



*"I wouldn't give a fig for the simplicity on this side of complexity;
I would give my right arm for the simplicity on the far side of complexity."*
Oliver Wendell Holmes



So, I asked the young man if he was flossing every day – he replied: “Except when I am tired.” He has moved from this side of complexity (not even thinking about flossing) to the swamp of complexity – considering whether he will floss or not.

This is just a simple picture of how discipline works – it is very simple to be undisciplined, it gets harder as you begin to learn, refine and grow in a discipline. And then, eureka, you move out of the complexity of having to think and struggle to improve and “seize” the discipline, to the day when you come out of that complexity into the simplicity on the far side of complexity. All of a sudden (and this is how it usually happens), it is now easier to do the discipline than not – this is the far side of complexity. And as times passes it becomes even much harder not to do the discipline than to do it.

Our error in thinking is that if something is hard, doing it more, regularly and better is harder – of course, we say, this is common-sense and intuitive. Well, it is intuitive, but it isn't true! The simplicity and ease on the far side of the complexity is real!

And as we age (and hopefully mature) we should develop more and more disciplines – working on several at one time, refining them, fighting for them until we find ourselves one by one in the easy “zone” – now a habit we no longer have to struggle with.

Children learn the discipline of brushing their teeth, taking a bath, washing their hands, going to bed on time. Young people must learn manners, how to study, simple chores . . . and as they age, how to better relate to and respect other people. And even as they age, wise people learn they must better focus their time and lives though a better and more disciplined use of their time. No one can afford to “retire” from devoting time to physical, spiritual and mental improvement – and developing effective and efficient disciplines for this personal development. This should be a lifetime and will provide lifelong rewards.

It is legitimate to ask what disciplines you need to work on now, and how. But it is foolish for ANYONE to be drifting along without considering what disciplines they need to work on now and how! In the short-run, a lack of discipline is easier. In the long-run, disciplines not only return great rewards, they are as easy, if not easier, than no or poor disciplines.

Teeth are just a small picture of many other, more important, aspects of life – what adult thinks about, much less resists and complains about, brushing their teeth? Greater disciplines are little different once habituated – except their rewards are even greater.



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I'm with you Oliver!