

# The truth about willpower — and how to get more!

## How to think with a different part of your brain

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I have often said that I don't believe in willpower. In fact, in my first book I referred to it as a "fleeting moment of bravado." But, recently I have had a change of heart.

In my own struggles with willpower and impulsiveness, I have come to learn that *will* is not a myth or genetic trait that you either have or don't have, it's a skill. This means that anyone can develop it at any point! It's like a muscle — it can grow stronger or it can become weaker. Ready to learn how to build your willpower instead of breaking it down?

To build willpower, you need to change where you think.

That's right. You can literally change the part of the brain that you are using to process information in order to take a long-term view and control your behavior. Your amygdala is the part of your brain that is impulsive. This is the part that has you grab that handful of M&M's off of your co-worker's desk or has you dive into the bread rolls on the table. But, by stopping and questioning these choices before you act on them, you literally shift the place where you are processing information — to the frontal lobe. Your frontal lobe is the part of your brain that is associated with willpower and self-control.

So, the next time you get the urge to reach your hand into a candy jar, transfer your mental control from the impulsive part of your mind to the logical part.

Here's how: Take a few deep breaths and then ask yourself some complex questions about what you are feeling, what you're about to do, what is triggering those emotions or cravings and whether the action supports your long-term health goal. Don't rush it. Carefully contemplating the results of your decisions and actions will allow you to move from that "go" state where you're ready to act on impulse to a "know" state where you are able to make the healthier choice.

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