

COPING WITH HURDLES THAT HAMPER SUCCESS

A cluster of reasons silently operates behind your failure or success in life and career. When this cluster is split, it yields an untidy crop, which varies from person to person. Yet, some of the reasons are common to many youngsters on the threshold of a career, or those who yearn to go up the greasy pole of success. They are: habits, morbidity, nerves, shyness (read inferiority complex), poor memory, ifs and buts, and a failure-attitude.

Every man has habits. Some are helpful. Others are not. He has physical, mental, emotional and moral habits. He should tackle his bad physical habits first. If these defy him, he will not go far.

He should grapple with his bad emotional habits. He should control his baser feelings. He should put his mind in order and begin to learn. And when his will has been strengthened, he can deal with his moral weaknesses and build up his character.

Some habits are really obsessions, such as, for instance, the biting of the fingernails. Some people are terrified of cats or lifts. Rossini was frightened of railway trains. Dr Samuel Johnson touched every post that he passed. There are many little obsessions of this kind. Some are harmless. But all are irrational.

As soon as a man makes the great decision to live his own life, he must overhaul his habits. Those that are silly or harmful he must overcome. It is wise to live automatically with regard to the small matters of life.

You must regularize life so that you will have more leisure. You should choose habits and not have them thrust on you. You must, in a word, bring your whole life into conformity with what you have decided to do.

Every man has characteristic faults or habits of thought that are more or less irrational. But in most cases this only means that he has his own point of view.

No man has a perfectly balanced brain. An engineer, for instance, does not appreciate the value of advertising.

No man has yet cleared his mind of prejudices, but he should know that he is prejudiced on many matters. He should not, as many men do, make a hobby of his prejudices.

As far as possible, he should be open to conviction. He should modify his opinions according to common sense and experience.

One drawback is morbidity. It is serious because it is hard to overcome. Morbidity is caused by some experience

in childhood. Invariably, there has been a shock of fear that has made the brain in some way imbalanced. Morbidity is a "mental disorder".

A morbid person becomes more and more self-centred and hostile. He inclines to sink back into isolation, which is in itself a cause of morbidity.

Morbidity ruins disposition. It is a surrender to the weaker self—to the fears of the subconscious. It has brought ruin and unhappiness to thousands of young people.

The cure is simple. A morbid person must mingle with happy people, laugh, help others, develop a sense of humour and a spirit of gaiety. Should not brood on a trouble or a bereavement or a defect or a wrong. The wisest plan is to concentrate on some task that must be done—to turn it on something outside of itself.

"Nerves!" Usually, this is a word for bad temper and lack of self-control. It often leads to a physical and mental breakdown.

Irritation

PEOPLE who have "nerves" are irritated by trifles. They "cannot endure". They are "driven mad". They have no poise—no steel. Even able men have allowed themselves to become the victims of "nerves". Pulitzer, the journalist, had to spend the last twenty years of his life on a yacht—a "silence yacht" that was specially built for him—because he could not endure the slightest noise.

Carlyle, too, tortured himself by being irritated by trifles. He once said to himself: "Alas! I ought to be wrapped in cotton-wool. I can stand nothing. I am really ashamed of the figure I cut."

Any case of "nerves" can be cured by doses of will-power and common sense. His own sense of self-respect should lift him above the power of trifles.

If he has the delusion that he is too fine—too delicate—too high-strung for his rough world, he must throw this out of his mind. Many endure harder troubles than he does.

He should train himself to look on the bright side of life and to think more of others and less of himself. He should get rid of "nerves" which paralyse.

Shyness is serious when a man remains shy all his life. It is serious because it represses him. It makes him put too low a value on himself. It prevents self-expression. It is a mild fear. It keeps hundreds of men in the rank and file.

It may harden into an inferiority complex. It becomes a

sense of smallness. An inferiority complex may do one of two things. It may spur us on to develop ourselves and do our best, or it may send us into a hole.

If a young man has no pluck, his inferiority complex will make him a weakling. He will be stuck in the rank and file. But if he has mental ambition, his inferiority will stimulate him to learn, to take chances and to breast the blows of circumstances and grapple with his fate.

The best way to overcome shyness is to meet more people, especially strangers. If a man is afraid of the sound of his own voice, he should join a class in public speaking. He should take more part in conversation in larger groups.

There is another pull-back, memory. The average mind is practically all memory and feelings. The active thinking part is not developed.

"Memory is the creator of tradition, which is the most powerful enemy of progress", says O.S. Marden. A certain body of knowledge or ignorance becomes standardized. When it becomes old, it becomes sacred. It becomes a creed. It is orthodoxy, and whoever questions it is regarded as immoral.

Keyserling says, "The power of memory is overwhelming. It is almost the incapacity to forget." There is the main reason why people are unprogressive. They do not "think". They only "remember".

We do bind the brain with formalism and class distinction. We create castes. We do have our traditional body of learning. We rank men, not by their usefulness and creative power, but by other tests which have nothing to do with intelligence.

We have invented ways of dulling and paralyzing the brain. We aim at oblivion rather than self-expression. We deaden the brain with drink, drugs, superstitions, traditions and castes.

Consequently, when one decides to follow his own reason and to live his own life, he is faced with difficulties and opposition, both from within and without.

Every young man, with a spark, has a wish to attain success. He may have a wish to be distinctive. But he shrinks back from paying the price. He says: "What will people say?" and "I don't feel like it." He makes weak excuses.

Status Quo

HE says: "I am what I am." "I can't change myself." "There is too much risk." His spark of ambition becomes a cinder. He settles down to do what he is *told* to do and to live a life that is controlled by others—a puppet!

These are the whines of the weak, the timid. No one can set limits to self-development. Many have made history and shaped the destinies of nations though born with a wooden spoon.

If Columbus had said: "I don't feel like going on", when he was a thousand miles from land, he would never have discovered a new continent. If he had been influenced by tradition or by what people said, he would never have started on the most famous of all voyages!

The weak man is always a "but" man. He is held fast by

the pull-backs. When anyone suggests a new plan or improvement, he says: "Yes. That would be a good idea, but...." He always has a "but". His "buts" have kept him unsuccessful, yet they continue to repress him.

There are always "buts"—risks and obstacles. If fame were sold in "Bargain Basements", we could all be celebrities. The only way that any man can succeed is facing and overcoming his "buts".

There is always a resistance to be overcome. All the prizes of life are upstream. They can never be reached by drifting.

Imagination rescues us from the clutch of memory. It makes a man look forward, not back. And it gives him forethought instead of fear-thought. Whenever you find yourself opposed and uncertain, the wisest policy is to concentrate upon the near future and the next step.

Think tomorrow. Take a short view. Go forward as a man does on a strange road in a dark night—one step at a time. As a golf champion, once said: "It is the next shot that counts."

If an ocean liner could think and feel, it would be afraid to leave its dock. It would think of the vast ocean and the storms and the great waves. It would think of all its dangers and it would be afraid. But the fact is that it has only to meet one wave at a time. And it is strong enough to overcome *one* wave.

If you have a big problem, divide it up and tackle one part at a time. Wave by wave, a ship goes through the sea, and step-by-step, a man can overcome most, if not all, of his difficulties.

A man goes forward by tackling his todays and planning his tomorrows. Every bit of progress gives him increased confidence.

A man prepare himself for tomorrow's work by making a strong assertion of what he will do—by making it just before he goes to sleep. This, says C.G. Leland, strengthens the will. It keeps the brain positive. It gives the habit of forethought. And is likely to awaken a glow of resolution and confidence.

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