



# THIRTEEN DISCIPLINES

A Warrior's Guide to Self Mastery  
for Individuals and Groups

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A Guide to Lasting Inner Peace*  
based on Sun Tzu's *Art of War*

# INTRODUCTION



Warfare is devastating. Violence and hostility toward another is wrong. So what good can be said of the warrior? We instinctively know that there is much good. We recognize that there are times when people may be called upon to defend oneself, or the country or community. Perhaps this is viewed by some as a necessary evil. But most would agree that if attacked, on any level, one has the right to defend oneself. And if those whom one loves and cares for are attacked, it is incumbent upon that one to offer a defense, meeting force with force. But beyond this, we also recognize that there is a nobility within the warrior archetype. A true warrior, a warrior of the spirit, stands up for and defends what is right, defends the innocent, and lives for honor and justice. We honor those who protect us, and are willing to sacrifice themselves for our defense. We value those who strive to live with integrity and honor and who practice discipline to do so. This is the true spirit of the warrior.

The spiritual essence of the warrior is pure love blended with courage and discipline, brought about by self mastery. The struggle for self mastery is the real battle, and it is a noble one, gaining victory over what is destructive in one's life, and becoming an emissary for what is good and true. The warrior of the spirit does not fight people, or attack other people's religious philosophies, way of life, or belief systems, as some have interpreted it. Spiritual warfare is not about brashly marching forward to conquer the world with our own agenda or to force our will on anyone or anything beyond ourselves. Those who make some effort to be spiritually awake and aware recognize that there are hurtful forces at work in the world. There is much spiritual darkness, apathy, cruelty, hatred, selfishness--evil. But the way to combat these is not by hostility, but by love. We can change the world, but the way to do this is to begin with ourselves. In fact, if we do not begin with ourselves, in conquering our own demons, and learning to truly love our fellow human beings, what we put out into the world is tainted, hypocritical, and cosmetic in nature. By making ourselves better people we can make the world a better place.

Emanuel Swedenborg, the great Eighteenth Century scientist and religious philosopher said that every moment of our lives involves a series of consequences extending into eternity. Every action we take launches an unremitting chain reaction into the world. The good we do today has ramifications centuries from now with people we don't even know. At the same time, every negative impulse we overcome and stop from entering into the world is eliminated for all time and beyond. Take a pebble and drop it into a still pond. Watch the ripples spread out and affect the entire body of water. Our lives are like that pebble dropping into the water. What we bring into this world goes out never to return, touching, moving, permeating every aspect of this universe. What we feel, think, say, and do makes a big difference. The question is, what do we choose to bring into the world? Are we willing to overcome the hurtful and destructive within ourselves, for our own happiness and for the happiness of others who will be affected by us? Will we choose to bring love and light into the world as we allow these healing entities to enter into our own lives? If so, we must learn the discipline it takes to do this, the truly warrior discipline of loyal service to higher principles, of self-control, self-sacrifice, and to walk this earth with integrity and love.

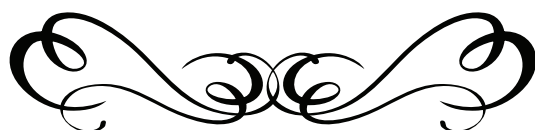
The genuine warrior masters the self by overcoming personal demons. These demons come in many forms. Perhaps you are intimately familiar with some of them --fear, mistaken wants, addiction, anger, lust, codependency, a need to control, inability to create healthy boundaries, laziness, unbridled appetite. These enemies to our own health and happiness attack, overrun, rule over us, if we do not learn to confront them and subdue them. The task of the warrior of the spirit is to recognize these spiritual enemies, and gain mastery over them. To recognize them means to develop awareness of ourselves, and when these spiritual enemies are likely to infiltrate our lives. To gain mastery over them means to integrate the animal appetites to a subservient role within our being, rather than ruling us. It means to gain freedom and independence

from those destructive tendencies that bring pain and misfortune into our lives and the lives of those around us. Sun Tzu, the ancient Chinese warrior philosopher says, "If you know the enemy and yourself you will never be at risk in a hundred battles." Through self examination, alertness, developing that "thousand yard stare" which allows one to see what is coming over the horizon, the warrior acts with intention, choosing a path free of enemy snares and potential ambush. Seeing these destructive impulses for what they truly are and recognizing the damage they do, the warrior can find the freedom and self control to choose not to act on these impulses, and to choose higher, more noble energies to flow through the warrior's being into the world.

To learn the art of the warrior is a discipline in itself. In our modern culture of consumerism, self gratification, and the commercial illusion that material gain and leisure can bring us happiness, sadly, the art of self-mastery has all but been forgotten. Though there are pockets of groups who gather and nurture those who have fallen victim to these modern cultural illusions, and a few spiritually minded who have never given up the struggle to understand and reach for something higher and more noble, most of us have not been mentored in the ways of self mastery, spiritual disciplines and realities. But it is these which bring the fulfillment and peace that so many seek in all the wrong places. In this regard, Jesus's words are more pertinent today than ever, when he said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moths and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moths nor rust destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." A literalist would have you believe that the moths, rust, and thieves are out there somewhere. On the contrary, the moths, rust, and thieves are the very inner demons which attack us, eating away our insides, stealing our joy, when we have a material focus and have abandoned the art of self-mastery. Buddha's words give us pause and urge us to learn another way when he says, "There is no fire like passion, there are no chains like hate. Illusion is a net, desire a rushing river." We are urged to lift up our minds and our hearts to spirit, and to gain mastery over the very desires and mistaken wants our culture urges us to embrace. "Seek the first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you," Jesus urges us. "Better than a hundred years of worship, better than a thousand offerings, better than giving up a thousand worldly ways in order to win merit, better even than tending in the forest a sacred flame for a hundred years--is one moment's reverence for the man who has conquered himself," Buddha explains. "Mastering others is strength: mastering yourself is true power," Lao Tzu explains. Self mastery is the key to happiness for the individual and for the world at large. The art of the spiritual warrior is the way to inner peace. The way of the spiritual warrior is a manifestation of that peace, centeredness, spirit, integrity and love, in the world.

This book was written to teach this ancient art of self-mastery, and to mentor the one who would strive for the dignity, honor, and integrity of the spiritual warrior. This book contains the essential components of the noble warrior's character and soul. It is a workbook and guide for those who would aspire to genuine spiritual warriorship by giving lessons, exercises, meditations, and the truths that one needs to know to walk this noble path. Read the lessons, and contemplate the wisdom of the great spiritual warriors who have gone before, walk yourself through the meditations, and put into action the processes that are presented here, and you will find a growing sense of inner strength, resolve, self-determination, and more and more freedom to live in happiness, integrity and love.

This book is also a guide for groups. Forming allies in our struggles against our spiritual enemies is highly desired. Supporting and gaining the support of those who walk a similar path, and who encounter the same spiritual foes along the way is critical to this work. Therefore, each chapter in this book can serve as a lesson plan for leading a support group in this work. Follow the guidelines in the section on How to Use this Book, and the Guide for Fellowship Groups to run a 13 week support fellowship.



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



## For Individuals

Take your time with this book. Read each Lesson and the Gems from the Masters in such a way that you allow yourself time for reflection. Let the lessons sink in. The Gems from the Masters are taken from the wise warriors who have gone before. Let their wisdom become yours. Ask yourself how these words and ideas relate to your own life, and how you can incorporate them more fully into your way of thought and daily routine. The Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion can help you gain a deeper insight into each discipline. If possible, share your thoughts and ideas with others, for their benefit, and also to ground these insights into your memory by articulating them. When you come to the Meditation, let yourself relax and allow for the imagery to sink in deep. Read a few sentences or thoughts and let your mind wander in the imagery. Return to the words and read some more. When finished reading the meditation, ask yourself what you have learned or received from it. The Processes are for individuals and groups. Take time to work with these, and experience the lesson on a physical level as well as mentally and emotionally. Allow yourself to incorporate these disciplines into your life. Ask yourself what you can do to live more fully by these principles today. Close each chapter with your own prayer for yourself and the world. Allow yourself enjoy the entire process.



## For Groups

Each chapter of this book can serve as an outline for leading a support group in spiritual warfare. Groups should consist of no more than eight to ten participants, so that a sense of intimacy and trust can be built, and the processes completed in a timely manner in each session. The thirteen chapters outline thirteen sessions to aid in learning the art of the noble warrior. When these are completed, the group can continue, if members choose, by reading other pertinent material about spiritual warfare, and simply sharing thoughts, struggles, and support for one another.

For each session, have one or more persons read aloud the Lesson. Let people take turns reading aloud the individual Gems from the Masters. Use the Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion to aid in a brief ten minute interchange among participants to gain insight and clarity about the topic. After this, get comfortable and have a volunteer lead in a relaxation process and read the Meditation offered in that particular chapter. When this is finished, participants may want to briefly share what they learned or received from the meditation. After this, follow the directions for the Processes, and allow time for people to debrief afterwards. Keep in mind that the processes often take the most amount of time, but are critical to learning the discipline. Allow for closing thoughts, and close with a prayer.

# A GUIDE FOR FELLOWSHIP GROUPS



Welcome to our spiritual warfare fellowship. Spiritual warfare is not about fighting against others, or fighting for any particular political or social cause or religious belief. It is a personal spiritual battle against the demons, destructive tendencies, addictions, compulsions, evils and falsehoods within each individual. It is a very real battle which takes place in the minds, hearts, and lives of all those who choose to live spiritually. This fellowship supports each individual in fighting these battles, in preserving hope, in offering companionship on the spiritual battlefield, and in helping to pave the way toward spiritual victory. The only requirement for membership is a desire to live and grow in love and integrity.

Because of the personal nature of these battles, it is absolutely necessary to keep everything that is said in these sessions in confidence, and for each individual to reserve judgment on others. No one wins every spiritual battle, but one can find healing, grow in spiritual strength, and achieve lasting victory if given a safe place to share what is going on inside, and an opportunity to learn and to grow. It is our hope that this fellowship will be such a safe and sacred place.

In order for this to take place, abide by these basic guidelines during our sessions:

1. What is said here stays here.
2. You can choose to pass when it is your time to talk.
3. Be considerate of others, in sharing equal time for speaking.
4. Do not interrupt others who are speaking.
5. Do not offer advice.
6. Do not attempt to “fix” another’s “problems” inside or outside of the group.
7. Reserve judgement and become a caring listener.

Through dedication to your own personal spiritual work, and the support of this fellowship, may you gain victory over your spiritual enemies, and find wholeness, spirituality, and inner peace.

**Reading:** Read aloud the lesson at the beginning of the chapter you are reviewing this session.

**Gems from the Masters:** Have people take turns reading aloud each gem from the masters.

**Sharing the Struggle:** Going around the room, each person has an opportunity to share how this particular reading and meditation reflects insights into his/her life, and about the week’s struggles, victories and triumphs. The questions for discussion can be used to assist in this process.

**Meditation:** Leader assists others in a relaxation exercise and reads the meditation in the pertinent chapter.

**Process:** Follow the directions given for the group process for the particular chapter the group is reviewing.

**Closing Thoughts:** Going around the room briefly, each participant can share a sentence or two about anything he or she desires in order to bring about a sense of completion and closure.

**Closing Huddle and Prayers:** Participants stand in a circle and clasp hands. Individuals may offer a prayer, or the group agrees to close regularly with a specific prayer.