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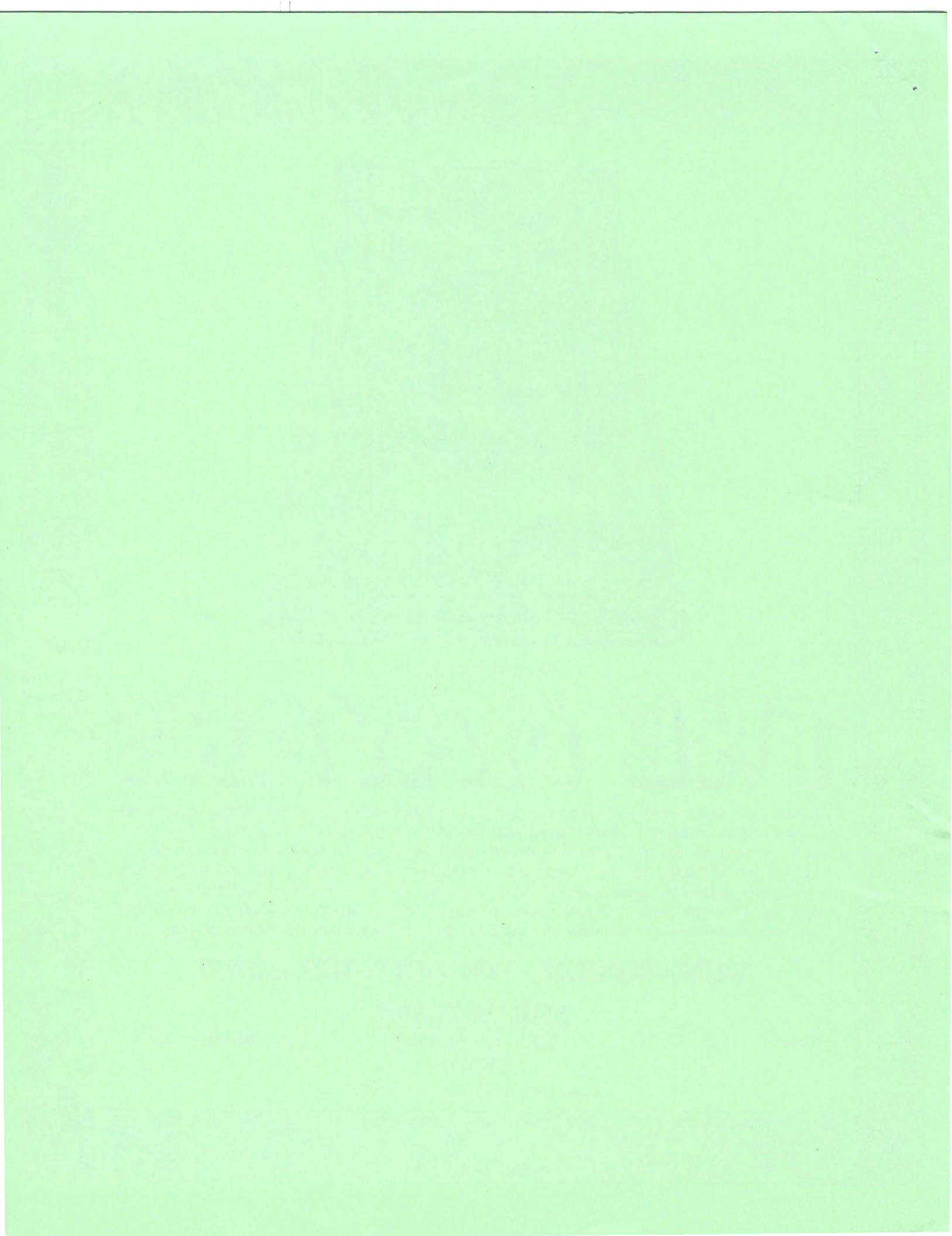
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DON'T DEFEAT YOURSELF

MAYAN REVELATION NUMBER 239

THE THRESHOLD

DON'T AIM TOO LOW

SOME ROADS TO FAILURE

YOU NEVER KNOW 'TIL YOU TRY

WATCH OUT FOR FIXATIONS

ONE FRIEND YOU CAN ALWAYS HAVE

THE IMPOSSIBLE

Beloved Perfectionist:

As you notice the subject of this lesson, "Don't Defeat Yourself," perhaps you do not know the real meaning of defeat.

Defeat is really education, because it is only the first step to something better if you have within yourself the initiative to keep on trying. How many times in your life have you heard someone state that they have tried, but the job at hand simply could not be done - and then you would see someone else come along and accomplish it - or even the person who said it could not be done in the first place, after trying again, was able to overcome the obstacles.

Defeat is really a stepping stone to success, and it has been the backbone that made possible the great deeds of some of our great leaders. They did not accept defeat, and every failure made them even stronger, until they attained their purposes.

There are many reasons for the "defeatist attitude" that so many people have. Many psychologists could tell you that the attitude of failure very often starts when one is a child. Something about their training has made them backward and afraid. They have no confidence in themselves because they have never been taught. They have been surrounded by failure on all sides and have never learned to use a positive attitude in their childhood.

Another point I would like to bring in right here in speaking of children is that there are some children who are lazy and they use excuses of not being able to do something when, as a matter of fact, they are too indolent to try to do what they are supposed to do and do it right. This also contributes to the defeatist attitude - and, of course, this attitude follows them on up into adulthood. There are so many reasons for a defeatist attitude, but in this prologue to your lesson I am only covering it in a general way.

And then, of course, one of the most prevalent reasons for defeat is lack of courage and, more than that, lack of faith in God. When we have faith, we know that there is nothing impossible to accomplish so long as it is good and worthwhile. A person who possesses these two virtues, Courage and Complete Faith, cannot possibly be defeated.

There are times when we are trying to accomplish something and we have a few failures before we succeed. But, as I have already stated, every failure is a step to success; - every time you detect what is false, it helps you to go forward to what is right and true - every time you try, you are weakening defeat and are growing closer to success. And how wonderfully sweet is success after we have had several failures before finally achieving our goal!

You know it is a very sad thing for a man to be selected by God to perform a great service and a great blessing, and then be so filled with an attitude of defeat that God must turn to someone else to accomplish the task he had set for this particular man to do.

I know how difficult it is at times when everything looks hopeless and there is not even a small ray of light to show us which way to go. But that is the time when we must not give up - we must know there is a solution and it is up to us to find it - but not alone - we cannot do this alone - we must have God's help in everything we do. What a devastating thought it would be if we had to carry on our life's work without the strong arm of our Father to support us when the road is rough.

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Our job is to never let the defeatist attitude, which is struggling for the upper hand in our nature, gain control. When we go to bed at night and there seems to be no way out of our difficulties, know that tomorrow is another day with new opportunities for us to show our strength, and never, never give up. All of the wonderful discoveries and inventions that we enjoy today are because of the men and women who never acknowledged defeat - there was no room in their thoughts for that villain who is responsible for so many of the failures in life today.

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You, as a Mayan, have gone far on the road toward controlling your thoughts, which in turn control your happiness. Help others to learn what you have learned. Never lose an opportunity to help someone who is grappling with defeat.

And now, before continuing further, we make our petition for help as we study and learn.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, let me never be found working against the interests of another, nor by wrong attitudes defeating my own interest. Amen.

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THE THRESHOLD

*M*ANY causes in history have been lost not so much by the onset of enemy forces as by failure to meet them. Many causes go unwon not because of the opposition but because they are promoted too weakly. Someone has wisely said that right often fails to win not so much because of the wolfishness of the wolves as because of the sheepishness of the sheep.

A visitor once said to a stock grower, "I keep hearing good people and bad people compared to sheep and goats, and I wonder why. Please tell me the main difference between sheep and goats as you work with them here on the farm".

"I can make that plain", replied the farmer, "by something that happened here only last week. The sheep and goats were out in the pasture when a heavy rainstorm came up so quickly that I didn't notice it in time. By the time I got out there the sheep were huddled in fence corners waiting to be drowned, while the goats were marching in order straight for the barn. The difference was that the sheep were too dumb to meet the situation, while the goats were smart enough not only to see the danger but to do something about it."

Think that over and do some observing in the field of human living to see if it is not too often true. The person who wants to do something that is not good for himself and others will work at it, spend money on it, put strategy into it, enlist help with it, and do whatever it takes to win. The person who needs to and could do some good for himself or others will often sit and wish he had the ability and the advantages necessary to do it. For instance, he could upgrade himself, but he only wishes he could get at it or hope to succeed at it, while he sees others attack similar problems and pay whatever the price in effort and strategy, to solve them and get on.

The trouble with this person is not the lack of ability but of purpose. He is not defeated, he defeats himself. In such a case one is already beaten at the start. He cannot understand why others are victorious, while he never even gets under way. Thus the sheep often stands in a fence corner in the rain, while the less deserving goat makes for the shelter of survival and success.

Can it be that you are without something you need because you do not get up the courage to try and see if you cannot do something about it? Can it be that some good remains unpossessed while you stand wishing that, like someone else, you could advance upon it and make it yours?

We have enough opposing forces. In war they call them the enemy, in games they call them hazards of some such name, in most work they call them problems. Whatever they are, we have enough of them without siding with them against ourselves. Of course we would never do that intentionally, but we do it unintentionally and in effect, which amounts to the same thing.

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SOME ROADS TO FAILURE

LET us now look at some of the ways in which this tragic thing takes place. If any one of them has happened to you, or threatens you, now is the time to begin to neutralize and overcome it. If it has gone on some time, remember that a good thing is better late than never. If none of them has happened to you, it may mean that something better has happened to you, or nothing at all has happened. In the first case be grateful and keep it up. In the second case change the picture and start something happening.

Some defeat themselves by not seeing their opportunities and possibilities. One answer to their problem is constant alertness to see these things at the moment when it is most possible to take advantage of them, for there is always one moment when each of them is at its best. Another is creative imagination to see possibilities and the realities into which they can be built. All facts and achievements are energized ideas. Possibilities are seeds. To turn them into fruitful plants takes creative imagination and effort.

Some defeat themselves by letting things look too hard for them. In one sense nothing worthwhile is easy, and in another sense the harder a thing is, the easier it is, because it is more challenging, more interesting, and more rewarding. Not much ever comes of anyone's spending his life doing only the easy things.

Some defeat themselves by comparing themselves unfavorably with others who make more of life. They say, "If I were only like that person I could do better too, but I am only myself." Consider these things: How do you know you are not even more capable than that person? How do you know that person's work is your work? You have your own as he has his. Find your own place, and you can fill it.

Some defeat themselves by spending their time puttering at details and unrelated scraps of living instead of choosing a central master purpose and building the details into it. Decide what right and good thing you want most to be, have, or do; then pursue that thing earnestly, capably, faithfully, desiringly, and prayerfully. If you should seem to be failing to attain it, examine your life and see if you have not gained something else as good or better.

Some defeat themselves by lack of faith in divine providence. Here is a little secret for those who do not know how to have faith.

You can generate it by forced practice. Live and do as if you had complete faith, and after a few experiences you will have seen so much of the workings of

providence that you cannot help having faith, faith that will keep growing with more experience.

Remember that God is our Father, and in any father's heart is a towering wish for his children to do well, to have everything they need or that would make them truly happy; and he is always trying to get those blessings to them, and can do it a great deal better if he has their gratitude and cooperation. It has been said that one with God is a majority, and you can demonstrate the truth of the saying if you try.

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WATCH OUT FOR FIXATIONS

SOMETIMES these negative attitudes that check, retard, and defeat us are the results of what are called fixations. A fixation is the effect on one's actions through his thought and emotional life of some experience, combination of experiences, or series of experiences that have crystallized into an attitude manner, and habit. This he can always be depended on to take automatically and even unconsciously if he has never analyzed himself, discovered its power over him, and learned to resist it and thus gradually overcome it.

In this way one may develop affinities, loyalties, antagonisms, and tendencies of almost any kind, from experience - how someone has treated him, a fright, a happy or unhappy experience, in the past, even in childhood, perhaps before the beginning of conscious memory. He will tend to act in accordance with that fixation of thought and feeling, to his advantage or disadvantage, as long as he lives, unless he get rid of it by ignoring it or unless it is overcome by a more powerful fixation and, let us hope, a better one.

One can be defeated so many times he will have a defeatist attitude. He may fail or err so many times that he will, without thinking, begin to assume that nothing else is to be expected. Those who have developed routine fixations of assurance and confidence have only the problem of keeping active, humble, and considerate of others; but those who have developed the negative and submissive ones of assuming failure or the uselessness of trying have chained themselves to something that will prevent them from achieving well the purposes of their existence unless they refuse to be hindered by these fixations and thus gradually overcome them.

Is this, or something akin to it, your problem? If so the condition needs attention, but it is by no means hopeless. Determine what your chains are and get rid of them. Then go on from there. You can win, if you will try in a persistent and sustained way.

Think how much depends on your escape from a failure fixation. It means victory in the struggle to live your own life. It means freedom from any ball

and chain attached to your thinking, your actions, your liberty to go ahead and do and be your best in the world. It means that you will have abandoned an abnormal condition and stepped out of a shadow into the sunshine. It means the releasing of your true and better self. You will be free from anything that has kept you from following the guiding pillars of the true and good.

Seek competent counsel and help if you want to, but it is not necessary unless some special condition or situation is involved. Give yourself a chance to learn how to handle problems yourself. Determine what the dead weights upon you are, and get rid of them. The Master said He came to proclaim release to the captives, and among the captives are those who are limited and hindered by fixations of fear, timidity, expectations of failure, dread of taking the initiative. Probably if you would disregard these things even a few times you would find yourself free of them the rest of your days.

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DON'T AIM TOO LOW

THERE are people who defeat themselves, however, without being victims of anything but just their own habits of thinking. One of them is the person who simply aims too low. He could live much more satisfyingly and at a much better level than he does, and he may really want to do so; but his desire is not vigorous enough. The trouble is with his aim. He does not look high enough for his mark. He may or may not realize later that he could have done better, but then it is too late. He may even do better from that time on, but the pages that are written cannot be changed.

We are not now referring to the realization of selfish ambitions, like great wealth, or fame, or power, or high position. These may or may not come. It is not necessarily good fortune if they do, and whether they do does not necessarily indicate whether one is living his life at a high level. That is determined by something more fundamental.

What we are talking about is the treasure of high integrity, honor, usefulness, and well-developed selfhood - the kind of things that makes it really good to live. If you have wealth, or get it, keep humble, use it rightly, and do not let it lead you astray; but whether you have it or not you can be rich in the values that abide. If you come to high position, use it as an honest service and elevate it to ever higher honor and worth, but you have right where you can step into it at will the high position of integrity, inspiring thinking, and creditable living, with the privilege of having at hand something that needs to be done and the ability to do it well. It is this that will make you rich in happiness and good will, with the favor of God and man.

This is where some make their mistake. They think aiming high is aiming at some lofty self-interest. No, it is aiming at high quality of living, thinking, and doing well what one has to do. This will bring its own rewards. Aiming

at some towering self-interest is likely to teach one what was meant by the saying that the first should be last and the last first.

St. Paul wrote that he paid no attention to things gone by, laid aside all excess hindrances, and ran with patience the race ahead, keeping his eye on the high calling of the ideals of Jesus. Today his name and work are still recognized, while the seekers of the temporal things of the times are remembered for their follies, if at all.

The mark to set before us and keep our eyes on is Excellence - excelling in what we do, doing it better than it has yet been done, and backing it with excellence of living. It is a mark of the prize of a high calling. What occupies your life? If you are wasting it on something of no value, discard it. Take the worthwhile things in your life and improve and develop them. When you learn of anything more that is lovely, worthwhile, useful, and important, add it to your program of living and strive for growing excellence in it. Shun mediocrity as a foe.

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YOU NEVER KNOW 'TIL YOU TRY

A great trouble with the negative attitudes we have been discussing is that, though they are assumptions, you are likely to make them true when they are really untrue. When you take these attitudes you are taking the easy way out, which is also the losing one. You do not know that you cannot accomplish a given desirable thing, and thus enrich your personality, your value to others, and the general satisfaction of living. Why? Because you have not tried, and no one ever knows anything for sure about his abilities till he has put them to the test. You never take a negative attitude till you know by experience that it is true. Usually it is not.

That is the way all true knowledge, so fundamental in life and history, has been accumulated. The world does not rely on assumptions, especially negative ones. Every boon to life, or health, or progress, has begun as an idea, a notion, or something that looked like it might be true. The person who had the inspiration did not take it for granted, much less simply decide that he could not do anything about it. He put it to the test, perhaps more than once. If it worked out it became a lasting blessing and benefit. If it failed to work out it was discarded.

In the process of living this process is simpler and quicker, though the same in principle. If we stand regretfully before some possibility that might make our lives happier, stronger, and more useful, and assume without trial that it is not for us, we lose. If we study it, estimate our abilities, try it, and succeed, we forever gain. It would seem that the choice of what to do would be quick and easy. For courage and faith it is. Therefore never let your supply of them run low.

Suppose you are walking and come to a swampy place. There may even be a quicksand warning there. If you must get across, what do you do? You do not start blundering carelessly along. You know there are spots where you may not safely tread, and others where you may. You can make it, if you step in the right places. You can turn back and fail, but you need not. You can start indiscriminately, and also fail, but you do not need to do that either. You can try each step as you go. If it is not solid, do not step there, but find a spot that holds. Reaching your objective on the other side of the swamp will reward you. But do not make up your mind about a step till you have tested it.

Why not then, when you locate a desirable goal in the field of living, one by which your life would be strengthened and blessed, try the ground carefully and see if it holds up? In more cases than not you can make it. Many doors of opportunity are not even locked, and many gates to good have their hinges freshly oiled. Even if you cannot open one, nothing is lost. Try another. Why go through life without finding out how much of its good is for you?

To call this a process of trial and error is not quite enough. Not all of our efforts will fail, if we make them. Perhaps few of the honest ones will. A better name for testing possibilities would be trial and success. It is amazing how many of the rewarding things in life are unexpected ones.

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ONE FRIEND YOU CAN ALWAYS HAVE

SOME may say that what hinders them is the lack of friends to support, encourage, and help them. Such help is most desirable. It is always gladdening to have friends backing us; but it is not always necessary, and it can actually be a liability, for the friend with the best intentions in the world may sometimes do us hurt by mistake.

If you have one or more wise and trustworthy friends to give you moral support and cooperation, well and good. That is a happy advantage to have; but if you do not have that advantage, that does not doom you to failure, and it might really work to your advantage. But you never need to be entirely without boosters. Two are always available, and they are the most important you could have. One is the God of all earnest seekers of the best. The other is you.

You can always count on God being on your side if and when what you seek is right, just, and good. Can you always count on yourself? That is exactly what this lesson is about.

You can depend on God because He is always the same. Nothing ever defeats or discourages Him. He never recognizes failure, but just turns it into success. If it takes too long He stays with it. If something breaks down He starts over and keeps at it, even if it takes a thousand years. His work in nature and history

shows that the great things usually take time. That is why someone has said that God can make a squash in three months, but He may take a hundred years to build a tree.

So the only supporter about whom there is any uncertainty at all is you. Only you are variable and subject to the hindrances and discouragements that arise. You should always count on yourself for better things, for you are capable of them.

We are not here advising you to be an egotist, for humility accomplishes more than self-importance ever dreams of, and dedication is always succeeding where arrogance has failed. Do not be a swashbuckling warrior or a seeker of great demonstrations and grand parades. Wasting your energy on the fuss and feathers might leave you without enough strength to reach the mark. Use your powers to succeed, and the applause will take care of itself. The really seasoned winner is interested in his performance, not the pageantry. When you set a goal put all of you there is into attaining it. There will be discouraging moments, but do not be defeated by them. Give yourself a motionless pat on the back and keep going.

Never yield anything needlessly. Respect yourself and your abilities, and be worthy of them. If through positive thinking you make your subconscious mind believe you can do it, that miracle-working part of you is likely to work out some way by which you really can. What can you expect of your creative self if you keep telling it that you are afraid you can't do it? What kind of a friend to yourself are you if, in the doubtful and uncertain moment, you do not stand by yourself and help yourself to win?

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THE IMPOSSIBLE

*W*E all need to become less afraid of that word "impossible". There are many reasons. No one knows what really is impossible. We only know that a thing has not yet been done, but that does not necessarily mean that it cannot be done. A million people might attempt it, and declare it is impossible because they did not succeed in doing it. Then the next person who gathers courage to try may succeed. To the last of time some things that have been considered impossible will be done by people who come along, figure out the secret, and try the right way. We can never be sure that anything cannot be done.

The progress of the human race has consisted in the accomplishment of supposedly impossible things. Anyone would have said that the thirteen American Colonies could never win their independence; but a handful of men who believed in it thought it could be done, and did it. Anyone would have thought that Gideon could not defeat the Midianite army with his three hundred selected men, but he did. Nobody thought people could ever talk over a wire, but S. F. B. Morse and Alexander Graham Bell found a way to do it; and later Marconi found a way to do it

without the wire. The list is endless. History is woven of a warp of things known to be possible and weft of miracles, impossible things that are not impossible at all. Any door can be opened by anyone who will find the key.

That problem in your life that has baffled you so long, or that difficulty in the life of mankind or any part of it that has so long been a barrier to progress, has a solution somewhere. There is a way, and if you, or those concerned, will calmly set it to rise in the leaven of thought and faith, some day there will be a clearing of the mists and at the next effort it will yield. But when that clearing of the mists comes the effort must be made, or they will close in again. The fact that it was shown you is proof of its possibility.

The assumption that this or that cannot be done is as mistaken as it is negative. Shun the "cold water and wet blanket" brigades. If it should be done, it can be done, and by you, if you are the one to do it. God waits and watches for people who know how to receive His inspirations and have the courage and patience to undertake the impossibles of the world in the one way by which they can be done.

It is said that in a New England cemetery is buried the remains of a spinster on whose gravestone those who knew her life have had carved this unusual epitaph, "She Hath Done What She Couldn't". Many communities are fortunate enough to have such people in them. You may have known some of them, or you may come to know some of them, or you may be or become one of them. They are simply people who refuse to go through life ascribing impossibility to things that are not impossible at all. They realize that performing miracles is only doing something that has never been done before.

The wide way and the narrow one are alike in one respect. They are both one-way roads. We have only one chance at each point we pass. But do not let that defeat you. No matter how many opportunities you have passed, there are plenty more ahead to keep you busy and happy as you go along, daily making yourself more of a person by refusing to defeat yourself.

AFFIRMATION

I have learned not to fear things because they appear difficult, for I find many of them are easy enough if I refuse to defeat myself.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.