



MANAGEMENT MINUTE

▶ WITH
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ARE YOU AN EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGER?

For many, one of the most difficult tasks a manager faces is managing their own behavior and actions. They can see clearly how to manage others under their control, but managing themselves can be challenging. Yet, their success in self-management directly influences their overall effectiveness in managing others.

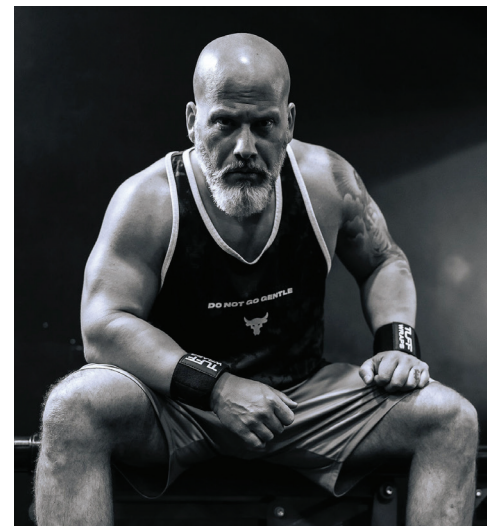


Recognizing the importance of self-management is relatively new to modern management theory. If, for example, we look back to the early 20th century, management theory focused not so much on the individuals, but rather on how the work was done. In 1909, Frederick Taylor published *The Principles of Scientific Management*, which put forth his theory that worker productivity could be increased by optimizing and simplifying jobs. Taylor's theories became part of modern management theory and part of every business school curriculum. Some might argue that Taylor's emphasis on standardization and discipline laid the groundwork for later, more focused studies on self-management.

Recently, business coach and author Corey Dissin identified a common characteristic of individuals struggling with self-management: the "Yes, but" mindset. A "Yes, but" person initially agrees with an idea or suggestion, but quickly follows it with a reason why it won't work or why they can't act on it. For example, when asked, "Did you remember that we need to plan the meeting with our customers?" the response might be, "Yes, but I'm too busy right now." This behavior often signals challenges with self-management.

To be fair, most of us can recognize a bit of "Yes, but" in ourselves. In a recent video shared with his contact group, Corey explained this concept, encouraging viewers to reflect on whether they exhibit this mindset. His goal was clear: to inspire self-awareness and motivate change.

The first step in developing self-management skills is recognizing areas where improvement is needed. If you identify with the "Yes, but" mindset, take time to reflect. Are your challenges rooted in time management, goal setting, emotional regulation, or a general lack of focus? Poor self-management can manifest in many ways, and it's common to excel in some areas while struggling in others.



Corey Dissin

Once you've pinpointed the areas for growth, make a commitment to yourself to address them. Whether it's learning new strategies, seeking guidance, or building better habits, taking action is key to overcoming the "Yes, but" mindset and improving your self-management skills.

Self-management skills are important for everyone. However, they are imperative for those who manage others. Whether you are the supervisor of a small three-person toolroom or the plant manager of a large facility, the same skills are needed to manage your team effectively. Your behavior and actions are a model for your team. If you demonstrate a calm and focused approach to your work, you will inspire others to adopt a similar behavior.

A manager who demonstrates consistent organization and sound decision-making will earn the trust and respect of the team. It is extremely important to be consistent. Once you make the decision to change and adopt the mindset and practices that are part of good self-management, you must stay the course and continue to improve, resisting slipping into old habits.

Over fifty years ago, Kurt Lewin, one of the pioneers of organizational and applied psychology, introduced the ideas of unfreezing and freezing as part of his change management model. This is a great way to visualize the process of change. As humans, we all develop habits and ways of doing things and are resistant to change. Lewin suggests that people need to visualize unfreezing the old habits, instituting the changes, then freezing the new habits so that they become routine and permanent. For this visualization process to work, it involves monitoring the change to be certain the desired effect is achieved.

EDM Today would like to suggest five key steps to help you become a better self-manager. Think of these as actionable goals that will help you achieve success.

▶ **Goal:** Gain a better understanding of your self-management strengths and weaknesses.

▶ **Actions:**

- Regularly reflect on your own performance.
- Get feedback from others.

▶ **Goal:** Keep yourself healthy.

▶ **Actions:**

- Get regular exercise and enough sleep.
- Maintain a nutritious diet and keep yourself at a healthy weight.
- Take breaks throughout the day to recharge yourself.

▶ **Goal:** Improve concentration and focus.

▶ **Actions:**

- Avoid multitasking. Focus on one task at a time; understanding, of course, that this is not always possible.
- Differentiate between personal and work time. When off work, try not to think about it.
- If possible, do things to reduce distractions.
- If allowed, shut down your email system while focusing on a specific task.
- Silence your cell phone.
- Set a time limit for focus. You can check email, respond to messages, and return calls at time intervals that make sense. Cumulatively, you will get far more done by better managing your time, eliminating distractions, and focusing on the task at hand.

▶ **Goal:** Improve adaptability.

▶ **Actions:**

- Be flexible to respond to change.
- Be open-minded about new ideas and processes.
- Consider problems that arise as challenges and opportunities.

▶ **Goal:** Improve your emotional state and demeanor.

▶ **Actions:**

- Force yourself to maintain a calm, cool demeanor.
- Pause and think before responding to a stressful situation.
- Identify potential psychological triggers that could get you off track. Once you know what it is that could impact your professional demeanor, you can recognize it and intervene before you might say or do something that you will regret.

Putting the skills in place to be a better self-manager will make you a better overall manager and will no doubt help you advance your career.

EDM Today would like to thank Corey Dissin for participating in this issue of Management Minute. Corey Dissin can be reached at: <https://coreydissin.com/>.

Corey is the owner of The Dissin Design Team. He is the author of *GOING THE DISS-TANCE: 10 Rounds to a Championship Life and Career: Life Lessons Inside a Tribute Wrapped in a Memoir*.

