

NAPOLEON
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HILL'S
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GOLDEN
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RULES



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Author of *Think and Grow Rich!*—
OVER 60 MILLION COPIES SOLD!

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FOREWORD



Perhaps you are like millions the world over who have read Napoleon Hill's writings and have profited from them. Whether you are a follower of Hill's teaching or this is your first encounter with his writing, you will benefit from these lessons on human potential.

The sources of the book you have in your hands are magazines Hill published over eighty years ago. Hill's Golden Rule Magazine and Hill's Magazine were published for several years before his first book appeared. Hill's lessons are a series of writings on human potential.

The remote mountains of Wise County, Virginia, where Hill was born in 1883, did not provide a lot of opportunities for a boy being raised in poverty. Hill's mother died when he was ten years old, and his father married again a year later. Napoleon's new stepmother was to be a blessing to the young boy. Martha was a young widow who was educated, the daughter of a doctor; she took a liking to her highly energized stepson, who was often involved in mischievous deeds. The newest member of the Hill household was a source of encouragement that lasted a lifetime. Later in life, Hill credited his stepmother in a manner similar to the way Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, credited his, when he once remarked that "whatever I am or ever aspire to be I owe to that dear woman." By the age of thirteen, with the help of his stepmother, he had traded a pistol for a typewriter. A series of articles would encourage his pursuit of a profession in writing.

After two years of high school, Hill enrolled in a business school, and upon completion sought a job with Rufus Ayres, who had been Attorney General of the State of Virginia, an officer in the Confederacy, and at one time a candidate for the United States Senate. General Ayres was into banking, lumber, and coal mining, and Hill thought of him as the richest man in the mountains. Suddenly attracted to the law profession, however, Hill convinced his brother Vivian to apply with him to Georgetown Law School; Napoleon would work as a writer and pay both of their ways. Both enrolled at Georgetown Law School, and Vivian graduated but Napoleon was detoured, obtaining a job with Bob Taylor's Magazine, which was owned by Robert Taylor, a United States Senator from Tennessee. Hill's assignments were success stories, including a story on the growth of Mobile, Alabama, as a seaport. When he was sent to interview Andrew Carnegie at his 45-room mansion, what was scheduled to be a short interview lasted three days. Carnegie challenged him to interview the successful and develop a philosophy of success, which Hill would then teach to others. Hill's life was changed drastically, and his lifelong adventure was to interview successful people in his study of why some were successful and so many others were not.

Carnegie's introduction put the young Hill in contact with Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, George Eastman, John D. Rockefeller, and other noted people of the time. Hill's study of the success principles took twenty years with over five hundred interviews before he wrote his first book.

Hill lived to be 87 years old and during his lifetime developed the philosophy of success principles that are as relevant today as when he studied and recorded his findings in his books. Hill's first title was actually an eight-volume set called The Law of Success, published in 1928. He began to receive royalties of \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month, such a huge sum that he purchased a Rolls-Royce for a visit up

Guest River in the mountains of Wise County, Virginia, where he had spent his childhood.

Hill wrote a small book called *The Magic Ladder to Success*, and while it appeared to be a condensed version of *The Law of Success*, it added a section called “Forty Unique Ideas” for making money. Among Hill’s ideas were automatic gas filling stations at which motorists could serve themselves either day or night, keyless locks to prevent theft, and fountain drinks made of vegetables served fresh without preservatives. Remember, this was in 1930; the list demonstrates what a visionary Hill was.

Further evidence that Hill was a visionary is found in the fact that so much of the self-help material written today is simply a version of what Hill studied and wrote about over 80 years ago.

Today a number of books have been written about the law of attraction as if it is some newly discovered principle that will ensure success. Hill wrote about this “new” principle in the March 1919 issue of Hill’s *Golden Rule Magazine*, which is included in Lesson #4: *The Law of Retaliation*.

Today there are stacks and stacks of books that reference one or more of Hill’s works, and he is no doubt quoted more than any other motivational writer or speaker who ever lived. These quotes are sometimes used verbatim and at other times with slight changes.

In 1937, Hill wrote his most famous book, *Think and Grow Rich*, which sold out three times the year it was published at \$2.50 a copy in the middle of the Great Depression, and that was without mass advertising that exists today. *Think and Grow Rich* has sold over sixty million copies worldwide and still sells about one million copies per year. Today a best seller is usually classified as a book that sells a hundred thousand copies. All of Hill’s books have sold more than

that, and most exceed a million copies. The more popular books today have what publishers refer to as a shelf life of one to two years (the length of time the book is in demand and remains in stock at major bookstores). Hill's *The Law of Success* has been in continuous publication since 1928, *Think and Grow Rich* since 1937, *Master Key to Riches* since 1945, *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude* since 1960, *Grow Rich with Peace of Mind* since 1967, and *You Can Work Your Own Miracles* since 1971. In other words, Hill's books sell better today than when he first wrote them.

—Don M. Green
Executive Director
The Napoleon Hill Foundation

PREFACE



How to Get the Most from Reading This Book

If you read Napoleon Hill's books, you will find several that include a section from the best seller *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*, which he wrote with W. Clement Stone. This article is called "How to Get the Most from Reading This Book."

In order to tap into the powers that are available to you, you must first be prepared to accept and apply the information.

The principles of success will work for you as they have for others, regardless of education, heredity, or environment. But if you take the belief you are destined to fail and that you cannot do anything to prevent it, you will surely fail. The choice is yours and yours alone.



The R2A2 Formula

The formula will tell you not only what to do but how to do it. If you are ready to use the R2A2 formula, here are two principles that will assure your success:

1. Recognize, Relate, Assimilate, and Apply principles, techniques, and methods from what you see, hear, read, and experience that can help you attain your goals. This is called the R2A2 formula. The R2 stands for Recognize and Relate and A2 for Assimilate and Apply.
2. Direct your thoughts, control your emotions, and ordain your destiny by motivating yourself at will to achieve worthwhile goals.

In using the formula, keep your goals in mind and be ready to accept useful information.

As you read, concentrate on the meanings and words as they relate to your own goals. Read the material as if the author is writing to you.

As you read, underscore sentences or passages you feel are important to you.

Write in the margins when you are inspired with ideas that have potential benefit.

As you read and apply the R2A2 formula, remember that the second part of the formula is the most important point. This part many people hurry over and tend to avoid. These are the same people who make excuses or blame others for their lack of success. Without action the material will not be worth the price you pay for any self-help book.

—The Napoleon Hill Foundation

1

Your Social and Physical Heredity

Your parents made you what you are, physically, but YOU can make yourself what you WILL, mentally.

You and every other human being are the sum total of just two things, heredity and environment.

You inherited certain physical tendencies and qualities from your parents. You inherited other tendencies and qualities from your grandparents, and from their parents.

The size of your body, the color of your hair and eyes, the texture of your skin, and certain other physical qualities of this nature you inherited; consequently, much of your physical makeup is a result of causes beyond your control.

Those qualities which were “wished” upon you, through your physical heredity, are, for the most part, qualities which you cannot change very materially.

However, it is another matter when you come to those qualities which you have developed out of your environment, or through what is called social heredity. You can change these qualities at will. Those which you developed before the age of ten years will, of course, be much harder to modify or change because they are deeply set, and you will find it hard to exercise sufficient willpower to change them.

Every sense impression which reaches your mind, from the moment of your birth, through any of the five senses, constitutes a part of your social heredity. The songs you sing

or hear sung, the poems you read, the books you study, the sermons you listen to, the sights you see, all constitute a part of your social heredity.

Probably the most influential sources from which you absorb the tendencies which constitute your personality are these: first, the teachings which you receive at home, by your parents; secondly, your teachings at church or Sunday school; thirdly, your teachings in public or private schools; fourthly, the daily newspapers and monthly magazines and your other reading.

You believe as you do, regarding every subject, as a result of the sense impressions which have reached your mind. Your belief may be false or correct, according to the soundness or unsoundness, truth or falsity, of those sense impressions.

If, in the process of your schooling, you have been taught how to think accurately; how to overcome prejudices which attach to race, creed, politics, and the like; how to see that nothing but facts impress themselves on your mind; how to keep away all sense impressions which do not arise out of truth, you are very fortunate, because you will be able to extract from your environment that which you can use to best advantage in developing your personality into exactly that which you want it to be.

Physical heredity is something that cannot be altered to any very great extent, but social heredity can be changed, and the new ideas can be made to take the place of the old, the truth to take the place of falsehood.

A small, weak body may be made to house a great mind by properly directing that mind through social heredity. On the other hand, a strong physical body may house a weak, inactive mind through the same cause. The mind is the sum total of all sense impressions which have reached the brain;

therefore, you can see how important it is that these sense impressions arise out of truth, how important it is that they be kept free from prejudice, hatred, and the like.

The mind resembles a fertile field. It will produce a crop according to the nature of the seed that is sown in it, through the sense impressions which reach it.

By controlling four sources, the ideal of a nation or a people can be completely changed, or even supplanted by a new ideal, in one generation. These four sources are: (1) the home teachings, (2) the church teachings, (3) the public school teachings, and (4) the newspapers, magazines, and books.

Through these four sources, any ideal, thought, or idea can be forced upon the child so indelibly that the results would be hard, if not impossible, to erase or change in afterlife.

Summarizing, we believe it worthwhile to repeat, in a few words, the two chief points made, namely:

First—Any ideal or habit which is intended to become a permanent fixture in a human being must be planted in his or her mind in early childhood, through the principle of social heredity. An idea so planted becomes a permanent part of that person and remains with him or her throughout life, excepting in very rare instances, where stronger influences than those which planted the idea tend to counteract or erase it. This principle is called social heredity, because it constitutes the medium through which the dominating qualities of a person are planted and developed out of all those sense impressions which reach the mind out of one's environment, through the five senses, as separate and distinct from those physical qualities which are inherited from the parents.

Second—One of the most important fundamental principles of psychology, through which the human mind functions, is the tendency of the mind to want that which is withheld, prohibited, or hard to acquire. The moment you remove an object out of reach of a person, that moment you set up in that person's mind a desire for that object. The moment you forbid a person to do a thing, that moment that person strongly desires to do the very thing it has been forbidden to do. The human mind resents being forced to do anything. Therefore, to plant an idea in a person's mind in such a way that it will remain there permanently, it must be so presented that the person welcomes it and readily accepts it. All competent salesmen are familiar with this principle, and practice the habit of so presenting the merits of their services, goods, or wares, that the prospective buyer is scarcely aware that the ideas he is forming are not originating in his own mind.

These two principles are worthy of consideration by all who would become leaders in any worthwhile undertaking, because all successful leadership depends upon their use. Whether you are selling goods, practicing medicine or law, preaching sermons, writing books, teaching school, or managing commerce and industry, you will find your ability greatly augmented by studying, understanding, and using these two principles through which the human mind may be reached.

You are the sum total of just two factors, heredity and environment. You can't help how you were born, but you can build up your strong traits and overcome your weak ones. And you CAN change your environment, your thoughts, your purpose, your life aim. It's up to YOU; do you WANT to? Then you CAN.

2

Auto-Suggestion

The term *auto-suggestion* simply means self-suggestion, suggestion which one deliberately makes to oneself.

James Allen, in his excellent little magazine, *As a Man Thinketh*, has given the world a fine lesson in auto-suggestion by having shown that a man may literally make himself over through this process of self-suggestion.

This lesson, like James Allen's magazine, is intended mainly as a means of stimulating men and women to the discovery and perception of the truth that "they themselves are makers of themselves," by virtue of the thoughts which they choose and encourage; that mind is the master weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance; and that as they have hitherto woven in ignorance, pain, and grief, they may now weave in enlightenment and happiness.

This lesson is not a preachment, nor is it a treatise on morality or ethics. It is a scientific treatise through which the student may understand the reason why the first rung in the magic ladder to success was placed there, and how to make the principle back of that rung a part of his or her own working equipment with which to master life's most important economic problems.

This lesson is based upon the following facts:

1. Every movement of the human body is controlled and directed by thought, that is, by orders sent out from the brain, where the mind has its seat of government.

2. The mind is divided into two sections, one being called the conscious section (which directs our bodily activities while we are awake), and the other being called the subconscious section, which controls our bodily activity while we are asleep.
3. The presence of any thought or idea in one's conscious mind (and probably the same is true of thoughts and ideas in the subconscious division of the mind) tends to produce an "associated feeling" and to urge one to appropriate bodily activity in transforming the thought so held into physical reality. For example, one can develop courage and self-confidence by the use of the following, or some similar positive statement, or by holding the thought of this statement in one's mind constantly: "I believe in myself. I am courageous. I can accomplish whatever I undertake." This is called auto-suggestion.

We shall now proceed to give you the *modus operandi* through which the first step in the magic ladder to success can be appropriated and used. To begin with, search diligently until you find the particular work to which you wish to devote your life, taking care to see that you select that which will profit all who are affected by your activities. After you have decided what your life work is to be, write out a clear statement of it and then commit it to memory.

Several times a day, and especially just before going to sleep at night, repeat the words of this written description of your life work, and affirm to yourself that you are attracting to you the necessary forces, people, and material things with which to attain the object of your life work, or your definite aim in life.

Bear in mind that your brain is literally a magnet, and that it will attract to you other people who harmonize, in thought

and in ideals, with those thoughts which dominate your mind and those ideals which are most deeply seated in you.

There is a law, which we may properly call the law of attraction, through the operation of which water seeks its level, and everything throughout the universe of like nature seeks its kind. If it were not for this law, which is as immutable as the law of gravitation which keeps the planets in their proper places, the cells out of which an oak tree grows might scamper away and become mixed with the cells out of which the poplar grows, thereby producing a tree that would be part poplar and part oak. But, such a phenomenon has never been heard of.

Following this law of attraction a little further, we can see how it works out among men and women. We know that successful, prosperous men of affairs seek the companionship of their own kind, while the down-and-outer seeks his kind, and this happens just as naturally as water flows downhill.

Like attracts like, a fact which is indisputable.

Then, if it is true that men are constantly seeking the companionship of those whose ideals and thoughts harmonize with their own, can you not see the importance of so controlling and directing your thoughts and ideals that you will eventually develop exactly the kind of “magnet” in your brain that you wish to serve as an attraction in drawing others to you?

If it is true that the very presence of any thought in your conscious mind has a tendency to arouse you to bodily, muscular activity that will correspond with the nature of the thought, can you not see the advantage of selecting, with care, the thoughts which you allow your mind to dwell upon?

Read these lines carefully, and think over and digest the meaning which they convey, because we are now laying the foundation for a scientific truth which constitutes the very foundation upon which all worthwhile human accomplishment is based. We are beginning, now, to build the roadway over which you will travel out of the wilderness of doubt, discouragement, uncertainty, and failure, and we want you to familiarize yourself with every inch of this road.

No one knows what thought is, but every philosopher and every man of scientific ability who has given any study to the subject is in accord with the statement that thought is a powerful form of energy which directs the activities of the human body, that every idea held in the mind through prolonged, concentrated thought takes on permanent form and continues to affect the bodily activities according to its nature, either consciously or unconsciously.

Auto-suggestion, which is nothing more or less than an idea held in the mind, through thought, is the only known principle through which one may literally make oneself over, after any pattern he or she may choose.



How to Develop Character through Auto-Suggestion

This brings us to an appropriate place at which to explain the method through which your author has literally made himself over during a period of approximately five years.

Before we go into these details, let us remind you of the common tendency of human beings to doubt that which they do not understand, and all that they cannot prove to

their own satisfaction, either by similar experiences of their own or by observation.

Let us also remind you that this is no age for a Doubting Thomas. Your author, while a comparatively young man, has nevertheless seen the birth of some of the world's greatest inventions, the uncovering, as it were, of some of the so-called "hidden secrets" of nature. And he is well within the bounds of accuracy when he reminds you that during the last sixty years, science has lifted the curtains that separated us from the light of truth, and brought into use more tools of culture, development, and progress than had been discovered in all the previous history of the human race.

Within comparatively recent years, we have seen the birth of the incandescent electric light, the typesetting machine, the printing press, the x-ray, the telephone, the automobile, the airplane, the submarine, the wireless telegraphy, and myriad other organized forces which serve mankind and tend to separate him from the animal instincts of the dark ages out of which he has risen.

As these lines are being written, we are informed that Thomas A. Edison is at work on a contrivance which he believes will enable the departed spirits of men to communicate with us here on earth, if such a thing is possible. And if the announcement should come from East Orange, New Jersey, tomorrow morning, that Edison has completed his machine and communicated with the spirits of departed men, this writer, for one, would not scoff at the statement. If we did not accept it as true until we had seen proof, we would at least hold an open mind on the subject, because we have witnessed enough of the "impossible" during the past thirty years to convince us that there is but little that is strictly impossible when the human mind sets