



**FIVE**  
**“Must-Do”**  
**“Gotta-Have”**  
**Traits**  
**You HAVE To Develop**  
**BEFORE**  
**You’re EVER**  
**Gonna Be**  
**SUCCESSFUL!**  
**BY**

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## Introduction

There are a few...just a VERY few...traits that a person must cultivate and develop in their lives before they can even START to become successful in whatever path they choose.

You can think of these traits as the building blocks...the foundation...of your growth into a successful life.

You can build a life without them, but, like building a house without a strong foundation, it'll be put at risk with the first heavy wind or rainstorm. Believe me, you will have a few of those in your life for sure!

A very successful businessman and public speaker originally wrote this book in the late 1800s. The author knows what he's talking about!

The text was thoroughly edited and updated to make the language more readable and more current. However, the concepts and "laws" that are discussed in the book are ageless.

These are traits that are a "must" for any person who is looking for long-term success in their life...no matter WHAT their goals may be.

Read them carefully and thoughtfully. They WILL make a HUGE difference in your life!

## The Power Of Concentration

Throughout the ages, great people have invariably had great concentration. In art and science, business and warfare, literature, politics and philosophy, the real achievements of the race have been due to this power. Concentration arises chiefly from being deeply interested, and is very closely related to persistency and definiteness of purpose. Concentration is an enemy to self-consciousness and vacillation. It enables a man to do the best that is in him. It is one of the characteristic marks of genius itself.

A timid person is erratic in their habits. They shift constantly from one thing to another, accomplishing nothing worth anything. Is it a book they're reading? Soon they turn the pages impatiently, skim lightly over the most important parts, hasten to learn the conclusion, and cast the book aside. Is it a new business venture? They enter upon it enthusiastically, but at the first sign of difficulty lose heart and give up. Every change they make causes a loss of time and energy, so that they are always going but never arriving.

People make their own world. To cultivate concentration they must think and do only one thing at a time. Concentration is the art of continuous and intense application to a task. It is not an abstraction; therefore it cannot be offered as an excuse for carelessness. Here's an example: A young man who worked in a bank was assigned to collect a note for \$75,000. He received the customer's check for the amount, had it certified, and returned to the bank. Upon arriving at the bank, he immediately engaged a fellow worker in conversation, and then was sent out again for another errand. He loitered on the way, and when he returned, the bank had closed and everyone had gone home. That night the young man told his father how he came to have the check still in his pocket.

His father made him call the president of the bank at home, and early next morning the young man handed in the check. The president called him into his office and said: "We don't require your services any longer."

Thoroughness is one of the marks of a self-confident person. They do everything they undertake just as well as they can. If it is a business matter to be discussed, they first inform themselves so completely that they are able to talk with accuracy and intelligence. If it is a public speech to be delivered, they don't wait until the day before and then put together a few hastily considered thoughts, but all is carefully and thoroughly prepared long in advance. Such a person speaks little of what they are going to do, but first does it and lets their work speak for itself.

Every person should get an idea of values in their life. There can be no true success where time and talent are squandered. "Every moment lost," said Napoleon, himself a wonderful example of concentration, "gives an opportunity for misfortune." The building of a self-confident person requires effort, self-sacrifice, and singleness of purpose.

It is not quantity but quality of work that differentiates one man from another. One thing well and thoroughly done is better than any amount of careless work. The person who is completely absorbed in the present duty has no time for discontent and discouragement. Time does not hang heavily on their hands, for the clock is not their master.

No one can become deeply interested in work that is distasteful to them. Thousands of people struggle up-stream all their lives because they are in a job that doesn't fit them. An anonymous writer said: "It is a sad parody on life to see a man earning his living by a vocation which has never received his approval. It is pitiable to see a youth, with the image of power and destiny stamped upon him, trying to support himself in a mean, contemptible occupation, which dwarfs his nature, and makes him despise himself; an occupation which is constantly condemning him, ostracizing him from all that is best and truest in life. Dig trenches, shovel coal, carry a rod; do anything rather than sacrifice your self-respect, blunt your sense of right and wrong, and shut yourself off forever from the true joy of living, which comes only from the consciousness of doing one's best."

In order to cultivate concentration a person must bring their will to bear strongly upon their work and their life. They should realize that every difficulty yields to this power, and that uninterrupted application to one thing will achieve the seemingly impossible. Mental shiftlessness is powerless in the face of difficulty, but a person of strong will and concentration uses obstacles as stepping-stones to higher things.

You need to begin to develop your concentration today in little things. Cultivate the most intense earnestness in whatever you may be doing. Say to yourself: "This one thing I do and I do it to the very best of my ability. My purpose is sure and steady. My aim is accurate and certain. I hold my thought severely and positively to the work in hand. My endeavor is to do better at each succeeding effort. I don't think about tomorrow, for today demands the best that's in me."

"I move quietly but persistently toward a definite goal. I shall be immensely successful through constant, earnest and sincere application to my work and duty. I grow daily in my power of concentrated effort. I am absorbed in all I do."

A person should concentrate not only in matters of business, but in their reading and recreation. This great power brings with it many other valuable elements, such as order, punctuality, thoroughness, self-respect, and self-reliance. Through concentration a person may aspire to the highest achievements. By its aid there is practically no limit to ambition.

Buskin said that "men's proper business in this world falls mainly into three divisions: First, to know themselves. Secondly, to be happy in themselves. Thirdly, to mend themselves as far as either are marred or mend able."

We hear people constantly deploring the fact that they lack concentration, memory, definiteness, and other qualities of excellence, but those same people don't make the slightest effort to cultivate them. Few persons are born with really great gifts; most of the truly great have achieved greatness. Napoleon ascribed his greatest victories to his ability to concentrate his forces on a single point in the enemy. Gladstone was remarkable for this same power. When the great statesman died, Lord Eosebery said: "My lords, there are two features of Mr. Gladstone's intellect which I can not help noting on this occasion, for they were so signal, so salient, and distinguished him so much from all other minds that I have come in contact with, that it would be wanting to this occasion if they were not noted. The first was his enormous power of concentration!"



"There never was a man, I feel, in this world, who, at any given moment, on any given subject, could so devote every resource and power of his intellect, without the restriction of a single nerve within him, to the immediate purpose of that subject."

The story is told of an English statesman whose powers of concentration were so great that after a great debate in Parliament, they hurried from the House bareheaded, passed his coach at the door, and walked all the way home in a pouring rain. In the highest form of public speaking men become so absorbed in their subject that they lose for the time being all consideration and thought of everything else. This power is really indispensable to the highest form of extempore address. The great pulpit orators of the world possessed this faculty in preeminent degree. Whitefield, Mirabeau, Wilberforce, Parker, Spurgeon, Beecher, Phillips Brooks, all were men of tremendous earnestness and concentration. John Bright was so completely absorbed in the subject of a forthcoming speech that they brooded over it day and night, talked it over with his friends, and when no one else was available discussed it with his gardener.

But along with a person's concentration there must be actual performance. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler says that "Indefinite absorption without production is fatal both to character and to the highest intellectual power. Do something and be able to do it well; express what you know in some helpful and substantial form; produce, and do not everlastingly feel only and revel in feelings--these are counsels which make for a real education and against that sham form of it which is easily recognized as well-informed incapacity."

The power of concentration is to be developed so as to enable a person to do better work, to produce the best of which they is capable. It does not mean brooding and meditating, with no thought of action and production. It is to encourage work, not restrain it.

It's a mistake to think that concentration means a straining of the mind. On the contrary, it is power in repose. It's not a nervous habit of doing your work under pressure, but the ease of self-control. Every person should have one great ideal in life toward which they direct their best powers.

By constantly keeping that aim before you, by bending your energies to it, you can hope eventually to attain to your highest goals. When a successful financier was asked the secret of his great success, he said that as a young man they made a strong mental picture of what some day he would become. Day and night he concentrated his powers upon that one goal. There was no feverish haste, no nervous overreaching, and no squandering of mental and physical power, but a strong, reposeful, never-wavering determination to make that picture of his youth a living reality. Such is the power of concentration; such is the secret of success.

## Developing Self-confidence

The development of self-confidence begins properly with intelligent self-examination. The mind must be closely scrutinized, undesirable tendencies checked; faults eradicated, and correct habits of thought and conduct firmly established.

To achieve the best results this personal overhauling, or house cleaning, should be thorough and fearless.

Fearful thought is a disease, to be diagnosed as carefully as any other illness. It comes largely from perverted mental habits. The mind is permitted habitually to dwell upon thoughts of doubt, failure, and inefficiency. So great does this power become, when permitted to rule unchecked, that it affects to greater or less degree almost every act of one's life.

The extremes to which a fearful person will sometimes go are as amusing as they are absurd. People fear poverty, darkness, ridicule, microbes, insomnia, dogs, lightning, burglars, cold, solitude, marriage, Friday, lawyers, death, thirteen, accident, and ghosts. The catalog of dreaded possibilities might include black cats, mice, ill luck, criticism, travel, disease, evil eyes, dreams, and old age.

It's true there is legitimate and honest fear, like that of the young soldier who, upon being asked after his first battle how they felt, replied: "I was afraid I would be afraid, but I was not afraid."

It's right and proper that one should fear to do a mean or cowardly thing, to injure another, or to commit any kind of wrong. This fear, however, instead of weakening personal character, imparts to it new and manly force.

To walk straight up to the thing feared will often strip it of its terror. In one of the old fables we read that when man first beheld the camel its huge size caused him to flee in dreadful fear. But later, observing the animal's seeming gentleness, he approached him less timidly, and then, seeing the almost spiritless nature of the beast, he boldly put a bridle in his mouth and set a child to drive him. We can in like manner conquer fearful thoughts of the human mind.

Fear has well been called our most ancient enemy. Primitive humanity was unprotected against more powerful animals, and in those early days they had good reason to be fearful, but it is difficult to justify the widespread fear that exists today.

Thousands of persons can say truthfully: "I have all my life feared things that never happened." The danger of this fearful attitude is that it frequently attracts that which is dreaded most, and the words of Job are literally fulfilled: "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." We are told that one of the bravest of African chiefs was driven into a cold sweat of agonizing fear merely by the constant ticking of a watch.

If worry is due to lack of self-reliance, fear is an acknowledgment of inferiority. It does not stand still, and unless throttled will gradually overwhelm its victim, making him at last "Like one, that on a lonesome road Doth walk in fear and dread, And having once turned round walks on, And

turns no more his head; Because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread."

Timidity is quickly recognized by the world, and not only argues an ignoble mind, as Virgil says, but actually invites pursuit and imposition. John Foster observes in his splendid essay "On Decision of Character ": "Weakness, in every form, tempts arrogance; and a man may be allowed to wish for a kind of character with which stupidity and impertinence may not make so free. When a firm, decisive spirit is recognized, it is curious to see how the space clears around a man, and leaves him room and freedom. The disposition to interrogate, dictate, or banter, preserves a respectful and polite distance, judging it not unwise to keep the peace with a person of so much energy."

It's surprising how confidence breeds confidence. Courage in danger is sometimes half the battle, while self-reliance will often safeguard a person's interests and give him an abiding sense of security. It makes them feel equal to almost any undertaking, however difficult, leading them to think with Dryden "They can conquer who believe they can."

The building of self-confidence is not difficult, but it requires patience and intelligent effort. There should be no straining, no anxiety, and no haste. The story of the man who tried to jump over a hill should be kept in mind. He went a long way back, then ran so hard toward the hill that when he got there he was obliged to lie down and rest. Then he got up and walked over the hill. Many men are always preparing, but never achieving.

It is said that with regard to any final or definite end, most people live without purpose, and without any fixed star to guide them. So, as a writer

has expressed it, "To him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favorable; neither can he who has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow correctly."

Indecision is a frequent cause of the fear. People hesitate to take a step one way or the other for fear that they might do the wrong thing, and this spirit of irresolution and hesitation often leads them into the very mistakes they would avoid. It's like a man on a bicycle, endeavoring to steer clear of an obstruction on the road, but all the while keeping his eye fastened upon it so that a collision is inevitable. There is nothing more disastrous to success than lack of purpose. "He who hesitates is lost," while he grows great who puts on "the dauntless spirit of resolution." The world generally accepts a man at his own value. If you give an impression that you are afraid, you will be elbowed aside and imposed upon at almost every turn.

Let me illustrate: The other day I saw a dog leisurely pass a cat on the street, and to all appearance there was no ill feeling on either side. The cat looked him straight in the eye as they approached, and the dog returned her confident glance and quietly passed on. Then the cat, seeing a good chance for escape, bolted across the street, but the instant the dog saw her running he turned and followed in hot haste. It was cat and dog for some yards, when suddenly the cat stopped, humped her back and looked defiantly at her adversary. He stopped, caught his breath, blinked uncertainly, turned up his nose, and walked off. As long as the cat showed fear and ran, the dog chased her; but the moment she took her stand, he respected her. When a person stands up boldly and self-confidently for their rights, fear slinks tremblingly into the shadows.

If you want to learn how to be self-confident, resolve to follow it to completion with bulldog tenacity. Realize that no weak-hearted, intermittent efforts will achieve your desired purpose. Hold in your mind the supreme assurance that you can and will achieve this indispensable power, and your reward for your energy and perseverance will be great!

## Overcoming Self-consciousness

Daily speech offers one of the vast opportunities for eliminating self-consciousness. The student should aim here to develop definiteness of idea, sincerity of expression, and concentration of mind. Nothing leads so quickly to hesitation and embarrassment in a speaker as mental uncertainty. To speak confidently, they must not guess, or imagine, or take for granted: they must know. Lack of proper mental equipment is responsible for a large part of the fearfulness of people. People who really know what they're talking about, and are absolutely sure of it, are likely to be sure of themselves. It shows itself in their voice, their use of words, their manner, and their entire personality.

The speaker should cultivate sincerity in his conversation. They will avoid formal compliments and empty platitudes. They will not talk like a book. They will not talk just to hear themselves. They will speak for a purpose, and this will easily enable them to concentrate their mind upon the subject of his conversation. They will listen attentively and interestedly to others. Above all, they will not speak of themselves unless obliged to do so, and then briefly, modestly, and gently.

In what manner, then, shall they speak? Newman's definition of a good person answers that question well: "They guard against unseasonable allusions or topics which may irritate; they are seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. They make light of favors when they do them, and seem to be receiving when they are conferring.



They never speak of themselves except when compelled, never defend themselves by a mere retort; they have no ears for slander or gossip, are scrupulous in assigning motives to those who interfere with them, and interpret everything for the best."

This self-discipline begins naturally with deep breathing. Many people don't realize that the manner in which they breathe affects their attitude of mind. It is altogether too common to use but one half of the breathing capacity. A man who breathes only with his upper chest lacks the vigor and vitality essential to a high degree of self-confidence. Deep breathing should be practiced daily until it becomes an unconscious habit.

So, what is the remedy for self-consciousness? It's mainly a matter of securing control of one's thoughts and intelligently directing them. The mind is a machine, which must be made obedient to the owner's will. When brought under subjection, it will serve man's highest and best purposes, but left to itself it may run easily to confusion and destruction.

You might say: "But my mind wanders." Then go after it and bring it back. You say you can't? Who's operating your mind? Does it run itself? What would you think of a train that had no engineer, no conductor, no one to direct it, and was allowed to run just anywhere? Yet this is what you permit with your train of ideas. Be sensible. Take hold of yourself seriously. Set your will to work. Straighten your spine. Take time today for mental overhauling. You are about to educate your will and it's serious business. Procrastination will not do. From this time forward resolve to control and direct your mental powers for definite purposes.

Let it be said here, without attempt to moralize, that wrongdoing will contribute its share to self-consciousness. It may be an injury done another, an unfair advantage in business, or a secret habit; but whatever it may be, its mark is seared upon the conscience, and sooner or later finds expression in embarrassment. What should one do who comes under this classification? Repair the injury, stop every undesirable habit, and resolve hereafter to deal justly with all people.

Constantly hold in your mind a high estimate of yourself, but be sure you have reasons for doing so. It is of little use to say you are well if you are ill. Don't deceive yourself. You are no greater than the sum of your thoughts and habits. Do you have good and sufficient reasons for holding yourself in high esteem? Are you a person of noble impulses? Is your ambition lofty? Do you have high ideals and do you work persistently to realize them? Are you doing the best you can? Do you have an uncompromising love for truth?

A business man recently wrote to a teacher, saying: "I lose control and become embarrassed when I speak even to my own employees, and can't keep a straight face at any time when meeting strangers. I feel embarrassed, turn red in the face, and otherwise feel uncomfortable when talking to a single individual. If I were called upon to address an audience, I believe I should drop dead." This is an illustration of the extremes to which self-consciousness may carry its victim. The mind is a fertile field for the growth of all kinds of thought. If false and negative ideas are allowed to take root, they, like weeds of an ordinary field, spread with wonderful rapidity, and may easily discourage and overwhelm the owner. The man to whom we have referred has long neglected his mental field and now finds himself in a bad way.

The remedy for him, and for lots of others, is to patiently root out every obnoxious habit and to substitute strong, healthy, positive thoughts in its place. They must be content with small victories at first, since they have permitted their mental field and garden to be overrun with these objectionable thought habits, but they can comfort themselves with the assurance that in this way they can and will attain success.

Timid people concern themselves too much about what others will think and say. They are constantly studying the impression they are making upon people who probably are not even thinking of them. Their super sensitiveness causes them to imagine themselves being criticized, slighted, and unfairly condemned by those who all the while are absorbed in their own affairs.

A man may be on the road to success when a single act of timidity may ruin all his chances. People lose confidence in him if he lacks faith in himself. Courage is admired, fear never is. Courage is dignified, fear is repulsive. The man of courage is welcomed everywhere, while fear invites itself to a seat in the rear. The following incident actually occurred in a second-hand bookshop. The salesman had been talking for some time to a customer, when another man who had selected a book for himself mustered up enough courage to say: "Don't let me interrupt you, sir, if you are busy with that gentleman—I wanted to get—this book--but I can just as well call in on my way back--I would have to trouble you anyway--to change--a five-dollar bill--and perhaps--you haven't--the change--so I'll come back--in a little while--don't trouble, sir--and then I'll have the right change with me."

This sounds exaggerated, but it can be vouched for. What chance, do you think, does that man have for advancement or distinction in the world? He is doomed to failure unless he changes his entire mental attitude.

Every person should learn to stand firmly upon his own feet. As themselves they may become great; as an imitator they will amount to little. "Intellectual intrepidity," says Samuel Smiles "is one of the vital conditions of independence and self-reliance in character. A man must have the courage to be himself, and not the shadow or the echo of another. He must exercise his own powers, think his own thoughts, and speak his own sentiments. He must elaborate his own opinions, and form his own convictions. It has been said that they who dare not form an opinion must be a coward; they who will not, must be an idler; they who can not, must be a fool."

The timid man should take inspiration from the experience of many of the world's greatest orators and actors. For the most part they at first were self-conscious men. Demosthenes, Cicero, Curran, Chalmers, Erskine, Pitt, Gladstone, Disraeli, Mirabeau, Patrick Henry, Clay, Gough, Beecher, Salvini, Henry Irving, Richard Mansfield, and many others were subject to "stage-fright." But this sensitivity, when at last controlled and intelligently directed, enabled them to reach a foremost place among distinguished men. It is said of Rufus Choate, the great lawyer, that before an important address to a jury, looked as nervous and wretched as a criminal about to be hanged.

Probably every public speaker who has amounted to anything could testify to this initial feeling of nervousness or anxiety, but the cure lies in becoming so absorbed in one's subject, or the welfare of others, as to forget one's self.

Self-consciousness may arise from self conceit. The victim says to himself: "What impression am I making?" "Do I look okay? " "What are they thinking and saying about me? " On the other hand, it may be due to extreme humility. Such a man says inwardly: "I am not equal to this," "I lack so many things," "If I had only been born right," "My father was bashful before me," "I know I'm going to fail." Natural humility need not necessarily be a stumbling block to any person. It's a safeguard against rashness, familiarity, and over-confidence.

The evil of extreme self-consciousness is that it makes a man do so many things they don't want to do. It changes his line of conduct a hundred times a day, makes him say "yes" when they would rather say "no," and, in short, robs him of his power and individuality.

When Thackeray said that sensitivity was a great mistake in a public man, he doubtless meant that super sensitivity by which a man loses initiative, self-reliance, and independence. A self-conscious man must sooner or later rid himself of this fault if he is to be preeminently successful.

## Thinking Right, Being Positive

We shouldn't apologize to ourselves. A sense of the dignity of life, and the sovereignty of the soul, should keep us strong and positive. We should be too big for that little habit of making excuses. Self-depreciation never won a single battle of life. It has, on the contrary, killed ambition, weakened the will, and incapacitated thousands of men for noble work. Apology is weakness on parade. Avoid it. Observe some man who comes toward you, walking with short, jerky steps, his dress careless, the corners of his mouth turned down, keeping well to one side of the walk. As he passes, he gives you a hasty, frightened glance, which shows you, unmistakably, despair, discouragement, and failure. The man's whole life probably has been negative in its character and outlook. The daily, and perhaps hourly, streams of false suggestions poured into his mind have at last overwhelmed him and his life closes in an eclipse.

Many people who are tormented by fear and timidity does not realize what a flood of negative thoughts daily affects them. They hem themselves in with suggestions of limitation, incapacity, and unworthiness. They constantly think not of how they will succeed, but of how they will surely fail. When Washington Irving was asked to preside at a public dinner for Charles Dickens, upon his visit to America, he hesitated and said he would surely fail. It was pointed out to him that he was really the man to be the toastmaster for that function, and at last was prevailed upon to accept. But to many friends he repeated his fear that they would fail. The night came, and before a brilliant gathering Irving arose to speak. He made an excellent beginning, but suddenly stopped and brought his remarks to a close. As he sat down, he whispered to a friend on his left, "There, I told you I would fail, and I did!"

In developing the habit of positive thinking--of seeing only the best in yourself and others--of regarding yourself as capable of great things—it's well to bear in mind that our thoughts really make us what we are. What you did yesterday makes you what you are today, and what you do today determines what you will be tomorrow. Suppose you put these practical questions to yourself: Does negative thinking pay? Is it desirable for me to encourage thoughts in my mind that break down, hinder, and incapacitate me for good work? Do I want negative thoughts that inevitably bring discontent, unhappiness, and ultimate failure in their train?

Your answer will be, of course, that you don't want them. But such thoughts work insidiously, and will find an entrance into your mind if you're not extremely vigilant. The surest way to keep them out, however, is to fill the mind completely with vital positive thoughts, to think constantly of yourself as a person of unlimited possibilities, growing daily in mental and spiritual power, equipped for great things, a necessary part of God's glorious creation, and moving forward toward a triumphant and immortal destiny.

It's difficult to construct positive thoughts out of the poor stuff from which dreams are made. People should devote themselves particularly to the practical things of life. Some people learn this lesson all too late, for, as Thoreau says, "Youth gets together the materials for a bridge to the moon, and maturity uses them to build a wood-shed."

The habit of positive thinking, when firmly established, becomes a source of attraction. Good thoughts soon become great thoughts, and the mature mind attempts even the impossible. The power of a single thought at the beginning of a day can NOT be over-estimated. It can change despondency into hope, and fear into courage. It can nerve the arm for great and noble deeds. It can strengthen a weak and timid character into a whole person. It's possible for it to set in motion an influence that will reach the ends of the world.

The importance of positive thinking is its effect upon doing right for YOUR life. How many disastrous mistakes are made for lack of proper thought? How many of life's failures are due to a careless and unwise selection of a business or profession?

It was Sidney Smith who said: "If we represent the occupations of life by holes in a table, some round, some square, some oblong, and persons by bits of wood of like shapes, we shall generally find that the triangular person has got into the square hole, the oblong into the triangular, while the square person has squeezed himself into the round hole."

But meditation, too, is an essential part of positive thinking. A writer said that there is not much real, honest thinking done in the world, but I'm not inclined to agree with him. Much of the thinking is honest enough, but it is badly organized, and even more badly applied. We must learn to brood more over our thoughts, to dwell long and intently upon ideas that seem dark and obscure, to fashion patiently intricate links of truth into chains of powerful argument.



In his pursuit of positive thinking the student should learn the art of definition. Thoughts fully matured in the mind are seen to be there in so many words. What do our thoughts or words really mean? The first step is to define them, and next to consider their truth. The habit of "constant and searching reflection," recommended by Gladstone, is what more than anything else produces right thinking.

"I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Webster," said a young admirer, "upon your wonderful impromptu effort to-day." "Impromptu!" exclaimed the great orator, "my young friend, I have been thinking out that speech for over six months!"

"How long does it take to prepare a sermon? " some one asked Dr. John Watson. "If you mean to write the manuscript, then a day may suffice; but if you mean to think a sermon, then it may be ten years!"

It's good sometimes to think out loud, when you're alone, in order to bring your thoughts out into concrete form. There is the advantage of definiteness, of getting an impression of the sound of words, and of making them seem real. Thoughts when uttered take on a life, reality, and character they didn't have before. They can better be considered, analyzed, and assigned to their proper duty or thrown in the garbage. The very act of giving expression to our thoughts illuminates and invests them with new power and significance.

An excellent way to furnish the mind with material for positive thinking is to commit to memory some of the sayings of great men and to ponder them at leisure.

This helps you establish a standard of truth, and at the same time furnishes the mind with many nourishing and useful thoughts. Here are some examples:

"The confidence which we have in ourselves gives birth to much of that which we have in others."--La Rochefoucauld.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all." -- Tennyson.

"They who has once been very foolish will at no other time be very wise."-- Montaigne.

"Nothing is said nowadays that has not been said before."--Terence.

" They must necessarily fear many, whom many fear."--Seneca.

"Courage in danger is half the battle." --Plautus.

"The multitude is always in the wrong." --Dillon.

"Thought once awakened does not again slumber."--Carlyle.

" Second thoughts, they say, are best." --Dryden.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries." --Shakespeare.

"We should not let others do our thinking for us. Our individuality is too precious to be so sacrificed."

Too many persons are like a chief of the South Sea Islands described by Sir John Lubbock. "Wishing to question him, Sir John first bountifully fed him, whereupon they fell into slumber. "When awakened they simply said: "Ideas make me sleepy." There are men who dislike thinking for themselves; it is too much like work; it makes them drowsy, and, after all, what is the use of it? Such men lack the true spirit of independence and courage. They are not in line; let it be said with pity, for great work, leadership, and noble success.

Positive thinking gives tone and vigor to the physical man, purifies and enlarges his mental world, and leads him into spiritual realization. While our thoughts are building body and character, they are also shaping human destiny.

"What a man thinks in his spirit in the world," declared Swedenborg, "that he does after his departure from the world when he becomes a spirit."

To think that our thoughts comprise "the city of man's soul" should awaken in us a determination not to waste this precious substance in reckless prodigality.

A person who thinks positively has reason to feel proud of themselves, and they walk with "the magic in their eye." There is no weakness, no timidity, no hesitation, since to them right is might. They have learned to make their thoughts selective; they take the good and reject the bad. They know, too, how to fit each thought into its proper place, make correct inferences, and form well-considered judgments.

This clear and positive thinking is constructive in its character; it builds new power and discloses ever-widening fields of usefulness. Wrong or negative thinking is destructive; it produces nothing but paralysis, fear, hopelessness, and heartrending failure.

Positive thinking means cheerful thinking. It means that a person is an intellectual optimist, who sees nothing but good in himself and in those about him. His thought goes out to clarify and brighten the lives of other men. Let Robert Louis Stevenson inspire discouraged men to similar heroism. Propped up in bed for weeks at a time, and racked by pain, not a weak or negative thought escaped his lips. But his glorious mind framed this: "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great theorem of the livableness of life."

When a difficult question came to Webster they would say, "Let me sleep on it." He must give his thought time to mature. Deliberateness and patient meditation played a prominent part in the building of his mind.

How would a man exclude negative thought from his life? Certainly not by affirming such sentences as "I have no fear," "I am not weak," "I do not lack ability," "I am not a failure." Remembering that only positive thoughts are constructive, they will avoid even the use of negative symbols as "weak," "fear," "lack," "failure." They will say, rather, "I am self-confident," "I am strong," "I am able," "I am a success." These affirmations will be made both silently and audibly, always with deep conviction and earnestness.

Let the student remember, however, that these affirmations must be confirmed by actual performance. A man might sit in his office chair and continually affirm that he was a success, and nothing but success, until they fell over from heart failure. When you say "I am courageous," you must demonstrate it in your daily life. You may say "I am hopeful, powerful, buoyant, cheerful," but if you then proceed to sit down in a corner by yourself and moan about your fate, you are simply deluding yourself. It is not sufficient that you believe what you affirm; you must be it, live it, and act it.

Every person who aspires to positive thinking should shut the door of his mind against fear thought and negative thought as they would against their most bitter enemies. Negative thought works its way cunningly, by plausible excuse and subterfuge, until it holds a person in its death-like grasp. It subdues, discourages, weakens, intimidates, and at last brands its victim a failure and outcast. To harbor it in one's mind is to entertain an enemy.

Positive thinking means that which constructs, strengthens, and ennobles. It means better manhood, the courage to do and to dare, and the heroism of mighty effort. It knows no limitation, but reaches out daily for new conquests. It is a power unto itself, growing through its own use.

Our habits of thought must be governed by fixed principles. One clear-cut, positive suggestion made in good time may frighten off a thousand petty negative thoughts. The thing we repeat frequently enough in our mind comes to acquire undisputed authority. We should not seek to perform some one great act of courage, but courageously perform all acts, however small, of our every-day life. Pascal says:

"Positive thoughts come from faith, negative thoughts from doubt; the right fear, joined to hope, because it is born of faith and we hope in the God in whom we believe; the wrong, joined to despair, because we fear the God in whom we have faith; some fear to lose Him, others fear to find Him."

Let us persist in our aim to think positively, and to do right, knowing that "true courage consists in long persevering patience." Let us more earnestly direct our thought toward the lofty and sublime. Above all let us seek the best sources of inspiration, that the great thoughts of other men may become our thoughts, and that we may rise into the fullness of our rich inheritance.

## Developing Imagination And Initiative

Every great work in the world first has its place in the human imagination. If a man is about to build a bench, he first pictures in his own mind the kind of bench it should be. Similarly the painter, architect, contractor, or manufacturer, traces in his imagination an image of that which they would produce.

The imagination, then, is a gallery in which we hang pictures, both of what we have done and what we intend to do. We may not always turn these pictures into realities at once, but they are there to interest and encourage us, and to come to our aid when needed. Upon one occasion Webster used, in one of his speeches, an illustration that he had carried in his imagination for fifteen years. Beecher, who was endowed with an unusually vivid imagination, placed this faculty first in importance in the making of a preacher.

They affirmed that a man with a trained imagination could not possibly wear out or become uninteresting to his congregation, and asked pertinently: "Did you ever hear anybody say that spring has been worn out? It has been coming for thousands of years, and it is just as sweet, just as welcome, and just as new, as if the birds sang for the first time; and so it will be for a thousand years to come."

If it's important that a man have a clear and accurate image of what his material product is to be, how much more important is it that they have a picture of the character and life he is building. It has well been said that no man ever made his mark in the world who did not have a master passion for something. When a boy is scribbling a picture on paper and in answer to your question tells you he doesn't know what it is going to be, you feel sure it will not amount to much. When you ask a youth what line of work he intends to follow, and he replies that he has not yet made up his mind, you begin to fear for his success. But what will you say to a man who at thirty, forty, and even fifty, has not determined what his life's ambition is, to what ultimate goal they is working? The fact that less than five per cent of men succeed be attributed to this aimless, hit-or-miss way of living one's life?

In the imagination, we find again much of the difference between the timid and self-confident man. One pictures defeat and failure, the other sees himself as successful and influential. One man thinks of all the ways in which they will fail, imprints them upon his mind, places them in the gallery of his imagination, to haunt him day and night. The other man thinks of the one way in which they will succeed, sketches himself as a strong, noble, courageous character, places the picture before his mind's eye, delights in it by day and dreams of it by night.

Fear is nowhere else more destructive than in the imagination. It is often a greater enemy than the thing feared. We have all heard of the soldier, a prisoner who was experimented upon many years ago, blindfolded and then told he was bleeding to death, while merely water was trickling from his arm. When subsequently examined he was found to be dead, although not the slightest injury had been done to his body.



The fear had so completely possessed him that he believed he was actually bleeding to death. Fear sometimes rises from over-caution, but frequently it is the result of selfishness. William James puts it in a strong, appealing way when he says: "The attitude of unhappiness is not only painful, it is mean and ugly. What can be more base and unworthy than the pining, puling, grumpy mood, no matter by what outward ills it may have been caused by? What is more injurious to others? We ought to scout it in ourselves and others, and never show it tolerance." Physicians tell us that nine-tenths of the ills of their patients are imaginary. In many instances a placebo pill is all that's necessary to affect a complete cure.

We all know of persons who think themselves born under an unlucky star, or pursued by some unhappy fate. Their imagination is crowded with pictures of the direful things that will surely happen to them sooner or later. They reproach themselves for physical weakness, lack of memory, want of ambition, fear of failure, inability to attract friends, or other shortcomings. Instead of resolutely setting out to develop themselves, they exhaust their remaining powers in useless regrets. They're like the people described in medical literature, utterly unable to initiate a single thing on their own behalf.

"A negative man," it says, "too suddenly ejected from his long-accustomed groove, where, like a toad embedded in the rock, he had made his niche exactly fitting to his own shape, presents a wretched picture of helplessness and unshiftiness. His friends suggest this or that independent endeavor; he shakes his head, and says he can't—it won't do; what he wants is a place where he is not obliged to depend on himself, where he has to do a fixed amount of work for a fixed amount of salary, and where his spineless attitude may find a mold ready formed, into which it may run

without the necessity of forging shapes for itself. Many a man of respectable intellectual powers has gone down to ruin, and died miserably, because of his negativity, which made it impossible for him to break new ground, or to work at anything whatsoever, with the stimulus of hope only. He must be bolstered up by certainty, supported by the walls of his groove, or else he can do nothing; and if he can't get into his friendly groove, he lets himself drift into destruction. Negative people never to be depended upon, their very central quality being fluidity, which is a bad thing to rest on."

Few people realize how important a part imagination plays in the every-day matters of life. A businessman endeavors to give a prospective customer a mental picture of his products, or of what they will do for him. The physician holds before his patient an image of what they will be and can do when well. The politician describes the condition of things as they would be if he is elected. The public speaker illuminates and illustrates his subject chiefly by means of the imagination. So in every human activity the order is first the mental picture, then the act.

Only second in importance to the image-making faculty is that of initiative, or the power of originality. Many business and professional men acknowledge that, had they known what difficulties awaited them, they could not have gone forward so hopefully. But they just couldn't bring themselves to turn back once they had put their hand to the plow. The story of almost every successful man would be a recital of uphill work at first, with many obstacles to be met and overcome, disappointments to be bravely borne, new resolutions of determination made at the beginning of each day.

There are a thousand imitators to one who can originate. A man who is constantly watching to see what others are doing in order to steal their thunder, is not true to himself nor developing his best faculties. Nothing could be more humbling to a person than the inner realization that they are a mere copycat, a make-believe. We should avail ourselves, it is true, of the experience and ideas of others, and frankly acknowledge our indebtedness to them, but we cannot rightly call this material our own until we have put it through our mental process and stamped it with our individuality.

Let a man take to heart these inspiring words of Emerson: "Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession. That which each can do best, none but the Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakespeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part they could not borrow. Another Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you can not hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart and thou shalt reproduce the foreworld again."

When Shakespeare says, "To thine own self be true," he indicates the way to originality. Let a person first place in the gallery of his imagination only such images as he would care to see materialized in his life. Then let him go bravely forth, resolved to make these a living reality, and by full use of originality, initiative, and courage, win an enduring place among successful men.

## Summary

As we said at the beginning of this book, when you are trying to build a mansion it just makes sense for you to start with a strong foundation. It doesn't matter if it's a one bedroom cottage or a 30 bedroom estate, the principle is the same...build whatever you're building on a strong foundation and it'll last. Build it on shifting sand and it'll collapse around your ears!

The five traits that we discussed are integral parts of that strong foundation.

The secret here is to NOT just read this book! The secret is to apply...on a daily basis...what you've learned from this book.

Chances are, if you take a close hard look at yourself, you'll see yourself in one of these chapters. Take that to heart and fix it! This book tells you how.

Don't be just a reader...be a doer. Go out and make these positive traits a part of your everyday life.

The fact that you bought this book is a great start. It shows that you WANT to fix your life. This book has given you the tools to start doing that. All YOU need to do is read it, absorb it, and apply it!

We wish you the best in your pursuit of whatever success you desire.