

# THE VICTORIOUS ATTITUDE



O. S. MARDEN

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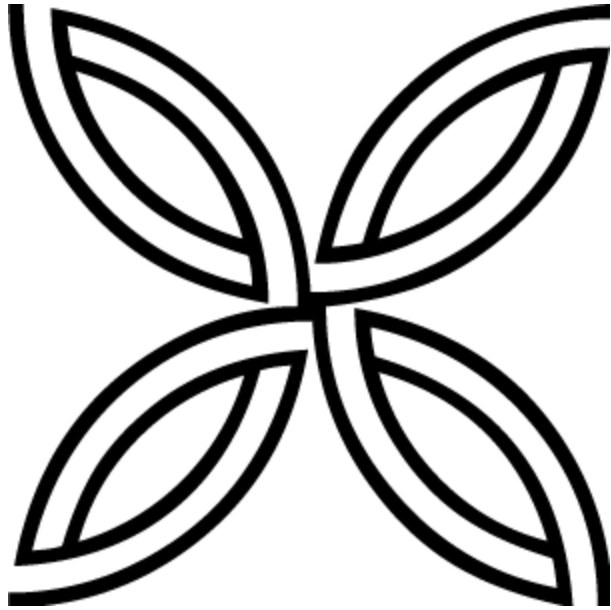
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# **The Victorious Attitude**

**Orison Swett Marden**



# CHAPTER I THE VICTORIOUS ATTITUDE

Go boldly; go serenely, go augustly;  
Who can withstand thee then!  
Browning.

What a grasp the mind would have if we could always hold the victorious attitude toward everything! Sweeping past obstacles and reaching out into the energy of the universe it would gather to itself material for building a life in its own image.

To be a conqueror in appearance, in one's bearing, is the first step toward success. It inspires confidence in others as well as in oneself. Walk, talk and act as though you were a somebody, and you are more likely to become such. Move about among your fellowmen as though you believe you are a man of importance. Let victory speak from your face and express itself in your manner. Carry yourself like one who is conscious he has a splendid mission, a grand aim in life. Radiate a hopeful, expectant, cheerful atmosphere. In other words, be a good advertisement of the winner you are trying to be.

Doubts, fears, despondency, lack of confidence, will not only give you away in the estimation of others and brand you as a weakling, a probable failure, but they will react upon your mentality and destroy your self-confidence, your initiative, your efficiency. They are telltales, proclaiming to every one you meet that you are losing out in the game of life. A triumphant expression inspires trust, makes a favorable impression. A despondent, discouraged expression creates distrust, makes an unfavorable

impression.

If you don't look cheerful and appear and act like a winner nobody will want you. Every man will turn a deaf ear to your plea for work. No matter if you are jobless and have been out of work for a long time you must keep up a winning appearance, a victorious attitude, or you will lose the very thing you are after. The world has little use for whiners, or long-faced failures.

It is difficult to get very far away from people's estimate of us. A bad first impression often creates a prejudice that it is impossible afterwards wholly to remove. Hence the importance of always radiating a cheerful, uplifting atmosphere, an atmosphere that will be a commendation instead of a condemnation. Not that we should deceive by trying to appear what we are not, but we should always keep our best side out, not our second best or our worst. Our personal appearance is our show window where we insert what we have for sale, and we are judged by what we put there.

The victorious idea of life, not its failure side, its disappointed side; the triumphant, not the thwarted-ambition side, is the thing to keep ever uppermost in the mind, for it is this that will lead you to the light. You must give the impression that you are a success, or that you have qualities that will make you successful, that you are making good, or no recommendation or testimonial however strong will counteract the unfavorable impression you make.

So much of our progress in life depends upon our reputation, upon making a favorable impression upon others, that it is of the utmost importance to cultivate mental forcefulness. It is the mind that colors the personality, gives it its tone and character. If we cultivate will power, decision, positive instead of negative thinking, we cannot help making an impression of masterfulness, and everybody knows that this is the qualification that does things. It is masterfulness, force, that achieves results, and

if we do not express it in our appearance people will not have confidence in our achieving ability. They may think that we can sell goods behind a counter, work under orders, carry out some mechanical routine with faithfulness and precision, but they will not think we are fitted for leadership, that we can command resources to meet possible crises or big emergencies.

Never say or do anything which will show the earmarks of a weakling, of a nobody, of a failure. Never permit yourself to assume a poverty-stricken attitude. Never show the world a gloomy, pessimistic face, which is an admission that life has been a disappointment to you instead of a glorious triumph. Never admit by your speech, your appearance, your gait, your manner, that there is anything wrong with you. Hold up your head. Walk erect. Look everybody in the face. No matter how poor you may be, or how shabby your clothes, whether you are jobless, homeless, friendless even, show the world that you respect yourself, that you believe in yourself, and that, no matter how hard the way, you are marching on to victory. Show by your expression that you can think and plan for yourself, that you have a forceful mentality.

The victorious, triumphant attitude will put you in command of resources which a timid, self-depreciating, failure attitude will drive from you.

This was well illustrated by a visitor to the Athenæum Library in Boston. Ignorant of the fact that members only were entitled to its special privileges, this visitor entered the place with a confident bearing, seated herself in a comfortable window seat, and spent a delightful morning reading and writing letters. In the evening she called on a friend and in the course of conversation, referred to her morning at the Athenæum.

"Why, I didn't know you were a member!" exclaimed the friend.

"A member! No," said the lady. "I am not a member. But

what difference does that make?"

The friend, who held an Athenæum card of membership, smiled and replied:

"Only this, that none but members are supposed to enjoy the privileges of which you availed yourself this morning!" Our manner and our appearance are determined by our mental outlook. If we see only failure ahead we will act and look like failures. We have already failed. If we expect success, see it waiting for us a little bit up the road, we will act and look like successes. We have already succeeded. The failure attitude loses; the victorious attitude wins. Had the lady in Boston had any doubt of her right to enter the Athenæum and freely to use all its conveniences, her manner would have betrayed it. The library attendants would have noticed it at once, and have asked her to show her card of membership. But her assured air gave the impression that she was a member. Her victorious attitude dominated the situation, and put her in command of resources which otherwise she could not have controlled. The spirit in which you face your work, in which you grapple with a difficulty, the spirit in which you meet your problem, whether you approach it like a conqueror, with courage, a vigorous resolution, with firmness, or with timidity, doubt, fear, will determine whether your career will be one grand victory or a complete failure.

It is a great thing so to carry yourself wherever you go that when people see you coming they will say to themselves, "Here comes a winner! Here is a man who dominates everything he touches."

Thinking of yourself as habitually lucky will tend to make you so, just as thinking of yourself as habitually unlucky and always talking about your failures and your cruel fate will tend to make you unlucky. The attitude of mind which your thoughts and convictions produce is a real force which builds or tears down. The habit of always seeing yourself as a fortunate individual, the feeling grateful just for being



alive, for being allowed to live on this beautiful earth and to have a chance to make good will put your mind in a creative, producing attitude.

We should all go through life as though we were sent here with a sublime mission to lift, to help, to boost, and not to depress and discourage, and so discredit the plan of the Creator. Our conduct should show that we are on this earth to play a magnificent part in life's drama, to make a splendid contribution to humanity.

The majority of people seem to take it for granted that life is a great gambling game in which the odds are heavily against them. This conviction colors their whole attitude, and is responsible for innumerable failures.

In the betting machines used by horse racing gamblers the bettors make the odds. If, for example, five hundred persons bet on a certain horse, and a hundred bet on another, then the first horse automatically becomes a five to one choice, and the odds in favor of his winning are five to one. In the game of life most of us start out by putting the odds on our failure.

In horse race gambling the judgment that forms the basis of belief as to the winning horse has a comparatively secure foundation in a knowledge of the qualifications of the different racers. In life gambling it is merely the unsupported opinion or viewpoint of the individual that puts the odds against himself. The majority of people look on the probability of their winning out in the life game in any distinctive way as highly improbable. When they look around and see how comparatively few of the multitudes of men and women in the world are winning they say to themselves, "Why should I think that I have a greater percentage of chance in my favor than others about me? These people have as much ability as I have, perhaps more, and if they can do no more than grub along from hand to mouth, of what use is it for me to struggle against fate?" When people believe and figure that they cannot, and



therefore never will, be successes, and conduct themselves according to their conviction: when they take their places in life not as probable winners, but as probable losers, is it any wonder that the odds are heavily against them?

"Mad! Insane! Eccentric!" we say when some miserable recluse dies in squalor and wretchedness,— "Starved," the coroner's inquest finds, although bank books revealing large deposits, or else hoards of gold, are discovered hidden away in nooks and crannies of the wretched miser's quarters.

Are such persons, whom we call mad, insane, eccentric, who stint and save, and hoard in the midst of plenty, refusing even to buy food to keep them alive, any worse than those who face life in a poverty-stricken, failure attitude, refusing to see and enjoy the riches, the glories all around them? Is it any wonder that life is a disappointment to them? Is it any wonder that they see only what they look for, get only what they expect?

What would you think of an actor who was trying to play the part of a great hero, but who insisted on assuming the attitude of a coward, and thinking like one; who wore the expression of a man who did not believe he could do the thing he had undertaken, who felt that he was out of place, that he never was made to play the part he was attempting? Naturally you would say the man never could succeed on the stage, and that if he ever hoped to win success, the first thing he should do would be to try to think himself the character, as well as to look the part, he was trying to portray. That is just what the great actor does. He flings himself with all his might into the rôle he is playing. He sees himself as, and feels that he is actually, the character he is impersonating. He lives the part he is playing on the stage, whether it be that of a beggar or a hero. If he is playing the part of a hero he acts like a hero, thinks and talks like a hero. His very manner radiates heroism. And vice versa, if the part he takes is that of a

beggar, he dresses like one, thinks like one, bows, cringes and whines like a beggar.

Now, if you are trying to be successful you must act like a successful person, carry yourself like one, talk, act and think like a winner. You must radiate victory wherever you go. You must maintain your attitude by believing in the thing you are trying to do. If you persist in looking and acting like a failure or a very mediocre or doubtful success, if you keep telling everybody how unlucky you are, and that you do not believe you will win out because success is only for a few, that the great majority of people must be hewers of wood and drawers of water, you will be about as much of a success as the actor who attempts to personate a certain type of character while looking, thinking and acting exactly like its opposite.

By a psychological law we attract that which corresponds with our mental attitude, with our faith, our hopes, our expectations, or with our doubts and fears. If this were fully understood, and used as a working principle in life, we would have no poverty, no failures, no criminals, no down-and-outs. We would not see people everywhere with expressions which indicate that there is very little enjoyment in living; that it is a serious question with them whether life is really worth while, whether it really pays to struggle on in a miserable world where rewards are so few and uncertain and pains and penalties so numerous and so certain.

Every boy, every girl should be taught to assume the victorious attitude toward life. All through a youth's education the idea should be drilled into him that he is intended to be a winner in life, that he is himself a prince, a god in the making. From his cradle up he should be taught to hold his head high, and to look on himself as a son of the King of kings, destined for great things.

No child is properly reared and educated until he or she knows how to lead a victorious life. This is what true

education means—victory over self, victory over conditions. It always pains me to hear a youth who ought to be full of hope and high promise express a doubt as to his future career. To hear him talk about his possible failure sounds like treason to his Creator. Why, youth itself is victory. Youth is a great prophecy, the forerunner of a superb fulfillment. A young man or a young woman talking about failure is like beauty talking about ugliness; like superb health dwelling upon weakness and disease; like perfection dwelling upon imperfection. Youth means victory, because everything in the life of the healthy boy or girl is looking upward. There is no downgrade in normal youth; it is its nature to climb, to look up. Its very atmosphere should breathe hope, superb promise of the future. If all children were reared with such a triumphant conception of life, with such an unshakable belief in their heritage from God, that nothing could discourage them, we would hear no talk of failure; we would soon sight the millenium. If they were made to understand that there is only one failure to be feared,—failure to make good, the failure of character, the failure to keep growing, to ennoble and enrich one's life,—this world would be a paradise. Just think what would happen if all of the down-and-outs today, all of the people who look upon themselves as failures or as dwarfs of what they ought to be, could only get this victorious, this triumphant, idea of life, if they could only once glimpse their own possibilities and assume the triumphant attitude! They would never again be satisfied to grovel. If they once got a glimpse of their divinity, once saw themselves in the sublime robes of their power, they never again would be satisfied with the rags of their poverty. But instead of trying to improve their condition, to get away from their failure, poverty-stricken atmosphere, they cling the more closely to it and sink deeper and deeper in the quagmire of their own making. Everywhere we find whining, miserable people grumbling at everything,

complaining that "life is not worth living," that "the game is not worth the candle," that "life is a cheat, a losing game." Life is not a losing game. It is always victorious when properly played. It is the players who are at fault. The great trouble with all failures is that they were not started right. It was not drilled into the very texture of their being in youth that what they would get out of life must be created mentally first, and that inside the man, inside the woman, is where the great creative processes of life are carried on. That which man does with his hands is secondary. It is what he does with his brain that counts. That is what starts things going. Some of us never learn how to create with our minds. We depend too much upon creating with our hands, or on other people to help us. We depend too much on the things outside of us when the mainspring of life, the power that moves the world of men and things, is inside of us.

There are times when we cannot see the way ahead, when we seem to be completely enveloped in the fogs of discouragement, disappointment and failure of our plans, but we can always do the thing that means salvation for us, that is persistently, determinedly, everlastingly to face towards our goal whether we can see it or not. This is our only chance of overcoming our difficulties. If we turn about face, turn our back on our goal, we are headed toward disaster.

No matter how many obstacles may block your path, or how dark the way, if you look up, think up, and struggle up, you can't help succeeding. Whatever you do for a living, whatever fortune or misfortune may come to you, hold the victorious attitude and push ahead.

A captain might as well turn about his ship when he strikes a fog bank, because he cannot see the way ahead of him, and still expect to make his distant harbor, as for you to drop your victorious attitude and face the other way just because you have run into a fog bank of disappointment or

failure. The only hope of the captain's reaching his destination is in being true to the compass that guides him in the fog and darkness as well as in the light. He may not see the way, but he can follow his compass. That we also can do by holding the victorious attitude towards life, the only attitude that can insure safety and bring us into port.

# CHAPTER II "ACCORDING TO THY FAITH"

"Where there is Faith there is Love,  
Where there is Love there is Peace,  
Where there is Peace there is God,  
Where there is God there is no need."

There is a divine voice within us which only speaks when every other voice is hushed,—only gives its message in the silence.

"I shall study law," said an ambitious youngster, "and those who are already in the profession must take their chances!" The divine self-confidence of youth, the unshaken faith that believes all things possible, often makes cynics and world-weary people smile. Yet it is the grandest, most helpful attribute of man, the finest gift of the Creator to the race. If we could retain through life the faith of ambitious, self-confident, untried youth, its unquestioning belief in its ability to carve out its ideal in the actual, what wonders we should all accomplish! Such faith would enable us literally to remove mountains.

All through the Scriptures faith is emphasized as a tremendous power. It was by faith that Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the waters of the Red Sea, and through the wilderness. It was by faith that Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel, and all of the great prophets performed their miracles.

Faith was the great characteristic of Christ Himself. The word was constantly on His lips, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." He often referred to it as the measure of what we receive in life, also as the great healer, the great

restorer. Whenever He healed He laid the entire emphasis upon the faith of the healer and the one healed. "Thy faith hath made thee whole," "Believe only and she shall be made whole," "Thy faith hath saved thee." Or He reproved His disciples for the lack of faith which prevented them from healing, as when He addresses them, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you."

Faith believes; doubt fears. Faith creates; doubt destroys. Faith opens the door to all things desirable in life; doubt closes them. Faith is an arouser, an awakener of our creative forces. It opens the door of ability and arouses creative energies. Faith is the link in the Great Within which connects man with his Maker. It is the divine messenger sent to guide men, blinded by doubt and sin. Our faith puts us in touch with Infinite Power, opens the way to unbounded possibilities, limitless resources. No one can rise higher than his faith. No one can do a greater thing than he believes he can. The fact that a person believes implicitly that he can do what may seem impossible to others, shows there is something within him that has gotten a glimpse of power sufficient to accomplish his purpose.

Men who have achieved great things could not account for their faith; they could not tell why they had an unflinching belief that they could do what they undertook. But the mere fact of such belief was evidence that they had had a glimpse of interior resourcefulness, reserve power and possibilities which would warrant that faith; and they have gone ahead with implicit confidence that they would come out all right, because this faith told them so. It told them so because it had been in communication with something that was divine, that which had passed the bounds of the limited and had veered into the limitless.

Men and women who have left their mark on the world have been implicit followers of their faith when they could



see no light; but their unseen guide has led them through the wilderness of doubt and hardship into the promised land.

When we begin to exercise self-faith, self-confidence, we are stimulating and increasing the strength of the faculties which enable us to do the thing we have set our heart on doing. Our faith causes us to concentrate on our object, and thus develops power to accomplish it. Faith tells us that we may proceed safely, even when our mental faculties see no light or encouragement ahead. It is a divine leader which never misdirects us. But we must always be sure that it is faith, and not merely egotism or selfish desire that is urging us. There is a great difference between the two, and no one who is true to himself can possibly be deceived. When we are doing right, when we are on the right track, our faith in the divine order of things never wavers. It sustains in situations which drive the self-centered egoist to despair. The man who does not see the Designer behind the design everywhere, who does not see the mighty Intelligence back of every created thing, cannot have that sublime faith which buoys up the great achievers and civilization-builders.

Our supreme aim should be to get the best from life, the best in the highest sense that life has to give, and this we cannot do without superb faith in the Infinite. What we accomplish will be large or small according to the measure of this faith. It is the man who believes in the one Source of All who believes most in himself; it is the man who sees good in everything, who sees the divine in his fellow-man, who has faith in everybody, who is the master man. The skeptic, the pessimist, has no bulwark of faith, none of the divine enthusiasm that faith gives, none of the zeal that carries the man of faith unscathed through the most terrible trials.

Without confidence in the beneficence of the great universal plan we can not have much confidence in

ourselves. To get the best out of ourselves we must believe that there is a current running heavenward, however much our surroundings may seem to contradict this. We must believe that the Creator will not be foiled in His plan, and that everything will work together for good, however much wars and crime, poverty, suffering and wretchedness all about us may seem to deny this.

The abiding faith in a Power which will bring things out right in the end, which will harmonize discord, has always been strong in men and women who have done great things in the world, especially in those who have achieved grand results in spite of the most severe trials and tribulations. It takes sublime faith to enable a man to fight his way through "insuperable" difficulties, to bear up under discouragements, afflictions and seeming failure without losing heart; and it is just such faith that has characterized every great soul that has ever made good. Whatever other qualities they may have lacked, great characters have always had sublime faith. They have believed in human nature. They have believed in men. They have believed in the beneficent Intelligence running through the universe. Some of the most important reforms in history have been brought about by very fragile, delicate men and women, not only without outside encouragement, but in the teeth of the most determined opposition. They have agitated and agitated, hoped and hoped, and struggled and struggled, until victory came. No one could even attempt the herculean tasks they accomplished without that instinctive, abiding faith in a Power superior to their own,—a Power which would work in harmony with honesty, with earnestness, with integrity of purpose, in a persistent struggle for the right, but which would never sanction wrong.

Think of what the faith of St. Paul enabled him to do for the world! Think of what Christ's little band of chosen disciples succeeded in accomplishing in spite of the might of the

Roman empire pitted against them! The power of the greatest benefactors of the race came largely from the inspiration of faith in their mission, their belief that they were born to deliver a certain message to the world, that they were to make an important contribution to civilization. Think of what the faith of the inventor has done! It has kept him at his task, kept him nerved and encouraged in the face of starvation, kept him at his work when his family had gone back on him, when his neighbors had denounced him, and called him insane. Think of what the faith of Columbus, of Luther, of the Wesleys, has accomplished for mankind! It has ever been men with indomitable faith that have moved the world. They have been the great pioneers of progress. An instinctive faith in the Divine Force which permeates the universe, which is friendly to the right and antagonistic to the wrong, has ever been the unseen helper that supported, encouraged, and stimulated men and women to accomplish the "impossible," or that which to lower natures seems beyond human capacity. It is this which sustains brave souls in adversity and enables them to bear up, to believe and hope and struggle on when everything seems to go against them. It is the same principle which supported the martyr at the stake and enabled him to smile when the flames were licking the flesh from his bones. Faith has ever been the greatest power in civilization. It has built our railroads, has revealed the secrets of nature to science, has led the way to all our inventions and discoveries, and has brought success out of the most inhospitable conditions and iron environments. In fact, we owe everything that has been accomplished to faith, and yet when we come to its practical application in our everyday affairs how few of us avail ourselves of this tremendous force! The vast majority are looking for some power outside to help, when we ourselves hold the key which has ever unlocked, and ever will unlock, all barred doors to aspiring souls.

If people could only realize what a potent building, creative force faith is, and would exercise it in their daily lives, we should have very few paupers, very few failures, very few sickly, diseased or criminal among us. If, by some magic, a strong, vigorous faith could be injected into the men and women of the great failure army to-day, the larger part of them would get out of this army and get into the army of the successful.

It is not alone in our life work, or in great or special undertakings that faith is necessary. We need it every moment of our lives, in everything, great and small, that concerns us. It is just as necessary to your health as it is to your success. To build up the faith habit, faith in human nature, the habit of believing in yourself, in your ability, of believing that you are sane, sound, and level headed, that you have good judgment and good horse sense, that you are victory organized and that you are going to attain your ambition, is to blaze a path to success.

A man begins to deteriorate, to go toward failure, not when he loses all of his material possessions, not when he fails in his undertakings, but when he loses faith in himself, in his ability to make his dreams come true.

When we remember that self-faith characterizes successful people, and lack of it the mediocres and the failures, one would think that everybody would cultivate this divine quality which by itself alone has done so much for the individual and for the world.

The reason why faith works such marvels is that it is the leader of all the other mental faculties. They will not proceed until faith goes ahead. It is the basis of courage, of initiative, of enthusiasm. Much of Napoleon's power and early success came from his tremendous faith in his mission, the conviction that he was a man of destiny, that he was born under a lucky star, born to conquer. Shorn of his mighty belief in his star, stripped of the faith that he was born to rule, he would have been no more of a power

in human affairs than the dullest private in the ranks of his army. When warned by his generals not to expose himself to the enemy, he would reply that the bullet or the cannon had not been cast which could kill Napoleon. This invincible belief in his destiny added wonderfully to his natural powers.

It was her conviction that she was chosen of God to free France from its enemies that made Joan of Arc, the simple, ignorant peasant girl of Domrèmy, the saviour of her country. Her mighty faith in her divine mission gave her a dignity and a miraculous force of character, a positive genius, that made all the commanders of the French army obey her as private soldiers obey their superior officers. Faith in herself and in her mission transformed the peasant maiden into the greatest military leader of her time.

There is no doubt that every human being comes to this earth with a mission. We are not accidental puppets thrown off to be buffeted by luck or chance or cruel fate. We are a part of the great universal plan. We were made to fit into this plan, to play a definite part in it. We come here with a message for humanity which no one else but ourselves can deliver, and faith in our mission, the belief that we are important factors in the great creative plan, that we are, in fact, co-creators with God, will add wonderfully to the dignity and effectiveness of our lives, will enable us to perform the "impossible."

If every child were brought up in the firm belief that he was made for health, happiness, and success; if it were impressed on him that he should never entertain a doubt of his power to attain them, as a man he would be infinitely stronger in his powers of self-assertion and in his self-confidence; and these qualities strengthen the ability, unify the faculties, clarify the vision, and make the attainment of what the heart yearns for a hundred per cent. more probable than if he had not been thus reared.

A child's faith is instinctive, and if not tampered with,

destroyed by wrong training, would continue through life. We see this sort of instinctive faith illustrated by the lower animals. Take the birds, or the domestic hen, for example. See how patiently she sits on the eggs week after week until the chickens are hatched. She cannot see the chickens when she begins to sit, but her belief that they will come if she does her part induces her to give up her liberty for weeks, and to go sometimes for days without food, that she may keep the eggs at the right temperature in order to produce the chickens.

The trouble with most of us is that we do not have sufficient faith in the creative power of the vigorous determination to do a thing, in the persistent endeavor backed by self—faith to accomplish what we desire. We give up too easily under discouragement. We haven't sufficient stamina and grit to push on under disheartening conditions. We want to see clear through from the beginning to the end of whatever we undertake. We refuse to have faith. Yet much of the time throughout life we may have to work without any goal in sight, or at least without any clear light to see it, but if the mental attitude is right we know that, somehow, we shall attain our heart's desire. We have merely been shown a program which we are capable of carrying out, a table of contents of our capabilities, the signs of the corresponding realities, for faith is not an idle dream, an illusive picture of the imagination. We have not been mocked by ideals and aspirations, soul-yearnings and heart-longings for the things which have no possible realities. Faith is not a cheat. There is ability to match the faith.

There is something about devotion to one's inward vision, the intense desire and concentrated effort to fulfill what we believe to be our mission here, that has a solidifying influence upon the character, gives poise and peace of mind and also helps us to realize our vision.

The probabilities are that the iceberg which sent the *Titanic* , with sixteen hundred souls, to the bottom of the