Part One - Fundamental Facts You Should Know About Worry

Chapter 1 - Live in "Day-tight Compartments"

In the spring of 1871, a young man picked up a book and read twenty-one words that had a profound effect on his future. A medical student at the Montreal General Hospital, he was worried about passing the final examination, worried about what to do, where to go, how to build up a practice, how to make a living.

The twenty-one words that this young medical student read in 1871 helped him to become the most famous physician of his generation. He organised the world-famous Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He became Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxfordthe highest honour that can be bestowed upon any medical man in the British Empire.

He was knighted by the King of England. When he died, two huge volumes containing 1,466 pages were required to tell the story of his life.

His name was Sir William Osier.

Here are the twenty-one words that he read in the spring of 1871-twenty-one words from Thomas Carlyle that helped him lead a life free from worry: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a

distance, but to do
what lies clearly at hand."
Forty-two years later, on a soft
spring night when the tulips were
blooming on the
campus, this man, Sir William Osier,
addressed the students of Yale
University. He told
those Yale students that a man like
himself who had been a professor in
four universities
and had written a popular book was
supposed to have "brains of a special
quality". He
declared that that was untrue. He
said that his intimate friends knew
that his brains
were "of the most mediocre
character".
What, then, was the secret of his
success? He stated that it was owing
to what he called
living in "day-tight compartments."
What did he mean by that? A few
months before he
spoke at Yale, Sir William Osier had
crossed the Atlantic on a great ocean
liner where
the captain standing on the bridge,
could press a button and-presto!-
there was a
clanging of machinery and various
parts of the ship were immediately
shut off from one
another-shut off into watertight
compartments. "Now each one of
you," Dr. Osier said to
those Yale students, "is a much more
marvelous organisation than the
great liner, and

bound on a longer voyage. What I urge is that you so learn to control the machinery as
to live with 'day-tight compartments' as the most certain way to ensure safety on the
voyage. Get on the bridge, and see that at least the great bulkheads are in working
order. Touch a button and hear, at every level of your life, the iron doors shutting out
the Past-the dead yesterdays. Touch another and shut off, with a metal curtain, the
Future -the unborn tomorrows. Then you are safe-safe for today! ... Shut off the past!
Let the dead past bury its dead. ... Shut out the yesterdays which have lighted fools the
way to dusty death. ... The load of tomorrow, added to that of yesterday, carried
today, makes the strongest falter. Shut off the future as tightly as the past. ... The
future is today. ... There is no tomorrow. The day of man's salvation is now. Waste of
energy, mental distress, nervous worries dog the steps of a man who is anxious about
the future. ... Shut close, then the great fore and aft bulkheads, and prepare to
cultivate the habit of life of 'day-tight compartments'."

Did Dr. Osier mean to say that we should not make any effort to

prepare for tomorrow?
No. Not at all. But he did go on in that address to say that the best possible way to
prepare for tomorrow is to concentrate with all your intelligence, all your enthusiasm, on doing today's work superbly today. That is the only possible way you can prepare for
the future.
Sir William Osier urged the students at Yale to begin the day with Christ's prayer: "Give
us this day our daily bread."
Remember that that prayer asks only for today's bread. It doesn't complain about the
stale bread we had to eat yesterday; and it doesn't say: "Oh, God, it has been pretty dry
out in the wheat belt lately and we may have another drought-and then how will I get
bread to eat next autumn-or suppose I lose my job-oh, God, how could I get bread
then?"
No, this prayer teaches us to ask for today's bread only. Today's bread is the only kind of
bread you can possibly eat.
Years ago, a penniless philosopher was wandering through a stony country where the
people had a hard time making a living. One day a crowd gathered about him on a hill,
and he gave what is probably the most-quoted speech ever delivered

anywhere at any
time. This speech contains twenty-
six words that have gone ringing
down across the
centuries: "Take therefore no
thought for the morrow; for the
morrow shall take
thought for the things of itself.
Sufficient unto the day is the evil
thereof."
Many men have rejected those
words of Jesus: "Take no thought for
the morrow." They
have rejected those words as a
counsel of perfection, as a bit of
Oriental mysticism. "I
must take thought for the morrow,"
they say. "I must take out insurance
to protect my
family. I must lay aside money for
my old age. I must plan and prepare
to get ahead."
Right! Of course you must. The truth
is that those words of Jesus,
translated over three
hundred years ago, don't mean
today what they meant during the
reign of King James.
Three hundred years ago the word
thought frequently meant anxiety.
Modern versions of
the Bible quote Jesus more
accurately as saying: "Have no
anxiety for the tomorrow."
By all means take thought for the
tomorrow, yes, careful thought and
planning and
preparation. But have no anxiety.
During the war, our military leaders
planned for the morrow, but they

could not afford
to have any anxiety. "I have supplied
the best men with the best
equipment we have,"
said Admiral Ernest J. King, who
directed the United States Navy,
"and have given them
what seems to be the wisest mission.
That is all I can do