

The Law of Receiving

You don't get what you want. You attract what you are.

Have you ever caught yourself asking, "Why does this always happen to me?" You look at your circumstances, your health, your bank account, the people around you, and something quietly insists that this is just how it is.

It isn't.

Written more than a century ago by James Allen, this small book reveals a single law that governs every life. And it has two halves most people never connect. The first is hard to hear: you are not the helpless effect of your circumstances. You are their cause.

The second is the quiet promise behind it. Your life is not a vending machine that dispenses whatever you ask for: it's a mirror that reflects who you have become. You don't chase what you want into your life. You attract it, and what you attract is always shaped by who you are on the inside. Being comes first. Receiving follows. Change the way you think, and everything that grows from it begins to change: your wealth, your health, your character, your achievements, the future you're walking toward.

I've restored Allen's masterpiece for the modern reader. The archaic language refreshed. The dense passages clarified. Much of it rewritten in direct, personal address, so its truth speaks straight to you, not at you. Its original title named only the symptom, how you think, and missed the whole promise: that learning to be, on the inside, is what causes a different life to come to you. This law belongs to everyone, so it now carries a name for what it truly teaches: that all good things come, in the end, to those who have become ready to receive them.

Read it slowly. Read it twice.

Then notice what begins to change.

— Paul Hutchings, for the Grow Rich Mastermind



*Mind is the Master power that molds and makes,
And we are Mind, and evermore we take
The tool of Thought, and, shaping what we will,
Bring forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills:
We think in secret, and it comes to pass:
Environment is but our looking-glass.*

Thought and Character

The old proverb, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," doesn't just capture one part of who you are; it reaches into every condition and circumstance of your life. You are, quite literally, what you think. Your character is the sum total of every thought you hold.

As the plant springs from, and could not be without, the seed, so every act springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them. This is just as true of the acts called "spontaneous" and "unpremeditated" as of those deliberately carried out.

Act is the blossom of thought, and joy and suffering are its fruits; in this way you gather the sweet and bitter harvest of your own cultivation.

You are a growth governed by law, not something thrown together by chance. Cause and effect is as absolute in the hidden realm of thought as in the world of visible, material things. A noble and Godlike character is not a matter of favor or luck, but the natural result of continued effort in right thinking, the fruit of long-cherished association with Godlike thoughts. A base and brutish character, by the same process, is the result of continually harboring groveling thoughts.

You are made or unmade by yourself. In the armory of thought you forge the weapons by which you destroy yourself; you also fashion the tools with which you build for yourself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application of thought, you ascend to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, you descend below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes lie all the grades of character, and you are their maker and master.



Of all the beautiful truths about the soul that have been brought to light in this age, none is more heartening, or more full of divine promise and confidence, than this: that you are the master of thought, the molder of character, and the maker and shaper of your condition, environment, and destiny.

As a being of Power, Intelligence, and Love, and the architect of your own thoughts, you hold the key to every situation. You contain within yourself that transforming and regenerative power by which you may make yourself whatever you will.

You are always the master, even in your weakest and most abandoned state; but in your weakness and degradation you are the foolish master who misgoverns your "household." When you begin to reflect on your condition, and to search diligently for the Law on which your being is established, you become the wise master, directing your energies with intelligence and shaping your thoughts toward fruitful ends. Such is the conscious master, and you can only become this by discovering within yourself the laws of thought, a discovery that is wholly a matter of application, self-analysis, and experience.

Only by much searching and mining are gold and diamonds obtained; and in the same way, you can find every truth connected with your being if you will dig deep into the mine of your soul. That you are the maker of your character, the molder of your life, and the builder of your destiny, you may prove beyond doubt. You need only watch, control, and alter your thoughts, tracing their effects on yourself, on others, and on your life and circumstances, linking cause and effect by patient practice and investigation, and using every experience, even the most trivial, everyday occurrence, as a means of gaining that knowledge of yourself which is Understanding, Wisdom, Power. In this pursuit, as in no other, the law is absolute that "He that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." For only by patience, practice, and ceaseless persistence can you enter the Door of the Temple of Knowledge.



Effect of Thought on Circumstances

Your mind is like a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or left to run wild; but whether it is tended or neglected, it must, and will, bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed-seeds will fall therein, and will continue to produce their kind.

Just as a gardener cultivates a plot, keeping it free from weeds and growing the flowers and fruits required, so may you tend the garden of your mind, weeding out all the wrong, useless, and impure thoughts, and cultivating toward perfection the flowers and fruits of right, useful, and pure thoughts. By pursuing this process, you sooner or later discover that you are the master-gardener of your soul, the director of your life. You also reveal, within yourself, the laws of thought, and come to understand, with ever-increasing accuracy, how the forces of thought and elements of mind operate in shaping your character, circumstances, and destiny.

Thought and character are one, and since character can only manifest and reveal itself through environment and circumstance, the outer conditions of your life will always be found in harmony with your inner state. This does not mean that your circumstances at any given time reveal your entire character, but that those circumstances are so intimately connected with some vital element of thought within you that, for the time being, they are indispensable to your development.

You are where you are by the law of your being; the thoughts you have built into your character have brought you here, and in the arrangement of your life there is no element of chance, but all is the result of a law which cannot err. This is just as true of those who feel "out of harmony" with their surroundings as of those who are content with them.

As a progressive and evolving being, you are where you are so you can learn that you can grow; and as you learn the spiritual lesson which any circumstance contains for you, it passes away and gives place to other circumstances.

You are tossed around by circumstances so long as you believe yourself to be the creation of outside conditions; but when you realize that you are a creative power, and that you can command the hidden soil and seeds of your being out of which



circumstances grow, you become the rightful master of yourself.

That circumstances grow out of thought every one knows who has for any length of time practiced self-control and self-purification, for you will have noticed that the alteration in your circumstances has been in exact ratio with your altered mental condition. So true is this that when you earnestly apply yourself to remedy the defects in your character, and make swift and marked progress, you pass rapidly through a succession of transformations.

The soul attracts what it secretly harbors: what it loves, and also what it fears; it reaches the height of its cherished aspirations; it falls to the level of its unrestrained desires; and circumstances are the means by which the soul receives its own.

Every thought-seed sown or allowed to fall into the mind, and to take root there, produces its own kind, blossoming sooner or later into act, and bearing its own fruit of opportunity and circumstance. Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bad fruit.

The outer world of circumstance shapes itself to the inner world of thought, and both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions work for your ultimate good. As the reaper of your own harvest, you learn both by suffering and by bliss.

Following the inmost desires, aspirations, thoughts, by which you allow yourself to be dominated, (chasing the mirages of impure imaginings or steadfastly walking the highway of strong and high endeavor), you at last arrive at their fruition and fulfillment in the outer conditions of your life. The laws of growth and adjustment hold true everywhere.

You do not come to the poorhouse or the prison by the tyranny of fate or circumstance, but by the pathway of low thoughts and base desires. Nor does a pure-minded person fall suddenly into crime by the pressure of any mere external force; the criminal thought had long been secretly nurtured in the heart, and the hour of opportunity revealed its gathered power. Circumstances do not make you; they reveal you to yourself. No one descends into vice and its attendant sufferings without vicious inclinations, and no one ascends into virtue and its pure happiness without the continued cultivation of virtuous aspirations. You, therefore, as the master of thought, are the maker of yourself, the shaper and author of your environment. Even at birth the soul comes into its own, and through every step of its earthly journey it attracts those



combinations of conditions which reveal it, which are the reflections of its own purity and impurity, its strength and weakness.

You do not attract what you want, but what you are. Your wishes, daydreams, and ambitions are frustrated at every step, but your inmost thoughts and desires are fed with their own food, be it destructive or constructive. The "divinity that shapes our ends" is in ourselves; it is our very self. You alone chain yourself: thought and action are the jailers of Fate, imprisoning you when they are base; they are also the angels of Freedom, liberating you when they are noble. You do not get what you wish and pray for, but what you justly earn. Your wishes and prayers are granted and answered only when they harmonize with your thoughts and actions.

In the light of this truth, what, then, does it mean to "fight against circumstances"? It means that you are continually rebelling against an effect on the outside, while all the time nourishing and preserving its cause in your heart. That cause may take the form of a conscious vice or an unconscious weakness; but whatever it is, it stubbornly hinders the efforts of the one who holds it, and cries out for a remedy.

People are anxious to improve their circumstances, but unwilling to improve themselves; and so they remain stuck. The person who does not shrink from releasing what no longer serves them can never fail to accomplish the object on which the heart is set. This is as true of earthly as of spiritual things. Even the person whose sole aim is to acquire wealth must be prepared to make great personal sacrifices before reaching it; and how much more so the one who would build a strong and well-balanced life?

Here is someone who is desperately poor. They are extremely anxious that their surroundings and home comforts should improve, yet all the while they shirk their work, and feel justified in cutting corners and deceiving the very people they serve, because they tell themselves the rewards are too small. Such a person does not understand even the basic principles on which true prosperity is built, and is not only completely unfit to rise out of their poverty, but is actually attracting still deeper poverty by dwelling in, and acting out, lazy, dishonest, and small-minded thoughts.

Here is a rich person who is the victim of a painful, persistent disease brought on by overeating. They are willing to give large sums of money to get rid of it, but they will not give up their cravings. They want to indulge their taste for rich, unnatural food and



keep their health as well. Such a person is completely unfit to have health, because they have not yet learned the first principles of a healthy life.

Here is a business owner who uses dishonest methods to keep more for themselves, and, hoping for bigger profits, shortchanges the people who trust and support them. Such a person is altogether unfit for prosperity, and when they find themselves bankrupt in both reputation and riches, they blame circumstances, not knowing that they are the sole author of their condition.

I have offered these three cases simply to illustrate the truth that you are the cause (though nearly always unconsciously) of your own circumstances, and that, while aiming at a good end, you continually frustrate it by encouraging thoughts and desires that cannot possibly harmonize with that end. Such cases could be multiplied almost endlessly, but there is no need, for you can, if you resolve to, trace the working of the laws of thought in your own mind and life; and until you do, mere external facts cannot serve as a basis for reasoning.

Circumstances, however, are so complicated, thought is so deeply rooted, and the conditions of happiness vary so vastly from person to person, that your entire soul-condition (though it may be known to you) cannot be judged by another from the outward appearance of your life alone. A person may be honest in some ways, yet suffer hardship; another may be dishonest in some ways, yet acquire wealth. But the usual conclusion, that the first fails because of their honesty and the second prospers because of their dishonesty, comes from a shallow judgment, one that assumes the dishonest person is almost wholly corrupt, and the honest person almost entirely virtuous. In the light of deeper knowledge and wider experience, such a judgment is found to be faulty. The dishonest person may have some admirable virtues that the other does not possess; and the honest person, character flaws that the other is free of. The honest person reaps the good results of their honest thoughts and acts; they also bring upon themselves the suffering their flaws produce. The dishonest person, likewise, gathers their own suffering and happiness.

It is pleasing to human vanity to believe that one suffers because of one's virtue; but not until you have rooted out every sickly, bitter, and impure thought from your mind, and washed every stain from your soul, can you be in a position to know and declare that your suffering is the result of your good qualities, and not your bad ones; and on the



way toward that highest good, yet long before reaching it, you will have found, working in your mind and life, the Great Law which is absolutely just, and which therefore cannot give good for evil, or evil for good. Armed with such knowledge, you will then know, looking back on your past ignorance and blindness, that your life is, and always was, justly ordered, and that all your past experiences, good and bad, were the fair outworking of your evolving, yet unevolved self.

Good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results; bad thoughts and actions can never produce good results. This is just another way of saying that nothing can come from corn but corn, and nothing from thistles but thistles. People understand this law in the natural world, and work with it; but few understand it in the mental and moral world (though it operates there just as simply and surely), and so they do not cooperate with it.

Suffering is always the effect of wrong thought in some direction. It is a sign that you are out of harmony with yourself, with the Law of your being. The sole and supreme use of suffering is to awaken: to shift the mind's eye to the higher order of things. Suffering ceases for the one who can see. Once the eyes are fully open, there is nothing left to awaken to; a perfectly enlightened being could not suffer.

The circumstances you meet with suffering are the result of your own mental disharmony. The circumstances you meet with blessedness are the result of your own mental harmony. Blessedness, not material possessions, is the measure of right thought; suffering, not the lack of material possessions, is the measure of wrong thought. You may be cursed and rich; you may be blessed and poor. Blessedness and riches are joined together only when the riches are rightly and wisely used; and the poor only descend into misery when they regard their lot as a burden unjustly imposed.

Poverty and over-indulgence are the two extremes of misery. Both are equally unnatural, and both the result of a disordered mind. You are not rightly conditioned until you are happy, healthy, and prosperous; and happiness, health, and prosperity are the result of a harmonious adjustment of the inner with the outer, of you with your surroundings.

You only begin to grow into your full self when you stop complaining and blaming, and begin to search for the hidden justice that governs your life. And as you adapt your mind to that governing principle, you stop accusing others as the cause of your



condition, and build yourself up in strong and noble thoughts; you stop fighting against circumstances, and begin to use them as aids to accelerate your progress, and as a means of discovering the hidden powers and possibilities within you.

Law, not confusion, is the dominating principle in the universe; justice, not injustice, is the soul and substance of life; and righteousness, not corruption, is the molding and moving force in the spiritual government of the world. This being so, you have only to right yourself to find that the universe is right; and in the process of putting yourself right, you will find that as you change your thoughts toward things and other people, things and other people will change toward you.

The proof of this truth is in every person, and it therefore admits of easy investigation by systematic introspection and self-analysis. Radically alter your thoughts, and you will be astonished at the rapid transformation it produces in the material conditions of your life. People imagine that thought can be kept secret, but it cannot; it rapidly crystallizes into habit, and habit solidifies into circumstance. Animal thoughts crystallize into habits of drunkenness and sensuality, which solidify into circumstances of poverty and disease; lower thoughts of every kind crystallize into habits that cloud the mind, which solidify into chaotic, scattered circumstances; thoughts of fear, doubt and indecision crystallize into weak and wavering habits, which solidify into circumstances of failure, poverty and slavish dependence; lazy thoughts crystallize into habits of uncleanness and dishonesty, which solidify into circumstances of filth and poverty; hateful and condemning thoughts crystallize into habits of accusation and violence, which solidify into circumstances of conflict and persecution; selfish thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of self-seeking, which solidify into circumstances of isolation and discontent.

On the other hand, beautiful thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of grace and kindness, which solidify into warm and sunny circumstances; higher thoughts crystallize into habits of moderation and self-control, which solidify into circumstances of calm and peace; thoughts of courage, self-reliance, and decision crystallize into strong, decisive habits, which solidify into circumstances of success, abundance, and freedom; energetic thoughts crystallize into habits of cleanliness and industry, which solidify into pleasant circumstances; gentle and forgiving thoughts crystallize into habits of tenderness, which solidify into protective and sustaining circumstances;



loving and unselfish thoughts crystallize into habits of generosity toward others, which solidify into circumstances of sure and abiding prosperity and true riches.

A particular train of thought, persisted in, whether good or bad, cannot fail to produce its results on your character and circumstances. You cannot directly choose your circumstances, but you can choose your thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape your circumstances.

Nature helps you toward the fulfillment of the thoughts you most encourage, and opportunities arise that will most quickly bring to the surface both your higher and your lower thoughts.

Stop your harmful thoughts, and all the world will soften toward you, and be ready to help you; put away your weak and defeated thoughts, and opportunities will spring up on every side to aid your strong resolve; encourage good thoughts, and no hard fate shall bind you down to misery and shame. The world is your kaleidoscope, and the shifting combinations of color it shows you at every passing moment are the exquisitely adjusted pictures of your ever-moving thoughts.

*So you will be what you will to be;
Let failure find its false content
In that poor word, "environment,"
But spirit scorns it, and is free.*

*It masters time, it conquers space;
It cows that boastful trickster, Chance,
And bids the tyrant Circumstance
Uncrown, and fill a servant's place.*

*The human Will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless Soul,
Can hew a way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene.*

*Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.*



Effect of Thought on Health and the Body

The body is the servant of the mind. It obeys the workings of the mind, whether they are deliberately chosen or automatically expressed. At the bidding of harmful thoughts the body can sink into ill health and decline; at the command of glad and beautiful thoughts it becomes clothed with youthfulness and beauty.

Sickness and health, like circumstances, are rooted in thought. Strong, happy thoughts build up the body in vitality and poise, while lasting anxiety and ill will wear it down. The body is a delicate and responsive instrument that answers readily to the thoughts impressed upon it, and your habits of thought produce their own effects, good or bad, upon it.

If you would protect your body, guard your mind. If you would renew your body, beautify your mind. Thoughts of malice, envy, disappointment, and despair rob the body of its health and grace. A sour face does not come by chance; it is made by sour thoughts. The lines that harden a face are drawn by recklessness, resentment, and pride.

I have known a woman of ninety-six with the bright, innocent face of a girl, and a man well under middle age whose face was already drawn and hard. The first was the result of a sweet and sunny disposition; the second, the outcome of bitterness and discontent. Just as you cannot keep a home fresh and wholesome unless you let air and sunlight into its rooms, so a strong body and a bright, serene face can only come from freely admitting thoughts of joy, goodwill, and serenity into the mind.

There is no physician like cheerful thought for dispelling the ills of the body, and no comforter to compare with goodwill for scattering the shadows of grief and sorrow. To live continually in thoughts of ill will, cynicism, suspicion, and envy is to be confined in a self-made prison. But to think well of all, to be cheerful with all, to patiently learn to find the good in all, such generous thoughts are the very gates of divinity; and to dwell day by day in thoughts of peace toward every living thing will bring abounding peace to the one who holds them.



Thought and Purpose

Until thought is linked with purpose, there is no intelligent accomplishment. For most people, the boat of thought is allowed to "drift" upon the ocean of life. Aimlessness is a weakness, and such drifting must not continue for anyone who would steer clear of catastrophe and ruin.

Those who have no central purpose in life fall an easy prey to petty worries, fears, troubles, and self-pity, all of which are signs of weakness that lead, just as surely as deliberately planned wrongdoing (though by a different route), to failure, unhappiness, and loss. For weakness cannot persist in a power-evolving universe.

You should conceive a legitimate purpose in your heart, and set out to accomplish it. You should make this purpose the centralizing point of your thoughts. It may take the form of a spiritual ideal, or it may be a worldly aim, depending on your nature at the time; but whichever it is, you should steadily focus the force of your thought on the object you have set before you. You should make this purpose your supreme duty, and devote yourself to its attainment, not allowing your thoughts to wander off into passing whims, wishes, and daydreams.

This is the royal road to self-control and true concentration of thought. Even if you fail again and again to accomplish your purpose (as you necessarily must until weakness is overcome), the strength of character you gain will be the measure of your true success, and it will form a new starting point for future power and triumph.

Those who are not yet ready to grasp a great purpose should fix their thoughts on the flawless performance of their duty, no matter how small the task may seem. Only in this way can the thoughts be gathered and focused, and resolution and energy developed; and once that is done, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished.

The weakest soul, knowing its own weakness, and believing this truth that strength can only be developed by effort and practice, will at once begin to exert itself; and, adding effort to effort, patience to patience, and strength to strength, will never cease to grow, and will at last become divinely strong.

Just as a weak body can be made strong by careful and patient training, so weak thoughts can be made strong by exercising in right thinking.



To put away aimlessness and weakness, and to begin to think with purpose, is to join the ranks of those strong ones who only recognize failure as one of the pathways to attainment; who make all conditions serve them, and who think strongly, attempt fearlessly, and accomplish masterfully.

Having conceived your purpose, you should mentally mark out a straight path to its achievement, looking neither right nor left. Doubts and fears should be rigorously shut out; they are disintegrating forces that break up the straight line of effort, making it crooked, ineffective, and useless. Thoughts of doubt and fear never accomplished anything, and never can. They always lead to failure. Purpose, energy, power to do, and all strong thoughts cease when doubt and fear creep in.

The will to do springs from the knowledge that we can do. Doubt and fear are the great enemies of knowledge, and whoever encourages them, and does not slay them, sabotages themselves at every step.

Whoever has conquered doubt and fear has conquered failure. Their every thought is allied with power, and all difficulties are bravely met and wisely overcome. Their purposes are planted in season, and they bloom and bring forth fruit that does not fall prematurely to the ground.

Thought aligned fearlessly with purpose becomes creative force. Whoever knows this is ready to become something higher and stronger than a mere bundle of wavering thoughts and fluctuating sensations; whoever does this has become the conscious and intelligent wielder of their mental powers.



The Thought-Factor in Achievement

All that you achieve, and all that you fail to achieve, is the direct result of your own thoughts. In a justly ordered universe, where any loss of balance would mean total destruction, individual responsibility must be absolute. Your weakness and strength, your light and darkness, are your own, and no one else's; they are brought about by you, and not by another; and they can only be altered by you, never by another. Your condition is also your own, and no one else's. Your suffering and your happiness are evolved from within. As you think, so you are; as you continue to think, so you remain.

A strong person cannot help a weaker one unless that weaker one is willing to be helped, and even then the weak must become strong of themselves; they must, by their own efforts, develop the strength they admire in another. No one but you can alter your condition.

People have long thought and said, "Many are oppressed because one is an oppressor; let us hate the oppressor." Now, however, a growing few reverse this judgment and say, "One is an oppressor because many are willing to be oppressed; let us despise the oppressed." The truth is that oppressor and oppressed are partners in ignorance, and, while seeming to afflict each other, are in reality afflicting themselves. A perfect Knowledge perceives the working of law in the weakness of the oppressed and the misapplied power of the oppressor; a perfect Love, seeing the suffering that both conditions entail, condemns neither; a perfect Compassion embraces both oppressor and oppressed.

When you have conquered weakness, and put away all selfish thoughts, you belong neither to oppressor nor oppressed. You are free.

You can only rise, conquer your circumstances, and achieve by lifting up your thoughts. You can only remain weak, defeated, and miserable by refusing to lift up your thoughts.

Before you can achieve anything, even in material things, you must lift your thoughts above your base appetites. You need not give up all your lower nature and selfishness in order to succeed; but at least a portion of it must be given up. Someone whose first thought is base indulgence can neither think clearly nor plan methodically; they could



not find and develop their hidden resources, and would fail in any undertaking. Having not yet begun to firmly control their thoughts, they are not in a position to control affairs or to take on serious responsibilities. They are not fit to act independently and stand alone. But they are limited only by the thoughts they choose.

There can be no progress, no achievement, without sacrifice, and your success in the world will be in proportion to how far you give up your confused lower thoughts, and fix your mind on developing your plans and strengthening your resolve and self-reliance. And the higher you lift your thoughts, the more upright and principled you become, the greater your success will be, and the more blessed and enduring your achievements.

The universe does not favor the greedy, the dishonest, or the corrupt, although on the surface it may sometimes appear to; it helps the honest, the generous, and the virtuous. All the great Teachers of the ages have declared this in varying forms, and to prove and know it you have only to persist in making yourself more and more virtuous by lifting up your thoughts.

Intellectual achievements are the result of thought devoted to the search for knowledge, or for what is beautiful and true in life and nature. Such achievements may sometimes be connected with vanity and ambition, but they are not the outcome of those traits; they are the natural outgrowth of long and demanding effort, and of pure and unselfish thoughts.

Spiritual achievements are the fulfillment of divine aspirations. Whoever lives constantly in noble and lofty thoughts, who dwells on all that is good and unselfish, will, as surely as the sun reaches its peak and the moon its full, become wise and noble in character, and rise into a position of influence and blessing.

Achievement, of whatever kind, is the crown of effort, the triumph of thought. By the aid of self-control, determination, integrity, and well-directed thought you ascend; by the aid of over-indulgence, laziness, corruption, and confusion of thought you descend.

You may rise to high success in the world, and even to great heights in the spiritual realm, and yet descend again into weakness and misery by allowing arrogant, selfish, and corrupt thoughts to take possession of you.



Victories won by right thought can only be maintained by watchfulness. Many people let down their guard once success is assured, and rapidly fall back into failure.

All achievements, whether in the business, intellectual, or spiritual world, are the result of definitely directed thought; they are governed by the same law and follow the same method. The only difference lies in the object of attainment.

Whoever would accomplish little must sacrifice little; whoever would achieve much must sacrifice much; whoever would attain greatly must sacrifice greatly.



Visions and Ideals

The dreamers are the saviors of the world. As the visible world is sustained by the invisible, so people, through all their trials and failures and thankless work, are nourished by the beautiful visions of their solitary dreamers.

Humanity cannot forget its dreamers; it cannot let their ideals fade and die; it lives in them; it knows them as the realities it shall one day see and know.

Creator, builder, composer, sculptor, painter, poet, prophet, sage: these are the makers of heaven on earth, the architects of divinity. The world is beautiful because they have lived; without them, struggling humanity would perish.

If you cherish a beautiful vision, a lofty heart-centered ideal, you will one day realize it. Columbus cherished a vision of another world, and he discovered it; Copernicus cherished a vision of many worlds and a wider universe, and he revealed it; Buddha beheld a vision of a spiritual world of flawless beauty and perfect peace, and he entered into it.

Cherish your visions; cherish your ideals; cherish the music that stirs in your heart, the beauty that forms in your mind, the loveliness that clothes your purest thoughts. For out of them will grow all delightful conditions, all heavenly surroundings; and of these, if you remain true to them, your world will at last be built.

To desire truly is to obtain; to aspire nobly is to achieve. Shall your basest desires receive the fullest satisfaction, while your highest aspirations starve for lack of nourishment? Such is not the Law: such a state of things can never be: "Ask and receive."

Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your Vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your Ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.

The greatest achievement was at first, and for a time, only a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the highest vision of the soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities.



Your circumstances may seem unfriendly, but they will not long remain so if you perceive an Ideal and strive to reach it. You cannot travel within and stand still without. Here is a young person hard pressed by low wages and high prices, stuck long hours in a job that grinds them down, unschooled and lacking all refinement. But they dream of better things; they think of knowledge, of skill, of advancement. They conceive, and mentally build up, an ideal condition of life; the vision of a wider freedom and a larger scope takes possession of them; restlessness urges them to action, and they use all their spare time and means, small as they are, to develop their latent powers and resources. Before long, their mind has so changed that the job can no longer hold them. It has become so out of harmony with their mind that it falls out of their life like an old coat cast aside; and as opportunities arise that match their expanding powers, it passes away forever.

Years later we see this young person as a fully grown adult. We find them a master of certain forces of the mind, which they wield with far-reaching influence and uncommon power. In their hands they hold great responsibilities; they speak, and lives are changed; people hang on their words and reshape their characters; and, like the sun, they become the fixed and shining center around which countless lives revolve. They have realized the Vision of their youth. They have become one with their Ideal.

And you too, dear reader, will realize the Vision (not the idle wish) of your heart, whether it is base or beautiful, or a mixture of both; for you will always gravitate toward what you secretly love most. Into your hands will be placed the exact results of your own thoughts; you will receive what you earn, no more, no less. Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your Vision, your Ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire, as great as your dominant aspiration.



Serenity

Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in self-control. Its presence indicates ripened experience, and a more than ordinary knowledge of the laws and workings of thought.

You become calm in the measure that you understand yourself as a being shaped by thought, for such knowledge requires understanding others as the result of thought too. And as you develop this understanding, and see more and more clearly how things connect through cause and effect, you cease to fuss and fume and worry and grieve, and remain poised, steadfast, and serene.

When you have learned to govern yourself, you know how to adapt to others; and others, in turn, respect that inner strength, and feel they can learn from and rely on you. The more calm you become, the greater your success, your influence, your power for good. Even the ordinary business owner will find their prosperity increase as they develop greater self-control and composure, for people will always prefer to deal with someone whose temperament is steady and even.

The strong, calm person is always loved and respected. They are like a shade-giving tree in a thirsty land, or a sheltering rock in a storm. Who does not love a peaceful heart, a sweet-tempered, balanced life? It does not matter whether it rains or shines, or what changes come to those who possess these blessings, for they remain always sweet, serene, and calm. That exquisite poise of character we call serenity is the last lesson of self-cultivation, the fruit of the soul. It is as precious as wisdom, more to be desired than gold, than even the finest gold. How insignificant the mere chasing of money for its own sake looks beside a serene life: a life that dwells in the ocean of Truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of storms, in the Eternal Calm!

How many people we know who sour their own lives, who ruin all that is sweet and beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their peace of mind and poison their relationships! Most people, it seems, ruin their lives and spoil their happiness through lack of self-control. How few people we meet who are well-balanced, who have that exquisite poise which marks the finished character!



Yes, humanity surges with uncontrolled passion, is tumultuous with ungoverned grief, is blown about by anxiety and doubt. Only the wise, only those whose thoughts are controlled and purified, make the winds and storms of the soul obey them. Storm-tossed soul, wherever you may be, under whatever conditions you may live, know this: in the ocean of life the isles of Blessedness are smiling, and the sunny shore of your ideal awaits your coming. Keep your hand firmly upon the helm of thought. In the boat of your soul sleeps the commanding Master, waiting to be awakened. Self-control is strength; Right thought is mastery; Calmness is power. Say to your heart, "Peace, be still!"

