

# NAPOLEON HILL

# LAW OF SUCCESS

The 21st-Century Edition

REVISED & UPDATED

*Law of Success*

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LAW OF SUCCESS

The 21st-Century Edition

*Revised and Updated*

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NAPOLEON HILL

*Edited by*

*Ann Hartley*

*Bill Hartley*

DEDICATED TO

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*ANDREW CARNEGIE*

who suggested the writing of the course, and to

*HENRY FORD*

whose astounding achievements form the foundation  
for practically all of the lessons of the course, and to

*EDWIN C. BARNES*

a business associate of Thomas A. Edison,  
whose close personal friendship over a period  
of more than fifteen years served to help me carry on  
in the face of a great variety of adversities  
and much temporary defeat met with in organizing the course.



*A publicity photo of the author, Napoleon Hill, 1955. Photograph courtesy of the Napoleon Hill Foundation.*

## TRIBUTES TO “LAW OF SUCCESS”

### From Great American Leaders

The publishers feel that you will realize more keenly the enormous value of these lessons if you first read a few tributes from great leaders in finance, science, invention, and political life.

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### Supreme Court of the United States Washington, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. HILL: I have now had an opportunity to finish reading your Law of Success textbooks, and I wish to express my appreciation of the splendid work you have done in this philosophy. It would be helpful if every politician in the country would assimilate and apply the 15 principles upon which the Law of Success is based. It contains some very fine material which every leader in every walk of life should understand.

**WILLIAM H. TAFT**

(Former President of the United States and Chief Justice)

### *Laboratory of Thomas A. Edison*

MY DEAR MR. HILL: Allow me to express my appreciation of the compliment you have paid me in sending me the original manuscript of Law of Success. I can see you have spent a great deal of time and thought in its preparation. Your philosophy is sound and you are to be congratulated for sticking to your work over so long a period of years. Your students . . . will be amply rewarded for their labor.

**THOMAS A. EDISON**

## **PUBLIC LEDGER**

### **Philadelphia**

DEAR MR. HILL: Thank you for your Law of Success. It is great stuff; I shall finish reading it. I would like to reprint that story "What I Would Do if I Had a Million Dollars" in the Business Section of the *Public Ledger*.

**CYRUS H. K. CURTIS**

(Publisher of *Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal*)

### **King of the 5 and 10 Cent Stores**

By applying many of the 15 fundamentals of the Law of Success philosophy we have built a great chain of successful stores. I presume it would be no exaggeration of fact if I said that the Woolworth Building might properly be called a monument to the soundness of these principles.

**F. W. WOOLWORTH**

### **Historic American Labor Leader**

Mastery of the Law of Success philosophy is the equivalent of an insurance policy against failure.

**SAMUEL GOMPERS**

### **A Former President**

May I congratulate you on your persistence. Any man who devotes that much time . . . must of necessity make discoveries of great value to others. I am deeply impressed by your interpretation of the "Master Mind" principles which you have so clearly described.

**WOODROW WILSON**

### **A Department Store Founder**

I know that your 15 fundamentals of success are sound because I have been applying them in my business for more than 30 years.

**JOHN WANAMAKER**

### **From the Founder of Kodak**

I know that you are doing a world of good with your Law of Success. I would not care to set a monetary value on this training because it brings to the student qualities which cannot be measured by money alone.

**GEORGE EASTMAN**

### **A Food and Candy Chief**

Whatever success I may have attained I owe, entirely, to the application of your 15 fundamental principles of the Law of Success. I believe I have the honor of being your first student.

**WILLIAM WRIGLEY, JR.**

*\*At the time these Tributes were written, the Law of Success had been based on fifteen principles.*





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## EDITORS' NOTE

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*LAW OF SUCCESS* IS COMPRISED OF THE KEY PRINCIPLES THAT FORM the foundation of Napoleon Hill's philosophy of personal achievement.

The genesis of the principles explored in *Law of Success* date from the day in 1908 when Napoleon Hill was assigned to write a magazine profile on steel baron and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. During their interview Carnegie became so impressed with the young writer that what was to have been a brief interview stretched into a three-day marathon. It concluded with Carnegie offering to introduce Napoleon Hill to the most powerful men of the day in order that Hill could learn from each of them the secrets of their success. It was Carnegie's vision that, in so doing, Hill would be able to formulate a philosophy that could be used by anyone to help themselves create their own success and realize their dreams.

As Napoleon Hill pursued his mission, he wrote thousands of articles and profiles, launched his own magazines, developed home-study courses, started training centers, and opened a business college—all inspired by his evolving philosophy. He also created a lecture series that brought him wide recognition as an inspiring public speaker on the subject of success and personal achievement. Through it all, Napoleon Hill was constantly testing and modifying his theories until they became refined into a set of specific principles that together formed the cohesive philosophy Andrew Carnegie had envisioned.

In 1927 Napoleon Hill finally assembled what would become the first edition of *Law of Success*. Then, in what proved to be a brilliant marketing concept, his publisher chose to release it not as a single book but as a set of eight volumes. The entire collection was an immediate and astounding success.

In its first edition *Law of Success* presented fifteen principles. In later editions the number was expanded to sixteen as Hill came to believe that The Master Mind, which had been part of the introduction to the first edition, was in fact a separate principle unto itself. Later still, he concluded that there was another key principle that in effect unified the others. This newly recognized principle he termed Cosmic Habitforce, which, when he began working with W. Clement Stone, was also referred to as the Universal Law. Over the years there have been at least five authorized editions that revised or added material, and in its various forms the book has been reprinted more than fifty times. This newly revised and updated twenty-first-century edition is the first to include all seventeen principles.

In preparing this edition of *Law of Success*, the editors have attempted to allow Hill to be as modern an author as if he were still among us, and we have treated the text as we would the text of a living author. When we encountered what modern grammarians would consider run-on sentences, outdated punctuation, or other matters of form, we opted for contemporary usage. If something was obscure or misleading because the author's language was idiosyncratic or archaic, or when it might be construed as out of step with modern thinking, minor alterations were made.

A more challenging issue was the question of how to update the actual content of the book. In carefully reviewing the original text, it became clear that the answer was not to simply replace the examples cited by Hill with similar stories about contemporary people. The anecdotes and examples used by Napoleon Hill were so integral to the point being made or the principle being discussed that to replace them just for the sake of having a more contemporary name would do nothing to make it better. The editors concluded that the best course was to instead augment with additional stories that would

serve as confirmation that the Law of Success is a living philosophy. The additional examples have been judiciously inserted as reminders that the principles upon which *Law of Success* is based were relevant when the first book was published in 1928, they were still applicable seventy-five years later in 2003, and they will no doubt continue to be relevant and applicable for at least the *next* seventy-five years.

In addition to contemporary examples, where the editors felt it would be of interest to the reader, we have also included marginal notes that provide background information, historical context, and, where applicable, we have suggested books that complement various aspects of Napoleon Hill's philosophy. All marginal commentary in these volumes is set off in a different font and style. You will also notice that sometimes *Law of Success* is italicized in the text and at other times it is not. The italicized usage is in reference to the book; unitalicized, it is a general reference to the concept and its principles.

As you read this edition of *Law of Success* you will find that certain key commentaries and references that appear early in the book are also repeated in later chapters. That is intentional. When this updated edition was first published in 2003 as four separate leather-bound collector's volumes, the key commentaries were included where relevant in each book for the benefit of readers who may not have been reading all four volumes consecutively. And because of their relevance to the lessons in which each appears, when this edition combining all seventeen lessons into one volume was being assembled, the decision was made to maintain the commentaries as they were.

Throughout the preparation of the revised editions, the editors have enjoyed the cooperation of the Napoleon Hill Foundation and the Napoleon Hill World Learning Center. With their assistance we have drawn upon the previous editions of the work, as well as on other books and materials written by Napoleon Hill, in order to incorporate the final evolution of his philosophy and thereby present the most comprehensive edition of *Law of Success*.

—Ann Hartley  
Bill Hartley



## THE AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HELP RENDERED HIM IN THE WRITING OF THIS COURSE

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THIS COURSE IS THE RESULT OF CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF THE lifework of over one hundred men and women who have achieved unusual success in their respective callings.

I have spent more than twenty years in gathering, classifying, testing, and organizing the lessons upon which the course is based. In this labor I have received valuable assistance either in person or by studying the lifework of the following:

Henry Ford	Henry L. Doherty
Thomas A. Edison	George S. Parker
Harvey S. Firestone	Dr. C. O. Henry
John D. Rockefeller	General Rufus A. Ayers
Charles M. Schwab	Judge Elbert H. Gary
Woodrow Wilson	William Howard Taft
Darwin P. Kingsley	Dr. Elmer Gates
William Wrigley, Jr.	John W. Davis
A. D. Lasker	Captain George M. Alexander
E. A. Filene	(to whom I was formerly
James J. Hill	an assistant)
Edward Bok	Hugh Chalmers
Cyrus H. K. Curtis	Dr. E. W. Strickler
George W. Perkins	Edwin C. Barnes



Robert L. Taylor  
(Fiddling Bob)

George Eastman

E. M. Statler

Andrew Carnegie

John Wanamaker

Marshall Field

Samuel Gompers

F. W. Woolworth

Judge Daniel T. Wright

(one of my law  
instructors)

Elbert Hubbard

Luther Burbank

O. H. Harriman

John Burroughs

E. H. Harriman

Charles P. Steinmetz

Frank Vanderlip

Theodore Roosevelt

William H. French

Dr. Alexander Graham Bell

(to whom I owe credit  
for most of Lesson One)

Of the people named, perhaps Henry Ford and Andrew Carnegie should be acknowledged as having contributed most toward the building of this course, for the reason that it was Andrew Carnegie who first suggested the writing of the course and Henry Ford whose lifework supplied much of the material out of which the course was developed.

I have studied the majority of these people at close range, in person. With many of them I enjoy, or did enjoy before their death, the privilege of close personal friendship which enabled me to gather from their philosophy facts that would not have been available under other conditions.

I am grateful for having enjoyed the privilege of enlisting the services of the most powerful human beings on earth, in the building of the Law of Success course. That privilege has been remuneration enough for the work done, if nothing more were ever received for it. They have been the backbone and the foundation and the skeleton of American business, finance, industry, and statesmanship.

The Law of Success course epitomizes the philosophy and the rules of procedure which made each of these men a great power in his chosen field of endeavor. It has been my intention to present the course in the plainest and most simple terms available, so it could also be mastered by very young men and young women of high school age.

With the exception of the psychological law referred to in Lesson One as the Master Mind, I don't claim to have created anything basically new in this course. What I have done, however, has been to organize old truths and known laws into practical, usable form.

Commenting on the Law of Success, Judge Elbert H. Gary said: "Two outstanding features connected with the philosophy impress me most. One is the simplicity with which it has been presented, and the other is the fact that its soundness is so obvious to all that it will be immediately accepted."

The student of this course is warned against passing judgment upon it before having read *all* of the lessons. The reader who takes up this course with an open mind, and sees to it that his or her mind remains open until the last lesson is finished, will be richly rewarded with a broader and more accurate view of life as a whole.



## A PERSONAL STATEMENT BY NAPOLEON HILL

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*from the 1928 edition*

SOME THIRTY YEARS AGO A YOUNG CLERGYMAN BY THE NAME of Gunsaulus announced in the newspapers of Chicago that he would preach a sermon the following Sunday morning entitled "What I Would Do if I Had a Million Dollars!"

The announcement caught the eye of Philip D. Armour, the wealthy packing-house king, who decided to hear the sermon.

In his sermon Dr. Gunsaulus pictured a great school of technology where young men and young women could be taught how to succeed in life by developing the ability to think in practical rather than in theoretical terms; where they would be taught to "learn by doing." "If I had a million dollars," said the young preacher, "I would start such a school."

After the sermon was over, Mr. Armour walked down the aisle to the pulpit, introduced himself, and said, "Young man, I believe you could do all you said you could, and if you will come down to my office tomorrow morning I will give you the million dollars you need." There is always plenty of capital for those who can create practical plans for using it.

That was the beginning of the Armour Institute of Technology, one of the very practical schools of the country. The school was born in the imagination of a young man who never would have been heard

of outside the community in which he preached had it not been for the imagination, plus the capital, of Philip D. Armour.

### COMMENTARY

*The Armour Institute of Technology opened in 1893, offering courses in engineering, chemistry, architecture, and library science, and in 1940 it became the Illinois Institute of Technology when the Armour Institute merged with the Lewis Institute, a Chicago college that had opened in 1895 and offered liberal arts as well as science and engineering courses. In 1949 the Institute of Design, founded in 1937, also merged with IIT, followed in 1969 by the Chicago-Kent College of Law and the Stuart School of Business, and in 1986 by the Midwest College of Engineering. Today there are several campuses in downtown Chicago. IIT has been called the alma mater of accomplishments.*

Every great railroad and every outstanding financial institution and every mammoth business enterprise and every great invention began in the imagination of some one person.

F. W. Woolworth created the 5 and 10 Cent Stores plan in his imagination before it became a reality and made him a multimillionaire.

Thomas A. Edison created sound recorders, moving pictures, the electric light bulb, and scores of other useful inventions, in his own imagination before they became a reality.

After the Chicago fire, scores of merchants whose stores went up in smoke stood near the smoldering embers of their former places of business, grieving over their loss. Many of them decided to go away into other cities and start over again. In the group was Marshall Field, who saw, in his own imagination, the world's greatest retail store, standing on the same spot where his former store had stood, which was then but a ruined mass of smoking timbers. That store became a reality.

Fortunate is the young man or young woman who learns, early in life, to use imagination—and doubly so in this age of greater opportunity.

Imagination is a faculty of the mind that can be cultivated, developed, extended, and broadened by use. If this were not true, this course on the laws of success never would have been created, because it was first conceived in my imagination, from the mere seed of an idea which was sown by a chance remark of the late Andrew Carnegie.

Wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever you may be following as an occupation, there is room for you to make yourself more useful, and in that manner more productive, by developing and using your imagination.

Success in this world is always a matter of individual effort, yet you will only be deceiving yourself if you believe that you can succeed without the cooperation of other people. Success is a matter of individual effort only to the extent that each person must decide, in his or her own mind, what is wanted. This involves the use of imagination. From this point on, achieving success is a matter of skillfully and tactfully inducing others to cooperate.

Before you can secure cooperation from others, before you have the right to ask for or expect cooperation from other people, you must first show a willingness to cooperate with them. For this reason the ninth lesson of this course, the Habit of Doing More Than Paid For, is one that should have your serious and thoughtful attention. The law upon which this lesson is based would, of itself, practically ensure success to all who practice it in all they do.

Following, you will find a Personal Analysis Chart in which nine well-known people have been analyzed for your study and comparison. Observe this chart carefully and note the danger points that mean failure to those who do not observe these signals. Of the nine people analyzed seven are known to be successful, while two may be considered failures. Study, carefully, the reasons why these two men failed.

Then, study yourself. In the two columns which have been left blank for that purpose, at the beginning of this course give yourself a rating on each of the laws of success; at the end of the course rate yourself again and observe the improvements you have made.

The purpose of the Law of Success course is to enable you to find out how you may become more capable in your chosen field of work. To this end you will be analyzed and all of your qualities classified so that you may organize them and make the best possible use of them.

You may not like the work in which you are now engaged. There are two ways of getting out of that work. One way is to take little interest in it and do just enough to get by. Very soon you will find a way out, because the demand for your services will cease.

The other and better way is by making yourself so useful and efficient in what you are now doing that you will attract the favorable attention of those who have the power to promote you into more responsible work that is more to your liking.

It is your privilege to take your choice as to which way you will proceed.

Thousands of people walked over the great Calumet Copper Mine without discovering it. Just one lone man used his imagination, dug down into the ground a few feet, investigated, and discovered the richest copper deposit on earth.

You and every other person walk, at one time or another, over your "Calumet mine." Discovery is a matter of investigation and use of imagination. This course on the laws of success may lead the way to your "Calumet," and you may be surprised when you discover that you were standing right over this rich mine, in the work in which you are now engaged. In his lecture "Acres of Diamonds," Russell Conwell tells us that we need not seek opportunity in the distance; that we may find it right where we stand.

*This is a truth well worth remembering!*



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ALL YOU ARE  
OR EVER SHALL BECOME  
IS THE RESULT OF  
THE USE TO WHICH  
YOU PUT YOUR MIND.

—Napoleon Hill

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## **AN EXERCISE IN COMPARISON**

<b>The Seventeen Laws of Success</b>	<b>Henry Ford</b>	<b>Benjamin Franklin</b>	<b>George Washington</b>	<b>Abraham Lincoln</b>	
1. <i>The Master Mind**</i>	100	100	100	100	
2. <i>A Definite Chief Aim</i>	100	100	100	100	
3. <i>Self-Confidence</i>	100	90	80	75	
4. <i>The Habit of Saving</i>	100	100	75	20	
5. <i>Initiative &amp; Leadership</i>	100	60	100	60	
6. <i>Imagination</i>	90	90	80	70	
7. <i>Enthusiasm</i>	75	80	90	60	
8. <i>Self-Control</i>	100	90	50	95	
9. <i>The Habit of Doing More Than Paid For</i>	100	100	100	100	
10. <i>A Pleasing Personality</i>	50	90	80	80	
11. <i>Accurate Thinking</i>	90	80	75	90	
12. <i>Concentration</i>	100	100	100	100	
13. <i>Cooperation</i>	75	100	100	90	
14. <i>Profiting by Failure</i>	100	90	75	80	
15. <i>Tolerance</i>	90	100	80	100	
16. <i>Practicing the Golden Rule</i>	100	100	100	100	
17. <i>Universal Law**</i>	70	100	100	100	
<b>Average</b>	91	92	86	84	

*The nine people who have been analyzed above are all well known. Seven of them are commonly considered to be successful. Two are generally regarded as failures, but of very different sorts. Napoleon had success within his grasp but squandered it. Jesse James gained notoriety and some cash but little else except a very short life. Observe where they each attained a zero and you will see why they failed. A grade of zero in any one of the laws of success is sufficient to cause failure, no matter how high any other grade may be.*

*Notice that all the successful figures grade 100 percent on A Definite Chief Aim. This is a prerequisite to success, in all cases, without exception. If you wish to conduct an interesting*

**Study this chart carefully and compare the ratings of these nine people before grading yourself, at the start and end of this course, in the two columns to the right.**

	<b>Napoleon Bonaparte</b>	<b>Helen Keller*</b>	<b>Eleanor Roosevelt*</b>	<b>Bill Gates*</b>	<b>Jesse James</b>	<b>Yourself Before</b>	<b>Yourself After</b>
	100	100	80	100	100		
	100	100	100	100	0		
	100	90	80	80	75		
	40	75	80	100	0		
	100	90	90	90	90		
	90	70	80	80	60		
	80	70	70	60	80		
	40	85	90	100	50		
	100	100	100	100	0		
	100	95	80	70	50		
	90	75	80	100	20		
	100	100	80	100	75		
	50	100	90	100	50		
	40	100	90	90	0		
	10	100	100	90	0		
	0	100	100	75	0		
	0	100	100	75	0		
	67	91	88	89	38		

*experiment, replace the above names with the names of nine people whom you know, half of whom are successful and half of whom are failures, and grade each of them. When you are through, grade yourself, taking care to see that you really know what are your weaknesses.*

*\* Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Bill Gates replace Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, and Calvin Coolidge in Hill's original chart.*

*\*\* These more recently defined laws were added to the original chart and scored by the editors.*



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*Volume I*

THE PRINCIPLES OF  
SELF-MASTERY

Introduction to the Master Mind

A Definite Chief Aim

Self-Confidence

The Habit of Saving

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