

The Law of Success

In Sixteen Lessons

By Napoleon Hill

Teaching, for the First Time in the History of the World,
the True Philosophy upon which all Personal Success is Built.

Lesson 14

Failure

Brought to you by **Chris And Susan Beesley**

[Click here](#) to visit my website and get more free eBooks and information.

[Click here](#) if you would like to have a **personalized** copy of this eBook so
you can make money by giving it away for free!

You have permission to distribute this eBook
in printed or electronic form **as long as no changes are made**
and it is distributed in whole – **every page must be included.**

This eBook publication was created with extracted material from the complete and original 1928 version of The Law of Success by Napoleon Hill that is in the public domain in the United States. However, it may not be in the public domain in other countries. If you are outside the U.S. then make sure you check the copyright laws in your country before you distribute or keep a copy of this eBook. **This new enhanced eBook edition is copyright protected.**

Copyright © 2010 ProfitTips.com All Rights Reserved.

If you have any questions please contact us at <http://www.profittips.com/contact.html>

About the Author



Napoleon Hill was born into poverty in 1883 in a one-room cabin on the Pound River in Wise County, Virginia. When he was 13 he began his writing career as a "mountain reporter" for small town newspapers and went on to become one of America's most beloved motivational authors. He dedicated more than 25 years of his life to define the reasons why so many people fail to achieve true financial success and happiness in their life.

His big break came in 1908 when Robert L. Taylor former Governor of Tennessee and owner of Bob Taylor's Magazine employed Hill to write "success stories" about famous men. Hill's first assignment was to interview one of the richest men in the world, the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie.

During the interview Carnegie asked Hill if he wanted the opportunity to organize the World's first philosophy of individual achievement based upon the principles of success that he and other self-made millionaires had used to accumulate their vast fortunes. Carnegie explained that the task would require years of work and that he would only pay Hill's expenses because he wanted to make sure Hill would learn the philosophy and prove it worked through his own success and financial achievements.

Hill accepted the task, so Carnegie commissioned Hill to interview over 500 millionaires, and with Carnegie's help Hill formulated a philosophy of success (The Law of Success), which was a success formula for the average person.

"The Law of Success in 16 Lessons" was Hill's first book set. It was originally published in 1925 as a multi-volume study course, and it was re-released in 1928 in an abridged version under the title "The Law of Success". The Law of Success later evolved into Napoleon Hill's personal success teachings that were called "The Philosophy of Achievement", and he considered freedom, capitalism, democracy, and harmony to be important elements of this philosophy.

Napoleon Hill passed away in November 1970 after a long and successful career writing, teaching, and lecturing about the principles of success. His work stands as a monument to individual achievement and is the cornerstone of modern motivation. Perhaps no other "success" book has influenced more people than Napoleon Hill's 1937 classic "Think and Grow Rich" which is an outstanding follow-up to The Law of Success.

Lesson Fourteen

FAILURE



Yesterday is but a dream,
Tomorrow is only a
vision.

But today well lived
makes

Every yesterday a dream
of happiness,

And every tomorrow a
vision of hope.

Look well, therefore, to
this day.

- From the Sanscrit.

THE LAW OF SUCCESS

Lesson Fourteen

FAILURE

"You Can Do It if You Believe You Can!"

UNDER ordinary circumstances the term "failure" is a negative term. In this lesson, the word will be given a new meaning, because the word has been a very much misused one; and, for that reason, it has brought unnecessary grief and hardship to millions of people.

In the outset, let us distinguish between "failure" and "temporary defeat." Let us see if that which is so often looked upon as "failure" is not, in reality, but "temporary defeat." Moreover, let us see if this temporary defeat is not usually a blessing in disguise, for the reason that it brings us up with a jerk and redirects our energies along different and more desirable lines.

In Lesson Nine of this course, we learned that strength grows out of resistance; and we shall learn, in this lesson, that sound character is usually the handiwork of reverses, and set-backs, and temporary defeat, which the uninformed part of the world calls "failure."

Neither temporary defeat nor adversity amounts to failure in the mind of the person who looks upon it as a teacher that will teach some needed lesson. As a matter of fact, there is a great and lasting lesson in every reverse, and in every defeat; and, usually, it is a lesson that could be learned in no other way than through defeat.

Defeat often talks to us in a “dumb language” that we do not understand. If this were not true, we would not make the same mistakes over and over again without profiting by the lessons that they might teach us. If it were not true, we would observe more closely the mistakes which other people make and profit by them.

The main object of this lesson is to help the student understand and profit by this “dumb language” in which defeat talks to us.

Perhaps I can best help you to interpret the meaning of defeat by taking you back over some of my own experiences covering a period of approximately thirty years. Within this period, I have come to the turning-point, which the uninformed call “failure,” seven different times. At each of these seven turning-points I thought I had made a dismal failure; but now I know that what looked to be a failure was nothing more than a kindly, unseen hand, that halted me in my chosen course and with great wisdom forced me to redirect my efforts along more advantageous pathways.

I arrived at this decision, however, only after I had taken a retrospective view of my experiences and had analyzed them in the light of many years of sober and meditative thought.

FIRST TURNING-POINT

After finishing a course in a business college, I secured a position as stenographer and bookkeeper which I held for the ensuing five years. As a result of having practiced the habit of performing more work and better work than that for which I was paid, as described in Lesson Nine of this course, I advanced rapidly until I was assuming responsibilities and receiving a salary far out of proportion to my age. I saved my money; and my bank account amounted to several thousand dollars. My reputation spread rapidly and I found competitive bidders for my services.

To meet these offers from competitors my employer advanced me to the position of General Manager of the mines where I was employed. I was quickly getting on top of the world, and *I knew it!*

Ah! but that was the sad part of my fate - *I knew it!*

Then the kindly hand of Fate reached out and gave me a gentle nudge. My employer lost his fortune and I lost my position. This was my first real defeat; and, even though it came about as a result of causes beyond my control, I should have learned a lesson from it; which, of course, I did, but not until many years later.

SECOND TURNING-POINT

My next position was that of Sales Manager for a large lumber manufacturing concern in the South. I knew nothing about lumber, and but little about sales

management; but I had learned that it was beneficial to render more service than that for which I was paid; and I had also learned that it paid to take the initiative and find out what ought to be done without someone telling me to do it. A good sized bank account, plus a record of steady advancement in my previous position, gave me all the self-confidence I needed, with some to spare, perhaps.

My advancement was rapid, my salary having been increased twice during the first year. I did so well in the management of sales that my employer took me into partnership with him. We began to make money and I began to see myself *on top of the world again!*

To stand “on top of the world” gives one a wonderful sensation; but it is a very dangerous place to stand, unless one stands very firmly, because the fall is so long and hard if one should stumble.

I was succeeding by leaps and bounds!

Up to that time it had never occurred to me that *success* could be measured in terms other than money and authority. Perhaps this was due to the fact that I had more money than I needed and more authority than I could manage safely at that age.

Not only was I “succeeding,” from my viewpoint. of success, but I knew I was engaged in the one and only business suited to my temperament. Nothing could have induced me to change into another line of endeavor. That is - nothing except that which happened, which *forced* me to change.

The unseen hand of Fate allowed me to strut around under the influence of my own vanity until I had commenced to feel my importance. In the light of my more sober years, I now wonder if the Unseen

Hand does not purposely permit us foolish human beings to parade ourselves before our own mirrors of vanity until we come to see how vulgarly we are acting and become ashamed of ourselves. At any rate, I seemed to have a clear track ahead of me; there was plenty of coal in the bunker; there was water in the tank; my hand was on the throttle - I opened it wide and sped along at a rapid pace.

Alas! Fate awaited me just around the corner, with a stuffed club that was not stuffed with cotton. Of course I did not see the impending crash until it came. Mine was a sad story, but not unlike that which many another might tell if he would be frank with himself.

Like a stroke of lightning out of a clear sky, the 1907 panic swept down upon me; and, overnight, it rendered me an enduring service by destroying my business and relieving me of every dollar that I possessed.

This was my first serious *defeat!* I mistook it, then, for failure; but it was not, and before I complete this lesson I will tell you why it was not.

THIRD TURNING-POINT

It required the 1907 panic, and the defeat that it brought me, to divert and redirect my efforts from the lumber business to the study of law. Nothing on earth, except defeat, could have brought about this result; thus, the third turning-point of my life was ushered in on the wings of that which most people would call "failure," which reminds me to state again that every defeat teaches a needed lesson to those who are ready and willing to be taught.

ONE of the greatest
leaders who ever lived
stated the secret of his
leadership in six words,
as follows: "Kindness is
more powerful than
compulsion."

When I entered law school, it was with the firm belief that I would emerge doubly prepared to catch up with the end of the rainbow and claim my pot of gold; for I still had no other conception of success except that of *money* and power.

I attended law school at night and worked as an automobile salesman during the day. My sales experience in the lumber business was turned to good advantage. I prospered rapidly, doing so well (still featuring the habit of performing more service and better service than that for which I was paid) that the opportunity came to enter the automobile manufacturing business. I saw the need for trained automobile mechanics, therefore I opened an educational department in the manufacturing plant and began to train ordinary machinists in automobile assembling and repair work. The school prospered, paying me over a thousand dollars a month in net profits.

Again I was beginning to near the end of the rainbow. Again I knew I had at last found my niche in the world's work; that nothing could swerve me from my course or divert my attention from the automobile business.

My banker knew that I was prospering, therefore he loaned me money with which to expand. A peculiar trait of bankers - a trait which may be more or less developed in the remainder of us also - is that they will loan us money without any hesitation when we are *prosperous*!

My banker loaned me money until I was hopelessly in his debt, then he took over my business as calmly as if it had belonged to him, which it did!

From the station of a man of affairs who enjoyed

an income of more than a thousand dollars a month, I was suddenly reduced to poverty.

Now, twenty years later, I thank the hand of Fate for this forced change; but at that time I looked upon the change as nothing but *failure*.

The rainbow's end had disappeared, and with it the proverbial pot of gold which is supposed to be found at its end. It was many years afterwards that I learned the truth that this temporary *defeat* was probably the greatest single blessing that ever came my way, because it forced me out of a business that in no way helped me to develop knowledge of self or of others, and directed my efforts into a channel which brought me a rich experience of which I was in need.

For the first time in life I began to ask myself if it were not possible for one to find something of value other than money and power at the rainbow's end. This temporary questioning attitude did not amount to open rebellion, mind you, nor did I follow it far enough to get the answer. It merely came as a fleeting thought, as do so many other thoughts to which we pay no attention, and passed out of my mind. Had I known as much then as I now know about the Law of Compensation, and had I been able to interpret experiences as I can now interpret them, I would have recognized that event as a gentle nudge from the hand of Fate.

After putting up the hardest fight of my life, up to that time, I accepted my temporary defeat as *failure* and thus was ushered in my next and fourth turning-point, which gave me an opportunity to put into use the knowledge of law that I had acquired.

FOURTH TURNING-POINT

Because I was my wife's husband and her people had influence I secured the appointment as assistant to the chief counsel for one of the largest coal companies in the world. My salary was greatly out of proportion to those usually paid to beginners, and still further out of proportion to what I was worth; but pull was pull, and I was there just the same. It happened that what I lacked in legal skill I more than made up through the application of the principle of performing more service than that for which I was paid, and by taking the initiative and doing that which should have been done without being told to do it.

I was holding my position without difficulty. I practically had a soft berth for life had I cared to keep it.

Without consultation with my friends, and without warning, I resigned!

This was the first turning-point that was of my own selection. It was not forced upon me. I saw the old man Fate coming and beat him to the door. When pressed for a reason for resigning, I gave what seemed to me to be a very sound one, but I had trouble convincing the family circle that I had acted wisely.

I quit that position because the work was too easy and I was performing it with too little effort. I saw myself drifting into the habit of inertia. I felt myself becoming accustomed to taking life easily and I knew that the next step would be retrogression. I had so many friends at court that there was no particular impelling urge that made it necessary for me to keep moving. I was among friends and relatives, and I had a position that I could keep as long as I wished it,

without exerting myself. I received an income that provided me with all the necessities and some of the luxuries, including a motor car and enough gasoline to keep it running.

What more did I need?

“Nothing!” I was beginning to say to myself.

This was the attitude toward which I felt myself slipping. It was an attitude which, for some reason that is still unknown to me, startled me so sharply that I made what many believed to be an irrational move by resigning. However ignorant I might have been in other matters at the time, I have felt thankful ever since for having had sense enough to realize that strength and growth come only through continuous effort and *struggle*, that disuse brings atrophy and decay.

This move proved to be the next most important turning-point of my life, although it was followed by ten years of effort which brought almost every conceivable grief that the human heart can experience. I quit my job in the legal field, where I was getting along well, living among friends and relatives, where I had what they believed to be an unusually bright and promising future ahead of me. I am frank to admit that it has been an ever-increasing source of wonderment to me as to why and how I gathered the courage to make the move that I did. As far as I am able to interpret the event, I arrived at my decision to resign more because of a “hunch,” or a sort of “prompting” which I then did not understand, than by logical reasoning.

I selected Chicago as my new field of endeavor. I did this because I believed Chicago to be a place

where one might find out if one had those sterner qualities which are so essential for survival in a world of keen competition. I made up my mind that if I could gain recognition, in any honorable sort of work, in Chicago, it would prove that I had the sort of material in my make-up that might be developed into real ability. That was a queer process of reasoning; at least it was an unusual process for me to indulge in at that time, which reminds me to state that we human beings often take unto ourselves credit for intelligence to which we are not entitled. I fear we too often assume credit for wisdom and for results that accrue from causes over which we have absolutely no control.

While I do not mean to convey the impression that I believe all of our acts to be controlled by causes beyond our power to direct, yet I strongly urge you to study and correctly interpret those causes which mark the most vital turning-points of your life; the points at which your efforts are diverted - from the old into new channels -in spite of all that you can do. *At least refrain from accepting any defeat as failure until you shall have had time to analyze the final result.*

My first position in Chicago was that of advertising manager of a large correspondence school. I knew but little about advertising, but my previous experience as a salesman, plus the advantage gained by rendering more service than that for which I was paid, enabled me to make an unusual showing.

The first year I earned \$5,200.00.

I was “coming back” by leaps and bounds. Gradually the rainbow's end began to circle around me, and I saw, once more, the shining pot of gold

REMEMBER this,
when things go
against you, that of all
the expressions you
carry in your face the
light of joy shines
farthest out to sea.

almost within my reach. History is full of evidence that a feast usually precedes a famine. I was enjoying a feast but did not anticipate the famine that was to follow. I was getting along so well that I thoroughly approved of myself.

Self-approval is a dangerous state of mind.

This is a great truth which many people do not learn until the softening hand of Time has rested upon their shoulders for the better part of a life-time. Some never do learn it, and those who do are those who finally begin to understand the “dumb language” of defeat.

I am convinced that one has but few, if any, more dangerous enemies to combat than that of self-approval. Personally I fear it more than defeat.

This brings me to my fifth turning-point, which was also of my own choice.

FIFTH TURNING-POINT

I had made such a good record as advertising manager of the correspondence school that the president of the school induced me to resign my position and go into the candy manufacturing business with him. We organized the Betsy Ross Candy Company and I became its first president, thus beginning the next most important turning-point of my life.

The business grew rapidly until we had a chain of stores in eighteen different cities. Again I saw my rainbow's end almost within my reach. I knew that I had at last found the business in which I wished to remain for life. The candy business was profitable and, because I looked upon money as being the only

evidence of success, I naturally believed I was about to corner success.

Everything went smoothly until my business associate and a third man, whom we had taken into the business, took a notion to gain control of my interest in the business without paying for it.

Their plan was successful, in a way, but I balked more stiffly than they had anticipated I would; therefore, for the purpose of “gentle persuasion,” they had me arrested on a false charge and then offered to withdraw the charge on condition that I turn over to them my interest in the business.

I had commenced to learn, for the first time, that there was much cruelty, and injustice, and dishonesty in the hearts of men.

When the time for a preliminary hearing came, the complaining witnesses were nowhere to be found. But I had them brought and forced them to go on the witness stand and tell their stories, which resulted in my vindication, and a damage suit against the perpetrators of the injustice.

This incident brought about an irreparable breach between my business associates and myself, which finally cost me my interest in the business, but that was but slight when compared to that which it cost my associates; for they are still paying, and no doubt will continue to pay as long as they live.

My damage suit was brought under what is known as a “tort” action, through which damages were claimed for malicious damage to character. In Illinois, where the action was brought, judgment under a tort action gives the one in favor of whom the judgment is rendered the right to have the person against whom it

whom it is obtained placed in jail until the amount of the judgment has been paid.

In due time I got a heavy judgment against my former business associates. *I could then have had both of them placed behind the bars.*

For the first time in my life I was brought face to face with the opportunity to strike back at my enemies in a manner that would hurt. I had in my possession a weapon with “teeth” in it - a weapon placed there by the enemies, themselves.

The feeling that swept over me was a queer one!

Would I have my enemies jailed, or would I take advantage of this opportunity to extend them mercy, thereby proving myself to be made of a different type of material.

Then and there was laid, in my heart, the foundation upon which the Sixteenth Lesson of this course is built, for I made up my mind to permit my enemies to go free - as free as they could be made by my having extended them mercy and forgiveness.

But long before my decision had been reached the hand of Fate had commenced to deal roughly with these misguided fellow men who had tried, in vain, to destroy me. Time, the master worker, to which we must all submit sooner or later, had already been at work on my former business associates, and it had dealt with them less mercifully than I had done. One of them was later sentenced to a long term in the penitentiary, for another crime that he had committed against some other person, and the other one had, meanwhile, been reduced to pauperism.

We can circumvent the laws which men place upon statute books, but the Law of Compensation never!

The judgment which I obtained against these men stands on the records of the Superior Court, of Chicago, as silent evidence of vindication of my character; but it serves me in a more important way than that - it serves as a reminder that I could forgive enemies who had tried to destroy me, and for this reason, instead of destroying my character, I suspect that the incident served to strengthen it.

Being arrested seemed, at the time, a terrible disgrace, even though the charge was false. I did not relish the experience, and I would not wish to go through a similar experience again, but I am bound to admit that it was worth all the grief it cost me, because it gave me the opportunity to find out that revenge was not a part of my make-up.

Here I would direct your attention to a close analysis of the events described in this lesson, for if you observe carefully you can see how this entire course of study has been evolved out of these experiences. Each temporary defeat left its mark upon my heart and provided some part of the material of which this course has been built.

We would cease to fear or to run away from trying experiences if we observed, from the biographies of men of destiny, that nearly every one of them was sorely tried and run through the mill of merciless experience before he "arrived." This leads me to wonder if the band of Fate does not test "the metal of which we are made" in various and sundry ways before placing great responsibilities upon our shoulders.

Before approaching the next turning-point of my life, may I not call your attention to the significant fact that each turning-point carried me nearer and

nearer my rainbow's end, and brought me some useful knowledge which became, later, a permanent part of my philosophy of life.

SIXTH TURNING-POINT

We come, now, to the turning-point which probably brought me nearer the rainbow's end than any of the others had, because it placed me in a position where I found it necessary to bring into use all the knowledge I had acquired up to that time, concerning practically every subject with which I was acquainted, and gave me opportunity for self-expression and development such as rarely comes to a man so early in life. This turning-point came shortly after my dreams of success in the candy business had been shattered, when I turned my efforts to teaching Advertising and Salesmanship as a department of one of the colleges of the Middle West.

Some wise philosopher has said that we never learn very much about a given subject until we commence teaching it to others. My first experience as a teacher proved this to be true. My school prospered from the very beginning. I had a resident class and also a correspondence school through which I was teaching students in nearly every English-speaking country. Despite the ravages of war, the school was growing rapidly and I again saw the end of the rainbow within sight.

Then came the second military draft which practically destroyed my school, as it caught most of those who were enrolled as students. At one stroke I charged off more than \$75,000.00 in tuition fees and

IT is far better to be associated with a few who are right than with the mob which is wrong, because right is always the winner in the end.

at the same time contributed my own service to my country.

Once more I was penniless!

Unfortunate is the person who has never had the thrill of being penniless at one time or another; for, as Edward Bok has truthfully stated, poverty is the richest experience that can come to a man; an experience which, however, he advises one to get away from as quickly as possible.

Again I was forced to redirect my efforts, but, before I proceed to describe the next and last important turning-point, I wish to call your attention to the fact that no single event described up to this point is, within itself, of any practical significance. The six turning-points that I have briefly described meant nothing to me, taken singly, and they will mean nothing to you if analyzed singly. But take these events collectively and they form a very significant foundation for the next turning-point, and constitute reliable evidence that we human beings are constantly undergoing evolutionary changes as a result of the experiences of life with which we meet, even though no single experience may seem to convey a definite, usable lesson.

I feel impelled to dwell at length on the point which I am here trying to make clear, because I have now reached the point in my career at which men go down in permanent defeat or rise, with renewed energies, to heights of attainment of stupendous proportions, according to the manner in which they interpret their past experiences and use those experiences as the basis of working plans. If my story stopped here it would be of no value to you, but there

is another and a more significant chapter yet to be written, covering the seventh and most important of all the turning-points of my life.

It must have been obvious to you, all through my description of the six turning-points already outlined, that I had not really found my place in the world. It must have been obvious to you that most, if not all, of my temporary defeats were due mainly to the fact that I had not yet discovered the work into which I could throw my heart and soul. Finding the work for which one is best fitted and which one likes best is very much like finding the one person whom one loves best; there is no rule by which to make the search, but when the right niche is contacted one immediately recognizes it.

SEVENTH TURNING-POINT

Before I finish I will describe the collective lessons that I learned from each of the seven turning-points of my life, but first let me describe the seventh and last of these turning-points. To do so, I must go back to that eventful day - *November Eleven, Nineteen Hundred and Eighteen!*

That was armistice day, as everyone knows. The war had left me without a penny, as I have already stated, but I was happy to know that the slaughter had ceased and reason was about to reclaim civilization once more.

As I stood in front of my office window and looked out at the howling mob that was celebrating the end of the war, my mind went back into my yesterdays, especially to that eventful day when that

kind old gentleman laid his hand on my shoulder and told me that if I would acquire an education I could make my mark in the world. I had been acquiring that education without knowing it. Over a period of more than twenty years I had been going to school in the University of Hard Knocks, as you must have observed from my description of the various turning-points of my life. As I stood in front of that window my entire past, with its bitter and its sweet, its ups and its downs, passed before me in review.

The time had come for another turning-point!

I sat down to my typewriter and, to my astonishment, my hands began to play a regular tune upon the key-board. I had never written so rapidly or so easily before. I did not plan or think about that which I was writing - *I just wrote that which came into my mind!*

Unconsciously, I was laying the foundation for the most important turning-point of my life; for, when I had finished, I had prepared a document through which I financed a national magazine that gave me contact with people throughout the English-speaking world. So greatly did that document influence my own career, and the lives of tens of thousands of other people, that I believe it will be of interest to the students of this course; therefore, I am reproducing it, just as it appeared in Hill's Golden Rule magazine, where it was first published, as follows:

“A PERSONAL VISIT WITH YOUR EDITOR”

I am writing on Monday, November eleventh, 1918. Today will go down in history as the greatest holiday.

On the street, just outside of my office window,

the surging crowds of people are celebrating the downfall of an influence that has menaced civilization for the past four years.

The war is over!

Soon our boys will be coming back home from the battlefields of France.

The lord and master of Brute Force is nothing but a shadowy ghost of the past!

Two thousand years ago the Son of man was an outcast, with no place of abode. Now the situation has been reversed and the devil has no place to lay his head.

Let each of us take unto himself the great lesson that this world war has taught; namely, only that which is based upon justice and mercy toward all - the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, alike can survive. All else must pass on.

Out of this war will come a new idealism - an idealism that will be based upon the Golden Rule philosophy; an idealism that will guide us, not to see how much we can "do our fellow man for"; but how much we can do for him that will ameliorate his hardships and make him happier as he tarries by the wayside of life.

Emerson embodied this idealism in his great essay, the Law of Compensation. Another great Philosopher embodied it in these words, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The time for practicing the Golden Rule philosophy is upon us. In business as well as in social relationships he who neglects or refuses to use this philosophy as the basis of his dealings will but hasten the time of his failure.

And, while I am intoxicated with the glorious news of the war's ending, is it not fitting that I should attempt to do something to help preserve for the generations yet to come, one of the great lessons to be learned from William Hohenzollern's effort to rule the earth by *force*?

I can best do this by going back twenty-two years for my beginning. Come with me, won't you?

It was a bleak November morning, probably not far from the eleventh of the month, that I got my first job as a laborer in the coal mine regions of Virginia, at wages of a dollar a day.

A dollar a day was a big sum in those days; especially to a boy of my age. Of this, I paid fifty cents a day for my board and room.

Shortly after I began work, the miners became dissatisfied and commenced talking about striking. I listened eagerly to all that was said. I was especially interested in the organizer who had organized the union. He was one of the smoothest speakers I had ever heard, and his words fascinated me. He said one thing, in particular, that I have never forgotten; and, if I knew where to find him, I would look him up today and thank him warmly for saying it. The philosophy which I gathered from his words has had a most profound and enduring influence upon me.

Perhaps you will say that most labor agitators are not very sound philosophers; and I would agree with you if you said so. Maybe this one was not a sound philosopher, but surely the philosophy he expounded on this occasion was sound.

Standing on a dry goods box, in the corner of an old shop where he was holding a meeting, he said:

NO one is living aright
unless he so lives that
whoever meets him goes
away more confident
and joyous for the
contact.

-Lilian Whiting.

“Men, we are talking about striking. Before you vote I wish to call your attention to something that will benefit you if you will heed what I say.

“You want more money for your work; and I wish to see you get it, because I believe you deserve it.

“May I not tell you how to get more money and still retain the good-will of the owner of this mine?

“We can call a strike and probably force them to pay more money, but we cannot force them to do this and like it. Before we call a strike, let us be fair with the owner of the mine and with ourselves; let us go to the owner and ask him if he will divide the profits of his mine with us fairly.

“If he says ‘yes,’ as he probably will, then let us ask him how much he made last month and, if he will divide among us a fair proportion of any additional profits he may make if we all jump in and help him earn more next month.

“He, being human, like each of us, will no doubt say – ‘Why, certainly boys; go to it and I’ll divide with you.’ It is but natural that he would say that, boys.

“After he agrees to the plan, as I believe he will if we make him see that we are in earnest, I want every one of you to come to work with a smile on your face for the next thirty days. I want to bear you whistling a tune as you go into the mines. I want you to go at your work with the feeling that you are one of the partners in this business.

“Without hurting yourself you can do almost twice as much work as you are doing; and if you do more work, you are sure to help the owner of this mine make more money. And if he makes more money he will be glad to divide a part of it with you. He will

do this for sound business reasons if not out of a spirit of fair play.

“He will retaliate as surely as there is a God above us. If he doesn't, I'll be personally responsible to you, and if you say so I'll help blow this mine into smithereens!

“That's how much I think of the plan, boys! Are you with me?”

They were, to the man!

Those words sank into my heart as though they had been burned there with a red-hot iron.

The following month every man in the mines received a bonus of twenty per cent of his month's earnings. Every month thereafter each man received a bright red envelope with his part of the extra earnings in it. On the outside of the envelope were these printed words:

Your part of the profits from the work which you did that you were not paid to do.

I have gone through some pretty tough experiences since those days of twenty-odd years ago, but I have always come out on top - a little wiser, a little happier, and a little better prepared to be of service to my fellow men, owing to my having applied the principle of performing more work than I was actually paid to perform.

It may be of interest to you to know that the last position I held in the coal business was that of Assistant to the Chief Counsel for one of the largest companies in the world. It is a considerable jump from the position of common laborer in the coal mines to that of Assistant to the Chief Counsel of one of the largest companies - a jump that I never could have

made without the aid of this principle of performing more work than I was paid to perform.

I wish I had the space in which to tell you of the scores of times that this idea of performing more work than I was paid to perform has helped me over rough spots.

Many have been the times that I have placed an employer so deeply in my debt, through the aid of this principle, that I got whatever I asked for, without hesitation or quibbling; without complaint or hard feelings; and, what is more important, without the feeling that I was taking unfair advantage of my employer.

I believe most earnestly that anything a man acquires from his fellow man without the full consent of the one from whom it is acquired, will eventually burn a hole in his pocket, or blister the palms of his hands, to say nothing of gnawing at his conscience until his heart aches with regret.

As I said in the beginning, I am writing on the morning of the Eleventh of November, while the crowds are celebrating the great victory of *right* over *wrong*!

Therefore, it is but natural that I should turn to the silence of my heart for some thought to pass on to the world today - some thought that will help keep alive in the minds of Americans the spirit of idealism for which they have fought and in which they entered the world war.

I find nothing more appropriate than the philosophy which I have related, because I earnestly believe it was the arrogant disregard of this philosophy that brought Germany - the Kaiser and his

people – to grief. To get this philosophy into the hearts of those who need it I shall publish a magazine to be called *Hill's Golden Rule*.

It takes money to publish national magazines, and I haven't very much of it at this writing; but before another month shall have passed, through the aid of the philosophy that I have tried to emphasize here, I shall find someone who will supply the necessary money and make it possible for me to pass on to the world the simple philosophy that lifted me out of the dirty coal mines and gave me a place where I can be of service to humanity. The philosophy which will raise you, my dear reader, whoever you may be and whatever you may be doing, into whatever position in life you may make up your mind to attain.

Every person has, or ought to have, the inherent desire to own something of monetary value. In at least a vague sort of way, every person who works for others (and this includes practically all of us) looks forward to the time when he will have some sort of a business or a profession of his own.

The best way to realize that ambition is to perform more work than one is paid to perform. You can get along with but little schooling; you can get along with but little capital; you can overcome almost any obstacle with which you are confronted, if you are honestly and earnestly willing to do the best work of which you are capable, regardless of the amount of money you receive for it....

.

(Note: It is the afternoon of November the twenty-first, just ten days since I wrote the foregoing

editorial. I have just read it to George B. Williams, of Chicago, a man who came up from the bottom through the aid of the philosophy of which I have written, and he *has made the publication of Hill's Golden Rule magazine possible.*)

.

It was in this somewhat dramatic manner that a desire which had lain dormant in my mind for nearly twenty years became translated into reality. During all that time I had wanted to become the editor of a newspaper. Back more than thirty years ago, when I was a very small boy, I used to “kick” the press for my father when he was publishing a small weekly newspaper, and I grew to love the smell of printer's ink.

Perhaps this desire was subconsciously gaining momentum all those years of preparation, while I was going through the experiences outlined in the turning-points of my life, until it had finally to burst forth in terms of action; or it may be that there was another plan, over which I had no control, that urged me on and on, never giving me any rest in any other line of work, until I began the publication of my first magazine. That point can be passed for the moment. The important thing to which I would direct your attention is the fact that I found my proper niche in the world's work and I was very happy over it

Strangely enough, I entered upon this work with never a thought of looking for either the end of the rainbow or the proverbial pot of gold which is supposed to be found at its end. For the first time in my life, I seemed to realize, beyond room for doubt,

TO give pleasure to a
single heart by a single
kind act is better than a
thousand head-bowings
in prayer.

-Saadi.

that there was something else to be sought in life that was worth more than gold; therefore, I went at my editorial work with but one main thought in mind - and I pause while you ponder over this thought

And that thought was to render the world the best service of which I was capable, whether my efforts brought me a penny in return or not!

The publication of Hill's Golden Rule magazine brought me in contact with the thinking class of people all over the country. It gave me my big chance to be heard. The message of optimism and good-will among men that it carried became so popular that I was invited to go on a country-wide speaking tour during the early part of 1920, during which I had the privilege of meeting and talking with some of the most progressive thinkers of this generation. Contact with these people went a very long way toward giving me the courage to keep on doing the good work that I had started. This tour was a liberal education, within itself, because it brought me in exceedingly close contact with people in practically all walks of life, and gave me a chance to see that the United States of America was a pretty large country.

Comes, now, a description of the climax of the seventh turning-point of my life.

During my speaking tour I was sitting in a restaurant in Dallas, Texas, watching the hardest downpour of rain that I have ever seen. The water was pouring down over the plate-glass window in two great streams, and Playing backward and forward from one of these streams to the other were little streams, making what resembled a great ladder of water.

As I looked at this unusual scene, the thought

“flashed into my mind” that I would have a splendid lecture if I organized all that I had learned from the seven turning-points of my life and all I had learned from studying the lives of successful men, and offered it under the title of the “Magic Ladder to Success.”

On the back of an envelope I outlined the fifteen points out of which this lecture was built, and later I worked these points into a lecture that was literally built from the temporary defeats described in the seven turning-points of my life.

All that I lay claim to knowing that is of value is represented by these fifteen points; and the material out of which this knowledge was gathered is nothing more or less than the knowledge that was *forced* upon me through experiences which have undoubtedly been classed, by some, as *failures*!

The reading course, of which this lesson is a part, is but the sum total of that which I gathered through these “failures.” If this course proves to be of value to you, as I hope it will, you may give the credit to those “failures” described in this lesson.

Perhaps you will wish to know what material, monetary benefits I have gained from these turning-points, for you probably realize that we are living in an age in which life is an irksome struggle for existence and none too pleasant for those who are cursed with poverty.

All right! I'll be frank with you.

To begin with, the estimated income from the sale of this course is all that I need, and this, despite the fact that I have insisted that my publishers apply the Ford philosophy and sell the course at a popular price that is within the reach of all who want it.

In addition to the income from the sale of the

course (which, please bear in mind, is but the sale of knowledge I have gathered through “failure”), I am now engaged in writing a series of illustrated editorials that is to be syndicated and published in the newspapers of the country. These editorials are based upon these same fifteen points as outlined in this course.

The estimated net income from the sale of the editorials is more than enough to care for my needs.

In addition to this I am now engaged in collaboration with a group of scientists, psychologists and business men, in writing a postgraduate course which will soon be available to all students who have mastered this more elementary course, covering not only the fifteen laws here outlined, from a more advanced viewpoint, but including still other laws which have but recently been discovered.

I have mentioned these facts only because I know what a common thing it is for all of us to measure success in terms of dollars, and to refuse, as unsound, all philosophy that does not foot up a good bank balance.

Practically all the past years of my life I have been poor - exceedingly poor - as far as bank balances were concerned. This condition has been, very largely, a matter of choice with me, because I have been putting the best of my time into the toilsome job of throwing off some of my ignorance and gathering in some of the knowledge of life of which I felt myself in need.

From the experiences described in these seven turning-points of my life, I have gathered a few golden threads of knowledge that I could have gained in no other way than through *defeat!*

My own experiences have led me to believe that

the “dumb language” of *defeat* is the plainest and most effective language in the world, once one begins to understand it. I am almost tempted to say that I believe it to be the universal language in which Nature cries out to us when we will listen to no other language.

I am glad that I have experienced much defeat!

It has had the effect of tempering me with the courage to undertake tasks that I would never have begun had I been surrounded by protecting influences.

Defeat is a destructive force only when it is accepted as failure! When accepted as teaching some needed lesson it is always a blessing.

I used to hate my enemies!

That was before I learned how well they were serving me by keeping me everlastingly on the alert lest some weak spot in my character provide an opening through which they might damage me.

In view of what I have learned of the value of enemies, if I had none I would feel it my duty to create a few. They would discover my defects and point them out to me, whereas my friends, if they saw my weaknesses at all, would say nothing about them.

Of all Joaquin Miller's poems none expressed a nobler thought than did this one:

“All honor to him who shall win a prize,”
The world has cried for a thousand years;
But to him who tries, and who fails, and dies,
I give great honor, and glory, and tears.

Give glory and honor and pitiful tears
To all who fail in their deeds sublime;
Their ghosts are many in the van of years,
They were born with Time, in advance of Time.

Oh, great is the hem who wins a name;
But greater many, and many a time,
Some pale-faced fellow who dies in shame
And lets God finish the thought sublime.

And great is the man with a sword undrawn,
And good is the man who refrains from wine;
But the man who fails and yet still fights on,
In, he is the twin-brother of mine.

There can be no failure for the man who “still fights on.” A man has never failed until he accepts temporary defeat as failure. There is a wide difference between temporary defeat and failure; a difference I have tried to emphasize throughout this lesson.

In her poem entitled When Nature Wants a Man, Angela Morgan expressed a great truth in support of the theory set out in this lesson, that adversity and defeat are generally blessings in disguise.

When Nature wants to drill a man,
And thrill a man,
And skill a man.
When Nature wants to mold a man
To play the noblest part;
When she yearns with all her heart
To create so great and bold a man
That all the world shall praise –
Watch her method, watch her ways!
How she ruthlessly perfects
Whom she royally elects;
How she hammers him and hurts him,
And with mighty blows converts him

IF we could read the
secret history of our
enemies, we should
find in each man's life
sorrow and suffering
enough to disarm all
hostility.

-Longfellow.

Into trial shapes of clay which only Nature understands -
While his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands!
How she bends, but never breaks,
When his good she undertakes....
How she uses whom she chooses
And with every purpose fuses him,
By every art induces him
To try his splendor out -
Nature knows what she's about.

When Nature wants to take a man,
And shake a man,
And wake a man;
When Nature wants to make a man
To do the Future's will;
When she tries with all her skill
And she yearns with all her soul
To create him large and whole....
With what cunning she prepares him!
How she goads and never spares him,
How she whets him, and she frets him,
And in poverty begets him....
How she often disappoints
Whom she sacredly anoints,
With what wisdom she will hide him,
Never minding what betide him
Though his genius sob with slighting and his
pride may not forget!
Bids him struggle harder yet.
Makes him lonely
So that only

God's high messages shall reach him,
So that she may surely teach him
What the Hierarchy planned.
Though he may not understand,
Gives him passions to command.
How remorselessly she spurs him
With terrific ardor stirs him
When she poignantly prefers him!

When Nature wants to name a man
And fame a man
And tame a man;
When Nature wants to shame a man
To do his heavenly best...
When she tries the highest test
That she reckoning may bring –
When she wants a god or king!
How she reins him and restrains him
So his body scarce contains him
While she fires him
And inspires him!
Keeps him yearning, ever burning for a
 tantalizing goal -
Lures and lacerates his soul.
Sets a challenge for his spirit,
Draws it higher when he's near it –
Makes a jungle, that he clear it;
Makes a desert that he fear it
And subdue it if he can –
So doth Nature make a man.
Then, to test his spirit's wrath
Hurls a mountain in his path –
Puts a bitter choice before him

And relentlessly stands o'er him.
"Climb, or perish!" so she says....
Watch her purpose, watch her ways!

Nature's plan is wondrous kind
Could we understand her mind...
Fools are they who call her blind.
When his feet are torn and bleeding
Yet his spirit mounts unheeding,
All his higher powers speeding,
Blazing newer paths and fine;
When the force that is divine
Leaps to challenge every failure and his ardor
still is sweet
And love and hope are burning in the presence of
defeat...
Lo, the crisis! Lo, the shout
That must call the leader out.
When the people need salvation
Doth he come to lead the nation....
Then doth Nature show her plan
When the world has found - a MAN! *

I am convinced that failure is Nature's plan through which she hurdle-jumps men of destiny and prepares them to do their work. Failure is Nature's great crumble in which she burns the dross from the human heart and so purifies the metal of the man that it can stand the test of hard usage.

I have found evidence to support this theory in the study of the records of scores of great men, from Socrates and Christ on down the centuries to the well

*From 'Forward, March P' The John Lane Company.

known men of achievement of our modern times. The success of each man seemed to be in almost exact ratio to the extent of the obstacles and difficulties he had to surmount.

No man ever arose from the knock-out blow of defeat without being stronger and wiser for the experience. Defeat talks to us in a language all its own; a language to which we must listen whether we like it or not.

Of course one must have considerable courage to look upon defeat as a blessing in disguise; but the attainment of any position in life, that is worth having, requires a lot of "sand," which brings to mind a poem that harmonizes with the philosophy of this lesson.

I observed a locomotive in the railroad yards one day,
It was waiting in the roundhouse where the locomotives stay;
It was panting for the journey, it was coaled and fully manned,
And it had a box the fireman was filling full of sand.

It appears that locomotives cannot always get a grip
On their slender iron pavement, 'cause the wheels are apt to slip;
And when they reach a slippery spot, their tactics they command,
And to get a grip upon the rail, they sprinkle it with sand.

It's about the way with travel along life's slippery track -
If your load is rather heavy, you're always slipping back;

So, if a common locomotive you completely understand,
You'll provide yourself in starting with a good supply
of sand.

If your track is steep and hilly and you have a heavy
grade,
If those who've gone before you have the rails quite
slippery made,
If you ever reach the summit of the upper tableland,
You'll find you'll have to do it with a liberal use of
sand.

If you strike some frigid weather and discover to your
cost,
That you're liable to slip upon a heavy coat of frost,
Then some prompt decided action will be called into
demand,
And you'll slip 'way to the bottom if you haven't any
sand.

You can get to any station that is on life's schedule
seen,
If there's fire beneath the boiler of ambition's strong
machine,
And you'll reach a place called Flushtown at a rate of
speed that's grand,
If for all the slippery places you've a good supply of
sand.

It can do you no harm if you memorize the poems
quoted in this lesson and make the philosophy upon
which they are based a part of your own.

'Tis the human touch in this
world that counts,
The touch of your hand and
mine,
Which means far more to
the fainting heart,
Than shelter and bread and
wine;
For shelter is gone when the
night is o'er,
And bread lasts only a day,
But the touch of the hand
and the sound of the
voice,
Sing on in the soul always.

- *Spencer M. Tree*

As I near the end of this lesson on Failure, there comes to mind a bit of philosophy taken from the works of the great Shakespeare, which I wish to challenge because I believe it to be unsound. It is stated in the following quotation:

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows, and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

Fear and admission of failure are the ties which cause us to be “bound in shallows, and in miseries.” We can break these ties and throw them off. Nay, we can turn them to advantage and make them serve as a tow-line with which to pull ourselves ashore if we observe and profit by the lessons they teach.

Who ne'er has suffered, he has lived but half,
Who never failed, he never strove or sought,
Who never wept is stranger to a laugh,
And he who never doubted never thought.

As I near the end of this, my favorite lesson of this course, I close my eyes for a moment and see before me a great army of men and women whose faces show the lines of care and despair.

Some are in rags, having reached the last stage of that long, long trail which men call *failure*!

Others are in better circumstances, but the fear of

starvation shows plainly on their faces; the smile of courage has left their lips; and they, too, seem to have given up the battle.

The scene shifts!

I look again and I am carried backward into the history of man's struggle for a place in the sun, and there I see, also, the "failures" of the past - failures that have meant more to the human race than all the so-called successes recorded in the history of the world.

I see the homely face of Socrates as he stood at the very end of that trail called failure, waiting, with upturned eyes, through those moments which must have seemed like an eternity, just before he drank the cup of hemlock that was forced upon him by his tormentors.

I see, also, Christopher Columbus, a prisoner in chains, which was the tribute paid him for his sacrifice in having set sail on an unknown and uncharted sea, to discover an unknown continent.

I see, also, the face of Thomas Paine, the man whom the English sought to capture and put to death as the real instigator of the American Revolution. I see him lying in a filthy prison, in France, as he waited calmly, under the shadow of the guillotine, for the death which he expected would be meted out to him for his part in behalf of humanity.

And I see, also, the face of the Man of Galilee, as he suffered on the cross of Calvary - the reward he received for his efforts in behalf of suffering human

"Failures," all!

Oh, to be such a failure. Oh, to go down in history, as these men did, as one who was brave

enough to place humanity above the *individual* and principle above pecuniary gain.

On such “failures” rest the hopes of the world.

Oh, men, who are labeled “failures” - up, rise up!
again and do!

Somewhere in the world of action is room; there is
room for you.

No failure was e’er recorded, in the annals of truthful
men,

Except of the craven-hearted who fails, nor attempts
again.

The glory is in the doing, and not in the trophy won;
The walls that are laid in darkness may laugh to the
kiss of the sun.

Oh, weary and worn and stricken, oh, child of fate’s
cruel gales!

I sing - that it haply may cheer him - I sing to the man
who fails.

Be thankful for the defeat which men call failure,
because if you can survive it and keep on trying it
gives you a chance to prove your ability to rise to the
heights of achievement in your chosen field of
endeavor.

No one has the right to brand you as a failure
except yourself.

If, in a moment of despair, you should feel
inclined to brand yourself as a failure, just remember
those words of the wealthy philosopher, Croesus, who
was advisor to Cyrus, king of the Persians:

“I am reminded, O king, and take this lesson to
heart, that there is a wheel on which the affairs

of men revolve and its mechanism is such that it prevents *any* man from being *always* fortunate.”

What a wonderful lesson is wrapped up in those words - a lesson of hope and courage and promise.

Who of us has not seen “off” days, when everything seemed to go wrong? These are the days when we see only the flat side of the great wheel of life.

Let us remember that the wheel is always turning. If it brings us sorrow today, it will bring us joy tomorrow. Life is a cycle of varying events - fortunes and misfortunes.

We cannot stop this wheel of fate from turning, but we can modify the misfortune it brings us by remembering that good fortune will follow, just as surely as night follows day, if we but keep faith with ourselves and earnestly and honestly do our best.

In his greatest hours of trial the immortal Lincoln was heard, often, to say: “*And this, too, will soon pass.*”

If you are smarting from the effects of some temporary defeat which you find it hard to forget, let me recommend this stimulating little poem, by Walter Malone.

OPPORTUNITY

They do me wrong who say I come no more
When once I knock and fail to find you in;
For every day I stand outside your door,
And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.
Wail not for precious chances passed away;
Weep not for golden ages on the wane;

Each night I burn the records of the day;
 At sunrise every soul is born again.
Laugh like a boy at splendors that have sped,
 To vanished joys be blind and deaf and dumb;
My judgments seal the dead past with its dead,
 But never bind a moment yet to come.

Though deep in mire wring not your hands and
 weep,
 I lend my arm to all who say, "I can!"
No shamefaced outcast ever sank so deep
 But yet might rise and be again a man!
Dost thou behold thy lost youth all aghast?
 Dost reel from righteous retribution's blow?
Then turn from blotted archives of the past
 And find the future's pages white as snow.
Art thou a mourner? Rouse thee from thy spell;
 Art thou a sinner? Sin may be forgiven;
Each morning gives thee wings to flee from hell,
 Each night a star to guide thy feet to heaven.

STRIVE not to banish
pain and doubt,
In pleasure's noisy din;
The peace thou seekest
from without,
Is only found within.

-Cary