

# Thought Factor

## The Ultimate Success Secret

Understanding and Unleashing the Power  
of Thinking for Achieving Your Goals...

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## **THE THOUGHT FACTOR**

**BY RICHARD HARGREAVES**

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BASED ON  
AS A MAN THINKETH  
BY  
JAMES ALLEN

*Mind is the Master power that moulds and makes,  
And people are Mind, and evermore they take  
The tool of Thought, and, shaping what they will,  
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills:  
They think in secret, and it comes to pass:  
Environment is but their looking glass.*

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## ***ORIGINAL FOREWORD BY JAMES ALLEN***

This little volume (the result of meditation and experience) is not intended as an exhaustive treatise on the much-written-upon subject of the power of thought. It is suggestive rather than explanatory, its object being to stimulate men and women to the discovery and perception of the truth that--

"They themselves are makers of themselves."

By virtue of the thoughts, which they choose and encourage; that mind is the master-weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance, and that, as they may have hitherto woven in ignorance and pain they may now weave in enlightenment and happiness.

## ***NEW FOREWORD BY RICHARD HARGREAVES***

**(from press release)**

A century old classic best selling motivational/inspirational book, *As A Man Thinketh*, has been updated and modernised to celebrate the book's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Says new author and former Mr Australia, Richard Hargreaves, "The original, by James Allen, is a classic best seller, with messages as valid today as they were in 1904 when it was written. But although the message is timeless...the language has dated." For this reason Richard has modernised the language...but still retained the original message and spirit of the text.... which is "All that we achieve and all that we fail to achieve is the direct result of our own thoughts." James Allen said that a person's mind is like a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated, or allowed to run wild. Either way, the garden will bring forth. You are what you think, and by controlling your thoughts and what goes into your mind, you have the ability to control life's outcomes. The updated book has been given a new title, "Thought Factor". Says Richard; I was browsing at books on Amazon.com and reading some reviews. I came across the original *As A Man Thinketh* text and started reading what people had to say about it. Although the original was getting glowing reviews as to its profound and inspiring message...not all could readily understand it. Additionally, the book's sexist title, and continual reference to the male gender, makes it politically incorrect in today's age. One reader and fan of the book expressed initial difficulty in getting into it because of the old style language. "My first impression of this book after the first chapter was that there were way too many elaborate and confusing words. I felt overwhelmed and just wanted to forget about the book; it wasn't worth looking up all the words I didn't know just to try to possibly comprehend what the author was trying to get across." (From an Amazon.com review by Jess Baxter Scottsdale, AZ USA) Says Richard... "I thought that's a shame that such a powerful little book with such a timeless inspiring message, which influenced me greatly when I first read it 15 years ago, was not having the maximum impact it could for the simple reason that we speak and write differently to people a century ago. With this in mind I rewrote the book's timeless message in today's language...still retaining the original essence, but expressed in terms more easily understood and accessible to today's modern generation. *As A Man Thinketh* has influenced many contemporary writers including Anthony Robbins, Denis Waitley, Earl

Nightingdale, and Dr Norman Vincent Peale, among others. To indicate just how well respected and revered the original is...Here's what some notable heavyweights in the self-improvement field have had to say about this classic book...said to be the instigator of today's multi million dollar personal development industry.

**"I have personally read As a Man Thinketh over 25 times. Timeless material." - Mark Victor Hansen, co-author, the Chicken Soup books**

***"I read As a Man Thinketh once a year for over 15 years when I was in my 20s and 30s." - Paul J. Meyer, recognized as one of the leading self-improvement authors of all time***

**"Some books are so good and meaningful that you read them again and again. Primarily because you know the substance and content are so important that you need to be reminded of what it has to say. As A Man Thinketh, by James Allen is just such a book." - Book Review, Michigan Chronicle**

***"Beyond the New Testament, the Old Testament and other books documenting the beliefs of the greatest religions of the world, there is one little book that impacted my life dramatically during my formative teenage years. The book is As A Man Thinketh, the most widely acclaimed...book written by James Allen, who might be likened to the Norman Vincent Peale or Earl Nightingale of the late 1800's." - Denis Waitley, Apollo astronaut's psychologist and author of The Psychology of Winning, the best selling audio program in the world.***

**Og Mandino counted "As a Man Thinketh" among the top ten success books of all time. Says Richard "I'll probably outrage some purists who reckon the original shouldn't be touched...but I haven't altered the meaning of the message, and I think my version is easier to understand. If the message in my version is more accessible to today's generation, then it's worth copping any flack. Why not read it today and put its wisdom to work for you"**

# **THE THOUGHT FACTOR**

## ***THOUGHT AND CHARACTER***

THE aphorism, "As a person thinks in their heart so are they," not only embraces the whole of a person's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of their life. A person is literally what they think, their character being the complete sum of all their thoughts.

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

Act is the blossom of thought, and joy and suffering are its fruits; thus does a person harvest in the sweet and bitter result of their own cultivation.

"Thought in the mind has made us, what we are by thought was wrought and built. If a person's mind has evil thoughts, pain comes on them as comes the cart behind the horse....  
If one endures in purity of thought, joy follows them as their own shadow, for sure."

A person is a growth by law, and not a creation by ingenuity, Cleverness or skill; and cause and effect is as absolute and undeviating in the hidden realm of thought as in the world of visible and material things. A noble and Pure character is not a thing of favour or chance, but is the natural result of continued effort in right thinking, the effect of long-cherished association with Pure thoughts. A cowardly and bestial character, by the same process, is the result of the continued harbouring of grovelling thoughts.

A person is made or unmade by themself; in the armoury of thought they forge the weapons by which they destroy themself; they also fashion the tools with which they build for themself heavenly characteristics of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application of



thought, a person ascends to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, they descend below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes are all the grades of character, and a persons thoughts is their maker and master.

Of all the beautiful truths pertaining to the soul which have been restored and brought to light in their age, none is more gladdening or fruitful of divine promise and confidence than there--that people are the master of thought, the moulder of character, and the maker and shaper of condition, environment, and destiny.

As a being of Power, Intelligence, and Love, and the master of their own thoughts, every person holds the key to every situation, and contains within themselves that transforming and regenerative agency by which they may make themselves what they will.

People are always the master, even in their weaker and most abandoned state; but in their weakness and degradation they are the foolish master who misgoverns their "household." When they begin to reflect upon their condition, and to search diligently for the Law upon which their being is established, they then become the wise master, directing their energies with intelligence, and fashioning their thoughts to fruitful issues. Such is the conscious master, and people can only thus become by discovering within themselves the laws of thought; which discovery is totally a matter of application, self analysis, and experience.

Only by much searching and mining, are gold and diamonds obtained, and people can find every truth connected with their being, if they will dig deep into the mine of their soul; and that they are the maker of their character, the moulder of their life, and the builder of their destiny, they may unerringly prove, if they will watch, control, and alter their thoughts, tracing their effects upon themselves, upon others, and upon their life and circumstances, linking cause and effect by patient practice and investigation, and utilizing their every experience, even to the most trivial, everyday occurrence, as a means of obtaining that knowledge of themselves which is Understanding, Wisdom, Power. In their direction, as in no other, is the law absolute that "He that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened;" for only by patience, practice, and ceaseless persistence can a person enter the Door of the Temple of Knowledge.

## ***EFFECT OF THOUGHT ON CIRCUMSTANCES***

A PERSON'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 weeds.

Just as a gardener cultivates their plot, keeping it free from weeds, and growing the flowers and fruits which they require, so may a person tend the garden of their 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 person sooner or later discovers that they are the master-gardener of their soul, the director of their life. They also reveal, within themselves, the laws of thought, and understands, with ever-increasing accuracy, how the thought-forces and mind elements operate in the shaping of their character, circumstances, and destiny.

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 their inner state. This does not mean that a person's circumstances at any given time are an indication of their entire character, but that those circumstances are so intimately connected with some vital thought-element within themselves that, for the time being, they are indispensable to their development.

Every person is where they are by the law of their being; the thoughts which they have built into their character have brought them there, and in the arrangement of their life there is no element of chance, but all is the result of a law which cannot err. There is just as true of those who feel "out of harmony" with their surroundings as of those who are contented with them.

As a progressive and evolving being, people are where they are that they may learn that they may grow; and as they learn the spiritual lesson which any circumstance contains for them, it passes away and gives place to

other circumstances.

People are buffeted by circumstances so long as they believe themselves to be the creature of outside conditions, but when they realize that they are a creative power, and that they may command the hidden soil and seeds of their being out of which circumstances grow, they then become the rightful master of themselves.

That circumstances grow out of thought every person knows who has for any length of time practised self-control and self-purification, for they will have noticed that the alteration in their circumstances has been in exact ratio with their altered mental condition. So true is it that when a person earnestly applies themselves to remedy the defects in their character, and makes swift and marked progress, they pass rapidly through a succession of sudden or unexpected changes.

The soul attracts that which it secretly harbours; that which it loves, and also that which it fears; it reaches the height of its cherished aspirations; it falls to the level of its reprimandable desires, and circumstances are the means by which the soul receives its own.

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

The outer world of circumstance shapes itself to the inner world of thought, and both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions are factors, which make for the ultimate good of the individual. As the reaper of their own harvest, people learn both by suffering and bliss.

Following the inmost desires, aspirations, thoughts, by which they allow themselves to be dominated, {pursuing their will-o'-the-wisps (a delusive or misleading hope) of impure imaginings or steadfastly walking the highway of strong and high endeavour}, a person at last arrives at their fruition and fulfilment in the outer conditions of their life. The laws of growth and adjustment prevail.

A person does not end up in the poorhouse or the jail by the tyranny of fate or circumstance, but by the pathway of grovelling thoughts and base desires. Nor does a pure-minded person fall suddenly into crime by stress of any mere external force; the criminal thought had long been secretly fostered in the heart, and the hour of opportunity revealed its gathered power. Circumstance does not make the person; it reveals them to themselves. No such conditions can exist as descending into vice and its attendant sufferings apart from vicious inclinations, or ascending into virtue and its pure happiness without the continued cultivation of virtuous aspirations; and people, therefore, as the lord and master of thought, are the maker of themselves the shaper and author of environment. Even at birth the soul comes to its own and through every step of its earthly pilgrimage it attracts those combinations of conditions which reveal itself, which are the reflections of its own purity and, impurity, its strength and weakness.

People do not attract that which they want, but that which they are. Their whims, fancies, and ambitions are thwarted at every step, but their inmost thoughts and desires are fed with their own food, be it foul or clean. The "divinity that shapes our ends" is in ourselves; it is our very self. Only themselves shackles themselves : thought and action are the gaolers of Fate...they imprison, being base; they are also the angels of Freedom...they liberate, being noble. Not what he wishes and prays for does a person get, but what he justly earns. Their wishes and prayers are only gratified and answered when they harmonize with their thoughts and actions.

In the light of their truth, what, then, is the meaning of "fighting against circumstances?" It means that a person is continually revolting against an effect without, while all the time they are nourishing and preserving its cause in their heart. That cause may take the form of a conscious vice or an unconscious weakness; but whatever it is, it stubbornly retards the efforts of its possessor, and thus calls aloud for remedy.

People are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve themselves; they therefore remain bound. The person who does not shrink from self-crucifixion can never fail to accomplish the

object upon which their heart is set. This is as true of earthly as of heavenly things. Even the person whose sole object is to acquire wealth must be prepared to make great personal sacrifices before he can accomplish their object; and how much more so he who would realize a strong and well-poised life?

Here is a person who is wretchedly poor. They are extremely anxious that their surroundings and home comforts should be improved, yet all the time they shirk their work, and consider they are justified in trying to deceive their employer on the ground of the insufficiency of their wages. Such a person does not understand the simplest rudiments of those principles which are the basis of true prosperity, and is not only totally unfitted to rise out of their wretchedness, but is actually attracting to themselves a still deeper wretchedness by dwelling in, and acting out, indolent, deceptive, fearful, shrinking, and resentful thoughts.

Here is a rich person who is the victim of a painful and persistent disease as the result of gluttony. They are willing to give large sums of money to get rid of it, but they will not sacrifice their gluttonous desires. They want to gratify their taste for rich and unnatural foods and have their health as well. Such a person is totally unfit to have health, because they have not yet learned the first principles of a healthy life.

Here is an employer of labour who adopts crooked measures to avoid paying the regulation wage, and, in the hope of making larger profits, reduces the wages of their workpeople. Such a person is altogether unfit for prosperity, and when they find themselves bankrupt, both as regards reputation and riches, they blame circumstances, not knowing that they are the sole author of their condition.

I have introduced these three cases merely as illustrative of the truth that a person is the causer (though nearly always is unconsciously) of their circumstances, and that, whilst aiming at a good end, they are continually frustrating its accomplishment by encouraging thoughts and desires which cannot possibly harmonize with that end. Such cases could be multiplied and varied almost indefinitely, but this

is not necessary, as the reader can, if they so resolve, trace the action of the laws of thought in their own mind and life, and until this is done, mere external facts cannot serve as a ground of reasoning.

Circumstances, however, are so complicated... thought is so deeply rooted, and the conditions of happiness vary so vastly with individuals...that a person's entire soul-condition (although it may be known to himself) cannot be judged by another from the external aspect of their life alone. A person may be honest in certain directions, yet suffer Lack of the basic necessities or comforts of life.; a person may be dishonest in certain directions, yet acquire wealth; but the conclusion usually formed that the one person fails because of their particular honesty, and that the other prospers because of their particular dishonesty, is the result of a superficial judgment, which assumes that the dishonest person is almost totally corrupt, and the honest person almost entirely virtuous. In the light of a deeper knowledge and wider experience such judgment is found to be erroneous. The dishonest person may have some admirable virtues, which the other does not possess; and the honest person obnoxious vices which are absent in the other. The honest person reaps the good results of their honest thoughts and acts; he also brings upon himself the sufferings, which their vices produce. The dishonest person likewise acquires their own suffering and happiness.

It is pleasing to human vanity to believe that one suffers because of one's virtue; but not until a person has totally abolished and pulled out by the roots every sickly, bitter, and impure thought from their mind, and washed every sinful stain from their soul, can they be in a position to know and declare that their sufferings are the result of their good, and not of their bad qualities; and on the way to, yet long before they have reached, that supreme perfection, they will have found, working in their mind and life, the Great Law which is absolutely just, and which cannot, therefore, give good for evil, evil for good. Possessed of such knowledge, they will then know, looking back upon their past ignorance and blindness, that their life is, and always was, justly ordered, and that all their past experiences, good and bad, were the equitable outworking of their evolving, yet unevolved self.

Good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results; bad

thoughts and actions can never produce good results. This is but saying that nothing can come from corn but corn, nothing from nettles but nettles. People understand this law in the natural world, and work with it; but few understand it in the mental and moral world (though its operation there is just as simple and undeviating), and they, therefore, do not co-operate with it. Suffering is always the effect of wrong thought in some direction. It is an indication that the individual is out of harmony with himself, with the Law of their being. The sole and supreme use of suffering is to purify, to burn out all that is useless and impure. Suffering ceases for those who are pure. There could be no object in burning gold after the dross (worthless waste) had been removed, and a perfectly pure and enlightened being could not suffer.

The circumstances, which a person encounters with suffering, are the result of their own mental disharmony. The circumstances, which a person encounters with blessedness, are the result of their own mental harmony. Blessedness, not material possessions, is the measure of right thought; wretchedness, not lack of material possessions, is the measure of wrong thought. A person may be cursed and rich; he may be blessed and poor. Blessedness and riches are only joined together when the riches are rightly and wisely used; and the poor person only descends into wretchedness when he regards their lot as a burden unjustly imposed.

Poverty, and indulgence are the two extremes of wretchedness. They are both equally unnatural and the result of mental disorder. A person is not rightly conditioned until they are a happy, healthy, and prosperous being; and happiness, health, and prosperity are the result of a harmonious adjustment of the inner with the outer, of the person with their surroundings.

A person only begins to be a person when he ceases to whine and revile, and commences to search for the hidden justice which regulates their life. And as they adapt their mind to that regulating factor, they cease to accuse others as the cause of their condition, and build themselves up in strong and noble thoughts; ceases to kick against circumstances, but begins to use them as aids to their more rapid progress, and as a means of discovering the hidden powers and

possibilities within themself.

Law, not confusion, is the dominating principle in the universe; justice, not injustice, is the soul and substance of life; and righteousness, not corruption, is the moulding and moving force in the spiritual government of the world. This being so, people have but to right themself to find that the universe is right; and during the process of putting themself right they will find that as they alter their thoughts towards things and other people, things and other people will alter towards them.

The proof of this truth is in every person, and it therefore admits of easy investigation by systematic introspection and self-analysis. Let a person radically alter their thoughts, and they will be astonished at the rapid transformation it will effect in the material conditions of their life. People imagine that thought can be kept secret, but it cannot; it rapidly crystallizes into habit, and habit solidifies into circumstance. Bestial thoughts crystallize into habits of drunkenness and sensuality, which solidify into circumstances of destitution and disease: impure thoughts of every kind crystallize into enervating and confusing habits, which solidify into distracting and adverse circumstances: thoughts of fear, doubt, and indecision crystallize into weak, unpersonly, and irresolute habits, which solidify into circumstances of failure, indigence, and slavish dependence: lazy thoughts crystallize into habits of uncleanness and dishonesty, which solidify into circumstances of foulness and beggary: hateful and condemnatory thoughts crystallize into habits of accusation and violence, which solidify into circumstances of injury and persecution: selfish thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of self-seeking, which solidify into circumstances more or less distressing. On the other hand, beautiful thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of grace and kindliness, which solidify into comfortable, pleasant and sunny circumstances: pure thoughts crystallize into habits of moderation and self-control, which solidify into circumstances of calmness, peace and freedom from worry: thoughts of courage, self-reliance, and decision crystallize into noble and dignified habits, which solidify into circumstances of success, plenty, and freedom: energetic thoughts crystallize into habits of cleanliness and industry, which solidify into circumstances of pleasantness:



gentle and forgiving thoughts crystallize into habits of gentleness, which solidify into protective and preservative circumstances: loving and unselfish thoughts crystallize into habits of unselfishness for others, which solidify into circumstances of sure and abiding prosperity and true riches.

A particular train of thought persisted in, be it good or bad, cannot fail to produce its results on the character and circumstances. A person cannot directly choose their circumstances, but they can choose their thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape their circumstances.

Nature helps every person to the gratification of the thoughts, which they most encourage, and opportunities are presented which will most speedily bring to the surface both the good and evil thoughts.

Let a person cease from their corrupt, evil and wicked thoughts, and all the world will soften towards them, and be ready to help them; let them put away their weakly and sickly thoughts, and surprise, opportunities will spring up on every hand to aid their strong resolves; let them encourage good thoughts, and no hard fate shall bind him down to wretchedness and shame. The world is your kaleidoscope, and the varying combinations of colours, which at every succeeding moment it presents to you are the exquisitely adjusted pictures of your ever-moving thoughts.

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

*It masters time, it conquers space;  
It upsets that boastful trickster, Chance,  
And bids the tyrant Circumstance  
Uncrown, and fill a servant's place.*

*The human Will, that force unseen,  
The offspring of a deathless Soul,  
Can carve a way to any goal,  
Though walls of granite intervene.*

*Be not impatient in delays  
But wait as one who understands;  
When spirit rises and commands  
The gods are ready to obey."*

## ***EFFECT OF THOUGHT ON HEALTH AND THE 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 person 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 soon shatter the nervous system.

Strong, pure, and happy thoughts build up the body in vigour 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.

People 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(dirty,corrupted, impure) mind proceeds a defiled life and a corrupt body. Thought is the fount(source) of action, life, and manifestation; make the fountain pure, and all will be pure.

Change of diet will not help a person who will not change their thoughts. When a person makes their thoughts pure, he no longer desires impure food.

Clean thoughts make clean habits. The so-called saint who does not wash their body is not a saint. He who has strengthened and purified their thoughts does not need to consider the harmful microbe.

If you would protect your body, guard your mind. If you would renew

your body, beautify your mind. Thoughts of malice, envy, disappointment, despondency, rob the body of its health and grace. A sour face does not come by chance; it is made by sour thoughts. Wrinkles that mar are drawn by folly, passion, and pride.

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

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

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

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

## ***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" up on 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-pitying, 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 person should conceive of a legitimate purpose in their heart, and set out to accomplish it. They should make their purpose the centralizing point of their thoughts. It may take the form of a spiritual ideal, or it may be a worldly object, according to their nature at the time being; but whichever it is, they should steadily focus their thought-forces upon the object, which they have set before them. They should make their purpose their supreme duty, and should devote themselves to its attainment, not allowing their thoughts to wander away into short lived fancies, longings, and imaginings. This is the royal road to self-control and true concentration of thought. Even if they fail again and again to accomplish their purpose (as they necessarily must until weakness is overcome), the strength of character gained will be the measure of their true success, and there will form a new starting-point for future power and triumph.

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

The weakest soul, knowing its own weakness, and believing this truth that strength can only be developed by effort and practice, will,

thus believing, at once begin to exert itself, and, adding effort to effort, patience to patience, and strength to strength, will never cease to develop, and will at last grow divinely strong.

As the physically weak person can make themselves strong by careful and patient training, so the person of weak thoughts can make them strong by exercising themselves in right thinking.

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

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

The will to do springs from the knowledge that we can do. Doubt and fear are the great enemies of knowledge, and those who encourage them, who do not slay them...thwart themselves at every step.

Those who have conquered doubt and fear have conquered failure. Their every thought is allied with power, and all difficulties are bravely met and wisely overcome. Their purposes are seasonably planted, and they bloom and bring forth fruit, which does not fall prematurely to the ground.

Thought allied fearlessly to purpose becomes creative force: those who know this are ready to become something higher and stronger than a mere bundle of wavering thoughts and fluctuating sensations; those who do this have become the conscious and intelligent wielder of their mental powers.

## ***THE THOUGHT-FACTOR IN ACHIEVEMENT***

All that a person achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of their own thoughts. In a justly ordered universe, where loss of equilibrium and balance would mean total destruction, individual responsibility must be absolute. A person's weakness and strength, purity and impurity, are their own, and not another person's; they are brought about by themselves, and not by another; and they can only be altered by themselves, never by another. Their condition is also their own, and not another person's. Their suffering and their happiness are evolved from within. As they think, so they are; as they continue to think, so they remain.

A strong person cannot help a weaker unless that weaker is willing to be helped, and even then the weak person must become strong of themselves; they must, by their own efforts, develop the strength which they admire in another. None but themselves can alter their condition.

It has been usual for people to think and to say, "Many people are slaves because one is an oppressor; let us hate the oppressor." Now, however, there is amongst an increasing few a tendency to reverse this judgment, and to say, "One person is an oppressor because many are slaves; let us despise the slaves."

The truth is that oppressor and slave are co-operators in ignorance, and, while seeming to afflict each other, are in reality afflicting themselves. A perfect Knowledge perceives the action of law in the weakness of the oppressed and the misapplied power of the oppressor; a perfect Love, seeing the suffering, which both states entail, condemns neither; a perfect Compassion embraces both oppressor and oppressed.

Those who have conquered weakness, and have put away all selfish thoughts, belongs neither to oppressor nor oppressed. They are free.

A person can only rise, conquer, and achieve by lifting up their thoughts. They can only remain weak, and low in status and condition, and miserable by refusing to lift up their thoughts.

Before a person can achieve anything, even in worldly things, they must lift their thoughts above slavish animal indulgence. They may not, in order to succeed, give up all animality and selfishness, by any means; but a portion of it must, at least, be sacrificed. A person whose first thought is bestial indulgence could neither think clearly nor plan methodically; they could not find and develop their latent resources, and would fail in any undertaking. Not having commenced to energetically and vigorously control their thoughts, they are not in a position to control affairs and to adopt serious responsibilities. They are not fit to act independently and stand alone. But they are limited only by the thoughts, which they choose.

There can be no progress, no achievement without sacrifice, and a person's worldly success will be in the measure that they sacrifice their confused animal thoughts, and fix their mind on the development of their plans, and the strengthening of their resolution and self-reliance. And the higher they lift their thoughts, the more noble, courageous, upright, and righteous they become, the greater will be their success, the more blessed and enduring will be their achievements.

The universe does not favour the greedy, the dishonest, the vicious, although on the mere surface it may sometimes appear to do so; it helps the honest, the unselfish, the courageously noble in mind and heart, the generous in forgiving, the virtuous. All the great Teachers of the ages have declared this in varying forms, and to prove and know it a person has but to persist in making themselves more and more virtuous by lifting up their thoughts.

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

Spiritual achievements are the consummation of holy aspirations. He who lives constantly in the conception of noble and lofty thoughts, who dwells upon all that is pure and unselfish, will, as surely as



the sun reaches its zenith(peak) and the moon its full, become wise and noble in character, and rise into a position of influence and blessedness.

Achievement, of whatever kind, is the crown of effort, the royal dignity of thought. By the aid of self-control, resolution, purity, righteousness, and well-directed thought a person ascends; by the aid of animality, laziness, impurity, corruption, and confusion of thought a person descends.

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

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

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

Those who would accomplish little must sacrifice little; those who would achieve much must sacrifice much; those who would attain highly must sacrifice greatly.

## ***VISIONS AND IDEALS***

THE dreamers are the saviours of the world. As the visible world is sustained by the invisible, so people, 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, labouring humanity would perish.

Those who cherish a beautiful vision, a lofty ideal in their 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.

To desire is to obtain; to aspire is to achieve. Shall a person's basest desires receive the fullest measure of gratification, and their purest aspirations starve for lack of sustenance? Such is not the Law: such a condition of things can never obtain: "ask and receive."

Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your Vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your Ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.

The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the

highest vision of the soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities.

Your circumstances may be uncongenial, but they shall not long remain so if you but perceive an Ideal and strive to reach it. You cannot travel within and stand still without. Here is a youth hard pressed by poverty and labour; confined long hours in an unhealthy workshop; unschooled, and lacking all the arts of refinement. But they dream of better things; they think of intelligence, of refinement, of grace and beauty. They conceive of, mentally build up, an ideal condition of life; the vision of a wider liberty and a larger scope takes possession of them; unrest urges them to action, and they utilize all their spare time and means, small though they are, to the development of their latent powers and resources. Very soon so altered has their mind become that the workshop can no longer hold them. It has become so out of harmony with their mentality that it falls out of their life as a garment is cast aside, and, with the growth of opportunities, which fit the scope of their expanding powers, they pass out of it forever. Years later we see this youth as a full-grown person. We find them a master of certain forces of the mind, which they wield with worldwide influence and almost unequalled power. In their hands they hold the cords of gigantic responsibilities; they speak, and lo, lives are changed; men and women hang upon their words and remould their characters, and, sun like, they become the fixed and luminous centre round which innumerable destinies revolve. They have realized the Vision of their youth. They have become one with their Ideal.

And you, too, youthful reader, will realize the Vision (not the idle wish) of your heart, be it base or beautiful, or a mixture of both, for you will always gravitate toward that which you, secretly, most love. Into your hands will be placed the exact results of your own thoughts; you will receive that which you earn; no more, no less. Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your Vision, your Ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire; as great as your dominant aspiration: in the beautiful words of Stanton Kirkham Davis, "You may be keeping accounts, and presently you shall walk out of the door that for so long has seemed to you the barrier of your ideals,

and shall find yourself before an audience--the pen still behind your ear, the ink stains on your fingers and then and there shall pour out the torrent of your inspiration. You may be driving sheep, and you shall wander to the city-or countryside and open-mouthed; shall wander under the intrepid guidance of the spirit into the studio of the master, and after a time he shall say, 'I have nothing more to teach you.' And now you have become the master, who did so recently dream of great things while driving sheep. You shall lay down the saw and the plane to take upon yourself the regeneration of the world."

The thoughtless, the ignorant, and the lethargic, seeing only the apparent effects of things and not the things themselves, talk of luck, of fortune, and chance. Seeing a person grow rich, they say, "How lucky they are!" Observing another become intellectual, they exclaim, "How highly favoured they are!" And noting the saintly character and wide influence of another, they remark, "How chance aids him at every turn!" They do not see the trials and failures and struggles which these people have voluntarily encountered in order to gain their experience; have no knowledge of the sacrifices they have made, of the undaunted efforts they have put forth, of the faith they have exercised, that they might overcome the apparently insurmountable, and realize the Vision of their heart. They do not know the darkness and the heartaches; they only see the light and joy, and call it "luck". They do not see the long and arduous journey, but only behold the pleasant goal, and call it "good fortune," do not understand the process, but only perceive the result, and call it chance.

In all human affairs there are efforts, and there are results, and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result. Chance is not. Gifts, powers, material, intellectual, and spiritual possessions are the fruits of effort; they are thoughts completed, objects accomplished, visions realized.

The Vision that you glorify in your mind, the Ideal that you enthrone in your heart--this you will build your life by, this you will become.

## ***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 person becomes calm in the measure that they understand themselves as a thought evolved being, for such knowledge necessitates the understanding of others as the result of thought, and as they develop a right understanding, and see more and more clearly the internal relations of things by the action of cause and effect they cease to fuss and fume and worry and grieve, and remain poised, steadfast, serene.

The calm person, having learned how to govern themselves, knows how to adapt themselves to others; and they, in turn, reverence their spiritual strength, and feel that they can learn of them and rely upon them. The more tranquil a person becomes, the greater is their success, their influence, their power for good. Even the ordinary trader will find their business prosperity increase as he develops a greater self-control and even-tempered composure, for people will always prefer to deal with a person whose demeanour is steady, serene, not easily disturbed and free from extremes.

The strong, calm person is always loved and revered. They are 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 possessing these blessings, for they are always sweet, serene, and calm. That exquisite poise of character, which we call serenity is the last lesson of culture, the harvest or crop of the soul. It is precious as wisdom, more to be desired than gold--yes, than even fine gold. How insignificant mere money seeking looks in comparison with a serene life--a life that dwells in the ocean of Truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of storms, in the Eternal Calm!

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

Yes, humanity surges with uncontrolled passion, is tumultuous with ungoverned grief, is blown about by anxiety and doubt only the wise person, only those whose thoughts are controlled and purified, makes the winds and the storms of the soul obey them.

Disturbed, tossed souls, wherever you may be, under whatsoever conditions you may live, know this in the ocean of life the isles of Blessedness are smiling, and the sunny shore of your ideal awaits your coming. Keep your hand firmly upon the helm of thought. In the bark of your soul reclines the commanding Master....sleeping: wake Him. Self-control is strength; Right Thought is mastery; Calmness is power. Say unto your heart, "Peace, be still!"

End

The Thought Factor by Richard Hargreaves

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