



## Don't Quit: Make Winning a Habit

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**D**o you know anyone who is pounding the pavement looking for a new **job**? Maybe you know someone who has tried to quit smoking or you have a neighbor who is training for the marathon. How about someone who has received strict doctor's orders to eat healthier and lose weight?

Over the course of our lifetime, we'll all face situations that test our will, defy our determination, and challenge our character. Remember, even if life were a bed of roses, you'd still need to avoid the thorns.

Yet, even though our personal limits may be challenged, defeat should never be accepted as an option. Of course, that's easier said than done — we're all human. Often it's so much easier to cheat “just this one time” or to give up entirely. Who will know? Answer: You will.

The fact still remains that the difference between a **winner** and an also-ran isn't always that the loser fell on hard times. Rather, the difference often lies in how the adversity was faced. While some people stare tough times right in the eye, others are quick to surrender to a challenge. Which one are you?

### Are You Ready to Meet the Challenge?

Why are some people so quick to throw in the towel?

**Afraid to lose.** Some people give up before they even start. Their rationale is “Why make the effort when the odds of winning are stacked against me anyway?”

**Lack of reality.** Some folks are like a “deer in headlights.” When they're faced with a challenge, they're surprised, overwhelmed, and ill prepared to rise to the occasion.

**Lack of confidence.** Some people have a tendency to reach out for help as soon as they're faced with a challenge. The problem is, the more reliant you are on others, the less reliant you are on yourself.

**Fear of accountability.** Some folks leave their future to fate. They reason, “If there's nothing I can do to change the outcome, why even try?” Sounds like a recipe for failure. Here, the poet Nikki Giovanni offers some inspirational advice: “I really don't think life is about the I-could-have-beens. Life is only about the I-tried-to-do. I don't mind the failure but I can't imagine that I'd forgive myself if I didn't try.” Well, be prepared to give each new challenge your best shot to avoid regret.

**Lack of will.** Some people don't have the stomach to face adversity. They've given up so many times in life that they accept defeat without making an effort. That's when you look to a well-known song by the Rolling Stones, who point out, “You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes you might find you get what you need.” Rock on!

While  
determination  
builds character,  
quitting is  
habit forming.

### Believe in Yourself

Are you up to the test? Although it isn't the first time you've faced a challenge like this, your body reacts the same way as before. It's like a physical and emotional tidal wave that slams into you. Your palms get sweaty, your heart starts pounding, your blood pressure starts rushing, and an adrenaline rush kicks in. “Come

on,” you say to yourself, “I've experienced this before.” The million-dollar question is, are you going to face the test or throw in the towel?

Face the test? Good . . . but are you really committed? I'm sure you see people every day who promise to go on a diet, eat healthier, exercise several days a week, or quit smoking. The problem is that they break their promise before they even finish their sentence. What about you? “This time it will be different,” you say.

Come on, who are you kidding? We've been down this road before. You've never kept a New Year's resolution

for more than two weeks. Why even go through the hassle, knowing that you're probably going to break your word (again)?

Okay. If you're really serious this time, promise yourself that you won't quit. Nomatterwhat.

Don't let others tell you that you can't. What do they know? Don't succumb to the broad-based statistics. So you need a job? It doesn't matter what the national employment statistics say — you only need one job. Don't use other people as a crutch. Believe in yourself. You can do it. And please don't think your challenge is going to be easy. It won't be. If you set realistic expectations and follow a systematic process from the start, you can do it. You can win out over challenges that you face. Here's how:

- First, try to break BIG challenges into bite-size pieces. They won't seem as overwhelming and you can focus your energies rather than getting spread too thin.
- Then, rather than setting a long-term goal for yourself, create ambitious yet achievable, short-term milestones — quick short-term wins will keep you motivated. Make sure you celebrate every win. Don't spend your time complaining, worrying, or finding excuses. All that amounts to is wasted energy.
- And stop focusing on whether you've hit your goal. Instead, focus and measure all the positive activity and energy that you're generating. The fact is, if you're moving in the right direction, you're one step closer to your goal.

Now is the hard part. Take a deep breath. Close your eyes. Create a mental image of yourself achieving your goal. Remember, when the voice whispers, "It's time to give up," don't give in. When the voice whispers, "Go ahead, just one more cigarette," or "It's only one piece of pie," whisper back, "Not this time!"

Every great performer, every athlete, every inventor, every entrepreneur — all share one thing in common: They achieved greatness because they had the confidence, skill, inner strength, and determination to make things happen. Something inside them said, "I'm not a quitter."

## Go for It!

So reach deep down into your soul and give it all you've got. There are times when you'll reach your limit. Everything inside you will be telling you to stop and quit. It's okay to take a rest. In fact, it's a good idea to stop occasionally to reflect on and celebrate your progress, check out your new insights, and catch your breath.

Some people run into a wall and figure out a way to get around it. Other people brush themselves off and run into the wall again. What can you do better? What can you do differently to increase your likelihood of success?

You will be tested, but DON'T quit. Many people throw in the towel when they're on the one-yard line, not knowing how close they are to the goal line. That's the real moment of truth. Give it that small extra effort that will put you over your own goal line!

While determination builds character, quitting is habit forming. When quitting becomes routine, you won't even think twice about giving up next time. On the other hand, when you overcome even an insignificant challenge, you'll gain the strength and motivation to confront your next challenge with confidence.

Isn't it about time that you believed in yourself? Prove to others and yourself that you have what it takes to **succeed**. You have the confidence, skill, inner strength, and determination to take on the world. So get ready for your next challenge. It'll be a whole lot easier this time. You're about to make winning a habit. ●

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Frank Sonnenberg, a marketing strategist, has written three books and published over 300 articles. • *Industry Week* named his book, *Managing With a Conscience* one of the Top Ten Business Books of the Year • Salon.com named Sonnenberg's blog among the top 100 in 2009 • *Trust Across America* named Sonnenberg one of the Top 100 Thought Leaders of 2010 • In 2011, *Social Media Marketing Magazine* (SMM) selected Sonnenberg as one of the top marketing authors in the world on Twitter. [www.franksonnenbergonline.com](http://www.franksonnenbergonline.com) © 2011 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved. If you want to re-post or republish this post, please email [frank@franksonnenbergonline.com](mailto:frank@franksonnenbergonline.com). Thank you for respecting intellectual capital.