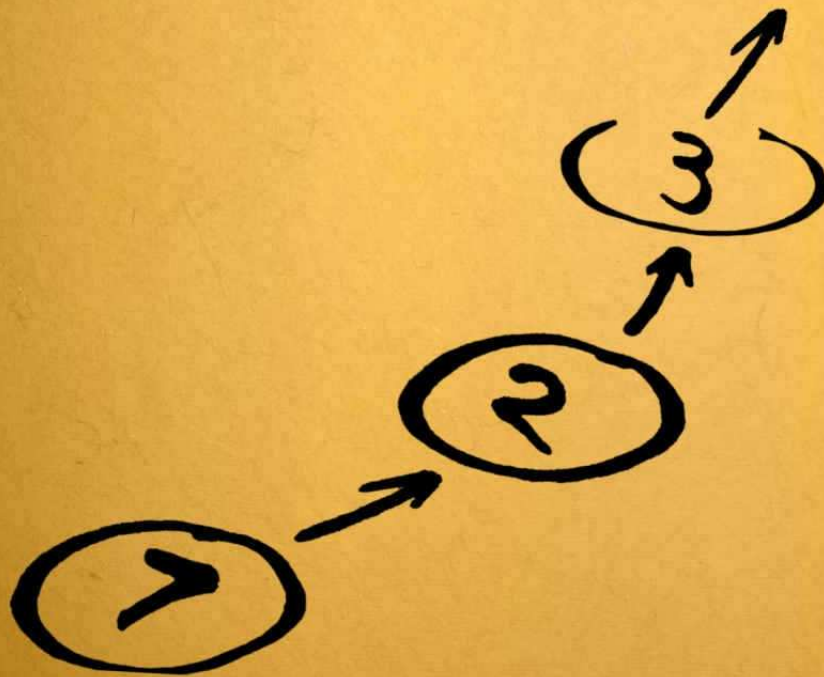
365 LIFE-ALTERING THOUGHTS ON  
SELF-CONTROL, MENTAL RESILIENCE, AND SUCCESS



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**365 Days**

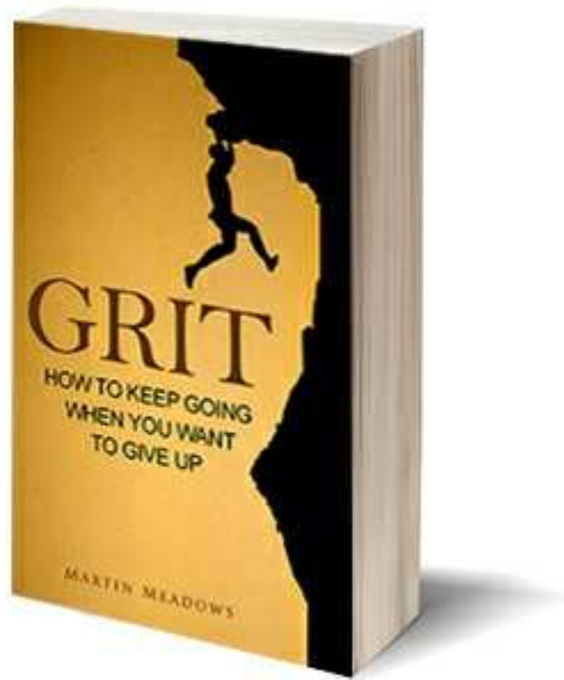
**With Self-Discipline**

365 Life-Altering Thoughts on  
Self-Control, Mental Resilience, and Success

By Martin Meadows

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## Prologue

Ouzouk woke up with the first rays of sunlight hitting his face. He scanned the interior of his dusty hut, constructed with twigs, mud and dry grass. He scratched his back, which, as always, had been bitten by insects over and over again throughout the night. Grateful that the night had passed without any danger to his family, he crawled out, careful not to make any sounds.

It was a crisp and clear morning. He would have loved to take his family for a walk around the waterfall and play with his little son, but there was work to do. It had been five days since the tribe ate something more substantial than a fistful of berries. Unfazed by the bloodthirsty mosquitoes buzzing by, Ouzouk walked over to the fire pit and warmed his calloused hands. The light scent of wood smoke filled his nostrils. He rubbed his hands together, still feeling the painful absence of his index finger lost during that fateful hunt many moons ago.

One by one, his fellow tribesmen crawled out of their huts and joined him at the fire. There was Dhizgab, his friend who was bitten by a snake and was left partly paralyzed on his left side. Gnokk limped along next, with his broken foot badly healed, and a part of his skull partly caved in after a stone thrown by an enemy tribesman hit him smack dab in the middle of his forehead. Rekknodd sauntered into the group next. So far, he was the luckiest of the band, with only a deep scar on his cheek, left from an attack by a tiger that had massacred a half of the tribe. Other men—some missing limbs, some having lost their entire families, some with even more horrible memories—joined the group.

When the men were ready, they separated into two groups and ventured out to secure food for the tribe. They made it back to the camp in the early afternoon, forced to make a hasty retreat after spotting a leopard resting in the thick bushes. Yet again, they had failed to obtain food, but at least they were grateful that (unlike two moons ago) this time nobody had been hurt.

With empty stomachs, the adults gathered around the fire pit while small children, supervised by teenagers armed with spears and bows, played by the creek a short distance from the camp.

They reluctantly decided that the area could no longer support them. While clean water was plentiful and predators rare, food was becoming increasingly scarce and successful hunts were few and far between.

The next day they would gather their belongings, put them on their backs, and walk for a long time until they would find another suitable place for a new temporary dwelling. Some would die along the way, some would get hurt, but such was life, Ouzouk thought to himself. A human being couldn't *ever* stop struggling and fighting to survive each day.

I can hear you thinking, "What a weird prologue to a book about self-discipline!" Bear with me, please...

Our basic human nature hasn't changed since the days of Ouzouk. While the vast majority of humans fortunately no longer have to live in constant discomfort and fear of death, we would still do well to possess even a fraction of mental toughness and self-discipline our ancestors had. In the modern world, it's easy to live without even a modicum of self-discipline.

Back then, nobody could avoid discomfort. It was a fact of life that one couldn't thrive unless they ventured into the world, facing unknown risks and possible death in a quest for a better life.

Today, most people are unable to wake up early without an alarm clock, and even then, it takes them thirty minutes just to crawl out of bed. Most would find it impossible to sleep on the bare floor, with insects crawling over them and biting their bodies the entire night. If they experienced just a slight ache, most would skip work and complain about how much pain they were in. Most wouldn't be able to fast for an entire day, let alone go without food for five days in a row.

Compared to our ancestors, we have it *easy* .

Yet, or perhaps because of it, so many people struggle with self-discipline today. A great majority of them do nothing to fix that, and the ones who try are often met with ridicule. If you belong to the group that is trying to better themselves or wanting to do so, the book you're now reading is for you.

I wrote *365 Days With Self-Discipline* with the intention of creating a daily companion to help you embrace self-discipline in your everyday life.

As the author of several bestselling books about self-discipline and being a personal growth junkie myself, self-control is a topic close to my heart. I believe that if a person wants to reach their full potential, he or she can't avoid discomfort. Doing things that might not be entirely pleasant is key to achieving long-term objectives.

In the following pages, I'll share with you one thought for each day of a year that is devoted to the topic of self-discipline, mental toughness, success, or self-improvement in general. The thoughts come from some of the world's brightest minds: successful entrepreneurs, athletes, bestselling authors, researchers, performers, bloggers, and more.

Since the entries are brief and get straight to the heart of the matter, you'll be able to quickly find ongoing inspiration to continue working on your most important long-term goals and on becoming an ever better person.

Due to the large number of days in a year, some themes will inevitably repeat, but I strove to address each subtopic from different perspectives. Please note that I have quoted various people from numerous sources, including books, articles, blogs, speeches, interviews, and more. By citing their words, I don't necessarily endorse their works or their persona.

(A note on quotes in the physical and ebook version of the book — whenever I could, I cited the source and included an endnote. Unfortunately, the exact source of a small number of quotes, particularly those by historic figures, was elusive to me. Whenever I couldn't find the author — as is often the case with many inspirational quotes circulating around the Internet — instead of risking misattribution I wrote "Unknown." )

Let's turn the page and start with Day 1 and the most important thought that defines the difference between a self-disciplined person and a weak-willed one.

## WEEK 1

### Day 1: On Living the Hard Way

*Life's easy when you live it the hard way... and hard if you try to live it the easy way.*

—Dave Kekich <sup>1</sup>

Self-discipline means living your life the hard way: resisting temptations and instant gratification, in order to receive bigger and better rewards in the future. It's certainly *easier* to avoid all kinds of discomfort and indulge yourself whenever you want, but in the end, all that you get from that approach is fleeting pleasure *now* at the expense of your future, which otherwise could have been much better.

Consider a weak-willed person who, when faced with a challenge, immediately opts out. How likely is this person to achieve anything substantial in life if their primary value is to feel comfortable? How is this person going to manage a crisis that they *must* face? Even a relatively insignificant problem can become an insurmountable obstacle for a person who's been living a sheltered life and always avoided what's difficult or disagreeable.

Now contrast that with a person who *voluntarily* makes his or her life harder. They seek out and welcome challenges as opportunities to grow. Each self-imposed affliction strengthens them, so that fewer and fewer difficulties in life overwhelm them. Day by day, they immunize themselves against problems, precisely because they seek them out. When life deals them an unexpected blow, they're ready to handle it because — thanks to living their lives the hard way — they're *always* ready for hardships.