

How to Stop Worrying and Start Living

Also by Dale Carnegie

How to Win Friends and Influence People

How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking

The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking

Lincoln the Unknown

Presented by Donna Dale Carnegie

How to Win Friends and Influence People for Teen Girls

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SPEAK!: Overcoming the Fear and Horror of Public Speaking

CONNECT!: How to Build Trust-Based Relationships

Take Command

How to Stop Worrying and Start Living

Updated for the Next Generation

Dale Carnegie



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This book is dedicated to a man
who doesn't need to read it—
my friend,
LOWELL THOMAS

I want to thank Miss Villa Stiles from the
northwest corner of my heart for all she has
done to help me in the preparation of this book
and *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

Note from Dale Carnegie Training: These Dale Carnegie principles are self-governing and allow individuals to address their daily stress and worries. They are not designed to replace any protocols or medications that doctors or health professionals prescribe.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	
<i>by Donna Dale Carnegie</i>	xix
<i>How This Book Was Written—and Why</i>	
<i>by Dale Carnegie</i>	xxv
<i>Nine Suggestions on How to Get the</i>	
<i>Most Out of This Book</i>	xxxi

PART ONE

Fundamental Facts You Should Know About Worry

1 Live in “Day-tight Compartments”	3
2 A Magic Formula for Solving Worry Situations	17
3 What Worry May Do to You	27

PART TWO

Basic Techniques in Analyzing Worry

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 4 | How to Analyze and Solve Worry Problems | 41 |
| 5 | How to Eliminate 50 Percent of Your Business Worries | 53 |

PART THREE

**How to Break the Worry Habit
Before It Breaks You**

- | | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 6 | How to Crowd Worry Out of Your Mind | 61 |
| 7 | Don't Let the Beetles Get You Down | 73 |
| 8 | A Law That Will Outlaw Many of Your Worries | 81 |
| 9 | Cooperate with the Inevitable | 89 |
| 10 | Put a "Stop-Loss" Order on Your Worries | 101 |
| 11 | Don't Try to Saw Sawdust | 109 |

PART FOUR

**Seven Ways to Cultivate a Mental Attitude That
Will Bring You Peace and Happiness**

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 12 | Eight Words That Can Transform Your Life | 119 |
| 13 | The High Cost of Getting Even | 135 |

14 If You Do This, You Will Never Worry About Ingratitude	145
15 Would You Take a Million Dollars for What You Have?	153
16 Find Yourself and Be Yourself: Remember There Is No One Else on Earth Like You	161
17 If You Have a Lemon, Make a Lemonade	171
18 One Way to Cure Depression	181

PART FIVE

The Perfect Way to Conquer Worry

19 How My Mother and Father Conquered Worry	201
--	------------

PART SIX

How to Keep from Worrying About Criticism

20 Remember That No One Ever Kicks a Dead Dog	213
21 Do This—and Criticism Can't Hurt You	217
22 Fool Things I Have Done	223

PART SEVEN

**Six Ways to Prevent Fatigue and Worry and
Keep Your Energy and Spirits High**

23 How to Add One Hour a Day to Your Waking Life	233
---	------------

24	What Makes You Tired—and What You Can Do About It	239
25	How to Avoid Fatigue—and Keep Looking Young!	245
26	Four Good Working Habits That Will Help Prevent Fatigue and Worry	251
27	How to Banish the Boredom That Produces Fatigue, Worry, and Resentment	257
28	How to Keep from Worrying About Insomnia	267

PART EIGHT

“How I Conquered Worry”: Thirty-One True Stories

Six Major Troubles Hit Me All at Once <i>by C. I. Blackwood</i>	279
I Can Turn Myself Into a Shouting Optimist Within an Hour <i>by Roger W. Babson</i>	282
How I Got Rid of an Inferiority Complex <i>by Elmer Thomas</i>	283
I Lived in the Garden of Allah <i>by R. V. C. Bodley</i>	287
Five Methods I Have Used to Banish Worry <i>by Professor William Lyon Phelps</i>	291
I Stood Yesterday. I Can Stand Today. <i>by Dorothy Dix</i>	294
I Did Not Expect to Live to See the Dawn <i>by J. C. Penney</i>	295

I Go to the Gym to Punch the Bag or Take a Hike Outdoors	
<i>by Colonel Eddie Eagan</i>	297
I Was "The Worrying Wreck from Virginia Tech"	
<i>by Jim Birdsall</i>	298
I Have Lived by This Sentence	
<i>by Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo</i>	300
I Hit Bottom and Survived	
<i>by Ted Ericksen</i>	301
I Used to Be One of the World's Biggest Jackasses	
<i>by Percy H. Whiting</i>	302
I Have Always Tried to Keep My Line of Supplies Open	
<i>by Gene Autry</i>	304
I Heard a Voice in India	
<i>by E. Stanley Jones</i>	307
When the Sheriff Came in My Front Door	
<i>by Homer Croy</i>	310
The Toughest Opponent I Ever Fought Was Worry	
<i>by Jack Dempsey</i>	312
I Prayed to God to Keep Me Out of an Orphans' Home	
<i>by Kathleen Halter</i>	314
My Stomach Was Twisting Like a Kansas Whirlwind	
<i>by Cameron Shipp</i>	316
I Learned to Stop Worrying in My Own Home	
<i>by Reverend William Wood</i>	319
I Found the Answer	
<i>by Del Hughes</i>	321

Time Solves a Lot of Things!	
<i>by Louis T. Montant, Jr.</i>	323
I Was Warned Not to Try to Speak or to Move Even a Finger	
<i>by Joseph L. Ryan</i>	324
I Am a Great Dismissor	
<i>by Ordway Tead</i>	326
If I Had Not Stopped Worrying, I Would Have Been in My Grave Long Ago	
<i>by Connie Mack</i>	327
I Got Rid of Stomach Ulcers and Worry by Changing My Job and My Mental Attitude	
<i>by Arden W. Sharpe</i>	329
I Now Look for the Green Light	
<i>by Joseph M. Cotter</i>	330
How John D. Rockefeller Lived on Borrowed Time for Forty-five Years	
<i>by Dale Carnegie</i>	332
I Was Committing Slow Suicide Because I Didn't Know How to Relax	
<i>by Paul Sampson</i>	340
A Real Miracle Happened to Me	
<i>by Mrs. John Burger</i>	341
How Benjamin Franklin Conquered Worry	
<i>by Benjamin Franklin</i>	342
I Was So Worried I Didn't Eat a Bite of Solid Food for Eighteen Days	
<i>by Kathryne Holcombe Farmer</i>	344
Index	353

How to Stop Worrying and Start Living

Preface

Donna Dale Carnegie

How often have you said recently, “I’m worried about . . .” (and here you can fill in anything from your daughter’s choice of boyfriend to the threat of nuclear annihilation)? While these and many more things are worthy of concern, worry is a sword we wave at them to make us feel as though we are *doing* something when in fact the opposite is true: worry paralyzes us with inaction. If you find it easy to slough off worry and go on with your life, then this book is not for you. But if worrying has become a corrosive habit that affects your daily life, then *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* will give you the tools to change it in remarkable ways.

Like most people—including my father, who wrote this book—I have had my own struggles with worry. Nothing was beneath my willingness to fret about. As a teenager, I once worried myself into a frenzy for a week, convinced I had the symptoms of hoof-and-mouth disease after a visit to the Bronx Zoo where I’d eaten a dubious-looking hot dog. When I finally forced myself to go to the doctor, the diagnosis was, “Canker sores. Gargle with salt water.”

Absurd as this example may be, it shows how worry can hijack all common sense when we give it the power. Had I only followed even *one* of the principles found in this book, I could have saved myself a week of misery and dealt with the issue rationally. But I still didn't learn the lesson. Over the ensuing years, I had accumulated so many things on my worry list that I had to create a "Worry Wait List" for the overflow, things I felt I *should* worry about if my mental capacity hadn't been maxed out. (I reasoned that I was "managing" my worries logically, and as one item cleared, I could move another from the wait list up to the active list.) It took practice, but when I finally started using the principles outlined in my father's book, I ceased cultivating a list of things with which to torment myself (most of which I had no control over anyway) and used my newfound energy to actually address the issues. And when the temptation arises to fall back into my old habits? I return to this book to put things back into perspective.

Your willingness to invest in reading this book means that you have taken the first step toward reclaiming your life from a tyrant who constantly extorts you. Don't let it. Our time is our most precious commodity, so don't allow it to be dominated by something as useless as worry. A tendency to worry is probably wired into our brains from birth, meant to protect us from danger. But in an ironic twist, how to turn *off* the worry isn't a skill that comes naturally: that, we must learn how to do. Although there are clinical reasons for worry that are beyond our control (genetics, brain chemistry, childhood trauma, to name a few), most of it is caused by such common triggers as having responsibilities we find overwhelming, facing changes in our life, or feeling we have no control over the outcome of a situation. This is where we *can* exercise power over our lives by learning techniques to combat both our four-o'clock-in-the-morning nuttiness as well as

the bugbears that seem indomitable even in the light of day. This book was written to show you how.

Since its publication in 1944, *How to Stop Worrying* has at times flown under the radar among my father's works. Many people are familiar with his primary best seller, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. It was a blockbuster when it was first published and remained so to the extent that it overshadowed *How to Stop Worrying* when it was published six years later. Yet it was *this* book that my father was most proud of and considered his best work. He'd had a few years to fine-tune his writing, and the financial success afforded by *How to Win Friends* gave him the time he wanted to spend on *How to Stop Worrying* without the pressure of getting it to market immediately. He took advantage of that time to craft a book that has always sold well and has had a significant impact on the readers who need it and find it, even if it never achieved the name recognition of *How to Win Friends*.

Since the time *How to Stop Worrying* was first published, many books have been written about controlling worry, anxiety, and stress, many of them quite good. So what makes this book so enduring? And how can a book of this vintage still compete with those of a more modern look or that boast the "latest research"? I wondered that myself when the book's longtime publisher, Simon & Schuster, first approached me with the idea of an updated edition. Although I employ the principles in this book on a daily basis, it had been a while since I had last read it cover to cover. I sat down and went through it again, this time with a critical eye. I was stunned by how good it is and especially by how well it resonates in today's world.

As I read, I kept pausing to call out to my partner, "Come here, Rick! Listen to this!" and would then read him a passage that struck me so strongly I absolutely had to share it. When I was done, I had no doubt about its worthiness to be on the

shelves today. Conquering worry never ceases to be relevant. The book is dynamic and chock-full of common sense and shrewd insight.

It is telling that so many of the statistics that my father quoted back in 1944 are still accurate today. My editing team and I often fact-checked assertions that were so startling that we couldn't believe them: almost 16 percent of army recruits are rejected for psychological reasons. Really? (True.) Stress can cause tooth decay? (True.) I soon realized that the only thing that is "dated" here are the references to events that were current when this was written. But they also serve to give us a perspective on how our needs have not changed, even with the advancements of the digital age. People are still people.

Currently, it's estimated that one in three adults will experience an anxiety disorder at some time in their lives. We are, without question, in a "mental health crisis," as it's euphemistically called. Depression, anxiety, and suicide rates are out of control, especially among young people. In fact, in a technology-driven age that promised so much, our advancements have created their own set of problems. But the methods my father laid out here have withstood the test of time, ready to help you, the next generation.

Despite all the information contained in *How to Stop Worrying*, it's an easy read. Like all of my father's work, it is written in his uniquely conversational style. His voice is there as if talking to you one-on-one, encouraging you at every step. He never talks down to his readers, and his use of the language of his time is colorful, engaging, and profound in its simplicity. This is also a deeply personal book, as my father shares his own battle with worry. He always said he wrote this for himself as well as for others.

As you will read in his introduction to this book, solving the riddle of worry was a lifelong quest for him. He avidly sought

out any words of advice, ancient or modern, and any psychological or scientific insights into the causes and cures for worry. In the end, the best answers came from simply asking people about their own methods to conquer worry, what worked for them that would be useful for others, too. Their stories are riveting and aptly illustrate each principle that he alighted upon.

My father heard from people who faced everything from the simple fear of a social misstep to economic ruin. How did one man manage the terror of being trapped on a submarine while being bombarded by depth charges? How did a parent confront the unimaginable fear of losing a child? Yet all of the stories have something in common—the people who shared them ultimately found strategies to cope with their circumstances. It doesn't matter whether our worries are "everyday" problems or dramatic, once-in-a-lifetime situations: They have the same power to torture us.

In here you will find useable, proven solutions, but I encourage you to not just read about them; begin to use these tools *as you read*, practicing a new approach to the challenges you face daily. The rewards for eliminating worry from your life are transformative.

It is now time to extend my gratitude to the people who worked on this new edition, especially to Andrew Postman, whose enthusiasm for the project, solid writing, and good judgment on where to make changes were invaluable. I also wish to thank Simon & Schuster editor Max Meltzer for his unflagging availability and guidance even while dealing with a new baby in the family! And from Dale Carnegie and Associates, many thanks to CEO Joe Hart, Christine Buscarino, and Ercell Charles for taking the time to contribute their thoughtful feedback and sound advice.

It is time for me to stop writing and for you to start reading. I hope you benefit from this book as much as I have.

How This Book Was Written—and Why

In 1909, I was one of the unhappiest lads in New York. I was selling motor trucks for a living. I didn't know what made a motor truck run. That wasn't all: I didn't want to know. I despised my job. I despised living in a cheap furnished room on West Fifty-Sixth Street—a room infested with cockroaches. I still remember that I had a bunch of neckties hanging on the walls; and when I reached out in the morning to get a fresh necktie, the cockroaches scattered in all directions. I despised having to eat in cheap, dirty restaurants that were also probably infested with cockroaches.

I came home to my lonely room each night with a sick headache—a headache bred and fed by disappointment, worry, bitterness, and rebellion. I was rebelling because the dreams I had nourished back in my college days had turned into nightmares. Was this life? Was this the vital adventure to which I had looked forward so eagerly? Was this all life would ever mean to me—working at a job I despised, living with cockroaches, eating vile food—and with no hope for the future? . . . I longed for

leisure to read, and to write the books I had dreamed of writing back in my college days.

I knew I had everything to gain and nothing to lose by giving up the job I despised. I wasn't interested in making a lot of money, but I was interested in making a lot of living. In short, I had come to the Rubicon—to that moment of decision which faces most young people when they start out in life. So I made my decision—and that decision completely altered my future. It has made the rest of my life happy and rewarding beyond my most Utopian aspirations.

My decision was this: I would give up the work I loathed; and, since I had spent four years studying in the State Teachers College at Warrensburg, Missouri, preparing to teach, I would make my living teaching adult classes in night schools. Then I would have my days free to read books, prepare lectures, write novels and short stories. I wanted “to live to write and write to live.”

What subject should I teach to adults at night? As I looked back and evaluated my own college training, I saw that the training and experience I had had in public speaking had been of more practical value to me in business—and in life—than everything else I had studied in college all put together. Why? Because it had wiped out my timidity and lack of self-confidence and given me the courage and assurance to deal with people. It had also made clear that leadership usually gravitates to the person who can get up and say what they think.

I applied for a position teaching public speaking in the night extension courses both at Columbia University and New York University, but these universities decided they could struggle along somehow without my help.

I was disappointed then—but now I thank God that they did turn me down, because I started teaching in Y.M.C.A. night schools, where I had to show concrete results and show them

quickly. What a challenge that was! These adults didn't come to my classes because they wanted college credits or social prestige. They came for one reason only: they wanted to solve their problems. They wanted to be able to stand up on their feet and say a few words at a business meeting without fainting from fright. People in sales wanted to be able to call on a tough customer without having to walk around the block three times to get up courage. They wanted to develop poise and self-confidence. They wanted to get ahead in business. They wanted to have more money for their families. And since they were paying their tuition on an installment basis—and they stopped paying if they didn't get results—and since I was being paid, not a salary, but a percentage of the profits, I had to be practical if I wanted to eat.

I felt at the time that I was teaching under a handicap, but I realize now that I was getting priceless training. I *had* to motivate my students. I *had* to help them *solve their problems*. I *had* to make each session so inspiring that they wanted to continue coming.

It was exciting work. I loved it. I was astounded at how quickly these businesspeople developed self-confidence and how quickly many of them secured promotions and increased pay. The classes were succeeding far beyond my most optimistic hopes. Within three seasons, the Y.M.C.A.s, which had refused to pay me \$5 a night in salary, were paying me \$30 a night on a percentage basis. At first, I taught only public speaking, but, as the years went by, I saw that these adults also needed the ability to win friends and influence people. Since I couldn't find an adequate textbook on human relations, I wrote one myself. It was written—no, it wasn't written in the usual way—it grew and *evolved* out of the experiences of the adults in these classes. I called it *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

Since it was conceived solely as a textbook for my own adult classes, and since I had written four other books that no one had

ever heard of, I never dreamed that it would have a large sale: I am probably one of the most astonished authors now living.

As the years went by, I realized that another one of the biggest problems of these adults was *worry*. A large majority of my students were businessmen—executives, salesmen, engineers, accountants: a cross section of all the trades and professions—and most of them had problems! But there were women in the classes, as well—saleswomen, teachers, housewives, and business owners. They, too, had problems! Clearly, what I needed was a textbook on how to conquer worry—so again I tried to find one. I went to New York’s great public library at Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street and discovered to my astonishment that this library had only twenty-two books listed under the title WORRY. I also noticed, to my amusement, that it had one hundred eighty-nine books listed under WORMS. *Almost nine times as many books about worms as about worry!* Astounding, isn’t it? Since worry is one of the biggest problems facing humanity, you would think, wouldn’t you, that every high school and college in the land would give a course on “How to Stop Worrying.” Yet, if there is even one course on that subject in any college in the land, I have never heard of it. No wonder David Seabury said in his book *How to Worry Successfully*: “We come to maturity with as little preparation for the pressures of experience as a bookworm asked to do a ballet.”

The result? More than half of our hospital beds are occupied by people with nervous and emotional troubles.

I looked over these twenty-two books on worry reposing on the shelves of the New York Public Library. In addition, I purchased all the books on worry I could find; yet I couldn’t discover even one that I could use as a text in my course for adults. So I resolved to write one myself.

I began preparing myself to write this book seven years ago.

How? By reading what the philosophers of all ages have said about worry. I also read hundreds of biographies, all the way from Confucius to Churchill. I also interviewed scores of prominent people in many walks of life, such as Jack Dempsey, General Omar Bradley, General Mark Clark, Henry Ford, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Dorothy Dix. But that was only a beginning.

I also did something else that was far more important than the interviews and the reading. I worked for five years in a laboratory for conquering worry—a laboratory conducted in our own adult classes. As far as I know, it was the first and only laboratory of its kind in the world. This is what we did. We gave students a set of rules on how to stop worrying and asked them to apply these rules in their own lives and then talk to the class about the results they had obtained. Others reported on techniques they had used in the past.

As a result of this experience, I presume I have listened to more talks on “How I Conquered Worry” than has any other individual who ever walked this earth. In addition, I *read* hundreds of other talks on “How I Conquered Worry”—talks that were sent to me by mail—talks that had won prizes in our classes that are held throughout the world. So this book didn’t come out of an ivory tower. Neither is it an academic preachment on how worry *might* be conquered. Instead, I have tried to write a fast-moving, concise, *documented report on how worry has been conquered by thousands of adults*. One thing is certain: this book is practical. You can set your teeth in it.

“Science,” said the French philosopher Valéry, “is a collection of successful recipes.” That is what this book is: a collection of successful and time-tested recipes to rid our lives of worry. However, let me warn you: you won’t find anything new in it, but you will find much that is not generally applied. And when it comes to that, you and I don’t need to be told anything new. We already

know enough to lead perfect lives. We all know the golden rule. Our trouble is not ignorance, but inaction. The purpose of this book is to restate, illustrate, streamline, air-condition, and glorify a lot of ancient and basic truths—and kick you in the shins and make you do something about applying them.

You didn't pick up this book to read about how it was written. You are looking for action. All right, let's go. Please read Parts One and Two of this book—and if by that time you don't feel that you have acquired a new power and a new inspiration to stop worry and enjoy life—then toss this book away. It is no good for you.

Dale Carnegie

Nine Suggestions on How to Get the Most Out of This Book

1. If you wish to get the most out of this book, there is one indispensable requirement, one essential infinitely more important than any rules or techniques. Unless you have this one fundamental requisite, a thousand rules on how to study will avail little. And if you do have this cardinal endowment, then you can achieve wonders without reading any suggestions for getting the most out of a book.

What is this magic requirement? *Just this: a deep, driving desire to learn, a vigorous determination to stop worrying and start living.*

How can you develop such an urge? By constantly reminding yourself of how important these principles are to you. Picture to yourself how their mastery will aid you in living a richer, happier life. Say to yourself over and over: “My peace of mind, my happiness, my health, and perhaps even my income will, in the long run, depend largely on applying the old, obvious, and eternal truths taught in this book.”

2. Read each chapter rapidly at first to get a bird's-eye view of it. You will probably be tempted then to rush on to the next one. But don't—unless you are reading merely for entertainment. If you are reading because you want to stop worrying and start living, then go back and *reread each chapter thoroughly*. In the long run, this will mean saving time and getting results.
3. *Stop frequently in your reading to think over what you are reading.* Ask yourself just how and when you can apply each suggestion. That kind of reading will aid you far more than racing ahead like a whippet chasing a rabbit.
4. *Read with a red crayon, pencil, or pen in your hand; and when you come across a suggestion that you feel you can use, draw a line beside it.* If it is a four-star suggestion, then underscore every sentence, or mark it with “XXXX.” Marking and underscoring a book make it far more interesting, and far easier to review rapidly.
5. I know a woman who has been office manager for a large insurance concern for fifteen years. She reads every month all the insurance contracts her company issues. Yes, she reads the same contracts over, month after month, year after year. Why? Because experience has taught her that that is the only way she can keep their provisions clearly in mind.

I once spent almost two years writing a book on public speaking; and yet I find I have to keep going back over it from time to time in order to remember what I wrote in my own book. The rapidity with which we forget is astonishing.

So, if you want to get a real, lasting benefit out of this book, don't imagine that skimming through it once will suffice. After reading it thoroughly, you ought to spend a few hours

reviewing it every month. Keep it on your desk in front of you every day. Glance through it often. Keep constantly impressing yourself with the rich possibilities for improvement that still lie in the offing. Remember that the use of these principles can be made habitual and unconscious only by a constant and vigorous campaign of review and application. There is no other way.

6. Playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw once remarked: “If you teach a man anything, he will never learn.” Shaw was right. *Learning is an active process. We learn by doing. So, if you desire to master the principles you are studying in this book, do something about them. Apply these rules at every opportunity.* If you don’t, you will forget them quickly. Only knowledge that is used sticks in your mind.

You will probably find it difficult to apply these suggestions all the time. I know, because I wrote this book, and yet frequently I find it difficult to apply everything I have advocated here. So, as you read this book, remember that you are not merely trying to acquire information. You are attempting to form new habits. Ah yes, you are attempting a new way of life. That will require time and persistence and daily application.

So refer to these pages often. Regard this as a working handbook on conquering worry; and when you are confronted with some trying problem—don’t get all stirred up. Don’t do the natural thing, the impulsive thing. That is usually wrong. Instead, turn to these pages and review the paragraphs you have underscored. Then try these new ways and watch them achieve magic for you.

7. *Offer your family members a quarter every time they catch you violating one of the principles advocated in this book. They will break you!*

8. Please turn to page 224 of this book and read how the Wall Street banker H. P. Howell and old Ben Franklin corrected their mistakes. Why don't you use the Howell and Franklin techniques to check up on your application of the principles discussed in this book? If you do, two things will result.

First, you will find yourself engaged in an educational process that is both intriguing and priceless.

Second, you will find that your ability to stop worrying and start living will grow and spread like a green bay tree.

9. *Keep a diary*—a diary in which you ought to record your triumphs in the application of these principles. Be specific. Give names, dates, results. Keeping such a record will inspire you to greater efforts, and how fascinating these entries will be when you chance upon them some evening, years from now!

IN A NUTSHELL

NINE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

1. Develop a deep, driving desire to master the principles of conquering worry.
2. Read each chapter twice before going on to the next one.
3. As you read, stop frequently to ask yourself how you can apply each suggestion.
4. Underscore each important idea.
5. Review this book each month.
6. Apply these principles at every opportunity. Use this volume as a working handbook to help you solve your daily problems.
7. Make a lively game out of your learning by offering some friend a quarter every time you are caught violating one of these principles.
8. Check up each week on the progress you are making. Ask yourself what mistakes you have made, what improvement, what lessons you have learned for the future.
9. Keep a diary in the back of this book showing how and when you have applied these principles.

Part One

Fundamental Facts You Should Know About Worry

1

Live in “Day-tight Compartments”

In the spring of 1871, a young man picked up a book and read twenty-one words that had a profound effect on his future. A medical student at the Montreal General Hospital, he was worried about passing the final examination, worried about what to do, where to go, how to build up a practice, how to make a living.

The twenty-one words that this young medical student read in 1871 helped him to become the most famous physician of his generation. He organized the world-famous Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He became Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford—the highest honor that can be bestowed upon any medical man in the British Empire. He was knighted by the King of England. When he died, two huge volumes containing 1,466 pages were required to tell the story of his life.

His name was Sir William Osler. Here are the twenty-one words that he read in the spring of 1871—twenty-one words from Thomas Carlyle that helped him lead a life free from worry: *“Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.”*

Forty-two years later, on a soft spring night when the tulips were blooming on the campus, this man, Sir William Osler, addressed the students of Yale University. He told those Yale students that a man like himself who had been a professor in four universities and had written a popular book was supposed to have “brains of a special quality.” He declared that that was untrue. He said that his intimate friends knew that his brains were “of the most mediocre character.”

What, then, was the secret of his success? He stated that it was owing to what he called living in “day-tight compartments.” What did he mean by that? A few months before he spoke at Yale, Sir William Osler had crossed the Atlantic on a great ocean liner where the captain, standing on the bridge, could press a button and—presto!—there was a clanging of machinery and various parts of the ship were immediately shut off from one another—shut off into watertight compartments. “Now each one of you,” Dr. Osler said to those Yale students, “is a much more marvelous organization than the great liner, and bound on a longer voyage. What I urge is that you so learn to control the machinery as to live with ‘day-tight compartments’ as the most certain way to ensure safety on the voyage. Get on the bridge and see that at least the great bulkheads are in working order. Touch a button and hear, at every level of your life, the iron doors shutting out the Past—the dead yesterdays. Touch another and shut off, with a metal curtain, the Future—the unborn tomorrows. Then you are safe—safe for today! . . . Shut off the past! Let the dead past bury its dead. . . . Shut out the yesterdays which have lighted fools the way to dusty death. . . . The load of tomorrow, added to that of yesterday, carried today, makes the strongest falter. Shut off the future as tightly as the past. . . . The future is today. . . . There is no tomorrow. The day of man’s salvation is now. Waste of energy, mental distress, nervous worries dog the