

The Science of Being Great - Wallace D. Wattles | Personal Success

"The Science of Being Great" by Wallace D. Wattles is a self-help guide that advocates for personal growth and spiritual awakening. The text emphasizes the importance of recognizing the inherent divine power within each individual and cultivating a positive mental attitude. The book suggests that by embracing a spiritual viewpoint, individuals can overcome limitations imposed by heredity, environment, and societal structures. Wattles presents a series of steps, including preparation, consecration, and identification, to help readers achieve conscious unity with the Supreme Mind, the source of all knowledge and power. The book stresses the significance of thought as a transformative force, urging readers to engage in self-reflection, to adopt a positive outlook, and to cultivate a life of service. Ultimately, the text proposes that by aligning oneself with the divine, one can achieve personal greatness and manifest a more harmonious and fulfilling life.

Main Themes

The Inherent Power Within: The central premise is that everyone possesses a "Principle of Power," a divine spark enabling unlimited growth and achievement. Wattles emphasizes that "There is no possibility in any man that is not in every man." This power, sourced from the "Original Substance" or "Mind of God," is accessible to all who consciously connect with it.

Overcoming Limitations: Heredity, circumstances, and lack of opportunity are not barriers to greatness. Wattles argues that through focused effort and the right mental attitude, one can overcome any inherited tendencies or external obstacles. He uses examples like Lincoln and Stephenson to demonstrate how individuals can rise above adversity and achieve greatness.

The Importance of Thought: Wattles stresses the significance of thought as the foundation for external manifestation. "Greatness is only attained by the constant thinking of great thoughts," he states. Habitually thinking of oneself as capable and powerful is crucial for attracting success and achieving desired outcomes.

The Power of Right Action: Right thinking must be accompanied by right action. Wattles encourages individuals to act in a "great way" in all aspects of their lives, from their home environment to their interactions with others. He highlights the

importance of treating everyone with respect and consideration, seeing them as equals.

Service as the Path to Greatness: Wattles echoes Jesus' teachings by emphasizing service as a defining characteristic of true greatness. He argues that striving for positions of power and seeking recognition are ultimately self-serving and diminish true power. Instead, focusing on helping others and contributing to the betterment of society are the hallmarks of a genuinely great individual.

Key Ideas and Facts

1. **The Source of Power:** Wattles identifies "wisdom" as the essential basis of greatness. He describes wisdom as "the power to perceive the best ends to aim at and the best means for reaching those ends." This wisdom is sourced from the "Mind of God," a limitless reservoir of knowledge and truth accessible through conscious connection. "Man's knowledge is limited and uncertain; therefore, he cannot have wisdom in himself. Only God knows all truth; therefore, only God can have real wisdom or the right thing to do at all times, and man can receive wisdom from God."
2. **The Importance of Faith:** Unwavering faith in principle and the inherent goodness of the world is crucial for achieving greatness. Viewing the world as a perfect work in progress, evolving towards completion, fosters hope and a positive mindset. This faith fuels the belief in one's own ability to overcome challenges and contribute meaningfully to the world.
3. **The Role of Consecration:** Consecration involves aligning oneself with the highest principles and living in accordance with them. It requires abandoning harmful habits, controlling impulses, and prioritizing service to others above selfish desires. "You cannot be ruled from below if you are to be great; you must rule from above," Wattles explains.
4. **The Practice of Idealization:** Creating a clear mental picture of oneself as successful and embodying desired qualities is essential for manifesting greatness. This "thought-form," consistently held in mind, activates the creative power within and attracts corresponding external circumstances. "You internally take the form in which you think of yourself; and you surround yourself with the invisible forms of those things with which you associate in your thoughts."
5. **The Significance of Realization:** Realization involves actively expressing one's idealized self in all actions, no matter how small. It requires acting with confidence and courage, trusting one's inner guidance, and utilizing all available resources to achieve goals. "I appropriate to myself the power to become what I want to be, and to do what I want to do. I exercise creative energy; all the power there is, is mine."

- "Do not talk about your greatness; you are really, in essential nature, no greater than those around you."
- "Big things will come to you, asking to be done."
- "Every man and woman is perfect."

I. The Foundation of Greatness (Chapters 1-8)

- **Chapter 1: Hurry and Habit:** This chapter explores the detrimental effects of haste and ingrained habits on personal growth, emphasizing the need to cultivate calmness and replace limiting thoughts with empowering beliefs.
- **Chapter 2: Heredity and Opportunity:** Challenging the limitations imposed by genetics and circumstance, this section asserts the inherent potential within every individual to overcome inherited traits and seize opportunities for growth.
- **Chapter 3: The Source of Power:** This chapter defines wisdom as the ability to discern and act upon the best course of action, arguing that true greatness stems from aligning one's actions with knowledge and righteousness.
- **Chapter 4: The Mind of God:** Here, the concept of a universal intelligence or "God" is introduced, presented as a boundless source of knowledge and power accessible to all who seek unity with it.
- **Chapter 5: Preparation:** This section outlines the necessary steps for achieving conscious unity with the divine, including overcoming financial and physical anxieties, and casting out moral impurities like greed and lust.
- **Chapter 6: The Social Point of View:** Advocating for a perspective that views society as an evolving entity progressing toward harmony, this chapter encourages faith in the inherent goodness and perfection of the present world.
- **Chapter 7: The Individual Point of View:** Building upon the previous chapter, this section stresses the importance of seeing individuals as perfect beings in their current stage of development, urging kindness and understanding rather than judgment.
- **Chapter 8: Consecration:** This chapter defines consecration as obedience to the soul, urging individuals to align their thoughts and actions with their highest ideals, and to relinquish outdated beliefs and habits.

II. The Pathway to Power (Chapters 9-16)

- **Chapter 9: Identification:** This section calls for conscious recognition of one's inherent unity with the divine, emphasizing the need to affirm this connection to unlock the limitless power within.

- **Chapter 10: Idealization:** This chapter highlights the creative power of thought, encouraging the formation of a clear mental picture of the ideal self and believing in its eventual manifestation.
- **Chapter 11: Realization:** This section emphasizes the importance of translating the idealized self into tangible action, advocating for acting in a "great way" in every aspect of life, regardless of external circumstances.
- **Chapter 12: Hurry and Habit:** Revisiting the themes of Chapter 1, this section reinforces the need for patience and the replacement of limiting habits with empowering thoughts of power and ability.
- **Chapter 13: Thought:** This chapter emphasizes the paramount importance of thinking about profound truths and principles, advocating for critical engagement with concepts like social evolution and the interconnectedness of humanity.
- **Chapter 14: Action At Home:** This section applies the principles of greatness to the domestic sphere, urging individuals to embody their highest ideals in their interactions with family members and resist unhealthy co-dependency.
- **Chapter 15: Action Abroad:** Expanding the scope of action, this chapter encourages individuals to apply their principles of greatness in all social interactions, treating everyone with respect and avoiding meddling in others' affairs.
- **Chapter 16: Some Further Explanations:** This chapter revisits the concept of viewpoint, further emphasizing the importance of seeing the world as fundamentally good and progressing towards harmony.

III. Embracing the Divine Within (Chapters 17-22)

- **Chapter 17: More About Thought:** This chapter delves deeper into the power of thought, stressing the need for sincerity, aligning thoughts with righteous intentions, and focusing on the positive aspects of individuals and situations.
- **Chapter 18: Jesus' Idea of Greatness:** Drawing upon the teachings of Jesus, this section highlights the importance of humility and service as the hallmarks of true greatness, contrasting this with the pursuit of accolades and recognition.
- **Chapter 19: The Scientific Basis of Christianity:** This chapter connects the teachings of Christianity with the principles of evolution, arguing that God's inherent desire for self-expression drives the continuous development of humanity toward a higher moral and spiritual plane.
- **Chapter 20: Serving God:** This section reframes the concept of service to God, asserting that the greatest service lies in realizing one's full potential and contributing to the advancement of humanity.

- **Chapter 21: A Mental Exercise:** This chapter provides a guided mental exercise designed to help individuals cultivate empowering thoughts and beliefs related to health, wealth, and spiritual growth.
- **Chapter 22: A Summary of the Science of Being Great:** This concluding chapter summarizes the key principles outlined throughout the book, providing a concise framework for achieving true greatness through conscious unity with the divine, righteous action, and continuous growth.

IV. Embracing the Power Within (Chapters 1-2)

- **Chapter 1: Any Person May Become Great:** This chapter emphasizes the inherent potential within each individual, arguing that greatness is attainable for everyone through the intelligent use and direction of the "Principle of Power."
- **Chapter 2: Heredity and Opportunity:** This section further challenges the limitations imposed by heredity and circumstance, asserting that individuals can transcend inherited tendencies and utilize the "Principle of Power" to master any situation.

V. Connecting to the Divine Source (Chapter 3-4)

- **Chapter 3: The Source of Power:** This chapter defines wisdom as the foundation of greatness, highlighting its dependence on knowledge and the ability to connect with a higher source of wisdom, identified as "God."
- **Chapter 4: The Mind of God:** This section further explores the concept of a universal intelligence or "God," presenting it as a boundless reservoir of knowledge and truth accessible to all who seek unity with it.

VI. Laying the Groundwork (Chapters 5-9)

- **Chapter 5: Preparation:** This chapter emphasizes the need for overcoming anxiety and worry, cultivating a pure heart by eliminating negative emotions and desires, and aligning one's actions with noble ideals.
- **Chapter 6: The Social Point of View:** Advocating for a perspective that sees society as evolving toward harmony, this chapter encourages faith in the inherent goodness and perfection of the present world, even amidst apparent imperfections.
- **Chapter 7: The Individual Point of View:** Building upon the previous chapter, this section stresses the importance of seeing individuals as perfect beings in their current stage of development, advocating for understanding and compassion over judgment.

- **Chapter 8: Consecration:** This chapter defines consecration as obedience to the soul, urging individuals to relinquish outdated beliefs and habits and align their actions with their highest ideals.
- **Chapter 9: Identification:** This section calls for conscious recognition of one's inherent unity with the divine, emphasizing the need to affirm this connection to unlock the limitless power within.

VII. Practical Steps Towards Realization (Chapters 10-16)

- **Chapter 10: Idealization:** This chapter highlights the creative power of thought, encouraging the formation of a clear mental picture of the ideal self and believing in its eventual manifestation.
- **Chapter 12: Hurry and Habit:** This section emphasizes the detrimental effects of haste and ingrained habits on personal growth, advocating for patience and the replacement of limiting habits with empowering thoughts of power and ability.
- **Chapter 13: Thought:** This chapter emphasizes the paramount importance of thinking about profound truths and principles, advocating for critical engagement with concepts and developing the ability to discern truth.
- **Chapter 14: Action at home:** This section applies the principles of greatness to the domestic sphere, urging individuals to embody their highest ideals in their interactions with family members and resist unhealthy codependency.
- **Chapter 15: Action Abroad:** Expanding the scope of action, this chapter encourages individuals to apply their principles of greatness in all social interactions, treating everyone with respect and avoiding meddling in others' affairs.
- **Chapter 16: Some Further Explanations:** This chapter revisits the concept of viewpoint, further emphasizing the importance of seeing the world as fundamentally good and progressing towards harmony, and how this affects personal development.

VIII. Cultivating Greatness Through Thought and Action (Chapters 17-21)

- **Chapter 17: More about Thought:** This chapter delves deeper into the power of thought, stressing the need for sincerity, aligning thoughts with righteous intentions, and focusing on the positive aspects of individuals and situations.
- **Chapter 18: Jesus' Idea of Greatness:** Drawing upon the teachings of Jesus, this section highlights the importance of humility and service as the hallmarks of true greatness, contrasting this with the pursuit of accolades and recognition.

- **Chapter 20: Serving God:** This section reframes the concept of service to God, asserting that the greatest service lies in realizing one's full potential and contributing to the advancement of humanity.
- **Chapter 21: A Mental Exercise:** This chapter provides a guided mental exercise designed to help individuals cultivate empowering thoughts and beliefs related to health, wealth, and spiritual growth.

IX. Understanding the Essence of Greatness (Chapter 22)

- **Chapter 22: A Summary of the Science of Being Great:** This concluding chapter summarizes the key principles outlined throughout the book, providing a concise framework for achieving true greatness through conscious unity with the divine, righteous action, and continuous growth.

Quotes:

- "Genius is Omniscience flowing into man."
- "The brain does not make the man; the man makes the brain."
- "Your place in life is not fixed by heredity."
- "There is a genius in every man and woman, waiting to be brought forth."
- "There are no 'bad' or 'evil' people. There are perfectly good people who are off the track."
- "The only way to develop a perception of truth in large things is to trust absolutely to your present perception of Truth in small things."
- "Hurry is a manifestation of fear; he who fears not has plenty of time."
- "Habit rules us all."
- "Thinking, not mere knowledge or information, makes personality."

Conclusion

Wattles' "Science of Being Great" offers a compelling roadmap for individuals seeking to unlock their full potential. The book encourages readers to cultivate a mindset of abundance and faith, to prioritize service and self-development, and to consistently align their actions with their highest ideals. By understanding and implementing these principles, anyone can embark on the journey towards personal greatness and contribute meaningfully to the world.

Glossary of Key Terms

Cosmic Intelligence: The universal, all-encompassing intelligence that permeates all things; also referred to as the Mind of God.

Consecration: The act of dedicating oneself to the service of the highest good within, aligning thoughts and actions with the soul's guidance.

Identification: The conscious recognition of one's unity with God, acknowledging the inherent divine potential within every individual.

Idealization: The process of forming a clear and vivid mental picture of one's desired self and circumstances.

Realization: The act of translating idealized thoughts and visions into tangible actions and outcomes in the external world.

Principle of Power: The inherent divine force within every individual, capable of guiding and empowering individuals towards greatness.

Thought-Form: A mental construct created through focused thought, believed to possess the power to manifest in the material world.

Viewpoint: The perspective from which an individual perceives the world, influencing their thoughts, beliefs, and actions.

Wisdom: The ability to discern the right course of action, stemming from a connection to divine knowledge and understanding.