

# NAPOLEON HILL

*AUTHOR OF THINK AND GROW RICH  
THE BESTSELLING SUCCESS BOOK OF ALL TIME*

# OUTWITTING THE DEVIL

*The Secret to Freedom and Success*



**Never Before  
Published!**  
Hidden Since 1938...  
Revealed now for  
the Modern  
Reader

ANNOTATED BY

**SHARON LECHTER**

Foreword by Mark Victor Hansen

Afterword by Michael Bernard Beckwith

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**“FEAR** is the tool of a man-made devil. Self-confident faith in one’s self is both the man-made weapon which defeats this devil and the man-made tool which builds a triumphant life. And it is more than that. It is a link to the irresistible forces of the universe which stand behind a man who does not believe in failure and defeat as being anything but temporary experiences.”

—NAPOLEON HILL

*Praise for Napoleon Hill's*  
**OUTWITTING THE DEVIL**

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“*Outwitting the Devil* proves once again that the messages and philosophies of Napoleon Hill are timeless. This book contains insights on how to break free of habits and attitudes that prevent success and will ultimately lead to happiness and prosperity. If you want to break through your own roadblocks, read this book!”

—T. HARV EKER, author of #1 *New York Times* best seller  
*Secrets of the Millionaire Mind*

“If you want to own your life, you have to own your money. In *Outwitting the Devil*, Napoleon Hill shares what may be holding you back in your financial life and charts the course for you to take control and own the life of your dreams.”

—JEAN CHATZKY, financial journalist and author of  
*The Difference: How Anyone Can Prosper in Even the Toughest Times*

“I have probably studied Napoleon Hill’s work as much as anyone alive. It was 50 years ago that I picked up *Think and Grow Rich*. I have it with me all the time and read it every day. When Sharon Lechter sent me a copy of *Outwitting the Devil* I thought Hill has done it again, another world changer. This book is going to eliminate the spiritual confusion people worldwide are presently experiencing and it will tear down the wall of ignorance that separates millions of individuals from the freedom their soul is seeking.”

—BOB PROCTOR, founder of Life Success, [www.bobproctor.com](http://www.bobproctor.com)

“Most people will achieve their greatest success one step beyond what looked like their greatest failure. While Napoleon Hill’s *Think and Grow Rich* provided a roadmap to success, *Outwitting the Devil* will help you break through the barriers that may be holding you back.”

—BRIAN TRACY, author of *The Way to Wealth*

NAPOLEON HILL

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**OUTWITTING  
THE DEVIL**

*The Secret to Freedom and Success*



ANNOTATED BY

**SHARON LECHTER**

*with The Napoleon Hill Foundation*



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*Portrait of a young Napoleon Hill*



OUTWITTING the DEVIL!

← BY THE MAN WHO  
BROKE THE DEVIL'S  
CODE AND FORCED  
HIM TO CONFESS!

The Secret of how the Author Attained  
Physical and Financial Freedom

\* \* \* \* \*

The boldest and the most inspiring of the  
self-help books by America's number one  
success philosopher who, after thirty  
years of diligent snooping, found the  
Devil and wrung from him an astounding  
confession disclosing where he lives,  
why he exists, and how he gains control  
over the minds of people, and how anyone  
can outwit him. The book is a generous  
course in psychology, making clear the  
working principles of the human mind.  
When you finish this story of the Devil  
you will know much more about God.

\* \* \* \* \*

By

N a p o l e o n H i l l

author of

~~THINK AND GROW RICH~~

and

THINK AND GROW RICH

MASTER-KEY  
TO  
RICHES

*The introduction, typed on a manual typewriter with handwritten notes, from the original manuscript by Napoleon Hill.*

# NOTE TO READERS

---

by

SHARON LECHTER

OUTWITTING THE DEVIL is the most profound book I have ever read.

First, I was incredibly honored when Don Green, CEO of the Napoleon Hill Foundation, trusted me enough to ask me to become involved in this project. And then I read the manuscript! I couldn't sleep for a week.

Written on a manual typewriter in 1938 by the Master himself, Napoleon Hill, this manuscript has been locked away and hidden by Hill's family for seventy-two years. Why? Because they were frightened by the response it would invoke. Hill's courage in revealing the Devil's work around each of us every day, in our churches, our schools, and our politics, threatened the very core of society as it was known at the time.

When asked why the family had hidden the manuscript, Don Green recites the following inside story:

It was the objections of Hill's wife, Annie Lou. She was secretary to Dr. William Plumer Jacobs, president of Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina. Jacobs was also owner of Jacobs Press and a public counselor to a group of South Carolina textile firms. Jacobs hired Hill to come to Clinton to work for him, and Annie Lou did not want the book published because of the role of the Devil. She feared the response from organized religion (and maybe for Hill's job). Even though Hill died in 1970, Annie Lou did not die until 1984. Upon Annie Lou's death, the manuscript came into the possession of Dr. Charlie Johnson, then the president of the Napoleon Hill Foundation. Charlie was the nephew of Annie Lou Hill. Charlie's wife, Frankie, knew and shared Annie Lou's feelings. Frankie told Charlie that she did not want the article published while she was alive either. Charlie's wife passed away a couple of years ago and Charlie finally gave me the manuscript, bound in red leather and embossed with the letters *Outwitting the Devil* in gold on the cover. The Foundation believes the manuscript has a powerful message that needs to be shared.

After speaking with Don, I was overcome with a powerful realization. This book, even though written in 1938, was actually meant to be published today . . . meant to rock our society today! It was intended to provide answers during this uncertain economic and spiritual time. It provides the keys for each of us to outwit the Devil in our own lives. It shows us how to chart a course for success and add value to the world around us through the process.

Just as *Think and Grow Rich* helped us recover and succeed after the Great Depression, *Outwitting the Devil* was written to help each of us recover and succeed today!

You may ask if Hill believes his conversation with the Devil was real, or was it merely imaginary. The choice is yours. But I also asked Don Green about Hill's thoughts in his other writings to see if we could get another look inside Hill's head. Don's response was as follows:

The use of imaginary conversations was not new to Hill. In 1953, Hill published *How to Raise Your Own Salary*, which was written as a conversation between Hill and Carnegie. Hill had actually interviewed Carnegie in 1908 and Carnegie died in 1919, well before its publication.

This was not the first time Hill used imaginary meetings to convey what he was writing about. In *Think and Grow Rich*, Hill, writing about the sixth sense, wrote about his imaginary council meeting with the nine men whose lifeworks had been the most impressive to Hill. These nine imaginary council members were Emerson, Paine, Edison, Darwin, Lincoln, Burbank, Napoleon, Ford, and Carnegie.

Hill wrote in *Think and Grow Rich* that during his meetings with his "Invisible Counselors" he found his mind most receptive to ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that reached him during these times when his sixth sense was activated.

*Outwitting the Devil* was by no means his first time to write about religion. In fact, after he published *Law of Success*

in 1928, he received letters of criticism about his stance on schools and religion. In *Think and Grow Rich*, in the chapter titled “The Six Ghosts of Fear,” Hill wrote that fear of death, in the majority of cases, could be charged to religious fanaticism. Hill had much to say about religious leaders in this section of his classic best seller.

Hill had much to say about religion even in his *Hill's Golden Rule Magazine*. He wrote an article, “A Suggestion to Ministers of the Gospel,” in which he admonished church leaders to teach their followers to practice harmony among each other.

So the choice is yours. Did Hill actually talk to the Devil or is this a parable created to reach and touch your heart? Hill's unique style will pull you in and move you in ways you never thought possible. The words in this book are Hill's own. Since the original manuscript was quite lengthy, I edited with careful precision to preserve the profound impact of his message. I have kept his original language in place even when modern grammar may have dictated adjustments.

In an effort to highlight certain issues, bring clarity to his words, and show how his predictions have become realities, I have added my thoughts throughout the manuscript in a different type style. This allows you to choose to read the book either with my comments or without.

Please enjoy this powerful book and share it with your friends and family. The power in Hill's words can and will change your life.

# FOREWORD

---

DR. NAPOLEON HILL is arguably the most famous self-help action writer, thinker, évocateur, and best-selling author of all time. We ask that you refer quickly to the actual interview with the Devil. You will thus get the impact in your life of who the Devil really is and what he does to 98 percent of living beings, according to the Devil himself.

As a thought stimulator, Hill quickly starts the book's journey, taking us through his life and what was meaningful and life-changing to him. Hill learned the greatest and most useful and instantly helpful success principles on the planet, but he did not know how to use and easily apply them. We predict that this is true for many people still today. It is easy to say the words and sometimes even think the thoughts. It takes a profound and lasting decision to actually live by the principles daily every way. Sharon Lechter illuminates what Hill's words mean when transported into today's dollar thinking, and understanding.

Dr. Hill's goal was to communicate clearly a philosophy and practice of individual achievement that would stimulate lasting happiness. His inner knower guided him to find his own life's rainbow.

You are being tested now in the toughest times imaginable, just as Hill was during the Depression. He felt, acted, and became depressed and despondent, an attitude that was deleterious to his very beingness, just as it is to you and your wellness. Reading this inspiring book can help you snap out of your lethargy and negative-mindedness and get you on a new and more glorious path to an even brighter, better, and more rewarding future.

Like Hill, you are here to master your fears and not let them master you, to live passionately and with purpose, to decide what you want to be, do, and have, and to make it so.

As you rediscover the marvelous and magical discoveries of Dr. Hill, you will know and believe that you can match them and surpass them if you want to, because you are unlimited. Hill correctly says, "Your only limitations are self-imposed." This book will help you be aware that you can achieve your breakthroughs using all that he learned by interviewing the five hundred greatest living achievers.

You will discover whether the Devil he interviews is real or imaginary, much like the Devil that you may personally be dealing with in your life and experience.

—MARK VICTOR HANSEN

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MARK VICTOR HANSEN is co-creator of the #1 *New York Times* best-selling series *Chicken Soup for the Soul*<sup>®</sup> and co-author of *Cracking the Millionaire Code*, *The One Minute Millionaire*, and *Cash in a Flash*.



✦ *Chapter One* ✦

MY FIRST MEETING WITH ANDREW CARNEGIE

**F**OR MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY my major purpose has been that of isolating and organizing into a philosophy of achievement the causes of both failure and success, with the object of being helpful to others who have neither the inclination nor the opportunity to engage in this form of research.

My labor began in 1908, as the result of an interview that I had with the late Andrew Carnegie. I frankly told Mr. Carnegie that I wished to enter law school and that I had conceived the idea of paying my way through school by interviewing successful men and women, finding out how they came by their success, and writing stories of my discoveries for magazines. At the end of our first visit Mr. Carnegie asked whether or not I possessed enough courage to carry out a suggestion he wished to offer me. I replied that courage was about all I did have and that I was prepared to do my best to carry out any suggestion he cared to offer.

He then said, "Your idea of writing stories about men and women who are successful is commendable, as far as it goes, and I have no intention of trying to discourage you from carrying out your purpose, but I must tell you that if you wish to be of enduring service, not only to those now living, but to posterity as well, you can do so if you will take the time to organize all of the causes of failure as well as all of the causes of success.

"There are millions of people in the world who have not the slightest conception of the causes of success and failure. The schools and colleges teach practically everything except the principles of individual achievement. They require young men and women to spend from four to eight years acquiring abstract knowledge, but do not teach them what to do with this knowledge after they get it.

"The world is in need of a practical, understandable philosophy of achievement, organized from the factual knowledge gained from the experience of men and women in the great university of life. In the entire field of philosophy I find nothing which even remotely resembles the sort of philosophy which I have in mind. We have few philosophers who are capable of teaching men and women the art of living.

"It seems to me that here is an opportunity which should challenge an ambitious young man of your type; but ambition alone is not enough for this task which I have suggested. The one who undertakes it must have courage and tenacity.

"The job will require at least twenty years of continuous effort, during which the one who undertakes it will have to earn his living from some other source, because this sort of research is never profitable at the outset, and generally those who have contributed to civilization through work of this nature have had to wait a hundred years or so after their own funerals to receive recognition for their labor."

*NOTE to READERS: Sharon Lechter adds her comments in special sections like this.*

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Twenty years of labor with no pay and possibly no recognition! How would you respond to this "offer"? As he discusses below, Hill accepted Carnegie's challenge and, with a letter of introduction from Carnegie, set about interviewing the giants of that time, including Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Edison, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, King Gillette (founder of the Gillette Safety Razor Company), and many others. His effort ultimately culminated in the publication of several books, including the eight-volume *Law of Success* and *Think and Grow Rich* after more than twenty-five years of research. *Think and Grow Rich* is widely recognized as the seminal work in self-development, introducing essentially all the principles that continue to serve as the foundation for the teachings of the personal development gurus of today. As reflected in Hill's own description, the process of developing and publishing *Think and Grow Rich* was itself a study in the principles he revealed. It may be telling that the manuscript of *Outwitting the Devil* was written the year after *Think and Grow Rich* was published, since this work may reveal the frustration and revelation of Hill's "other self" and how he conquered his frustrations and succeeded in using

“If you undertake this job, you should interview not only the few who have succeeded, but the many who have failed. You should carefully analyze many thousands of people who have been classed as ‘failures,’ and I mean by the term ‘failures,’ men and women who come to the closing chapter of life disappointed because they did not attain the goal which they had set their hearts upon achieving. Although inconsistent as it may seem, you will learn more about how to succeed from the failures than you will from the so-called successes. They will teach you what not to do.

“Along toward the end of your labor, if you carry it through successfully, you will make a discovery which may be a great surprise to you. You will discover that the cause of success is not something separate and apart from the man; that it is a force so intangible in nature that the majority of men never recognize it; a force which might be properly called the ‘other self.’ Noteworthy is the fact that this ‘other self’ seldom exerts its influence or makes itself known excepting at times of unusual emergency, when men are forced, through adversity and temporary defeat, to change their habits and to think their way out of difficulty.

“My experience has taught me that a man is never quite so near success as when that which he calls ‘failure’ has overtaken him, for it is on occasions of this sort that he is forced to think. If he thinks accurately, and with persistence, he discovers that so-called failure usually is nothing more than a signal to re-arm himself with a new plan or purpose. Most real failures are due to limitations which men set up in their own minds. If they had the courage to go one step further, they would discover their error.”

---

*“Most real failures are due to limitations which men set up in their own minds.”*

A negative mind-set and self-doubt can be the primary obstacle to success. With the current economic downturn, far too many people who have, all their life, done everything right are now, for the first time, facing severe economic adversity. The greatest barrier to their recovery is their own fear and self-doubt instilled by their recent experience. Have you allowed the current economic downturn to overtake you? Have self-doubt and self-sabotage held you back from reaching your dreams? Are you your own worst enemy? In *Think and Grow Rich*, Hill told the story of R.U. Darby, a gold prospector. Frustrated when a rich vein of gold apparently ran out, Darby sold his gold claim for a pittance to the town junkman. The junkman brought in the right expert advisers and found that Darby would have rediscovered the vein—had he moved his digging by a mere three feet. Had Darby persevered he would have made his fortune, but he gave up and abandoned his dreams—when he was only three feet from gold. Rather than being crushed by his error, Darby learned from his experience and went on to build an insurance empire. Will you abandon your quest just before reaching great success, when you are only three feet from gold? (You can read how many of today's icons persevered through difficult situations in the book *Three Feet from Gold*.)

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## ***Begin Life Anew***

Mr. Carnegie's speech reshaped my entire life and planted in my mind a burning purpose, which has

driven me ceaselessly, and this despite the fact that I had but a vague idea as to what he meant by the term “other self.”

---

During my labor of research into the causes of failure and success I have had the privilege analyzing more than 25,000 men and women who were rated as “failures,” and over 500 who were classed as “successful.” Many years ago I caught my first glimpse of that “other self” Mr. Carnegie had mentioned. The discovery came, as he said it would, as the result of two major turning-points in my life, which constituted emergencies that forced me to think my way out of difficulties such as I had never before experienced.

I wish it were possible to describe this discovery without the use of the personal pronoun, but this is impossible because it came through personal experiences from which it cannot be separated. To give you the complete picture I shall have to go back to the first of these two major turning-points and bring you up to the discovery step by step.

The research necessary for the accumulation of the data, from which the seventeen principles of achievement and the thirty major causes of failure were organized, required years of labor.

I had reached the false conclusion that my task of organizing a complete philosophy of personal achievement had been completed. Far from having been completed, my work had merely begun. I had erected the skeleton of a philosophy by organizing the seventeen principles of achievement and the thirty major causes of failure, but that skeleton had to be covered with the flesh of application and experience. Moreover, it had to be given a soul through which it might inspire men and women to meet obstacles without going down under them.

The “soul,” which had yet to be added, as I discovered later, became available only after my “other self” made its appearance, through two major turning-points of my life.

Resolving to turn my attention, and whatever talents I might possess, into monetary returns through business and professional channels, I decided to go into the profession of advertising, and I became the advertising manager of the LaSalle Extension University of Chicago. Everything went along beautifully for one year, at the end of which I was seized by a violent dislike for my job and resigned.

I then entered the chain store business, with the former president of the LaSalle Extension University, and became the president of the Betsy Ross Candy Company. Unfortunate—or what seemed to me at the time to be unfortunate—disagreements with business associates disengaged me from that undertaking.

The lure of advertising still was in my blood, and I tried again to give expression to it by organizing a school of advertising and salesmanship, as a part of Bryant & Stratton Business College.

The enterprise was sailing smoothly and we were making money rapidly when the United States entered World War I. In response to an inner urge which no words can describe, I walked away from the school and entered the service of the United States government, under President Woodrow Wilson’s personal direction, leaving a perfectly sound business to disintegrate.

On Armistice Day 1918, I began the publication of *The Golden Rule* magazine. Despite the fact that I did not have a penny of capital, the magazine grew rapidly and soon gained a nation-wide circulation of nearly half a million, ending its first year’s business with a profit of \$3,156.



for each year compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and \$202,000 using the nominal GDP per capita tables. Not a bad profit for a first year in the magazine business . . . when 80 to 90 percent of new titles fail and even the successful ones take three to five years to become profitable

(<http://www.magazinepublisher.com/startup.html>).

---

Some years later I learned, from an experienced publisher, that no man experienced in the publication and distribution of national magazines would think of starting such a magazine with less than half a million dollars of capital.

*The Golden Rule* magazine and I were destined to part company. The more we succeeded the more discontented I became, until finally, due to an accumulation of petty annoyances caused by business associates, I made them a present of the magazine and stepped out. Through that move perhaps I tossed a small fortune over my shoulder.

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This was only the beginning of Hill's love for magazines. *The Golden Rule* was followed by his publication of *The Napoleon Hill Magazine*. Later in life he became the editor of *SUCCESS*, a magazine that is still published today.

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Next I organized a training school for salesmen. My first assignment was to train a sales army of 3,000 people for a chain store company, for which I received \$10 for each salesman who went through my classes. Within six months my work had netted me a little over \$30,000. Success, as far as money was concerned, was crowning my efforts with abundance. Again I became "fidgety" inside. I was not happy. It became more obvious every day that no amount of money would ever make me happy.

Without the slightest reasonable excuse for my actions, I stepped out and gave up a business from which I might easily have earned a healthy salary. My friends and business associates thought I was crazy, and they were not backward about saying so.

Frankly, I was inclined to agree with them, but there seemed nothing I could do about it. I was seeking happiness and I had not found it. At least that is the only explanation I could offer for my unusual actions. What man really knows himself?

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*"Again I became 'fidgety' inside. I was not happy. It became more obvious every day that no amount of money would ever make me happy."*

I could have written this about myself a few years ago. But when I took action by leaving a situation that, although financially rewarding, was no longer aligned with my personal mission, new doors of opportunity opened for me. It turned out to be the best decision of my professional life. Can you think of a time in your life when you made a difficult decision . . . but knew it was the right one even when others questioned you?

---

That was during the late fall of 1923. I found myself stranded in Columbus, Ohio, without funds and worse still, without a plan by which to work my way out of my difficulty. It was the first time in my life that I had actually been stranded because of lack of funds.

Many times previously I had found money to be rather shy, but never before had I failed to get what I needed for my personal conveniences. The experience stunned me. I seemed totally at sea as to what I could or should do.

I thought of a dozen plans by which I might solve my problem, but dismissed them all as being either impractical or impossible of achievement. I felt like one who was lost in a jungle without a compass. Every attempt I made to work my way out brought me back to the original starting point.

For nearly two months I suffered with the worst of all human ailments: indecision. I knew the seventeen principles of personal achievement, but what I did not know was how to apply them. Without knowing it I was facing one of those emergencies of life through which, Mr. Carnegie has told me, men sometimes discover their “other selves.”

My distress was so great that it never occurred to me to sit down and analyze its cause and seek its cure.

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*“The worst of all human ailments: indecision.”*

Have you ever felt paralyzed by indecision? This was the first major turning point in Napoleon Hill’s life. His moving from job to job, seeking contentment and his own ideal professional life, sounds like many people today . . . people who are seeking contentment in their jobs and lives. Hill’s predicament was, by his own admission, self-inflicted. However, he found himself in very much the same circumstances as someone today who has been negatively affected by the present economic situation. Hill took advantage of his temporary defeat, using it as a spur to force himself into thought and analysis—to find his “other self.” If you have been dealt a blow by economic circumstances, you too can use it as a lever and motivation to find your “other self.”

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## ***Defeat Is Converted into Victory***

One afternoon I reached a decision through which I found the way out of my difficulty. I had a feeling that I wanted to get out into the “open spaces” of the country, where I could get a breath of fresh air and think.

I began to walk, and had gone seven or eight miles when I felt myself brought suddenly to a standstill. For several minutes I stood there as if I had been glued to my tracks. Everything around me went dark. I could hear the loud sound of some form of energy which was vibrating at a very high rate.

Then my nerves became quiet, my muscles relaxed, and a great calmness came over me. The atmosphere began to clear, and as it did so, I received a command from within which came in the form of a thought, as near as I can describe it.

The command was so clear and distinct that I could not misunderstand it. In substance it said, “The time has come for you to complete the philosophy of achievement which you began at Carnegie’s suggestion. Go back home at once and begin transferring the data you have gathered from your own mind to written manuscripts.” My “other self” had awakened.

For a few minutes I was frightened. The experience was unlike any I had ever undergone before. I turned and walked rapidly until I reached home. As I approached the house, I saw my three little boys looking out of a window of our house at our neighbor's children, who were dressing a Christmas tree in the house next door.

Then I recalled that it was Christmas Eve. Moreover, I recalled, with a feeling of deep distress such as I had never known before, that there would be no Christmas tree at our house. The look of disappointment on the faces of my children reminded me painfully of that fact.

I went into the house, sat down at my typewriter, and began at once to reduce to writing the discoveries I had made concerning the causes of success and failure. As I placed the first sheet of paper in the typewriter I was interrupted by that same strange feeling which had come over me out of the country a few hours before, and this thought flashed into my mind:

“Your mission in life is to complete the world's first philosophy of individual achievement. You have been trying in vain to escape your task, each effort having brought you failure. You are seeking happiness. Learn this lesson, once and forever, that you will find happiness only by helping others find it! You have been a stubborn student. You had to be cured of your stubbornness through disappointment. Within a few years from now the whole world will start through an experience which will place millions of people in need of the philosophy which you have been directed to complete. Your big opportunity to find happiness by rendering useful service will have come. Go to work, and do not stop until you have completed and published the manuscripts which you have begun.”

I was conscious of having arrived, at last, at the end of life's rainbow, and I was happy!

## ***Doubt Makes Its Appearance***

The “spell,” if the experience may be so called, passed away. I began to write. Shortly thereafter my “reason” suggested to me that I was embarking upon a fool's mission. The idea of a man who went down and almost out presuming to write a philosophy of personal achievement seemed so ludicrous that I laughed hilariously, perhaps scornfully.

I squirmed in my chair, ran my fingers through my hair, and tried to create an alibi that would justify me in my own mind in taking the sheet of paper out of my typewriter before I had really begun to write, but the urge to continue was stronger than the desire to quit. I became reconciled to my task and went ahead.

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*“The urge to continue was stronger than the desire to quit.”*

Remember that time when you wanted to quit, but something drove you to keep going? It may have been your “other self.”

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Looking backward now, in the light of all that has happened, I can see that those minor experiences of adversity through which I had passed were among the most fortunate and profitable of all of my experiences. They were blessings in disguise because they forced me to continue a work which finally

brought me an opportunity to make myself more useful to the world than I might have been had I succeeded in any previous plan or purpose.

---

For almost three months I worked on those manuscripts, completing them during the early part of 1924. As soon as they had been completed, I felt myself again being lured by the desire to get back into the great American game of business.

Succumbing to the lure, I purchased the Metropolitan Business College in Cleveland, Ohio, and began to lay plans for increasing its capacity. By the end of 1924 we had developed and expanded, by adding new courses, until we were doing a business nearly double the best previous record the school had ever known.

Again the germ of discontentment began to make itself felt in my blood. Again I knew that I could not find happiness in that sort of endeavor. I turned the business over to my associates and went on the lecture platform, lecturing on the philosophy of achievement, to the organization of which I had devoted so many of my previous years.

One night I was booked to lecture in Canton, Ohio. Fate, or whatever it is that seems sometimes to shape the destiny of men, no matter how hard they may try to battle against it, again stepped into the picture and brought me face to face with a painful experience.

In my Canton audience sat Don R. Mellett, publisher of the *Canton Daily News*. Mr. Mellett became so thoroughly interested in the philosophy of individual achievement on which I lectured that night that he invited me to come to see him the following day.

That visit resulted in a partnership agreement which was to have taken place on the first of the following January when Mr. Mellett planned to resign as publisher of the *Daily News*, to take charge of the business and publishing of the philosophy on which I had been working.

However, in July 1926, Mr. Mellett was murdered by Pat McDermott, an underworld character, and a Canton, Ohio, policeman, both of whom were sentenced to life imprisonment. He was murdered because he was exposing in his newspaper a hook-up between the bootleggers and certain members of the Canton police force. The crime was one of the most shocking that the prohibition era produced.

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The July 1926 murder of crusading journalist Donald Ring Mellett, the editor of the *Canton, Ohio, Daily News*, was one of the most publicized crimes in the 1920s. In 1925 Mellett had discovered widespread corruption within the Canton police force and embarked on an anti-vice, anti-corruption editorial campaign, targeting, among others, the Canton police chief. Hill was reported to have asked Ohio's governor to initiate an investigation of the corruption, a detail not reflected in Hill's account.

Local underworld figures and at least one Canton police officer hired Patrick McDermott, an ex-con from Pennsylvania, to silence Mellett. Mellett was gunned down outside his home. As the story goes, gunmen were also lying in wait for Hill, but a fortuitous automotive breakdown kept him out of their way. On July 17, the *New York Times* reported in an article titled "More Death Threats Follow the Slaying of Canton Editor" that the citizens of Canton "are terror-stricken by threats of further killings by the rulers of the gamblers, bootleggers and other criminals." As recounted by Hill, after hearing of Mellett's murder and receiving an anonymous warning to get out of town, he fled to West Virginia. In large part due to the work of a private detective hired by the Stark County prosecutor, McDermott, two local gangsters, and a former police detective were ultimately convicted of Mellett's murder.

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## *Chance (?) Saves My Life*

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The morning after Mr. Mellett's death I was called on the telephone and put on notice, by some unknown person, that I had one hour in which to get out of Canton; that I could go voluntarily within the hour, but if I waited longer I probably would go in a pine box. My business association with Mr. Mellett had apparently been misunderstood. His murderers evidently believed I was directly connected with the exposé he was making in his newspapers.

I did not wait for the one hour time limit to expire, but immediately got into my automobile and drove down to the home of relatives in the mountains of West Virginia, where I remained until the murderers had been placed in jail.

That experience came well within the category described by Mr. Carnegie as an "emergency" that forces men to think. For the first time in my life I knew the pain of constant fear. My experience of a few years before, in Columbus, had filled my mind with doubt and temporary indecision, but this one had filled it with a fear which I seemed unable to remove. During the time that I was in hiding I seldom left the house at night, and when I did step out I kept my hand on an automatic pistol in my coat pocket, with the safety catch unlatched for immediate action. If a strange automobile stopped in front of the house where I was hiding, I went into the basement and carefully scrutinized its occupants through the basement windows.

After some months of this sort of experience, my nerves began to crack. My courage had been completely left me. The ambition which had heartened me during the long years of labor in my search for the causes of failure and success also had departed.

Slowly, step by step, I felt myself slipping into a state of lethargy from which I was afraid I should never be able to emerge. The feeling must have been closely akin to that experienced by one who suddenly steps into quicksand and realizes that every effort to extricate himself carries him just a little much deeper. Fear is a self-generating morass.

If the seed of insanity had been in my make-up, surely it would have germinated during those months of living death. Foolish indecision, irresolute dreams, doubt and fear were my mind's concern day and night.

The "emergency" I faced was disastrous in two ways. First, the very nature of it kept me in a constant state of indecision and fear. Secondly, the forced concealment kept me in idleness, with its attendant heaviness of time, which I naturally devoted to worry.

My reasoning faculty had almost been paralyzed. I realized that I had to work myself out of this state of mind. But how? The resourcefulness which had helped me to meet all previous emergencies seemed to have completely taken wing, leaving me helpless.

Out of my difficulties, which were burdensome enough up to this point, grew another which seemed more painful than all the others combined. It was the realization that I had spent the better portion of my past years in chasing a rainbow, searching hither and yon for the causes of success, and finding myself now more helpless than any of the 25,000 people whom I had judged as being "failures."

This thought was almost maddening. Moreover, it was extremely humiliating, because I had been lecturing all over the country, in schools and colleges and before business organizations, presuming to tell other people how to apply the seventeen principles of success, while here I was, unable to apply them myself. I was sure that I never could again face the world with a feeling of confidence.

Every time I looked at myself in a mirror I noticed an expression of self-contempt on my face, and

not infrequently I did say things to the man in the mirror which are not printable. I had begun to place myself in the category of charlatans who offer others a remedy for failure which they themselves cannot successfully apply.

The criminals who had murdered Mr. Mellett had been tried and sent to the penitentiary for life; therefore, it was perfectly safe, as far as they were concerned, for me to come out of hiding and again take up my work. I could not come out, however, because now I faced circumstances more frightful than the criminals who had sent me into hiding.

The experience had destroyed whatever initiative I had possessed. I felt myself in the clutches of some depressing influence which seemed like a nightmare. I was alive; I could move around, but I could not think of a single move by which I might continue to seek the goal which I had, at Mr. Carnegie's suggestion, set for myself. I was rapidly becoming indifferent, not only toward myself, but worse still, I was becoming grouchy and irritable toward those who had given me shelter during my "emergency."

I faced the greatest emergency of my life. Unless you have gone through a similar experience, you cannot possibly know how I felt. Such experiences cannot be described. To be understood they must be felt.

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*"My reasoning faculty had almost been paralyzed."*

Hill was paralyzed first by fear of physical harm and then by the shame of having been paralyzed by that fear. Have you ever been paralyzed by similar emotions? When you are faced with your own "emergency," fear can either motivate you or paralyze you. By recognizing that you have a choice and reacting positively to your fears, you can permanently change your life for the better. Many people today may be experiencing the same feelings of anger followed by irritability and the debilitating feeling of indifference. They feel discouraged and lack self-confidence due to uncertainty in their financial situation or personal lives. They may be angry and allow that anger to paralyze them. I had a conversation with just such a young man. "I am 30 years old," he said, "and have no marketable skills or prospects." He had a million excuses for not taking action to change his situation. I pointed out that unless he took action nothing would change. "Unless you make an effort to change things," I said, "in a year's time the only difference will be that you are 31 years old with no marketable skills or prospects." Does this pattern sound familiar to you, either for yourself or someone you care for? How do you break that paralysis? Napoleon Hill now shares how he overcame his fear and indifference and found the hope, inspiration, and motivation to recover and create success in his life.

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## ***The Most Dramatic Moment of My Life***

The turn came suddenly, in fall 1927, more than a year after the Canton incident. I left the house one night and walked up to the public school building, on top of a hill above the town.

I had reached a decision to fight the matter out with myself before that night ended. I began to walk around the building, trying to force my befuddled brain to think clearly. I must have made several hundred trips around the building before anything which even remotely resembled organized thought began to take place in my mind. As I walked I repeated over and over to myself, "There is a way out and I am going to find it before I go back to the house." I must have repeated that sentence a thousand times. Moreover, I meant exactly what I was saying. I was thoroughly disgusted with myself, but

entertained a hope of salvation.

Then like a flash of lightning out of a clear sky, an idea burst into my mind with such force that the impulse drove my blood up and down my veins:

“This is your testing time. You have been reduced to poverty and humiliated in order that you might be forced to discover your ‘other self.’”

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If today’s economic times have dealt you a blow, moving you toward poverty, embarrassing you, or damaging your self-confidence, consider it a test, just as Napoleon Hill did in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Force yourself to discover your “other self.” By working through the low points in your life and persevering, you can gain the insight needed to succeed.

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For the first time in years I recalled what Mr. Carnegie had said about this “other self.” I recalled now that he said I would discover it toward the end of my labor of research into the causes of failure and success, and that the discovery usually came as the result of an emergency, when men are forced to change their habits and to think their way out of difficulty.

I continued to walk around the school house, but now I was walking on air. Subconsciously I seemed to know that I was about to be released from the self-made prison into which I had cast myself.

I realized that this great emergency had brought me an opportunity, not merely to discover my “other self,” but to test the soundness of the philosophy of achievement which I had been teaching others as being workable. Soon I would know whether it would work or not. I made up my mind that if it did not work I would burn the manuscripts I had written and never again be guilty of telling other people that they were “the masters of their fate, the captains of their souls.”

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Hill is paraphrasing from the poem “Invictus,”  
published in 1888  
by William Ernest Henley (1849–1903).

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years*

*It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.*

---

The full moon was just rising over the mountain top. I had never seen it shine so brightly before. As I stood gazing at it, another thought flashed into my mind. It was this:

“You have been telling other people how to master fear and how to surmount the difficulties which arise out of the emergencies of life. From now on you can speak with authority because you are about to rise above your own difficulties with courage and purpose, resolute and unafraid.”

With that thought came a change in the chemistry of my being which lifted me into a state of exultation I had never before known. My brain began to clear itself of the state of lethargy into which it had lapsed. My faculty of reason began to work once more.

For a brief moment I was happy to have had the privilege of going through those long months of torment, because the experience provided an opportunity for me to test the soundness of the principles of achievement which I had so laboriously wrested from my research.

When this thought came to me, I stopped still, drew my feet closely together, saluted (I did not know what or whom), and stood rigidly at attention for several minutes. This seemed, at first, like a foolish thing to do, but while I was standing there another thought came through in the form of an “order” that was as brief and snappy as any ever given by a military commander to a subordinate.

The order said, “Tomorrow get into your automobile and drive to Philadelphia, where you will receive aid in publishing your philosophy of achievement.”

There was no further explanation and no modification of the order. As soon as I received it, I walked back to the house, went to bed, and slept with peace of mind such as I had not known for over a year.

When I awoke the following morning, I got out of bed and immediately began to pack my clothes and make ready for the trip to Philadelphia. My reason told me that I was embarking upon a foolish mission. Who did I know in Philadelphia to whom I might apply for financial aid in publishing eight volumes of books at a cost of \$25,000? I asked myself.

Instantly the answer to that question flashed into my mind, as plainly as if it had been uttered in audible words: “You are following orders now, instead of asking questions. Your ‘other self’ will be in charge during this trip.”

There was another condition which seemed to make my preparation to go to Philadelphia absurd. I had no money! This thought had barely occurred to me when my “other self” exploded it by giving me another sharp order, saying, “Ask your brother-in-law for fifty dollars and he will lend it to you.”

The order seemed definite and final. Without further hesitation I followed instructions. When I asked my brother-in-law for the money, he said, “Why, certainly you can have fifty dollars, but if you are going to be gone very long you had better take a hundred dollars.” I thanked him and said I thought fifty dollars would be enough. I knew it was not enough, but that was the amount my “other self” had



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