

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

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

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

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