

Lighting the torch

It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.

— Epictetus

The principles outlined in this book are not new. They have been understood by a small number of people for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. And the number of people who understand them is growing all the time. Each person who lives these principles is like a light that shines to illuminate the principles for those around them. Many who have transformed their lives by studying and following these principles feel inspired to light a torch to show others the way, by re-explaining the principles for their time and place.

In this chapter we'll take a short break from financial matters so I can introduce you to Orison Swett Marden.

Marden was born in 1850 in the backwoods of New Hampshire in the USA. He grew up in poor circumstances and lost both his parents before he was seven. Marden rotated through foster families and was put to work at an early age. He found “the labour hard, the families often abusive — and he was alone.” Luckily, in an attic in one of the farms, he found the Samuel Smiles book, *Self-Help*,

which changed his life. The theme of *Self-Help* was that anybody could rise above their circumstances and achieve whatever they set their mind to if they could exercise unwavering persistence and a positive mental attitude.

The author, Smiles, was a doctor and newspaper editor who lived in Leeds, England. Also in that city lived a group of young men who were keen to learn and improve their lives despite their poverty. To do this, they formed a kind of a self-help society, meeting at least weekly to exchange ideas and share their knowledge with each another. They asked Smiles to attend some of their meetings, and he began collecting rags to riches stories to inspire them.



Famous railway engineer George Stephenson convinced Smiles to collate these stories into the book, *Self-Help*, which was published in 1859 and had sold over a quarter of a million copies by 1900. The book, and Smiles' mission, so impressed the Queen of Italy that she authorised an Italian version and later wrote to him, "You have done more to make Italy than Cavour or Garibaldi. Come and see."

Self-Help certainly worked for Marden. Soon after reading it, the 17-year-old ran away to get an education. At first he found the going tough, working several odd jobs at the same time to help pay his way. Applying what he had learned from Smiles, Marden rose from waiting tables to managing hotels, and even studied at the Boston University Law School and the Harvard Medical School, simultaneously. By age 32, he owned several hotels and used all his spare time to collect inspirational stories with the aim of helping “strugglers trying to be somebody and do something in the world”. This mission to pay it forward was entirely due to the knowledge he had gained from Smiles.

In 1890, a series of disasters struck. A fire burned down one of his hotels, destroying his treasured writing notes, while a smallpox epidemic and a drought combined to wreak havoc in the community and decimate the value of the rest of his property. Many would have given up, but for Marden it was the spur that goaded him to greater heights. He immediately began writing his first novel, *Pushing to the Front*, which was such a hit that it provided him with the inspiration to start *Success* magazine as well.

On every page, Marden’s *Success* magazine proclaimed, “Everybody can triumph over fear and adversity and create their own opportunities.” Both Marden’s writings and his magazine were highly influential in helping many Americans recover from the 1893 economic depression. He showed that it was possible for everybody to “form a vision, serve his fellow man and work persistently for his goals”.

The great JC Penney, who founded the US retail chain that bears his name, said: "The best thing, the most important thing ... that influenced and dominated my whole career ... was discovering the writings of Dr Orison Swett Marden. He aroused and stimulated my ambition, my determination, and gave me the willpower to banish all thought of failure from my mind."

Marden was one of the first to publicly recognise the abilities and achievements of women. In the December 1897 edition of *Success* magazine, he wrote: "The phenomenal elevation of women during the last quarter century is adding a new force to our civilisation." He then recounted the story of legal secretary, Rita Wildwood, who left her job after reading his writings and, within two years, became the richest female coffee planter in Hawaii.

In 1907 he took pleasure in publicising the rise of typist Mary Orr to the board of Remington. Her secret? Become indispensable. She made herself so valuable that the Remington people had no alternative *but* to make her a member of their board of directors.

Marden's writings were the inspiration for the renowned work of Napoleon Hill, who became a reporter for *Success*. In 1908, Hill interviewed legendary industrialist, Andrew Carnegie, who was following Marden's example of paying it forward. Carnegie offered to introduce Hill to the greatest men in the country, provided the young reporter would spend the next 20 years compiling their secrets into a success formula that could be shared with the world. There were two conditions: Hill had to make the decision within 60 seconds, and he had to take no pay for the job.

Hill accepted the challenge. He interviewed more than 500 people, including automotive pioneer Henry Ford, US President Theodore Roosevelt, and acclaimed inventor Thomas Edison. Hill's findings were published in *The Law of Success*, a huge book that became a world bestseller in 1928.

Hill took over *Success* magazine in 1931 after Marden's death, and then refined and condensed his success principles into *Think and Grow Rich*. Today, Hill's acclaimed classic has sold more than 120 million copies, and still features in bestseller lists around the world.

In 1937, the same year *Think and Grow Rich* was published, insurance agent W Clement Stone was in trouble. His sales force had shrunk from 1,000 people to 135 people, and he was up to his eyeballs in debt. Stone stumbled across *Think and Grow Rich*, which inspired him so much that in a couple of months he was able to completely transform his company: his employees enjoyed a significant boost in wages, while Stone banked an enormous personal fortune. The book became compulsory reading for his entire sales team.

In 1952, Hill and Stone met. At their first meeting, they formed a plan to publicise Hill's success principles through courses, speeches, and books. Seven years later, they co-authored *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*, which has transformed the lives of many of its readers and saved at least two people I know from suicide. They have been followed by inspirational writers such as Norman Vincent Peale, Og Mandino, Denis Waitley, Wayne Dyer and Steven Covey.

In 2016, I became a producer of the film *Think and Grow Rich: The Legacy*, which premiered to a packed theatre in Los Angeles, California. This powerful film combines Hill's timeless principles with anecdotes of people living today whose lives have been changed by applying these principles. They include athlete Janine Shepherd, who had qualified for the Winter Olympics, but was hit by a speeding truck and almost killed. Miraculously, she emerged from a coma, but spent six months in the spinal ward while they assessed the damage and performed surgery after surgery. Despite being told she would never walk again, Janine Shepherd is now an aerobatic pilot and bestselling author who travels around the world sharing her story with leading companies and associations.

Another is Jim Stovall, who was told by doctors at the age of 17 that he would soon go totally and permanently blind, and there was nothing they could do about it. Sure enough, he lost his sight and entered a great state of depression. He then discovered there were hundreds of millions of people in the world who shared his affliction. In 1988, he founded the Narrative Television Network for blind and visually impaired people to enjoy programming like others can. Jim Stovall has also written 30 bestselling books, including *The Ultimate Gift*, which was made into a feature film by 20th Century Fox.

In 2018, the book *Think and Grow Rich: The Legacy*, written by my son, James Whittaker, was published. It details the stories of more than two dozen people, many of whom were featured in the film, whose lives were transformed — often after facing extreme adversity — by applying the principles of Hill's book. I am thrilled that

James is committed to paying it forward, like the other people included in this chapter, to help inspire today's generations to success.

Notice the common threads in all these anecdotes? There are certain principles that change lives, helping those who follow them achieve great success, despite the inevitable problems life hands us. These principles have been known for hundreds of years, yet many people never encounter them; those who do are often keen to pass them on to benefit others.

In the introduction to this book, I mentioned that discovering *Think and Grow Rich* was a profound turning point in my life. After reading it, I vowed to share the principles espoused in that book, because I believe *everybody* should have the opportunity to benefit from them.

That mission continues.

Each day, the emails and letters I receive remind me of the difference my books, articles and speeches have made in many people's lives. This keeps me as excited as ever to help show people how the right blueprint — and staying the course — can completely change their fortunes. Success does not discriminate ... it comes to all those who do what needs to be done. It will work as well for you as it did for me so many years ago.

For more than 30 years, *Making Money Made Simple* has passed the torch between generations to help those who are ready. Now that you know about the torch, my hope is that you will first help yourself, and then pass the torch along to inspire the next generation.

\$ MONEY CLIPS

- ~ *There are certain principles that will help us achieve great success, despite the inevitable problems life hands our way.*
- ~ *These principles have been known for hundreds of years, yet most individuals never encounter them.*
- ~ *There are people keen to accept the responsibility of passing them on.*
- ~ *These principles change lives.*