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## Reaching for the Stars

Mayan Lesson Number 164

### HORIZONS ARE ELASTIC

THE LENGTHENING ROAD

RISE TO THE OCCASION

THERE IS A SECRET

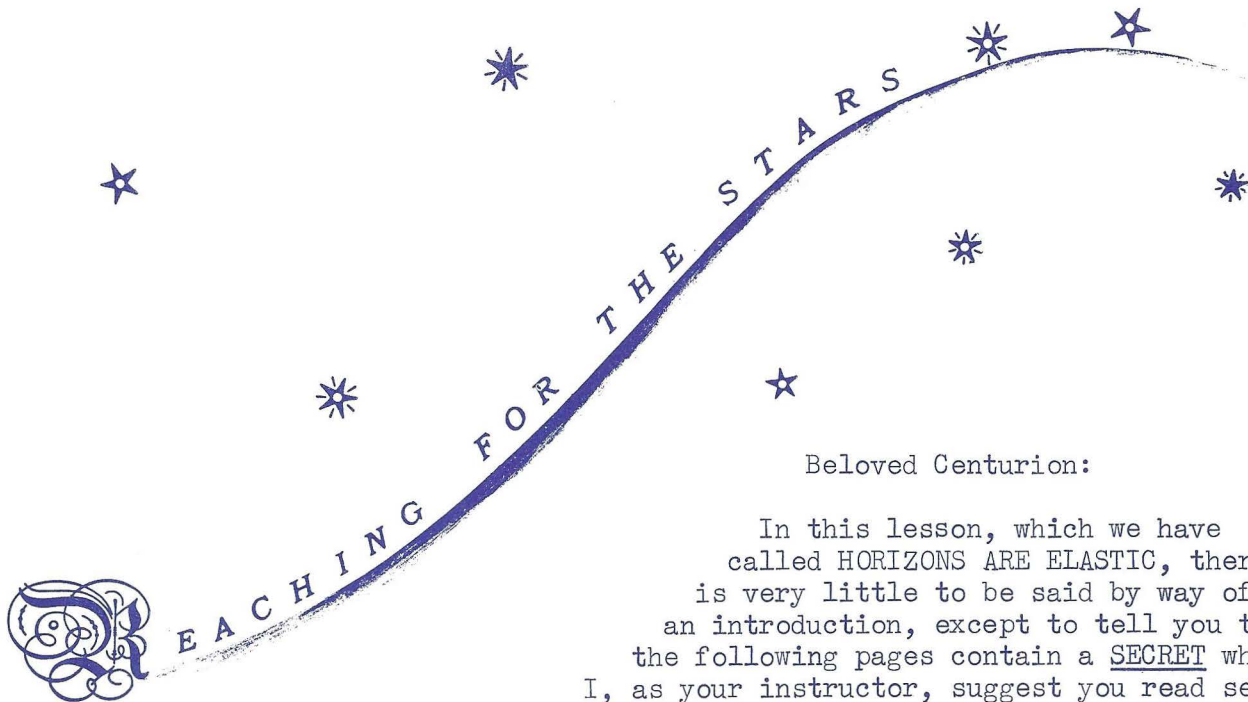
SPARKING THE MOTOR

DON'T TAKE "NO"  
FOR AN ANSWER

A GREAT DAY

THE END OF THE RAINBOW

MEDITATION



Beloved Centurion:

In this lesson, which we have called HORIZONS ARE ELASTIC, there is very little to be said by way of an introduction, except to tell you that the following pages contain a SECRET which I, as your instructor, suggest you read several times to be sure you find the meaning which may seem to be hidden as you read it the first time.

It is very important to your progress in achieving those things which you desire; it is a principle which you can use all through your life, in every walk of life, to attain success. It is especially important to those who give up before their task is finished.

I am reminded of the words of Beecher, who gave us this important truth: "Many men build as cathedrals were built, the part nearest the ground finished, but that part which soars toward heaven, the turrets and the spires, forever incomplete."

This whole series of lessons, as you have begun to notice, are designed to keep you from failing in attaining your desires, whatever they may be. Perhaps you, like many others, have started something, which, for some reason or another, you have never been able to finish.

In my many years of coming in contact with the desires, successes, failures, disappointments of people, I know how easy it is to give up before our task is finished, feeling that we cannot possibly accomplish what we have set out to do. This is not true. Help is always there if you will accept it, providing your aim is a worthy one.

This lesson deserves your undivided attention. When it reaches you, if you do not have a quiet time at the moment it comes into your hands, wait a few hours until you can be in a position to absorb it undisturbed. It is important to you.

Prepare yourself for the reading of it, with the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, deliver me from giving up before I try.  
Save me from the thought that any good thing is beyond my reach.

Help me to put complete faith in the Master's assurance that  
all things are ours.

Amen.

## THE LENGTHENING ROAD

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DRIVING on strange roads you have doubtless learned many things about its illusions, and have long since stopped being deceived by them. You know that from the slope of one hill the next hill always looks much steeper and higher than it really is. You have also learned that it never looks far to the end of a road, though it really reaches on and on.

You can drive for hundreds of miles looking ahead on a road that seems to melt away in the distance, disappear around a turn, or come to an abrupt end at the top of the next hill. But it doesn't. It only leads on to another hill.

Driving in the mountains you think again and again that you are coming to the topmost summit, only to find beyond your supposed crest another and higher one. You think each mountain will be the last, only to find that across the valley is another mountain. Then just as your discouragement approaches despair you soon find yourself gliding through the foothills down to the valley of your dreams.

All this time what has been happening to the horizon? It appeared to be not far ahead of you when you started out. By that token it should be far behind you on the road now, but it isn't. Yonder it is, still luring you on and looking as far ahead of you as it did when you first started out.

Beyond its anticipated end the road still leads on. You discover that only as you go on, and you never would have discovered it, or any of the other things we have mentioned, if you had not kept going. People who do not keep on never know where they might have arrived. People who do not keep trying never know what they might have accomplished.

Disillusionment? Call it what you may, but it is really only discovering the facts about things, and one of them is that the world and life are large. There is plenty of room in them to grow. Roads are long. There is plenty of reach in them for going on.


As to the horizon, you need never be afraid of bumping into it, for it is even vaster than the world. No matter how far you go, there is always plenty of room to go farther. The horizon of your childhood was very small, but it grew with you, always keeping a little out of reach to beckon you on. The horizon is elastic. It will always be there ahead calling to you. No matter what you do or how far you go, you will never outgrow possibility.

Do not try to cover the whole distance in a day, for you cannot do that. You will only fail and discourage and weaken yourself. A step at a time is all you can take. Be content with that. It gives you time to take it with care. Just

keep going. You will not collide with the horizon. It will move out of your way as you approach.

## R I S E T O T H E O C C A S I O N

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 ONE of the opportunities we have to stretch our abilities to greater measures of strength and importance is the occasions we have to which to rise. Think how much added stature of ability, character and quality has been created in just that way.

What made da Vinci, Columbus, Washington, Lincoln, Marconi, Pasteur, Banning, and Salk, what they were or are? Answer - the opportunities they did not fail to seize, the occasions to which they did not fail to rise. Others have had abilities even they themselves never suspected because they did not rise to the occasions that presented themselves.

When an occasion does present itself one may think he is not sufficient for it, and for the moment that may be true. The wonderful thing about it is that the initiative and effort of rising to an occasion tends to bring one up to its requirements. It stretches him to the necessary stature.

That is exactly what happened to the men named above. They were at first inadequate, immature, inexperienced people; but when they recognized the need and resolved to do something about it they ventured, and as they ventured they gained courage and grew in strength and ability. Then with experience they developed skill and wisdom. Thus they became masters of the situations to which they rose.

New occasions teach new duties, as the poet has said; but they do more. They also impart strength and stature to those who rise to them. The shrinking, trembling novice should never despair. His very effort will strengthen him to do better each time he tries.

A great surgeon and a capable orator once told each other how each would tremble and falter trying to do the other's work. The work of each would have been impossible to the other, yet he was master of his own task. Each had reached excellence over the hard road, but each effort he made had opened the way to the next and given him strength to undertake the larger task.


As you make your first attempts at whatever you undertake, you will probably be very doubtful of your future, for you will see only to the top of the next hill. It looks as though the horizon will soon stop you. Never fear. It will move out of your way as you come up to it. It will never stop you. There is no limit to your possibilities. By rising to one occasion your power grows to fit the next occasion.

Did you say you have no great occasion to which to rise? They may be more, and they may be nearer, and they may be more important than you think. Recognizing occasions is part of the secret. Surely there are interests and projects worth taking upon your heart. There is always the occasion of how much more adequate to life you can become, and you can do that right where you are, beginning

now. Consider that. It may be the key to occasions of which you have never yet dreamed.

T H E R E I S A S E C R E T

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 HERE is a secret to this matter of proceeding more and more along the infinite reach of possibility, a way to keep the road from becoming a blind alley. It is to retain the sense of newness, to keep growing with the lengthening road. As long as it is springtime in the soul, things will keep growing.

In your reading of the Bible you have already noticed the emphasis it lays on keeping ever going on to something new. God's people are always shown moving toward some new objective. They do not find it easy. They have their problems and difficulties. But they manage to arrive.

We first find them moving toward a new country where they can develop a real commonwealth of God. There they are to work out that new condition, the quality of personal and national life to which the prophets called.

Once in Canaan a new dream possessed them. A new world life was being visualized, something to which to keep going on. Then Jesus revealed the kind of living that would be its final realization. This was enough to work on for ages. We still cherish the faith that it will finally blossom into the magnificent reality of a new heaven and a new earth.

This gives us something always to keep going on to attain, first in ourselves and then in the world. One might say the key sentence of the entire Bible is this from the Book of Revelation, "And I heard a great voice saying, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

In all this we actually get a glimpse into the divine mind. There is no room there for anything static. Its processes are always dynamic, positive, constructive and progressive. God is called not the Nay, nor the Yea or Nay, but the Yea, the Amen, the everlasting Yes. He is the God of going on.

One of the prophets denounces the people who "have settled on their lees", - who have lost the sparkle of life and become the dregs and settlings in its cup. Under the influence of God, even the most listless person becomes alive and alert.

Being divine, Jesus was always looking ahead, always concerned with something to strive for, always trying to challenge people to leave the dead past and push on.

Now for the secret. The Master always had a workable way of attaining ideals. He never demanded anything impossible or proposed anything unattainable. He knew that even people with good intentions start things and do not finish them, undertake things and give up before they are done.

So he reminded all of us who so often mean better than we do that we must

not put new wine into old wineskins or it will ferment and burst them, nor must we put new patches on old garments or they will shrink and tear the cloth.

In other words, the new and old do not mix. You cannot motivate a new life from an old viewpoint. You cannot fit a new program into old habits. You cannot adapt a new ideal to an old character. You must renovate your life and make a wholly new start.

That is the secret. You must grow with your horizon. You must be as big as your purpose. Your stride must lengthen with the road.

### S P A R K I N G   T H E   M O T O R

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RESOLVING to push out one's horizons is quite an undertaking, even when he knows they are adjustable. Yet it should be easy, for they have no weight, and they offer no resistance. They retreat readily when one advances toward them.

It is the resolving, not the doing, that is the problem. The trouble is the lethargy and inertia that so often keeps us from advancing. It is not so much a matter of doing something bold and spectacular. The need at first is just getting at it. Indecision is the point where most failures are made.

You may have the finest and most expensive motor car on the highway, in perfect condition, well supplied with fuel, and the battery fully charged. But if the ignition is not turned on, it will not start. You have to spark the engine or it will not go.

Any going on in life, whatever it may be, requires the sparking of the motor. The first thing necessary is the resolution to do it. There is nothing very difficult about keeping going, once one is on the way. It is that first impulse to real motion that does it. After that one builds up momentum and his own weight helps carry him along.

We may safely say that in a sense the resolution to try is the longest step toward attaining a goal. What do you want that goal to be? Where do you want to go? Thinking it would be a nice thing to do, or feeling that you may try it some time, or wondering why it never happens, will leave you tomorrow where you are today. Get started, and you will spend the rest of your life wondering why you didn't do it sooner. You will know then that the reason was that you just didn't get at it. You didn't fully realize that your day had come. You didn't spark the motor.

Most of us have put off things we knew should be done, only to lose precious time forever. To perform a duty, to make an adjustment, to work out a problem, to take measures to realize your treasured ambition, or to come to terms with your conscience about some neglected duty, was never developed from a nebulous thought to actual performance for the lack of the first activating spark so long as the resolution was lacking.

Then perhaps a development, a reminder, or a ripening of our thinking about the thing, sparked us into action. The effort proved much easier and turned out much better than we ever thought it could. We felt so much better, knowing we had at last taken a long step toward the peace of mind that comes from the sense of opportunity realized upon. Taking the first step was where your problem lay.

But what do you do if your motor fails to spark when you turn it on? You turn the engine over with your own motive power. In any event start moving. Your courage will be translated into action. Your resolution to get going, like the sparking of your engine, proves after all to be the longest step. No matter how you have to do it, turn the engine over.

D O N ' T   T A K E   N O   F O R   A N   A N S W E R

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An older generation used to have a saying for determination. It was, Don't take no for an answer. They remembered and observed it well, too. People who had dealings with them learned how determined they could be when they had made up their minds.

This is a good policy to learn and practice in dealing with conditions and seeming limitations, for they can appear more stubborn, unreasonable, and wrong, than people do. You will make no progress on the way of least resistance, and your resolution will weaken too. You will have to keep going in spite of things.

Have you ever seen a road built across a rugged mountain range? The surveyors and builders have to disregard the question whether it is possible, and just do it. They have to begin where there is no place to begin. They have to build a place to stand and a place for their machines to start making a place for themselves. They have not only to devise ways to get started, but even then to look up into the face of seeming impossibility and refuse to take no for an answer. In one way and another they succeed.

Suppose there is to be built a great suspension bridge, like the one across the Hudson or the one across San Francisco Bay. It looks impossible, but there is a way. The task is to find that way and follow it.

Piers with cutting edges at the bottom are built, and they sink with their increasing heft through the mud and sand at the bottom till they rest on bed rock. Caissons are built around them to keep out the water while workmen complete them. Steel towers hundreds of feet high are mounted on them. Small wire cables are swung from one tower to another. Then a small wheel spins on more cables and then twists them together into a support three feet thick or more. Steel sleepers and flooring are swung to these cables and rested on the piers. Thus is constructed a bridge that would be impossible to men who had not discovered the one way to do it.

If you propose to live a life or accomplish a work that is unusual at all, expect it to be something like building a mountain road or a great suspension bridge. There will be no road, and you will even have to make yourself a place to stand while you build one. There will be nowhere to set piers for your bridge




except hidden bed rock, and you will not know how deep it is. These are no's, and you will fail at the start if you take them for an answer.

There is a way, and you will have to find that way. Conditions will forbid you, people will discourage you, and your own courage may sometimes sag. There will be moments when it will look as though you can go no further. Do not be deceived by these hindrances. To give up now would be defeat. As your resolution asserts itself you will find that the horizon you thought was closing in on you is receding.

Everyone has to build roads and bridges that seem impossible. Everyone has moments that call for great determination, ingenuity, and patience. Life may sometimes say no to try you, but she does not want you to take it for an answer. Get across the barrier. The horizon will move back to make room.

### A G R E A T D A Y

 AILURE has many tricks by which it tries to bring about our surrender and defeat. One of its favorites is trying to persuade us that the day is unfavorable, the time is not right. "This is not the day to try it", it whispers. Then it proceeds to name a hundred reasons why we should wait till another time, all of them amounting to the implication that there is something wrong with the day itself.

One may think it is easy to brush aside these negative suggestions of discouragement and surrender. Sometimes it is, but other times it isn't. We have all been subjected to these attacks, and probably most of us at some time or other and in one way or another have fallen victim to them.

The morning is cloudy and dull. You did not rest very well last night. Important matters are slow developing. Reports are not arriving. You don't feel like taking any important steps or making any important decisions till things mature further. So we wait and let the iron on the anvil grow colder and colder.

What Failure is doing to us is very clever. It knows there are no barriers on the road we could not surmount if we really tried. It also knows the hardest obstacles to get past are those we build up or allow to be built up within ourselves. The spirit of discouragement and defeat may be harder to get past than a mountain range or a river. So Failure suggests the desired illusion that it is not a good day.

Right here and now let us look squarely into the face of one of life's greatest, truest, and most important facts - the fact that God does not make any bad days. Only man does that, and there is no reason why he should.

What we find as we rise morning by morning is not a good day or a bad one, but a blank which we can make as good or as bad as we will. The selfsame day may be good to one man and bad to his next door neighbor. The reason is not in the day, but in the fact that one made the best of it and the other the worst. All days are essentially alike. Some are warm and some cold, some bright and some

cloudy. On some we feel vigorous and on others dull. But every day on the calendar is potentially and essentially a good day.

The day Magna Charta was signed someone called a poor day. The day our nation was born someone complained that nothing important ever happened any more. The day deliverance from Polio was discovered someone yawned and said he could do better if he could only have a favorable day. This negative attitude about days can defeat you. You will never get a great day, but every morning you get the raw material of which to make one. There are no ordinary days. There are only ordinary people who make them so.

This day on which you are reading these words is a good day, - as good a day as ever dawned or ever will, and tomorrow will be exactly like it. You can let this day remain a blank page in the story, or you can stand up to it and make it something fine and victorious. The decision is yours.

## THE END OF THE RAINBOW

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MOST people think that at the end of the rainbow is a pot of gold, but that no one ever found the end of the rainbow or ever can. Speaking of experiences usually considered impossible, here is the personal account given by a man who learned better.

"Twice I have stood at the end of a rainbow as literally and actually as one might stand by a rosebush or a tree. This is an account of the first time it happened. I did not exactly find it. It sought me out and came to me.

"I was driving on a country road when a summer shower came up. The thunder and lightning shook the rain loose in torrents. Then came hail, which fell in large, pounding ice-stones, beating a tattoo on the top and sides of my car. Then it stopped as suddenly as it had begun, and the sun's rays began struggling through the cloud rifts.

"At the top of a hill, I pulled out and left the car to look at the rain-washed landscape. That was when I saw a large and brilliant rainbow reaching far across a valley and seeming to come down behind some hills several miles away.

"I stood there thinking how far away the end of that rainbow must be. If one started out to reach it he would only find it farther away each time he arrived where it had appeared to be. He could not even find that place, because the great arc of color would have faded from the sky before he could reach it.

"All at once it occurred to me that a rainbow has two ends. When I turned to find out where the other end came down, I did not see it at first, for the reason that it came down at my feet, and the trees and ground ahead of me were in it. Its vari-colored light was flooding around them like colored lights upon a stage.

"I thrust one hand into it to be sure it was not a dream or hallucination. Sure enough it was there, and I could see my hand bathed in its transparent

colors. On the ground I could see my feet in the same tinted mist. I know they were mine, for I moved them to make sure.

"Did I find a pot of gold? No, not in the ordinary sense of the words, but in their truer sense I feel that I found treasure worth a great deal more. I found it in the things the experience had taught me.

"First, I learned that the end of the rainbow is not inaccessible, and though we may not reach it by searching for it, if we live in the spirit of hope it may some day seek us out. Its glorious symbol of promise is a phase of the goodness and mercy of God which follow us all the days of our lives.

"Second, I learned that we may often miss the end of the rainbow because we look at the one farthest away across the hills when the nearer end may come down at our very feet. We do it the hard way when doing it the easy way would bring results.

"Third, I was reminded that nothing beautiful and good is really out of reach, that many seemingly impossible things would be possible if we would only let them be, and that much to which we cannot go will come to us if we keep within its reach.

"Yes, one thing more. Fourth, I realized the half-pondered fact that we never have a rainbow unless we have a cloud."

#### M E D I T A T I O N

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I do not let myself be limited by appearances, nor baffled even by facts that can be changed and overcome. I keep the way open for God's blessings to come to me.

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR