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Think and Grow Rich

This week, Life Training Online is reviewing [Think and Grow Rich](#), by Napoleon Hill, the ninth of fifty-two books in the [52 Personal Development Books in 52 Weeks](#) series.

Last week, I didn't have a chance to run to the bookstore to figure out which book I'd be reviewing for this week. So on Sunday evening, I noticed a book that's been sitting on the bookshelf for a while that I never had the opportunity to read. It's Napoleon Hill's **Think and Grow Rich**.

Another classic in the self-help genre (it was first published in 1937), this book is the end product of two decades of research of highly successful people conducted by Napoleon Hill.

Steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie (who was at the time equivalent to our Bill Gates) contacted Hill to write the Philosophy of Personal Achievement. Hill, using Carnegie's letter of instruction, then went forth to interview over five hundred successful people of that time, among those: Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, John D. Rockefeller, George Eastman, William Wrigley Jr. and Charles M. Schwab.

Hill then disclosed his findings in the form of the thirteen steps to success which make up the book, **Think and Grow Rich**.

Although the title suggests that this book deals exclusively with how to achieve monetary wealth, the author claims that the principles that are contained therein can be applied to achieving anything in life, as is the case with International Boxing Hall of Famer Ken [Norton](#). After initial failure, Norton attributes his beating Muhammed Ali to win the heavyweight title to the principles that he learned from **Think and Grow Rich**.

I'm excited to read this book and am surprised that after years of having this book collect dust on my shelves, that it would first come to my attention now. Perhaps

it's synchronicity and will be life changing for me or for one of you...let's find out this week!

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Think and Grow Rich: Chapters 1 - 5

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As you begin reading, you'll notice that the author uses language that sounds as if it were written early in the last century (that's because it was), but despite that, it remains very easy to follow — partly because he uses a lot of repetition and overlap throughout the book. However, unlike [The Millionaire Course's](#) distracting regurgitation, I found this repetition to be helpful in truly grasping the points that Hill sets forth. So enough with the intro, let's get going...

Thoughts are Things

I wonder how much the authors of [The Secret](#) ended up taking from **Think and Grow Rich**. This first chapter is basically a summary of the Law of Attraction. There's no doubt that Hill understood "the Secret." Here are some of the quotes:

Success comes to those who become success conscious. Failure comes to those who indifferently allow themselves to become failure conscious.

[Our] brains become magnetized with the dominating thoughts which we hold in our minds, and, by means with which no man is familiar, these "magnets" attract to us the forces, the people, the circumstances of life which harmonize with the nature of our dominating thoughts.

Sound familiar?

Desire (the 1st Principle of Success)

In order to achieve any kind of success, desire is the first step. Hill is not talking

about a mere wish or even a hope — these will never produce the needed energy required to achieve success.

For example, wishing doesn't bring riches. It's only when you desire riches with a state of mind that borders on obsession that you will ever come up with the plans and means to acquire those riches. And what's more, you must be able to back those plans with the kind of persistence which doesn't recognize failure.

Here are the six steps that will "turn your desires into gold":

1. Decide *exactly* how much money you desire to have
2. Decide exactly what you intend to give in return for the money you desire.
3. Decide when (an exact date) you intend to have this money.
4. Create a specific plan for carrying out your desire and immediately begin putting this plan into action.
5. Put all the previous four steps into one statement
6. Read your statement aloud, twice a day (once before going to bed and once when you wake up). As you read it — see, feel and believe yourself already in possession of the money.

According to Hill, it all comes down to being ready to receive what it is that you want. If you merely wish for something, you are not ready. Belief, plus a burning desire will cause you to be ready to receive.

Faith (the 2nd Principle of Success)

Faith can be defined as "knowing" something is true without having clear physical evidence of its existence. According to Hill, faith is an emotion which you can increase and develop through autosuggestion — the repeating of affirmations which take root in the subconscious mind. The more these impulses of thoughts are repeated, the more they influence and finally become accepted by the mind which eventually translates into its physical equivalent. To support his point, Hill quotes a famous criminologist:

When men first come into contact with crime, they abhor it. If they remain in contact with crime for a time, they become accustomed to it, and endure it. If they remain in contact with it long enough, they finally embrace it, and become influenced by it.

By learning to take your thoughts and adding to them strong emotion, mixed with

faith, those thoughts will immediately begin to translate themselves to their physical counterparts.

Autosuggestion (the 3rd Principle of Success)

Autosuggestion is none other than the choice to communicate from your conscious mind to your subconscious mind. Hill uses the example of **[your mind being likened to a fertile plot of land](#)**. If left unto itself, the weeds of negative thought will grow in abundance. However, we all have the ability and agency to determine what types of “thought seeds” — be they productive or invasive — enter into our minds. Autosuggestion is the tool whereby you can specifically plant those seeds of thought which grow into positive outcomes and eventual success.

The technique of autosuggestion is none other than reading aloud — with emotion and visualizing having it already in your possession — the statement you came up with in the section on Desire. Hill warns that if you just read the words, without emotion, they will not have enough power to manifest anything in your physical life. Your subconscious mind only acts upon and recognizes thoughts which are backed by strong emotion. This is the primary reason people fail to get results when they apply the principle of autosuggestion.

Specialized Knowledge (the 4th Principle of Success)

There are two types of knowledge — one general and the other is specialized. General knowledge is what we consider today to be a liberal-arts education. Hill claims that “no matter how great in quantity of variety it may be, [general knowledge] is of but little use in the accumulation of money.” Instead we should seek out specialized knowledge.

For a book that was written in the 1920s, the importance of specialized knowledge is probably more relevant today. It’s the engineers in their specific fields, the doctors with specialized skills, and the tradesmen with distinct talents that command not only a high demand but high salaries as well. Gone are the days of succeeding in employment with general knowledge. What the work force requires is expertise and if you want to move up within your chosen field, then you must specialize.

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Think and Grow Rich: Chapters 6 - 10

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Continuing with the review of **Think and Grow Rich**, today we'll be exploring the fifth through the ninth Principles of Success.

Imagination (the fifth Principle of Success)

The imagination is literally the workshop wherein are fashioned all plans created by man. The impulse, the desire, is given shape, form, and action through the aid of the imaginative faculty of the mind.

While desire acts as the catalyst in starting the process of achieving one's aim, it is imagination which takes desire's thought and impulse and begins to bring it into physical form. We exercise our imaginations by mentally forming and shaping the plan that we will use as the blueprint to build our desire.

Organized Planning (the sixth Principle of Success)

In this chapter, Hill seems to take a small detour in the usual manner of his writing style and instead offers a series of practical career helps. For example he explains the attributes of an effective leader, common pitfalls of leadership to avoid, how one can draft a "written brief" — what we refer to today as a resume — as well as how to land the exact position of employment that you're shooting for. He then seems to ramble on about thirty-one causes of failure and throws in twenty-eight self-analysis questions for a thorough "personal inventory."

As I was reading this chapter, I failed to see the correlation between "organized planning" and all this talk about leadership, resumes, job hunting skills, causes of failure on top of taking personal inventories. It all seemed to be haphazardly

bundled together. At the end of the chapter, as I was struggling to make it through, I almost laughed when Hill *finally* attempts to bring some clarity to his descriptive mud:

In this chapter will be found an adequate description of every principle essential in planning the sale of personal services, including the major attributes of leadership; the most common causes of failure in leadership; a description of the fields of opportunity for leadership; the main causes of failure in all walks of life, and the important questions which should be used in self-analysis.

...This might have proved more helpful in the beginning of this chapter. 😊

Decision (the seventh Principle of Success)

Hill references an interesting study which took 25,000 men and women who have experienced failure, and discovered that one of the most common reasons they failed was their inability to decide.

In a related analysis of several hundred people who had accumulated fortunes well beyond the million-dollar mark, they realized that "every one of them had the habit of reaching decisions promptly, and of changing these decisions slowly, if, and when they were changed." Compare this with those who fail to accumulate money, tend to, without exception, reach decisions very slowly and change these decisions quickly and often.

Those who fail to succeed in life are, according to Hill, easily influenced by the opinions of others. If you are constantly worried about what someone else might think or feel about you, you will never succeed in any undertaking.

Hill offers this pearl of wisdom, "Keep your own counsel...by reaching your own decisions and following them."

Persistence (the eighth Principle of Success)

If desire is what supplies the fuel, and imagination the plan, then it is dogged persistence that allows the plan to be carried out until success is achieved.

It seems that most people are ready to throw their dreams away at the first sign of opposition. In the end, it is the few who manage to carry on despite all opposition,

until they achieve their goal. Besides not being able to come to a decision, lack of persistence is one of the other major causes for failure. In the words of Napoleon Hill,

Sometimes it appears that there is a hidden Guide whose duty is to test men through all sorts of discouraging experiences...The hidden Guide lets no one enjoy great achievement without passing the persistence test. Those who can't take it simply do not make the grade.

Hill offers these four steps to develop persistence:

1. A definite purpose backed by burning desire for its fulfillment.
2. A definite plan, expressed in continuous action.
3. A mind closed tightly against all negative and discouraging influences, including negative suggestions of relatives, friends and acquaintances.
4. A friendly alliance with one or more persons who will encourage one to follow through with both plan and purpose.

Power of the Master Mind (the ninth Principle of Success)

"Power is essential for success in the accumulation of money."

When I first read this, I was thinking in terms of power being the possession of control over others. If that's what is required to accumulate wealth, I don't want any part of that.

What Hill is actually referring to is "organized and intelligently directed knowledge." This sounds a lot to me like wisdom. And there is no better way to intelligently direct knowledge than through working in concert with others on a common goal. Finding those special people to work with is what Hill calls assembling one's "Master Mind."

The Master Mind is the "coordination of knowledge and effort, in a spirit of harmony, between two or more people, for the attainment of a definite purpose." Stephen Covey would be proud, because this is exactly what he refers to as interdependence.

When we work together with others on a common goal, there is an enhanced ability that develops which is collectively greater than the sum of the abilities of each individual person. "No two minds ever come together without, thereby, creating a

third, invisible, intangible force which may be likened to a third mind." This is the Master Mind principle in a nutshell and the basis of synergy.

If you look at any person who has accumulated a great amount of wealth, you may notice, as Hill did, that they have consciously or unconsciously employed the principle of the "Master Mind."

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Think and Grow Rich: Chapters 11 - 15

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The Mystery of Sex Transmutation (the tenth Principle of Success)

Transmutation, in the simplest sense, is the transferring or the changing of one form of energy, into another. Hill refers to sex as an emotion which, according to him, can be channeled into productive outlets such as accumulating wealth. Ok, now that I've got your attention let's try to discover exactly what Napoleon Hill is talking about here.

Sex has three constructive potentialities. They are:

1. The perpetuation of the species,
2. The maintenance of health, and the least known being...
3. The transformation of mediocrity into genius through transmutation.

Has Hill completely gone off his rocker here? I don't think so.

We all know that sexual desire is one of the most powerful of all human desires. So strong is it, that many risk their life and reputation just to indulge in it. Too many people — especially in our day and age — lower themselves, through misunderstanding and misuse of this great power, to the status of the lower beasts. By learning to properly channel this energy, it can become a great force for good in your life.

To understand this a little better, let me give you an example that Hill uses. Observe what happens to any animal after it's been castrated. A bull becomes as docile as a cow after it has been altered sexually. It takes all the fight that was in

him, and removes it completely. This same effect can be seen with man as well (as we historically have seen with the eunuchs). Destroy the sex glands of a man, woman, or beast and you remove a major source of action.

The sexual hormones (like testosterone in men) are what I think Hill is referring to as sexual energy. When you can learn to channel these hormones into constructive outlets which benefit others and yourself, you will have understood what this mystery is.

The Subconscious Mind and the Brain (the eleventh and twelfth Principle of Success)

Hill proposes that the connecting link between our finite human mind to that of Infinite Intelligence is our subconscious mind. A very brief two chapters, besides explaining how the brain functions, Hill repeats many of the concepts he previously laid out in earlier chapters. For example, the importance of actively planting your desires into your subconscious through emotion mixed with autoassociation.

The Sixth Sense (the thirteenth Principle of Success)

This final principle can only be understood and assimilated by first mastering the other twelve. Hill refers to the sixth sense as one's creative (right brained) imagination. Most importantly it acts as a "receiving set" through which plans, thoughts and ideas flash into the mind — sometimes referred to as hunches or inspiration.

The author doesn't go into details on how to develop this sense, but assures you that if you truly understand and master the other principles, then this one will make perfect sense.

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Think and Grow Rich: Final Thoughts

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Think and Grow Rich has been a joy to read. Despite having heard that it was a classic which inspired many people in all walks of life, it still took a while for me to read it. I guess that I thought it would be some shallow book which focused too much on the obtaining of material things. While it does focus on that, it's principles are far from shallow and they easily apply to any worthwhile endeavor that you might have.

Can it teach you to become rich? Read the book and try out the principles for yourself. I've already begun to experiment with them. Let's see where it leads me...

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