

CHARACTER BUILDING BY MENTAL CONTROL.

BY WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON.

The student who has read the preceding lessons has doubtless said, after reading some of the statements contained therein, "Yes, that is all true enough, and I could accomplish these results *if* I but possessed the necessary qualities of mind and character."

This seems to be the great stumbling block to many. They know just what is necessary to produce Success, but because they do not possess just the characteristics of the successful man, they fancy that the prize is beyond their reach. There is no greater mistake in the world than this false belief, this kind of fear thought, this lack of recognition of the power of the I AM.

Man can so mould his mind by the power of the will that he can make of himself practically what he will. He can "make over" himself, without a doubt. A man is just what he wills himself to be. This is a bold statement, but it is absolutely true and we have hundreds of instances of it in every city in this land. Hundreds of men can testify to its correctness, and many hundreds of others are on the road. Regeneration is no idle dream. It is a living truth.

You will realize just what this means, if you will stop to consider that every effect has its cause. Business success is due to certain qualities of mind, character

or temperament. Of these three qualities, the first is the only *real* one, as the last two are but results of the first. Those who have the given qualities, produce the given result; those lacking the said qualities, fail to obtain the result. When once you realize that these qualities are within your grasp—that you can make them a part of yourself, you will readily see that wonderful possibilities are open to you. The acquirement of these qualities is the key to the situation.

You know just what these necessary qualities are: Energy, Ambition, Determination, Courage, Confidence, Perseverance, Patience, Prudence, and the rest of the list.

All persons possess some of these qualities, and lack others. Some are strong in some of these qualities, and weak in others. And every man instinctively knows in just what respect he falls short. He may not admit it to his friends, or even to his wife, but deep down in his inner consciousness lurks the knowledge of the truth. If he could acquire the missing qualities by a mere wish, he would know just what to wish for. No doubt about that. But he lacks the confidence and perseverance thought to be necessary for the acquirement of that which he knows he needs. He is not willing to pay the price of attainment. If some great scientist would announce to the world that he had discovered some wonderful chemical combination, or some new "serum," that would develop the shrunken and atrophied faculties of the

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mind, and which would render a man strong in the qualities wherein heretofore he had been weak, what a rush there would be for the new "regenerator"! Thousands would want it, and every man would be able to tell just what brand of serum he needed. He would need no diagnosis or prescription for that. Every man would be able to diagnose his own case and order the serum indicated by his symptom. One would want triple extract of Energy; another, the "Stick-to-it" brand; another, the vial bearing the confident "I Can" label; and so on. They would all know that if they could get the proper kind of serum, they would be able to round out their characters, and command success.

Now, there is no drug that will produce this result. And there never will be. But the desired result can be obtained by the operation of the law of Mental Control.

I can give you but a general idea of the workings of this great law, but if you will pay attention to what I have to say on the subject, you will grasp the principle, and will be able to work out your own salvation.

The first point to remember is that we are all creatures of habit, bodily and mentally. Our characteristics are largely the result of habits of thought. We may have inherited impulses which make it easier to form certain habits, and more difficult to form others, and we consequently move along the lines of the least resistance; but the character is, after all, the result of certain acquired habits. We follow well worn mental paths, in preference to making new paths through the woods, even although we know that the new path would be the better, by far, and that it would be as easy to travel over as

the present one, when it was finally formed. We know all this. It is an old story. Then why do we not start in to make the new path? Simply because "it is too much trouble." We lack the will power, determination and persistency to do it. I admit that it is no easy task, but think of the reward.

These things are "ancient history" to you, of course, but I have something else to say to you on the subject that is not so "antiquated." I purpose to make you a present of a labor saving "path-maker," which is guaranteed to clear away the underbrush and rubbish in but a fraction of the time, and with much less labor, than the old plodding clearing-away process.

This new plan is very simple, but very effective, and will enable you to "make yourself over" without the ripping apart process attendant upon the old method. I will tell you about it in as few words as possible.

I have already explained to you that your minds possessed two planes of effort, two functions, the Active and the Passive. The Active function does the volitional, the original thinking, whilst the Passive function does only what it is told to do by the Active function (or by others). The Passive function is the easy going partner of the firm, to whom I introduced you in a previous lesson. It is this part of the mind upon which hypnotists operate, after lulling to sleep the Active function, the critical partner. The Passive function, although in a sense the inferior, really rules us, unless we know how to manage it. It is the habit-function, the beaten-track function, of whose existence we are all conscious. It is easily influenced, but nevertheless is "set" in its ways. Tell it a thing over and over

—something which you wish it to believe—and it will end up in accepting the new thought and being as “set” in the new notion as it was in the former one. This is the secret of breaking up the habits of thought; action; disposition; character. The suggestion upon which the Passive function acts may come from your own Active mind, or from the mind of another. This is the explanation of the beginning of a habit, good or bad.

To break up old thought habits, and to replace them with new habits of thinking, one or more of several plans may be used. One may accomplish the result by sheer force of will; another by hypnotic suggestion from an experienced qualified operator; another by what is known as auto-suggestion, given by your Active to your Passive mind; a fourth by that which I will term Thought Absorption.

Breaking up thought-habits by sheer force of will is a most difficult task, as most of us know, for we have all tried it. It is a plan by which only the strongest succeed, whilst the weaker are defeated and relinquish the effort, experiencing additional discouragement and despair. We accomplish this result by the “strengthening of the will,” or more correctly by the strengthening of the Active Function of the Mind by the will, enabling it to step in and simply *command* the Passive function to drop the old thought-habit and adopt the new in its place. It is a magnificent feat, but very difficult of performance. The same result can be obtained by easier plans. The very habit of making the Passive mind more amenable to the commands of the Active function can be acquired by the easier plan of which I will speak in this lesson.

The second plan, the changing of the

thought-habit by Hypnotic Suggestion, has been followed by many, with excellent results, provided, always, that the operator was a proper person, thoroughly understanding his profession, and being fully acquainted with the *latest* methods of eradicating undesirable thought-habits. In this connection, I would say that one should be very careful in whose hands they place themselves for treatment of this sort. One should not trust their case to a person just because that person could give hypnotic suggestion; one would not employ a man as cashier of a bank, just because the applicant could keep books, and count money rapidly.

The third plan, that of producing the result by auto-suggestion, is good, especially when accompanied by Thought Absorption. In auto-suggestion you simply keep on repeating to the Passive mind the statement that the new habit exists (ignoring the old one), and the Passive mind, although inclined to be a little rebellious at first, will eventually accept what you say as truth. It will adopt the new thought-habit as its own thought, just as do some people under like circumstances. Auto-suggestion is practically self-hypnosis of the Passive mind by the Active mind. It is a case of “every man his own hypnotist.”

The third plan, Thought Absorption, consists in the placing of yourself in a perfectly passive condition, at frequent intervals, and fixing the mind *intently* upon the idea or mental statement, that the new habit exists; picturing yourself, by an effort of the imagination, as being a man possessed of the desired qualities. You should “carry the thought” with you continually, picturing yourself as possessing the desired habit, in every leisure moment, day and night, and in other ways

acting out the belief. This is purely an action of the Passive mind, assisted by the imagination. It seems very simple, but the results which have been attained by it seem little short of marvelous. It is by far the easiest and one of the most effective methods of making over your character. The imagined thing becomes a reality in a comparatively short time, and action follows upon the heels of thought.

In my opinion the combination of auto-suggestion and Thought Absorption affords the ideal treatment in Character Building. If persisted in it will accomplish the most marked results in a comparatively short space of time, the effect being felt from the very first. Do not pass over this lightly because it seems so simple. It is a secret worth thousands of dollars to you, and one which you would not part with for any money, once you have experienced its benefits.

I will now give you a brief explanation of the several methods above referred to.

Let us take the Fear (worry) thought-habit, as an illustration. It affords an excellent illustration of a bad habit of thought, for it does more to unfit one for the duties of life than all the rest of the bad thoughts combined, and also brings with it the vile brood of miserable weakening thought-habits of which it is the parent. The man who has torn out by the roots the vile Fearthought (worry-thought) has progressed a long distance on the road to Freedom. Fearthought never helped anyone, and never will; but it has wrecked the careers of thousands of men and women, paralyzing their energies, preventing their progress, enfeebling their minds, and diseasing their bodies. We have all felt it, and those of us who have banished it would not return to its thralldom under any con-

sideration. Life is an entirely different thing to the man who has rooted out this noxious weed. He becomes an entirely different order of being. Most of the things we fear never occur; and the few that do occur can be routed by a bold front, aided by the strength which the absence of Fear and Worry imparts. The energy and vital force wasted on Worry is more than sufficient to enable us to conquer our *real* troubles when they occur. You remember the tale of the old man, on his death-bed, giving his son good advice, who said: "John, I have lived eighty years and have had many troubles, *the majority of which never occurred.*" The old man merely voiced the experience of all men or women who have lived to old age. The moral is obvious.

I will suppose that you are a victim to Fearthought (and I am very likely correct) and that you are about to try the four several plans of ridding yourself of it. I will suppose you will try them in turn, one after the other.

You will first try the power of the Will, and will say to yourself: "*I will not Fear,*" "*I command fear to depart.*" This is the heroic remedy. I shall not go into details of this treatment. You know all about it already. You have all tried it.

You will next try the effect of Hypnotic Suggestion, and will employ a good suggestionist who will place you in an easy position; cause you to relax every muscle; quiet every nerve and assume a state of mental calm; and who, having secured your undivided, concentrated attention, will give you strong, repeated suggestions of Fearlessness, Courage, Hopefulness, Confidence, etc. The capable suggestionist will study each case closely, and by carefully selected, and properly admin-

istered suggestions, will plant the seed of the new thought-habit which is designed to supplant and crowd out the old one. Splendid results are obtained by this line of treatment. The writer has cured many persons of undesirable thought-habits in this way, when they felt that they preferred outside help. He has also used this form of treatment in order to get the patient started on the right mental path; to give him confidence in himself and in the efficacy of this form of mental development; and then instructed him in the theory and practice of auto-suggestion and Thought Absorption, leaving him to finish the fight himself.

You will then try the power of auto-suggestion, by constantly repeating to yourself the words: "I am Fearless;" "I am Confident;" "I have abolished Fear;" "I Fear Nothing," etc. These auto-suggestions must be made earnestly, just as if you were suggesting to another person, and you must endeavor to live up to them. Let your Passive mind see that you believe what you say, and it will have confidence in your statements, and, accepting them as correct, will act accordingly. If you go about this practice in good faith and in earnest, you will notice an improvement from the first. You must remember, however, that if the Passive mind thrusts a Worry thought upon your consciousness, you must redouble your assertion of Fearlessness, until the intruder retreats. This may bother you at the first, for the Worry thought is pretty confident of a friendly reception, but like any other mangy cur, it will soon learn that you carry a club, and will beat a hasty retreat at the mere sight of it. Carry this idea of the cur and the club in your mind, and you will have but little trouble with the brute. You will learn to despise the Worry thought

as you do the snarling, snapping cur, and will not hesitate to deal him a good sound whack with your mental club, provided he stays long enough to be hit. He will soon retreat with his tail between his legs, and will thereafter manifest a wholesome respect for the club. Don't wait until he actually bothers you, but get in the habit of reaching out for the club at the first sight of the yellow hide of the mongrel.

And now you are ready to try the effects of Thought Absorption. In this case you place yourself in the suggestible, passive condition, just as you did at the bidding of the suggestionist when he was preparing to give you helpful suggestions. The more passive you become, the better will be the effect. In other words, you relax, let go, and become perfectly passive, bodily and mentally. You thus relieve the Active mind from duty, and allow the Passive mind to have undisputed control. You then carry the thoughts of "I am Fearless," and the others above given, calmly and firmly. You also picture yourself, in your imagination, as being Fearless, acting fearlessly, having moral and physical courage, and as driving away the Worry mongrel with your mental club. Give your imagination full scope, but hold it down to the desired line of thought. You will find the exercises in Concentration most valuable here. You also will carry the thought of Fearlessness with you all the time, and endeavor to *act* the part naturally. I mean just what I say; *act* the part just as does the actor when he assumes a role. The assumed character will soon become more real, and in time will be the "real thing" with you. After a little practice, it will become second nature to you, and eventually will become your *real* nature.

As I have said before, the combination of Thought Absorption and Auto-Suggestion forms the ideal treatment in Character Building. I will close this lesson with a few exercises designed to aid you in Thought Absorption. Do not forget to practice the Concentration exercises, but do not wait to master them before commencing your fight on the Fearthought cur. Commence this fight at once. Cut your club to-day, and just "lay" for the brute. Once get him out of the way, and you will be able to pursue the study of this subject, without the annoyance of having him around, howling and yelping at you.

The treatment for lack of Energy, Confidence, Perseverance, etc., is identical with that directed for Fearthought, the words of the auto-suggestions and affirmations, of course, being altered to suit the particular case.

THE PRACTICE OF THOUGHT ABSORPTION.

1. Find a secure, quiet place, as far as possible removed from the scenes and sounds of the outside world. If the ideal conditions cannot be secured, you must content yourself with the best obtainable conditions. The idea is to shut out the distracting impressions, and enable you to be alone with *yourself*.

2. Place yourself on a couch, bed or easy chair, obtaining a position of absolute ease and comfort. Relax every muscle; withdraw the tension from every nerve; allow yourself to be perfectly "limp" all over, from head to feet. Breathe deeply and slowly, retaining the breath for several moments before expelling it; continue the deep breathing until a feeling of calm, restful quiet manifests itself.

3. Concentrate your whole attention inwardly upon yourself, shutting out all

outside impressions. Concentration exercises will enable you to do this.

4. Having obtained the proper conditions of bodily and mental relaxation, fix your thought firmly, calmly and steadily upon the word "FEARLESS," letting its outward form sink into your mind, as the die into the wax. Give yourself up to the thought and the word. Then think of the *meaning* of the word, the characteristics of a person possessing that quality, etc.

5. Form the mental picture of yourself possessed of the desired quality, act it out in your mind, as in a dream; think of yourself doing certain things by reason of the possession of the quality; see yourself in your relations to other men and women, you being possessed of the desired quality. In short, indulge in a pleasant "day dream," having for its theme your possession of the quality desired. Give your imagination full sway, merely insisting upon it sticking to the text, and its always showing you successful in the scenes and occurrences of the dream. Always conclude this "dream" with a strong impression and thought of "I AM." This will give you additional strength and confidence. In fact, it is better to alternate the thought of the quality, with the idea and recognition of the "I AM."

6. Repeat these exercises as often as possible. It is like the dripping of the water on the stone. The repeated thought takes root and grows rapidly. It is a good plan to practice this exercise when you retire for the night, and also during your waking hours at night, if you have any. The exercise will not keep you from slumber, but will rather tend to induce the desire for sleep. If you feel yourself dropping into a doze, do not resist it, as the impression which you carry with you into

sleep will dwell with you, and will do its work even while you are slumbering.

In the above exercises, I have used the word "Fearless" and its accompanying thought, to illustrate the process of inducing Thought Absorption. You will understand that you are to use the word expressing the quality of which you are desirous of acquiring. If you wish to rid yourself of an undesirable quality, select the word expressing the opposite thought. For instance, if you are inclined to be indolent, select the word "Active" or "Energy," etc., and so on. You must remember that when we wish to brighten a room, we do not have to drive out the darkness first; we merely open the blinds and admit the light, and lo, the darkness has departed. Do not bother about the undesirable thoughts, but concentrate on their opposites, and the positive will neutralize the negative. Do not become discouraged if the results do not come as soon as you would like. Remember, they are *sure* to come in time. All that you require is repeated practice. The mind can be developed just as can be the muscle, and by the same process—continued practice.

You have been given the means of remedying your defects. If you do not avail yourself of its benefits, it is simply *because you do not want to*. If you have Desire strong within you, you will do it. If you lack the strong desire, I can not help you. If you prefer to sell your glorious birthright of Mental Control for the mess of pottage of present indulgence, that is your own business. You are your own master. **MAKE OF YOURSELF WHAT YOU WILL.**

"What on earth are you doing with that little water can, Freddie?"

"Sprinkling the baby's head so his hair'll sprout."

Sir Wm. Crookes on Telepathy.

The Light of Truth prints an extract from the address of Sir William Crookes before the British Association for the advancement of science. Speaking of his former work on psychic science, he says that if he were now introducing for the first time these inquiries he would choose a different starting point—*telepathy*. While the phenomena have not reached the scientific stage of certainty, he points out the direction in which scientific investigation can legitimately advance. Between the physical change in the brain of the suggestor and the brain of the recipient there must exist a train of physical causes. Such a train of causes can occur only through an intervening medium. The ether could be such a medium. The structure of the brain and nerve being similar, it is conceivable there may be present masses of *nerve coherers* in the brain whose special function it may be to receive impulses brought from without through the connecting sequence of ether waves of appropriate order of magnitude.

Young Housewife—Any liver today, Mr. Bones?

Butcher—Yes, madam.

Young Housewife—Then I'll take ten pounds; but please see that it is not that wretched, torpid kind, which the doctors say is the cause of so much disease.—*Raymond's Monthly*.

Fuddy—Mrs. Deadeasy always speaks of her physician, Dr. Serum, as an "old war horse." Isn't it odd?

Duddy—Oh, I don't know; they say he is a terrible charger, and he's always on hand at the finish.