

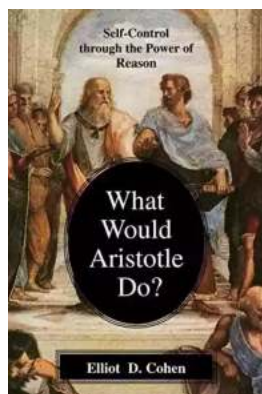
What Would Aristotle Do? Self-Control Through the Power of Reason

Do you often find yourself struggling with self-control? Are you easily swayed by temptations or impulsive decisions? If so, you're not alone. Self-control is a trait that many strive to develop, but few manage to master. Luckily, we have a guide from the past to help us in our quest for self-control: Aristotle.

Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, believed that self-control was not just a matter of willpower but rather a result of cultivating reason and rational thinking. In this article, we will explore Aristotle's teachings on self-control and how they can be applied in our modern lives.

The Importance of Self-Control

Self-control is the ability to regulate our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to achieve our long-term goals. It allows us to resist immediate gratification and make more rational decisions that align with our values and aspirations.



What Would Aristotle Do? Self-Control Through the Power of Reason by Elliot D. Cohen(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3225 KB

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

Print length : 251 pages

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Without self-control, we may find ourselves succumbing to impulsive urges or giving in to short-term pleasures, which can lead to negative consequences and hinder our personal growth. This is where Aristotle's wisdom comes into play.

Aristotelian Virtue Ethics

In order to understand Aristotle's approach to self-control, we must first delve into his theory of virtue ethics. According to Aristotle, virtue is the key to living a fulfilling and flourishing life. He believed that every virtue lies between two extremes, known as vices.

For example, courage lies between the extremes of recklessness and cowardice, and generosity lies between extravagance and stinginess. Self-control, in Aristotle's view, is the virtue that lies between the extremes of indulgence and self-denial.

Training the Rational Mind

Aristotle believed that self-control is not an inherent trait but rather a skill that can be cultivated through the power of reason. He argued that by engaging in rational thinking and contemplation, we can develop the ability to withstand temptations and make more restrained choices.

One of Aristotle's key teachings was that reasoning should always be in control of our desires and emotions. He believed that our rational mind should govern our actions, guiding us towards virtuous behavior and helping us resist impulsive urges.

For example, if you find yourself tempted to indulge in unhealthy food, instead of giving in to the immediate pleasure, Aristotle would suggest that you engage in rational thinking. Consider the long-term impact of your choices, remind yourself

of your health goals, and make a reasoned decision to opt for a healthier alternative instead.

Moderation and Balance

Aristotle emphasized the importance of moderation and balance in all aspects of life. He believed that self-control requires finding the middle ground between excess and deficiency.

For instance, if you're trying to achieve financial stability, it's important to strike a balance between being overly frugal and overly extravagant. Aristotle would advocate for managing your finances wisely, cultivating the virtue of generosity, and finding the sweet spot that allows you to enjoy life while also saving for the future.

Self-Reflection and Habituation

In addition to rational thinking, Aristotle's approach to self-control involves self-reflection and habituation. He believed that by observing our own actions, reflecting on our virtues and vices, and practicing self-discipline consistently, we can gradually develop self-control as a habit.

Through self-reflection, we gain insight into our own tendencies and patterns of behavior, allowing us to identify areas in which we need to exercise more self-control. By making a conscious effort to cultivate virtuous habits and repetitively practicing self-restraint, we can train our minds to act more rationally and resist impulsive temptations.

Practical Tips for Developing Self-Control

Now that we have explored Aristotle's teachings on self-control, let's discuss some practical tips for incorporating his wisdom into our daily lives:

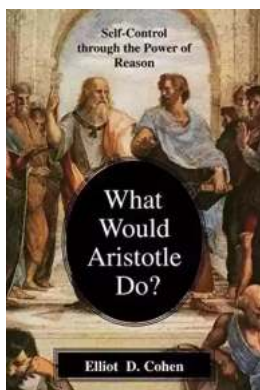
1. **Practice mindfulness:** Cultivate self-awareness and be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and actions. This will help you recognize the moments when self-control is needed.
2. **Set clear goals:** Define your long-term goals and identify the behaviors or habits that align with them. This will give you a sense of purpose and motivation to exercise self-control in order to achieve your aspirations.
3. **Develop a routine:** Establish a daily routine that incorporates healthy habits and self-discipline. By making self-control a regular part of your life, it becomes easier to resist temptations and make rational choices.
4. **Seek support:** Surround yourself with individuals who value self-control and can provide support and encouragement on your journey. Having like-minded companions can reinforce your commitment to developing self-control.
5. **Persist and learn from setbacks:** Developing self-control is not a linear process, and setbacks are bound to happen. Instead of being discouraged by failures, view them as learning opportunities and use them to grow stronger in your pursuit of self-control.

The Rewards of Self-Control

By incorporating Aristotle's teachings into our lives and practicing self-control, we can reap a multitude of benefits. Self-control allows us to make more reasoned decisions, resist immediate gratification, and pursue our long-term goals. It enhances our well-being both mentally and physically, strengthens our relationships, and promotes personal growth and fulfillment.

So, the next time you find yourself facing a temptation or struggling with self-control, remember: What would Aristotle do? Channel your rational mind, seek

virtue, and become the master of your own actions through the power of reason and self-control.



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Do you get upset easily, even about small things, or have trouble getting along with others? Do you feel down most of the time? Are you plagued by loneliness, grief, guilt, or a gnawing feeling of life's futility? Does fear, anxiety, or worry often overwhelm you? In this uplifting, user-friendly guide, philosopher Elliot D. Cohen offers an uncommonly commonsense approach to these and many other problems of living. Cohen, one of the principal founders of "philosophical counseling" in the United States, reveals how you can attain genuine insight into the common confusions of everyday life by harnessing your own native powers of reason. "Early on in my work with clients," writes Cohen, "I became aware that the utility of philosophy for ordinary life was in the rigors of its rational, commonsense approach." Through engaging case studies drawn from his practice, and candid discussion of his own personal life ("stories of the road"), Cohen vividly illustrates how, by making unrealistic assumptions about life, you may be undermining your own personal and interpersonal happiness without even realizing it. Step by step, the author shows you how to use your native reason to expose, refute, correct, and overcome these sometimes dangerous, irrational assumptions hidden in your

thinking. This realistic, no-nonsense, and drug-free approach to "rational medicine," in the tradition of Aristotle, walks you through some of the most injurious and offending fallacies of life, and arms you with many commonsense prescriptions for attaining greater freedom and control over your life.



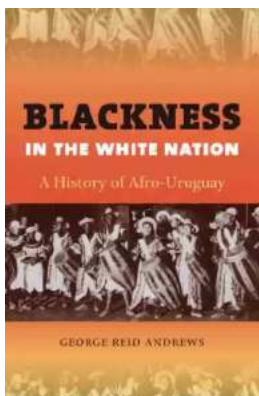
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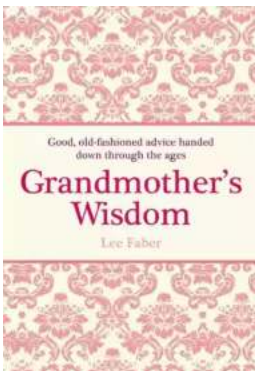
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