



Impulse Control Facts & Stats

The Marshmallow Test



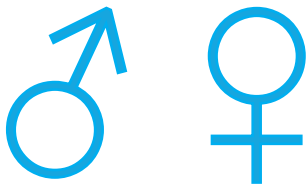
Studies that began at Stanford University over fifty years ago on self-control used 'The Marshmallow Test' to determine if children could delay eating a marshmallow when promised another as a reward for waiting. Study results, shown below, revealed self-control is the most powerful predictor of adult success - even more than IQ and socioeconomic status!

Children Who Delayed Gratification

- Experienced better health as adults
- Earned more money as adults
- Felt happier as adults

Children Who Did Not Delay Gratification

- Engaged in more drug use as teens
- Had more difficulty coping with problems
- Were less motivated to pursue their goals



In general, females score better than males on controlling impulses.

2x

Youth who have a family history of alcoholism are twice as likely to engage in risky behavior.

Steps to Impulse Control

1. Know your values
2. Recognize impulses by tracking when you act in ways that contradict your values
3. Admit when you act impulsively
4. Reflect on what you regret and how the impulsive action hurt you or others
5. Think of when the same situation may occur again
6. Imagine yourself in that future scenario, but this time you think more slowly and carefully
7. See yourself saying and doing things after thinking it through
8. Practice impulse control and be open to feedback from others

Impulse Control Scenarios

In each scenario below, ask yourself what self-control strategies can you use? Would thinking of your values or the consequences help you maintain impulse control? Why or why not?

- 1) You are 15 minutes late driving to school. Your first period teacher told you that if you are late again you will have to attend after-school detention. What is your impulse?
- 2) Your friends invite you to a party. At the party someone offers you an alcoholic drink, then they pressur you to try it. What is your impulse?
- 3) At your friend's house, they offer to show you a pornographic website. What is your impulse?
- 4) Your parents said not to stay on the video game for longer than an hour, but they are not home to monitor you. What is your impulse?