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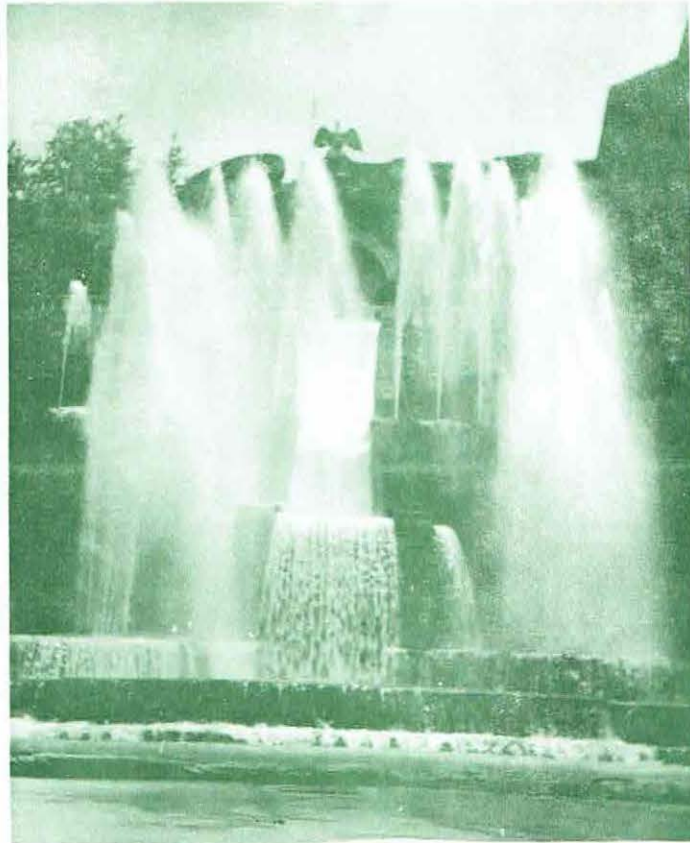
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Fountains at Tivoli, Villa d' Este
Photo by Rose Dawn

... I will give unto him that is athirst of
the fountain of the water of life freely.
Revelations: 21-6

THE MAXIMUM LIVING SERIES **Mayan Revelation Number 181**

KEEP TRYING

One for Trying

In Case You Fail

Consider the Tackle

Sleep On It

You Are at the Bat

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Meditation

Beloved Centurion:

Very often there have been those who have wanted to become members of the Mayan Order, but feel there is no use for them to continue to try to make anything of their lives. Through the years, I have noticed that one of the reasons given is because some thought they were too old to learn.

This is one of the most mistaken ideas people have, from the standpoint of learning and accomplishing. The newest studies show that the functioning of the mind can remain the same or even be increased as we pass the half-century mark; and most people at the age of seventy are just as capable as they were at the age of fifty.

The chairman of one of our great universities has said that at eighty the intellect is often roughly equivalent to what it was in the twenties, and that at ninety the mental return is frequently back to the 'teens, which is considered the very best age for learning - but there is a string attached to it. All of this is possible, of course, only if people continue to use and exercise their brains. If you decide you are too old to learn or do anything worthwhile and just sit back and do nothing, then surely you will deteriorate mentally.

The late President Roosevelt once asked Oliver Wendell Holmes why he read so much ancient philosophy, and the ninety-three year old ex-Supreme Court Justice said, "To improve my mind, Mr. President."

It has been found that students, after seventy years of age, can learn a foreign language and shorthand as easily as their younger classmates. In New Hampshire it was found that in a group who were studying artcraft and handicraft, four out of five students learned their skills after they were fifty years of age.

As your teacher, I feel that I must impress upon you the importance of continuing to learn. You should never permit yourself to deteriorate mentally but USE your brain. Keep your mentality active to the fullest degree and follow closely the advice in this lesson, KEEP TRYING. You are given actual instructions in this lesson which, if followed, will help you to attain your desire.

One of our greatest obstacles in obtaining our aim in life is the impatience we encounter when, after trying several times, we are unable to accomplish what we set out to do. We allow our failures to defeat us and we quit trying.

Every failure that we meet is growth, that is, if we continue to try. If we fail and do not try again, then each failure is a step backward; but if each failure causes us to continue to try again, then we will really go up the ladder. Sometimes it seems heartbreaking, but the final result is worth every heartache we encounter if we KEEP TRYING.

The prayer, which is to help prepare you for the lesson, should give you great strength; and I earnestly and sincerely feel that if you repeat the words of the prayer, and think about what it says and let it come from deep within your heart, there isn't any obstacle in this life too difficult for you to conquer.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, forgive me for all the times
 I have not tried hard enough or long enough
 And thus have failed when I might have succeeded.

Give me strength of purpose
 To try all doors, all roads, and all ways,
 In each attempt to make the most and best
 Of the life Thou hast given me,
 And thus to honor Thee for the giving.

Help me never to let it be true
 That I have not done my part.

Amen

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ONE FOR TRYING

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IN school we used to get three kinds of marks. A figure representing more or less of success on the scale of a hundred, a zero for making no effort at all, and one for trying even though the effort was no good. Even a guess would get one percent. That one for trying had more significance than might appear on the face of it. The person who tries, however poor may be the effort, may and sometimes does get into the spirit of it and start trying harder and doing better.

It is easy to be in the zero class, except for two things. When the period of ease is over, and there is nothing to show for it; and when the recognitions for accomplishments are passed around, the slothful one is not included. These are two of the judgments we have to take for being sluggards who do not consider the ways of the ant and be wise.

No one really wants to be in the zero class, and no one needs to be. Anyone, no matter how incompetent he is, can at least get one for trying. If you are aiming at maximum living you have to keep approaching the standards of excellence. To approach anything one has to start. This the zero mark people do not do. You may, if you are a very exceptional case, be able to do it all at once; but most people have to work up to it. You cannot work up to anything from zero, but you can start from one, showing that at least you have tried.

The trouble with very many who do not try is not that they are indolent, but that they lack the courage to make the attempt. They are fearful of failure or of some dire Pandora's box consequence of having attempted something new and untried. Why should anyone fear failure? It is usually because of the feeling that a certain humiliation attaches to it. What will people say? That is a very potent question in this sensitive world. We would rather be struck than laughed at, and we can take out and out laughter better than a silent, supercilious smile.

But stop and think a moment. Worthwhile people will honor you for trying, even though for the moment you do not succeed. Those who do not understand and respect your efforts are people whose opinion is of no importance. Whether people cheer or not matters little anyway. The important thing is that you have got started. As is so often said, losing a skirmish is not losing a battle.

You never know what you can do till you try. You may do much better than you expected you would. Whatever the result, even if it is only one for trying, you know where the starting point is and can go on from there.

You have nothing to lose by trying. It is the least you can do. That is where even the greatest masters have to start. Some of the greatest discoveries, achievements, and victories, followed years of trying. Too, many who have tried and failed to do what they were trying to do, found that they had unexpectedly come upon still greater achievements.

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CONSIDER THE TACKLE

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THERE is a world of meaning, good, strong, rugged meaning, in the fine old word tackle. It is more peaceful a word for attack, but it means just as much or more. A good hearty tackle is likely to be more potent than a spiritless, half-hearted attack. From stopping a man with the ball on the gridiron to doing about the same thing with the problems of life, tackle is a good word. It is what happens when we realize that we must do something about a thing.

There is a certain amount of physical risk in tackling a wild beast or even a running football player determined to carry the ball through; but in the enterprise of life physical peril is seldom involved. There the real danger is in not doing it.

On the football field, though, you will readily see that there is a science of tackling. A tackle does not simply get in a man's way, or throw himself at him, or fumble blindly in his direction. If he is a good tackle, and he must be or the coach would not send him into the game, he knows certain effective ways to take hold of an opposing player, ways by which he is sure to succeed in a high percentage of instances. Learn skill in tackling the problems of life.

Since tackling is a form of attack, it is the beginning of an offensive action. It is the onset. It is the action of one who has or is taking the

initiative. The initiative is a great advantage. Try to get it and keep it. The odds are on your side as long as you can do that. That has been a fundamental principle of battle, sports, and contests, from the beginning. It is a fundamental principle in living a winning life, too. Lose the initiative and the odds are against you unless and until you can get it again.

The first move in any kind of effort is determining. A singer tries to make his first note effective. A speaker must win his audience and a writer must get his reader's interest in the first few sentences or run the risk of not getting it at all. The first impression one makes is very likely to determine what the nature of the last one will be. In such things it pays to be a good tackle.

So get ready not merely to try to succeed, but positively to make at least an effective beginning. The writer asked a young minister once how carefully he prepared his sermons. "I try to be sure I have something worthwhile to say all the way through", he replied, "but I pay special attention to the opening and closing parts. At those points I try to make sure that the material and my delivery of it are the best I can do."

Prepare well. Get ready. Hit the line hard. Follow through. If you fail to do that at the start it will be hard to make up for it later. Analyze your problem. Make your plan. Be sure it is good. Then give it all you have. If the road is blocked with obstacles, tackle them, and do it as skillfully as you can.

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YOU ARE AT THE BAT

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A CERTAIN man suddenly found himself appointed to a position of great and constant responsibility. While he was still confused, and dazed, and wondering how he was going to meet the situations that come up all the time in such positions, a friend asked him how he felt. Like a baseball player who has just been called to bat for the first time, he replied, "I feel like a green ballplayer with the bat in his hands for the first time. Any moment now I will see the balls coming at me, straight, curved, and every possible way. I know I have got to do something about each one as it comes, though each will create a little different situation; and I have got to be able to hit most of them. I can't choose. The situation will be changing all the time, and I have got to be prepared to meet it."

He had it right. That is the situation a batter is in, and the time never comes when it does not present problems. The most seasoned player sometimes wonders and sometimes misses. Some of the balls will not arrive where he thinks they are going to and where he has the bat awaiting them. It is a baffling situation in which he is placed and not many would claim to be masters of it at all times.

That is the position anyone is in who realizes that life takes the form of a game. He must play it or be counted out. He must play it well or he fails

to score against others who have made themselves experts. The opposition will take all kinds of forms, and suddenly and unexpectedly baffle him with something new.

Thinking of yourself under this figure may help you better to understand your own situation and problem. You have been called up, and are at the bat. Balls will be thrown in your direction, and it will be done by practiced hands and with great but deceptive precision and skill. Let us say that life is the pitcher, and you have to try to hit the balls it throws. You have to hit most of them if you are to remain on the team. If you do well, your average will be high. If you do poorly, it will be low. If you do not try, you will fan out.

As we have said, going through the motions isn't all there is to it. Life can think of more ways and more intricate ways of curving balls than the best human pitcher ever known. Among the balls it throws are situations, opportunities, needs, and problems. You do not have to create them, or seek them, or go to them. They will be thrown at you suddenly, swiftly, and inevitably. You can't prevent them, nor delay them, nor know what form they will take as they come. You can only try to meet them adequately when they arrive. That is what it means to live, to achieve, to get on.

Things may happen accidentally, of course. Some will be against you in spite of anything you can do. Be prepared to have more or less of that and to make the best of it by having good enough average to stand the loss. On the other hand, accidents will happen in your favor, things that just happen to be to your advantage. Be grateful for them, but don't boast about them. You deserve no credit for a fortunate accident, and the next one may go against you. That is just part of the give and take of life.


But most human experience is not like that. Most of it you have to decide upon, and do, and then face the record you have made. Some minor results are accidents, but the real trend and the final score depend on your pluck and skill.

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LIFE IS A PUZZLE

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 LIFE is a great puzzle made up of a long series of lesser puzzles, and we are the puzzle solvers, knitting our brows, racking our brains, and wishing we were wiser and more clever. Everyone who has lived into the age of responsibility knows that, and we learn it better all the time.

How many kinds of puzzles we have known, with new ones being added all the time! One is a set of rings which will come apart only when all of them have been brought exactly into a certain position with relation to each other. One is a board with pins set in holes, and one hole empty. There is a way to jump one pin over others till it alone remains on the board, but it is not as easy as it sounds. One is a maze which you can get out of only if you do not once turn the wrong way. One is a jig-saw picture where each of many pieces must go into exactly the right place; and lo, the design appears. The puzzle of your life may seem like one of

these at one time and another of them at another time. It may now and then seem like all of them rolled into one, perhaps with a few more kinds added for good measure.

All puzzles are alike in one thing - there is just one way to solve them. You cannot solve them by force. You have to find that one and only way. It is not a matter of strength but one of ingenuity and patience. One who has a problem must not only meet it, but must also move from the beginning in such a way as to be in a position to finish successfully.

In a certain place a beautiful church was built. Much of the interior and all of the front were of beautiful sacred pictures in mosaic. They were made up of countless little pieces of various colors and shapes, many of them plated with gold. Artists were brought from Italy, and worked many months putting that vast picture puzzle all in place.

One morning an earthquake wrecked the building and shattered this rare and costly art work, scattering fragments everywhere. That can happen after all the labor of creating something beautiful and intricate. It makes one of life's hardest possible moments for one who lives creatively.

But the builders did not give up. All the little fragments were found and gathered out of the debris. The workers in Mosaic were called back. It was harder this time for the parts of the pictures were all mixed in confusion. But in time each of those countless pieces was put back in its place, and the beautiful pictures stood out again as before. After that the work looked doubly beautiful because the beholder could see in it the devotion that was patient enough to do it all over again when an unexpected force had destroyed it.


That is something of the way we have to do, solve puzzles and sometimes even have to do it over again. Always there is a puzzle, but each is like one of figures that when finally assembled, make the great mosaic pattern with an abiding inspiration and meaning. It is a grand thing to have such a challenge to our powers.

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IN CASE YOU FAIL

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 Do not have failure in mind, for it is a negative note and not the right one to stress. To emphasize it is to invite it. But though you may not stress it you may have met it and it may have hindered or halted your progress and some of the discouragement may still remain. Or you could meet it later, with the same results.

This is not a negative section of this lesson. It is really a positive one, for its message is not to let failure stop you. When you make your plan, fortify against it if you can, but be sure to fortify against letting it break down your purpose and defeat you. This could be a part of the pattern of victory if you take and keep the attitude of superiority to failure. That should prevent

failure, but if now and then you should get out of line and fail, you certainly can refuse to surrender to discouragement, for it is only a state of mind. It is something you can control if you will. If you let yourself be defeated, it will not be the failure that did it. It will be your own lack of courage to disregard failure and go on.

Everyone makes some mistakes. Every player occasionally fumbles. Every worker sometimes has something not come off as he had hoped. We should be charitable about that in others, and we should strive ourselves to make it happen less and less. We are human, and sometimes we are more competent than others.

It would not be at all good for us to have everything go smoothly and come out right. What a hopeless race of weaklings that would soon make of us! We have to have something to cut our teeth on, something to keep our souls from softness and flabbiness, something to make us rugged and keep us trying.

When you find that life is sure to have its downs as well as its ups, do not resent it and struggle against it. It does not mean that the universe is against you, or that God has forsaken you. There has never been a storm so long and fierce but that the sun shone again. The triumphant levels of life are not for weaklings, and those who reach them do so in part by rising above mistakes and failures. You are not the first person ever to stumble, and you will not be the last. The rough places, as well as the smooth ones, show that God has not forgotten. He sometimes tries us in the crucible to burn away the dross.

Remember when something fails to work out as you had hoped and planned that you haven't lost anything, at least not if you don't lose heart. You are no worse off. You can go ahead just as before, and if you will profit by the experience, you may do better. Nobody ever tumbles all the way down the hill. So long as you manage to climb more than you fall, you are still gaining. It may take a little longer to reach the top, but you are still on the way. No one ever reaches it in a day. It wouldn't be worth doing if we could.

Take the scraps of failure and see if you can't work them over. The potter may give the marred vessel a new and lovelier shape than was first planned. Who knows but that your worked-over fragments may make the pattern even more beautiful? The picture may call for them. Who knows? We do not know, nor do we need to. Our part is to go ahead and do our best, and you cannot do that if you stop much to brood over fancied failures or even real ones. If now and then you fail, consider it a lesson learned. You can do better next time.

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SLEEP ON IT

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IF now and then the problem you try to solve or the project you undertake to carry out seems too much for you, or if you have made a failing effort and are wondering what to do next, here is a good rule. It has helped many a puzzled pilgrim to find a way through a dark hour or over a hard place. Sleep on it. Just lay the problem aside, trustfully of course,

and don't bother about it till you hear from your inner consciousness what to do and when to do it. Let it rest over at least one night of good, quiet, restful sleep (The nights of tossing and turning do not count. They show you haven't laid it aside). It is while you sleep, or rest, or devote your conscious thinking to other things that you get help. If you forget it entirely, so much the better.

Have you not known people who avoided announcing definite decisions on the spur of the moment? They would say they wanted time to sleep on it and would answer later. And have you not found the percentage of wisdom and success in their decisions higher than in those of most people? That was because they took time to get a decision from their subconscious minds, those amazing instruments of the wisdom and the will of God. When awake, you get in the way, but when you are sound asleep, your deeper consciousness can work unhindered by you.

We have yet much to learn about that super-mental power, but like many instruments we do not know much about we can use it just the same. We have only to refer a matter to it and stop worrying about it and tinkering with it so the subconscious mind can take it off our hands. We do not hear from it for awhile, maybe a short while, maybe a longer one. Then some day, or night, or morning after sleep, we find the veil is gone and the way stands out clear before us. When that time comes, act! The iron is already hot. Strike!

Night before last I thought over a matter that had remained immovable for nearly three months. Then came the thought, "I will trouble about it no more. I now unburden myself of it and leave it with God. What He does about it, if anything, will be right." The next morning three long-distance phone calls took complete and satisfactory care of it. They were as decisive as they were unexpected. Do you not see how it works? Sleep on it.

If a matter is not clear to you - how or when to do a thing, whether to do it at all, whether to give up something you haven't been able to budge, don't jam the workings of your soul by trying to force an immediate decision. The years are in no hurry. It can wait a little. Do what any good workman does if a tool fails to work at the moment - work with it very gently, or perhaps put it aside awhile and turn to something else. Let it rest a bit and give it a chance to adapt itself. A forced machine will not do good work, nor will a forced mind.

Do not force the issue. Do not decide or act prematurely. Give your deeper powers a chance to help you. Sleep on it.

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CONCLUDING NOTES

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OW in closing this lesson let us think at random for a few moments, looking for any stray point that may have been overlooked. Let us put off the pressure of trying to think consecutively, and just pluck whatever flower we happen to see:

1. Select the doors you want to open with care. Everything done toward the wrong result has to be undone. Do not judge things by fancy. Consider whether they fit in with what you are trying to achieve.
2. Having selected your door, do not be afraid to try to turn the knob. It may be locked, but it may not be. If it is locked, you may be able to find a key. If you cannot, be grateful. That is not your door. Forget it and look for the right one. If you are faithful, the results will be much better than you expect.
3. Never try to take your heritage by force. The result is likely to be that you will not get it at all. To everything any one of us should have there is a way. In the conquest of life the battering ram is the poorest of weapons. Brute force achieves nothing to be proud of.
4. Don't get impatient if you have to try several times. That is what most people have to do in any effort worthwhile. We used to say, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. We might also say, if at first you don't succeed, and if you try again, you are not only nearer victory but you are also capable of better efforts than you otherwise could have been.
5. Pray your way along. That is the supreme source of supreme power. Do not take such statements as the above as mere platitudes. They are practical, everyday, workable truth. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Prayer is something to work with.
6. But in your praying never fail to condition your askings as Jesus did in Gethsemane - "nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." That will save your prayers from going afield and it will save you from being in the position of asking for something that ought not to be.
7. Go forward gently and carefully. The ice might be thin or the scaffolding weak. It is dangerous to rush impetuously on. You might have to find another way.
8. Heed the words of the wise and experienced, but waste no time listening to the ignorant and unbelieving. We must get on, and somewhere there is an open road or one that can be opened.
9. Never mind about the past. The memory of the yesterdays may be lovely or unlovely, but they are gone. The adventure of the road ahead is the important thing now. It is the forward looking people who are doing the important things. The driver never gets ahead whose chief interest is the rear vision mirror.
10. Be proud to be called a visionary, only be careful to be one who works to make his visions real. If you are to be a visionary, be a heaven-guided one. What people mean, and do not know it, is that you are ahead of your time. So what? Let them learn. History is made by people who are ahead of their time.

11. You can't do these things alone. You must have the help of God. You can't do them with the help of God either - unless you cooperate.

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MEDITATION

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*M*Y soul does honor to the great privilege of effort. I have no doubt passed untested opportunities that were for me, but I will do so no more. Guided by God into what is right for me, and I for it, I will make an honest and complete effort to do it successfully. I will keep trying as long as there is any hope of success, and then try once more just in case.

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