

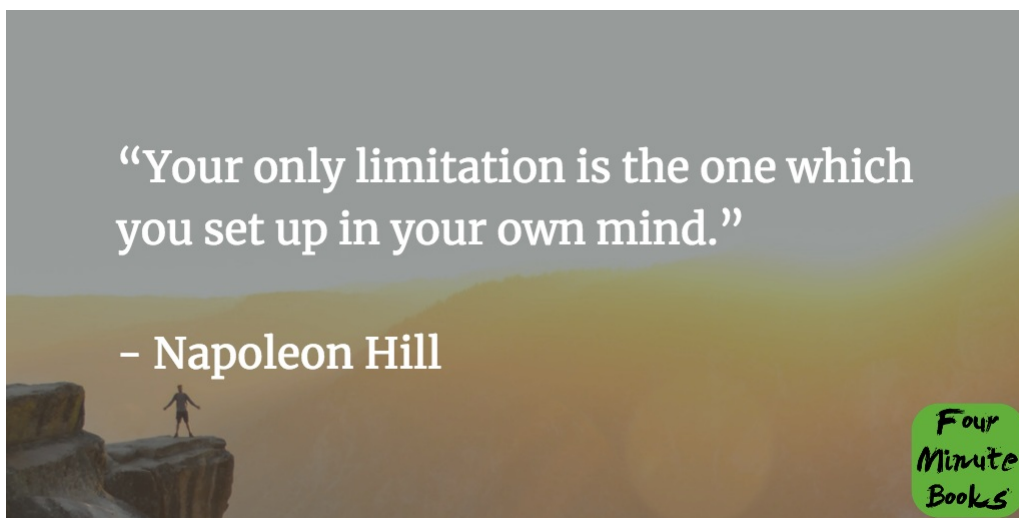
Outwitting The Devil Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Outwitting The Devil* is an imagined interview between Napoleon Hill and the Devil himself, in which he wrings certain truths from the root of evil, which will help us avoid his grasp and live a good life.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



In 1908, would-be author of the global phenomenon that became *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill, interviewed the richest man in America: Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie had already sold his steel company to J. P. Morgan at the time and thus amassed a fortune of some \$370+ *billion* dollars in modern-day estimations. That's over three times more than Jeff Bezos of *Amazon*.

When Hill told Carnegie that he planned to enter law school and interview successful people to earn money on the side, the business magnate made an odd request. Why couldn't Hill just interview people full time? Both the successes and the failures? Carnegie was convinced people needed to learn not so much from books, but from others who'd gone through "the school of life."

Hill took the advice to heart. Eventually, he would interview some 25,000 normal people and 500 extraordinary outliers. *Think and Grow Rich* was a huge success, making Hill a rather famous figure himself. In 1938, one year after the book came out, he immediately set out to create his next work. Sadly, his imaginary interview with the root of all evil, *Outwitting The Devil*, never saw the light of day. His wife thought it too controversial for its time, which is why it wasn't published until 72 years later, in 2011.

Here are 3 lessons from a fascinating book by one of the world's first self-improvement pioneers:

1. There are only two bases from which we build our entire lives: faith and fear.

2. The devil's goal is to make all humans aimless drifters and if we're not careful, he quickly succeeds.
3. To attain mental, spiritual, and physical freedom, we must follow seven principles and escape the devil's grasp.

Whether you take the devil as the literal figure, an invisible force, or merely the antics of our mind, let's learn how to outwit him, shall we?

Lesson 1: You spend your entire life operating from either fear or faith.

Going into his fictitious interview with evil incarnate, Hill already knew one of the primary tools in the devil's belt: fear. A few years earlier, Hill had received a death threat. He ended up hiding with relatives for over a year, paralyzed. One night, he finally went outside and found what Carnegie had told him about years before:

"You will discover that the cause of success is not something separate and apart from the man; that it is a force so intangible in nature that the majority of men never recognize it; a force which might be properly called the 'other self.'"

The other self told Hill to stop giving in to fear and doubt and finally finish his philosophy of achievement, which he did. When we're listening to our other self, we have faith in ourselves. We don't give in to what Steven Pressfield calls the Resistance. This is the only way to properly operate in life.

However, this 'other self' is exactly what the devil tries to undermine at every turn of our lives. He does so by dividing mankind into drifters and non-drifters.

Lesson 2: The devil seeks to make us permanent drifters, never getting around to what we're meant to do in life.

Once he starts drilling the devil for the most common fears he uses against man, Hill quickly finds he has even cleverer ways of ruining us. The devil claims to first invade our minds with "the principle of habit" in order to then establish "the habit of drifting."

Here's what drifting is, straight from the horse's mouth:

"I can best define the word "drift" by saying that people who think for themselves never drift, while those who do little or no thinking for themselves are drifters."

A drifter is the antithesis of a Stoic. Drifters let themselves be tossed around in life and allow externals to dominate their minds. They go nowhere because they're not using their brains to think.

Later in the book, Hill explains how drifting eventually turns into a "hypnotic rhythm," which keeps people busy with trivialities, and over time, drifting becomes permanent.

Unless we outwit the devil, that is.

Lesson 3: There are seven principles which help us gain mental, spiritual, and physical freedom.

After he forced the devil to reveal every dirty trick in his book, Hill finally goes about asking the master of evil for the ways in which we can combat his dire forces. He reveals seven principles humans should follow to find freedom in all walks of life:

1. **Definiteness of purpose.** Choose a purpose, a grand aspiration, a big goal, and move towards it relentlessly.
2. **Mastery over self.** Discipline equals freedom. If you're driven by impulse all your life, you'll go nowhere, like a drifter.
3. **Learning from adversity.** Failures are just failures. Whether we learn from them or let them stop us is up to us.
4. **Controlling environmental influence.** Who you hang out with matters. What your room looks like matters.
5. **Time.** Time can make drifting and negativity permanent. But it can also make positivity and wisdom permanent.
6. **Harmony.** In order for you to balance mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of your life, *you* must be the main actor.
7. **Caution.** Always act. But always think *before* you act.

Setbacks happen to the best of us. But those setbacks can quickly turn into lasting indecisiveness. Don't let them. Don't let the devil win. Life's too important of a game for us to lose it.

Outwitting The Devil Review

What a creative approach for writing a book, especially considering its time. Even 80 years after it was written, *Outwitting The Devil* shines with simple ideas, packaged in stories we can understand, and repeated in fun ways so they stick. Napoleon Hill may have been a controversial figure, but in his writing, I sense he had his fellow citizens' best interests at heart.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How many people are controlled by fear
- What privilege only humans have
- How Franklin D. Roosevelt united the country, not with politics, but with humanity
- An easy way to avoid the many traps of desire
- Why Hill had to learn to take his own advice

Who would I recommend the Outwitting The Devil summary to?

The 27 year old office worker, who's already bored with life at the beginning of her career, the 43 year old writer, who struggles with procrastination, and anyone who feels like a spectator in their own life.