

WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON

THOUGHTS ARE THINGS



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Thoughts Are Things

William Walker Atkinson
writing as Edward Walker

INTRODUCTION, ANNOTATION AND STUDY
GUIDE

BY M.C. MESEN

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CONTENTS

ABOUT WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON.....	1
Introduction.....	3
FOREWORD	7
I. "THOUGHTS ARE THINGS"	11
II. THOUGHT CURRENTS	23
III. THOUGHT ATMOSPHERES	35
IV. THE MAGNET OF THOUGHT.....	47
V. CREATIVE THOUGHT	57
VI. YOUR LATENT POWERS	65
Glossary.....	77
STUDY GUIDE	81
Thoughts Are Things.....	81
1. Thoughts and the Creation of Character.....	82
2. Ideas as Seeds: From Ideal to Reality.....	83
3. Mental Contagion and Psychic Atmospheres..	83
4. Ethics and Volition in the Art of Thinking	84

ABOUT WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON

Born in Maryland in 1862, he began working life at 15 in his parent's grocery store. He married at age 27, and became an attorney in Pennsylvania.

While he gained material success as a lawyer, the stress and over-strain brought him to a complete physical and mental breakdown that ended in a financial disaster. He looked for healing and in the late 1880's he found the principles of New Thought, and in applying them he restored his health, mental vigor and material prosperity.

Atkinson then began to write articles on the truths he felt he had discovered. His "A Mental Science Catechism," appeared in Charles Fillmore's *'Modern Thought'* in 1889.

By the early 1890's Atkinson moved to Chicago, then a major centre for New Thought, and became an active promoter of the movement as an editor and author. In 1900 he wrote his first book, *Thought-Force in Business and Everyday Life*, a series of lessons in personal magnetism, psychic influence, thought-force, concentration, will-power, and practical mental science. Soon after he met Sydney Flower, a well-known New Thought publisher and businessman, and in December 1901 he became editor of Flower's popular *New Thought* magazine (until 1905), and a very prolific writer of dozens of well appreciated articles in the magazine; and later on, he was

a regular contributor to Elizabeth Towne's Magazine, Nautilus.

Throughout his subsequent career, Atkinson wrote and published over 100 different books, some under his own name and many under pseudonyms such as Yogi Ramacharaka, Theron Q. Dumont, Theodore Sheldon, Magus Incognito, Edward Walker, Three Initiates and Swami Bhakta Vishita.

Among the first to develop the concept of Law of Attraction, Atkinson is considered, together with Orison Swett Marden and Wallace Wattles, the masters of self-development and positive thinking, and the real promoters of New Thought, a movement that came very much to life again with the Millennium. He died November 22, 1932 in Los Angeles, California at the age of 69, after 50 years of successful career in business, writing, occultism, and the law, and a life surrounded by mysteries, including his own death.

Introduction

First published in the early twentieth century, *Thoughts Are Things* is a seminal text of the New Thought movement, a spiritual-philosophical current that emphasized the power of mind to shape reality. Written by William Walker Atkinson under the pseudonym Edward Walker, this compact volume distills the movement's central insight: that thoughts are not ephemeral abstractions but actual 'things'—forms of energy with the power to create, attract, and transform. Atkinson's Foreword warns that the message will 'itch in your ears,' setting the tone for a work intended to be read repeatedly and internalized.

Atkinson was a prolific author, attorney, and occultist who wrote dozens of books on mental science, self-help, and esoteric philosophy, often using multiple pen names. As Edward Walker, he presents here a systematic exposition of the 'thingness' of thought, building his case through analogy with physical science and everyday experience. The book is structured in six chapters, each exploring a facet of the core principle: from the basic statement that thoughts are things (Chapter I), through thought currents (II), thought atmospheres (III), the magnet of thought (IV), creative thought (V), and latent powers (VI).

The book identifies four primary manifestations of thought's reality: (1) thoughts create character and

personality; (2) thoughts tend to materialize into objective existence; (3) thoughts act as magnets, attracting people and circumstances in harmony with them; and (4) thoughts radiate as vibratory waves influencing others. Each chapter elaborates on these laws, weaving together scientific citation, metaphor, and practical advice. Atkinson draws heavily on contemporary science, quoting Professor Julian Ochorowicz on the ‘dynamic correlate’ of thought and William James on the phenomenon of ‘second wind.’ By linking mental activity to known physical principles—vibration, induction, persistence of energy—he attempts to ground New Thought in reputable research.

The practical heart of the book lies in its instructions for applying these laws. Readers learn to cultivate a positive thought atmosphere, use desire and imagination to form clear mental images, overcome fear by dwelling on its opposite, and develop latent faculties through the ‘law of use.’ Atkinson insists that action must accompany thought: ‘The thinking must be supplemented by acting.’ He repeatedly emphasizes the importance of strong, clear desire and the formation of a mental picture as a nucleus for materialization. The book’s advice is concrete: avoid negative mental company, charge your environment with positive vibrations, and use the will to hold attention on the ideal.

Stylistically, the book is repetitive by design, with key phrases and analogies reappearing across chapters to

reinforce the central message. Atkinson's tone is authoritative yet encouraging, blending scientific language with spiritual exhortation. He does not shy from making bold claims—that one can become 'a master—of yourself and outside things'—but always returns to the theme of personal responsibility and natural law. The book closes with 'Finis,' a Latin term common in older publications, marking the end of a work that aims to begin a transformation in the reader.

Nearly a century after its publication, *Thoughts Are Things* remains a cornerstone of the positive-thinking genre. Its core ideas about mental causation and the law of attraction have been widely popularized, though often stripped of the nuanced scientific framing Atkinson provided. Modern readers may find some claims dated or overly simplistic, but the book's insistence on the creative power of thought continues to resonate. For anyone seeking to understand the roots of contemporary self-help or to explore the intersection of psychology and metaphysics, this little book offers a clear, earnest, and historically significant introduction.

Mauricio Chaves-Mesén

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FOREWORD

This little book contains a message for you—you, who are reading these lines. Think of the book what you will, at first—nevertheless, it will leave its message imprinted upon your mind, and you will be unable to forget it. The reading of it will form a distinct epoch in your life, little as you may realize it at this moment. You will be different, henceforth, by reason of the message contained herein. You may not accept all of its statements, but some of them will “stick” in your mind, as does the burr in the wool of the passing sheep.

As Whitman once said¹: “My words will itch in your ears till you understand them.” And, often almost unconsciously, you will find yourself acting upon its advice; following its precepts; heeding its admonitions. But fear not—the message is for your betterment, advancement, strengthening. It will bring you power and possessions. It will make you a master—of yourself and outside things.

In its pages are condensed many important statements of truth and scientific fact. Its chapters blend and merge into each other, and what may at first glance seem to be repetition will later be seen to be but a new emphasis, or a presentation of a new phase. The first

¹ The quote is from Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself' (1855): 'My words itch in your ears till you understand them.' Atkinson borrows the line to assert the book's lasting impact on the reader.

reading of this book will serve as but a mere “taste” of its contents. It will need many re-readings in order to extract its full flavor. We advise that you read it through the first time, without attempting to master its contents. Then, reread it, carefully, in the light of the new ideas that have come to you from the first reading. You will find new things in it each time you go through its pages.

The value of a book of this kind is not represented by the nominal price at which it is sold. When you realize the benefit that its teachings have been to you, you will feel that you have not paid fully for it. Then pay the balance—by bringing it to the attention of someone else who may need it.

I. "THOUGHTS ARE THINGS"

Among the many remarkable statements of new and startling scientific fact, discovery and phenomena, that we hear on all sides—statements sounding strange to the ears of persons of the older habits of thought—perhaps the most startling and unprecedented is that with which we head this chapter, and entitle this book; the statement that "Thoughts are Things." Only a few years ago an expression of this kind would have caused the significant lifting of eyebrows, and the equally significant wagging of heads—it would have given rise to the suspicion of extreme "queerness." But today, surrounded as it is, with equally wonderful statements regarding the natural phenomena of life and the universe, it is accepted at least as possible and quite in keeping with other scientific ideas, by those who keep abreast of the advanced thought of the day. We are indeed living in a wonderful age, and wonderful things have become commonplace. And this wonderful idea that "Thoughts are Things" is becoming so common, that many fail to recognize the remarkable features of the fact, and the significance and importance of the discovery. And yet it is a matter that is closely bound up with the lives of each and every one of us—a matter that makes for the weal or woe of every human being. And consequently it behooves us to examine carefully this scientific fact that "Thoughts are Things."

The idea of the “thingness” of thoughts is diametrically opposed to the older view regarding mental activities. Formerly, thoughts were regarded as mere abstract, idealistic somethings, far divorced from actuality as we understand the term. Thoughts were regarded as intangible somethings allied to dreams, fancies, and imaginings—vapory nothings that arise like the mist, and again disappear like the mist before the morning sun. Important and real as the results of thoughts were seen to be, the thoughts themselves were held to be the very antithesis of these results—the very essence of unreality. Therefore, this new doctrine that “Thoughts are Things” is revolutionary in the extreme, upsetting all the preconceived theories, ideas, and conceptions of the older schools of thought. But still so true is the doctrine seen to be, and so important a part does it play in the actual, everyday life of us all, that people are demanding to be informed regarding the underlying principles of the subject—the plain “facts of the case,” divested of academic verbiage and technical terms. And this little book attempts to fill this important demand, and these requirements.

At the beginning of our little talk regarding the “thingness” of thoughts, let us understand each other concerning the exact meaning of the term “thoughts” as used in this connection. To many persons the term “thoughts” signifies nothing more than the result of intellectual activity—the ideas evolved by the reasoning

faculties. But the term has a much wider and broader significance, particularly in connection with the phase of the subject now before us for consideration. For the purposes of our inquiry, we must hold that *a thought is any mental state, or mental activity, including those of the intellect, feelings, emotions, will, desire, imagination or memory—all mental states, in fact.*

Concerning the above general definition, we would say that the mental states known as feelings, emotion, desires, will and imagination have a degree of “thingness” more marked than the states of pure intellectual activity; for the former are creative in their nature, while the latter are merely activities in the direction of weighing, comparing, measuring, deciding upon, choosing or determining upon the images, ideas or concepts created by the first named set of mental activities. The dynamic power of the first named set of mental states is very much greater than those of the purely intellectual mental states, for reasons that we shall discover as we proceed—they are more elemental, basic, primitive, and accordingly more concerned with energy and expressive force than the more abstract activities of the mind. For example, compare the relative dynamic qualities of the strong feeling of love or hate, accompanied by the desire to act in accordance therewith, on the one hand, and a strong intellectual effort to decide some disputed point of logic or philosophy, or perhaps a nice point in grammatical

construction, or a problem in differential calculus, on the other hand. Which is apt to manifest its “thingness” in expression, activity, or materialization with the greatest dynamic force? Or which is apt to manifest the greatest dynamic force—the imaginative images of a Napoleon²; a Shakespeare; an Emerson; a Darwin or Spencer; or the efforts of the reason exerted toward the statement of the exact distinction, or resemblance (or both at the same time), between “tweedledum and tweedledee,” on the part of a great abstract philosopher like Hegel³? The first set represents the life-blood, the nerves, the meat and marrow of thought—the latter the dry-bones. So, when we say that “Thoughts are Things,” let us remember what we mean by thoughts.

The “thingness” of thoughts manifests in a number of ways, the principal of which may be grouped into the following four classes of manifestation, viz:

I. Manifestation in the direction of creating character and personality—both inward character, and outward expression of personality. We create our own character

² Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), French military and political leader. Atkinson uses him as an example of imaginative, will-driven thought that reshapes the world, illustrating creative rather than analytical thinking.

³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), German idealist philosopher known for abstract dialectical reasoning. Atkinson contrasts Hegel's dry intellectualism with the dynamic, creative thought of figures like Napoleon.

and personality by the thoughts we originate, harbor, entertain, or accept from others. We are, each of us, the result of what we have thought in the past; we will be the result of what we are now thinking. Our todays are the result of our past thinking; our tomorrows will be the result of our present thinking. We have been our own mental parents, and we will be our own mental children.

II. Manifestation in the direction of the materialization of our ideals, good or bad, into objective and concrete existence.

Thoughts are mental Things, and tend to become material Things. The Ideal becomes Real. Our dreams come true. Our desires are seed-thoughts⁴ that have a tendency to sprout, and grow, and blossom, and bear fruit—and the blossom and the fruit are of the same nature as the seed-thought. We are sowing these seeds every day—are we prepared to accept the perfume of the blossom, and taste the meat of the fruit?

III. Manifestation in the direction of drawing to ourselves the persons, things, and environments in harmony with, and conducive to, the character of our desires, mental images, feelings, and ideals; or, else, in urging and leading us in the direction of these persons, things and environments in harmony with our thoughts.

⁴ A term for originating ideas or desires that, if nurtured with attention and desire, will grow and materialize. Atkinson likens them to seeds that must be planted and cultivated.

Just as the vibration of a particular atom attracts to it another atom the vibrations of which are in harmonious rhythm with it; or, else urges the first atom toward the other; or both; so do the vibrations of our thoughts exert an urge and attraction upon us, and upon others in harmony with our vibrations. Each thought seeks its own kind. Birds of a feather flock together. Oil and water will not mix. The law of atomic affinity is paralleled by the law of mental attraction.

IV. Manifestation in the direction of vibratory waves radiating in all directions, influencing those in harmony therewith, just as we are influenced by the thought-waves of others with which we are in harmony. Mental currents are just as real as are currents of light, heat, electricity, or magnetism. Flowing out in all directions, often at the greatest distance from their creators, they exert an effect upon all within their field of influence, but only in so far as those persons bear a harmonious relation to the thoughts. Each kind of thought has its own rate, degree, and character of vibration. There are shades and degrees of harmony and inharmony between these rates of vibration, just as there are in music. We attract our own kind of thought-waves to us; we repel our opposites. Like the Marconi wireless telegraphic instruments⁵, we receive only those messages with which

⁵ Guglielmo Marconi (1874–1937) pioneered wireless telegraphy. Atkinson uses this technology as an analogy: just as a receiver must

we are in tune. We have the right, and the power, to establish our own rhythmic tune. Consciously or unconsciously we are establishing our rhythmic rate, and are attracting to us that which is in harmony therewith. We are establishing mental connections with others of our own mental kind. Are we selecting mental company worthy of ourselves, and conducive to advancement, power, and betterment? That is a question that each must answer for one's self. Surely it is an important one.

And these are the four classes of manifestation of the “thingness” of thought. Surely a careful consideration of the activities mentioned above leads one to an agreement to the proposition that “Thoughts are Things”—real, actual forms of energy and power, and not the airy, unreal, appearances that we had thought them.

And from whence does this quality of “thingness” of thoughts arise? Why is a thought a “thing?” Because Mind itself, the field from which thoughts arise, is a real, actual, substantial form of energy. Mind in itself is believed to be a subtle form of static energy, from which arise the activities called “thought” which is the dynamic phase of mind. Mind is static energy—thought is dynamic energy—the two phases of the same thing. Science informs us that every mental activity involves

be tuned to a specific frequency, minds receive thoughts with which they are in harmony.

the production and manifestation of energy. There is a burning up of brain substance occasioned by every thought, just as there is a burning up of bodily tissue during physical motion; and just as there is a burning up of the elements of the battery when a telegraphic message is transmitted. There is a transformation of energy occasioned by the action of the brain when a thought is created. Science informs us that no energy is destroyed, and that all energy is transmuted into other forms of energy.

This being so, it follows that the thought-energy is capable of producing effects, even at a distance, by means of vibratory thought-waves which travel along the ether. We shall see more about this phase in another chapter. Let us give you a general idea of what science is teaching regarding the fact that thought is a form of energy—a real, actual “thing.”

Professor Ochorowicz⁶ says in this connection: “Every living being is a dynamic focus. A dynamic focus tends ever to propagate the motion that is proper to it. Propagated motion becomes transformed according to the medium it traverses. Motion tends always to propagate itself. Therefore when we see work of any

⁶ Julian Ochorowicz (1850–1917) was a Polish psychologist, philosopher, and inventor. His work on the 'dynamic correlate' of thought bridged psychology and physics; Atkinson quotes him to lend scientific weight to the idea of thought-energy.

kind-mechanical, electrical, nervic, or psychic—disappear without visible effect, then, of two things, one happens, either a transmission or a transformation. Where does the first end, and where does the second begin? In an identical medium there is only transmission. In a different medium there is transformation. You send an electric current through a thick wire. You have the current, but you do not perceive any other force. But cut that thick wire and connect the ends by means of a fine wire; the fine wire will grow hot; there will be a transformation of a part of the current into *heat*. Take a pretty strong current and interpose a wire still more resistant, or a very thin carbon rod. The carbon will emit *light*. A part of the current then is transformed into heat and *light*. This light acts in every direction around about, first visibly as light, then invisibly as heat and as electric current. Hold a magnet near it. If the magnet is weak and movable, in the form of a magnetic needle, the beam of light will cause it to deviate; if it is strong and immovable, it will in turn cause the beam of light to deviate. And all this from a distance, without contact, without special conductors. A process that is at once chemical, physical and psychical, goes on in a brain. A complex action of this kind is propagated through the gray matter, as waves are propagated in water....Regarded on its physiological side, an idea is only a vibration, a vibration that is propagated, yet which does not pass out of a medium in which it can exist as

such. It is propagated as far as other like vibrations allow. It is propagated more widely if it assumes the character which subjectively we call emotive. But it cannot go beyond without being transformed. Nevertheless, like force in general, it cannot remain in isolation, it escapes in disguise.”

Prof. Ochorowicz says further: “Thought stays at home, as the chemical action of a battery remains in the battery; it is represented by its dynamic correlate, called in the case of the battery, a current, and in the case of the brain—I know not what; but whatever its name may be, it is *the dynamic correlate of thought*. I have chosen the term ‘dynamic correlate.’ There is something more than that; the universe is neither dead nor void. A force that is transmitted meets other forces, and if it is transformed only little by little, it usually limits itself to modifying another force at its own cost, though without suffering perceptibly thereby. This is the case particularly with forces that are persistent, concentrated, well seconded by their medium; it is the case with the physiological equilibrium, nervic force, psychic force, ideas, emotions, tendencies. These modify environing forces without themselves disappearing; they are but imperceptibly transformed, and if the next man is of a nature exceptionally well adapted to them, they gain in inductive action.”

We ask you to read carefully the above quotation from this scientific authority, who gives us one of the

most striking presentations of the analogy existing between the so-called “physical” energies and the energies of the mind and thought. We feel sure that after a careful reading, you will agree with us that modern physical science has met mental science face to face and that the two have clasped hands in agreement. The “dynamic correlate” mentioned by Prof. Ochorowicz, is called “thought-waves” or “currents of thought vibrations” by us in this work.

The space of this little book prevents a more elaborate argument and proof of the statement that “Thoughts are Things” from the scientific viewpoint. We trust that we have at least given you the important basic statement of fact, supported by reasonable analogy. In the following chapters you will doubtless find other corroborative instances agreeing with incidents within your own personal experience—and this, after all, is the best proof.

NOTES

II. THOUGHT CURRENTS

In the preceding chapter we explained to you that the production of a thought is a manifestation of energy—a transformation of energy from one form to another. We closed the chapter by a quotation from Prof. Ochorowicz in which he compared the production of thought to the production of electric light and heat. You will remember that he then went on to speak of the light (which was but transformed electricity) sending forth vibratory waves in all directions, which waves appear first as visible light, and then as invisible heat, and electric currents.

He then makes the following statement, which bears a startling analogy to the phenomena of mental currents: “Hold a magnet near it (the beam of light). If the magnet is weak and movable, in the form of a magnetic needle, the beam of light will cause it to deviate; if it is strong and immovable, it will in turn cause the beam of light to deviate. All this from a distance without contact, without special conductors.” The Professor then goes on to compare the action of electricity to that of thought, so far as its production is concerned. He says that in the production of thought “a process that is at once chemical, physical, and psychical, goes on in the brain.” He tells us that “an idea is only a vibration,” and that “a complex action of this kind is propagated through the gray (brain) matter, as waves are propagated in water.”

He informs us that thought, like any other form of energy, cannot escape from the medium in which it originates without a transformation in form.

He says that “like force in general, it cannot remain in isolation, it escapes in disguise.” He says: “Thought stays at home, as the chemical action of a battery remains in the battery; it is represented by its dynamic correlate, called in the case of the battery, a current, and in the case of the brain—I know not what; but whatever its name may be, *it is the dynamic correlate of thought.*”

This transformed thought-force that is radiated from the brain in currents and waves, which Prof. Ochorowicz conservatively styles “the dynamic correlate of thought,” has not as yet received an authoritative scientific title. It is known by many names, chief among which are the following: “thought-force,” “dynamic-thought,” “mind-power,” etc., all of which, however, cover the static as well as the dynamic phases of thought-currents. The students of the subject seem to prefer the terms: “thought-vibrations,” “thought-waves,” “mental-currents,” etc.

The matter of names, however, is not important, the vital fact being that every person is constantly sending forth mental currents of different degrees of power, character and quality, which often travel to great distances, and which, coming in contact with the minds of other persons in whom is manifested a degree of harmony with the character of the thought, there tends

to induce or reproduce the original thought, emotion, feeling, desire, or other mental state. You will see that in view of this fact, "Thoughts are Things" in the fullest sense of the word.

The phenomena of telepathy have attracted the attention of the public mind of recent years, and are justly regarded as being most wonderful. But the phenomena of mental currents and thought waves of feeling, desire and emotion, are far more common, and exert a far more vital influence on the race than do the technical psychological phenomena of telepathy. In experimental telepathy there is a transference of a mental image of certain words, figures, designs, etc., from one mind to another. This transference is occasioned by the passage of thought-waves, of course. But the mental image transmitted is almost always some formal abstract idea, such as certain words, numbers, drawn figures, etc., that have very little of the emotive power in them, and which, consequently, are very difficult to transmit. The fact that they are transmitted at all, even under exceptional circumstances and between people specially *en rapport* with each other, and with the advantage of the particularly sensitive organism of the recipient, is a striking proof of the power of thought-waves and mental vibrations. But the very difficulty of reproducing such delicate tests, involving the presence of unusual powers of receptive sensibility, and the transmission of abstract symbols or mental images, have caused many

people to undervalue the importance of the subject, and the universality of its manifestations. They agree that these exhibitions and experiments are “wonderful” and interesting, but, finding that they cannot be duplicated by everyone on all occasions, they regard the phenomena as “unusual” and “abnormal,” placing them in the category of clairvoyance, etc. Little do they realize that everyone is constantly sending forth these mental currents which have an effect upon others; and that everyone is receiving similar thought-waves from others, which affect one according to the character of his own thought—according to his mental keynote.

There are but few people who have not had experiences of their own which demonstrate the reality of these mental currents. Who has not suddenly sensed the approach of some person before he put in an appearance or before a letter was received from him? This fact has been embodied in a common proverb: “Speak of an angel, and you hear the flapping of his wings;” or its correlate: “Speak of the devil, and his imps will appear.” Who has not “felt” the pain or distress of some loved one at a distance? These experiences are too common and universal to require argument. And it will be noted that the majority of them are reproductions of emotive mental states of others, rather than mere words or abstract thoughts. As Prof. Ochorowicz says: “It is propagated more widely if it assumes the character which subjectively we call emotive.” But there are certain

fixed, persistent abstract ideas, which form mental images as clearly defined as the strongest feeling, desire or emotion—for instance, the result of the concentrated thought of an inventor, scientist, or artist, which produces a mental image of a remarkable degree of depth and clearness, from which emanate thought-waves of unusual power and vitality.

As we have said, there is a great difference in the degree and character of the mental currents or thought-waves radiated from the minds of different individuals. There are of course as many rates, degrees and character of thought-vibrations as there are varieties of thought, feelings, desires, emotions, etc. Every mental state has its own degree, quality and character of vibration. And as the mental states intermingle and become more complex, so do the variations of vibratory action become more complex. But whether simple or complex, they tend to set up similar vibrations in the minds of others who are attuned to receive them in the shape of thought waves. There are also many degrees of intensity, influence and persistence. There is a difference as wide as the space between the poles between a strong, intense mental state and a mere fanciful feeling or idea—and the vibrations of each correspond thereto. There are also the vibrations arising from special mental states, and from the general character of the mental states of the individual. The latter are in the nature of composite vibrations arising from the continued action of the mind

after the actual thought has passed from the field of consciousness into the subconscious regions of the mind.

The vibrations arising from the general character of the thoughts of the individual, as a rule, are not projected very far from his body, but remain around him in the state of a "thought atmosphere," or "aura" as some have called it, and which thought atmosphere has much to do with what we call the phenomena of "personality." This subject of thought atmospheres will be considered in detail in our next chapter. Other thought-waves, arising from special mental states are projected a greater distance from the body, according to their nature and intensity. The man of strong desires, feelings, will, and imagination has a tendency to project his thought-currents to a great distance.

Not only do individuals have their distinctive thought-waves and mental currents, but assemblies, communities, cities, countries and nations have their collective thought-waves, arising of course from the composite thought of the individuals composing them. It should require no argument to convince a thinking individual of the difference in character between the thought-waves existing in a church and a concert-hall; a college and a bar-room; a scientific library and a five-cent show.

Those who have traveled much know that every city has its personal mental atmosphere peculiar to itself.

And even the small towns differ from each other in similar degree. Think of the “personalities” of Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, New York, San Francisco, respectively. Is there any danger of mistaking the characteristics of one for that of another? These things do not “just happen;” they are the result of the operation of the scientific laws of mental currents.

There are certain portions of every city in which there appears to be a mental “something” at work that induces activity, business, energy, and enterprise, while only a block or so distant an entirely different state of affairs exists. There is a tendency of men of like mental characteristics to attract each other to a common centre, the result being that the centre once formed serves to attract others to it, and to become a thought whirlpool around which the waters of business and commerce circle. It is of common knowledge that in many cities there is one side of a certain street that attracts to itself the greater share of the business of the thoroughfare, although there is no apparent physical explanation of the phenomena.

The secret is that some strong mentality had originally started the thought currents in that direction, and then others feeling the attraction have added to the original impulse, which then became permanent.

The streets, the buildings, the street cars and trains are filled with the thought currents of the people frequenting them. And we are affected by them in two

ways, viz.: (1) In the direction of receiving the vibrations having some marked degree of harmony with our own; and (2) by feeling the resistance to our own expression of thought, occasioned by the opposing thought-waves of others not in harmony with us. The first is in the direction of the “affinity” existing between similar things on all planes of activity, physical, mental and spiritual, which manifests in the direction of attracting to a thing the other things in harmonic vibration with itself, and the repulsion of other things lacking such harmonic vibrations. The second is caused by the universal law of “opposites,” operating likewise on all planes of activity, physical, mental, and spiritual, which manifests in a thing by tending to oppose, resist, and retard the expression of its opposite.

The fact to be remembered in considering the first of the above forms of contact with thought currents of others, is that we may decide the character of the thoughts that we shall receive by carefully observing the rule to think only along such lines as may be worthy of us, and which may tend to our betterment, strength, and advancement. In other words, we have the power to select our mental company. Determine to regulate your thoughts so that you will attract to yourself only the thoughts conducive to your well-being and advancement; and to carefully refrain from indulging in feelings, desires, imaginings or other mental states that may be detrimental to you in the direction of attracting

to you similar thought-waves emanating from the minds of others. Many persons who exercise great care in their selection of personal company, are very careless about the selection of their mental comrades— and the latter is just as important, if not more so, than the former. You avoid the companionship of persons in whose company you are ashamed to be seen—likewise should you avoid the companionship of thoughts that you would be ashamed to have people know that you had formed acquaintance and comradeship with.

In the second form of contact with the mental currents of others, the remedy lies in the fact that we are able to counteract the opposing and adverse thought currents of others in two ways, viz.: (a) By avoiding, so far as is possible, the vicinity favored by those of the opposing mental tendencies. People of similar tastes are apt to congregate around each other, owing to the law of mental attraction. And it is easy to avoid frequenting such places. Keep out of harm's way: Avoid bad company, for this if no other reason. Refrain from frequenting places having a bad mental atmosphere. And avoid people whose personal atmosphere has a tendency to affect you adversely, for instance in the direction of depressing you, giving you detrimental suggestions, lowering influence, etc. Frequent the places, and cultivate the presence of the people, from which you recognize the emanation of helpful and stimulating thought vibrations. But there is still another, and a better

way, and that is (b) to cultivate strong, positive, thought-vibrations of your own, which will overpower and beat off the opposing mental currents of others which have tended to retard you. The law in the mental world, as in the physical, is that “Positives overcome Negatives.” This is the law for you to remember and put into effect.

A positive mental state is one conducive to advancement, strength and power—one that stimulates and imparts vitality. A negative mental state is one that degrades, weakens, robs of power—one that depresses and enervates. They are opposites—there is no difficulty in distinguishing between them. Hold fast to the positives—discard the negatives. And, remember, first, last, and all the time that: Positives Neutralize and Destroy Negatives.

NOTES

III. THOUGHT ATMOSPHERES

Every person has a thought atmosphere, depending upon the general character of his thoughts. And every place, house, room, office, or workshop has its own distinctive mental atmosphere arising from the general character of the thoughts of the persons occupying it. Proof of this statement is not necessary to persons who have been out in the world of men and women, and who have learned to distinguish that subtle mental emanation surrounding people and producing its effect upon those with whom it comes in contact. This experience has come to nearly every person who may read these words. Who has not *felt* that strange, unexplainable, but distinct impression regarding strange people the moment they have entered one's presence? Who has not felt that peculiar sensation of like or dislike; confidence or distrust; attention or aversion; arising from the mere presence of certain people who may not even be known to one? These things do not arise from mere fancy, but are the result of perfectly natural laws that are understood by those who have made a scientific study of the subject.

There are certain public speakers, preachers, orators, statesmen, and others accustomed to addressing large numbers of people, who diffuse a thought influence over their hearers merely by standing in their midst and attracting their attention. Some men seem to claim

recognition as born leaders by reason of that strange thought influence emanating from them, even before they have uttered a word. Others, perhaps equally brilliant intellectually, fail to produce this effect—there seems to be something lacking in them. There are physicians whose mere entry into the room imparts a feeling of confidence and trust in the mind of the patient and his family, and which changes the entire atmosphere of the room. Other physicians possessing equal knowledge, experience and ability, fail to produce this effect. Some salesmen induce a feeling of good fellowship the moment they come into one's presence; while others arouse but a feeling of indifference, or even actual repulsion. Some actors need but to appear before an audience, and even before the first words of the lines are uttered something goes out from the man to the crowd that is actually *felt* as a living force, while other actors produce only a lack of interest, and oftentimes a feeling of being bored. But why multiply these instances of the manifestations of mental atmosphere? Everyone who has noticed anything about the characteristics of people must have had his or her attention directed to this matter by actual experience, many times. It is a matter of such common experience that the idea has but to be mentioned in order to be recognized and admitted.

By some, this personal atmosphere of people has been treated as if it were some strange, unknown force, unconnected with mind or body of the people

emanating it. The term “magnetism” has been used in connection with it, very aptly, and this fact has led many to imagine that it is something other than it is. And, accordingly, many ingenious theories have been devised to account for it. And many have been the “methods” taught to be conducive to its cultivation. Publishers and teachers have issued high price “courses” purporting to instruct one in the art of acquiring “personal magnetism.” Certain methods of breathing, certain modes of diet, certain physical exercises, all these have formed parts of the so-called instruction in the art of acquiring personal magnetism, particularly in its phase of personal atmosphere. But under all of these methods there may be noticed a carefully veiled allusion to the value of the mental attitude of the person practicing the exercise. And in that little “side-issue” really lies all the virtue in the various methods. For personal magnetism is, first, last, and all the time, nothing but the result of mental energies, and depends entirely upon the character, quality, and degree of thought-energy manifested by the person.

One’s prevalent thoughts and feelings, his hopes, fears, and desires, as well as his mental pictures produced in his imagination, are not only projected into space, there to affect others, but they also create around him what some of the old writers called an “aura,” or atmosphere, of thought vibrations which may be felt distinctly by those with whom he comes in contact. This

mental atmosphere varies in degree, character, quality, and extension, according to the characteristics of the person. In some, the extension is great—that is, the mental atmosphere may be felt at a great distance from them; while in others it may be so feeble that it can be noticed only when one is very near to them. Then again, the degree of power differs materially. Some persons radiate such powerful thought vibrations that others are markedly influenced more or less by simply remaining in the presence of the persons emanating the force. Others radiate vibrations of but a feeble character, which are capable of producing but a faint effect. And so far as the character and kind of vibrations emanated or radiated, one may see that the variety is endless, depending as it does upon the specific character and thought tendencies and habits of the persons manifesting them.

The whole matter may be summed up in the explanation that each and every person is surrounded by a thought atmosphere, extending some distance from him, in which is reproduced the general character of his mental states, and which atmosphere may be, and is, felt by others with whom he comes in contact.

The degree of strength of the thought atmosphere depends upon the degree of strength of the mental states. The degree of receptivity of others to this thought atmosphere depends upon the particular temperamental receptivity of the other persons. This thought atmosphere is composed of subtle vibrations of the

ether, just as real and actual as the vibrations which are known to us as electricity, magnetism, heat and light. The matter is not one connected with mystical theories or weird beliefs, but is recognized by the advanced science of today, having its underlying principles and laws of operation, which may be understood by anyone who will take the trouble to investigate the subject scientifically. Beneath the strange theories and wild assertions of some of the leaders of the many cults and schools teaching some of the phenomena of the newer phases of psychology, there is a solid basis of scientific fact based upon experiment and rational investigation.

As has been said, not only do persons have their own thought atmospheres, but places also have a similar condition manifested within them. That is, that every house, room, office, store, workshop or other place that is or has been occupied by people, has its own personal and particular thought atmosphere which is perceptible to persons entering within its walls. This thought atmosphere is the result of the thought vibrations of those who have occupied it. This statement, also, is one that has but to be mentioned in order to be recognized as being correct. For nearly every person has had some personal experience of this strange phenomena. Who has not felt, when entering into a strange house, a peculiar feeling or impression about the place, even though its occupants may be utter strangers to the visitor, and may not yet have put in an appearance? Who

has not experienced similar sensations when entering a strange room in a hotel, school, railroad station, or other place? Or in an empty house? Who has not felt the atmospheres of the several stores in which one deals? One store gives the impression of activity and wide-awakeness, while another will convey the impression of sleepiness, non-progressiveness, and lack of interest. Another store will convey the impression of fair-dealing and a desire to satisfy the customer; while another will give the undefinable feeling of trickiness, over-shrewdness, and a desire to overreach the customer.

Many persons receive the above mentioned impressions quite readily, and are influenced by them. Some office buildings seem to be thrilling with life and activity, while others give forth a somnolent, drowsy, "back number," "has been" air that is unmistakable. Ask any traveling salesman whether he does not receive impressions of this kind from the various places of business he visits on his trips. The writer has been informed by a representative of one of the great mercantile agencies, who has acquired quite a reputation for his ability to scent out unfavorable conditions in business, that the thought atmospheres of places of business, in many cases, have been the first hint he received that there was something queer under way in them. There is an entirely different thought atmosphere around a business place in which things are prosperous and progressive, from that around one in which the

opposite conditions prevail. Persons accustomed to entering business places notice these things often, although they may not recognize the source of the impression, and may often attribute it to an “instinct” or “intuition.” It is really nothing but the impressions produced by the sensing of the particular mental atmosphere of the place.

It may be asked how it is possible that places may possess mental atmospheres even after the persons causing them have departed from the place. The answer is to be found in the well-established scientific law of the persistence of energy. A stove may be removed from a room, and yet its heat vibrations will remain for some time. A distant star may be blotted out of existence, and yet its light will travel for centuries. The light of the distant stars that we see every night left them in the shape of ethereal light vibrations hundreds of years ago. The perfume of the rose, which is but another form of vibration, lingers in the room for hours after the flower is removed. Old closets and bureau drawers retain the faint odor of perfume for years. Old letters, after being hidden away for a quarter-century, give forth the subtle odor of the favorite perfume of the writer, bringing tears to the eyes of one who remembers.

The little ebony cabinet that Mary, Queen of Scots⁷, brought over from France several centuries ago, still exhales the odor of the favorite perfume of that unhappy queen. A paper wafer may be laid upon the surface of a new razor, and the metal then breathed upon. When the moisture has evaporated, the wafer may be removed and no sign of its presence is apparent. But, breathe upon it again—a minute after, or a month, or a year—and if the surface has not been previously disturbed, the spectral image of the wafer will reappear. The experiment may be performed upon a good mirror, with fair results. Let a sheet of paper be exposed to the bright sunlight, after placing upon its surface another object, and then carefully kept in the dark for several months after removing the object laid on it. If the sheet then be laid upon a plate of hot metal (still in the dark), the figure of the object will appear on its surface. Science gives us many analogies akin to that of the persistence of thought vibrations.

But, as we have said elsewhere in this little book, thought vibrations may be neutralized by others of a more positive character, or those of greater power. So that no matter how negative may be the thought atmosphere of a place, it may be made positive by a

⁷ Mary Stuart (1542–1587), Scottish queen. An anecdote about her ebony cabinet retaining the scent of her perfume for centuries illustrates the persistence of vibrations, a key argument for the lasting nature of thought-atmospheres.

change in the thoughts of those frequenting the place. By directing to the place a steady and frequent current of positive thought, the old conditions will disappear gradually, just as the darkness of a room may be driven out by letting in the light of the rising sun. The coming in of a positive person who radiates vigorous thought vibrations, often changes the entire mental atmosphere of a place, and visitors may distinguish the difference at once. Each of you may charge your room, house, office, or store with strong positive thought vibrations, if you will but begin to send forth the right kinds of thought, and avoid the sending out of thoughts of a depressing, negative character.

And just as the thought atmosphere of the place may be changed by right thinking, so may one's personal thought atmosphere be changed by the same process. Our personal thought atmospheres are just what we have made them by our mental states; and we may alter, change and improve them in the same way, if we will but go about it in earnest. The method of procedure is simple—this book is filled with it—the only thing needed is earnest effort, and perseverance. The work itself becomes a pleasure, and is helpful and power-giving. For the reaction upon one's self of strong, positive thoughts sent forth to create or improve the mental atmosphere of one's self, or one's room, will prove very beneficial, uplifting and strengthening. By action and reaction do we become strong or weak,

according to the character of our thoughts and mental states.

NOTES

IV. THE MAGNET OF THOUGHT

“Thoughts are Things”—many things, in fact. And one of the things that thought is, is a Magnet. Yes, a magnet— an actual magnet, not merely a figure of speech magnet. This is one of the phases of the phenomena of thought “thingness” that possesses the most weird and magical interest to the investigator when he becomes aware of the truth of the proposition for the first time. Our thoughts constitute the elements of a great thought magnet that operates in the direction of drawing to us the persons, things, ideas, knowledge, and environment in harmony with our composite mental states and conducive to the expression of our static thought into dynamic action. And, the reverse of this is true, for the same peculiar property of the thought magnet operates in the direction of repelling and repulsing persons, things, ideas, knowledge and environment of an opposite character and calculated to prevent the expression of our dominant thoughts.

All this may seem strange and fanciful to one who has never investigated the subject, but it is proven not only by investigation and experiment, but also by analogy. All through nature there is a manifestation of this law of attraction and repulsion. The atom attracts another in rhythmic harmony with itself, and repels and repulses one of opposing vibratory rhythm. Chemical affinity, molecular attraction, cohesion— physical laws, all of

them—as well as the phenomena of magnetism and electricity, all attest the universality of this law. The mineral may be dissolved in a liquid containing many other minerals or chemicals, and yet, when the opportunity for crystallization arises, we see the orderly formation of its special crystal, by gradual stages, the first granule attracting to itself the materials of its own kind, discarding and repelling atoms of different composition. The crystal acts almost as if it knew its own kind.

The seed planted in the earth draws to itself from the earth, and water, and light, precisely the kind of material it needs to build up its particular kind of plant. Take two tiny seeds, both practically alike so far as chemical analysis reveals, and plant them in the same earth, containing the same constituents—plant them side by side if you will. And from that same earth, and from the same water that falls upon them, and from the same sunlight that invigorates them, each plant draws to itself exactly what is in rhythmic harmony with its inner nature—and one develops into a deadly nightshade, and the other into a fragrant rose. The honey of the bee, and the poison in its sting, are both extracted from the same nectar it sips from the flower.

The milk of the cow, and the virus of the cobra are drawn from the same elementary substances. Why? There is no evidence of rational choice, as we use the term, in these things. There is but the operation of that

universal principle—the Law of Attraction. Birds of a feather flock together. Like attracts like.

And in the case of living things, we find that that mysterious process which we call “nature” provides that each thing shall draw to itself the other things that serve to nourish it and to enable it to grow and express the life that is within it. The desire for expression is a vital energy that causes the thing to struggle for existence, and to draw to itself that which is conducive to its survival. Not only do minerals, plants, animals, and men act in accordance with this law, but passing on to the mental plane we find that ideas, desires and mental states struggle for survival and expression. There is always a conflict of desires, feelings, motives, and ideals, going on within our mentality— and the strongest wins out. We may throw the weight of our will into the struggle and decide the day, it is true, but the principle remains. And each idea, desire, and feeling exerts its attractive power in the direction of drawing to itself other things of its own kind to serve to strengthen and develop itself, and to allow it to express itself more fully. All this refers to the inner workings of thought attraction—there is an outer phase.

Have you never noticed that when a man is filled with a strong, burning desire to express a certain line of mental activity, and sets to work to make his thoughts take form in action, there seems to be set into operation a train of circumstances that tend to draw to him the

persons, things, and environments conducive to that particular line of expression, or else to draw the man himself away from his old environment, occupation, and surroundings into the presence of those better adapted to the expression of his thought? A little consideration will show you, either from your own experience or that of others, how common is this occurrence. We hear much of people finding “by chance” the very things needed to complete their invention, story, theory, etc. We hear of others finding “by accident” the very book containing the information that they needed, or the person who could, and would, put them on the path of that which they sought. But there is no chance or accident about these things. They are a part of the working of the law of cause and effect in its phase of thought attraction. Life is full of these occurrences, but we pass them by heedlessly and carelessly, until we become acquainted with the law.

“Thoughts are things” just as much as are the chemicals, minerals, crystals, plants, seeds, and living things that we have mentioned above. And all “things” have this inclination toward expression, development and growth, and the corresponding power to draw to themselves as nourishment the thing conducive to that expression and growth. And so thoughts manifest this universal law of life, and under the same general laws that govern all other “things.” An individual holding a strong ideal, desire, feeling or emotion, sets into

operation this natural principle which tends to form an attractive centre, similar to the centre of the crystal, which then attracts to itself the things, surroundings, environment, and persons in harmony with its nature and conducive to its expression. As we have said, it may do this either by actually attracting these to itself, or else causing its owner to move toward them.

This attractive power operates gradually, and more or less slowly at first. But like the rolling snowball, or the growing crystal, its rate of growth increases with its size. We have known many cases of men and women who have attained in after years the ideals of their earlier days. In many cases they were apparently led away from the channels of expression for a number of years, but then, later, there would come to them a peculiar branching off or divergence in a certain direction, and lo! sometimes before they realized it they found themselves materializing and expressing their old ideals. Every strong desire, ideal, or feeling is a seed-action that will strive ever to express itself and draw to itself that which will tend to nourish it and enable it to manifest into action and objective shape and form. Of course, many of these seeds never grow—they are crowded out by other and stronger seeds, or else are killed out by the will. And, in the same way, the mental states that are watered by attention, and surrounded by the rich soil of encouragement, tend to develop more strength and vigor and to outstrip their weaker companions. This

mental gardening is a worthy task for the individual, and one that will bring to him a full measure of results.

Not only are we largely what we have thought ourselves into being, but we have around us largely those things that we have attracted to us by our thoughts. This may be objected to by some who say that they have reaped the things they feared, rather than the things they desired—"the thing I feared has come upon me." But what of that? Is not a fear a mental state as much as is desire? Fear is the negative pole of the mental state of which the positive pole is desire. In both cases a strong mental picture is held, and the thought processes are set into operation to materialize it into objectivity. The man who continually holds the mental picture of poverty in his mind, surely attracts those conditions to him. The man who holds the idea of prosperity before him attracts his own to himself. And right here, at this very place, we wish to give you the antidote and remedy for fear. It is this: If you dislike a thing, and therefore find yourself evincing a fear that it may materialize in your life—stop right there and take mental stock of yourself. Then begin by steadily refusing to allow your mind to dwell upon the fear, but in its place build up the desire for, and the thought picture of, the very opposite thing—the thing or condition which if realized will save you from the thing you are beginning to fear. Then concentrate all your efforts upon the mental growth of this idea, desire, feeling, and hope for the thing you want—and try to

forget the thing you have feared, driving it out of your mind by will, and determination. You will find that by cultivating and dwelling upon the positives, you will neutralize and kill out the negatives. If you will but realize the value of this little bit of advice that we have just given you; and will begin to act upon it, you will ever look back upon this moment of the first reading of it, with feelings of joy and thankfulness. For it is the antidote for fear—and fear is the deadly nightshade of the mind.

Each of us is a great thought-magnet, ever drawing to us things, persons, and environment—circumstances even—in harmony with our composite thoughts, and tending to enable those thoughts to express themselves. And at the same time we are ever repelling, driving away and repulsing the things of the opposite character. This being so, does it not become of the greatest importance for us to cultivate the right sort of thought-magnet, that we may draw to ourselves that which we would desire? Does it not become our duty to drive out from our thought realm the thoughts that tend to attract to us the people and conditions calculated to pull us down in the quicksands of life? Does it not become our duty to ourselves to drag up by the roots that deadly nightshade of the mind—Fear? And with it its companion plants of Hate, Anger and jealousy, all of which tend to bring about undesirable conditions for us— and all of which are negatives and not positives?

We are all thought-magnets whether we wish to be or not. And this being so is it not the height of folly to refuse to take advantage of the understanding of this law, and to cultivate the positive qualities of thought that will serve to draw to us the things that will aid us, and bring us greater happiness, health, and success? If asked to choose between the results of the positive qualities, and those of the negative qualities, no sane man or woman would hesitate a moment. And yet many shiver on the brink of the great lake of life, unable to decide whether it is worthwhile to choose between the boat of Positivity which will take them safely across to the shore of Attainment, by the use of the oars of the will and the reason, on the one hand; or the rotten, heavy, flat-bottomed scow of Negativity, which has no oars, but just “drifts” along until it becomes waterlogged and sinks, on the other hand. It is a matter for your own choice. We have pointed out the way, and stated the rules—you must do the rest. In the phrase of the day: “It is now up to you.”

To those who object that this matter of the magnetic power of thought savors too much of magic or miracles, we would say that a careful consideration of the principles of thought-waves and thought-currents, radiating on all sides, in all directions, from every individual, reaching those for whom they are intended, and with whom they are in harmony, will be seen to cover all the points and meet all the requirements of the

case. It is all a matter of natural scientific principles and law. There is nothing miraculous or magical about it. It is but another application of the principle of: “As ye sow; so shall ye reap.” You sow seed thoughts, and you reap materialized conditions.

You sow thought, and you reap action. Each seed grows trees, blossoms, and fruit according to its kind.

You are a thought-magnet. What are you drawing to yourself? Is it not time to stop attracting negative conditions? Do you want positives? Then think, feel, desire and act accordingly.

NOTES

V. CREATIVE THOUGHT

In the preceding chapter we explained to you the operations of the law of attraction, under which thoughts tend to attract or draw to themselves the things in harmony with themselves, and which are conducive to the outward expression of the thought. In connection therewith we called your attention to the fact that there is a universal tendency toward expression and manifestation. All things have the inward urge prompting the fullest expression and manifestation, and the law of attraction serves to draw the materials for the same. Accompanying this active principle of nature, there is another law operative on both the mental and physical planes, and this law we now ask you to consider. We refer to the law of materialization, or objective creative effort.

The law of materialization is universal—it is found on all planes and manifests in various ways. Its underlying principle is its inward tendency to create forms, and outward manifestation. In the mineral world we find a constant state of motion, change and building up of form. The electrons group themselves into atoms; the atoms into molecules; and the molecules into various shapes and forms and varieties. Underlying it all, science perceives the constant effort of the inner to express itself in the outer—the invisible striving to become visible—the unmanifest striving to become manifest. We shall

not dwell on this side of the subject—we mention it merely to illustrate the universality of the law. And not only do physical things possess this inward urge toward outward materialization, but thoughts, being “things,” also possess and manifest it to a great degree. Thoughts strive to take form in action. Thoughts strive ever to materialize themselves in objective material form. A strong mental state produces mental unrest in its efforts to materialize itself. In its striving for birth on the material plane it sets into operation both the law of attraction, before mentioned, and also starts into operation the subconscious activities of the mind in the direction of thinking out plans and means wherewith the materialization may be effected.

Before considering further the operation of this law in the thought world, let us pause a moment and consider how perfectly natural and common a thing is the materialization of thought. At first mention it seems unusual to say the least. But when we begin to consider that the entire creative and inventive work of man is simply the result of the materialization of his imaginings, the matter takes on another aspect. Every material thing that man has created, built, erected or constructed has first existed as a thought in the imagination of the inventor, maker or builder. Every house that has been built has had its preceding thought-form in the imagination of the architect or designer.

This is true of every bridge that ever has been constructed, and of every piece of machinery. The locomotive, the steamboat, the telegraph, the telephone, the electric light, the telescope, the microscope, the printing press—every invention, in fact— has had its mental image preceding its material construction. It existed first as a thought-thing, and then as a material-thing. And yet some people doubt the “thingness” of thought, and regard the imagination as mere “fancy.”

There is, it is true, a negative form of imagination that is but little more than mere fancy, but in its positive phase, the imagination is the great creative workshop of the world. And those who understand its mighty power no longer allow it to “run away with them,” but, instead, set it to work, well harnessed, and then reap the result that comes to those who understand and apply the great laws of nature. Some of the statements that will follow may seem strange to you, but if you have firmly grasped the idea of the “thingness” of thoughts, you will see in the phenomena simply the transformation of the subtle form of things into a visible and material form. Just as Morse’s telegraph was but the materialization of his thought-form of it; just as Edison’s electric light was but the materialization of his thought-image of it; just as the Brooklyn bridge was but the materialization of its designer’s imaginative-forms—so are the great business enterprises, the great telegraph lines, the great railroad routes, the great trusts, the great financial houses, just

the result of the thoughts of those who created them. Think of this for a moment until the truth of the statement sinks into your mind. Then listen to this further statement: Just as these things are objectified forms of subjective ideas—materialized forms of immaterial thoughts—so the ideas, mental images, ideals, hopes, and aspirations of all of us, are the moulds, patterns, or dies of the material things of our future. We are making patterns today that will be materialized tomorrow. We are making today the moulds from which the materialized things of the future will emerge.

But, it may be urged, all ideals do not become real, all hopes are not realized, all aspirations are not possible of expression and attainment—why? The answer lies in the fact that the majority of people do not know how to desire—do not know what they want. So far as desire is concerned, they content themselves with mere “wishing,” or “wanting” or fretting because they haven’t the thing—real, active, burning, creative desire is foreign to their natures. They say they want things— but they “don’t want them hard enough.” The men who attain are those who are filled with the burning thirst of desire which leaves nothing undone to satisfy itself. The desire hardens into will, and bends and draws everything toward its manifestation and accomplishment. Desire is the motive power that is behind all attainment, achievement and action. Unless one possesses it he does not act and move.

And as to the matter of getting things, very few people really know just what they do want—they lack clear mental images of the desired thing. The same people who know exactly what they want so far as a small thing is concerned—and accordingly get it if their desire is strong enough, and the will is firm—are at sea when it comes to imaging great things. They content themselves with merely vaguely wanting something different from what they have—and the result is that they wander around from one thing to another, like a ship that has lost its rudder. The strongest desire—the most rigid will—will fail to accomplish anything for the person who has not formed a clear mental picture or idea of exactly what he does want.

Therefore, in the materialization of thought, one should first take mental stock of himself, then pick out the things that he really wants to accomplish or to acquire and then proceed to build up the strongest kind of desire for those things. In this way he sets into operation the law of thought materialization, and incidentally the law of attraction, and the preliminary operations whereby the ideal becomes real are started in motion.

A clear-cut mental picture, or idea, of the things that one wishes to accomplish, serves as a nucleus around which the creative forces of thought centre, and which they use as a basis of creative materialization. There must always be this creative centre around which thought may

build. This centre must be formed in that wonderful creative region of thought—the imagination. In the imagination you must form the clear mental picture or ideal that you wish to make real. At first you will be able to see it but dimly, but repetition will deepen the lines, and broaden the form, until the ideal will be seen in the actual process of realization and materialization. You will find that the ideal will develop and grow under the attention that you are giving to it. New details will work into the picture, and the fainter portions will come into plainer view, while the important details will stand out in still bolder relief. Very often you may not be able to form the complete mental image at the start, in which case do not be discouraged but try to see the first step, or the first detail of the thing, as clearly as possible.

This will serve as the “seed-image” from which the complete picture will develop. Until you are able to form the ideal of what you want, in your imagination, you do not really know just what you do want. Train the imagination to show you the picture of the thing you want—this is the first important step in thought creative effort.

Then bestow upon your mental picture, or ideal, a constant supply of desire. Look at your picture, and then long for it, crave it, hunger and thirst for it—and by so doing you will set into motion the natural laws of the thought world, which will tend to make real your ideal. You will find new plans, methods, and means flashing

into your mind from the great subconscious regions—and the law of attraction will bring to your aid the persons, things and environments conducive to the materialization of your thought; or else will lead you to them. You and the means will be brought together somehow, someway, sometime. It will not all be done at once. Just as the crystal slowly forms around its centre, so will your materialized thought form around the ideal that serves as its centre. Just as the tree grows from the seed, so will the tree of objective form and shape and condition grow from your seed ideal, if it be kept watered with care, attention and persistency, and warmed by the sun of desire. Thus shall our dreams come true—our ideals become realities—our subjective thoughts become objective things.

And so we see that the generally reviled imagination is really the mystic creative workshop of the mind, in which are first created the patterns, moulds, and designs of all that shall afterward become the material realities of life. Consequently we should exercise care in the selection of the subject and objects of our imagination. Drive out the negative pictures which tend to materialize their corresponding realities. Keep the attention and the imagination firmly fixed on the positives. Practice will enable you to do this. Hang bright pictures in the gallery of the mind.

NOTES

VI. YOUR LATENT POWERS

Another of the several important revelations attending the truth that “Thoughts are Things,” is the startling fact that the average individual is merely “scratching the surface” of his thought-power in his everyday thinking. It is now accepted as an established scientific fact that the creative faculty of thought may be operated not only in the direction of outward materialization, but also in the direction of developing the powers of the self—the faculties of one’s own mind—in brain building, in short. It appears that the human race has been merely picking up the nuggets of thought from the surface of the mind, and allowing the rich deposits lying beneath to remain undisturbed. As Professor William James says, we have not used our “second wind” of thought. In this connection we think that the following quotation from a recent magazine article of Professor James will be of interest to you. Here it is:

“Everyone knows what it is to start a piece of work, either intellectual or muscular, feeling stale or ‘cold,’ as an Adirondack guide⁸ once put it to me. And everybody knows what it is to ‘warm up’ to his job. The process of

⁸ An unnamed guide from the Adirondack Mountains who used the phrase 'cold' to describe a lack of readiness. William James included this in his essay 'The Energies of Men' to illustrate the need to push past initial fatigue.

warming up gets particularly striking in the phenomenon known as ‘second wind.’ On usual occasions we make a practice of stopping an occupation as soon as we meet the first effective layer (so to call it) of fatigue. We have then walked, played or worked ‘enough,’ so we desist. That amount of fatigue is an efficacious obstruction, on this side of which our usual life is cast. But if an unusual necessity forces us to press onward, a surprising thing occurs. The fatigue gets worse up to a certain critical point, when gradually or suddenly it passes away, and we are fresher than before. We have evidently tapped a level of new energy, masked until then by the fatigue-obstacle usually obeyed. There may be layer after layer of this experience. A third and fourth ‘wind’ may supervene. Mental activity shows the phenomenon as well as physical, and in exceptional cases we may find, beyond the very extremity of fatigue distress, amounts of ease and power that we never dreamed ourselves to own, sources of strength habitually not taxed at all, because habitually we never push through the obstruction, never pass those early critical points.”

Thus we see, on the evidence of one of the world’s greatest authorities on psychology, the fact that there are great “layers” of thought-power in the mind of man, which are seldom used. It is true that Professor James speaks of this “second wind” of thought as reached only by great effort, and under exceptional circumstances—but one may go still further in this matter. Not only may

these hidden powers of mind be reached by great effort, and under exceptional circumstances, as stated, but they may be uncovered by simple methods of gradual development by the use of desire, will and imagination. One may develop any mental quality to a remarkable degree by means of the simple methods to be described in this chapter. One may suppress the activities of undesirable faculties in the same way. And one may actually create a new character for himself by the same procedure.

This method of self-development, unfoldment of the latent powers of mind, reconstruction of character, brain building, or whatever we may prefer to call it, depends upon the operation of thought in the two directions mentioned in preceding chapters of this book, namely:

(1) the law of materialization, under the operations of which thought tends to materialize itself into objective reality; and;

(2) the law of attraction, under the operations of which thought tends to draw to itself the particular materials conducive to its materialization and expression. In the preceding chapters we have shown you how thought acts in accordance with these two laws in the direction of outward manifestation. We now invite you to consider thought employing the same laws in the direction of inward manifestation—in manifestation in the brain which it uses.

Without entering into theory, we may say that we hold that the brain is merely the organ of the mind—the thinking machine which mind uses to produce thoughts. But, note this important fact—it is a machine also capable of being used to build up, enlarge, add to, and change itself. Mind not only uses the brain to produce thoughts, but it also uses thoughts to build up brain. By turning thought back upon the brain, it causes brain to develop in order that better and stronger thoughts may be produced, and so on—action and reaction, ever. A strange procedure, but strictly in line with nature's evolutionary processes. And now let us plunge at once into the heart of the method that may be used in this brain-building, self-development, character creation, etc.

This inner building work of thought is accomplished by the employment of desire, will, and the imagination, operating under what in scientific parlance is termed the Law of Use. By the latter is meant that principle of nature which causes a part, muscle, organ, or mental faculty (as well as many other things) to develop by active employment and use. You know how a muscle develops by use, and how a part tends to flabbiness, and even atrophy, by disuse. The same rule applies to the mental faculties or brain centres. The fire of desire generates an energy which demands expression and materialization; the imagination supplies the mental picture of the quality or power desired, which serves as a pattern or mould for the thing itself; the will holds the

attention firmly upon the desire, mental image, and activity; and the active employment, by use, of the rudimentary faculty or brain centre tends to build up a stronger and more active centre or faculty. The law of attraction, and the law of materialization, respectively, aid in the building up process. And thus is the latent power developed.

You find yourself deficient in certain qualities. Then begin to realize just what these qualities are, in detail, and form a mental picture of yourself “as you will be” when you develop these faculties or qualities. Make the mental picture as deep and clear as possible—strive to imagine yourself as acting by reason of these qualities. See yourself as already in possession of them. Give the imagination a loose rein in this matter, so far as the forming of mental pictures is concerned, although do not give yourself over to day dreaming at the expense of action. Then cultivate the strongest kind of desire for the materialization of the said qualities or faculties. Want them “hard.” Hunger and thirst after their attainment. Fill yourself with ambition and aspiration in that particular direction. Use your will in giving your strongest attention to the matter at frequent intervals, and in preventing anything else to “sidetrack” you. Also use the will in the direction of preventing you from acting along lines calculated to interfere with the cultivation of the ideal. Then endeavor to exercise, employ and use whatever faculties or qualities you may

already possess along the lines of the ideal. No matter how little of the desired quality you may possess, use it to the utmost—employ it actively upon all occasions—exercise it freely and frequently—for by so doing you set the laws into operation, that will make it grow and develop.

You will notice that this method consists of the seeing, desiring, willing and acting along the direct lines of the object to be attained. These four phases are necessary—you cannot omit any of them without weakening the method. Many fail in similar practices because they content themselves with mere thinking and desiring, and omitting the willing and acting, particularly the acting. Every time you act out some little detail of your ideal, you strengthen yourself ten-fold in that detail.

The manifestation of a thought strengthens the brain centre controlling that thought, and adds to its dynamic power. If you will keep before your mind the idea of strengthening of a muscle, you will be able to see more plainly the process whereby you may strengthen your mental muscles, or brain centres.

Take the instance of a baby learning to walk. It sees others walking, and forms the mental picture of the act—if it were brought up in the company of crawling creatures, alone, it probably would never think of walking but would crawl about on all fours. Seeing others walk, it forms the “idea” or mental picture of walking, and then wants to walk itself—it forms the

“ideal.” Then finding it difficult to walk, but still wanting to do so, its desire is set on fire and it begins to manifest a burning desire to stand erect and step out. It uses its will to that purpose, and it develops not only the leg muscles, but also the co-ordinate brain centres governing walking, and strengthens both by use. And in the end it does walk—why? Because it knew what it wanted; wanted it hard enough; used will in the process; kept its attention and imagination busily on the task; and finally, used every opportunity to manifest the mental state into action. It saw itself walking before it could manifest the act; it wanted and desired to walk before the desire could be materialized; it tried hard to walk before it succeeded. And in doing these things it unconsciously brought into operation the various mental laws of thought materialization and expression.

And these are just the stages of the process of brain building, character development, self-creation. This is the way you may mine the deeper strata of thought expression—this is how you may catch your “second wind,” or third, fourth, or fifth wind, in fact. The method is scientific and simple—but it requires patient and persistent practice. The thinking must be supplemented by acting. Acts and thoughts react upon each other, each action and reaction tending to strengthen and develop. Thoughts along a given line make it easier for you to act along those lines. Acts along

those lines render it easier for you to think along them. "To him who hath, shall be given."

In conclusion, we think it well to say that in this process of development and brain building, the rule already stated that "to restrain a mental quality or faculty, develop its opposite," is in full operation. If your self-building requires the restraint of some faculty or quality of thought, the best and simplest plan is to develop the opposite quality or faculty.

The average person considers that his "character" or "nature" has been given to him once and for all, and is as unchangeable as the motion of the earth around the sun. And it is unchangeable, unless he proceeds to turn back upon his brain the power of the thought evolved therefrom.

That which enables the man to build up outside things by reason of his creative thought; that enables him to materialize his thought-forms; may also be used by him in the direction of the addition to, alteration, development and unfoldment of his own thought-machine. By means of thought-power he may explore the deep recesses of his mind, or dig down into its depths, bringing forth to the light of consciousness many rare and beautiful things. A man's mind is like a great unexplored forest, in the majority of cases. Only by exploration along scientific lines may he discover what he has in it. By intelligent application of these principles he may rid that forest of the noxious and dangerous

creatures lurking in its depths, and at the same time bring forth many things that will well serve him in his life work.

Why spend our days in striving for help from outside— why pay great prices to others—when within ourselves are to be found the most valuable of qualities and possessions, awaiting the hour of discovery and development? For, after all, all this development, creation and building is in the nature of “unfoldment” of things that are wrapped up, or enfolded in our mental being. They are there, else they could never be unfolded. They are latent within our mentality, awaiting the time of expression and manifestation. They are there as seeds, awaiting the water and sun and chance to grow, blossom, and bear fruit. They are there in static form, awaiting the process whereby they are transformed into dynamic forces. They are there in possibilities, awaiting transmutation into actualities.

They are there as ideals, awaiting the call to reality. Verily a great day is before us, when our ideals become real, our dreams come true.

FINIS⁹.

⁹ Latin for 'end,' commonly used in older books to mark the conclusion. Its use here reflects the period style and underscores the book's finality even as it aims to begin a transformation.

NOTES

Glossary

Thoughts are Things: The central thesis of the book: mental states are real, energetic entities that can manifest physically. This concept was revolutionary in its time and remains foundational to New Thought and modern positive psychology.

Dynamic correlate: Ochorowicz's term for the energetic equivalent of thought that radiates from the brain, analogous to the electric current from a battery. Atkinson uses this to support the physical reality of thought-waves.

Thought-waves: A term coined to describe the vibratory radiation of mental energy, comparable to light, heat, or radio waves. Atkinson argues these waves travel through the ether and affect others.

Telepathy: Direct mind-to-mind communication. Atkinson uses telepathy as evidence for thought-waves but argues that emotive thoughts are transmitted more readily than abstract ideas.

Second wind: A term popularized by psychologist William James (1842–1910) in his essay 'The Energies of Men.' James described the experience of tapping into hidden reserves of energy beyond normal fatigue. Atkinson applies this to mental faculties.

Law of attraction: The principle that like attracts like on mental planes; dominant thoughts draw corresponding people, circumstances, and

environments. This concept was central to New Thought and later popularized by works like 'The Secret.'

Law of materialization: The tendency of thoughts to manifest into objective reality. Atkinson argues that every invention or creation existed first as a thought-form, from the simplest tool to the Brooklyn Bridge.

Aura: Derived from occult traditions, an 'aura' is an emanation surrounding a person. Atkinson redefines it as a field of thought-vibrations that can be sensed by others, akin to a personal mental atmosphere.

Thought atmosphere: The cumulative mental radiation of a person or place. Atkinson notes that homes, offices, and cities each have a distinct thought atmosphere that influences visitors.

Thought magnet: Atkinson's metaphor for the attractive power of thought: dominant mental states draw to the thinker people and conditions that help express those states. He urges readers to cultivate a positive 'magnet.'

Deadly nightshade: *Atropa belladonna*, a highly toxic plant. Atkinson uses it as a metaphor for fear, calling it 'the deadly nightshade of the mind.' The contrast with the rose (Chapter IV) reinforces the theme of positive versus negative thoughts.

Chemical action of a battery: Ochorowicz's analogy for the transformation of energy in the brain: thought is

the 'current' generated by the brain's chemical and physical processes, just as a battery produces an electric current.

Static energy: Atkinson describes mind as 'static energy' (potential) and thought as 'dynamic energy' (active). This distinction comes from physics (potential vs. kinetic energy) and underpins his argument that thoughts are real forces.

The crystal: Used as an analogy for thought attraction: just as a crystal forms by attracting molecules of its own kind, a strong thought or desire acts as a nucleus that draws harmonious circumstances.

Birds of a feather flock together: A common proverb that Atkinson uses to illustrate the law of attraction in human affairs: like-minded people are drawn to each other by mental currents.

THE ESOTERIC COLLECTION



STUDY GUIDE

THOUGHTS ARE THINGS

**A Study Guide for Observing and Practicing
Mental Force**

By M.C. Mesen

Introduction

This book, penned under the pseudonym Edward Walker, delivers a disturbing and powerful idea: there are no harmless thoughts. Atkinson argues that mental forms shape both our personality and the visible course of events. Beyond superstition, he invites us to observe how our habitual thinking finds expression in moods, habits, choices, and the atmospheres we create.

Read this text with critical attention and genuine openness. It is not about accepting automatic miracles or denying external conditions. Atkinson's emphasis is on responsibility: to what extent do your thoughts participate in the fabric of your daily reality? This guide invites you to observe, question, and—most importantly—practice the art of thinking with greater consciousness and direction.

How to use this guide

Read slowly and take notes. The guide is meant to activate the reading, not replace the book.

Work with a journal. Copy the questions that make you pause: they are often the most useful.

Do not try to do everything in one session. Choose one practice and repeat it for several days.

Study path

1. Thoughts and the Creation of Character

Core teaching: Atkinson emphasizes that our character is not an accident, but the cumulative fruit of repeated, accepted, and internalized thoughts. Outward personality traits (attitudes, speech, expression) originate from an invisible inner movement.

Working question: Is there a trait of yours—positive or negative—that you can trace back to ideas or beliefs you've carried for a long time?

Practice: For three days, notice and write down each time a self-defining thought ('I am...', 'I can't...', 'I always...') arises. Ask: Does this help or limit me? Consciously choose to repeat and reinforce only those reflecting the kind of person you aspire to be.

2. Ideas as Seeds: From Ideal to Reality

Core teaching: The book teaches that every idea or desire is a seed. If nourished—with attention and emotion—it tends toward expression in experience. Not every thought will materialize, but many of our successes and failures began as persistent mental images.

Working question: What desire or mental image have you nurtured so much that it has become part of your reality, for better or worse?

Practice: Pick one small, positive ideal (order, calm, initiative). For a week, nourish this image with daily actions; note any changes in your environment, relationships, or internal mood.

3. Mental Contagion and Psychic Atmospheres

Core teaching: Atkinson describes thoughts as a force that both influences and is influenced by others. We are shaped by the thoughts we pick up from those around us just as much as by the ones we emit, consciously or not.

Working question: Which thoughts or emotions in you originated not from yourself but from your family, social, or work environment?

Practice: In groups or meetings, observe the prevailing 'mental atmosphere.' Make a conscious effort not to absorb it automatically; instead, deliberately radiate your chosen state (serenity, clarity, respect) and note any subtle effects.

4. Ethics and Volition in the Art of Thinking

Core teaching: The invitation is not to obsess or blame yourself for each passing thought, but to assume the capacity to intervene in the general direction of your mind. Atkinson advises combining clarity, will, and ethical self-observation.

Working question: Do you demand immediate results, or can you sustain patient and realistic mental work, acknowledging subtle progress without obsession?

Practice: Each night, review your day, identifying one recurring thought, and decide whether it should be strengthened or softened. If you find a toxic or limiting thought, replace it with a brief, constructive phrasing before sleep. Repeat this for seven nights.

Closing

Atkinson's proposal calls for honesty: to recognize both the real yet limited influence of thoughts in life's development. Use this reading as a laboratory and training ground—not a magic wand. Thoughts become things when we choose what to nurture, what to transform, and what to release.

More guides and information at MauricioChavesMesen.com