



I'd like to tell you about the strangest secret in the world. Not long ago, Albert Schweitzer, the great Doctor and Nobel Prize winner was being interviewed in London and a reporter asked him, "Doctor, what's wrong with men today?" The great doctor was silent a moment, and then he said, "Men simply don't think!" And it's about this that I want to talk with you.

We live today in a golden age. This is an era that man has looked forward, dreamed of, and worked toward for thousands of years. But since it's here, we pretty well take it for granted.

We in America are particularly fortunate to live in the richest land that ever existed on the face of the earth, a land of abundant opportunity for everyone. But do you know what happens?

Let's take 100 men who start even at the age of 25. Do you have any idea what will happen to those men by the time

they are 65? These 100 men who all start even at the age of 25 believe they're going to be successful.

If you asked any one of these men if he wanted to be a success, he'd tell you that he did, and you'd notice that he was eager toward life; that there was a certain sparkle to his eye, an erectness to his carriage, and life seemed like a pretty interesting adventure to him.

But by the time they're 65, one will be rich. Four will be financially independent, five will still be working, 54 will be broke. Now, think a moment. Out of the 100, only five make the grade.

WHY DO SO MANY FAIL?

What has happened to the sparkle that was there when they were 25? What's become of the dreams, the hopes, the plans? And why is there such a large disparity between what these men intended to do, and what they actually accomplished?

When we say about 5% achieve success, we have to define success. And here's the definition:

**Success is the progressive
realization of a worthy ideal.**

If a man is working toward a pre-determined goal and knows where he's going, that man is a success. If he's not doing that, he's a failure. **Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal.**

Rollo May, the distinguished psychiatrist wrote a wonderful book called "Man's Search for Himself." In this book, he says the opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice. It is conformity.

And there you have the trouble today. It's conformity, people acting like everyone else without knowing why, without knowing where they're going.

Now think of it. In America right now, there are over 40 million people 65 years of age and over, and about 30

million of this 40 million are broke. They're dependent on someone else for life's necessities.

Now we learn to read by the time we're seven. We learn to make a living by the time we're 25. Usually, by that time, we're not only making a living we're supporting a family. And yet, by the time we're 65, we haven't learned how to become financially independent in the richest land that has ever been known.

Why? We conform.

The trouble is that we're acting like the wrong percentage group, the 95% who don't succeed.

NOW WHY DO THESE PEOPLE CONFORM?

Well, they don't know really. These people believe that their lives are shaped by circumstances, by things that happen to them by exterior forces, they're outer-directed people.

A survey was made one time that covered a lot of men, working men, and these men were asked this questions:

“Why do you work?”

“Why do you get up in the morning?”

19 out of 20 had no idea. If you ask them they will say, “Everyone goes to work in the morning,” and that’s the reason they do it – because everyone else is doing it.

Now, let’s get back to our definition of success.

WHO SUCCEEDS?

The only man who succeeds is the man who is progressively realizing a worthy ideal. He is the man who says, “I am going to become this,” and then begins to work towards that goal.

I’ll tell you who the successful people are:

- The success is the school teacher who is teaching school because that’s what he wanted to do.

- The success is the woman who is a wife and mother because she wanted to become a wife and mother and is doing a good job of it.
- The success is the man who runs the corner gas station because that's what he wanted to do.
- The success is the successful salesman who wants to become a top notch salesman and grow and build with his organization.
- A success is anyone who is doing deliberately a pre-determined job because that's what he decided to do deliberately. But only 1 out of 20 does that.

That's why today there isn't really any competition unless we make it for ourselves. Instead of competing, all we have to do is create.

Now for 20 years, I looked for the key which would determine what would happen to a human being. Was

there a key, I wanted to know, which would make the future a promise that we could foretell to a large extent?

WAS THERE A KEY THAT WOULD GUARANTEE A PERSON'S BECOMING SUCCESSFUL IF HE ONLY KNEW ABOUT IT AND KNEW HOW TO USE IT?

Well, there is such a key. And I found it.

Have you ever wondered why so many men work so hard and honestly without ever achieving anything in particular, and others don't seem to work hard and yet seem to get everything? They have a magic touch.

You've heard them say that about someone. "Everything he touches turns to gold."

Have you ever noticed that a man who becomes successful tends to continue to become successful? And on the other hand, have you noticed how a man who's a failure tends to continue to fail?

it's because of goals. Some of us have them; some don't. People with goals succeed because they know where they're going.

Now think of a ship leaving a harbor and think of it with a complete voyage mapped out and planned. The captain and crew know exactly where it's going and how long it will take. It has a definite goal. 9,999 times out of 10,000 it will get to where it started out to get.

Now let's take another ship, just like the first, only let's not put a crew on it, or a captain at the helm. Let's give it no aiming point, no goal, and no destination. We just start the engines and let it go.

I think you'll agree with me that if it gets out of the harbor at all, it will either sink or wind up on some deserted beach, a derelict. It can't go any place because it has no destination and no guidance.

It's the same with a human being. Take the salesman for example. There is no other person in the world today with the future of a good salesman.

Selling is the world's highest paid profession, if we're good at it and if we know where we're going. Every company needs top-notch salesmen, and they reward those men. The sky is the limit for them. But how many can you find? Someone once said the human race is fixed. Not to prevent the strong from winning, but to prevent the weak from losing.

The American economy today can be likened to a convoy in time of war. The entire economy is slowed down to protect its weakest link, just as the convoy had to go at the speed that would permit its slowest vessel to remain in formation. That's why it's so easy to make a living today. It takes no particular brains or talent to make a living and support a family today. So we have a plateau of so-called security, if that's what person is looking for.

But we do have to decide how high above this plateau we want to aim for.

Now let's get back to the Strangest Secret in the World, the story that I wanted to tell you today.

WHY DO MEN WITH GOALS SUCCEED IN LIFE, AND MEN WITHOUT THEM FAIL?

Well, let me tell you something which, if you really understand it, will alter your life immediately.

If you understand completely what I'm going to tell you from this moment on, your life will never be the same again. You will suddenly find that good luck just seems to be attracted to you, the things you want just seem to fall in line.

And from now on you won't have the problems, the worries, the gnawing lump of anxiety that perhaps you've experienced before. Doubt, fear, well, they will be things of the past.

Here is the key to success and the key to failure.

1- We become what we think about.

Now let me say that again. **We become what we think about.**

Throughout all history, the great wise men and teachers, philosophers, and prophets have disagreed with one another on many different things. It is only on this one point that they are in complete and unanimous agreement.

Listen to what **Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman Emperor, said, he said:**

“A man’s life is what his thoughts make of it.”

Benjamin Disraeli said this:

“Everything comes if a man will only wait. I’ve brought myself by long meditation to the conviction that a human being with a settled purpose must accomplish it, and that

nothing can resist a will that will stake even existence for its fulfillment.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson said this:

“A man is what he thinks about all day long.”

William James said:

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.”

And he also said, “We need only in cold blood act as if the thing in question were real, and it will become infallibly real by growing into such a connection with our life that it will become real. It will become so knit with habit and emotion that our interests in it will be those which characterize belief.”

He also said this, “If you only care enough for a result, you will almost certainly attain it. If you wish to be rich, you

will be rich. If you wish to be learned, you will be learned. If you wish to be good, you will be good. Only you must, then, really wish these things, and wish them exclusively, and not wish at the same time a hundred other incompatible things just as strongly.”

In the Bible you will read in Mark 9:23:

“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale said this:

“This is one of the greatest laws in the universe. Fervently do I wish I had discovered it as a very young man. It dawned upon me much later in life, and I found it to be one of the greatest, if not my greatest discovery outside of my relationship to God.”

And the great law briefly and simply stated is that:

If you think in negative terms, you will get negative results.
If you think in positive terms, you will achieve positive results.

That is the simple fact, which is at the basis of an astonishing law of prosperity and success.

In three words:

“Believe and Succeed.”

William Shakespeare put it this way:

“Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.”

George Bernard Shaw said:

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can’t find them, make them.

Well, it's pretty apparent, isn't it? And every person who discovered this, for a while, believed that he was the first one to work it out.

"We become what we think about."

Now it stands to reason that a person who is thinking about a concrete and worthwhile goal is going to reach it, because that's what he's thinking about. And we become what we think about.

Conversely, the man who has no goal, who doesn't know where he is going, and whose thoughts must therefore be thoughts of confusion, anxiety, fear, and worry becomes what he thinks about. His life becomes one of frustration, fear, anxiety, and worry. And if he thinks about nothing, he becomes nothing.

Now how does it work?

WHY DO WE BECOME WHAT WE THINK ABOUT?

Well I'll tell you how it works as far as we know. Now to do this I want to tell you about a situation that parallels the human mind.

Suppose a farmer has some land. And it's good fertile land. Now the land gives the farmer a choice. He may plant in that land whatever he chooses. The land doesn't care. It's up to the farmer to make the decision.

Now remember we are comparing the human mind with the land because, the mind, like the land, doesn't care what you plant in it. It will return what you plant, but it doesn't care what you plant.

Now let's say that the farmer has two seeds in his hand: one is a seed of corn, the other is nightshade, a deadly poison. He digs two little holes in the earth and he plants both seeds, one corn, the other nightshade. He covers up the holes, waters, and takes care of the land.

And what will happen? Invariably, the land will return what is planted. As it's written in the Bible, **“As ye sow, so shall ye reap.”**

Remember, the land doesn't care. It will return poison in just as wonderful abundance as it will corn. So up come the two plants – one corn, one poison.

The human mind

Now the human mind is far more fertile, far more incredible and mysterious than the land, but it works the same way. It doesn't care what we plant success... failure. A concrete, worthwhile goal or confusion, misunderstanding, fear, anxiety, and so on. But what we plant it will return to us.

You see the human mind is the last great unexplored continent on the earth. It contains riches beyond our wildest dreams. It will return anything we want to plant.