



*The New As A Man Thinketh  
Study and Act Program*

**Workbook**

## **Important**

**P**rior to beginning our first session please read Chapter 1 of *As A Man Thinketh*. Even though you may have read it before, please re-read it again. The complete text of the book is located at the end of the workbook. Please print out the workbook and the text of the book for use in our sessions.

## **Purpose**

**T**he questions and exercises in this workbook are meant to be contemplated when you have some time alone. Ponder them, reflect on them and the thoughts they produce, and journal your thoughts and feelings in the places provided. These exercises will help you integrate the content of *As A Man Thinketh* and the ideas generated during our group sessions into your own life.

Space is also provided so that you can take notes during each of the tele-class sessions if you would like. More importantly than taking notes, however, try to become an active participant in each session so that all participants can learn from each other, as these sessions are most beneficial when you interact with others who are also learning from *As A Man Thinketh*.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

The date you first began this program: \_\_\_\_\_

The date you first read *As A Man Thinketh*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\* This may seem trivial, but *As A Man Thinketh* is not the kind of book you will read only once in your life. It is the kind of book you can read time and time again and still continue to gain some new insight from it every time you read it. And you probably will do just exactly that. Some day it may interest you to go back and realize when this book first came into your life and began to make a difference for you personally.

**I** am reading and studying *As A Man Thinketh* because I want to make some changes in my life. These are the changes I want to see in my life:

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(Note: Be sure to list at least three changes you want to make in your life beginning today. Please be as specific and detailed as possible. Use the back of this page, if necessary.)





## Session 1 Follow-up Exercises

Through these exercises, you will come to a greater understanding of your own character, how your thoughts have led to the development of your character, and how you can change your thoughts to further develop your character to become the person you want to be.

Answer the next five questions quickly without taking time to analyze your answers. Write down the first things that come to your mind.

1. Do you look at the glass as half full or half empty? \_\_\_\_\_

2. List three positive things that happened to you today.

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3. List three negative things that happened to you today.

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4. Of the six things you listed in answer to questions number 2 and 3, which was the most important? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Of these six, which single item did you spend the most time thinking about or dwelling on today? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Considering this in a new light, would you still answer question one the same? Why or why not? How does what you think most about influence who you are as a person? How does it influence your character? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How would you describe your present character—the person you are today?

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8. How do you think this correlates with the way other people perceive your character?

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Each person will have his or her own perception of your character based on your specific interactions with them and their own preconceived ideas about you or your relationship. For example, your drinking buddies no doubt have a different perception of your character than your minister, your mother perceives your character differently than your employees would view you, and so on.

Looking at the way you described your character in question number 7, consider how these specific people in your life would agree or disagree with your description. What would *they* say if asked to describe your character?

Your spouse or significant other:

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Your parents:

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Your siblings:

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Your children, if applicable:

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Your best friend:

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Acquaintances from your church:

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People you know well from church:

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Your pastor:

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Your boss or your employees (or both, if applicable):

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The waitress who served you the last time you went out to dinner:

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The checkout person at the counter the last time you shopped:

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Your professional colleagues (peers):

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Your next door/closest neighbor (do you even know his/her name?):

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Your children's teachers or daycare providers (if applicable):

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Your in-laws (if applicable):

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Your ex-spouse or ex-significant other (if applicable):

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A potential new client or employer:

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Your teachers or professors (if applicable):

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9. Chances are, if you truly pondered the perception these people have of your character and tried to mesh that with your own view of yourself or how you want people to perceive you, you didn't quite find a perfect match. In what ways would you like to change or develop your character?

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10. What kinds of thoughts do you need to focus on in order to develop your true character to be more like the person you desire to be? What kinds of books can you read or what kinds of tapes can you listen to in order to enhance your right thinking process? What kinds of things, people, or situations should you probably *avoid* to enhance your thinking and develop your desired character?

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11. What kinds of thoughts and thinking have influenced your character to this point? Where did those thoughts originate? Were they things someone else told you or things you read? How did you come to think about yourself and your character the way you do? Can you identify any specific thoughts or thought patterns that have contributed to the person you are today?

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Take a closer look at some of the characteristics or traits we typically identify with a person’s character. While this is not an all-inclusive list and each person has their own perception of which characteristics are most desirable, this should provide a good starting point for you to examine your own character today and the person you want to become.

Write an “M” next to those characteristics you want to develop “More” of in your life, an “L” to indicate you want “Less” of a particular characteristic and want to reduce or eliminate that trait from your character, or an “N” for “Neutral,” meaning you don’t feel this characteristic applies to you or you feel neutral about it, desiring no specific development on this trait in yourself either way.

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|--------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| A risk taker | _____ | A show off           | _____ |
| Aggressive   | _____ | Ambitious            | _____ |
| Analytical   | _____ | Assertive            | _____ |
| Attractive   | _____ | Boring               | _____ |
| Brilliant    | _____ | Calculating          | _____ |
| Careless     | _____ | Challenging          | _____ |
| Charitable   | _____ | Cheap                | _____ |
| Cold-hearted | _____ | Committed            | _____ |
| Conceited    | _____ | Concerned for others | _____ |

|              |       |               |       |
|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Considerate  | _____ | Content       | _____ |
| Creative     | _____ | Critical      | _____ |
| Deceitful    | _____ | Decent        | _____ |
| Dedicated    | _____ | Driven        | _____ |
| Dumb         | _____ | Effective     | _____ |
| Efficient    | _____ | Ethical       | _____ |
| Fair         | _____ | Faithful      | _____ |
| Focused      | _____ | Generous      | _____ |
| Giving       | _____ | Gluttonous    | _____ |
| Good         | _____ | Good looking  | _____ |
| Greedy       | _____ | Hard Working  | _____ |
| Hasty        | _____ | Helpful       | _____ |
| Honest       | _____ | Industrious   | _____ |
| Informed     | _____ | Innovative    | _____ |
| Intelligent  | _____ | Inventive     | _____ |
| Irrational   | _____ | Judgmental    | _____ |
| Kind         | _____ | Knowledgeable | _____ |
| Lazy         | _____ | Loving        | _____ |
| Manipulative | _____ | Merciful      | _____ |
| Naïve        | _____ | Negative      | _____ |
| Obnoxious    | _____ | Open-minded   | _____ |
| Opinionated  | _____ | Optimistic    | _____ |
| Overbearing  | _____ | Passive       | _____ |
| Peaceful     | _____ | Pessimistic   | _____ |
| Positive     | _____ | Powerful      | _____ |
| Proactive    | _____ | Professional  | _____ |
| Rational     | _____ | Reactive      | _____ |
| Reliable     | _____ | Rude          | _____ |
| Savvy        | _____ | Self-centered | _____ |
| Sensible     | _____ | Smart         | _____ |
| Sociable     | _____ | Strong        | _____ |
| Stupid       | _____ | Sweet         | _____ |
| Thoughtful   | _____ | Thoughtless   | _____ |
| Trusting     | _____ | Ugly          | _____ |
| Uninformed   | _____ | Warm          | _____ |
| Weak         | _____ | Wise          | _____ |
| Witty        | _____ | Worldy        | _____ |

If you took some time to truly ponder each of the different character traits listed above and really evaluated how each trait relates to your own character, you probably found yourself thinking about some things you haven't thought about in a long time.

Perhaps someone's words popped into your mind...the seed of an idea that was planted long ago. Maybe you realized how far off the mark you are on a particular characteristic—far from the ideal of who you want to be. You may have recognized—especially in light of the fact that we just examined how different people perceive our character differently—that you need to work on developing a particular characteristic with just certain people in your life. For instance, maybe you are very generous with your family, but when it comes to raise time, your employees have to beg for every nickel. Perhaps you are a hard worker and very focused on your career, but you seldom help your significant other or give him or her your undivided attention when you're out together. Maybe you are really informed at work but you don't know much about what's going on with your kids.

As you evaluate the traits you want to be an integral part of your character and the traits you want to eliminate, try to identify what subconscious thoughts cause you to act the way you do in certain circumstances. To effectively change some part of your character, you will need to change the thoughts you hold in your mind. Remember, you must reject the old way of thinking and replace it with a new thought, and you must do this on a regular, continual basis to see its effect. If you have been thinking one way for years, you will need some practice thinking about something in a new way before it will truly impact your life and become a part of your character.

For example, let's suppose you identified greed and generosity as two traits you'd like to work on. Specifically, you want to be less greedy and more generous. If you think back on your actions, you see a pattern. Whenever someone asks you for a donation, you feel a little sense of panic in your stomach. You've never really thought about it before, but now that you analyze it, you realize that it stems from a fear that if you give a donation, then you may be short money when you really need it. You live in a state of uneasiness about what tomorrow may bring and how you will handle it. You don't want to give things away, because you are afraid you might need them someday.

Where does that come from? Was your family poor when you were a child? When you asked for something, were you told there wasn't enough money? Did you or your family ever go through bankruptcy or have bill collectors calling for payments? Do you have inadequate savings to see you through should an actual emergency occur?

The thoughts in your mind are the product of many years of thinking this way. To change those thoughts now, you need to get to the root of why you think the way you do. If, like in this instance, you find that this fear stems from having to do without as a child, but you now make more than enough money to finance your lifestyle, you need to replace that old fear thought with the truth as it is now. You need to tell yourself that you do have enough, you are not lacking for anything,







## Session 2 Follow-up Exercises

These exercises will help you examine more closely the relationship between your thoughts and your life circumstances—past, present, and future.

1. Describe your current life circumstances. You may wish to include marital or family status, education, finances, lifestyle, career, personal, business, emotional, spiritual, or any other relevant factors that accurately describe what your life is like today.

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2. Think back to the day you graduated high school or thereabouts. You were probably about 18 years old. Back then, what did you imagine your life would be like at the age you are today?

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3. How is your life different than the way you imagined it?

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4. Why do you suppose your life is different from the way you imagined it in some ways and similar to what you imagined in other ways? What influenced the reality? Did you get “off track?” And if so, how?

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5. Look back at the reasons you said your life got off track. Are you “blaming” anyone or anything else for your current circumstances? Playing the “blame game” doesn’t accomplish anything, and it’s really not very accurate in light of our realization that *our* thoughts determine our circumstances, is it?

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6. If you’ve been blaming someone else for any difficulties, take a moment to rectify that situation here. Reframe those thoughts and write down the reality—that another person or situation is not really responsible for your current circumstances. Rather, you exercised your own free will and your thoughts, and that has resulted in where you are today.

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7. Just as our past thoughts brought us to where we are today, so too can our thoughts now and in the future take us to where we want to be. What circumstances in your life would you like to change over the next 5 or 10 years? Write down the description of your life circumstances as you would like to see them at the end of that 5 or 10 year timeframe (specify which you used).

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8. What changes do you need to make in your life to change your circumstances from the way they are today to the way you want them to be in 5 or 10 years?

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9. How will you change *your thought processes* to bring those changes to fruition?

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10. List three significant difficulties you've experienced in your life. These may be setbacks, challenges, or even things you considered "disastrous" at the time.

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11. Looking back on each of these difficulties, what do you suppose the spiritual lesson you needed to learn was in each case?

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12. How would your life be different today if you had not experienced those difficulties? Would you be a better person? Why or why not?

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13. List three positive influences you've had in your life. (This could be a book you've read, someone who set a good example, a mentor, whatever comes to mind.)

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14. Now list three negative influences you've had in your life.

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15. What negative influences are still or currently present in your life?

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16. How do these negative influences impact your current life circumstances?

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17. What are you planning to do to change or eliminate those negative influences and thus, their influence on your life circumstances?

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18. Do you harbor any secrets? Any whatsoever? It's time to purge your personal demons so that these secrets relinquish the hold they have on you and your life. Even if you think they aren't doing any harm, they are. Get them out in the open. Even if you're not ready to share them with the world, journal them here for your own healing. Pull them out of the darkness and look at them in the light of day. They're less scary that way. Take away their "power" over your mind.

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### Session 3 Follow-up Exercises

These exercises will help you examine more closely the relationship between your thoughts and your physical health. You will also examine the correlation between your thoughts and your life purpose and your actual achievements.

1. Describe your health today.

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2. Check all those conditions or symptoms that currently apply to you or that you have experienced at least once in the last two weeks:

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| Allergies          | _____ | Arthritis           | _____ |
| Asthma             | _____ | Back pain           | _____ |
| Burnout            | _____ | Carpal tunnel       | _____ |
| Cancer             | _____ | Chronic pain        | _____ |
| Constipation       | _____ | Depression          | _____ |
| Diabetes           | _____ | Diarrhea            | _____ |
| Dizziness          | _____ | Eating disorder     | _____ |
| Fatigue            | _____ | Frequent headaches  | _____ |
| Heart disease      | _____ | High blood pressure | _____ |
| Indigestion        | _____ | Insomnia            | _____ |
| Irritable bowel    | _____ | Light headedness    | _____ |
| Lupus              | _____ | Migraine            | _____ |
| Multiple sclerosis | _____ | Nervousness         | _____ |
| Overweight         | _____ | Sexual dysfunction  | _____ |
| Suicidal thoughts  | _____ | Ulcer               | _____ |
| Underweight        | _____ | Upset stomach/aches | _____ |

3. As honestly as you can, evaluate how your current and past thoughts have influenced your health problems and concerns.

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4. What mental changes, or changes in your thinking process, can you make to enhance your physical health?

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5. Let's focus on insomnia for a bit. Almost everyone has had at least a few restless or sleepless nights. Why do you have difficulty sleeping?

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6. If you answered, like most people, "because I couldn't shut off my mind" or "because I kept thinking about such and such" or "because I was worried about something," you're not alone. Most insomnia is the direct result of lying in bed knowing we should be sleeping, but our *mind* won't let us. Insomnia is a direct result of our thought process. Your thoughts have taken control over your body and you cannot relax enough to fall asleep. What are some things you could change about your before bed routine that would make your mind and your thoughts more conducive to relaxing and sleeping?

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7. Do you have a life purpose? Write about it here.

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8. Is your life purpose clearly defined, perhaps configured as a vision or mission statement? If so, please write it out here for future reference.

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9. If you do not have a life purpose, ask yourself what things are most important to you, what kinds of things you most enjoy doing, what kinds of relationships and people you are drawn to, what you would love to do for a living if money were no problem, and what you would do for free given the opportunity. Take a few moments to write the answers to those questions here and to add anything else that is important to you or particularly relevant in your life.

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## Session 4 Follow-up Exercises

These exercises will help you examine more closely your thoughts, visions, and ideals and your progress toward the ultimate goal: your serenity.

1. In the past, has anyone ever discouraged your dreams? Perhaps they told you to “get a real job” or “go to college” or “put those ideas in the back of your head and get practical.” Write about those circumstances and how they made you feel at the time.

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2. How does this make you feel now—at this point in your life?

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3. Can you think of any dreams you had in the past? Did they come true? Why or why not? Journal about that here.

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4. What do you really and truly love to do? What kind of people do you like to spend time with? Describe your passions in every possible way you can think of.

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5. Are you living your life in a way that truly honors those things, experiences, people, interests, and passions you love? If so, how? If not, why not?

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6. When is the last time you lost your temper or lost control? Write about it here. Explain why you lost it, who you lost it with, the circumstances surrounding the situation, any particular stress you were under at the time, how the situation was resolved or still remains outstanding, etc.

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7. How did you feel when you lost control?

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8. How did the people you lost control with react at the time?

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9. How might you have reacted in their place?

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10. How can you exercise self-control in your life? Do you need to make some significant changes to regain self-control? How can you change your thoughts about yourself and situations that are your “hot buttons” to prevent the loss of control in the future?

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11. Write about someone (a friend, mentor, relative, famous personality, whoever) or something (a book, a tape, a movie, a life-changing experience, etc.) that had a significant and positive influence on your life. In what way did this *change* your life? *How* did it change your life?

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12. How can you “pay it forward” to someone else?

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13. Think of someone in particular you admire. Describe that person’s characteristics, their influence on your life, why you are drawn to them, what you most admire about them, and anything else relevant to your relationship with that person here.

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14. Take some time now to journal your dreams for the most important areas of your life. If you don’t have any immediate or specific dreams that come to mind,

journal your thoughts about what you might like to occur or even why you are having difficulty establishing dreams for yourself. Write in freeflow and fill up all the space provided. The more specific you can be, the better.

**Your Dreams for Your Career/Professional Life**

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**Your Dreams for Your Relationships/Family**

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**Your Dreams for Your Financial Well-Being/Success**

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16. What do you need to do to achieve serenity in your life?

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## Congratulations

You've taken a mighty giant step toward becoming the person you want to be. I know you've grown through this process. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "The human mind, once stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original dimension."

I also know that you're feeling the same excitement that I did when I really realized what James Allen's principles were all about. My life has never been the same, and neither will yours!

Always remember it's a journey. Some days are two steps forward, one step back (heck, some days are one step forward, two steps back!). But as long as you remember and apply your knowledge that "good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results; bad thoughts and actions can never produce good results," you will always be facing (and headed) in the right direction.

Your progress is important to me and I hope you'll keep me posted and also let me know whenever I can be of help.

I'm proud of you!

Peace, prosperity and blessings always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vic Johnson', with a large, stylized flourish that loops back to the left.

Vic Johnson

[Vic@AsAManThinketh.net](mailto:Vic@AsAManThinketh.net)



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### **Thought And Character**

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5       The aphorism, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," not only embraces the  
6 whole of a man's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and  
7 circumstance of his life. A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the  
8 complete sum of all his thoughts.

9       As the plant springs from, and could not be without, the seed, so every act of man  
10 springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them.  
11 This applies equally to those acts called "spontaneous" and "unpremeditated" as to those  
12 which are deliberately executed.

13       Act is the blossom of thought, and joy and suffering are its fruit; thus does a man  
14 garner in the sweet and bitter fruitage of his own husbandry.

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Thought in the mind hath made us.

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What we are by thought was wrought and built.

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If a man's mind hath evil thought,

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pain comes on him as comes the wheel the ox behind.

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If one endure in purity of thought,

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Joy follows him as his own shadow - sure.

1       Man is a growth by law, and not a creation by artifice, and cause and effect are as  
2 absolute and undeviating in the hidden realm of thought as in the world of visible and  
3 material things. A noble and God-like character is not a thing of favor or chance, but is  
4 the natural result of continued effort in right thinking, the effect of long-cherished  
5 association with God-like thoughts. An ignoble and bestial character, by the same  
6 process, is the result of the continued harboring of groveling thoughts.

7       Man is made or unmade by himself. In the armory of thought he forges the weapons  
8 by which he destroys himself. He also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself  
9 heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application  
10 of thought, man ascends to the divine perfection. By the abuse and wrong application of  
11 thought he descends below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes are all the  
12 grades of character, and man is their maker and master.

13       Of all the beautiful truths pertaining to the soul which have been restored and  
14 brought to light in this age, none is more gladdening or fruitful of divine promise and  
15 confidence than this--that man is the master of thought, the molder of character, and the  
16 maker and shaper of condition, environment, and destiny.

17       As a being of power, intelligence, and love, and the lord of his own thoughts, man  
18 holds the key to every situation, and contains within himself that transforming and  
19 regenerative agency by which he may make himself what he wills.

20       Man is always the master, even in his weakest and most abandoned state. But in his  
21 weakness and degradation he is foolish master who misgoverns his "household." When  
22 he begins to reflect upon his condition and search diligently for the law upon which his  
23 being is established, he then becomes the wise master, directing his energies with

1 intelligence and fashioning his thoughts to fruitful issues. Such is the conscious master,  
2 and man can only thus become by discovering within himself the laws of thought. This  
3 discovery is totally a matter of application, self-analysis and experience.

4       Only by much searching and mining are gold and diamonds obtained, and man can  
5 find every truth connected with his being, if he will dig deep into the mine of his soul.  
6 That he is the maker of his character, the molder of his life, and the builder of his destiny,  
7 he may unerringly prove, if he will watch, control, and alter his thoughts, tracing their  
8 effects upon himself, upon others and upon his life and circumstances, linking cause and  
9 effect by patient practice and investigation. And utilizing his every experience, even the  
10 most trivial, everyday occurrence, as a means of obtaining that knowledge of himself  
11 which is understanding, wisdom, power. In this direction, as in no other, is the law  
12 absolute that "He that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." For  
13 only by patience, practice, and ceaseless importunity can a man enter the door of the  
14 temple of knowledge.

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## II

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### Effect Of Thought On Circumstances

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A man's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated 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.

8

Just as a gardener cultivates his plot, keeping it free from weeds, and growing the flowers and fruits which he requires so may a man tend the garden of his 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, a man sooner or later discovers that he is the master-gardener of his soul, the director of his life. He also reveals, within himself, the flaws of thought, and understands, with ever-increasing accuracy, how the thought-forces and mind elements operate in the shaping of character, circumstances, and destiny.

16

Thought and character are one, and as character can only manifest and discover itself through environment and circumstance, the outer conditions of a person's life will always be found to be harmoniously related to his inner state. This does not mean that a man's circumstances at any given time are an indication of his entire character, but that those circumstances are so intimately connected with some vital thought-element within himself that, for the time being, they are indispensable to his development.

22

Every man is where he is by the law of his being; the thoughts which he has built into his character have brought him there, and in the arrangement of his life there is no

23

1 element of chance, but all is the result of a law which cannot err. This is just as true of  
2 those who feel "out of harmony" with their surroundings as of those who are contented  
3 with them.

4 As a progressive and evolving being, man is where he is that he may learn that he  
5 may grow; and as he learns the spiritual lesson which any circumstance contains for him,  
6 it passes away and gives place to other circumstances.

7 Man is buffeted by circumstances so long as he believes himself to be the creature of  
8 outside conditions, but when he realizes that he is a creative power, and that he may  
9 command the hidden soil and seeds of his being out of which circumstances grow; he  
10 then becomes the rightful master of himself.

11 That circumstances grow out of thought every man knows who has for any length of  
12 time practiced self-control and self-purification, for he will have noticed that the  
13 alteration in his circumstances has been in exact ratio with his altered mental condition.  
14 So true is this that when a man earnestly applies himself to remedy the defects in his  
15 character, and makes swift and marked progress, he passes rapidly through a succession  
16 of vicissitudes.

17 The soul attracts that which it secretly harbors, that which it loves, and also that  
18 which it fears. It reaches the height of its cherished aspirations; it falls to the level of its  
19 unchastened desires, and circumstances are the means by which the soul receives it own.

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

1       The outer world of circumstances shapes itself to the inner world of thought, and  
2 both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions are factors which make for the ultimate  
3 good of the individual. As the reaper of his own harvest, man learns both of suffering and  
4 bliss.

5       Following the inmost desires, aspirations, thoughts, by which he allows himself to be  
6 dominated (pursuing the will-o'-the wisps of impure imaginings or steadfastly walking  
7 the highway of strong and high endeavor), a man at last arrives at their fruition and  
8 fulfillment in the outer conditions of his life.

9       The laws of growth and adjustment everywhere obtain. A man does not come to  
10 the alms-house or the jail by the tyranny of fate or circumstance, but by the pathway of  
11 groveling thoughts and base desires. Nor does a pure-minded man fall suddenly into  
12 crime by stress of any mere external force. The criminal thought had long been secretly  
13 fostered in the heart, and the hour of opportunity revealed its gathered power.  
14 Circumstance does not make the man; it reveals him to himself. No such conditions can  
15 exist as descending into vice and its attendant sufferings apart from vicious inclinations,  
16 or ascending into virtue and its pure happiness without the continued cultivation of  
17 virtuous aspirations; and man, therefore, as the lord and master of thought, is the maker  
18 of himself and the shaper of and author of environment. Even at birth the soul comes of  
19 its own and through every step of its earthly pilgrimage it attracts those combinations of  
20 conditions which reveal itself, which are the reflections of its own purity and impurity, its  
21 strength and weakness.

22       Men do not attract that which they want, but that which they are. Their whims,  
23 fancies, and ambitions are thwarted at every step, but their inmost thoughts and desires

1 are fed with their own food, be it foul or clean. Man is manacled only by himself; thought  
2 and action are the jailors of Fate--they imprison, being base; they are also the angels of  
3 Freedom--they liberate, being noble.

4 Not what he wished and prays for does a man get, but what he justly earns. His  
5 wishes and prayers are only gratified and answered when they harmonize with his  
6 thoughts and actions.

7 In the light of this truth what, then, is the meaning of "fighting against  
8 circumstances?" It means that a man is continually revolting against an effect without,  
9 while all the time he is nourishing and preserving its cause in his heart.

10 That cause may take the form of a conscious vice or an unconscious weakness; but  
11 whatever it is, it stubbornly retards the efforts of its possessor, and thus calls aloud for  
12 remedy.

13 Men are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve  
14 themselves; they therefore remain bound. The man who does not shrink from self-  
15 crucifixion can never fail to accomplish the object upon which his heart is set. This is as  
16 true of earthly as of heavenly things. Even the man whose sole object is to acquire wealth  
17 must be prepared to make great personal sacrifices before he can accomplish his object;  
18 and how much more so he who would realize a strong and well-poised life?

19 Here is a man who is wretchedly poor. He is extremely anxious that his  
20 surroundings and home comforts should improve, yet all the time he shirks his work, and  
21 considers he is justified in trying to deceive his employer on the ground of the  
22 insufficiency of his wages. Such a man does not understand the simplest rudiments of  
23 those principles which are the basis of true prosperity, and is not only totally unfitted to

1 rise out of his wretchedness, but is actually attracting to himself a still deeper  
2 wretchedness by dwelling in, and acting out, indolent, deceptive, and unmanly thoughts.

3 Here is a rich man who is the victim of a painful and persistent disease as the result  
4 of gluttony. He is willing to give large sums of money to get rid of it, but he will not  
5 sacrifice his gluttonous desires. He wants to gratify his taste for rich and unnatural foods  
6 and have his health as well. Such a man is totally unfit to have health, because he has not  
7 yet learned the first principles of a healthy life.

8 Here is an employer of labor who adopts crooked measures to avoid paying the  
9 regulation wage, and, in the hope of making larger profits, reduces the wages of his  
10 workpeople. Such a man is altogether unfitted for prosperity. And when he finds himself  
11 bankrupt, both as regards reputation and riches, he blames circumstances, not knowing  
12 that he is the sole author of his condition.

13 I have introduced these three cases merely as illustrative of the truth that man is the  
14 causer (though nearly always unconsciously) of his circumstances, and that, whilst  
15 aiming at the good end, he is continually frustrating its accomplishment by encouraging  
16 thoughts and desires which cannot possibly harmonize with that end. Such cases could be  
17 multiplied and varied almost indefinitely, but this is not necessary. The reader can, if he  
18 so resolves, trace the action of the laws of thought in his own mind and life, and until this  
19 is done, mere external facts cannot serve as a ground of reasoning.

20 Circumstances, however, are so complicated, thought is so deeply rooted, and the  
21 conditions of happiness vary so vastly with individuals, that a man's entire soul condition  
22 (although it may be known to himself) cannot be judged by another from the external  
23 aspect of his life alone.



1           A man may be honest in certain directions, yet suffer privations. A man may be  
2 dishonest in certain directions, yet acquire wealth. But the conclusion usually formed that  
3 the one man fails because of his particular honesty, and that the other prospers because of  
4 his particular dishonesty, is the result of a superficial judgment, which assumes that the  
5 dishonest man is almost totally corrupt, and honest man almost entirely virtuous. In the  
6 light of a deeper knowledge and wider experience, such judgment is found to be  
7 erroneous. The dishonest man may have some admirable virtues which the other does not  
8 possess; and the honest man obnoxious vices which are absent in the other. The honest  
9 man reaps the good results of his honest thoughts and acts; he also brings upon himself  
10 the sufferings which his vices produce. The dishonest man likewise garners his own  
11 suffering and happiness.

12           It is pleasing to human vanity to believe that one suffers because of one's virtue; but  
13 not until a man has extirpated every sickly, bitter, and impure thought from his soul, can  
14 he be in a position to know and declare that his sufferings are the result of his good, and  
15 not of his bad qualities; and on the way to, yet long before he has reached that supreme  
16 perfection , he will have found, working in his mind and life, the great law which is  
17 absolutely just, and which cannot, therefore, give good for evil, evil for good. Possessed  
18 of such knowledge, he will then know, looking back upon his past ignorance and  
19 blindness, that his life is, and always was, justly ordered, and that all his past experiences,  
20 good and bad, were the equitable outworking of his evolving, yet unevolved self.

21           Good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results; bad thoughts and actions  
22 can never produce good results. This is but saying that nothing can come from corn but  
23 corn, nothing from nettles but nettles. Men understand this law in the natural world, and

1 work with it; but few understand it in the mental and moral world (though its operation  
2 there is just as simple and undeviating), and they, therefore, do not cooperate with it.

3 Suffering is always the effect of wrong thought in some direction. It is an indication  
4 that the individual is out of harmony with himself, with the law of his being. The sole and  
5 supreme use of suffering is to purify, to burn out all that is useless and impure. Suffering  
6 ceases for him who is pure. There could be no object in burning gold after the dross had  
7 been removed, and a perfectly pure and enlightened being could not suffer.

8 The circumstances which a man encounters with suffering are the result of his own  
9 mental inharmony. The circumstances which a man encounters with blessedness are the  
10 result of his own mental harmony. Blessedness, not material possessions, is the measure  
11 of right thought; wretchedness, not lack of material possessions, is the measure of wrong  
12 thought. A man may be cursed and rich; he may be blessed and poor. Blessedness and  
13 riches are only joined together when the riches are rightly and wisely used. And the poor  
14 man only descends into wretchedness when he regards his lot as a burden unjustly  
15 imposed.

16 Indigence and indulgence are the two extremes of wretchedness. They are both  
17 equally unnatural and the result of mental disorder. A man is not rightly conditioned until  
18 he is a happy, healthy, and prosperous being; and happiness, health, and prosperity are  
19 the result of a harmonious adjustment of the inner with the outer of the man with his  
20 surroundings.

21 A man only begins to be a man when he ceases to whine and revile, and commences  
22 to search for the hidden justice which regulates his life. And he adapts his mind to that  
23 regulating factor, he ceases to accuse others as the cause of his condition, and builds

1 himself up in strong and noble thoughts; ceases to kick against circumstances, but begins  
2 to use them as aids to his more rapid progress, and as a means of discovering the hidden  
3 powers and possibilities within himself.

4 Law, not confusion, is the dominating principle in the universe; justice, not injustice,  
5 is the soul and substance of life. Righteousness, not corruption, is the molding and  
6 moving force in the spiritual government of the world. This being so, man has but to right  
7 himself to find that the universe is right. And during the process of putting himself right,  
8 he will find that as he alters his thoughts towards things and other people, things and  
9 other people will alter towards him.

10 The proof of this truth is in every person, and it therefore admits of easy  
11 investigation by systematic introspection and self-analysis. Let a man radically alter his  
12 thoughts, and he will be astonished at the rapid transformation it will effect in the  
13 material conditions of his life. Men imagine that thought can be kept secret, but it cannot.  
14 It rapidly crystallizes into habit, and habit solidifies into circumstance. Bestial thoughts  
15 crystallize into habits of drunkenness and sensuality, which solidify into circumstances of  
16 destitution and disease. Impure thoughts of every kind crystallize into enervating and  
17 confusing habits, which solidify into distracting and adverse circumstances. Thoughts of  
18 fear, doubt, and indecision crystallize into weak, unmanly, and irresolute habits, which  
19 solidify into circumstances of failure, indigence, and slavish dependence. Lazy thoughts  
20 crystallize into weak, habits of uncleanness and dishonesty, which solidify into  
21 circumstances of foulness and beggary. Hateful and condemnatory thoughts crystallize  
22 into habits of accusation and violence, which solidify into circumstances of injury and

1 persecution. Selfish thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of self-seeking, which  
2 solidify into distressful circumstances.

3 On the other hand, beautiful thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of grace and  
4 kindness, which solidify into genial and sunny circumstances. Pure thoughts crystallize  
5 into habits of temperance and self-control, which solidify into circumstances of repose  
6 and peace. Thoughts of courage, self-reliance, and decision crystallize into manly habits,  
7 which solidify into circumstances of success, plenty, and freedom. Energetic thoughts  
8 crystallize into habits of cleanliness and industry, which solidify into circumstances of  
9 pleasantness. Gentle and forgiving thoughts crystallize into habits of gentleness, which  
10 solidify into protective and preservative circumstances. Loving and unselfish  
11 thoughts crystallize into habits of self-forgetfulness for others, which solidify into  
12 circumstances of sure and abiding prosperity and true riches.

13 A particular train of thought persisted in, be it good or bad, cannot fail to produce its  
14 results on the character and circumstances. A man cannot directly choose his  
15 circumstances, but he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape his  
16 circumstances.

17 Nature helps every man to gratification of the thoughts which he most  
18 encourages, and opportunities are presented which will most speedily bring to the surface  
19 both the good and the evil thoughts.

20 Let a man cease from his sinful thoughts, and all the world will soften towards him,  
21 and be ready to help him. Let him put away his weakly and sickly thoughts, and the  
22 opportunities will spring up on every hand to aid his strong resolves. Let him encourage  
23 good thoughts, and no hard fate shall bind him down to wretchedness and shame. The

1 world is your kaleidoscope, and the varying combinations of colors which at every  
2 succeeding moment it presents to you are the exquisitely adjusted pictures of your ever-  
3 moving thoughts.

4

5                   You will be what you will to be;  
6                   Let failure find its false content  
7                   In that poor word, "environment,"  
8                   But spirit scorns it, and is free.

9

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

14

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

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

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### III

#### Effects Of Thoughts On Health And Body

The body is the servant of the mind. It obeys the operations of the mind, whether they be deliberately chosen or automatically expressed. At the bidding of unlawful thoughts the body sinks rapidly into disease and decay; at the command of glad and beautiful thoughts it becomes clothed with youthfulness and beauty.

Disease and health, like circumstances, are rooted in thought. Sickly thoughts will express themselves through a sickly body. Thoughts of fear have been known to kill a man as speedily as a bullet and they are continually killing thousands of people just as surely though less rapidly. The people who live in fear of disease are the people who get it. Anxiety quickly demoralizes the whole body, and lays it open to the entrance of disease; while impure thoughts, even if not physically indulged, will sooner shatter the nervous system.

Strong pure, and happy thoughts build up the body in vigor and grace. The body is a delicate and plastic instrument, which responds readily to the thoughts by which it is impressed, and habits of thought will produce their own effects, good or bad, upon it.

Men will continue to have impure and poisoned blood, so long as they propagate unclean thoughts. Out of a clean heart comes a clean life and a clean body. Out of a defiled mind proceeds a defiled life and a corrupt body. Thought is the fount of action, life and manifestation; make the fountain pure, and all will be pure.

1 Change of diet will not help a man who will not change his thoughts. When a man  
2 makes his thoughts pure, he no longer desires impure food.

3 Clean thoughts make clean habits. The so-called saint who does not wash his body is  
4 not a saint. He who has strengthened and purified his thoughts does not need to consider  
5 the malevolent.

6 If you would perfect your body, guard your mind. If you would renew your body,  
7 beautify your mind. Thoughts of malice, envy, and disappointment, despondency, rob the  
8 body of its health and grace. A sour face does not come by chance; it is made by sour  
9 thoughts. Wrinkles that mar are drawn by folly, passion, pride.

10 I know a woman of ninety-six who has the bright, innocent face of a girl. I know a  
11 man well under middle age whose face is drawn into in harmonious contours. The one is  
12 the result of a sweet and sunny disposition; the other is the outcome of passion and  
13 discontent.

14 As you cannot have a sweet and wholesome abode unless you admit the air and  
15 sunshine freely into your rooms, so a strong body and a bright, happy, or serene  
16 countenance can only result from the free admittance into the mind of thoughts of joy and  
17 goodwill and serenity.

18 On the faces of the aged there are wrinkles made by sympathy others by strong and  
19 pure thought, and others are carved by passion; who cannot distinguish them? With those  
20 who have lived righteously, age is calm, peaceful, and softly mellowed, like the setting  
21 sun. I have recently seen a philosopher on his death-bed. He was not old except in years.  
22 He died as sweetly and peacefully as he had lived.

1           There is no physician like cheerful thought for dissipating the ills of the body; there  
2 is no comforter to compare with goodwill for dispersing the shadows of grief and sorrow.  
3 To live continually in thoughts of ill-will, cynicism, suspicion, and envy, is to be  
4 confined in a self-made prison hole. But to think well of all, to be cheerful with all, to  
5 patiently learn to find the good in all--such unselfish thoughts are the very portals of  
6 heaven; and to dwell day by day in thoughts of peace toward every creature will bring  
7 abounding peace to their possessor.

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## IV

### Thought And Purpose

Until thought is linked with purpose there is no intelligent accomplishment. With the majority the bark of thought is allowed to "drift" upon the ocean of life. Aimlessness is a vice, and such drifting must not continue for him who would steer clear of catastrophe and destruction.

They who have no central purpose in their life fall an easy prey to petty worries, fears, troubles, and self-pityings, all of which are indications of weakness, which lead, just as surely as deliberately planned sins (though by a different route), to failure, unhappiness, and loss, for weakness cannot persist in a power-evolving universe.

A man should conceive of a legitimate purpose in his heart, and set out to accomplish it. He should make this purpose the centralizing point of his thoughts. It may take the form of a spiritual ideal, or it may be a worldly object, according to his nature at the time being. Whichever it is, he should steadily focus his thought-forces upon the object he had set before him. He should make this purpose his supreme duty and should devote himself to its attainment, not allowing his thoughts to wander away into ephemeral fancies, longings, and imaginings. This is the royal road to self-control and true concentration of thought. Even if he fails again and again to accomplish his purpose--as he must until weakness is overcome--the strength of character gained will be the measure of his true success, and this will form a new starting point for future power and triumph.

1        Those who are not prepared for the apprehension of a great purpose, should fix the  
2 thoughts upon the faultless performance of their duty, no matter how insignificant their  
3 task may appear. Only in this way can the thoughts be gathered and focused, and  
4 resolution and energy be developed. Once this is done, there is nothing which may not be  
5 accomplished.

6        The weakest soul knowing its own weakness, and believing this truth--that strength  
7 can only be developed by effort and practice--will, thus believing, at once begin to exert  
8 itself. And, adding effort to effort, patience to patience, and strength to strength, will  
9 never cease to develop and will at last grow divinely strong.

10        As the physically weak man can make himself strong by careful and patient training,  
11 so the man of weak thoughts can make them strong by exercising himself in right  
12 thinking.

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

17        Having conceived of his purpose, a man should mentally mark out a straight  
18 pathway to its achievement, looking neither to the right nor left. Doubts and fears should  
19 be rigorously excluded. They are disintegrating elements which break up the straight line  
20 of effort, rendering it crooked, ineffectual, useless. Thoughts of doubt and fear can never  
21 accomplish anything. They always lead to failure. Purpose, energy, power to do, and all  
22 strong thoughts cease when doubt and fear creep in.

1           The will to do springs from the knowledge that we can do. Doubt and fear are the  
2 great enemies of knowledge, and he who encourages them, who does not slay them,  
3 thwarts himself at every step.

4           He who has conquered doubt and fear has conquered failure. His every thought is  
5 allied with power, and all difficulties are bravely met and overcome. His purposes are  
6 seasonably planted, and they bloom and bring forth fruit that does not fall prematurely to  
7 the ground.

8           Thought allied fearlessly to purpose becomes creative force. He who knows this is  
9 ready to become something higher and stronger than a bundle of wavering thoughts and  
10 fluctuating sensations. He who does this has become the conscious and intelligent wielder  
11 of his mental powers.

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## V

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### **The Thought-Factor In Achievement**

4 All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own  
5 thoughts. In a justly ordered universe, where loss of equipoise would mean total  
6 destruction, individual responsibility must be absolute. A man's weakness and strength,  
7 purity and impurity, are his own and not another man's. They are brought about by  
8 himself and not by another; and they can only be altered by himself, never by another.  
9 His condition is also his own, and not another man's. His sufferings and his happiness are  
10 evolved from within. As he thinks, so is he; as he continues to think, so he remains.

11 A strong man cannot help a weaker unless that weaker is willing to be helped. And  
12 even then the weak man must become strong of himself. He must, by his own efforts,  
13 develop the strength which he admires in another. None but himself can alter his  
14 condition.

15 It has been usual for men to think and to say, "Many men are slaves because one is  
16 an oppressor; let us hate the oppressor!" But there is amongst an increasing few a  
17 tendency to reverse this judgment and to say, "One man is an oppressor because many are  
18 slaves; let us despise the slaves."

19 The truth is that oppressor and slaves are cooperators in ignorance, and, while  
20 seeming to afflict each other, are in reality, afflicting themselves. A perfect knowledge  
21 perceives the action of law in the weakness of the oppressed and the misapplied power of  
22 the oppressor. A perfect love, seeing the suffering which both states entail, condemns  
23 neither; a perfect compassion embraces both oppressor and oppressed. He who has

1 conquered weakness and has pushed away all selfish thoughts belongs neither to  
2 oppressor nor oppressed. He is free.

3 A man can only rise, conquer, and achieve by lifting up his thoughts. He can only  
4 remain weak, abject, and miserably by refusing to lift up his thoughts.

5 Before a man can achieve anything, even in worldly things, he must lift his thoughts  
6 above slavish animal indulgence. He may not, in order to succeed, give up all animality  
7 and selfishness, necessarily, but a portion of it must, at least, be sacrificed. A man whose  
8 first thought is bestial indulgence could neither think clearly nor plan methodically. He  
9 could not find and develop his latent resources and would fail in any undertaking. Not  
10 having begun to manfully control his thoughts, he is not in a position to control affairs  
11 and to adopt serious responsibilities. He is not fit to act independently and stand alone.  
12 But he is limited only by the thoughts that he chooses.

13 There can be no progress nor achievement without sacrifice, and a man's worldly  
14 success will be by the measure that he sacrifices his confused animal thoughts, and fixes  
15 his mind on the development of his plans, and the strengthening of his resolution and  
16 self-reliance. The higher he lifts his thoughts, the greater will be his success, the more  
17 blessed and enduring will be his achievements.

18 The universe does not favor the greedy, the dishonest, the vicious, although on the  
19 mere surface it sometimes may appear to do so. It helps the honest, the magnanimous, the  
20 virtuous. All the great teachers of the ages have declared this in varying ways, and to  
21 prove it and to know it a man has but to persist in making himself increasingly virtuous  
22 by lifting his thoughts.

1 Intellectual achievements are the result of thought consecrated to the search for  
2 knowledge or for the beautiful and true in nature. Such achievements may sometimes be  
3 connected with vanity and ambition, but they are not the outcome of those characteristics.  
4 They are the natural outgrowth of long and arduous effort, and of pure and unselfish  
5 thoughts.

6 Spiritual achievements are the consummation of holy aspirations. He who lives  
7 constantly in the conception of noble and lofty thoughts, who dwells upon all that is pure  
8 and selfless, will, as surely as the sun reaches its zenith and the moon its full, become  
9 wise and noble in character and rise into a position of influence and blessedness.  
10 Achievement of any kind is the crown of effort, the diadem of thought. By the aid of self-  
11 control, resolution, purity, righteousness, and well-directed thought a man ascends. By  
12 the aid of animality, indolence, impurity, corruption, and confusion of thought a man  
13 descends.

14 A man may rise to high success in the world, even to lofty attitudes in the spiritual  
15 realm, and again descend into weakness and wretchedness by allowing arrogant, selfish,  
16 and corrupt thoughts to take possession of him.

17 Victories attained by right thought can be maintained only by watchfulness. Many  
18 give way when success is assured, and rapidly fall back into failure.

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

22 He who would accomplish little need sacrifice little; he who would achieve much  
23 must sacrifice much. He who would attain highly must sacrifice greatly.

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## VI

### Visions And Ideals

The dreamers are the saviors of the world. As the visible world is sustained by the invisible, so men, through all their trials and sins and sordid vocations, 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 which it shall one day see and know.

Composer, sculptor, painter, poet, prophet, sage--these are the makers of the after-world, the architects of heaven. The world is beautiful because they have lived. Without them, laboring humanity would perish.

He who cherishes a beautiful vision, a lofty ideal in his heart, will one day realize it. Columbus cherished a vision of another world and he discovered it. Copernicus fostered the vision of a multiplicity of worlds and a wider universe, and he revealed it. Buddha beheld the vision of a spiritual world of stainless 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 drapes your purest thoughts. For out of them will grow all delightful conditions, all heavenly environment; of these, if you but remain true to them, your world will at last be built.

1 To desire is to obtain; to aspire is to achieve. Shall man's basest desires receive the  
2 fullest measure of gratification, and his purest aspirations starve for lack of sustenance?  
3 Such is not the Law. Such a condition can never obtain, "Ask and receive."

4 Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your vision is the  
5 promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last  
6 unveil.

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

10 Your circumstances may be uncongenial, but they shall not remain so if you only  
11 perceive an ideal and strive to reach it. You cannot travel within and stand still without.  
12 Here is a youth hard pressed by poverty and labor. Confined long hours in an unhealthy  
13 workshop; unschooled and lacking all the arts of refinement. But he dreams of better  
14 things. He thinks of intelligence, or refinement, of grace and beauty. He conceives of,  
15 mentally builds up, an ideal condition of life. The wider liberty and a larger scope takes  
16 possession of him; unrest urges him to action, and he uses all his spare times and means  
17 to the development of his latent powers and resources. Very soon so altered has his mind  
18 become that the workshop can no longer hold him. It has become so out of harmony with  
19 his mind-set that it falls out of his life as a garment is cast aside. And with the growth of  
20 opportunities that fit the scope of his expanding powers, he passes out of it altogether.  
21 Years later we see this youth as a grown man. We find him a master of certain forces of  
22 the mind that he wields with worldwide influence and almost unequaled power. In his  
23 hands he holds the cords of gigantic responsibilities; he speaks and lives are changed;



1 men and women hang upon his words and remold their characters. Sun-like, he becomes  
2 the fixed and luminous center around which innumerable destinies revolve. He has  
3 realized the vision of his youth. He has become one with his ideal.

4 And you, too, will realize the vision (not just the idle wish) of your heart, be it base  
5 or beautiful, or a mixture of both; for you will always gravitate toward that which you  
6 secretly love most. Into your hands will be placed the exact results of your own thoughts.  
7 You will receive that which you earn; no more, no less. Whatever your present  
8 environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts--your vision, your  
9 ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire, as great as your dominant  
10 aspiration.

11 The thoughtless, the ignorant, and the indolent, seeing only the apparent effects of  
12 things and not the things themselves, talk of luck, of fortune, and chance. Seeing a man  
13 grow rich, they say, "How lucky he is!" Observing another become skilled intellectually,  
14 they exclaim, "How highly favored he is!" And noting the saintly character and wide  
15 influence of another, they remark, "How chance helps him at every turn!" They do not  
16 see the trials and failures and struggles which these men have encountered in order to  
17 gain their experience. They have no knowledge of the sacrifices they have made, of the  
18 undaunted efforts they have put forth, of the faith they have exercised so that they might  
19 overcome the apparently insurmountable and realize the vision of their heart. They do not  
20 know the darkness and the heartaches; they only see the light and joy, and call it "luck."  
21 Do not see the long, arduous journey, but only behold the pleasant goal and call it "good  
22 fortune." Do not understand the process, but only perceive the result, and call it "chance."

1           In all human affairs there are efforts, and there are results. The strength of the effort  
2 is the measure of the result. Chance is not. Gifts, powers, material, intellectual, and  
3 spiritual possessions are the fruits of effort. They are thoughts completed, objectives  
4 accomplished, visions realized.

5           The vision that you glorify in your mind, the ideal that you enthrone in your heart --  
6 this you will build your life by; this you will become.

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**VII**  
**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 is an indication of ripened experience, and of a more than ordinary knowledge of the laws and operations of thought.

A man becomes calm in the measure that he understands himself as a thought-evolved being. For such knowledge necessitates the understanding of others as the result of thought, and as he develops a right understanding, and sees ever more clearly the internal relations of things by the action of cause and effect, he ceases to fuss, fume, worry, and grieve. He remains poised, steadfast, serene.

The calm man, having learned how to govern himself, knows how to adapt himself to others. And they, in turn reverence his spiritual strength. They feel that they can learn from him and rely upon him. The more tranquil a man becomes, the greater is his success, his influence, his power for good. Even the ordinary trader will find his business prosperity increase as he develops a greater self-control and equanimity, for people will always prefer to deal with a man whose demeanor is equitable.

The strong, calm man is always loved and revered. He is like a shade-giving tree in a thirsty land, or a sheltering rock in a storm. Who does not love a tranquil 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 are always serene and calm. That exquisite poise of character that we call serenity is the last lesson of culture. It is the

1 flowering of life, the fruitage of the soul. It is precious as wisdom--more desirable than  
2 fine gold. How insignificant mere money-seeking looks in comparison with a serene life.  
3 A life that dwells in the ocean of truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of the  
4 tempests, in the Eternal Calm!

5       How many people we know who sour their lives, who ruin all that is sweet and  
6 beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their poise of character and make bad blood!  
7 It is a question whether the great majority of people do not ruin their lives and mar their  
8 happiness by lack of self-control. How few people we meet in life who are well balanced,  
9 who have that exquisite poise which is characteristic of the finished character!

10       Yes, humanity surges with uncontrolled passion, is tumultuous with ungoverned  
11 grief, is blown about by anxiety and doubt. Only the wise man, only he whose thoughts  
12 are controlled and purified, makes the winds and the storms of the soul obey him.

13       Tempest-tossed souls, wherever you may be, under whatever conditions you may  
14 live, know this: In the ocean of life the isles of blessedness are smiling and the sunny  
15 shore of your ideal awaits your coming. Keep your hands firmly upon the helm of  
16 thought. In the core of your soul reclines the commanding Master; He does but sleep;  
17 wake Him. Self-control is strength. Right thought is mastery. Calmness is power. Say  
18 unto your heart, "Peace. Be still!"