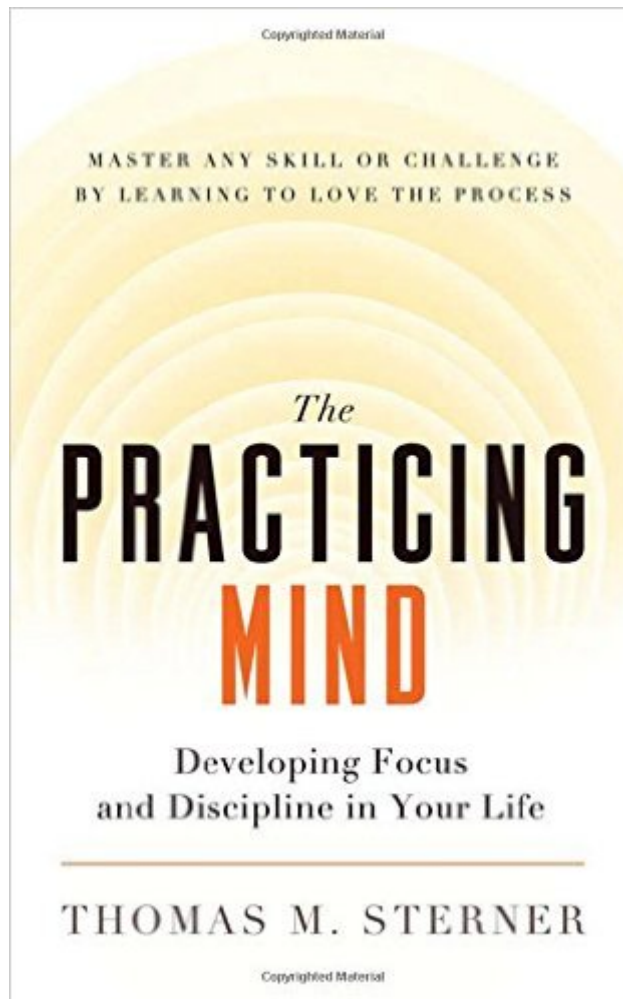


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# The Practicing Mind: Developing Focus And Discipline In Your Life &#151; Master Any Skill Or Challenge By Learning To Love The Process



## Synopsis

In those times when we want to acquire a new skill or face a formidable challenge we hope to overcome, what we need most are patience, focus, and discipline, traits that seem elusive or difficult to maintain. In this enticing and practical book, Thomas Sterner demonstrates how to learn skills for any aspect of life, from golfing to business to parenting, by learning to love the process. Early life is all about trial-and-error practice. If we had given up in the face of failure, repetition, and difficulty, we would never have learned to walk or tie our shoes. So why, as adults, do we often give up on a goal when at first we don't succeed? In his study of how we learn (prompted by his pursuit of disciplines such as music and golf), Sterner has found that we have forgotten the principles of practice; the process of picking a goal and applying steady effort to reach it. The methods Sterner teaches show that practice done properly isn't drudgery on the way to mastery but a fulfilling process in and of itself, one that builds discipline and clarity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although I have bought and read literally hundreds of self help books in all categories through , the Practicing Mind by Thomas M. Sterner is by far the 1st book that has compelled me to write my very first review. There are many things that make this book stand out. It is very short, with absolutely, no-fluff or fillings, with the result that every word and every phrase really counts. Sterner's tone is also very down to earth and easy to understand without the use of any pretentious words. The book also has a few very good illustrations and stories to clarify the concepts presented in the book. But

what I think makes the book really practical is Sterner's realization and revelation that the key to success in any area of life is to acquire self-discipline through non-judgmental concentrated practice. Now, I know that this doesn't sound at all like a very profound or new revelation. But if you have been searching through hundreds of self help books - like I have been for the last few years - for the one key ( or system) that would enable me to become successful in improving my spirituality, my role as husband and father, time-management, health and exercise, writing, entrepreneurship and my other personal areas of interest that are of value to me - then the Practicing Mind will be of great value to you. The Practicing Mind - is not a panacea to cure it all - but for me it turned out to be an amazingly simple and effective system to help me to systematically and measurably improve all the areas of interest in my life.

Accomplished musician Thomas M. Sterner spent years learning to play the piano, but it was learning the sport of golf that taught him the dynamics of practice. Through observing his classmates, Sterner began to notice key motivational flaws that keep us in an unyielding state of confusion and discontent. Today's over-stimulated society is focused on multitasking to the point that we are unable to concentrate on a single task. At any given time, our minds race from events in the past to worries about the future, but we are seldom living in the present. We measure success based on where we are in relation to our goals--or where advertising tell us we should be. Sterner argues that the exhaustion we pile on ourselves to achieve is useless and self-defeating. We struggle to achieve perfection, but perfection is a myth, as our concept of perfection is constantly changing and moving away from us. To reach one milestone means that a dozen more are lining up in front of us. Sterner's solution is to live in the present and realize that practice is the goal, not the end result. Therefore, no matter what stage we are at, if we are practicing, we are always in a state of perfection and always successful. Learning to take a step back from life, observe situations and direct our actions without invoking emotion make up Sterner's "DOC" (do, observe, correct) method. He encourages us to immerse ourselves in the process of practice rather than constantly comparing ourselves to the ideal. His four "S" words--simplify, small, short, and slow--help to bring attention to the present and provide the ability to enjoy life, which is one enormous process (or practice) in itself.

How would you like to learn to let go of anxiety? To get twice as much done with half the stress? To find a way to handle intimidating, unpleasant, or even boring tasks without having them take a bite out of you? What if I told you that this would involve your investing a little over \$10 and reading a 98-page book? I thought you'd be interested. Here's the deal. Sterner, a musician, a piano

technician, a golfer, and an all-around sage (who would probably be a really interesting person to get to know) mined what he had learned about repetitive tasks, like practicing music and golf swings (and, I guess, piano tuning and adjusting) and put it into a little book. No frills, no fancy language, no huffing and puffing about how profound he is, his message is, or anything else. And, at least from my experience and that of the other contented reviewers here, he got it right. Um, sorry, that really should have been *Got It Right*. What he presents here is not novel - it's been around in recorded human wisdom for thousands of years - but it is simple, direct, and easy to apply. His basic principles are: attach to process (which you can control) not to outcomes (which you can't); accept yourself as embodying perfectly whatever stage of development you happen to be at - don't postpone happiness until you reach/have/attain something - break big projects down into tiny tasks; open yourself to learning from those around you and to joy, which is everywhere. He lays them out in simple, functional prose that anyone can read and understand. This little book is a giant weapon in *The War Against Suffering*. Read it. Do what it tells you to do. Read it again. Do more of what it tells you to do. Praise it so that others will read it. Give it to your friends.

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