

## SMALL PASSAGE FOR PRACTICE

P.1

Like their ancient toga-wearing counterparts, modern philosophers continue to disagree on the nature of freewill. Do we really have any control over the choices we make and the things we desire, and if so, to what degree?

Theories of freewill vary, but the ancient words of Plato still line up with our modern perceptions of temptation and willpower. The revered Greek philosopher argued that the human experience is one of constant struggle between the intellect and the body, between rationality and desire. Along these lines, true freedom is only achievable when willpower unchains us from bodily, emotional, instinctual slavery.

You can find similar sentiments throughout world religions, most of which offer a particular and often difficult path to rise above our darker natures.

And science? Well, science mostly agrees with all of this. Willpower is all about overcoming your natural impulses to eat cupcakes, skip your morning workout, flirt with the waiter, hit the snooze alarm and check your e-mail during a funeral.

Your willpower, however, is limited. If life were a video game, you'd see a glowing "willpower" or "ego" meter at the top of the screen next to your "life" meter. Successfully resist one temptation, and the meter depletes a little. The next temptation depletes the "willpower" meter even more, until there's nothing left at all.

Our modern scientific understanding of willpower in large part stems from a 1996 research experiment involving chocolate and radishes. Psychologist Roy Baumeister led a study in which 67 test subjects were presented with tempting chocolate chip cookies and other chocolate-flavored treats before a persistence-testing puzzle. Here's the catch: The researchers asked some of the participants to abstain from sweets and snack on radishes instead.

Baumeister's results told a fascinating story. The test subjects who resisted the sweet stuff in favor of radishes performed poorly on the persistence test. They simply didn't have the willpower left to resist slacking off.

The resulting paper, "Ego Depletion: Is the Active Self a Limited Resource?" inspired more than a thousand additional studies discussing everything from the influence of positive messages to the ego-sapping power of daily decisions

Studies also show that cognitive capacity also affects our ability to hold out against temptation. Cognitive capacity is essentially your working memory, which you employ when resisting a temptation ... or holding a string of numbers in your head. A 1999 study from the University of Iowa professor Baba Shiv found that people tasked with remembering a two-digit number held out better than people remembering a seven-digit number when tempted with chocolate cake.

Q1.What do you understand by 'freewill'?

- 1)The choices we make and the things we desire
- 2)The choices that philosophers force us to make
- 3)Our perception of temptation
- 4)Our ego

Q2.According to Plato, when is true freedom available?

- 1)When there is a struggle between the intellect and the body
- 2)When our willpower helps us to overcome our base instincts
- 3)When we desire that which we cannot achieve
- 4)When we have no control over our ego

Q3.In the second paragraph, what does the expression 'line up' signify?

- 1)Align with
- 2)disagree with
- 3)Differ from
- 4)In discussion with

Q4.What is meant by 'cognitive capacity'?

- 1)Willpower
- 2)Our ego
- 3)Our ability to overcome temptation
- 4)The desire to give in to temptation

Q5.From the RC given above, find a synonym for 'respected'

- 1)Cognitive
- 2)Temptation
- 3)Desire
- 4)Revered

ANSWERS WITH REASONS

Ans1. The first option is correct. The answer can be found in the second sentence of the first paragraph, where after stating a general observation on 'freewill', an attempt is made to define it.

Ans2. The second option is correct, as is evident from the last line of the second paragraph – once our willpower becomes strong enough to overcome instant gratification, we are truly free.

Ans3. The first option is correct, as the second paragraph opens up by relating the fact that although the contemporary philosophers' views vary, they still align with Plato's thoughts.

Ans 4. The third option is correct, the last paragraph offers a working definition of 'cognitive capacity'

Ans 5. The fourth option is correct, 'revered' also means – to hold in high esteem, to respect.

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