**THE SPIRIT IN WHICH YOU WORK**

No matter how humble your work may seem, do it in the spirit of an artist, of a master. In this way you lift it out of commonness and rob it of what would otherwise be drudgery. You will find that learning to thoroughly respect everything you do, and not to let it go out of your hands until it has the stamp of your approval upon it as a trademark, will have a wonderful effect upon your whole character.

The quality of your work will have a great deal to do with the quality of your life. If your work quality is down, your character will be down, your standards down, your ideals down. The habit of insisting upon the best of which you are capable, and of always demanding of yourself the highest, never accepting the lowest, will make all the difference between mediocrity or failure, and a successful career.

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**RESPONSIBILITY DEVELOPS POWER**

Every man is a stranger to his greatest strength, his mightiest power, until the test of a great responsibility, a critical emergency, or a supreme crisis in his life, calls it out. Giants are made in the stern school of necessity. The strong, vigorous, forceful, stalwart men who have pushed civilization upward are the products of self-help. They have not been pushed or boosted; but they have fought every inch of the way up. They are giants because they have been great conquerors of difficulties, supreme masters of difficult situations. They have acquired the strength of the obstacles which they have overcome.

Responsibility is a great power developer. Where there is responsibility there is growth. People who are never thrust into responsible positions never develop their real strength.

Many employers are always looking for people outside of their own establishment to fill important vacancies, simply because they cannot see or appreciate a man’s ability until he has actually demonstrated it; but how can he demonstrate it until he has the chance? The way to bring out the reserve in a man is to pile responsibility upon him. If there is anything in him this will reveal it. Some of us never quite come to ourselves in fullness and power until driven to desperation.

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**AN OVERMASTERING PURPOSE**

No man can hope to accomplish anything great in this world until he throws his whole soul, flings the force of his whole life, into it. Any kind of a human being can wish for a thing, can desire it; but only strong, vigorous minds with great purposes can do things. There is an infinite distance between the wishers and the doers. The man with a vigorous purpose is a positive, constructive, creative force. No one can be resourceful, inventive, original, or creative without powerful concentration; and the undivided focusing of the mind is only possible along the line of the ambition, the life purpose. We cannot focus the mind upon a thing we are not interested in and enthusiastic about. The putting-off habit will kill the strongest initiative.
ACTION STEPS
Get more out of this SUCCESS Book Summary by applying what you’ve learned to your life. Here are a few thoughts and questions to get you started.

1. Education takes many forms outside of the formal classroom setting. What can you do to continue your education?

2. Most failures begin when you begin to doubt yourself. Take a few moments each day to visualize yourself achieving your goals.

3. Ambition is contagious. Have you surrounded yourself with ambitious people?

4. The best way to change the world is to change your attitude toward it. Make a list of challenges in your life and then take a few moments to reflect on how your attitude toward these challenges affects you.

5. The quality of your work affects the quality of your life. Are you bringing your best to work every day?

6. Marden suggests that unless an individual is given responsibility, he can’t know how he will perform. Have you overlooked anyone on your team who might be capable of greatness, if given a chance?

7. Do you throw your whole soul into your projects?

About the Author
Orison Swett Marden, a prominent American New Thought movement writer, started writing books while in his 40s and went on to complete more than a dozen before his death at age 74. Born in New Hampshire in 1850, Marden lost his mother when he was 3, followed by his father four years later. He and his siblings were shuffled from relative to relative, and young Marden had to work to earn his keep. Marden put himself through Boston University and later Harvard, and afterward studied at an oratorical college and a theological seminary. After a successful career in the hotel business, Marden began writing his philosophical ideas. In 1894, he published his first book and he founded SUCCESS magazine three years later. He was a prolific writer who had many unpublished works when he died.

Recommended Reading
If you enjoyed the summary of He Can Who Thinks He Can, check out:

The Magic of Thinking Big by David Schwartz
See You at the Top by Zig Ziglar
The Magic of Believing by Claude M. Bristol
He Can Who Thinks He Can
by Orison Swett Marden

Power from Within
All good things start with the power of thinking.

QUICK OVERVIEW
Though this book was written more than 100 years ago, it is loaded with gems of inspiration that are fresh and applicable today: Attitude matters; ambition is contagious; power comes from within or from nowhere. Readers also benefit from Marden’s sage advice to bring energy to work, fling the force of your whole life into the accomplishment of your dreams and to get an education to avoid lifelong hardship.

Marden’s target audience is those who want to improve themselves or change their lives, personally or professionally. But much of what he wrote can easily be applied to the workplace. Readers learn how to apply themselves, advance in life and how to effectively manage teams and employees. At the turn of the century, Marden was considered a proponent of “New Thought,” and as such, he founded SUCCESS magazine. Today, his legacy continues to challenge people to achieve more in life.

APPLY AND ACHIEVE
Some education takes place in a classroom, while some is done at home with a good book. Marden also reminded readers to educate themselves through the power of observation.

In He Can Who Thinks He Can, Marden stressed the difference between seeing and really observing. The eye “was intended for a great educator,” he wrote. The brain relies on the senses, particularly sight, to bring it material. The power of observation can be developed. Take time every day to go out and observe something and then come home and write down as many details as you can remember. Train yourself to pay attention. He tells the story of a naturalist who gave a student a fish and told him to look at it for more than 30 minutes and then describe what he saw. After the student told the professor everything he thought he saw, the professor said, “You have not really seen the fish yet. Look at it a while longer, and then tell me what you see.” He repeated the process several times until the student developed the ability.
to observe. “If we go through life holding an alert, inquiring mind toward everything, we can acquire great mental wealth, wisdom which is beyond all material riches,” Marden wrote.

It is astonishing how the world makes way for a resolute soul, and how obstacles get out of the path of a determined man who believes in himself. There is no philosophy by which a man can do a thing when he thinks he can’t. What can defeat a strong man who believes in himself and cannot be ridiculed down, talked down or written down? Poverty cannot dishearten him, misfortune deter him or hardship turn him a hair’s breadth from his course. Whatever comes, he keeps his eye on the goal and pushes ahead.

How long will it take a young man to become successful who puts himself in an atmosphere of failure and remains in it until he is soaked, saturated, with the idea? How long will it take a man who depreciates himself, talks failure, thinks failure, walks like a failure and dresses like a failure; who is always complaining of the insurmountable difficulties in his way, and whose every step is on the road to failure? How long will it take him to arrive at the success goal? Will anyone believe in him or expect him to win?

The majority of failures began to deteriorate by doubting or depreciating themselves, or by losing confidence in their own ability. The moment you harbor doubt and begin to lose faith in yourself, you capitulate to the enemy.

Be sure that your success will never rise higher than your confidence in yourself. You cannot succeed while doubting yourself or thinking thoughts of failure. Cling to success thoughts. Fill your mind with cheerful, optimistic pictures, pictures of achievement. Believe in yourself; feel that you are to dominate your surroundings.

**AMBITION IS CONTAGIOUS**

Many people seem to think that ambition is a quality born within us; that it is not susceptible to improvement; that it is something thrust upon us which will take care of itself. But it is a passion that responds very quickly to cultivation, and it requires constant care and education, just as the faculty for music or art does, or it will atrophy.

If we do not try to realize our ambition, it will not keep sharp and defined.

If we constantly allow opportunities to slip by us without making any attempt to grasp them, our inclination will grow duller and weaker. It makes all the difference in the world to me whether I bring out the best thing in me or the worst, whether I utilize 10, 15, 25, or 90 per cent of my ability. Everywhere we see people who have reached middle life or later without being aroused. They have developed only a small percentage of their success possibilities. They are still in a dormant state. The best thing in them lies so deep that it has never been awakened. When we meet these people we feel conscious that they have a great deal of latent power that has never been exercised.

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**No man can hope to accomplish anything great in this world until he throws his whole soul, flings the force of his whole life, into it.**

It will make all the difference in the world to you whether you are with people who are watching for ability in you, people who believe in, encourage and praise you, or whether you are with those who are forever blasting your hopes and throwing cold water on your aspirations.

Even the strongest of us are not beyond the reach of our environment. No matter how independent, strong-willed, and determined our nature, we are constantly being modified by our surroundings. It does not take much to determine the lives of most of us. We naturally follow the examples about us, and as a rule, we rise or fall according to the strongest current in which we live. Every sermon or lecture or conversation you have heard, every person who has touched your life has left an impress upon your character, and you are never quite the same person after the association or experience. You are a little different, modified somewhat from what you were before.

Whatever you do in life, make any sacrifice necessary to keep in an ambition-arousing atmosphere, an environment that will stimulate you to self-development. Keep close to
people who understand you, who believe in you, who will help you to discover yourself and encourage you to make the most of yourself. This may make all the difference to you between a grand success and a mediocre existence. Stick to those who are trying to do something and to be somebody in the world, people of high aims, lofty ambition.

Ambition is contagious. You will catch the spirit that dominates in your environment. The success of those about you who are trying to climb upward will encourage and stimulate you to struggle harder if you have not done quite well yourself.

EDUCATION BY ABSORPTION

The uneducated man is always placed at a great disadvantage. No matter how much natural ability one may have, if he is ignorant, he is discounted. It is not enough to possess ability; ability must be made available by mental discipline.

You will find the whole world will change to you when you change your attitude toward it. You will be surprised to see how quickly you can materially improve your mind after you have made a vigorous resolve to do so. Go about it with the same determination that you would to make money or to learn a trade. There is a divine hunger in every normal being for self-expansion, a yearning for growth or enlargement. Man was made for growth. The best-educated people are those who are always learning, always absorbing knowledge from every possible source and at every opportunity.

The world is a great university. From the cradle to the grave we are always in God’s great kindergarten, where everything is trying to teach us its lesson; to give us its great secret. Some people are always at school, always storing up precious bits of knowledge. Everything has a lesson for them.

Wishing does not amount to anything unless it is backed by endeavor, determination and grit.

The habit of absorbing information of all kinds from others is of untold value. A man is weak and ineffective in proportion as he secludes himself from his kind. There is a constant stream of power, a current of forces running to and fro between individuals who come in contact with one another, if they have inquiring minds. We are all giving and taking perpetually when we associate together. The achiever today must keep in touch with the society around him; he must put his finger on the pulse of the great busy world and feel its throbbing life. He must be a part of it, or there will be some lack in his life.

A single talent which one can use effectively is worth more than 10 talents imprisoned by ignorance. Education means that knowledge has been assimilated and become a part of the person. It is the ability to express the power within one, to give out what one knows, that measures efficiency and achievement.

The trouble with most of us is that, while ambitious to succeed, we do not put ourselves in a condition to win; we do not cut the cords which bind us, or try to get rid of the entanglements and obstructions that hinder us. We trust too much to luck. To eliminate everything that can possibly retard us, to get into as harmonious an environment as possible, is the first preparation for a successful career. There are tens of thousands of people who have ability and inclination to rise out of mediocrity, and to do something worthwhile in the world, but who never do so because they cannot break the chains that bind their movements. Most of us are so bound in some part of our nature that we cannot get free; cannot gain the liberty to do the larger thing possible to us.

Ask the majority of men and women who have done great things in the world, to what they owe their strength, their breadth of mind, and the diversity of experience which has enriched their lives. They will tell you that these are the fruits of struggle; that they acquired their finest discipline, their best character drill, in the effort to escape from an uncongenial environment; to break the bonds which enslaved them; to obtain an education; to get away from poverty; to carry out some cherished plan; to reach their ideal, whatever it was.

No man can live a full life while he is bound in any part of his nature. He must have freedom of thought as well as freedom of action to grow to his full height. There must be no shackles on his conscience.
Be yourself. Do not lean or apologize. Few people belong to themselves. They are slaves to their creditors or to some entangling alliance. They do not do what they want to. They do what they are compelled to do, giving up their best energy to make a living, so that there is practically nothing left to make a life.

WHAT THE WORLD OWES TO DREAMERS

Take the dreamers out of the world’s history, and who would care to read it?

Our dreamers are the advance guard of humanity; the toilers who, with bent back and sweating brow, cut smooth roads over which man marches forward from generation to generation. Most of the things which make life worth living, which have emancipated man from drudgery and lifted him above commonness and ugliness, are the great amenities of life we owe to our dreamers.

The present is but the sum total of the dreams of the ages that have gone before, the dreams of the past made real. Our great ocean liners, our marvelous tunnels, our magnificent bridges, our schools, our universities, our hospitals, our libraries, our cosmopolitan cities, with their vast facilities, comforts, and treasures of art, are all the result of somebody’s dreams.

The most practical people in the world are those who can look far into the future and see the civilization yet to be. The dreamers have ever been those who have achieved the seemingly impossible.

The dreaming faculty, like every other faculty, may be abused. A great many people do nothing but dream. They spend all their energies in building air castles which they never try to make real; they live in an unnatural, delusive, theoretical atmosphere until the faculties become paralyzed from inaction.

It is a splendid thing to dream when you have the grit and tenacity of purpose and the resolution to match your dreams with realities, but dreaming without effort, wishing without putting forth exertion to realize the wish, undermines the character. It is only practical dreaming that counts, dreaming coupled with hard work and persistent endeavor. Just in proportion as we make our dreams realities, shall we become strong and effective. Dreams that are realized become an inspiration for new endeavor. It is in the power to make the dream good that we find the hope of this world.

Before you go into anything of importance think it through to the end; make reasonably sure that you know where you are coming out.

Just Be Yourself

• No human being ever yet made a success trying to be somebody else, even if that person was a success. Success cannot be copied, cannot be successfully imitated.

• Every man will be a failure just in proportion as he gets away from himself and tries to be somebody else and to express somebody else instead of himself.

• Power comes from within or from nowhere. Be yourself. Listen to the voice within.

• Blaze your own way, make your own path, or you will never make any impression on the world. It is striking originality that attracts attention.

• The world is full of followers, leaners, and taggers, who are willing to walk in old trails, and to have their thinking done for them.

• Just be yourself. The consciousness that you are not another in the slightest degree, that there is no suggestion of being a copy of somebody else about you, is a great power in itself. It increases your confidence.

• Why try to be somebody else? To be yourself, or to express yourself with originality and power, is the greatest thing you can do. You cannot be another if you try. It only makes you unnatural and ridiculous, and robs you of the power which comes from self-expression, from being yourself.

Before you go into anything of importance think it through to the end; make reasonably sure that you know where you are coming out.