

**COURSE TITLE:** WHY WILLPOWER MATTERS: Improve Health, Happiness, & Productivity  
**WA CLOCK HRS:** 60  
**NO. OF CREDITS:** 6 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]  
**OREGON PDUs:** 60  
**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 60  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Brenda McKinney  
bbbrain@comcast.net

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Every single day we are bombarded with decisions. Do we choose the less enjoyable, better-for-me option or the more pleasurable alternative? Do students choose to turn in homework or do activities of their own choosing? A startling discovery is that willpower is depleted by usage. Some kids' brains run out of willpower and not surprisingly so do adults. Would you like to be able to help your students do much, much more in the classroom and learn about yourself at the same time? The big question is . . . can you teach this skill? It turns out that *the neuroscience behind self-regulation* can be taught.

Won't you join me for this exciting class so you can find out how! This class will engage and excite you while you learn the science behind self-control. Through practical activities and dynamic reading, you will be able to make the connections between quality of life and willpower.

Appropriate for all K-12 teachers, coaches, and parents. *Sign up today to transform ordinary students into students with a passion for learning and transform your personal ability to stretch your own willpower.*

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Found out where the power in willpower comes from.
2. Understand why people feel like willpower failures.
3. Define and understand the neuroscience of "I will," "I want," "I won't."
4. Look inside at what weakens our willpower and why our reserves are limited.
5. Develop a plan to break old habits, conquer procrastination, manage stress, and focus goals.
6. Develop strategies that can enhance learning for students who lack self-control.
7. Develop a plan for understanding the role of paying attention and willpower.
8. Discover ways to help underachievers be more successful and gain more pleasure in school.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

---

**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

---

---

**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
- 
- 
- 

### **CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **REQUIRED TEXT**

McDonigal, Kelly. *The Willpower Instinct. How Self-Control Works, Why it Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More Out of It.* 2012. New York, NY: Avery Books. ISBN: 9978-1-68333-4386

None. All reading is online.

#### **MATERIALS FEE**

Text, *The Willpower Instinct. How Self-Control Works, Why it Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More Out of It*, is approximately \$15 from Amazon.com.

### **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

#### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: Introduction.**

For those participating in Group Collaboration, you must read and follow the instructions outlined in the Group Collaboration Guidelines. Click on the link for Guidelines. <https://www.hol.edu/about/group-collaboration>

- Assignment #1, each participant must complete this assignment independently.
- There should be a minimum of (4) four group meetings during which the course content is discussed.
- Teleconferences or live meetings are acceptable. A good videoconference option is Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>).
- Each participant must attend at least 75% of the group meetings (a minimum of 3 of 4 meetings).

You must complete the introduction before moving on to other assignments.

In 250+ words describe your current professional situation, some low and high points in your teaching career and why you chose to take this course. What are you most excited about learning?

#### **Assignment #2: What Willpower Is & Why It Matters.**

Read pages 9-29 in your text to be able to define and discover the neuroscience behind willpower.

View the following video:

- The Science of Willpower

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/W\\_fQvcBCNbA](https://www.youtube.com/embed/W_fQvcBCNbA)

In 500+ words explore what willpower is and why it matters and why our two minds are constantly in conflict with each other. Consider the following in your response.

- Explore the problem of the conflict between the two minds and how to strengthen self-control.
- Discuss what you learned about training the mind so the brain and body to work together to achieve goals.
- What powerful examples show the critical aspect of training when discussing willpower?
- What can you do this week to discover the power of willpower in your own life?
- What are the “must-do’s” for your own life and for your classroom?

For 400 Level you will be journaling and trying four (4) of willpower challenges, so you might want to be tracking the challenges as you move forward. How about using the non-dominant hand for everything a try this week?

### **Assignment #3: Brain & Body on Willpower.**

Read 30-54 and be able to explain what derails your goals to live a happy, healthy life. Explain the pause and plan response and how that can change your willpower reserves.

View the following video:

- The Science of Willpower, Roy Baumeister  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/ibui4M4eito>

In 250+ word response discuss the role of the brain and body on willpower using the learning from the reading and video:

- How do you go about creating willpower miracles?
- What sabotages the best intentions?
- What was new information for you in this section?
- What are the “must-do’s” for your own life and students in the classroom?
- Reminder: Check out the willpower challenges.

### **Assignment #4: How to Train the Willpower.**

Read 55-80 and be able to explain the body/brain struggle and willpower. Explain the ramifications of the limitations of our self-control.

View the following YouTube videos:

- Two things you Need to Understand to Stop Being Lazy  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/-iqiRCQWRmA>  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/RpiDWeRN4UAhttps://www.youtube.com/embed/vefDeoXCBBk>

Create a Canva showing the paradoxes that exist in training the willpower muscle. Use your learning from the videos and the reading.

Include a response about what was the most applicable learning for you. Detail what you included in your Canva. <https://www.canva.com>

Continue to check out the willpower challenges. Take on a new one this week if you are 400/500 Level.

### **Assignment #5: Permission to be Bad.**

Read pages 82-107 to understand the virtue and vices of willpower.

Watch the following video

- Self-Control: Teaching Students About Their Greatest Inner Strength  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/E2jYdEO18nU>

In a 250+ word response exploring why being good often leads to permission to being bad.

- ?What example in this section would be helpful for you to use in your classroom and why?
- What new strategies can you add to your lesson design to help students learn the idea of “dig down and pull it out when you need it the most” strategy?
- What are the “must-have” ideas for lesson design and application?

Check out the willpower challenges.

### **Assignment #6: How the Brain Deceives Us.**

Read pages 109-143 to be able to explain the neurobiology of “I want.”

- Watch this YouTube video to learn about Olds and Milner and their famous study with rats  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HbAFYiejvo>  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/7HbAFYiejvo>

Relate this to stimulation in your world and how the “I want” behavior rules our brains.

- Explain the neurobiology of wanting and happiness.
- How has neuromarketing lured the brain into a web of deceit or pleasure?
- What could you personally do to become a dopamine detective?
- How can you help kids in the classroom become detectives?
- Discuss the dark side of dopamine and addiction.
- What would be the critical “take-away” information for happiness and engagement in life?

Respond in a 500+ word discussion of the topics above.

Check out the willpower challenges.

### **Assignment #7: Power of Rewards, Cravings, Failure & Stress.**

Read pages 134-155 about how feeling bad leads to giving in and why we always follow the same pattern.

Watch the following videos:

- What the Hell Effect: The Reason You Often Binge on a Bad Habit  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/LwTfZmFgMjs>

Discuss the flip-flop feelings that accompany the promise of reward and happiness.

- Why is stress so pervasive in our mindset and chemically how does it sabotage our best efforts?
- What did you learn about “terror management” and its effects?
- Define the “what the hell” effect and what you learned about breaking the cycle.
- What are the implications for the classroom?
- What are your personal must have’s from this section?

Check out the willpower challenges.

Choose a 500+ word response, a mind map, or a chart to show your learning.

### **Assignment #8: Instant Gratification.**

Read pages 156-183, focusing on understanding your future self.

- Check out this You Tube video from Daniel Goleman about the conflict with our future self.  
[https://youtu.be/t1Z\\_oufuQg4?t=4](https://youtu.be/t1Z_oufuQg4?t=4)  
[https://www.youtube.com/embed/t1Z\\_oufuQg4](https://www.youtube.com/embed/t1Z_oufuQg4)
  - What is the message about the pull of instant gratification as it relates to your own life?
  - Discuss your feelings about how quickly children learn and respond to rewards and how you might help a student learn to use delay discounting and bounded rationality to change their behavior and choices.
- Watch the YouTube video to learn about the Marshmallow Experiment and how it changed the scientific view of willpower.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4y6R5boDqh4&feature=fvst>  
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/4y6R5boDqh4>

In a 500+ word response discuss your learning using the videos and reading. Consider the following:

1. How might you use the idea of pre-commitment to make changes in your own life and to help students with follow through?
2. Discuss the idea of the future self and how you might be proactive in changing their self-control?
3. What are the implications for the classroom?
4. What are your personal must have's from this section?

Check out the willpower challenges.

#### **Assignment #9: Willpower is Contagious.**

Read pages 184-208 to learn about the role the social self plays in willpower.

- Watch the following videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/8pwHJ18P0eg>

What Do Mirror Neurons Do?

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/pGYKcqzG\\_7M](https://www.youtube.com/embed/pGYKcqzG_7M)

Create a series of Google slides to explain mirror neurons, willpower failure and contagion, shame, and how to use the concept of a tribe to change the willpower dynamic in the classroom.

<https://www.google.com/slides/about/>

Check out the willpower challenges.

#### **Assignment #10: Things You Don't Want to Read About.**

**In a 1-2 page paper, explore things you don't want to read about.**

Read pages 207-235 about how our thinking plays tricks on us.

- What is the most important thing you learned about dieting and self-control?
- What explains why thinking about things makes sure that you do think about them?
- Why can't you believe your own thinking and how do you translate this information to your students?
- What practical life strategies are offered in this don't read chapter?
- What are the implications for the classroom?
- What are your personal must have's from this section?
- Check out the willpower challenges.

For 400 Level you will be journaling and trying 4 of them.

### **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

#### **B. LEARNING APPLICATION**

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

---

---

#### **Assignment #11: Graphic Summary of Willpower.**

Create a graphic summary of willpower. Define what it is and how it works. Include four of the most critical sections in this book to display. This would be something that could be hung on your wall or made available to other teachers to show them willpower, self-control, and faulty thinking.

#### **Assignment #12: Willpower Challenges.**

Check out the willpower challenges.

Option A:

You will be trying four of them and journaling your response. You need to conduct the challenge, write a response, and record what you have learned combining the research with your journal activity.

**OR**

Option B:

You could conduct some type of willpower challenge with your students and then record the journey and your results. Include testimony or samples.

### **Assignment #13: Case History.**

For those participating in **Group Collaboration**, this assignment is **Required** to be completed individually by all participants.

Develop a case history about teaching one child who has been difficult for you to work with in the past. Based on your learning from this course, create and implement a plan of action to address the student's issues in a new way and to help the student change his/her view of willpower.

Describe your case history, your plan of action. Include the outcomes, your learning and changes you saw with the student. Also discuss additional changes you would make in the future.

### **Assignment #14: (500 Level ONLY)**

In addition to the 400-level assignments, complete **ONE (1)** of the following options:

#### **Option A)**

Create a Google slide presentation for your staff based on this course and focused on perspectives or strategies you feel would be beneficial for your school. This should be 15-20 slides. Graphics, pictures, appropriate font size, format should all be a focus. Save this as a PDF.

**OR**

#### **Option B)**

Mentor another individual in the concepts of this class. Have them share two or three key concepts that they would like to implement within their work or social setting. Share specifics of the plan and how it will be evaluated for success in 500+ words.

**OR**

#### **Option C)**

Another assignment of your own design with the instructor's prior approval.

### **C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #15: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### **SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
  2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
  3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
  4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
  5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?
- 
- 

#### **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Brenda McKinney, CEO of Vancouver, WA based BrainVolution, is a developer and dynamic facilitator of workshops that teach practical

thinking and learning tools for raising student achievement with the brain in mind. She has trained educators throughout the Pacific Northwest and is a popular presenter because of her ability to motivate, make things fun, and teach practical techniques for the classroom that can be used immediately. Brenda continues to read hundreds of books and articles on the subject of neuroscience and searches for the answer to success for every student. Her work with at-risk students and those with reading problems have made her a popular speaker at the state, regional and national level.

Brenda is able to synthesize the new research and continues to address the role of how to use the latest findings to create high achievement classroom. She brings 30+ years of experience at the elementary, middle school, high school and university level as a mentor teacher, consultant, motivational speaker, university instructor, and reading specialist. Brenda has her Master's in Education from Washington State University and is nationally certified in Brain Based Learning through the renowned Jensen Corporation, led by Eric Jensen, a noted international spokesperson for neuroscience and education.

Brenda will inspire and motivate you with her energy, enthusiasm and knowledge. Her wisdom, techniques, and brain based approach to education will inspire you and challenge you to meet the demands of this ever changing world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### WHY WILLPOWER MATTERS: Improve Health, Happiness, & Productivity

**Baumeister, Roy & John Tierney.** *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*. New York, NY. Penguin Press. 2012. 291 pages. ISBN: 1594203075.

Baumeister discovered that willpower operates like a muscle: it can be strengthened with practice and fatigued by overuse. Willpower is fueled by glucose, and simply replenishing the brain's store of fuel can bolster it. Baumeister's latest research shows that we typically spend four hours every day resisting temptation. No wonder people around the world rank a lack of self-control as their biggest weakness.

**Brafman, Ori & Rom Brafman.** *Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior*. Doubleday Publishing Company. 2008. ISBN: 078-0-85-52458-4.

Drawing on innovative research from the fields of social psychology, behavioral economics, and organizational behavior, *Sway* reveals dynamic forces that influence every aspect of our personal life. *Sway* introduces us to the Harvard Business School professor who got his students to pay \$204 for a \$20 bill, the head of airline safety whose disregard for his years of training led to the transformation of an entire industry, and the football coach who turned conventional strategy on its head to lead his team to victory. This book challenges our views of the world but also the way we think.

**Davidson, Richard & Mary Begley.** *The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live--and How You Can Change Them*. New York, NY. Hudson Street Press. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-59463-089-7. Davidson has discovered that personality is composed of six basic emotional "styles," including resilience, self-awareness, and attention. Our emotional fingerprint results from where on the continuum of each style we fall. He explains the brain chemistry that underlies each style in order to give us a new model of the emotional brain. And, finally, he provides strategies we can use to change our own brains and emotions.

**Dodge, Jack.** *The Power of Habit: Harnessing the Power to Establish Routines that Guarantee Success in Business and in Life*. Indiana. Broadway Books. 2001. ISBN: 1-4107-7995-5. Up to 90 percent of your everyday behavior is based on habit. Nearly all of what you do each day, every day, is simply habit. The techniques outlined in this book provide easy-to-implement action steps to help you effectively change bad habits and establish good habits. It explores why habits are so powerful and how we can harness this power to reach a higher degree of success.

**Duhigg, Charles.** *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*. Random House. 2012. ISBN: 978-1-4000-6928-6. *The Power of Habit* contains an exhilarating argument: The key to exercising regularly, losing weight, raising exceptional children, becoming more productive, building revolutionary companies and social movements, and achieving success is understanding how habits work. Habits aren't destiny instead we need to harness this new science to transform businesses, communities, and our lives.

**Heath, Chip & Dan Heath.** *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. Broadway Books. 2010. ISBN: 978-0-385-52875-7. Why is it so hard to make lasting changes in our schools and in our own lives? The primary obstacle is a conflict that's built into our brains, says Chip and Dan Heath, authors of *Made to Stick*. Psychologists have discovered that our minds are ruled by two different systems—the rational mind and the emotional mind and they compete for control. In *Switch*, the Heaths show that change follows a pattern and that pattern can be used to make changes in your personal life.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**McGonigal, Kelly.** *The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do To Get More of It*. 2012 Penguin Group. ISBN: 978-1-58333-438-6. Based on Stanford University psychologist Kelly McGonigal's wildly popular course "The Science of Willpower," *The Willpower Instinct* is the first book to explain the new science of self-control and how it can be harnessed to improve our health, happiness, and productivity. Informed by the latest research and combining cutting-edge insights from psychology, economics, neuroscience, and medicine, *The Willpower Instinct* explains exactly what willpower is, how it works, and why it matters. Get ready to enjoy learning why too much self-control is bad for you and why temptation and stress hijack your brain. Not only that, but

willpower failures are contagious! Very practical and easy to read.

**Pink, Daniel.** *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us.* 2010. New York, NY: Riverhead Books. 2010. ISBN 978-1-101-52438-1. Most people believe that the best way to motivate is with rewards like money--the carrot-and-stick approach. That's a mistake, says Daniel H. Pink in *Drive*. He asserts that the secret to high performance and satisfaction--at work, at school, and at home--is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by our world and us. Drawing on four decades of scientific research on human motivation, Pink exposes the mismatch between what science knows and what business does--and how that affects every aspect of life.

**Ryan, M.J.** *This Year I Will...: How to Finally Change a Habit, Keep a Resolution, or Make a Dream Come True.* New York, NY. Broadway Books. 2006. ISBN: 978-0-7679-2008-7. Why do people find it so hard to change? The secret is that everyone has his/her own formula for making changes that stick, but most people don't know what theirs is. They think there is one way to lose five pounds, and another way to stay on top of their e-mail, and they don't realize that for all changes there is one system that works best for each individual. *This Year I Will . . .* helps you lock on to your unique formula for planning, implementing, and seeing a life change through, so you can use it again and again to tackle anything else you'd like to do.

**Schwartz, Jeffrey & Rebecca Gladding.** *You Are Not Your Brain: The 4-Step Solution for Changing Bad Habits, Ending Unhealthy Thinking, and Taking Control of Your Life.* 2011. Penguin Books. ISBN: 1-101-50671-7. Schwartz has worked with psychiatrist Rebecca Gladding to refine a program that successfully explains how the brain works and why we often feel besieged by bad brain wiring. They discovered that bad habits, social anxieties, self-deprecating thoughts, and compulsive overindulgence are all rooted in overactive brain circuits. The key to making life changes that you want-to make your brain work for you-is to consciously choose to "starve" these circuits of focused attention, thereby decreasing their influence and strength.

**Thaler, Richard & Cass Sunstein.** *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness.* Penguin Books. 2009. ISBN: 978-0-14-311526-7. *Nudge* is about choices--how we make them and how we can make better ones. Authors Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein offer a new perspective on preventing the countless mistakes we make- including consumption of unhealthy foods, failures when dieting, and other bad decisions. Straightforward, informative, and entertaining, this is a must-read for anyone with interest in our individual and collective well-being.

**Wilson, Timothy D.** *Redirect. The Surprising New Science of Psychological Change.* Random House. 2012. ISBN:978-0-316-05188-0. Fascinating, groundbreaking, and practical, *Redirect* demonstrates the remarkable power small changes can have on our everyday lives as well as the way we see the world and ourselves. In the words of David G. Myers, "With wit and wisdom, Wilson shows us how to spare ourselves worthless (or worse) interventions, think smarter, and live well." Essential here is the information about storyboarding and the chapter on dieting.