

The Strangest Secret by Earl Nightingale | Unlock Success Mindset

The Earl Nightingale's self-help message, "The Strangest Secret," was published in 1956. The message emphasizes the power of positive thinking and goal setting to achieve success. Nightingale argues that success is directly related to the thoughts and actions of an individual. He asserts that those who focus on their goals and visualize themselves achieving them are more likely to succeed. This idea is presented as a law, similar to the laws of nature, and is based on the principle that "we become what we think about." The summary provides Nightingale's message, and encourages readers to implement the principles of positive thinking and goal setting into their lives through a 30-day action plan to help readers develop and maintain a positive mindset for greater success in life.

The book argues that success is achieved by visualizing your desired outcome and constantly focusing on it. Nightingale believes that our thoughts shape our reality, and that by choosing to think positively and planting seeds of success in our minds, we can achieve our dreams.

About Earl Nightingale

- **Early Life and Influences:** This section explores Nightingale's childhood curiosity about success and his early career in radio broadcasting, including his time in the Marine Corps and his survival of the Pearl Harbor attack.
- **The Birth of "The Strangest Secret":** This section details Nightingale's transition into the insurance industry, his motivation of his salesforce, and the creation of "The Strangest Secret" as a motivational message, which ultimately won a Gold Record for its impact.
- **Nightingale's Legacy:** This section discusses Nightingale's partnership with Lloyd Conant to create self-improvement materials, including the long-running radio program "Our Changing World," and highlights Nightingale's lasting impact as a voice of motivation and learning.

Main Themes

The Power of Thought: Our thoughts shape our reality. We become what we think about, attracting success or failure based on our dominant thoughts.

This is the "strangest secret" – a simple yet profound truth often overlooked.

Goal Setting as a Path to Success: Having clear, specific goals is crucial for success. Goals provide direction and purpose, just like a map guides a ship to its destination.

The Importance of Service: True success is measured by the value we provide to others. Focusing on serving and contributing leads to prosperity and abundance.

Key Ideas & Facts

Statistical Reality of Success: Only a small percentage of people achieve significant success by the age of 65. Nightingale highlights the stark statistic: 1 out of 100 becomes rich, 4 become financially independent, 5 still work, and a staggering 54 are broke.

Conformity as the Enemy of Success: Following the crowd without questioning leads to mediocrity. Most people fail because they conform to the 95% who don't succeed, rather than forging their own path.

The Law of Attraction in Action: Our minds work like fertile land – whatever we plant, it will return to us in abundance. Planting positive, goal-oriented thoughts yields success, while dwelling on fear and negativity cultivates failure.

The Paradox of Value: We often undervalue the things most precious to us, like our minds and talents, because they are given freely. Conversely, we prioritize material possessions that can be easily replaced.

Taking Control of our Mental Machine: We must actively steer our thoughts towards our goals, just as a driver controls a powerful machine. Leaving our minds to wander aimlessly leads to undesirable outcomes.

About "The Strangest Secret"

The Message's Initial Impact: This section describes the powerful effect "The Strangest Secret" had on Nightingale's insurance sales team and the overwhelming demand for copies of the recording.

From Motivational Talk to Gold Record: This section details the journey of "The Strangest Secret" from its initial creation for Nightingale's sales staff to

its distribution by Columbia Records and achievement of Gold Record status, emphasizing its enduring relevance.

Prescription for Success: This section presents Nightingale's recommendation for incorporating "The Strangest Secret" into one's life for long-term success: listening or reading twice a month for ten years, then once a month indefinitely.

Unveiling The Strangest Secret

The Sobering Statistics of Success: This section presents the startling statistic that only 5% of individuals achieve significant success by the age of 65, prompting the question of why so many fail to reach their potential.

The Root of the Problem: This section introduces Nightingale's central argument: the primary reason for failure is a lack of thinking, citing Dr. Albert Schweitzer's observation that "Men simply don't think!"

The Paradox of Potential and Reality: This section contrasts the abundant opportunities of the modern age with the widespread lack of success, attributing this discrepancy to conformity and the failure to actively shape one's destiny.

Call to Action

Nightingale encourages readers to embark on a 30-day challenge, focusing on their goals and replacing negative thoughts with positive visualizations. He stresses the importance of persistence and service as key ingredients for achieving lasting success and abundance.

Defining Success

A Working Definition: This section defines success as the "progressive realization of a worthy ideal," emphasizing that success is not limited to wealth but encompasses any individual pursuing their chosen path.

The Conformity Trap: This section contrasts those who actively pursue their goals with those who conform to societal expectations, explaining that conformity is the opposite of courage and a primary reason for failure.

The 95% vs. The 5%: This section draws a distinction between the majority who fail and the minority who succeed, highlighting the need to break free from the patterns of the unsuccessful 95%.

The Power of Goals

The Differentiator Between Success and Failure: This section establishes goals as the key factor that separates those who achieve success from those who do not, emphasizing the clarity and direction goals provide.

The Ship Analogy: This section utilizes the analogy of a ship with a planned course versus a ship adrift to illustrate the importance of having a clear destination and guidance in life.

Societal Security and Individual Ambition: This section explains how societal "security" can hinder ambition and emphasizes the need to set goals beyond mere survival to achieve true success.

We Become What We Think About

The Strangest Secret Revealed: This section introduces the core message of "The Strangest Secret": our thoughts shape our reality.

Echoes from History's Wise Men: This section presents quotes from various historical figures, including Marcus Aurelius, Disraeli, William James, and George Bernard Shaw, to support the concept that thoughts determine destiny.

The Creative Power of Thought: This section explains how focusing on a concrete goal leads to its achievement while dwelling on negativity creates a life of fear and frustration.

Reaping What We Sow

The Mind as Fertile Land: This section compares the human mind to a farmer's land, capable of producing both positive and negative outcomes depending on what is planted (thought) and nurtured.

The Choice is Ours: This section emphasizes that the mind, like land, does not discriminate, returning whatever is sown, whether good or bad, as reflected in the biblical principle, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

The True Value of Priceless Possessions: This section contrasts the invaluable and irreplaceable gifts of the mind, soul, and body with material possessions that can be lost and regained.

30-Day Action Plan

Step 1: Define and Visualize Your Goal: This section instructs readers to identify a specific, clearly defined goal, write it down, and regularly visualize themselves achieving it.

Step 2: Replace Fear with Focused Action: This section advises replacing negative thoughts with positive images of the desired goal and emphasizes persistence even when facing setbacks.

Step 3: Embrace the Law of Service: This section highlights the principle that success is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of service rendered, urging readers to focus on contribution rather than solely on financial gain.

Committing to the Test: This section encourages readers to fully commit to the 30-day action plan, restart if setbacks occur, and emphasizes that embracing these principles can lead to a life of abundance and fulfillment.

Supporting Quotes

"Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal." This defines success as an ongoing journey toward a meaningful goal.

"Men simply don't think!" Dr. Albert Schweitzer's observation highlights the lack of conscious thought and direction in many lives.

"The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice ... it is conformity."

Rollo May emphasizes how conforming hinders individual potential and leads to unfulfilling lives.

"We become what we think about." This encapsulates the core message of the book, highlighting the power of thought in shaping our reality.

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap." This biblical quote emphasizes the principle of cause and effect in our mental and physical worlds.

"Your success will always be measured by the quality and quantity of service you render." This underscores the importance of contributing value to others as a foundation for success.

Glossary of Key Terms

Success:

According to Nightingale, success is "the progressive realization of a worthy ideal." It emphasizes active pursuit of goals aligned with one's values.

Conformity:

The act of behaving like others without independent thought or action.

Nightingale sees conformity as a major obstacle to success.

Goals:

Specific and clearly defined objectives that provide direction and purpose in life.

Nightingale stresses the importance of setting and pursuing worthwhile goals.

Law of Attraction:

The belief that focusing on positive thoughts can attract positive experiences, while negative thoughts attract negative ones.

Service:

Providing value and assistance to others. Nightingale believes that genuine service is a prerequisite for financial success.

Fear:

A powerful emotion that can paralyze action and hinder progress. Nightingale advises replacing fear with positive visualization of one's goals.

Persistence:

The quality of continuing to pursue a goal despite setbacks or obstacles.

Nightingale emphasizes persistence as essential for success.

Abundance:

A state of plentiful resources and prosperity, both material and non-material.

Nightingale suggests that abundance follows service and a positive mindset.

Peace of Mind:

A state of tranquillity and inner calm, often associated with achieving one's goals and living in alignment with one's values.