

The Law of Success

What's in it for me? Learn some 1920s wisdom that still hasn't gone out of style.

Author Napoleon Hill is like the grandfather of the self-help book genre. Even though his heyday was in the early twentieth century, many of his ideas continue to fill the pages of today's top motivational and secrets-of-success books. The times may have changed, but people are still people. It was one of the author's specialties to look at human nature and figure out which of our habits can lead to success, and which can lead to ruin. In his first 15-volume book, the author lays out a series of lessons that you can take to heart and start putting to use immediately. These lessons will inspire you to take your dreams out of the theoretical phase and into the real world through decisive action. In these blinks, you'll learn

the principles of the Master Mind; how auto-suggestion can make you a better public speaker; and why you should always follow the Golden Rule.

The foundational concept underpinning success is known as the Master Mind.

Success shouldn't remain limited to a select few. You may think there's a wide gap separating you from the titans of industry – like the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, or the automobile innovator Henry Ford, but you'd be mistaken. These weren't men born with the advantages of wealth or family connections. They went from having next to nothing to accomplishing things few people had even dreamed possible. As we'll see in the 15 lessons that we cover in these blinks, what made their achievements possible are the kinds of principles that any able-minded person can learn and master. Before diving into the lessons, though, we need to come to grips with the foundational concept on which all 15 lessons are built. That concept is called Master Mind. The key message here is: The foundational concept underpinning success is known as the Master Mind. Have you ever been in the same room as someone else and intuitively known that they're not on the same wavelength as you? That you simply understand, without speaking to this person, that your personalities are going to be like oil and water? Well, the same way your mind can pick up on bad vibrations, it can pick up on good ones as well. Not only that, when you have a meeting of minds with someone who has a compatible personality, and an open and receptive mind, you can tap into their archive of knowledge, just as they can tap into yours. Now, when you have a team of people with the right minds and personalities, you can collectively harmonize and form a Master Mind, which can go on to create truly amazing things that would otherwise be out of reach to a mere individual. This is an important point. Carnegie, Wrigley, Ford – these men weren't alone in creating their fortunes. Each one made it a point to spend time with his peers and to help one another succeed. For example, Ford went on regular retreats with the inventor Thomas Edison and Harvey Firestone, the founder of the world-renowned tire and rubber company that bears his name. They shared priceless wisdom and benefitted immensely by expanding their sources of knowledge. But remember, Master Minds are only created through harmonious personalities and intentions. Nothing will ruin the arrangement more quickly than inviting in a negative

personality with selfish intentions.

Success requires a definite chief aim and self-confidence.

No matter whose success story you most admire, there's one primary asset that assured that person's triumph: their brain. If you took away all of the money, the personnel, the factories, and the tools, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie would all be able to restart their businesses in no time. Because power comes first and foremost from the mind. In other words, power comes from the use of organized knowledge. So, the first step to success is gaining and organizing knowledge. And as we covered in the previous blink, one of the best ways to do that is through harmonizing with other knowledgeable minds. But a wealth of knowledge is nothing unless you put it to use. Which brings us to the first two lessons. The key message here is: Success requires a definite chief aim and self-confidence. Let's define success in simple terms. First, we can look at success as, in Hill's words, "the development of the power with which to get whatever one wants in life without interfering with the rights of others." It stands to reason, then, that having a definite chief aim is therefore essential to success. The most powerful thing you can do is to take your organized knowledge and use it through organized effort: creating a Master Mind of harmonized partners and employees who are all working toward a definite purpose. This is all quite abstract so let's look at a real-world example. Frank Winfield Woolworth came from a modest family and in his early twenties he was a stock boy at a general store in New York. But he had ambitions. So while he worked his meager job he dreamt of new and more efficient ways in which a general store could be run. Eventually, Woolworth made it his definite chief aim to see a chain of his own Five and Ten Cent Stores operating throughout America. But his success wouldn't be realized until he honed his mind and his actions fully upon this one task. We all have a certain fear of failure. We fear what people might say if we aim high and end up falling short. But success requires doing, which in turn requires the level of self-confidence willing to commit to an idea and take action. To cultivate self-confidence, the author is a big believer in auto-suggestion. This is the repeated input of positive messages that will eventually take root and turn those negative fear-based feelings into the kind of positive self-confidence that can turn ideas into reality. You might start by committing this message to memory: "I know I have the ability to achieve my definite purpose, therefore I demand of myself persistent, aggressive and continuous action toward this goal."

Success requires the habit of saving, as well as initiative and leadership.

As far as so-called "secrets of success" go, saving money isn't exactly a mystery. You already know that you should save money. But actually doing it is harder. This is why the third lesson is entitled: The Habit of Saving. Sometimes, learning how to do something requires concentrated, repetitive behavior in order to create a habit that will pay dividends in the long run. The key message here is: Success requires the habit of saving, as well as initiative and leadership. One of the biggest favors you can do for yourself right now is to save money. Ideally, your salary should be divided up in the following way. Fifty percent should go to food, clothing, and shelter. Ten percent should go to your continued education. Another 10 percent should, according to Hill, go to life

insurance, and 10 percent to recreation. The remaining 20 percent goes into your savings. There are at least two significant reasons for starting to save money immediately. The first is that this money may provide you with the funding you need to take action. So, when a great idea strikes, you may already have the resources necessary to build a prototype or travel to places where you can sell your idea. But even if you don't have that much, the simple habit of saving will send the right message to the investors who do have the money you need. Woolworth, Ford, Rockefeller – they didn't have the money they needed to start their game-changing businesses. But since they were in the habit of saving a portion of their small monthly salaries, their investors trusted them enough to issue the loans they needed. Another habit sits at the core of Lesson Four: Initiative and Leadership. Initiative is an essential requirement for leadership. Leaders can't wait for someone to tell them what to do. They must sense what the right action is and do it. The opposite of initiative is procrastination, one of the deadliest enemies of success. Fortunately, procrastination can be swiftly eliminated by starting a new habit of initiative. Make a promise to yourself that every day you'll do at least one thing that will bring you closer to your definite chief aim. Every day, without being asked, you'll also do one thing that will be of value to others. Following this path, you'll be well on your way to putting procrastination behind you and starting a much better habit that will lead to rewards in the future.

Success requires both imagination and enthusiasm.

All of the lessons mentioned in these blinks so far lead back to one lesson in particular, the fifth lesson: imagination. This is because, by definition, imagination is the ability to organize knowledge into new and creative systems. But not only that. To become successful, you must overcome fears and convince yourself to take action, which requires the creation of positive mental images that are essential to effective auto-suggestion. You must instill confidence, positivity, and picture yourself achieving your goals if you're to succeed. The key message here is: Success requires both imagination and enthusiasm. When it comes to sales, few skills are more important than a well-developed imagination. In particular, the salesperson who can imaginatively combine knowledge with psychology is bound to go far. Consider the man with no imagination who knocked on the farmer's door, trying to get rid of his dog. The man explained he was moving to the city and had no room in his apartment for a dog. He asked the farmer, "Could you do me a favor and take this dog off my hands?" To which the farmer replied, "No thanks," and closed the door. Now, consider the man with imagination. He knocks on the farmer's door and tells him about a great opportunity. "Here's a dog who can herd sheep, help bring in the cows, and chase off wild animals," he says. "There's no shortage of errands on the farm this dog could help you with. I'll give him to you for a hundred dollars." "Sold," says the farmer. Unimaginative people can't see past their own needs. Whereas the imaginative person can quickly scan a customer and anticipate her needs. But, of course, imagination can be even more effective when combined with the next lesson: enthusiasm. When building a business, enthusiasm is key to getting people motivated and taking action toward your definite chief aim. It's infectious. You've probably been in the presence of someone with enthusiasm and could feel yourself being drawn into whatever subject they were talking about. Like self-confidence, enthusiasm can be nurtured through positive auto-suggestion. But you should also keep in mind that enthusiasm spreads not so much by what you say, but how you say it. A positive tone and body language are essential, as is dressing well and exuding genuine

love for the work you're doing. These are all basic components in being able to win people over with the power of enthusiasm.

You must learn the importance of both self-control and doing more than what you're paid for.

Enthusiasm is essential to taking action and doing, rather than just sitting at home and thinking about doing. Success requires enthusiasm. But it also requires self-control. Without it, your enthusiasm and willingness to take action can lead you to any number of negative consequences. The key message here is: You must learn the importance of both self-control and doing more than what you're paid for. Many of us harbor a fear of criticism. Receiving harsh and cutting words, whether from a peer or a competitor, can be difficult to cope with, but it's something that needs to be overcome. No one who's ever been successful hasn't been subject to criticism, either justly or unjustly. And this is where the importance of self-control comes in. When receiving criticism, your first instinct may be to lash out at your critics, with as much venom as they were using on you. But it can be deadly to let this kind of negativity take over. There's a saying, that "like attracts like." And this is something the author holds as a profound truth. When you take the bait and open yourself up to negativity, it'll only attract more of it into your life. Resist the urge, practice self-control and stay positive. One tip the author uses is to write a letter to your critic. Put on paper the things you want to say in order to get them out of your head. But rather than sending the letter, destroy it or file it away and treat it as a lasting example of the progress you've made. When someone attacks you in public, you hold the power in this relationship. You can choose to forgive them, while they have no such power over you. Now, let's look at another successful habit you can start nurturing right now: doing more than what you're paid for. You may be one of those people who balk at working after hours or doing any task that isn't explicitly written in your job description. But these aren't the habits that lead to success. By routinely going above and beyond the call of duty, you're demonstrating value and potential to those around you. This will be noticed and your efforts won't go unrewarded for long. The author sees this as a twist on the law of increasing returns. If you continue rendering more service than you're expected to, and that value is appreciated, the world will reward you in the long run.

Make sure you have a pleasing personality and always do your best to think correctly.

We've now reached Lesson Nine in our journey through The Law of Success. This brings us to the importance of having a pleasing personality. Now, some might think of this as a call to simply always be smiling, shaking hands, and dishing out compliments. But it's not as simple as that. A pleasing personality must go hand in hand with genuine interest. The key message here is: Make sure you have a pleasing personality and always do your best to think correctly. The author relays a story that perfectly illustrates the benefit of a pleasing personality. It's to do with a team of life insurance salespeople

who thought they'd play a trick on a new recruit. They gave their new teammate the information on a local artist and told him that he'd be an easy sale. Little did the new recruit know that everyone in the office had tried and failed to close a sale with the artist. But a few hours later, when the fledgling salesman came back, there was a smile on his face. You were right, he said. The artist was happy to buy \$2,000 worth of securities. What was his secret? He listened. When he arrived at the artist's studio, he sat patiently and watched the man work on a painting until he put his brush down. The two men then talked about art for nearly an hour, and not once during this time did the salesman bring up his reason for being there. The salesman had genuine interest in hearing what the artist had to say and learning about his craft. If the salesman had been disingenuous, the artist would surely have seen through it and that \$2,000 would have stayed in his pocket. But thanks to the pleasant, genuine conversation, the sale was happily made at the end of the conversation. Now, let's quickly touch on another important lesson: accurate thought. There's a lot of information out there, and much of it can be distracting. This is why one of the most important things you can do for your success is to remain focused on what's accurate and what's fact. Slander, rumors, gossip, lies. A successful person can't waste their time on such trivial matters. You must be diligent in blocking out negative elements such as these and remain dedicated to the positive pursuit of your definite chief aim.

Concentration and cooperation are two more keys to success.

If there's one lesson that contains a "magic key," it's Lesson Eleven, which stresses the importance of concentration. Now, we've already gone over diligence and staying focused on your goal, but concentration is so essential it has its own devoted lesson in The Law of Success. As Hill defines it, concentration is more than just staying focused. It's "the ability, through fixed habit and practice, to keep your mind on one subject until you've thoroughly familiarized yourself with that subject and mastered it." In other words, concentration is the path to self-mastery. The key message here is: Concentration and cooperation are two more keys to success. Achieving success requires a certain amount of self-reflection. You need to take an honest look at yourself and recognize the unhelpful habits and biases that need to be put aside. The best way to get rid of bad habits is to replace them with good ones, and this is where concentration comes in. Creating new habits of initiative and making a daily practice of instilling positive thoughts and self-confidence through auto-suggestion require dedication and concentration. Like most of the lessons imparted here, you won't see the results until you make changes and see them through to the end. In many ways, the most effective change you can create is through cooperation, which is the subject of the next lesson. Cooperation is a key part of the Master Mind, the foundational concept we covered back in the first blink, but here we're talking about the cooperation between your conscious and your subconscious mind. That's all pretty abstract so let's look at an example to make it clearer. Let's say you make it a daily habit to read and memorize positive statements such as "I am going to become a powerful public speaker because this will help me to provide the world a useful service and achieve my definite purpose." By repeating this sentence, it'll take root in your subconscious, and when this happens, you'll begin to transform yourself and your life. This is because the ideas that are in your subconscious invariably manifest themselves in your daily actions and decisions. If your subconscious believes you'll never be a good public speaker, that's your reality. But through auto-suggestion, you can change that. The choices you make will begin to lead

you toward becoming a confident public speaker. This is the phenomenal power of cooperation between your conscious and subconscious mind.

Think of any failure as merely temporary and embrace a more tolerant outlook.

For many of us, a fear of failure is closely associated with fear of poverty. Along with worrying about what people might say if we fail in our endeavors, we also fear that if we follow our dreams we might end up penniless. Fortunately, there's one simple fact that can help vanquish this tireless enemy: failure is only temporary. For the vast majority of ambitious people out there, failure can be seen as nothing more than a setback. Not only that, failure is often a blessing in disguise. We learn from failures, we stiffen our resolve and become both wiser and stronger. So let's look at failure by the name it more accurately deserves: temporary setback. In that light, is there really anything to be afraid of? The key message here is: Think of any failure as merely temporary and embrace a more tolerant outlook. While in his forties, the author could already count seven different times when his plans fell apart and he had to lick his wounds, make adjustments, and try again. In fact, it's through those so-called failures that the author was able to recognize some of the very principles that make up the Law of Success. Breaking free from unjustified opinions and misguided beliefs is no small part of becoming successful, and it's at the heart of Lesson 14, which is all about tolerance. There was a noted clergyman who once said, "Give me the control of the child until it is twelve years old and you can teach it any religion you may please after that time, for I will have planted my own religion so deeply in its mind that no power on earth could undo my work." There is truth to this statement since by the time we reach our teens, everything from our political allegiances to which sports team we root for are firmly implanted in our mind. But sometimes, these biases aren't good. Tolerance is about remaining open-minded toward all people, no matter their beliefs. Intolerance is what starts wars, tears apart societies, and creates enemies. It's to be avoided at all costs. We'll get further into this subject in the next and final blink, which is all about the Golden Rule.

By following the Golden Rule you're sure to stay on the right path to success.

You've probably heard it before: Do unto others as you'd wish them to do unto you. It's a sentiment that has been around a long time, but that doesn't make it any less meaningful. This is, in fact, the essence of the Golden Rule, and the last lesson the author has to offer in this series. The key message here is: By following the Golden Rule you're sure to stay on the right path to success. Remember how we defined success early on in these blinks? It's "the development of the power with which to get whatever one wants in life without interfering with the rights of others." History is filled with people who've risen to success only to wield their power with malice. But time and time again, these people didn't stay in power for long. There's another law to the universe,

one that says “you reap what you sow,” and that law never fails in the end. Don’t forget the law of attraction, either. Those who use their power for malicious intentions will only attract more negative and corrupting forces to them, which can only lead to destruction. Indeed, the author is so sure of the law of attraction and the principles of the Master Mind, that actions alone aren’t quite good enough. Since our thoughts are also capable of attracting like-minded individuals, we should be thinking according to the Golden Rule, too. In other words, “think about others as you’d wish them to think about you.” Ultimately, the Golden Rule is perhaps the most effective guardrail you could have in your career. Following this simple rule makes it impossible to indulge in hate, greed, envy, bigotry, or selfishness – the truly destructive forces that can lead to ruin. It’ll keep you honest and your intentions pure. It’ll keep you on the true path of success by reminding you of what your purpose should be, which is creating value for other people and making the world a better place while you’re at it. This is what’s really going on behind every success story.

Final summary

The key message in these blinks: There are 15 lessons in The Law of Success, and they’re all intertwined to serve as a sturdy backbone to a successful career. They can be used to make you a better salesperson or to set you on your way to founding a major international enterprise. Lessons on self-confidence, concentration, and enthusiasm are designed to have you overcome your fears and finally move from the idea stage to the taking action stage. These lessons are also meant to keep you thinking positive, in order to attract other positive minds and become even more effective as a cooperative unit moving toward a clear and definite goal. Actionable advice: Don’t let social heredity define who you are. Social heredity is responsible for the kind of values we grow up with and are likely to pick up at an early age. The three most influential voices in the world are schools, churches, and media. Any of these three sources can instill intolerance, close-mindedness, malicious lies, and negativity that can lead you away from success and the Golden Rule. Stay attuned to accurate thinking and tolerance, and don’t let social pressure stand in the way of your success. Got feedback? We’d love to hear what you think about our content! Just drop an email to with The Law of Success as the subject line and share your thoughts!