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Introduction by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

A few years ago, in Kansas City for a speaking engagement I was passing through the hotel lobby when I heard sounds of enthusiastic applause coming from a ballroom.

I asked the man at the door who was speaking to the large crowd, and his reply was “Tom Hopkins, and he is the greatest.” I was unable to resist the impulse to slip into a seat, and had great trouble finding one.

I listened with admiration to Tom as he handled a motivational meeting masterfully. It was highly inspirational, very practical and, of course, positive in nature.

I had heard of Tom Hopkins for several years, and subsequent to this incident have followed his career with admiration. I think he is one of the best motivational speakers on the American platform today.

Throughout my own life I have tried to persuade people of the great potential that has been built into them by their Creator. And I have tried to outline techniques of faith and thinking that would help release such potential.

Some years ago I wrote a book called, “The Power of Positive Thinking,” which contained my own philosophy of successful living. I am flattered that Tom Hopkins says he read this book and others in his early years and that he has been helped by them in his personal and business life.

It has encouraged me that this brilliant young speaker and writer persuades his readers and listeners to employ the principles of positive thinking in their own lives.

I am delighted that Tom Hopkins has written a new book, “The Official Guide to Success.” In this volume, he shows effectively how the time-tested principles of success in which he and I believe may be geared to the complex demands of our contemporary generation.

Mr. Tom Hopkins has the ability to relate the long proven concepts and ideas for gaining happiness and success, so that this generation can understand and use these basic principles creatively.

In these pages he has outlined a workable guide to success, and in my judgment, anyone seeking fulfillment in their lives will find practical and valuable help in the study of Tom Hopkins’ “The Official Guide to Success.” I know that as this book goes out among people everywhere, it will change the lives of many for the better.

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

Chapter 1—HOW TO FLIP YOUR SWITCH FROM LOSE TO WIN

Throughout our entire lives, we operate under a set of instructions. Everything we choose to do is governed by them. So is almost everything that happens to us, and almost everything we think we’re forced to do.

Since the instructions other people give us after childhood have no effect on our personalities beyond the impact we give those instructions by repeating them inside our own heads, all our self-instructions fall into only three categories:

   Instincts.
Whatever someone else pounded into us during our childhood.

Everything we’ve pounded into our own personalities since childhood.

That makes our self-instructions sound simple. They’re not. Our self-instructions are extremely complex. The most advanced researchers in this field claim no more than a general understanding of their processes and inter-connections.

But one fact is simple. Where our self-instructions are negative, our achievements will be negative. That is, we will lose in our negative instructions areas because we can succeed there only by failing. In other words, we will do what we have programmed ourselves to do.

On the other hand, where our self-instructions are positive we will achieve much. We’ll win far more often than we’ll lose. We’ll do that because we’ve programmed ourselves to achieve and to win in that area of our activities.

Would you like to change your self-instructions in the areas where you’re now losing?

Fortunately, we don’t have to wait for science to gain a complete understanding of these instructions before we can get started on changing them. If we’re perfectly satisfied in every way with ourselves, our lives, and our achievements, we won’t want to change our instructions. Few people who feel that way will open this book. Most of us want to see a great amount of improvement in our lives and our achievements, and we want to see that improvement fast. We’re even willing to think about changing ourselves a bit if it’ll help bring those improvements about, aren’t we?

The changes start with our goals. Nobody is without goals. The unfortunate alcoholic who slept on a park bench last night owns a goal: to acquire another jug of wine. The temporarily-broke tycoon who has made and lost a dozen fortunes owns a goal: to acquire another fortune. They’ll both reach their goals. Why? Because their self-instructions not only allow them to, they require them to.

To get an understanding of how we can change our instructions to ourselves, let’s look at how they keep us moving down the road we’ve chosen to travel—again, by heeding those self-instructions. The method is so simple, and we all use it so constantly all our lives that we tend to forget about it.

Our self-instructions control us because we keep repeating them over and over to ourselves—and often to anyone else we can get to listen. Hour after hour, that little voice in our head keeps telling us things:

“I better not try that.”

“They’d probably just turn me down anyway.”

“I’ve got to do this or I’m a goner.”

“She wouldn’t want to go out with me.”

“What if I call him and he says no?”

“I don’t have a chance to win this one now.”

“If I miss the next one, I’ve had it.”

I could list thousands of these tension-building and confidence-destroying instructions that many of us wash through our brains all day every day. No wonder we’re afraid to try new things—we always lose when we do. Which is what we expected. Which is why we did. It’s a closed loop. Expected failure keeps on breeding more failure, which in turn breeds more expectations of failure.

We can just as well tell ourselves to succeed.

That is, we can just as well set ourselves up to keep on breeding the expectation of success, which will breed success, which will breed more expectations of success. That’s a closed loop, too, and it’s what flipping our switch from lose to win is all about.

We start by telling ourselves that we can do it. The basic concept is that simple, although the technique for doing it successfully is a bit more complicated. We’ll get into that in a moment. If you’ll follow the system thoroughly enough, that is, often enough and with enough emotional force, it really will flip your switch from lose to win. The fantastic part is that—once you have yourself organized to do it, you’ll spend less than five minutes a day on it.

It won’t work if you decide to make sure it won’t work. Unfortunately, unless this system is helping you, it’s hurting you. Why? Because there’s no way you can shut that little voice inside your head off. As long as you’re conscious, it’ll keep on telling you to succeed or fail, to stay healthy or get sick, to take a carefully-prepared-for risk or to let it all ride on a wild gamble. That voice is always there, telling you to lose or win.

So let’s get on with winning more often. Here’s how to make the good things start happening sooner:

Make up a set of new self-instructions. However, this set will be vastly different from all the instructions you’ve been giving yourself throughout your life up to now. The
difference is that these instructions will be carefully thought through. Then they’ll be written out. Finally, and most importantly, they’ll be reviewed frequently as a conscious act. In other words, they are different because they are completely under your control. This means that you can make them completely positive to what you want to do now.

Write your new self-instructions on 3 X 5 inch cards, one to a card. Write things like:

“Today I’ll meet the right people in the right place at the right time for the betterment of all.”

“People like me. It’s amazing, but nearly everyone I meet really likes me right off. Of course, I like almost everyone I meet right away, too. I guess the way I feel about people shows.”

“I always prepare thoroughly for every important thing that I do. This is one reason why I…” (Finish this one to fit your own unique situation.)

“…win so many of my cases.”

“…close so many sales.”

“…accomplish so much in my business.”

“Always leave early for an appointment so I’ll have time to psyche myself up before I get there.”

“Always do the thing I least want to do first, so it doesn’t hang over me and spoil my whole day.”

“Every day, I get closer to my goals.”

The more specific your new self-instructions are, the more they’ll help you change what you want to change.

“I get up feeling great every morning at six” instead of “I have to get up at six no matter what.”

4. Pack them with emotion. “I don’t eat those yucky, gooey pastries.”

5. Concentrate on at least ten, but no more than twenty self-instructions at a time. When you’re satisfied that one of them is now a firm part of your highly successful new nature, drop its card from the pack. Then put a new one in its place.

6. Build your confidence in this system by starting with several easy ones. Little things that drive your spouse crazy, like not putting the cap back on the toothpaste, are terrific for proving to yourself that the system really works. Always keep a few easy ones in the pile so you won’t overwhelm yourself.

7. Emphasize confidence in your new self-instructions: “I always make a fine impression because I know my stuff, I dress professionally, and I’m sensitive to people.”

8. Relaxation and alertness are the keys to superior performance. Emphasize them in your new self-instructions: “I do everything with smooth, relaxed alertness.”

9. Look through your own eyes as you see yourself performing with calm confidence.

10. Aim for the mark, not beyond it. If you’re overweight and want to lose a few bulges, don’t keep telling yourself that you never eat and you’re just skin and bones—you’re likely to starve yourself to death. Pick the weight you want. Then choose a sensible rate of weight loss, and start seeing yourself enjoying life at the weight you want to be. If you make your vision of the rewards of losing weight vivid enough, you’ll avoid that extra helping and all those other avoidable calories, and you’ll get down to your chosen weight right on schedule. It’s all a matter of what you instruct yourself to really want. With all self-instructions relating to health and diet, be sure to consult your doctor before you make any changes.

The content of this book is also available in an audio format with the same title. It’s not the exact same content, rather at recording of a live training event where the author taught many of the concepts from the book.