

WEEK 5

Turning Up The Heat

Over the past few weeks we have increased our awareness both internally and externally. We have assessed our strengths and weakness, determined triggers to better understand our reactions and identified patterns that drive our choices. We have sought to increase our awareness—to *know* better in order to *do* better. Now that our awareness has been ignited, it's time to turn up the heat and *act* on our knowledge with self-management. To help cultivate and develop this skill further, self-management can be broken down into three categories: self-control, perseverance and goal-setting.



Self-Control

The benefits of self-control have been woven into moral tales and fables for centuries. Yet on average, our need for immediate gratification has increased rather than decreased and we fail to realize that today's actions affect tomorrow. Think about self-control from the perspective of behavior patterns rather than individual acts. Anticipate situations and determine your own pattern in order to avoid temptations. For example, if we decide to begin a pattern of behavior such as refraining from eating fried foods, we can anticipate situations in which we would come across these foods and establish a pattern of alternative choices or avoidance.

Perseverance

A study by Northwestern University found that feeling pride or compassion increases perseverance on difficult tasks by over 30 percent.⁷ In addition, attitudes of gratitude and compassion have been associated with improved academic performance and an increased willingness to exercise and eat healthy, as well as decreased levels of consumerism, impulsivity, tobacco and alcohol use. In short, encountering and overcoming obstacles is difficult—yet rewarding.

Goal-Setting

Goals are important influencers on our life choices encompassing both self-control and perseverance in order to guide our actions toward a desired result. The more specific a goal, the easier it is to take action and reach it. When setting a goal, keep in mind the SMART strategy: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-based.