

# The Great Secret of Life

A PRACTICAL SYNTHESIS OF THE MASTERS WHO KNEW HOW  
REALITY REALLY WORKS

*A 30-Day Path Through the Teachings of Neville Goddard, Abdullah, Wallace Wattles,  
Joseph Murphy, Napoleon Hill, and Ernest Holmes*

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**The Great Secret of Life** *A Practical Synthesis of the Masters Who Knew  
How Reality Really Works*

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# How To Read This Booklet

There are three honest ways to read what follows.

**The first** is to read it as history — a compressed introduction to a tradition you may have encountered fragments of, presented for the first time with the names, dates, and connections restored. If that is your interest, read Chapter 1 carefully, then read Chapters 2 through 7 in any order that interests you, then close the book. You will know more about the actual lineage of modern "manifestation" literature than ninety-nine readers in a hundred.

**The second** is to read it as philosophy — to follow the argument from Chapter 1 to Chapter 8, watching the case build, evaluating where you agree and where you part company, and ending with a clear view of what these six teachers shared and what they did not. If that is your interest, read straight through to the end of Chapter 8 and stop there. The synthesis chapter is the destination.

**The third** is to read it as a practical manual — to read all nine chapters in order, with the working understanding that Chapter 9 is the chapter for the sake of which the other eight were written, and that the thirty-day program at the end of the book is what the entire volume has been preparing you to undertake.

This third way is the one for which the book was written. It is the only way that will, on the testimony of the six teachers introduced here, change anything in your life.

The others are valid uses of three hours. Only the third is the use the booklet asks of you.

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## A Note On Sources

This booklet draws on the published books and recorded lectures of Wallace Wattles, Neville Goddard, Joseph Murphy, Napoleon Hill, and Ernest Holmes. The teaching of Abdullah, who published nothing under his own name, is reconstructed from the testimony of his students. Biographical and historical details have been cross-referenced against the standard scholarly sources, including the modern investigative work of Matt Novak on Napoleon Hill and Mitch Horowitz on Neville Goddard and Abdullah.

Where direct quotation is used, attribution is provided. The substantial majority of the prose in this booklet — including all commentary, analysis, synthesis, and practical instruction — is the original work of the editor and is not derived from the source authors except in the form of properly attributed quotation.

Readers wishing to consult the primary works are directed to the "Read These Next" sections at the end of each author chapter, which provide a recommended reading order for each of the six teachers.

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## CHAPTER 1

# *The Secret Hidden in Plain Sight*

In the late 1920s, a man known to his students as Abdullah — born Modeste Abdallah Guillaume, a former baritone with one of the great Black vaudeville companies of the day — was running a small study center at 30 West 72nd Street in Manhattan. Two of his students would go on to change the world.

One was a 24-year-old Barbadian dancer named Neville Goddard. The other was an Irish-born pharmacist named Joseph Murphy.

Within four decades, both of those young men would publish books that sold tens of millions of copies. Their work would influence — directly or indirectly — almost every major self-help and "manifestation" teacher of the last century: Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret* (2006), Wayne Dyer's lectures, Bob Proctor's seminars, and the vast "Law of Assumption" community now found on YouTube and TikTok.

And it began, in part, in that single Manhattan study, with a single teacher whose name almost no one remembers.

This booklet is about what that teacher — and a handful of his contemporaries — actually knew.

## *The Tradition You Weren't Told*

### *About*

There is a tradition. It was not invented in 2006 by an Australian documentary filmmaker, and it was not invented in 1937 by a man named Napoleon Hill. Its roots reach back at least to the 1830s in Maine, to a clockmaker named Phineas Parkhurst Quimby who began healing the chronically ill by changing what they believed about their own bodies.

Quimby's central conviction — that mental states shape physical conditions, and that beliefs, when held with conviction, harden into facts — fertilized a movement that historians now call **New Thought**. Between roughly 1880 and 1960, dozens of practitioners refined those ideas into specific techniques. A handful rose above the rest. Not because their personalities were more magnetic, but because their methods worked, were teachable, and were written down.

This booklet introduces six of them.

**Wallace Wattles** (1860–1911). A self-taught farm boy from Illinois who, in the last year of his life, wrote *The Science of Getting Rich* (1910). His claim: wealth is the result of doing things in a "Certain Way" — and that Way begins with the conscious formation of a clear mental image, held with gratitude, until physical action aligns with it.

**Napoleon Hill** (1883–1970). Author of *The Law of Success* (1928) and *Think and Grow Rich* (1937), the latter among the best-selling self-help books of all time. Hill's contribution was a vocabulary: *burning desire, the Mastermind, autosuggestion*. Words that have entered ordinary English. (A note on Hill: parts of his biography have been seriously challenged by historians. We will treat his teachings on their merits rather than on his myth.)

**Ernest Holmes** (1887–1960). Founder of Religious Science and author of *The Science of Mind* (1926) — a six-hundred-page systematic treatise that remains the most ambitious attempt anyone has made to lay out the metaphysics of this tradition as a coherent whole. Holmes also founded *Science of Mind* magazine in 1927, which still publishes today.

**Joseph Murphy** (1898–1981). That young Irish pharmacist from West 72nd Street. He was ordained by Ernest Holmes himself in 1946, led one of the largest New Thought congregations in America, and in 1963 published *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*, which has sold more than fifteen million copies. Murphy's specialty was the precise mechanics of how the conscious mind impresses upon the subconscious — and how the subconscious, once impressed, executes.

**Neville Goddard** (1905–1972). The Barbadian dancer turned mystic. Across fourteen books and hundreds of recorded lectures, Neville developed the most philosophically extreme version of this tradition: that human imagination is itself God, that the world we walk through is the mirror of states we have already assumed within, and that "an assumption, though false, if persisted in, will harden into fact." He is, by some distance, the most rigorously demanding of the six.

**Abdullah** (dates uncertain). Modeste Abdallah Guillaume. Neville's teacher. Murphy's teacher. He published nothing under his own name. Almost everything we know about what he taught reaches us through what his two students later said and wrote. His method, by their account, was uncompromising: assume, now, that the thing you want is already yours, and refuse to be moved.

## *Why Another Book*

Because the existing literature has a problem.

Most contemporary writing on "manifestation" suffers from one of three failures, and often all three. It **cherry-picks** — pulling a slogan from Hill, a visualization from Murphy, a feeling from Neville, and presenting the mash-up as if it were one unified teaching. It **softens** — replacing the specific, demanding techniques of the originals with vague invitations to "feel positive." And it **omits the lineage** — presenting these ideas as if they emerged fully-formed from some recent guru's intuition, when in fact they were forged in print, over decades, by writers whose names are on the books.

A reader who has spent a hundred hours on the modern material may have absorbed nothing from any of the six teachers above. They may be able to recite *The Secret* without ever having read the 1910 book it was lifted from. This is not their fault. It is a failure of the genre.

This booklet exists to correct it.

Across the next seven chapters, we will treat each teacher on his own terms. We will distinguish where they agreed and — equally important — where they did not. We will then assemble what they shared into a single, internally consistent model of how this is supposed to work. And in the final chapter, we will translate that model into a thirty-day practice that you can begin tomorrow morning.

## *What You Should Expect*

A few honest notes.

This is a summary and a synthesis. It is not a substitute for reading Wattles, Hill, Holmes, Murphy, or Neville in their own words. At the end of each chapter, I will tell you which of their works to read next, in what order, if you want to go deeper.

It is also not a magical document. Reading it will not, by itself, make you wealthy, fulfilled, loved, or healed. It is a map. Maps are useless to people who will not walk. The thirty-day path in the final chapter is the walking part; everything before it is the territory you need to understand in order to walk it without getting lost.

Finally, a word on tone. The teachers in this book made large claims about the nature of reality. I have not softened those claims to make them more palatable, nor added defensive caveats designed to insulate me from skeptical readers. If Neville said human imagination is God, this book reports that he said it, in roughly the strength in which he said it. What you do with that claim is, properly, your business.

# *The Road From Here*

The next chapter, the longest in the booklet, is on Neville Goddard. He is first because his framework — assumption, feeling, the "state akin to sleep," revision — is the sharpest and most teachable single technique in the entire tradition. Once you understand Neville, everything else in this book either reinforces or qualifies what you have already learned.

After Neville comes the man behind him: Abdullah. The chapter is short, because the documentary record is short, but the chapter is essential, because Abdullah is the connective tissue that links Neville to Murphy and stands at the practical, no-nonsense root of this whole tradition.

Then come Wattles, Murphy, Hill, and Holmes — each on his own terms.

Chapter eight pulls the threads together. Chapter nine is the practice.

If you read carefully, work the practice honestly for thirty days, and find that nothing in your life has changed, you will have lost about three hours of your time and the price of this booklet. If something does change — and the experience of millions of readers across more than a century suggests something will — then you will have made the only investment in your life that returns on itself for as long as you live.

Turn the page.

## CHAPTER 2

# *Neville Goddard*

In December of 1933, a young Barbadian dancer living in Manhattan badly wanted to be home for Christmas.

His name was Neville Goddard. He was 28 years old. He had no money for a ticket, no prospect of one, and no work that would pay for one in time. His mother, his brothers, his sister, the Barbados of his childhood — the open air, the sea, the family table — sat in his imagination like a separate planet to which there was no flight.

He went to see his teacher.

The teacher was an older man, known only as Abdullah, who taught a small circle of New Yorkers in a study at 30 West 72nd Street. Neville told him the problem.

Abdullah listened, then said: "You are in Barbados."

Neville objected. He was in New York. He could see New York out the window.

Abdullah said it again: "You are in Barbados. There is nothing to discuss."

What Abdullah meant — and what he required Neville to do — was that Neville should henceforth fall asleep each night not in the bed in his Manhattan apartment but in the bed of his childhood home, hearing Barbadian birds, feeling the Barbadian sun, accepting in feeling and imagination that he was already there. Whatever the senses reported about cold and Manhattan and the empty pocket was, on this question, irrelevant.

Neville did as he was told. Each night, for several weeks, he slept "in Barbados." During the day, when New York reasserted itself, he found ways to dismiss it and return to the assumption.

Within a few weeks, a letter arrived from his brother Victor in Barbados. Inside was a steamship ticket, sailing in time for Christmas. His brother, the letter said, had felt, without quite knowing why, that he should send it.

Neville told this story, in some version of it, in more lectures and books than any other event in his life. It was, for him, the proof. Not that the universe is fair, or that hope is rewarded, but that the imagination, properly used, is the operative power that produces the events of a life.

This chapter is about how he came to believe that, what exactly he meant by it, and the four specific techniques he taught.

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## *Bio in Brief*

Neville Lancelot Goddard was born February 19, 1905 in Fontabelle, Barbados, the fourth of nine children of a middle-class merchant family. He left home at 17 in 1922 for New York City, intending to become a stage actor. He found instead a long, modest career as a dancer — beginning at the New York Hippodrome in 1925 — and an underlying restlessness that no theatrical success ever quieted.

In 1929 he met Abdullah, a man of disputed origins who, when Neville arrived at his door for the first time, is said to have greeted him by saying, "You are six months late. The brothers told me you were coming." Neville studied with him for the next seven years — in Hebrew, in Kabbalistic readings of Christian scripture, and in a particular method of practical magic that involved no rituals, no objects, and no incantations, only the disciplined use of human imagination.

By 1938 Neville was lecturing publicly in New York. His first book, *At Your Command*, appeared in 1939. Over the next three decades he produced fourteen books and several thousand recorded lectures, settled permanently in Los Angeles in 1952, hosted a weekly television program on KTTV that drew over 300,000 viewers per episode, and died on October 1, 1972 in West Hollywood.

He left no organization, no church, no degrees, no certifications. The only thing he left behind was a body of teaching so internally consistent that it can be reduced — without distortion — to a single sentence.

## *The Sentence*

Here is the sentence.

**The world is your imagination pushed out into apparent solidity, and you may, by changing what you imagine, change what you see.**

Everything else in Neville — and there is a great deal — is either elaboration of that sentence or technique for applying it. We will skip most of the theology (his identification of human imagination with God, his Kabbalistic readings of the Bible, his late-period claim that humanity's destiny is to awake into individual godhood) and focus on the techniques.

There are four. They are taught here in the order in which they should be learned.

### *Technique 1: Assumption*

The Law of Assumption, as Neville taught it, has one rule.

Decide what you want. State it to yourself as a fact already realized — not a hope, not a goal, not a prayer for help. A fact. Then go about your life as the person to whom that fact is true.

Neville's most-quoted line on this is: "*An assumption, though false, if persisted in, will harden into fact.*"

Read it carefully. He is not saying that assumptions occasionally come true if you also work hard. He is saying that assumptions, *as such*, produce the realities that match them — provided they are persisted in. The mechanism is the imagination itself, which Neville held to be the creative power of the universe operating through the human being.

The practical instruction is correspondingly precise:

1. **Formulate the wish in a single short sentence.** Not "I would like a better job." But: "I have been promoted." Or: "I earn a comfortable living doing work I love."
2. **Imagine a single short scene that would only be true if the wish were already fulfilled.** A handshake. A phone call delivering news. A glance at a bank balance. The scene should be sensory and brief — five to fifteen seconds.
3. **Enter the scene mentally and feel it, in the first person, until it is more real than the room you are sitting in.**
4. **Repeat.**

Neville insisted that step three is not visualization in the ordinary sense. Visualization, as the modern self-help industry teaches it, looks at a scene from the outside, like watching a film of yourself. Neville's method is the opposite. You are inside the scene. The handshake is being given to your hand. The voice on the phone is being heard with your ear. The feeling that floods you is the feeling — relief, gratitude, satisfaction, calm — that would naturally arise if the thing were already done.

The feeling is the key. Hence the title of his most foundational book: *Feeling Is the Secret* (1944).

## *Technique 2: The State Akin to Sleep*

Neville's second technique is the one for which he was most distinctive among the New Thought teachers of his era. He called it the **State Akin To Sleep**, usually abbreviated SATS.

The instruction is simple. As you fall asleep at night — the half-conscious, drowsy minutes when waking thought has loosened but sleep has not yet taken you — is the moment in which assumptions impress most deeply on the subconscious. Use it.

In practice:

1. Get into bed. Make yourself comfortable. Close your eyes.
2. Let the body relax, but do not pursue sleep aggressively. The aim is the drowsy threshold, not unconsciousness.
3. Construct your one short scene of the wish fulfilled.
4. Enter it. Feel it. Loop it — replaying the brief scene as if it were a short film on a loop — until it feels natural, automatic, unforced.
5. Allow yourself to fall asleep with the feeling of the scene still present.

The theory: in waking life the conscious mind interferes constantly with the subconscious, contradicting any assumption with the visible evidence of "what is." The drowsy threshold is the only state in which the

conscious censor relaxes and the subconscious can be reached directly. Whatever feeling-tone is dominant in that moment is what the subconscious will subsequently work to make real.

A reader who experiments with this technique for a single week, honestly, will know within ten days whether Neville was right.

## *Technique 3: Revision*

This is the technique that, if you do nothing else from this booklet, is most worth your time.

Neville called it **Revision**, and he taught it in a now-classic lecture titled *The Pruning Shears of Revision*. The method:

At the end of the day, before sleep, mentally review the events of the day. Identify any scene — a conversation that went badly, a piece of news that disappointed you, a moment of friction or fear — that you would, if given the power, rewrite. Then rewrite it. In imagination, replay the scene as you would have wished it to occur. Hear the kind words instead of the harsh ones. See the smile instead of the scowl. Continue replaying the corrected scene until it feels, in the moment of replay, as if it had actually happened that way.

The next day, watch what happens.

Neville claimed — and the testimony of those who practice the technique seriously is in agreement with him — that revised days produce revised tomorrows. The person who was hostile yesterday is unaccountably

warmer today. The news that arrived bad arrives, on the next pass, less bad. The opportunity that closed reopens.

He told a particular story in *The Pruning Shears of Revision*: a New York City schoolteacher, after hearing him teach revision, applied it to a sixteen-year-old student whom the entire faculty had voted unanimously to expel for being, in their judgment, rude, crude, and unethical. She did not argue with the faculty. She did not lecture the student. Each night she sat with the image of the child in her mind and communed, in imagination, with a girl who was tender, dignified, and loved. The following Monday she found it natural to express that tenderness in the classroom. Within ten days, the faculty had reversed its vote. The child remained at George Washington High School.

The teaching is hard for the modern reader to take seriously because it requires accepting that the inner adjustment, alone, was the cause of the outer change. Neville was uncompromising on this. He held that all external events without exception are the precipitate of imaginal acts — your own and others' — and that the practitioner who refuses to wait for the world to change is the practitioner who finds, eventually, that it has.

A line from the lecture captures the temperament: "*The only art of living is forgetting and forgiving.*"

## *Technique 4: Persistence*

The fourth technique is not technically a technique. It is a temperament.

Neville taught that the single most common reason assumptions fail to manifest is that the practitioner abandons them too soon. The mind that imagines a state for five minutes, then spends the next eighteen hours in worry, fear, and contradictory inner speech, has not in any meaningful sense assumed anything.

His instruction was to live in the assumed state — not just to visit it at bedtime — as steadily as one can. When the contrary fact intrudes ("but the bank balance still says the old number"), the practitioner notes the intrusion without engagement and returns. When the impatience rises ("but it should have happened by now"), the practitioner notes the impatience and returns. The assumption is a residence, not a hotel.

The Barbados story, told in this light, is not a tale of how a wish was granted in three weeks. It is a tale of three weeks of unbroken assumption. Neville was, every night of those weeks, in Barbados. He did not return to New York in his inner life until the steamship sailed.

## *"Everyone Is You Pushed Out"*

A final teaching, hardest of all to accept, that you should know exists before reading Neville's books in his own words.

In his mature lectures, Neville made a claim that goes well beyond the workable self-help summarized above. He held that other people are not, in any meaningful sense, independent agents. Each person you encounter is, he said, "you pushed out" — a costume worn by your own consciousness, mirroring back to you whatever state you have most consistently assumed.

The implications are severe. The hostile coworker is a reflection of an unresolved hostility within. The withholding partner mirrors a withholding within. There is no "out there" out there. There is only the inner state, externalized.

You do not have to accept this teaching to use Neville's techniques. The techniques work — by his account and by the testimony of his serious students — for people who treat them merely as practical methods, without subscribing to the metaphysics. But you should know that he held the metaphysics, and that the techniques follow from it. The further one walks into Neville's work, the harder it becomes to keep the techniques while leaving the metaphysics behind.

## *A First Exercise*

Tonight, before sleep, do this:

1. Identify one thing you wish were true in your life that is not yet true. Choose something concrete, not abstract. ("I have signed the contract" is concrete. "I am happier" is abstract.)
2. Construct a single short scene that would only be true if the thing were already done. A handshake. A signed page. A phone call.
3. As you fall asleep, enter the scene. Feel it from the inside. Loop it gently.
4. In the morning, take no special action. Go about your day. Do not check whether it has worked.
5. Repeat tomorrow night.

6. Repeat every night for thirty nights.

Then judge.

## *Read These Next*

If you want to go deeper into Neville, read in this order:

1. *Feeling Is the Secret* (1944, ~30 pages). Short, foundational, the cleanest single-document statement of the technique.
2. *The Power of Awareness* (1952). The mature philosophical exposition.
3. *The Law and the Promise* (1961). Case studies — about 100 letters from students reporting how the techniques worked for them. The best way to calibrate what is and is not possible.
4. *Awakened Imagination* (1954) and *Resurrection* (1966). The late mystical works. Read only after the first three, and only if the metaphysics interests you.

Before you go to any of them, however, you should know about the man who taught Neville himself. He is the subject of the next chapter, which is the shortest in this book — and, by some measures, the most important.

## CHAPTER 3

# *Abdullah*

He published nothing.

He founded no school, ordained no successors, granted no interviews, wrote no books. He left behind no manuscripts, no recordings, no body of correspondence. The exact dates of his birth and death are unknown. The country he came from is unknown. The number of students he taught is unknown.

And yet, twice in the twentieth century, men who walked into his small Manhattan study walked back out as the eventual authors of books that, between them, would sell more than twenty million copies and shape the lives of millions of readers across nine decades.

This is the chapter on Abdullah.

It is short because the documentary record is short. It is essential because, without him, neither Neville Goddard nor Joseph Murphy — two of the six teachers in this book — would have taught what they taught, in the form they taught it.

## *What We Know*

The most rigorous historical work on Abdullah's identity, conducted by researchers including Mitch Horowitz, has converged on a single likely candidate: a man named **Modeste Abdallah Guillaume**, also recorded in some documents as G. Mahmud Ahmad Abdoullah.

By that account, Abdullah had been, earlier in his life, a baritone singer with the **Williams and Walker Glee Club**, an offshoot of the most successful Black vaudeville act in turn-of-the-century America. He performed with the company in the years 1905 to 1910. When the vaudeville career ended, his religious career began.

By 1928 he had established a study center at 30 West 72nd Street in Manhattan, on the Upper West Side, half a block from Central Park. He represented Islam, in those years, on interfaith panels alongside Paramahansa Yogananda (the future author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*) and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. He was identified in the press as the leader of a small congregation he called the "Religion of Love."

He taught, among other things, Kabbalah. He taught Hebrew. He taught a method of esoteric Bible interpretation in which scripture was read not as history but as a coded set of instructions for the use of the imagination. He taught, by all accounts, in a manner that brooked no sentimentality and accepted no excuses.

We know about his teaching almost entirely through what two of his students — Neville Goddard and Joseph Murphy — later said and wrote.

# *A Note on the Houdini Investigation*

In 1929, an investigator named Rose Mackenberg, who worked for Harry Houdini's anti-fraud unit, published a brief exposé of Abdullah, focused on the credentials of his small ministry. The exposé was minor and dealt almost exclusively with the certification of his religious organization, not with the substance of his teaching.

Neville and Murphy, both of them already studying with Abdullah at the time of the exposé, were apparently unmoved by it. They went on studying. Whatever they were getting from him was, in their judgment, not a function of the paperwork.

For the modern reader, this is worth knowing chiefly as a piece of historical color and a warning. The judgment of authority — of officialdom, of credentialing bodies, of public exposés — is a poor instrument for assessing whether a teaching works. Either the technique produces the result, or it does not. Abdullah's two most famous students walked past the exposé and went on producing results.

## *What He Taught*

Reconstructed from the testimony of his students, Abdullah's central teaching was the most uncompromising version of the Law of Assumption ever recorded.

The method had no preliminary practices. There was no breathing technique to master, no diet to adopt, no period of preparation. There was only the instruction:

**Assume, now, that the thing you want is already yours. Refuse to be moved.**

To the student who said, "But it isn't yet true," Abdullah's answer — the answer he gave to Neville about Barbados in 1933, and the answer he is said to have given many other students — was: there is nothing to discuss. The assumption is the cause. The fact is the effect. To wait for the fact before making the assumption is to misunderstand the entire mechanism.

A few specific features of his teaching, drawn from what Neville and Murphy later passed on:

**Bodily commitment.** It was not enough to think the assumption. The student was required to move, eat, dress, speak, and sleep as the person to whom the assumed fact was already true. If Neville was in Barbados, he was to sleep as a man in a Barbadian bed. The body was an instrument of impression, not a passive observer.

**Refusal of the sensory contradiction.** The student would inevitably encounter, every waking hour, evidence that the assumed fact was not yet true. Abdullah's rule was that this evidence had no claim on the assumption. It was background noise. The senses report only the past — the precipitate of prior assumptions, already cooling. The current assumption is concerned with the future.

**Persistence without limit.** Abdullah set no expected timeline. The assumption was to be maintained until the fact arrived. If it did not arrive in a week, the assumption was to be maintained for another week. If it did

not arrive in a month, another month. The mistake was always letting go too soon.

**No invocation, no ritual, no help.** Abdullah taught no prayer to be said, no candle to be lit, no name to be invoked. The imagination of the practitioner was the entire mechanism. There was nothing to call on, because there was no agency external to the practitioner's own imagination that was doing the work.

The discipline this required, sustained over weeks and months, is the reason most people who claim to "practice manifestation" do not get the results Neville and Murphy got. Abdullah's training was not a soft, motivational thing. It was, by the testimony of his students, closer to the discipline of a martial art than to anything sold in airport bookshops.

## *Two Students, Two Books, Two Continents of Influence*

Consider what came out of that small study at 30 West 72nd Street.

**Neville Goddard** took the teaching and made it philosophically extreme, ultimately arguing that the imagination of the practitioner is God, that the Bible is a manual of the imagination's operations, and that the entire visible world is the externalization of one's inner states. He wrote fourteen books and gave thousands of lectures across forty years. His di-

rect influence on the modern "manifestation" subculture — Rhonda Byrne, Wayne Dyer, the entire YouTube and TikTok "Law of Assumption" community — is incalculable.

**Joseph Murphy** took the teaching and made it scientifically accessible, framing it in the language of conscious-and-subconscious mind, of mental engineering, of techniques that any reader of a 1963 paperback could try at home. *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* sold over fifteen million copies and is still in print. Murphy's direct influence on the modern self-help shelf — Wayne Dyer, Louise Hay, Tony Robbins, the entire genre of subconscious-reprogramming literature — is also incalculable.

Two students. Two completely different idioms. One teacher.

When you read Neville and Murphy side by side, the family resemblance is unmistakable — and the resemblance is Abdullah. The unshakable insistence on assumption. The refusal of sensory evidence as final authority. The placement of the imagination at the center of the entire mechanism. The contempt for half-measures.

## *What Abdullah Refused to Do*

There is one detail about Abdullah that is, for the discerning reader, the most significant detail of all.

He did not publish.

He had every opportunity. He was in New York in the 1920s and 1930s, in the middle of the New Thought publishing boom. Wattles, Holmes, Hill, and Atkinson all had books out. The market for this kind of

teaching was alive. Abdullah's friends and students included people who knew the publishing world. Murphy and Neville, when they began publishing in the 1930s and 40s, would have happily promoted him.

He published nothing.

The most plausible reading of this silence is that he understood something about the nature of the teaching that most teachers who follow him have not. A printed book reaches a thousand readers who will skim it, agree with it, and never apply it. A trained student, drilled in private over years, reaches the level at which the teaching can be lived. Abdullah, it seems, was not interested in being widely heard. He was interested in producing operators.

He produced at least two of them whose names we know. There may have been others whose names we do not.

## *Why This Chapter Matters*

The lesson of Abdullah, for the modern reader, is not that one must find a personal teacher (almost no one will) or that one must be initiated into a secret tradition (there is no secret left to keep). The lesson is about temperament.

The four teachers who follow this chapter — Wattles, Murphy, Hill, and Holmes — each made their teachings public, available, and accessible. Each of them, in the long run, helped millions of people. None of them, however, ever quite matched the operational sharpness of the obscure man who taught two of them in private.

Read the rest of this book in that light. The widely accessible version of these techniques is what is on the page. The version that actually works, week after week, is the version held with the kind of discipline Abdullah taught — and demanded.

A line from Neville, late in his life, captures the inheritance: *"If I have ever spoken anything in my life that was worth hearing, it came from him."*

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The next four chapters introduce, in turn, the teachers who were Abdullah's contemporaries and equals: men who did publish, and whose books — read in the right order, with the right attention — supply the missing pieces of the picture.

We begin with the oldest of the four, and the one whose work, against the longest odds, became the seed of nearly everything that followed: Wallace Wattles.

## CHAPTER 4

# *Wallace Wattles*

In 1910, a year before his death at the age of 50, a self-taught American writer and Christian Socialist named Wallace Wattles published a thin book through a small New Thought press in Holyoke, Massachusetts. He called it *The Science of Getting Rich*. He sold fewer copies in his lifetime than the average self-published author today sells in a month. He died in obscurity, in Tennessee, in 1911.

A century later, his book had been read by tens of millions of people in fifteen languages, had been the explicit basis for one of the most-watched self-help films ever made, and had become the unattributed source of half the manifestation literature published in the English-speaking world.

This chapter is about what Wattles actually wrote.

# *The Man*

Wallace Delois Wattles was born in Illinois in 1860 to a farm family of modest means. His formal education ended early. He was, in the description used by his daughter Florence in a memoir written after his death, "self-taught" — which is accurate in the sense that, by his late twenties, he had read deeply in Hegel, Emerson, and the New England Transcendentalists, and had absorbed the entire Phineas Quimby / New Thought tradition that had been building in America for the previous fifty years.

He spent his adult life as a writer and lecturer on the New Thought circuit, never famous, never wealthy. He was a committed Christian Socialist, ran for political office twice, in 1908 and 1910, on the Socialist Party ticket, and lost both times. Florence's memoir describes his daily practice: each morning he would form a clear mental image of the success he intended, hold it for an extended period of focused attention, accept the image as already fulfilled, and then act, throughout the day, as the man to whom it was true.

He left behind five short books: *Jesus: The Man and His Work* (1905), *A New Christ* (1910), *The Science of Getting Rich* (1910), *The Science of Being Well* (1910), and *The Science of Being Great* (1911, posthumous).

The middle three — the "Science" trilogy — are the work for which he is remembered. *Science of Getting Rich* is the most read of them and the most directly responsible for his outsized posthumous influence.

# *The Tradition's Most Famous Borrowing*

When Rhonda Byrne — the Australian television producer who made the documentary *The Secret* in 2006 and the book of the same name in 2007 — was asked, in interview after interview, what her source had been, she gave the same answer each time. She had been handed a copy of Wattles' *Science of Getting Rich* by her daughter at a moment of personal collapse. What she read had changed everything.

Almost everything in *The Secret* — the Law of Attraction, the "ask, believe, receive" structure, the gratitude practice, the visualization technique — is in Wattles, in close paraphrase of his exact words, written ninety-six years before her film was released. The fact that very few readers of *The Secret* have heard Wattles' name is a measure of how thoroughly a publishing genre can absorb a tradition without acknowledging it.

If you have ever read or watched any of the modern manifestation material, you have already, indirectly, read Wattles. The chapter you are reading now is your chance to read him directly.

# *The Central Claim*

Wattles's opening claim in *Science of Getting Rich* is uncompromising and immediate. There is, he says, an underlying intelligent substance from which all visible things are formed. A thought, held in that substance, produces the thing thought of. A person who learns the technique of impressing definite thoughts upon this substance — and who lives, simultaneously, in a particular practical manner he calls "a Certain Way" — can produce, with the regularity of any physical science, the financial outcomes she wants.

He is not speaking metaphorically. The whole conceit of the book is that getting rich is a science, governed by definite laws that can be stated and followed, and that the consequences of following them are as reliable as the consequences of following the laws of chemistry.

His three foundational propositions, repeated and developed throughout the book, are these:

1. There is a Thinking Substance from which all things are made, which, in its original state, permeates and fills the interspaces of the universe.
2. A thought in this Substance produces the thing imaged by the thought.
3. A person can form things in her own thought and, by impressing those thoughts upon the formless Substance, can cause the thing imagined to be created.

This is the philosophical machinery. The rest of the book is the operating manual.

## *The Certain Way*

The phrase Wattles uses for the lived practice of his method is "acting in a Certain Way" — capitalized, in his text, to emphasize that he means a specific manner of action, not a general one.

The Certain Way has four components.

**A Definite Mental Image.** Wattles is severe on the question of clarity. Vague aspirations — "more money," "a better life," "success" — produce nothing. The practitioner is required to form a specific, sensory, and complete mental picture of the result intended. Not "wealth" but a particular house with particular furnishings; not "success" but a particular position held in a particular kind of work. The image must be detailed enough that it could be described to a stranger.

**Gratitude.** This is the technique Wattles emphasizes more than any other and the one most thoroughly stripped out of the modern repackagings. After forming the image, the practitioner is instructed to give thanks — not for what she hopes to receive, but for what she has, in her clear mental certainty, already received. The reasoning is that gratitude is the emotional state that signals to the formless Substance that the image has been accepted as fact. A demand carries doubt. Gratitude carries certainty. The Substance, in Wattles's framework, responds to certainty.

The grateful mind, in his teaching, fixes itself upon the best, takes the form of the best, and receives the best. The ungrateful mind, fixed upon what is lacking, takes the form of what is lacking, and receives more of what is lacking. The discipline of gratitude is, on this view, not a moral nicety; it is a technical requirement of the method.

**Will, applied only to oneself.** Wattles is unusually strict here. The practitioner is instructed never to use will, intention, or mental force on other people, on circumstances, or on outcomes. Will is to be directed solely inward — to the discipline of holding the image, returning to it when distracted, and acting from it. The external work is done by the Substance, not by the practitioner's effort to manipulate the world.

**Action in the present, complete and unhurried.** This is the most practical and the most often missed component. Wattles is emphatic that the mental work alone is not enough. The practitioner must, every day, do every action of the day in the spirit of the image — not as preparation for the future but as the present life of the person to whom the image is already true. He calls this doing "more than fills the present hour."

The phrase is worth pausing on. It does not mean working frantically. It does not mean working long hours. It means that whatever action one is taking in the present moment — answering an email, having a conversation, eating a meal — is done with the full attention and competence of the person who has already arrived. The future, in Wattles's theory, is reached by inhabiting the present so completely that no effort to reach the future is left.

## *Creative versus Competitive Thinking*

Of the components of *Science of Getting Rich*, the one most worth recovering for the modern reader is Wattles's insistence on what he calls **creative** rather than **competitive** thinking.

His distinction: a competitive mind sees the supply of wealth, opportunity, or recognition as fixed. To get more, someone else must get less. A creative mind sees the supply as inexhaustible — to be brought into being by the act of imagining and acting on the image. The two modes feel radically different from the inside, and they produce radically different results.

Wattles taught that competitive thinking is the operative state of nearly all conventional commerce and the chief reason most people, even when they apply themselves with great effort, never get rich. The competitive thinker is in unconscious agreement with the proposition that wealth is scarce, and the Substance, responding always to the practitioner's agreement, produces a life consistent with scarcity.

The creative thinker, in his terminology, "is on a higher plane." Wealth, to such a person, is something to be brought into being, not seized from someone else. She need not — and must not — take advantage of anyone. She need not undercut. She need not compete in the usual sense. She has only to hold her clear image, give thanks for it, and act, in her Certain Way, in the direction the image suggests.

This is the part of Wattles that most directly anticipates Neville, who would refine the same insight, four decades later, into the more radical claim that there are no others at all — only the externalization of one's

own assumed state.

## *What Wattles Got Wrong*

A fair chapter on Wattles requires this section.

He was, in places, wrong. His confidence in the universal applicability of his method led him to claim, repeatedly, that anyone who follows the rules will get rich, with the regularity of a scientific law. The historical record of his readers does not bear this out at full strength. Many serious students of *Science of Getting Rich*, working its method honestly, have produced significant changes in their financial lives. Many others, equally serious, have not — and Wattles's framework offers no clean explanation of why.

He also held the view, common in his era, that physical disease is essentially a mental error, and his sequel volume *Science of Being Well* (1910) advanced that view in a form most modern readers will find untenable. His own death the following year, at age 50, complicates that book's claims in a way his estate has never adequately addressed.

The honest position, for the modern reader, is this: Wattles's method does what it does. It produces, in a meaningful number of serious practitioners, real and durable improvements in financial life. It does not produce miracles on demand, and the version of his philosophy that promises miracles on demand is not, on careful reading, what Wattles actually wrote.

# *A First Wattles Exercise*

For one week, before any other action, do this each morning:

1. Sit quietly for ten minutes.
2. Form a specific, sensory mental image of one financial result you intend.
3. Hold the image until it is vivid.
4. Give silent thanks for it — not for the wish, for the result, as already given.
5. Rise and go about your day with the inner posture of the person to whom the result is already true.

Do nothing else of a "manifestation" kind. Do not visualize at other times. Do not affirm. Do not journal about progress. Just the morning ten minutes, every morning, for seven days.

The point of the constraint is to isolate the variable. If, after a week, nothing has shifted, you will know where to refine. If something has shifted — and Wattles's readers report, with a consistency that is hard to ignore, that something usually does — you will know what produced it.

## *Read These Next*

If you want to go deeper into Wattles, you only need to read one book, and it is short.

*The Science of Getting Rich* (1910). Approximately 30,000 words, seventeen short chapters. Available free in dozens of editions because it has been in the public domain since 1986. Read it in a single sitting, then again the following week, then again the following month. The third reading is, for most serious students, the one that lands.

His other two "Science" books — *Being Well* (1910) and *Being Great* (1911) — are interesting historical documents but add little to the method laid out in *Getting Rich*. Read them only if the first book has produced changes in your life and you want context.

The next chapter introduces the second of Abdullah's two famous students — and the man who, more than any other writer of the twentieth century, made these ideas accessible to ordinary readers.

## CHAPTER 5

# *Joseph Murphy*

Of the six teachers in this booklet, Joseph Murphy is the one whose book you are most likely to have already seen on a shelf in an airport or a doctor's office.

*The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*, published in 1963, has sold, by reasonable estimates, more than fifteen million copies. It has been continuously in print for sixty-two years. It has been translated into more than twenty languages. A first-time reader who picks it up today — six decades after publication — finds the text feels almost contemporary: plain-spoken, organized like a manual, light on theology, heavy on practical instruction, and structured into stand-alone chapters on specific topics that the reader can dip into in any order.

Murphy is, in the sober assessment of historians of the genre, the writer who did more than any other single twentieth-century figure to take the tradition this booklet is summarizing — the New Thought tradition rooted in Quimby, refined in Wattles, Holmes, and Neville — and translate it into the accessible idiom of the modern self-help shelf.

The fact that he was, in his thirties, a student of the same Abdullah who taught Neville Goddard is a piece of history that the publishing industry has been slow to acknowledge.

## *The Pharmacist*

Joseph Denis Murphy was born on May 20, 1898, in the village of Ballydehob, County Cork, Ireland. He emigrated to the United States in 1922, arriving in New York City in his early twenties with limited money and a working knowledge of pharmacy. He took a job as a pharmacist and worked, for several years, in that capacity in Manhattan.

Sometime in the late 1920s — the exact date is uncertain — he became a student of Abdullah at the same study center at 30 West 72nd Street where Neville Goddard was simultaneously studying. The two young men were thus, for several years, fellow students of the same teacher: Neville the Barbadian dancer with the theatrical bearing, Murphy the Irish pharmacist with the quiet, methodical temperament. They were not friends, by any record that survives. They were contemporaries.

In 1946, Murphy was ordained as a minister in the Religious Science movement — by Ernest Holmes himself, the subject of Chapter 7 of this book. He was also ordained, separately, in Divine Science. In 1949 he became the minister of the Los Angeles Divine Science Church, which he built, over the next several decades, into one of the largest New Thought congregations in the country.

He published more than thirty books. *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* (1963) is the most read, but several others — *Miracles of Your Mind* (1953), *Believe in Yourself* (1955), and *The Miracle of Mind Dynamics* (1964) — were significant in their own right.

He died in Laguna Hills, California, on December 16, 1981, at the age of 83.

## *The Core Distinction*

Murphy's contribution to the tradition is one of vocabulary and clarity. He did not invent the central techniques; he inherited them — from Abdullah directly, from Wattles and Holmes by reading. What he did was translate the techniques into a vocabulary that ordinary educated readers, in the postwar years, could understand and apply.

The vocabulary he used is the one most modern readers of this material now take for granted, which is testimony to how successful his translation was. He spoke of the **conscious mind** and the **subconscious mind**, two functionally distinct layers of mental activity that he treated as if they were two separate operators living in the same skull.

The conscious mind, in Murphy's framing, is the reasoning, choosing, evaluating part. It is where deliberation happens. It can accept or reject ideas, weigh evidence, decide.

The subconscious mind is something else entirely. It does not reason, weigh, or decide. It accepts whatever is impressed upon it by the conscious mind and brings it to pass. It is, in Murphy's account, the seat of all

emotion, all habit, all imagination, and all involuntary action. It runs the body, generates feelings, produces dreams, and — most importantly for this book — manifests, in external reality, the contents of whatever beliefs and assumptions have been most consistently impressed upon it.

The relationship between the two is straightforward, in Murphy's account, and is the foundation of his entire method:

*Whatever the conscious mind accepts as true, the subconscious accepts and brings to pass.*

Read that sentence as carefully as you read the equivalent line from Neville in Chapter 2. They are the same teaching in different vocabularies. Neville called it the Law of Assumption. Murphy called it the conscious-impressing-the-subconscious. Abdullah, presumably, called it something else. The mechanism is the same.

## *The Subconscious Does Not Take a Joke*

The single most consequential of Murphy's clarifications — and the one most useful to the modern reader's daily life — is his insistence that the subconscious mind does not have a sense of irony.

The conscious mind can say "I am broke" as a joke, as a complaint, as an offhand remark, as an exaggeration. The subconscious mind hears the sentence and registers it as a statement of fact. It does not consult the

conscious mind about whether the statement was meant literally. It begins, immediately, to organize the affairs of the body and the life in accordance with the proposition.

The implication for daily speech, daily thought, and daily self-talk is severe. Murphy taught that the casual derogatory remarks people make about themselves and their lives — "I'm hopeless at math," "I always pick the wrong men," "I'll never get ahead," "I'm bad with money" — are not, as the conscious mind treats them, harmless venting. They are direct instructions to the subconscious, accepted as commands, and acted upon.

He recommended a near-total cessation of negative self-talk, not as a matter of "positive thinking" in the soft, soothing sense, but as a matter of operational hygiene. You would not, in his analogy, type a virus into your own computer for fun. The subconscious is a more powerful operator than any computer, and its uptime is twenty-four hours a day.

## *The Sleep Technique*

If Wattles's signature contribution was the morning gratitude practice and Neville's was the State Akin to Sleep, Murphy's was the methodical use of sleep itself as the impression interval.

His instruction:

In the last few minutes before sleep, when the conscious mind has begun to relax its grip and the subconscious is more directly accessible, formulate a short, affirmative statement of what you intend to be true. Speak

it silently to yourself with conviction. Repeat it slowly, with feeling, until you fall asleep with the sentence in mind. Allow the subconscious, during the night, to do its work on the statement.

The statement is to be:

- **Positive.** Not "I am not poor" but "I am financially provided for."
- **Present-tense.** Not "I will be healthy" but "I am healthy and well."
- **Specific enough to be meaningful but general enough to be believable.** "I have a million dollars by Tuesday" will be rejected by the conscious censor on the way to the subconscious. "My income is steadily increasing month by month" will pass.
- **Repeated.** Once is not enough. Murphy recommended at least five minutes of patient repetition each night for the same statement, sustained for at least thirty consecutive nights, before evaluating results.

His readers report — and the testimony, accumulated over six decades of letters to his church and his publishers, is substantial — that this technique, practiced honestly for a month, produces measurable changes in the area of life it is directed at.

It is, by some measure, the most beginner-friendly technique in the entire tradition. There is no philosophical commitment required, no period of preparation, no special setting. Bed, dark, silence, sentence, sleep. That is the entire instruction.

## *A Word on the Tone*

One reason Murphy's book has remained in print for sixty years is that its tone is unflashy and clinical. He does not promise miracles. He does not exhort. He does not preach. He describes a mechanism, gives a technique, cites case after case from his counseling practice (most names changed, most details redacted), and invites the reader to test.

This is also the most legitimate reason to recommend him as the first author from this tradition for a modern reader to actually pick up. Neville's books require a tolerance for mystical Christianity. Wattles's books require a tolerance for the prose conventions of 1910. Hill's books require constant vigilance against his self-mythologizing. Holmes's major work is six hundred pages.

Murphy's book is four hundred pages of plain English, organized into stand-alone chapters, written by a man whose evident interest is in helping readers get results rather than in being recognized as a great thinker. It is, for most modern readers, the door.

## *A First Murphy Exercise*

For thirty consecutive nights, do this:

1. Choose one short, present-tense, affirmative statement of something you intend to be true in your life. Write it down.

2. Each night, in the last five minutes before sleep, lie in bed, close your eyes, and repeat the statement slowly to yourself, with as much feeling as you can summon, for the entire five minutes.
3. Allow yourself to fall asleep with the statement in mind.
4. In the morning, write nothing, plan nothing, and continue with your day.
5. Do this every single night for thirty consecutive nights without missing one.

At the end of the thirty nights, evaluate. Murphy's claim — and the testimony of millions of his readers — is that you will have evidence sufficient to know whether his technique does what he says.

## *Read These Next*

If you want to go deeper into Murphy, read in this order:

1. *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind* (1963). Read all of it. It is the most accessible single book in this entire booklet.
2. *Believe in Yourself* (1955). A shorter companion volume on the application of the same techniques to confidence, public presence, and self-image. Less famous, often more useful.
3. *Miracles of Your Mind* (1953). Murphy's earlier work, more directly New Thought in its idiom, less polished but with material that did not make it into the 1963 book.

The next chapter introduces a teacher whose contribution to the tradition is the most disputed and whose biography is the most problematic — and whose handful of genuine ideas have, nonetheless, shaped the language of self-help more than any other figure in this book.

## CHAPTER 6

# *Napoleon Hill*

This chapter is the hardest in the booklet to write fairly.

Napoleon Hill is the most commercially successful figure in this book. His *Think and Grow Rich* (1937) has sold, by various estimates, between 80 and 100 million copies in the eighty-eight years since publication. It is, on most lists, among the five best-selling self-help books in the history of publishing. His vocabulary — *burning desire, the Mastermind, autosuggestion* — has entered ordinary English. He has been quoted, paraphrased, repackaged, and cited by every major figure in twentieth-century motivational literature, from Earl Nightingale to Tony Robbins to the modern YouTube self-help economy.

He is also, on the historical record, almost certainly a fraud.

This chapter does two things. First, it lays out, as honestly as the evidence permits, what historians have established about Hill's biography and the credibility of his claims. Second, it isolates the parts of his teaching that are genuinely useful — and there are several — from the surrounding mythology that is not.

## *The Charges*

Begin with the standard story Hill told about himself, the one repeated in every edition of *Think and Grow Rich* and in essentially every secondary account written before about 2010.

In 1908, the twenty-five-year-old Hill, then a magazine journalist, was supposedly sent to interview the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. The interview, originally scheduled for a few hours, stretched into three days. At the end of it, Carnegie supposedly handed Hill a commission of historic ambition: to interview five hundred of the most successful men in America, distill from their lives the principles of achievement, and codify those principles into a single philosophy that any ordinary person could apply. Hill, on his account, accepted, and spent the next twenty years carrying out the assignment. *The Law of Success* (1928) and *Think and Grow Rich* (1937) are, in his telling, the result.

The story is the foundation of Hill's authority and the marketing centerpiece of his entire publishing career.

Historians have found the documentary record of it to be remarkably thin.

The Carnegie archives, which are extensive, contain no record of a meeting with Hill. Carnegie's published correspondence, his diaries, and the meticulous appointment calendars his staff kept do not mention Hill's name. None of the other "five hundred most successful men in America" whom Hill claims to have interviewed left correspondence or memoir noting a meeting with him. The credentials Hill claimed in other contexts

— that he was an attorney, that he held an LL.B. degree, that he had personally advised Presidents Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt — likewise lack documentary support and, in several cases, have been actively disproved.

The fullest modern accounting of Hill's biographical record is by the journalist Matt Novak, whose investigation for *Gizmodo* concluded that essentially every load-bearing claim in Hill's autobiography is fabricated or unverifiable. Earlier biographers, working with access to Hill's papers and the people who knew him, had reached similar conclusions decades before — they were just less widely read.

Hill's career outside of writing reinforces the picture. He was involved, across several decades, in a series of business ventures that ended in lawsuits, bankruptcies, FTC investigations, or the abrupt disappearance of investors' money. He founded an "Automobile College of Washington" that was investigated for fraud. He founded a "George Washington Institute" that suffered a similar fate. He spent significant periods on the run from creditors and, on at least one occasion, from criminal investigators.

He died in 1970 with an estimated net worth of one million dollars, which sounds modest by his own promised standards, until one remembers that his estate's wealth came almost entirely from his books and not from any of the business ventures the books supposedly equipped him to lead.

## *What This Means For The Reader*

The temptation, having read the preceding section, is to dismiss Hill entirely.

That would be a mistake. The biographical fraud is real, but it is also a separate question from the question of whether the techniques in his books work. Many fraudulent men have written useful books. The book stands or falls on what is in it.

What is in *Think and Grow Rich* is a synthesis — well-organized, vividly written, and repackaged — of ideas that were already present in the New Thought tradition by 1937. Hill's actual original contribution, stripped of his self-mythologizing, is small. But two of the ideas he popularized are genuinely valuable, and they are worth recovering for the modern reader.

## *Idea 1: Burning Desire*

Hill's term for the necessary precondition of any significant outcome.

"Burning desire" is what he called the state of intense, sustained, emotionally engaged wanting that, in his framework, is required for any sustained action toward a goal. He distinguished it sharply from "wish," "hope," and "passive desire." A wish is something you would prefer if it were given to you. A burning desire is something for which you are willing to organize your life.

The distinction matters because the New Thought techniques in the rest of this booklet — assumption, visualization, the impression of the subconscious, the Certain Way — all assume a definite, specific aim. They assume that the practitioner knows, with clarity, what she wants. Hill's contribution was to point out that this clarity is itself the precondition, and that most people who claim to be practicing manifestation are still in the wish stage and have never moved to the burning-desire stage.

His prescription: write down your aim. Be specific. Include the amount of money, if money is the aim, and the date by which you intend to have it. Read the written statement aloud, twice daily — once on rising and once before sleep — with as much feeling as you can summon, until the desire is no longer a thought you visit but a state you inhabit.

The instruction is similar in form to Murphy's sleep technique and Neville's SATS. The distinguishing feature, in Hill's framing, is the emphasis on the *emotional intensity* of the practice. Polite, lukewarm repetition will not, in his view, produce results. The repetition must be backed by the kind of wanting that, in his own words, "makes you obsessed."

## *Idea 2: The Mastermind*

Hill's term for a small group of people who meet regularly to support each other's aims through coordinated thought and discussion.

The idea, in his framing, is that two or more minds working together on a definite purpose generate a third "mind" — the *Mastermind* — that has capacities neither member possesses individually. The Mastermind is, in his telling, the secret weapon of nearly every significant figure of accomplishment in modern history, and the absence of one is the most common reason ambitious individuals fail.

Stripped of the slightly mystical language, what Hill is describing is what modern researchers would call a structured peer accountability group, with three features:

1. **Definite shared purpose.** Each member of the Mastermind has a clearly stated aim. The group exists to support those aims.
2. **Regular meeting.** Weekly, at minimum; ideally with predictable agenda and structure.
3. **Confidentiality and harmony.** Members do not compete with or undermine each other. Disagreement is permitted; conflict is not.

The empirical literature on peer accountability groups, eight decades after Hill, has consistently shown them to be among the highest-leverage practices an individual can adopt to increase the probability of achieving difficult goals. Hill's Mastermind, in modern dress, is a documented and powerful tool.

A practical recommendation: if you are serious about applying the methods in this booklet to a difficult aim, find three to six other people who are equally serious about their own aims, and meet, in person or by video call, every week, for an hour, for at least six months. Do nothing more complicated at each meeting than the following: each member reports progress, names obstacles, and receives counsel.

The compounding effect of such a group, over time, is in excess of what an isolated individual can produce by any technique in this booklet alone.

## *How To Read Hill*

If, after the preceding sections, you choose to read *Think and Grow Rich* — and you should, with the caveats stated — read it as follows.

Read it as you would read a sales letter from a brilliant but unreliable narrator: alert to the embellishment, alert to the unverifiable anecdotes, alert to the promotional structure, but watching for the four or five durable insights underneath. The insights are real. The packaging is theater.

Three of the chapters are worth your full attention:

- Chapter 1, **Desire**, for the burning-desire material.
- Chapter 10, **Power of the Master Mind**, for the Mastermind material.
- Chapter 4, **Autosuggestion**, for an unusually clear treatment of subconscious impression that complements Murphy's chapter on the same subject.

The rest of the book is competent but not original. Skim it.

## *Read These Next*

If you want to go deeper into Hill — and you should be cautious about how deep — read in this order:

1. *Think and Grow Rich* (1937), the original 1937 edition where possible. Later editions have been revised, in some cases substantively, by the Napoleon Hill Foundation. The 1937 text is widely available free in jurisdictions where it has entered the public domain.
2. *The Law of Success* (1928), the original sixteen-volume work that *Think and Grow Rich* condensed. Long. Useful chiefly to readers who want the full elaboration of the 13 principles.

Skip his other books. Skip the modern "Napoleon Hill Foundation" repackagings, which add nothing of substance. And read no biography of Hill that does not engage directly with the documentary record of his life. The hagiographies, of which there are many, are not history.

The next chapter introduces the most academically sophisticated and least personally controversial of the six teachers in this book — the man whose six-hundred-page systematic theology is the closest thing the New Thought tradition ever produced to a doctrinal core.

## CHAPTER 7

# *Ernest Holmes*

If Wattles is the seed of the tradition, Neville is its mystic, Murphy is its translator, and Hill is its showman, then Ernest Holmes is its systematic theologian.

He is the only one of the six teachers in this book who attempted to do, in writing, what a doctoral student of religion would attempt to do: to lay out the entire metaphysical framework of his tradition as a single coherent system, with definitions, propositions, derivations, and a comprehensive index. The result, *The Science of Mind*, published in 1926 and revised in 1938, runs to over six hundred pages of careful, almost-academic prose. It remains, almost a century after publication, the most ambitious work of theological exposition ever produced inside the New Thought movement.

Holmes was also the man who founded, in 1927, the Institute of Religious Science, an institution that survives to this day as **Centers for Spiritual Living** — a network of several hundred churches in the United

States and abroad, with active membership in the tens of thousands. He started *Science of Mind* magazine the same year. It has been published continuously since.

He is, in short, the closest thing the New Thought tradition produced to an institutional founder. And he is the teacher most likely to be useful to the reader who values intellectual rigor over inspirational warmth.

## *The Maine Schoolboy*

Ernest Shurtleff Holmes was born on January 21, 1887, in Lincoln, Maine, to a family of modest means. His formal education was limited. By his own later account, he was a precocious child whose questions exhausted the patience of his teachers; he left school in his mid-teens and educated himself thereafter, by reading.

What he read, between fifteen and thirty, was approximately the entire library of nineteenth-century American religious and philosophical thought: Ralph Waldo Emerson, the New England Transcendentalists, William James, the works of Mary Baker Eddy (whose Christian Science he found doctrinally too narrow), and most of all the British author Thomas Troward, whose *Edinburgh Lectures on Mental Science* (1904) became the single most important influence on Holmes's thinking. He absorbed Phineas Quimby through secondary sources, the New Thought writers of the 1880s and 1890s through pamphlets, and the entire philosophical tradition of mental causation through patient self-instruction.

He moved to Los Angeles in 1912 at the age of twenty-five and began lecturing publicly on what he called, at first, "the Science of Mind." His early lectures, which drew small audiences, gradually grew. By the early 1920s he was filling auditoriums seating two thousand and more. In 1926 he published the first edition of his magnum opus. In 1927 he founded the Institute. In 1942, the government of Belgium awarded him its Cross of the Commander of the Grand Humanitarian Prize for the international reach of his teaching during a period in which the world badly needed it.

He died on April 7, 1960, in Los Angeles, at the age of seventy-three.

## *The Framework*

Holmes's central philosophical claim is similar in shape to Wattle's — that there is an underlying intelligent substance from which all things proceed — but stated with greater precision and developed with greater rigor.

In Holmes's terminology, this substance is called the **Universal Mind** or, more often, simply **the Mind**. The Mind is intelligent. The Mind is creative. The Mind is responsive. The Mind is, in his careful formulation, *impersonal* — it responds to any thought impressed upon it without regard for who is doing the impressing, without preference for any particular outcome, and without judgment about the moral worth of the impressor. It operates, in Holmes's most-quoted analogy, like the law of gravity: reliable, neutral, and indifferent.

The individual human mind, in Holmes's framework, is not separate from the Universal Mind. It is the Universal Mind operating at the level of the individual — a localized expression of the same intelligence, with the

same creative power, restricted only by what the individual chooses to think.

This framework allows Holmes to make, with philosophical confidence, a claim that the other teachers in this book make with varying degrees of caution: that the conditions of one's life are, without exception, the precipitate of one's own habitual thought. There is no "other" responsible for one's circumstances. There is no fate to which one is subject. There is only the steady, impersonal, lawlike operation of Mind responding to whatever the individual has been thinking, saying, and feeling with conviction.

The implication, for the reader, is exactly the implication Neville drew in his more mystical idiom: change the thought, and the circumstances will eventually change with it.

## *Spiritual Mind Treatment*

Holmes's signature contribution — the technique most associated with his name and the most thoroughly developed in his writings — is what he called **Spiritual Mind Treatment**, sometimes abbreviated SMT.

It is, at its core, a five-step prayer formula, designed to be applied to a specific problem or aim with a specific structure. The five steps:

- 1. Recognition.** The practitioner begins by acknowledging the existence and the nature of the Universal Mind — by recognizing, with attention and feeling, that there is one intelligent Mind, that it is everywhere present, that it is responsive, and that it is the source of all that is.

**2. Unification.** The practitioner then recognizes that she is not separate from this Mind. She is, in Holmes's phrasing, a particular expression of it. Whatever the Mind is, she is; whatever capacities the Mind has, she has access to.

**3. Realization.** The practitioner then states, in clear and definite words, the specific condition or outcome she intends. She states it as a present fact, not a future hope. She speaks with the full authority of the Mind through which the statement is being made.

**4. Thanksgiving.** Following Wattles's emphasis from sixteen years earlier, the practitioner gives thanks for the result — not for the wish, for the result, as already given.

**5. Release.** The practitioner releases the entire process to the Law, refusing to monitor it, second-guess it, or attempt to bring it about by personal will. The Mind, she trusts, will work it out.

The whole treatment can be done in three to five minutes. It can be done aloud or silently. It can be done seated, standing, walking, or lying down. It is, in Holmes's framing, a complete and self-sufficient operation: once it is done, no further work of the same kind is required, and the practitioner is to go about her business with the certainty that the work has been done.

For a problem that does not resolve quickly, Holmes recommended repeating the treatment daily, with the same structure, until the result manifests. He was clear that the repetition is not because the Mind needs reminding, but because the practitioner's own conviction often needs reinforcement before the assumption is fully held.

## *Where Holmes Sits in the Tradition*

Holmes is the bridge between the philosophical and the practical halves of New Thought.

He has, by some distance, the most careful and complete philosophical exposition of any teacher in this book. *The Science of Mind* takes the entire metaphysics of mental causation, lays it out from first principles, and answers, point by point, the objections that a skeptical reader is likely to raise. A reader who finds Neville's mysticism too high-flown, Murphy's manualism too thin, Wattles's 1910 prose too quaint, and Hill's showmanship insufferable will frequently find Holmes the writer who actually makes the case.

He also, for the same reason, ordained Joseph Murphy in 1946 as a Religious Science minister, and through that ordination the two main streams of the postwar New Thought movement — Murphy's accessible self-help and Holmes's systematic theology — were institutionally united in a way that has shaped everything that came afterward.

For the reader of this booklet, Holmes is most useful as the source of philosophical confidence. When the technique seems to fail, when the assumption seems to slip, when the surrounding skepticism of the modern world starts to make the whole enterprise feel embarrassing, Holmes is the writer to whom to return. His patient, almost legalistic exposition of why this works has, for many serious students, been the difference between sustained practice and gradual abandonment.

## *A First Holmes Exercise*

For any one definite condition in your life that you intend to change, perform the five-step Spiritual Mind Treatment, daily, for thirty days.

The structure to follow each day:

1. Sit quietly. Close your eyes if you prefer.
2. **Recognition.** "There is one Mind, present everywhere, intelligent, responsive, creative, the source of all that is."
3. **Unification.** "I am one with this Mind. What it is, I am; what it does, it does through me."
4. **Realization.** State, in present-tense and specific terms, the condition you intend. "I am [healthy / employed in fulfilling work / in a loving partnership / earning \$X per month]. This is true now."
5. **Thanksgiving.** "I give thanks for this, which is already so."
6. **Release.** "I release this to the Law, which is now bringing it forth. It is done."

The whole exercise takes about three minutes. Do it once each day, at the same time each day, for thirty days. Do not double up. Do not try to "intensify" it. Do not check on its progress.

At the end of the thirty days, evaluate.

## *Read These Next*

If you want to go deeper into Holmes, the body of work is large but the entry points are clear.

1. *The Science of Mind* (1926; revised 1938). The systematic exposition. Long, deliberate, and best read slowly — perhaps a chapter a week — over six months. The reader who completes it has the most complete philosophical map of this tradition available in any single book.
2. *Creative Mind* (1919) or *Creative Mind and Success* (1919). Early, short, accessible. Either is a reasonable place to start before tackling *Science of Mind*.
3. *This Thing Called You* (1948). A late, gentle, practical volume. Useful for the reader who has the framework but wants encouragement.

The next chapter pulls everything in this booklet together. It is the synthesis of what these six teachers shared, where they differed, and the single underlying mechanism that, when properly understood, makes their separate methods comprehensible as variations on one practice.

## CHAPTER 8

# *The Synthesis*

For seven chapters, this booklet has introduced six teachers — separated by half a century, three continents, and as many vocabularies as one would expect from independent writers working without coordination — and asked you to read each of them on his own terms.

This chapter does what the booklet has, until now, refused to do. It states, with maximum compression and minimum hedging, what the six teachers actually shared, where they genuinely differed, and the single underlying claim that organizes all their separate methods.

## *What They Agreed On*

Strip away the differences in language and the differences in personality, and the six teachers agree on the following six propositions. Every one of them — Wattles, Hill, Holmes, Murphy, Neville, and (by reliable second-

hand testimony) Abdullah — would, if asked, sign each line below.

**1. There is an intelligent creative principle, operating throughout reality, that responds to human thought.**

The teachers gave it different names. Wattles called it the *Thinking Substance*. Holmes called it the *Universal Mind*. Murphy called it the *Subconscious Mind* (or, in a more cosmic register, the *Universal Subconscious*). Neville called it *Human Imagination*, identified with God. Hill called it, vaguely, *Infinite Intelligence*. The names matter less than the claim: there is something that responds, and one of the things it responds to is what a human being is thinking.

**2. Habitual thought, sustained over time, manifests as external circumstance.**

The mechanism by which it does so was described differently. Some teachers emphasized subtle behavioral change in the practitioner. Some emphasized the "bringing together of opportunities" in the environment. Some emphasized something straightforwardly miraculous. All agreed that the manifestation happens. The honest reader will note that, while the *fact* of the manifestation is what every one of these teachers claimed to have observed, the *mechanism* of it is the part on which the tradition is least clear.

**3. Definite, specific, sensory mental images are dramatically more effective than vague aspirations.**

Every teacher in this book hammered this point. The mind that thinks "more money" produces nothing. The mind that thinks "I am sitting at my kitchen table on a Saturday morning, opening a bank statement that shows a balance of \$250,000" produces something. The difference is not in the wanting; it is in the specificity of the image being held.

#### **4. Emotional engagement is what makes the thought operative.**

A thought held coolly, intellectually, abstractly does not work. A thought held with the felt sense of its reality does. The technical name for the engaged emotional state varies by teacher — Wattles called it *gratitude*, Neville called it *the feeling of the wish fulfilled*, Murphy called it *conviction*, Holmes called it *acceptance*, Hill called it *burning desire* — but the underlying requirement is identical. The image must be felt, not merely thought.

#### **5. Persistence is non-negotiable.**

Every teacher in this book warned, in some version of the same warning, that the most common reason the technique fails is that the practitioner gives up too soon. The image must be held not for hours but for weeks. Not for weeks but for months. Not for months but for as long as it takes. Neville's Barbados assumption was held for three weeks. Murphy's recommended impression cycles run thirty days as a minimum. Holmes recommended daily treatment until the result manifests, without time limit.

The practitioner who imagines a result for five minutes and abandons the assumption the moment the day's first contrary evidence arrives has not, by any of these teachers' definitions, practiced the method.

#### **6. The contrary evidence of the senses is not authoritative.**

This is the hardest of the shared propositions, and the one most aggressively dropped from the modern repackagings. Every one of the six teachers held that what the senses report — what the bank balance says, what the doctor says, what the spouse said over breakfast, what the mirror shows — is the precipitate of past assumptions, already cooling into form. It is, on every one of their accounts, information about *what was*, not information about what is or will be.

The implication is severe. The serious practitioner of any of these techniques is required to ignore the visible evidence of the current life and continue to inhabit, in feeling and imagination, the state of the desired life. To wait for the visible evidence to confirm the new state before fully assuming it is, in every one of these teachers' frameworks, to keep the new state out of arrival permanently.

## *Where They Differed*

The disagreements among the six are real, and the honest reader should know what they were.

**Theology.** Holmes, Wattles, and Hill held that the responsive intelligence is impersonal — a *Lam*, like gravity, with no preference for any particular outcome. Neville, in his mature work, held that the responsive intelligence is the practitioner's own imagination, identified with God, and that there is no separate intelligence "out there" doing the responding. Murphy held a position somewhere in between. The implications for prayer, gratitude, and the felt sense of the practice are significant; the implications for the technique itself are surprisingly small.

**The role of action.** Wattles required action in the present, every day, "in a Certain Way," as a non-negotiable component of the method. Hill required action structured around a written plan revised regularly. Neville, in his most extreme statements, held that no action is required at all — that the assumption, properly maintained, produces the action of others,

the rearrangement of circumstance, and the arrival of the result without the practitioner having to *do* anything in the conventional sense. Murphy and Holmes occupied middle positions.

The honest synthesis, for the modern reader, is that action is required to the extent that the circumstances of arrival require it, and not more. The man assuming a promotion must still show up to work; he need not engineer his promotion. The woman assuming a partnership must still meet other people; she need not strategize.

**Other people.** Wattles taught that other people are independent agents to be respected and never competed with. Hill taught that other people are resources to be enlisted through the Mastermind. Neville taught that other people are *not independent agents at all* — that they are "you pushed out," costumes worn by one's own consciousness, mirroring back one's own assumed state. The metaphysical distance between these three positions is large. The practical implications — in all three cases, to treat others well and to refuse to manipulate them — are, surprisingly, similar.

**The boundary of legitimate application.** Wattles, Hill, and Murphy generally restricted the method to outcomes the practitioner could plausibly bring about — wealth, health, work, relationships, confidence. Neville and Holmes were willing to extend it further, into the more frankly miraculous, including the kind of result that admits no naturalistic explanation. Where the boundary lies, in practice, is a question this booklet will not answer, because the data does not exist to answer it cleanly. The serious practitioner will discover, by working the method, where her own boundary is.

# *The Single Mechanism*

After eight chapters of distinctions, qualifications, and variations, here is the underlying claim that organizes everything in this booklet.

**The state of mind a person inhabits, with sustained conviction, tends — over time, through some combination of psychological, behavioral, and (in the strongest versions of the teaching) more-than-psychological mechanisms — to manifest as the external circumstances of that person's life.**

This is the entire teaching. Every technique introduced in this booklet — assumption, SATS, revision, the Certain Way, gratitude, the five-step treatment, the burning-desire affirmation, the sleep statement — is a method for inhabiting a chosen state of mind with sustained conviction.

The variations among the methods are real, and some methods will suit some practitioners better than others. But the underlying mechanism — to the extent that the tradition's own account of itself is to be trusted — is identical across the six teachers, and the practitioner who masters any one method has, in effect, mastered all of them.

# *Why The Field Has Obscured This*

A reader who has spent any time on the modern manifestation literature will, at this point, have a question: if the tradition is this coherent, why does the modern literature on it present such a confused, contradictory, and often embarrassing face to the world?

The answer is commercial.

A coherent tradition, clearly stated, with honest acknowledgment of its open questions and its failure modes, is not a profitable product. A confused tradition, repackaged every eighteen months with a fresh celebrity face and a new piece of jargon, is. The publishing economics of the last forty years have rewarded fragmentation, repackaging, and the strategic forgetting of sources. Each new author has had a commercial incentive to present her version as fresh, distinctive, and primary, rather than as a faithful summary of what was already in print eighty years before.

The result is a literature in which a careful reader can spend two hundred hours and absorb less than she would have absorbed from a careful reading of Murphy's 1963 book.

The booklet you are reading is the attempt to undo, in compressed form, what the publishing economics of the last forty years have done. Whether it has succeeded, in your particular case, will be evident to you in about thirty-five days.

# *The Open Questions*

This chapter would be dishonest without a final section on what the tradition has not, in a century of practice, satisfactorily explained.

**Why does it work for some practitioners and not others?** The teachers in this booklet uniformly attributed failures to insufficient practice, insufficient persistence, or insufficient conviction. This explanation is, however, unfalsifiable: any failure can be attributed retroactively to a shortcoming in the practitioner. The honest position is that the question is not closed.

**What is the actual mechanism?** The strongest versions of the teaching require commitments to metaphysical claims that are difficult to reconcile with contemporary physics, neuroscience, or evidence-based psychology. The weakest versions of the teaching reduce to "set clear goals, work toward them, don't talk yourself out of them" — which is sound but not novel. The tradition's own account of itself sits somewhere between these poles, and the question of where exactly is open.

**How much of the effect is the technique, and how much is the selection of practitioners?** The people who undertake serious thirty-day or year-long practice of any of these methods are not a random sample of the population. They are, by self-selection, the people most likely to also be making other consequential changes in their lives at the same time. Disentangling the contribution of the technique from the contribution of the practitioner is, in any meaningful sense, an unsolved problem.

These open questions are not reasons to abandon the practice. They are reasons to undertake it honestly — as an experiment, not as an act of faith — and to evaluate the results with the same honesty.

The next and final chapter is the experiment.

## CHAPTER 9

# *The Thirty-Day Practical Path*

You are now at the chapter for the sake of which the other eight were written.

Everything in this booklet has been preparation. Eight chapters of history, biography, philosophy, and technique have been laid out to give you the context in which the following thirty days will make sense — and so that, when something difficult happens in week two or three (as it will), you have the framework to understand what is happening and the persistence to continue.

This chapter is the path. It is structured as a thirty-day program, with one specific practice for each of four weeks. It is designed to be done by an ordinary person, in the middle of ordinary life, without retreats, special locations, or hours-per-day commitments. The total daily time required is approximately twenty minutes — ten in the morning, ten before sleep.

If you do it honestly, for thirty consecutive days, you will know, by the end, whether the techniques in this booklet do for you what their authors claim they do.

If you do not do it honestly — if you miss days, if you reduce the practice when it becomes inconvenient, if you abandon the assumption the first time the visible evidence seems to contradict it — then the question of whether the technique works for you will remain open, and the only person responsible for that lack of resolution will be you.

You are about to make a contract with yourself. The terms are below.

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## *Day 0 — Preparation*

Before Day 1, do this.

### **Choose Your Aim**

Select one specific outcome you intend to manifest in the next thirty to one hundred eighty days. The aim must meet four criteria:

**1. Specific.** Not "more money" but a particular figure, in a particular form, in your possession by a particular date. Not "a better job" but a particular kind of position, in a particular kind of organization, with a particular kind of compensation. Not "a relationship" but a relationship with a person who has a particular set of qualities, at a particular stage of life, with a particular kind of feeling between you. If your aim cannot be stated in a single sentence that another person could understand without asking follow-up questions, it is not yet specific enough.

**2. Plausible.** Not in the sense of "easy" but in the sense of "imaginable." If your aim is so far from your current life that you cannot, even for a moment, feel what it would be to inhabit it, the assumption will not take. Choose an aim that stretches you but does not break the imaginative connection. A first-time practitioner should not, for the first thirty-day program, choose "I have a billion dollars." She should choose something at the edge of what feels possible.

**3. Yours.** The aim must be something you actually want, not something you believe you should want, or that your parents want for you, or that the surrounding culture has told you constitutes success. The technique requires the engagement of real desire. Performed wants do not work.

**4. In your own life.** The aim must concern your own state — your wealth, your work, your relationships, your health, your skills. The method is not for use on other people. Wattles was emphatic, and the modern reader should be too: the attempt to manipulate other human beings through these techniques is both ethically prohibited and operationally unreliable.

Write the aim down. In a single sentence. In the present tense. On a piece of paper you will keep.

## Set Up A Log

Get a notebook. Not a phone. A paper notebook, with lined pages, that you will write in each night for thirty days.

On the first page, write the date you intend to start.

On the second page, write your aim. The same single sentence.

The rest of the notebook is for the daily prompts that follow.

## Schedule The Practice

Decide, in advance, the two times of day at which you will do the practice. The morning practice should be in the first thirty minutes after rising. The evening practice should be in the last ten minutes before sleep. Put these in your calendar as recurring appointments. Treat them with the same seriousness as you would treat work meetings.

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## *Week 1 — Days 1 through 7*

### Awareness

The first week is the easiest to skip and the hardest to do well.

The aim of the week is not yet to manifest anything. The aim is to notice — honestly, without judgment — what you are currently assuming about your life, what feelings dominate your inner experience, and what the gap is between your current state and the state your stated aim would require.

**Morning Practice (Days 1–7).** For ten minutes each morning, sit in a quiet place. Close your eyes. Take three slow breaths. Then, mentally, do this: run through your current life in the area of your aim. If your aim concerns money, run through the current financial circumstances — the balance, the income, the bills, the felt sense. If your aim concerns a rela-

tionship, run through the current relational life — the connections, the absences, the felt sense. If your aim concerns work, run through the current work — the daily reality, the feelings about it, the felt sense.

Do not change anything. Do not affirm. Do not visualize the new aim. Just observe what is, and notice the dominant feeling that accompanies it.

**Evening Practice (Days 1–7).** For ten minutes each evening, before sleep, lie in bed. Close your eyes. Take three slow breaths. Then, mentally, do this: run through the day that just ended. What were the dominant inner states? Where, during the day, did you slip into the felt sense of the old reality you are trying to change? What sentences did you say to yourself, aloud or silently, that reinforced the old assumption?

Note these without judgment. Allow yourself to fall asleep with the noticing fresh.

**Daily Journal Prompt (Days 1–7).** Each evening, after the practice, write three sentences in the notebook:

1. The dominant feeling I noticed today was: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The most contradictory thought I had today, in light of my aim, was: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The clearest moment of the day, when I noticed I was slipping into the old assumption, was: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Common Pitfalls In Week 1.** The most common failure is impatience. Practitioners who have read the booklet and absorbed the more dramatic stories want, by Day 3, to be visualizing in the new state. Resist this. The first week's work is observation. Without an honest map of the current state, the second week's construction will be built on imagined ground.

The second most common failure is judgment. Practitioners who observe their old assumptions begin to criticize themselves for having them. This is counterproductive. The current assumptions were laid down over years or decades, often without your awareness. They are what they are. The observation, not the judgment, is what matters.

**Sign Of Progress In Week 1.** By the end of the week, you should be able to articulate, in one or two sentences, the dominant assumption you have been holding about your life in the area of your aim. The articulation may be uncomfortable. ("I have been assuming that I am the kind of person whose income never goes above \$X." "I have been assuming that the kind of partner I want would never choose me.") Discomfort is the sign that the observation has gone deep enough. Comfort is the sign that you have not yet seen what is.

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## *Week 2 — Days 8 through 14*

### **Construction**

The second week introduces the new state.

**Morning Practice (Days 8–14).** For ten minutes each morning, sit in your quiet place. Close your eyes. Take three slow breaths. Then, mentally, do this: construct a single short scene — five to fifteen seconds long — that would only be true if your aim were already fulfilled. Make it concrete and sensory. Not "I am rich" but "I am at my kitchen table on a Saturday morning, opening a bank statement that shows a balance of \$250,000."

Not "I have a partner" but "I am on my couch on a Sunday afternoon, and my partner is across from me, reading, and reaches over without looking up to take my hand."

Enter the scene. See it from inside, not from outside. Hear the sounds, feel the temperature, smell the air. Allow the feeling that would naturally arise — the relief, the gratitude, the warmth — to come, and rest in it for as long as it stays.

If the feeling fades, gently re-enter the scene. Do this for the full ten minutes.

**Evening Practice (Days 8–14).** For ten minutes each evening, in bed, in the drowsy minutes before sleep, do the same. The scene should be the same scene as the morning. The execution is slightly different: you are now in the State Akin To Sleep, the threshold state in which the conscious mind has loosened and the subconscious is more accessible.

Loop the scene gently. Allow the feeling to be present as you fall asleep. The last thought before unconsciousness should be the feeling of the wish fulfilled.

**Daily Journal Prompt (Days 8–14).** Each evening, after the practice, write three sentences in the notebook:

1. The scene I held today was: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The most vivid moment of the practice today was: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The dominant feeling I went to bed with was: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Common Pitfalls In Week 2.** The most common failure is changing the scene. The practitioner who, on Day 8, constructs a scene of opening the bank statement, and then on Day 9 decides the better scene is signing a contract, and on Day 10 decides it should be looking at a property list-

ing, has not held an assumption. She has held a series of related wishes. The scene must be the same scene, repeated, until the feeling that arises with it is reliable.

The second most common failure is forcing. The practitioner who tries to manufacture a feeling — straining to feel grateful, performing the felt sense — produces a strain, not a feeling. The instruction is to enter the scene, allow the feeling, and rest in it. If no feeling comes, the scene is not yet vivid enough; sharpen the sensory detail, do not force the emotion.

**Sign Of Progress In Week 2.** By the end of the week, the scene should arise with little effort. The feeling that accompanies it should arise more or less automatically when the scene is entered. There may be moments, during the day, when the feeling of the scene returns unbidden — when, walking down the street or sitting in a meeting, you suddenly feel for a few seconds as you would feel if the thing were already done. These spontaneous returns are a strong sign of progress.

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## *Week 3 — Days 15 through 21*

### **Inhabitation**

The third week introduces the daytime work.

The morning and evening practices continue as in Week 2, with the same scene, the same execution. Do not change anything about them.

What is added is a daytime discipline. The aim of Week 3 is to extend the assumed state from the two ten-minute practice intervals to the rest of the day.

**Daytime Practice (Days 15–21).** Each time you notice, during the day, that you have slipped into the felt sense of the old reality — the assumption of scarcity, of being unloved, of being stuck, of whatever the old state was — pause. Take one breath. Mentally re-enter the scene from the morning practice, for five to ten seconds. Allow the feeling to return. Then continue your day.

This is what Neville called *staying in the state*. It is what Holmes called *abiding in the realization*. It is what Wattles called *living in the Certain Way*. The vocabulary differs. The discipline is identical.

A practitioner who does this consistently — pausing perhaps twenty or thirty times across a day, for five to ten seconds at a time — will find, by the end of the week, that the proportion of the day spent in the new state has grown substantially. The proportion of the day spent in the old state has, correspondingly, shrunk.

**The Revision Practice (Days 15–21).** In addition to the morning and evening practice, and in addition to the daytime catch-and-return, add the following to the bedtime work:

Before the scene-and-feeling practice, spend two or three minutes reviewing the day. Identify any scene of the day that disappointed you, frustrated you, or contradicted your assumption. In imagination, replay the scene as you would have wished it to occur. Hear the kind words instead of the harsh ones. See the smile instead of the scowl. Allow the corrected scene to feel, in the moment of replay, as if it had actually happened that way. Then proceed to the regular bedtime practice.

This is Neville's Revision. It is the practice that, more than any other in this booklet, produces the next day's visible evidence of the work.

**Daily Journal Prompt (Days 15–21).** Each evening, after the practice, write three sentences in the notebook:

1. The scene I revised today was: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The number of times I caught myself and returned to the new state during the day was approximately: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The most encouraging external evidence I noticed today was: \_\_\_\_\_.

**Common Pitfalls In Week 3.** The most common failure is the impatient checking of results. Practitioners who, by Day 16 or 17, begin scrutinizing every event of the day for evidence that "it is working" are still in the wish state, not the assumption state. The instruction is to inhabit the assumed state and to leave the production of evidence to the mechanism. Checking is a form of doubt, and doubt undoes assumption.

The second most common failure is discouragement when the visible evidence appears to contradict the assumption. Bills arrive. Conversations go badly. The bank balance refuses to move. The practitioner who interprets this as evidence that the technique is not working misunderstands what is happening: the visible evidence is the precipitate of *past* assumptions, already cooling. The current assumption — held only for two weeks now — has not yet had time to cool into visible form. The instruction is to continue.

**Sign Of Progress In Week 3.** By the end of the week, the new state should be felt for a meaningful portion of each day — perhaps three or four hours' total accumulated time, in scattered intervals. Small visible evidence may begin to appear: an unexpected message, a fresh opportunity, a

new line of conversation, a coincidence too pointed to dismiss. These are confirmations, not the result itself. Note them without making them the focus.

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## *Week 4 — Days 22 through 30*

### **Persistence**

The fourth week is the week the technique either becomes a permanent part of your life or quietly slips away.

By Day 22, the novelty has worn off. The practice has begun to feel routine. The visible evidence may still be modest. The temptation to reduce the time commitment, to skip a morning, to abandon the journal entries, is at its strongest.

This is the week the teachers in this booklet were most concerned about. Wattles named "persistence." Hill made it the entire eleventh chapter of *Think and Grow Rich*. Neville built it into the structure of his whole teaching. Murphy returned to it again and again.

The instruction for Week 4 is simple, and it is the entire instruction: continue exactly as in Week 3. Do not reduce. Do not modify. Do not improve. Do not check more frequently. Do exactly what you did in Week 3, every day, for nine more days.

- **Morning practice:** same scene, ten minutes.
- **Evening practice:** revision plus scene, ten minutes.

- **Daytime:** catch and return, as needed, throughout.
- **Journal:** three sentences each evening (same prompts as Week 3).

**Common Pitfall In Week 4.** The single common failure of Week 4 is reduction. Practitioners decide, somewhere around Day 24 or 25, that they "have the hang of it now" and can do an abbreviated version. The abbreviated version does not work. The full practice does. Do the full practice.

**Sign Of Progress In Week 4.** By Day 30, the practice should feel less like a discipline and more like a state. The new assumption should be available, on demand, without the elaborate construction of Week 2. The visible evidence — what some teachers call the "bridge of incidents" leading to the desired result — should be detectable, not necessarily as a fully manifested outcome (which often takes longer than thirty days) but as a clear directional change in the events around you.

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## *Day 30: Evaluation*

On the morning of Day 31, before any other practice, sit with your notebook and read it from the beginning.

Note, in writing, on a fresh page:

1. The aim you stated on Day 0.
2. The state of that aim as of Day 30: not yet manifested, partially manifested, fully manifested, or no longer your aim.

3. The visible evidence accumulated across the thirty days, listed.
4. The internal evidence: the change in your dominant felt state, your habitual self-talk, your relationship to the aim.
5. Your honest assessment of whether the techniques in this booklet, on the evidence of your own thirty days, do what their authors claim they do.

If the answer is yes — even partially yes — continue. The thirty-day program was the experiment; the rest of your life is the work.

If the answer is no, evaluate honestly whether the failure was in the technique or in the practice. Did you skip days? Did you reduce the time? Did you abandon the assumption at the first contrary evidence? Did you change the scene? Did you check too often?

The teachers in this booklet would say, almost in unison, that an honest failure of the technique is rare, and that the cause is almost always one of the failure modes above. If, on review, you find that the practice was honest — full time, every day, same scene, no checking — and the result was still nothing, then you will have one of the rarer experiences in the history of this tradition, and it will be worth your while to consult one of the more advanced books on the recommended reading list to refine.

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## *What Comes After Day 30*

The thirty-day program is the beginning, not the end.

A serious practitioner, having completed one cycle, will typically begin a second cycle the following day — either with the same aim, if not yet fully manifested, or with a new aim, if the first is complete or in clear progress. The techniques become, over weeks and months, less like a special practice and more like a way of being. The morning ten minutes and the evening ten minutes become permanent features of the day. The catch-and-return becomes automatic. The journal becomes a record of an unfolding life rather than the documentation of an experiment.

You have, in this booklet, the whole tradition in compressed form. You have the techniques of six teachers, the synthesis of their shared mechanism, and a practical thirty-day path. What you do with it from here is, properly, your business.

The teachers in this booklet would say, in one voice and across the century that separates the oldest of them from the youngest, that the only person who has ever stood between you and the life you wished for is the person you have been assuming yourself to be.

Change the assumption.

The life follows.