

SESSION 4. MIRACLE OF YOUR MIND

Audio Transcript

At birth, all creatures are supplied with everything they need for successful survival. All creatures except one are supplied with a set of instincts that will do the job for them, and because of that, they don't need much of a brain.

Take the magnificent bald eagle, for example. My wife and I saw dozens of bald eagles on a recent fishing trip to Alaska. To see one of them come swooping down and pluck a live and sizable fish from the water on a single pass is astonishing. More astonishing, still, is the eagle's eyesight. And because of its need to see from high altitudes small rodents moving in the grass, or a fish just inches under the surface of the water, its incredible eyes take up just about all the space in its head. For the eagle, its eyes are the most important thing, and everything else works in unison with them. Its brain is tiny and rudimentary. It doesn't think or plan or remember; it simply acts in accordance with stimuli.

It's the same with most other living creatures. Even the beautiful porpoise, which has a much larger brain, and the chimpanzee are easily tamed and taught.

Only one creature takes 20 years to mature, has dominion over all the rest and the earth itself, and has today the power to destroy all life on earth in a couple of hours. Only one creature is given the godlike power to fashion its own life according to the images it holds in its remarkable mind.

Everything fashioned by human beings is a result of goal setting. We reach our goals. That's how we know that the diseases that plague us will be conquered. We have set goals to eradicate all diseases that plague us – and eradicate them we will, one by one. We have never set a goal that we have not reached – even landing on the moon – or are not now in the process of reaching.

No one has ever made a purposeful accomplishment without a clear goal toward which to work. I hope you've established yours, and that you've begun to think about it frequently every day – to impress it into your mind, particularly your remarkable subconscious, where forces greater than we can imagine can come to your aid.

For a moment, consider the things your mind has brought you. Everything you have – your work, your relationships with your family and others, your philosophy of life, your religion – has come to you as a result of your using your mind. Now, consider this estimate made by experts: You have probably been operating on less than 10 percent of your mental capacity – and probably much less than that!

In an article for the *Saturday Review*, our old friend Herbert Otto, psychologist, educator, and chairman of the National Center for the Exploration of Human Potential, reminded us that many well-known scientists, such as Abraham Maslow, Margaret Mead, Gardner Murphy, O. Spurgeon English, and Carl Rogers, subscribed to the hypothesis that man is using a very small fraction of his capacities. Margaret Mead quoted a 6 percent figure. Herbert Otto wrote, "My own estimate is 5 percent or less."

Neurological research has shed new light on man's potential. Work at the UCLA Brain Research Institute points to enormous abilities latent in everyone. Researchers there suggest an incredible hypothesis: The ultimate creative capacity of the human brain may be, for all practical purposes, *infinite*. To use the computer analogy, man is a vast storehouse of data, but we have not learned how to program ourselves to utilize these data for problem-solving purposes.

The following appeared in *Soviet Life Today*, a U.S.S.R. English-language magazine: "The latest findings in anthropology, psychology, logic, and physiology show that the potential of the human mind is very great indeed. As soon as modern science gave us some understanding of the structure and work of the human brain, we were struck with its enormous reserve capacity." That was written by Yefremov, an eminent Soviet scholar and writer. He continued: "Man, under average conditions of work and life, uses only a small part of his thinking equipment.... If we were able to force our brain to work at only half its capacity, we could, without any difficulty whatever, learn 40 languages, memorize the large Soviet encyclopedia from cover to cover, and complete the required courses of dozens of colleges."

That statement is hardly an exaggeration; it is the generally accepted theoretical view of man's mental potentials.

Now, how can we tap this gigantic potential? It's a big and very complex problem with many ramifications. But, as Herbert Otto pointed out, "It is clear that persons who live close to their capacity, who continue to activate their potential, have a pronounced sense of well-being and considerable energy. They see themselves as leading purposeful and creative lives."

The way most people use their minds can be compared to the time, back in the early 19th century, when just the Eastern coast of the North American continent was settled – just a strip along the East Coast. To the West stretched the raw, undeveloped, great bulk of what was later to become the incredibly rich 90 percent of the economy – 90 percent of the natural resources – which resulted in the standard of living enjoyed today by Americans.

If everything you have is the result of your using just 5 or 10 percent of your mind, consider for a moment what it will mean to you and your family if you can increase this percentage! This program will show you how to use infinitely more of your mental powers, how to develop some of that 90 percent virgin territory.

None of us, as a rule, has the slightest notion of the real capabilities of his mind. But believe me when I say that your mind can be compared to an undiscovered gold mine. And it makes no difference whether you're 17 or 70.

Look at it this way: Your goal is in the future. Your problem is to bridge the gap that exists between where you now are and the goal you intend to reach. This is the problem to solve.

Robert Seashore, when he was chairman of the Department of Psychology at Northwestern University, pointed out that "Successful people are not people without problems; they're simply people who've learned to solve their problems."

There you have it. Living successfully, getting the things we want from life, is a matter of solving the problems that stand between where we are now and the point we wish to reach!

No one is without problems; problems are a part of living. But let me show you how much time we waste in worrying about the wrong problems. Here's a reliable estimate of the things people worry about: things that never happen, 40 percent; things over and past that can't be changed by all the worry in the world, 30 percent; needless worries about our health, 12 percent; petty miscellaneous worries, 10 percent; real, legitimate worries, 8 percent.

In short, 92 percent of the average person's worries take up valuable time, cause painful stress – even mental anguish – and are absolutely unnecessary.

Of the real, legitimate worries, there are two kinds: There are the problems we can solve, and there are the problems beyond our ability to personally solve. But most of our real problems usually fall into the first group: the ones we can solve, if we'll learn how.

There must be millions of people today who feel they are being barred from the life they want because they look upon problems not as challenges to be met, but as wide chasms beyond their ability to bridge.

A little research proves that successful people have the same kinds of problems other people have. One of the very real benefits of working with a psychologist or psychiatrist comes from learning that there are hundreds of thousands – perhaps millions – of other people with problems identical to our own. So the whole thing boils down to a matter not of problems, which are common to us all, but of our ability to solve them.

Now, I'm going to assume you have decided on a goal.

Remember, you will become, and you will achieve, what you think about. That is, if you stay with it, you will reach your goal. But how? Here is where your mind comes into play.

What is your mind, really? Perhaps the best way to describe it is to quote Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Archibald MacLeish. In his play *The Secret of Freedom*, a character says, "The only thing about a man that is a man is his mind. Everything else you can find in a pig or a horse."

That's uncomfortably true. The human mind is the one thing that separates us from the rest of the creatures on earth. Everything that means anything to us comes to us through our minds. Our love of our families, our beliefs, all of our talents, knowledge, abilities – everything – is reflected through our minds. Anything that comes to us in the future will almost certainly come to us as a result of the extent to which we use our minds! And yet, it is the last place on earth the average person will turn to for help!

Do you know why? Do you know why most people don't automatically turn on their own vast mental resources when they're faced with a problem? It's because they've never learned how to think. That is a fact, believe it or not. Most people never think at all during the entire course of their lives. They remember, but that's not thinking creatively, or thinking in new directions. They

react to stimuli, but again, that's not thinking. Remembering to set the alarm clock at night and getting up when it rings in the morning does not take thought. Nor do showering, shaving, getting dressed, eating breakfast, and going to work. At work, we once again fall into comfortable routines. At quitting time, we go home and start repeating the process.

Let me say it again: Most people do not know how to think. When they are faced with a problem, they will go to any length to avoid thinking. They will ask advice from the most illogical people – usually people who don't know any more than they do, such as next-door neighbors and members of their families. Very few of them have reference books. But much more important than that, only one in a thousand will take a large notepad, write the problem at the top of the page, and then deliberately turn on his thinking apparatus.

But some people do think – they do, indeed. Reflect for a moment on the human mind; consider what it has accomplished! As you do, realize that we are developing so rapidly that we've come farther in the realm of progress in the past 50 years than we have in all the preceding 10,000 years of human civilization.

Of all the scientists who ever lived, it's estimated that 90 percent of them are alive today!

In the area of ideas and human advancement, we've reached a plateau so high, it was undreamed of by even the most optimistic forecasters as recently as 30 years ago. But every new idea triggers additional ideas, so now we're in an era of compounding advancement in every area, and on every front, that staggers the imagination.

The harnessing of the power of the sun in our atomic plants and ships; the speed-of-light computers that, in minutes, save months and years of calculating drudgery – every advance you see and touch spawned from the most powerful agency in the world: the human mind.

Dr. Harlow Shapley of Harvard University said that we are entering an entirely new age of man. He called it the psychozoic age: the age of the mind. And you, my friend, own one! Free and clear!

Now, let's look at a few facts. The 40-hour week, long standard is in imminent likelihood of being shortened even further. This means that the average working person has, at his disposal, an enormous amount of free time. In fact, if you'll total the hours in a year and subtract the sleeping hours (assuming eight hours of sleep every night), you'll find that this person has about 6,000 waking hours, of which less than 2,000 are spent on the job. Now, this leaves 4,000 hours a year when a person is neither working nor sleeping. These can be called discretionary hours, with which that person can do pretty much as he pleases.

So you can see the amazing results in your life, I want to recommend that you devote just one hour a day, five days a week, to exercising your mind. You don't even have to do it on weekends. Pick one hour a day that you can count on fairly regularly. The best time for me is an hour before the others are up in the morning. The mind is clear, the house is quiet, and, if you like, with a fresh cup of coffee, this is the time to start the mind going.

And here's one good way to do this: During this hour every day, take a completely blank sheet of paper. At the top of the page, write your present primary goal – clearly and simply. Then, since our future depends upon the way in which we handle our work, write down as many ideas as you can for improving that which you do now. Try to think of 20 possible ways in which the activity that fills your day can be improved. You won't always get 20, but even one idea is good.

Now, remember two important points with regard to this: (1) This is not particularly easy, and (2) most of your ideas won't be any good.

When I say it's not easy, I mean it's like starting any other habit. At first, you'll find that your mind is a little reluctant to be hauled up and out of the old, familiar rut. But as you think about your work and ways in which it might be improved, write down every idea that pops into your head, no matter how absurd it might seem.

Let me tell you what will happen. Some of your ideas will be good and worth testing. The most important thing this extra hour accomplishes, however, is that it deeply imbeds your goal into your subconscious mind and starts the whole vital machinery working, the first thing every morning. And 20 ideas a day, if you can come up with that many, total 100 a week, even if you skip weekends. An hour a day five days a week totals 260 hours a year and still leaves you 3,740 hours of free leisure time.

Now, this means you'll be thinking about your goal and ways of improving your performance – increasing your service – six-and-one-half full, extra working weeks a year! Six-and-one-half 40-hour weeks devoted to thinking and planning. Can you see how easy it is to rise above the so-called competition? And it will still leave you with seven hours a day to spend as you please!

Starting each day thinking, you will find that your mind will continue to work all day long. You will find that at odd moments, when you least expect it, really great ideas will begin to bubble up from your subconscious. When they do, write them down as you can. Just one great idea can completely revolutionize your work and, as a result, your life!

If you want to develop the muscles of your body, you engage in daily exercise of some sort. The mind is developed in the same way, except that the returns are out of all conceivable proportion to the time and energy spent. The mind of man can lift anything. His muscles – even the best developed – are puny alongside those of some of the dumbest animals on earth. If man had depended on his muscles for survival, he probably would have disappeared, as did the dinosaurs – which were, incidentally, the most physically powerful creatures that ever lived.

Let me give you just some of the results people have reported to me as a consequence of following this one-hour-a-day routine: An office-equipment salesman sold more of his company's product in one month than he had formerly sold in an entire year during the four years he had been with his company. And a Sunday-school teacher with five pupils set a goal of 30 pupils. In her last letter, she told me she now has a class of 25. She's almost reached her goal.

I've used this system for years, and it has given me some of the most gratifying and rewarding experiences of my life. And it costs only five hours per week – five hours out of 168. Is it worth it? It's like spending five hours a week digging in a solid vein of pure gold, because your mind is all of that – and much more!

Each time you write your goal at the top of a sheet of paper, don't worry or become concerned about it. Think of it as only waiting to be reached, a problem only waiting to be solved. Face it with faith, and bend all the great powers of your mind toward solving it, and, believe me, solve it you will!

This puts each of us in the driver's seat.

Now, let's briefly recap:

This week, start spending one hour each day getting as many ideas as you can – try for 20 a day – on ways to improve what you are now doing. Don't become discouraged. Remember, the achievement of your goal very likely depends upon it, as does your whole future. Once you start exercising your mind in this way, I know you'll want to continue the practice.

If everything you now have is the result of using, say, 5 to 10 percent of your mental ability, you can imagine what life will be like if you can increase this figure to 20 percent or more.

Successful people are not people without problems; they are simply people who have learned to solve their problems.

Don't waste time and energy worrying about needless things. 40 percent of them will never happen; 30 percent have already happened and can't be changed; 12 percent are needless worries about our health; 10 percent are petty miscellaneous worries; and only 8 percent are genuine. Try to separate the real from the unnecessary, and solve those that are within your ability to solve.

The human race has advanced farther during the past 50 years than it has in all the preceding 10,000 years of human civilization. We are now living right in the middle of the golden age man has been dreaming of and praying for for centuries – and it's going to get better!

The only thing in the world that can take you to your goals in life is your mind, your effective use of it, and your follow-through on the good ideas it supplies you.

Each of us has a tendency to underestimate his own abilities. We should realize that we have, deep within ourselves, deep reservoirs of great ability – even genius – that can be tapped, if we'll just dig deeply enough. It's the "Miracle of Your Mind."

Exercises — Write your answers in the space provided below.

1. List all your worries and concerns.

2. From this list, determine which worries are needless and which are legitimate.

3. Outline a strategy for solving your legitimate problems.

4. Starting this week, spend one hour each day exercising your mind. That is, write down ideas for improving your present and/or achieving your current goal. Strive for 20 ideas each day.

5. Test the ideas that you believe have merit.