

## **Self-Control, There Is “Nun” Better**

Going to a Catholic Grammar School for 9 years had its benefits. We had to wear uniforms so there wasn't any clothes competition, we went to church all the time so we got some formal spiritual training, you couldn't even think of using profanity because you thought the nuns read your mind and would find out what you were thinking, we learned good penmanship, we were respectful, compliant, and responsible. The crazy thing is no one gave me a choice in any of these areas I was forced to do them. It wasn't like the nun said to me you can go to church if you like, or why don't you try to hold your pencil this way, or is that the way to speak to someone? If I didn't do it the way it was supposed to be done there would be blood stains on the floor, and it wasn't Jesus' it was mine. As I look back at this experience the one thing that I realize is that this type of education taught me something that no one talks about today and that's self-control. The majority of the problems that a person faces in their life are related to a lack of self-control. Everybody either eats too much, drinks too much, spends too much, can't control their temper, lusts after things that they can't have like someone else's spouse, and develops habits that they can't break that could kill them or someone else like smoking or driving too fast.

Now why does this stuff happen? Well I never remember my parents or any teacher in my life saying to me the choice is yours you can smoke or not, or you can lose your temper or not, or you can overeat or not. Self-control is taught. If I did something that exhibited a lack of self-control I got grabbed by someone and got reamed out or in the worst case scenario got clobbered. I was taught to wait on line, raise my hand, take my time, practice until I got it right, memorize, and I got drilled on skills that everyone knew were necessary for life long success. Look musicians practice endless hours to perform a single piece of music. Students study instead of watch TV. Athletes devote years of their lives to prepare for an Olympic event that may last only a few minutes.

The concepts of self-control, delayed gratification and discipline seem so counter to our cultural values. We use our credit cards because we want things right away. We become impatient if we wait more than a few moments at a drive-through at McDonalds. We eat ourselves into obesity and poor health because it feels good, with little consideration of the long-term consequences. Self-control should be graded in school and looked at as a quality necessary for success as an adult. If you or someone you know is having trouble with self-control I have a good friend named Sister Houlihan who still thinks self-control is important. She is 4 feet 8 inches tall and she can still make a grown man hold his pencil the right way.

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