

OFFICIAL EMBLEM OF

THE MAYANS

All material, discourses, lectures, illustrations, lessons, scientific dissertations and letters of transmittal appearing under this Official Emblem are protected by copyright. They may not be quoted except by official and written permission of The Mayans. They are not for sale but are prepared for the private use of Members of our Order. The recipient of this manuscript agrees by acceptance to hold it Private as the property of The Mayans to be delivered up to the Order upon demand. All rights in the material appearing beneath this cover are reserved by The Mayans, including the privilege of translation into other languages.

VADE MECUM, VOLVENTIBUS ANNIS

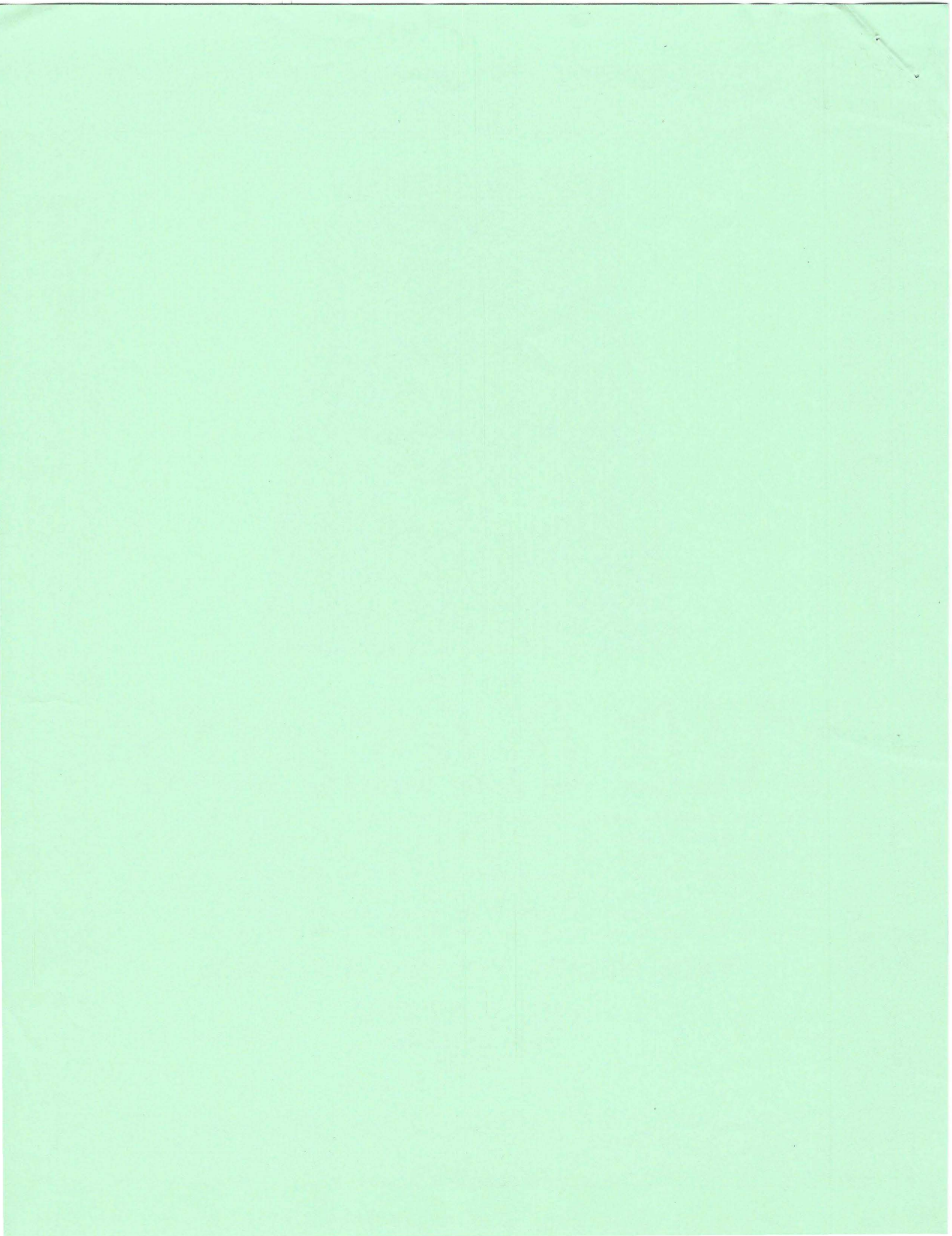
Degree 8 - 9

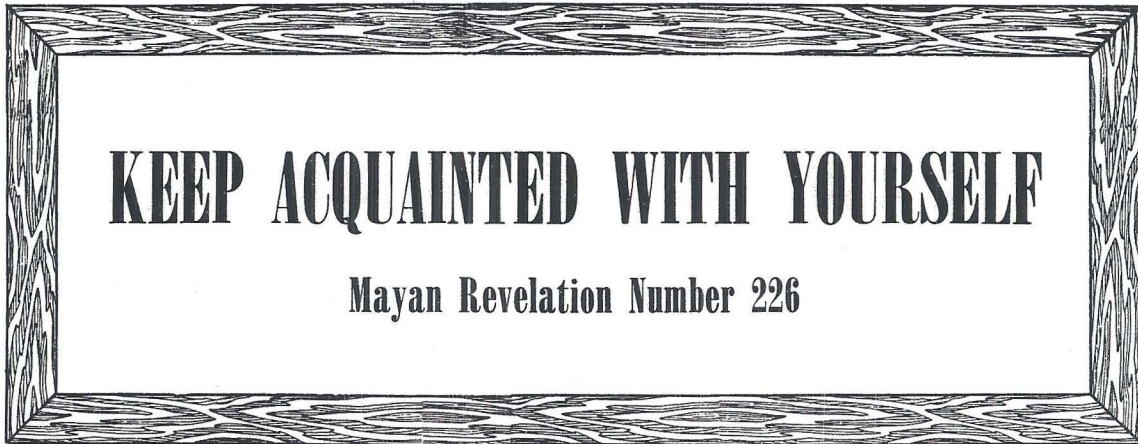
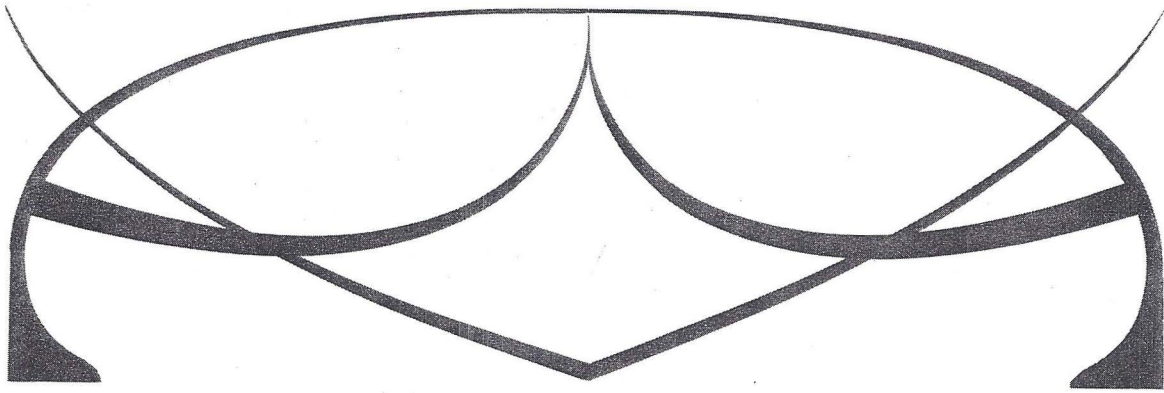
THE MAYANS
SAN ANTONIO,
TEXAS

Number 226

Copyright 1960 by The Mayans







Appraising Acquaintanceships

Know Thyself

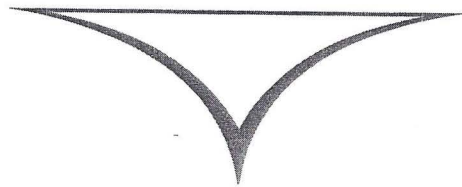
Your Qualities

Your Abilities

Your Capacities

Your Limitations

Be a Personality Engineer



Beloved Centurion:

The time has come for us to take up a subject that is not new to you in the advanced class. As a Mayan, traveling on the Path that leads to better things, there are certain Truths that bear repeating. It is very much like going to your doctor once a year, or more often, for a checkup. There are conditions in our lives that we must check on.

It amounts to taking an inventory in order to decide what has been accomplished in our lives and what needs doing, and the only way this can be discovered is through taking stock of ourselves, something that you and most of our members do quite frequently for you have learned the value of it. But this lesson will serve as a strong reminder as to what you must do in order to keep yourself fit - mentally, physically, and spiritually - in these changing, rapidly-moving times in which we live.

If a fine department store were to permit its merchandise to become shoddy and out of date, very soon it would slip backwards to a point where there would be no business, where people would shun doing business with the firm, all because the store did not take inventory and see what was on its shelves, what should be discarded and what should be kept for use in one way or another.

This, we must do with our lives, with ourselves. We must take an inventory, for so many things can happen as we go along that we are not even aware of. We slip backward - we allow bad habits to get a strong hold upon us - we do things that we should not do from a standpoint of protecting our health. These things slip in in such an insidious manner that we hardly realize what they are doing to us, and the longer these adverse practices continue, the more difficult it is to get back on the right path. The more quickly they are recognized, the more quickly they can be remedied and overcome.

After all, human improvement does come from within and extends outward. And always remember, too, that character has a great bearing on our health. Our character affects our health. Character covers so many things. Character is a product of our daily actions, even our hourly actions. Our thoughts and our words - our attitude toward other people - our forgivenesses of others and our unselfishness - our kindnesses and our sympathies - our understanding and our generosity toward others - any sacrifice we must make to help others - all of these things play their part in character building. And one of the great character builders is successful struggle against temptation.

Just like the blending of beautiful colors in a picture, or beautiful harmonies in music, all these things are part of the great whole that makes up the building of character, which is the reason Your Instructor admonishes you to "Keep Acquainted with Yourself", about which you will read in the pages to follow. But first, our prayer.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to be far-sighted enough that I will know other people and things as I know myself, and therefore will do as I should in relation to them. Amen.

Appraising Acquaintanceships

People in trade must take a periodic inventory. Tedious as the task is, every item, large and small, in stock must be noted and recorded. People in business of any kind must take regular stock of property, equipment, obligations payable, all resources and liabilities, and make sure it is possible to strike a balance between them. In business, one must know where he stands and where he is heading.

The same is advisable in our human relationships. We may well make a frequent check-up of our acquaintances and friends. Is this relationship or that mutually worthwhile, yielding values and advantages that are to friendship and the business of daily living what profits are to the business man or corporation? As one looks over the list and calculates these estimates, does the need for subtractions or additions appear? Does the circle include all the people it should? Do we need to improve any or all our relationships? The answer to these last two questions is nearly always in the affirmative.

When all this has been examined, considered, and recorded, there is one more data sheet that should be filled out and considered just as honestly and frankly as those already mentioned. It is the one concerning ourselves. Many of us make the mistake a business inventory does not show. It is the one that answers the question, what about ourselves?

After all, in both the business of making a living and the business of living itself, we, ourselves, are necessarily unavoidable considerations. Though unhired and unsalaried, each person is first in the personnel list and the prime maker of decisions and originator of endeavors both in his business and in his life. Whatever counsel and help he may have, he casts the deciding vote. Is it good business, then, to take account of every other person and item and take one's self for granted? Don't forget the person who sits at the head desk, nor the person who makes the plans, each of which is you.

One should see that he is at least as acceptable a worker and associate as he requires anyone else to be, and as worthy a friend as others must be to be counted among his friends. After all, the rest of the world has to get along with us just as truly as we have to get along with it, and if we do not appraise, analyze, and understand ourselves, we may be sure that others are doing so. Their estimates will be all the better if we have charted ourselves before they have had an opportunity to do so. It is pleasanter that way too, for thus we can weed out the faults before someone else notices them.

Of course our qualities will not all be faults. Each of us, whoever and whatever he is, has virtues too; and before others have a chance to consider even our virtues, we can work them over and improve on them. Self appraisal pays.

Know Thyself The Athenians had a favorite maxim, one of just the kind that would be treasured by a nation of scientists and philosophers. It was "Know thyself". Some said it was dropped from the gods out of the sky, and it was worthy to have been. It is one we still should treasure and obey. He who knows himself can not only manage his own life better, but he will better know both how to deal with and understand others. He who best understands people will deal best with them, get along best with them, and get the best cooperation from them; and the one who best understands others is very likely to be the one who best understands himself.

"But I know myself already; I always have," you may say. Stop and think it over a little. Perhaps you did consider it a long time ago, and considered the matter done with for the rest of your life. That is not enough. Conditions may have changed greatly since you made that reckoning, and present ones may not give you the same result for the same treatment at all. Perhaps you have changed too. In fact, it is certain you have, for we all do. It may have been for the better, the worse, or neither; but just the same you are different.

Are you as well acquainted with you present self as you were with your former one, and do you plan to keep acquainted with yourself as each new personality and viewpoint emerges? Our lives are relative to countless things, and we change as they change, or as we learn better how to keep adapted to them.

A certain man stepped into the empty lounge of a hotel to rest. That is, he thought the room was empty; but after he had entered, he saw one other person in a corner opposite him, and the second man was coming toward him from the corner where he was. Each kept advancing straight toward the other, and as the stranger came nearer he saw that he wore a suit the same color as his own. At the point where it was obvious that they were going to collide unless one or the other changed direction, the new arrival looked up at the other man's face, and saw that it was his own. The entire wall of the large room was a mirror. He had not known himself when he met himself, for one reason - because he hadn't looked. With life's perfect mirror, this happens somewhere every day.

The question implied in our title here suggests the infinite or progression idea. It is not about the past, and it does not refer to the present alone. It relates to all the tenses because it is something that needs to be kept going on and on, even as time and change go on and on. Do you keep acquainted with yourself? That is, are you at any given time acquainted with yourself to date?

If a plant could see itself in a mirror, one day it would see a shoot, then a stem and a leaf, then a bud, then a blossom. Each stage calls for a more advanced self-acquaintance. It is the same with us. Then, if any part of the development takes too long, or any part of it seems to be going wrong or doing less

than its best, we know it is time to do something about it.

Your Qualities Would you know your physical self if you met it in a strange place - or your mental self, or your spiritual self? Or would you recognize any one of them if there were a mirror that would perfectly reveal it? The last two are hidden from the eyes, and have to be recognized by what they give rise to in feeling and conduct. One set of the necessary points of recognition would be your qualities.

Do you know your own qualities well? Have you studied yourself and watched and listened to yourself until you can fairly call yourself one of your own acquaintances? Do you sometimes say to someone that you are like this, or that; and are you careful to be correct about it? In fact, do you know yourself well enough to know whether you are correct about it?

Many of us get to thinking after we have had a conversation in which we have characterized ourselves to someone as this or that, and realize that we did not do it adequately and truly. We may have given ourselves too much credit, or too little; or we may unknowingly have presented a picture that was unreal. We did not mean to deceive anyone. We were simply trying to describe a self and a set of qualities we did not know well enough to present.

Have you ever heard someone characterize you, and either disapproved or gone away in silent surprise that anyone should see you in such a light; then have you thought it all over objectively and dispassionately, and found that what that person said was true, whether to your gratification or resentment? There may be other people who know almost any one of us better than we know ourselves, because they have observed us more and looked at us from a less prejudiced point of view. Perhaps we didn't even know that we were prejudiced in favor of ourselves. We are so close to ourselves that we lack perspective. We are like the man who didn't see the forest for the trees.

It is sometimes said of this person or that one that he thinks about himself too much. That can be true, but more often it is the other way. We cannot manage ourselves well or receive due consideration from others till we have studied ourselves and pointed our personalities up at the seams.

By qualities, we mean characteristics; and by characteristics, we mean the outgrowths of character. The most important thing we do is to cultivate the best in life and discourage the worst. A neglected character is like a fertile field left to grow up in weeds. It is not true that one's character is fixed, and nothing can be done about it. Something can be done about it, just as something can be done about the field. All one has to do to let a field grow up in weeds is just nothing at all.

We need to watch our actions and the feelings that motivate them if we are to keep track of what is happening to us from within where our qualities dwell. If we find that inner condition unsatisfactory, we should not assume that we are

beyond further improvement, but keep cultivating the best as long as we live. We must be able to approve ourselves, but we must be able to do it justly and humbly, that we may not fall victim to the added fault of vanity.

Your Abilities To be acquainted with yourself you must know your abilities, and to keep acquainted with yourself you must know them up to date. You must know what ones are developing, and how, and why; also what ones are failing, and how, and why. You must know what change has taken place since yesterday, and which way.

We have already considered the matter of our qualities, but do not confuse abilities with them. Qualities are basic; abilities demonstrative. Qualities are the soil; abilities what grows in it. Qualities are hidden; abilities visible if used. Qualities are what we are; abilities what we can do.

Soil with nothing growing from it fails of its purpose. Qualities that give rise to no abilities are the same as none. Abilities that are not expressed by being put into action might as well not exist. We are not here referring to latent qualities that die for lack of food and moisture, but to normal and healthy ones kept so by being put to use. What measure of such qualities do you possess, and what are you making of them? That is a part of your acquaintance with you.

Two kinds of people make rather dismal failures with their abilities. One is the person who is so self-effacing that he gives himself no credit for the powers he has. The other is the person who is so egotistical that he takes credit for more ability than he possesses. Humility in general is a virtue, but false humility is not. It robs us and the human race of wonderful things that could be accomplished, but never are. On the other hand, people usually recognize the egotist from his boasting and false pride. He is failing to make his true place in life because the abilities he imagines he possesses usually belong to a person very different from himself.

The person who credits himself with less abilities than he has, or could develop, needs to overcome his shyness and timidity enough to try a few things, one at a time, and see if he cannot succeed with them. Success in one little thing may embolden him to try something larger. In time he may become a master, and a humble one, which would be all to his credit, for genius is very often shy, and greatness is always humble.

As for the egotist, his first need is deflation. He confuses himself with some superman. If he once faces himself as he is, and gets his spirit down to where it is willing to start with simple realities, he, too, may develop real abilities that will give him something of the true importance he once falsely imagined.

Now and then, someone who has not rated his abilities highly enough watches someone do a thing he had thought beyond his powers, and discovers that it is simple after all, and that any work is a matter of knowing how and trying. He goes away

and tries the thing himself, and discovers that he can do it. If he keeps on trying, he may become an expert. The powers we have are to radiate by use. Find out what abilities you possess, and be willing for others to learn from you.

Your Capacities

Now let us consider another field in which it is important to keep acquainted with ourselves, our capacities. This again is different. Your qualities are what you are, your abilities are what you can do, but your capacities are what you may become able to do if you try to push beyond the present order of things. They constitute an added boundary, beyond the known one, in the center of which you dwell. They are your potentialities, your possibilities, the you that might be.

Do not be deceived about their reach. They do not lie near to you, but far out, probably much farther than you can see. You cannot reach out to this circle and touch it now. You cannot go to it and get back before nightfall. It takes a lifetime in which some progress is being made all the while to reach its farthest limits.

You cannot know exactly what all your capacities are today. You cannot know what their limits are till you have tried them. Anyway, their limits change every time you take a forward step. The more you progress, the more you can progress. But you know these possibilities are there. A flower cannot know what its capacity for growth is. It can learn only by keeping on growing.

Seeing a man who had made a wreck of his life, Emerson remarked, "There goes the ruin of what was made to be a god." Another great man has said that too many lives are only the empty shells of what might have been. The mistake of letting this happen is often innocently made. We did not know our capacities were so great, so we did not try to realize them. We cannot know what they are, but we can know that they are, and make the effort.

Some of us make this mistake in the name of practicality. We say we are realists, but we are not realists enough to realize that the possible is just as real as the actual. We proudly claim that we are down to earth people, taking no account of the realities we cannot see or understand. We propose to let others talk of what might be or will be, while we give our attention to what is and may soon cease to be. This attitude chains us to where we stand. For us there is no more going on unless we recognize the vastness of life, and escape from these chains of self-limitation.

One of the qualities everyone needs is confidence. This is a kind of mixture of faith, hope, and daring. It enables one to take the best for granted instead of the worst. With confidence, one ventures to hope to attain a thing, and has the courage to try. Too many of us stand before doors on the other side of which are levels of quality and achievement for which we long, and go away wishing we knew where to find a key to our chosen door, never dreaming that it wasn't even locked. There is much good we have to attain, or obtain; but there is also much of it that we have only to accept. In one way or another, we can always keep

edging a little nearer to our possibilities. That means growth; and as long as one keeps growing, he knows he is really alive.

Trying, in whatever way we can and whatever situation happens to be ours, to realize our capacities makes life an adventure. They are frontiers, and can furnish us all the thrill of being pioneers pushing wildernesses out of the way.

Your Limitations

Only one seemingly negative note is to be sounded - know your limitations. We have been emphasizing possibilities. Now, let us be reminded that we can conserve our strength for them by not wasting it on the unlikely or the unsuitable. We have to learn what is possible by trying, and along with this we will save ourselves failure and grief by recognizing what common sense would say is the line beyond which we are least likely to succeed. We should remember, of course, that there can be miraculous and unexpected help; but even so, we should be conscious that we do have limitations.

There are the limitations of time and age. Age should have its goals, but they cannot be quite as distant as those of youth. If one has already finished one plan, or been late in starting on any serious purpose, he should not attempt as long-range an effort as he might have done earlier. He might, of course, surprise himself and others by what he can accomplish, and might even exceed the efforts of some who began younger. We can go only one step at a time anyway; and, really, if when we are through we have taken as many steps as we could, we shall surely have fulfilled the requirements of duty.

There are the limitations of health and strength, which, if we understand ourselves, would lead us to make life plans fitting our conditions. There is some way for everyone to make his life valuable to God and man and to have the happiness of achievement. Helen Keller had to plan her life within dismaying limitations, but what a magnificent life she has made of it! We must take account of such things, and work in accordance with them.

There are limitations of ability and preparation, and one may not know what the first is till he has given himself the value and advantage of the second. There is a human tendency to want to do what someone else is doing, forgetting that the other person is adapted to and prepared for a work we might not be able to do so well, if at all. That other person may at the same moment be envying us the work we are doing, and with as little reason.

"The grass is always greener on the other side" - till we get across the fence. If we cannot get across the fence, it is probably for the best. One with stubby fingers should think twice before trying to be a pianist, and one who is color blind should let someone else do the painting. Meanwhile, there are things at which you, too, can excel. One of them may be the very thing you are doing. Yet someone, every now and then, proves a genius at something he never dreamed of trying before. Have your trial and error department, but keep conditions and limitations in view.

Many limitations are removable. Demosthenes became a great orator after overcoming a bad impediment of speech. Many have been victorious in spite of shyness, poverty, and what not. Knowing your limitations might help you to overcome them.

Be a Personality Engineer

Who of us has not admired the engineer who knows his machine and how to operate it? He makes it go, maintains it in good condition, corrects things that go wrong, and judges with exactness what its possibilities are and how to keep them at the maximum. When he steps up to the great mechanical creature that is to do his bidding, we see at once by his manner and motions that we are looking at the man who knows.

That is exactly how well we need to be qualified for the management of our lives, need to be the person who knows the operation of personal powers - in short, himself. We need to be the people who know what to do and what not to do, what can be expected and how to bring it to pass, how to translate power into action and result, how to meet emergencies and maintain good working conditions. Life is a kind of engine, and each of us is an engineer appointed to operate it.

The operator of a great machine has to study its powers and their action. We must take that much interest in ourselves and our own lives. If we think life is simpler and easier to learn all about, we are mistaken. One may learn all there is about a locomotive, a ship, or an airplane, but never about himself. Even those who have tried have never more than gotten well started. Qualities and conditions, with their combinations and changes, will keep coming up as long as one lives.

At any stage of life, however, one can be master of what he knows about himself, and that much increases all the time. You can tell an expert at living just as you can tell a master engineer. He is calm, confident, and certain. In other words, he is adequate. He takes hold in the right way and does the right thing, and that is that. This is the way to live one's life and do one's work, just as it is the way to operate a machine.

A certain writer had trouble with his typewriter. He was sure he had looked the machine over thoroughly, but he could see nothing wrong. The only trouble he could see was that it wouldn't work. Surely it would have to be torn down and rebuilt. He took it to a repair man, dreading the cost of such an extensive job. The repair man set the machine on a table, gave it a few taps, and reached in and released a part that was kept immobile by the obstruction of another part. He stepped back smiling, and made no charge. The machine worked perfectly. There are people who can do that with the problems of life, and others who have not learned.

The Bible says that a man who rules his own spirit is greater than one who takes a city. A man who takes a city must be a real military engineer, and there are many technicalities involved; but the man who can rule his own life well is a

greater engineer. It involves more than merely governing one's temper. It involves knowing what makes himself tick and how to keep himself ticking by having the gears in mesh and the wheels going correctly, productively, usefully, and satisfyingly. It is a great thing to be a capable engineer of any kind, especially of one's own life. To be that one must first be acquainted with the self he has been appointed to manage.

AFFIRMATION

I have met and studied the man I see in the mirror.
What I think of him matters less than what I can
make of him.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.

