

A Course of Instruction

in the

Development of Power through

Concentration

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Course in Concentration.

INTRODUCTION.

This is an age of mail courses and of personal instruction in psychology. Thousands of people in this country and in all parts of the world, in fact, are intensely interested in the subject in its many phases. Concentration is one of the main features. It deals not alone with the experimental side, but it is of great importance in education as well.

To be able to concentrate is to be able to do many things, but concentration in itself has so many divisions and subdivisions that it will be necessary to carefully look at these in order to gain a comprehensive knowledge of the subject.

The form of concentration that is best known is that in which the mind can be held on one subject to the exclusion of other subjects. It is the ability to hold the mind on a study, on a discourse or on anything in which the memory is to play a part.

If the concentration is poor, so is the memory poor. If the concentration is excellent, the memory is likewise good. This, it will be understood, applies to memory of different classes. One man is good at remembering faces but forgets names. Another man can remember the names but fails to place the face and would pass a newly-made acquaintance on the street without recognizing him.

Another man is good at remembering localities and can carry the position of streets and buildings in his mind almost perfectly no matter how many cities he may visit.

Still another will remember numbers but will fail entirely on dates. They both consist of figures but one class appeals to him while the other does not.

Another man can remember the ingredients of various compounds but he would not be able to tell what the date is until he consults his calendar.

Why is this?

The reason is: All people are created and developed differently. One person possesses a remarkable memory for faces and may fail in all other forms of memory. It is because his *concentration* is good on that point and his concentration is good for one of two reasons:

The first is the *natural power* of the mind in that particular respect, and the second is the *cultivation* of the mind along that line.

This cultivation may be from choice or it may be brought about by circumstances. A man may cultivate his mind because his occupation makes it impossible for him to do otherwise.

While concentration has much to do with memory, it is a part of all that man does. It is impossible to attain anything, to reach

any height, to learn or to progress in any manner, without concentration.

In psychological studies, it is particularly noticeable. In the courses and books, in the articles and lectures, we are continually told to *concentrate*, and yet those who should teach us how to do so pass it by with some pleasing remark about "going into the silence." This is not without methods. And it is for this reason that this course is written. Its aim is to teach concentration in its varied forms, which will be given under the heads of six separate lessons.

LESSON I.

We will take up the preparatory work in concentrating, studying the details that are so necessary to the development of some certain kind of concentration.

Breathing, much exploited though it is, is one of the main features; but a general care of the physical being is always necessary. If one hopes to become proficient in the art of concentration along any particular line, he must be careful of his health. It is not necessary to go in for a reform movement but it is essential to keep the body in good condition, for the mind will not come to the standard we create for it if it is absorbed in warding off the tortures of an unhealthy body.

While concentration is one of the main features in acquiring mental power, and again, while mental power can be turned to the betterment of the being in general, the opposite is also true; that is, the body has much to do with the mind and he who would be normal must cultivate them in harmony.

This is not a course in hygiene, nor on the power of suggestion. It has nothing to do with the actual work of mental healing and repair. Its object is to teach concentration, but it cannot do that and forget the physical.

Good hours, care in eating, plenty of fresh air, bathing, exercise and scores of other points can be mentioned as excellent things to consider. But the matter of reformation is not to enter into these lessons. Therefore, these subjects will be touched upon briefly.

While this is not a review in curative breathing, it is urged that you all breathe properly. Fifteen minutes a day is little enough to devote to this kind of exercise. Half an hour is much better. Following I will give the points that are to be considered in scientific breathing:

An erect position of the body; breathing through the nose; filling the abdomen before the chest; breathing evenly, taking about as much time for holding the breath as you do for inhaling or exhaling; fresh air; and deep breaths at all times.

This is an exact way of stating things. It is to the point; follow the suggestions.

As to bathing, I will not say everyone is to take a certain kind of bath at stated intervals. That is a matter that circum-

In these five classes, all the points are covered for successful development of any form of concentration. All depend upon the primal conditions referred to in this lesson, and in each lesson following are the instructions necessary to determine the kind of concentration lacking.

In all, too, practice is necessary. You can never acquire anything if you do not practice. These lessons are written with that object in view—*Practice!*

Be sincere. Go at this development in a whole-hearted manner. Never be weak and feeble in self-development. The exercises are simple and can be readily followed.

Start in with a good foundation and give your mind all the opportunities possible.

LESSON II.

The nervous person, the student, the thinker, the mathematician, the designer, and the business man all need Passive Concentration. Some of them need other forms, but those will be taken up later.

The work of these men is principally mental. They are people who get too little exercise and while their bodies may not get the hard knocks of life, their minds certainly do. They must guard their minds or they will suffer. They must go about their work with more certainty than is usually evinced. Look at these men—nine out of ten show wear in their faces. While the young student does not suffer greatly through lack of this power, he will suffer later on and it is far better to meet things prepared than unarmed.

Here we have a class of men and women with care written in their faces; their brows are furrowed and their sunken eyes tell the tale of sleepless nights, of days of mental agony. They are the brains, the motive power of the world. They plan, they build cities, they open up new roads of commercial enterprise and they are the least rewarded for their labors. If every man and woman of them could concentrate passively the story would be different. These things are not noticed so much in the smaller towns as they are in the cities. But mind is mind wherever it is found, and a principle that is applicable one place must be equally serviceable another.

These people would have to practice evenings. Few would have the opportunity of practicing during the day. I will address you as though I were giving you personal instructions regarding the exercises you are to take:

Your work will vary a little according to your locality and also in different seasons of the year. For instance, in the summer or warm months, or in a warm climate, always take a bath before you undertake your practice in concentration. But in the winter time, or in a cold climate, this feature can be omitted. Get the body refreshed. Wait until you have had your evening meal and your mind has become a little calm after the labors of the day.

When a man or woman is rushed and overworked mentally the first thing thought of is a stimulant. If alcohol is not used, coffee or something similar is resorted to. For the time being you are carried over your trials. You take so much off your future life to help out the present. If, instead of doing that, you were clear-headed and not open to the trying influences about you, the stimulant would not be necessary and you would go home filled with the happiness of a contented mortal who has faithfully fulfilled his mission. Usually, however, you feel as though the silvery lining of the cloud never turned your way.

If the weather is warm take your bath. If it is cold, sit around and relax a little from the day's labor. Then retire to your room. Give up half an hour. Rest your weary mind and aid that rest by relaxing the body.

Tell the other members of the family what you are going to do. Get their co-operation. Illustrate to them that it means a longer life and a happier existence and they will aid you. But they must keep away from you; you must not be disturbed.

Have the light rather dim. If it is one you can regulate, turn it so that it is not too bright, or shade it. At any rate, keep it subdued.

An easy chair is first rate to rest in. But if you would rather lie upon a bed, it is just the same. Take a good stretch or two and settle back. But you must give your mind something to do or you will start thinking again just as hard as though you were to meet some urgent demand of business.

On the wall at a distance of from five to ten feet from you have an object hanging that will reflect the light, but not too strongly. Your position must be such that you can easily turn your eyes on it without twisting the muscles of your neck.

This is not an exercise in auto-hypnosis. It has nothing to do with hypnotism, so get that idea out of your mind. Look at the object steadily for about a minute; then slowly, very slowly, close the eyes. As they close, let them roll back. Keep them closed for another minute—or what you would judge to be a minute—and slowly open them. This process of opening and closing the eyes is to be carried on without bringing the muscles into prominent play. Do not jerk the eyes open and closed.

Keep this up for about five minutes and then keep the eyes closed for another five minutes. There will be a feeling of heaviness about the eyes, caused merely by the exercises you have taken.

At the end of the second five minutes, start in again with the opening and closing process.

After you have gone through this the second time, keep your eyes closed for the remainder of the time. You may ask what this really has to do with concentration. The theory—based on the practical application—is this:

After a meal, there is more of a tendency to get the mind into

a passive state than at any other time. The blood supply is naturally drawn to the region of the stomach. By keeping quiet, you destroy all expectancy and the mind is not excited. The exercises of opening and closing the eyes while gazing at the bright object is to produce the physiological conditions of the first stages of sleep. You concentrate—on rest.

LESSON III.

Meditation is likewise of interest to the scholar; in fact, more to the scholar than any one else. By this, of course, is meant the student in any line, be he a minister, a professor, or a student as the term is generally used.

In meditation, the subconscious is brought into what we might term "conscious communication" with the reasoning powers of the conscious mind. The truths that are pursued are herein found; the conscious absorbs them and the process of reasoning makes use of them in teaching others.

There is never knowledge until the mind has brought about this subconscious condition to some extent. There was never a man with a trade or a profession, who ever became proficient at it, who did not have this meditative power.

It is a step farther than concentration in the passive state.

The conditions surrounding the practice are exactly those of the lesson in Passive Concentration. In inducing relaxation, however, it is to be a little more pronounced than it is the Concentration in the passive state.

When you are ready for this exercise, and have retired to your room, remove your shoes and anything that interferes with you in any way. You must be at ease, for you are to get your body in a state of rest through the agency of a combined physical and mental exercise.

Stand erect on the floor near your chair—or, preferably, your couch—and hold your hands above your head, so that the tips of the fingers touch. Take a deep breath and bend downward, keeping your legs as straight as possible without bending the knees. Do not exhale your breath until you are rising from your position. As your hands come nearer the floor, allow the tips of the fingers to touch your toes, bending your knees no more than you have to.

Now straighten and exhale as you resume your upright position. Rest a minute or two and repeat this. Twice will be enough to get your mind in a good condition for the work that will follow. It is always necessary to combine the physical with the mental if we expect favorable results. The student who would better his condition must be broad enough to grasp all means that are helpful to him; he must not be bigoted, for as soon as he is, his success is on the wane.

To lie upon the couch is better than to sit in a chair as relaxation is brought about more easily. In resting on the bed, or couch, get into as comfortable position as possible. Make yourself feel at rest before you attempt anything in Meditation.

In getting the mind in condition for meditative concentration, it is advisable to get it accustomed to working along some meditative line; that is, if the mind is accustomed to nothing but the ordinary channels of thought, it will not take readily to another means of thinking. But by giving it the proper food, as it were, it is taught to carry out its thoughts in that quiet manner.

The object of meditative thought is to develop the subconscious to a reasonable extent. There is a development that is often carried to the abnormal stage, in which the reason becomes the subjective power and the subconscious is ruler. The development of the subconscious to a certain point will strengthen the reasoning powers; concentration exercises should tend that way unless the student wishes to develop his subconscious to a point of producing phenomena. But that state is generally brought about by concentration on the work in hand, be it clairvoyance, psychometry, telepathy or anything else. This course can not take up those phases, as it is obliged to keep closely to those forms of concentration that are most needed in actual daily experiences.

As I stated in the beginning of this lesson, meditation is desirable for the student, as it brings into communication with his conscious, his subconscious to that degree in which his memory is refreshed and his deduction strengthened.

For the first part of this exercise in meditation proper, call before your mind a picture. Learn to dwell on these thought-pictures to the exclusion of everything else. A mental picture, in itself, can be *seen* mentally, or it can be *dwelt upon in thought* to that extent in which it would be no more real were it seen.

In creating this picture, see that its details are brought out. Always choose something that is pleasing, something that will leave you in a happy state of mind, rather than plunge you into deep, disagreeable thought. A picture of this kind should be some outdoor scene. Look at it in an earnest manner, bring out the clouds, the sky, the flowers; in fact, while your thoughts are drifting easily along, call these scenes before you and dwell on them lightly. Of course, during all this time, your eyes are closed, your body is relaxed and you are resting.

In itself there is nothing to this exercise that will better you a great deal. It is merely due to the fact that it paves the way to something better. Your mind is put into a pleasant state, you have dropped your little troubles and have temporarily laid aside your greater ones. You are then ready to take up any line of thought that you desire, be it along the line of study, or thought of any kind.

Spend about fifteen minutes in actual meditation, or about half an hour in the exercise.

LESSON IV.

Outward concentration is really the development of Observation. It is to be sought by men or women who are brought constantly in contact with the rough edges of the world. It teaches

them to be on the constant lookout and, consequently, to *remember* what they learn in this manner. Develop the concentration along any certain line and the memory will always be strengthened along the same line.

Outward Concentration also teaches self-reliance and does away with fear and with self-centeredness. Self-centered people do not think enough of the things about them, or of what they are doing; they live in the past, they fill the present with fears and the future with chaotic disorder. These are the people who must practice their concentration in company as well as in silence. In fact, do not practice more than fifteen minutes alone in this external concentration.

Here, the advanced state of passivity is not desired. Relaxation only to that stage in which the body is at rest will be sufficient. Have a good light in the room and seat yourself in a chair so that the light falls over your left shoulder.

Before you on a table are several articles, among them some books. Part of these books have their backs turned your way and the remainder of them furnish you with a view of the edges of the leaves. Study the proportions of these books carefully, but do not pick any of them up while doing so. When you have carefully compared the lengths, thickness and general appearance of the various books, make an estimate of the number of pages in each book. Do not *guess* at it; *estimate* it. Figure that there are likely so many pages to the inch, the paper appearing to be of a certain thickness. When you have noted every book, pick them up, one at a time and, with a rule, find out *how* true your estimates were. This will take up quite a little time. It is interesting. You find your mind is centered on the work you are doing. It is because:

First, you have created an interest;

Secondly, you have brought the Perceptive faculties of the mind into play.

This is a combination that cannot court defeat. You first throw your mind onto something foreign and find the subject interesting. Then you bring your percepts into action; the result is that your observation, or ability to concentrate on outside things, is increased.

This will be all that you are to do during your regular exercises. From day to day you can vary these experiments but always have the same object in view.

Now we come to the general practice of external concentration. You may use it in business, pleasure or the general routine of work. It is essential that you become consciously aware of facts if you wish to become proficient in them. Your subconscious grasps them afterward and gradually puts them into practice. Then it is automatic. But you will never gain this subconscious knowledge if you do not become conversant with the tasks in hand consciously.

Careful use will strengthen any organ. Legitimate exercise will build up the weakest tissues. Let us look at memory, then, as something due to the physical being. If the conscious mind is as transient as life in the flesh, then reason, judgment, logic and conscious attributes generally must also be fleeting. If, in cultivating memory, we build brain cells or create convolutions, let us get to work at it!

These points are touched briefly and all theory has been weeded out:

To retain knowledge gained from books is undoubtedly the most trying kind of memory; not necessarily the hardest. The bright student, in my eyes, is the one who learns his lessons and enjoys life at the same time. The book-worm is always a bore. Ask this bright student how he learns his lessons. He will tell you that he studies a shorter time than the boy across the aisle, and who never has his lessons. Ask him how he remembers history. He will tell you that he reads it just as you or I would read a story. Pray, why is it that such a large percent can read novels and tell you the whole story, when the same people could not tell you who reigned in ancient Gaul 800 A. D. or how many Roman emperors there were who were called "Cæsar?" Why is it? Simple, very simple. When we read a story, the world has temporarily changed. We follow the hero with bated breath as he rescues the heroine from the jaws of death. We live that story, we are there. Our inner voice cries words of warning in vain, and we actually turn our heads from the book with a sigh as the villain raises his knife to end the drama. The door bell rings and we come to the commonplace with a start and the hard, cold world greets us, shorn of romance, devoid of interest! Why don't we study history, algebra, or rhetoric that way?

The cultivation of memory, our deduction tells us, must necessarily be the cultivation of *interest*. If we wish to retain, we must delight in our studies. This thing is also true of the cultivation of any kind of memory. The reason we forget is because we lack the proper interest. Our intentions are all right but our efforts are feeble.

For the student, half an hour's work *every day* in memory cultivation is urged. By all means get up early enough in the morning to go through your work. It is essential to do this kind of work when the dew—or the frost—has not been disturbed by the morning's sun. Like the Mohammedan, greet the first rays of old Sol; not necessarily in prayer, but in something equally as strengthening. I dislike reforms when they are radical. I know that many who read this will wonder why a later hour wouldn't do. But this is one of the secrets. If you arise early, it will be necessary to get to bed at a reasonable hour. The mind must be clear. Therefore, no late lunches! Be temperate; otherwise—never practice!

Be sure that you take your deep breathing. Nor is it amiss

to eat a light breakfast before you practice. But do not do so unless you feel hungry. The light—sunlight only—must fall over your left shoulder and be shed evenly. There will be a great many days in the year that will give you nothing but darkness and gloom; there will be others when you have been obliged to stay up late and sleep a little later in the morning. Get enough sleep or you can never practice. But, if you have had enough sleep, never mind a snowstorm or a rain.

Pick up your book; a study in which you are the least interested. Open to your day's lesson. Read a paragraph, or a sentence. Slowly repeat the meaning to yourself. Read the next one in the same manner until you have read between three hundred and four hundred words. Close your book; pick up a pencil and piece of paper and write it out in your own language. When it is written, compare it with the book. Note your weak points and go over the same again until it is perfected.

Now rest. Get up and walk around your room, breathe two or three times deeply and throw your shoulders back. This applies to girls, boys, men or women.

Return to your chair and take another section in the same manner. If your study embraces diagrams, copy them first from the book and then reproduce them through the aid of *memory*. Half an hour, or forty minutes at the outside, will teach you the lesson. You go to school with a feeling of buoyancy about you. Students, you study too much at night. You study too hard and concentrate too poorly. This ruins your nerves, your eyesight, your prospects! Study in the morning. Take up your work in sections and you will soon form a *habit* of it. It is a good habit, and it receives the "O. K." mark of Nature. There is but one consequence: You develop interest. During the day, your other studies are much easier, the lectures and talks, the demonstrations and recitations all have a different meaning to you. It is impossible to succeed and, at the same time, go through your school or college day with vivid thoughts of the maze of the waltz or the musty taste in your mouth of things lately eaten and otherwise taken, productive or premature old age. In a word, it is impossible to have a bright mind when the material brain is abused.

The cultivation of memory of names, or places, of events or engagements must be along the lines of *association of ideas*. Each name you hear and wish to remember must be closely linked with the place, the circumstances and through a repetition of the name. Practice and constant development will alone win in this respect. With the student, there is an actual material transformation taking place. This may be just as true with any kind of memory, but those mentioned last are due to proper association. For instance, I meet a Mr. Van Altenberger. A rather peculiar name. The man has a good, honest face. As soon as I hear his name, I associate the name with his looks, with the circumstances surrounding the meeting. As I leave him, I make it a point to

say his name in bidding him good-bye. On the way to the office I think of it once or twice. This is something, perhaps, I have never done before. Most people make a mistake in not pronouncing names distinctly in introduction. Insist on that; paint a clear mind-picture and the rest is a matter of practice only.

The best practices, or exercises, are those that can be turned to account in the quickest and easiest manner. The mind must be *educated* along those lines in which it is deficient. There was never a course of instructions that accomplished anything that did not have in it the element of education, or *practice*.

LESSON VI.

Our last lesson deals with Will Power, Projection of Mind Force, or the attainment of the ability to make the Ego felt. But as soon as the Self, the Being, is mentioned, man grasps at mystery and fears. He cannot learn to look on the occult and couple with it the actual building of brain force. This course in concentration, I wish to repeat, deals with the waking, conscious mind. All the occult depends on the control of that. By properly training that mind, the little subconscious falls into line and does its part just as nature intended it should.

This is not a lesson in Personal Magnetism but it is a lesson that will help in the attainment of personal magnetism. It aims to teach how to use the Psychic force of the mind in concentrating, be the end telepathy, or hypnotism. *There is mental force used in both.*

Here again, the lesson is divided into two parts; the first relating to the quiet exercises and the second to the application, or the work among other people. While there is a condition of harmony, there is also a condition of concentration, pure and simple.

First, if you are weak in any of the points touched in the preceding lesson, practice until you have bettered your condition. If your memory along any one line is weak, take one of the exercises I have given and practice until you have overcome that weakness. Then you are ready for the work of bringing about the projection of thought; the creation of what is commonly called "vibration." It will not be the potent factor that many think it is; you will not be able to "shoot your thoughts" into another intellect; you will be unable to *draw* them to you as rapidly and with the force that a magnet would a bit of steel. The man who says that he can do this is a fanatic or absolutely insane. It is a theoretical condition that could be attained if certain things were accomplished. But those things we never see; they may exist; in India, for instance. Maybe they do, but don't work for them. Your greatest *power* is physical and mental health and attainments, your accomplishments, your prowess. They are *mental*, true. But you are always working on the mental; if you accept one you must also accept the other. It would be a "diamond

cut diamond" affray. The chance of each one would be only better as its position of vantage changed.

Take but fifteen minutes a day in development. It would be better to divide that into two parts, taking ten minutes in the morning and five in the afternoon.

On a table in front of you place a mirror, so that you get a good clear image of your countenance. The light must be very good.

Seat yourself before it and look into the eyes of the image steadily for a minute or so. Then close your eyes and relax slightly. Remain this way for one or two minutes.

When you open your eyes, look into the eyes of the reflection, focusing your gaze on the right eye steadily and then the left. Do not look harshly but look steadily.

In looking into the eyes of your own image, your reflection, you give yourself something better than a purely inanimate image. Your reflection takes on more than a picture would do and gives you actual experience in focusing your thought on external objects, whether it is in experimental psychology or practical application in conversation, etc. One point must always be remembered and that is:

The most enduring concentration is that in which the muscles are not tense; that which is carried out with the least physical exhaustion.

You will find that there is a mild, yet earnest, look to be cultivated and that, as you bring this about, your expression changes. It takes weeks and even months to accomplish it. Gradually you cultivate a *belief* in yourself and that belief is expressed by the face itself, and especially the eyes and mouth. The firmer and more convincing you become, the firmer will be your mouth and the keener and softer your eyes.

Patience and practice must form the greatest part of your work. In looking into this mirror you learn to throw your thoughts, if that expression is clear, from yourself to the image. Your thoughts are there more than with you. You fasten your thoughts firmly on:

First, the being you wish to direct your thoughts to, and Secondly, on the *object* of your concentration.

That is, if you wish to send a telepathic message, it is done through dwelling on the thought of the message alone and not on anything else.

Volumes could be written on this interesting subject, but it is the concise course, the boiled down discourse that reaches and attracts the busy man and woman. I have touched the phases most sought without drifting into other lines of development. These exercises form the base of the various branches of psychology and personal development that attract and hold so many. I do not believe in giving a great variety of exercises nor in discussing a subject to the point of superfluity. Study what is herein given;

then apply it. If you do not apply it, it is useless for your good. Practice is the one feature that students in the psychic fields neglect. They get to a certain point and then whirl around in an orbit, just so near the center but never reaching it.

I am more than pleased to be able to condense this subject in this manner. It is designed to prove helpful and it will do so.

When you labor, concentrate on your work; you will soon learn to be "just a little better" than any one else doing that same kind of work. In your recreation, enter with a whole-souled spirit; you will be the leader—concentrate on your pleasures. In all you do be *earnest*; earnestness and frankness are but other terms for concentration.

Concentration is a broad term. It means the focusing of force on one point, bringing power down to a center and acting through that center. It means the ability to bring all the forces down to one thing and using them for the accomplishment of the ends desired.

So, whatever you do, if you wish to do it well—*Concentrate!*