

The
MAGIC
of
BELIEVING

**UNLOCK YOUR
POWER TO ACHIEVE**

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**The Magic of
Believing**
by
Claude Bristol 1948

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CHAPTER—1

HOW I CAME TO TAP THE POWER OF BELIEF

Is There some force, or factor, or power, or science – call it what you will – which a few people understand and use to overcome their difficulties and achieve outstanding success? I firmly believe that there is, and it is my purpose in this book to try to explain it so that you can use it if you desire.

Around 1933, the financial editor of a great Los Angeles newspaper attended lectures I gave to financial men in that city and read my brochure T.N.T. – It Rocks the Earth. Afterwards, he wrote the following:

“You have caught from the ether something that has a mystical quality – a something that explains the magic of coincidence, the mystery of what makes men lucky.”

I realized that I had run across something that was practical and workable. But I didn’t consider it then – neither do I now – as anything “mystical,” except in the sense that it is unknown to the majority of people. This “something” has always been known to a fortunate few down the centuries, but for some unknown reason it is still barely understood by the average person.

Years ago, when I started to teach this science by means of lectures and the medium of my brochure, I wasn’t certain that the concepts could be grasped by the ordinary individual. But since then, I have seen those who have used it to double and triple their incomes, build their own successful businesses, acquire homes of their dreams, and create sizable fortunes. I am now convinced that any intelligent person who is sincere with themselves can reach any heights they truly and honestly desire. I had no intention of writing a second book, although many urged me to do so, until a woman in the book business who had sold many copies of my first little book literally read me “the riot act” by stating:

“You have a duty to give to the men and women who seek places for themselves in the world, in easily understood form, the new material that you have given in your lectures. Everyone of ambition wants to get ahead,

and you have amply demonstrated that you have something that will help anyone. It's up to you to pass it along."

It took time to sell myself on the idea. But having served as a soldier in World War I, mostly in France and Germany, and having been active for many years in ex-service men's organizations as well as a state commission for the rehabilitation of ex-service men and women, I realized that it would be hard for many individuals to make outstanding places for themselves in a world from which they had long been separated. It is with a sincere desire to help them, as well as all ambitious men and women, that I write this more full and detailed exposition of the Power of Belief. Thus, this work is written also to help develop individual thinking and doing.

Since this book may fall into the hands of some who may call me a crackpot or screwball, let me say that I am past the half-century mark and have had many years of hard practical business experience – as well as a goodly number of years as a newspaper man. I started as a police reporter. Police reporters are trained to get facts and take nothing for granted. For a two year period I was church editor of a large metropolitan newspaper, during which I came in close contact with clergymen and leaders of all sects and denominations, mind-healers, divine healers, Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, New Thoughters, Unity leaders, sun and idol worshipers – and, yes, even a few infidels and pagans.

The well-known English evangelist Gypsy Smith was making a tour of America at that time. Night after night as I sat on his platform, watching people stumble down the aisles, some sobbing, others shouting hysterically, I wondered.

Again I wondered when I accompanied the police in answering a riot call: some Holy Rollers in a moment of hysteria had knocked over a stove and set fire to their meeting hall. When I attended my first (and only) meeting of Shakers, I wondered – as I did while attending various spiritualistic meetings. I wondered as I heard the testimonials at the Christian Scientists' Wednesday night meetings. I wondered when I watched a group of people immersed in the icy waters of a mountain stream and coming up shouting "Hallelujah!" even though their teeth were chattering. I wondered at the Indians' ceremonial dances and their rain-dance rituals. Billy Sunday also caused me to wonder as, in later years, did Aimee Semple McPherson.

In France during the First World War, I marveled at the simple faith of the peasants and the powers of their village cures. I heard stories of miracles at Lourdes, and of somewhat similar miracles at other shrines. When in a famous old Roman church, I saw elderly men and women climb literally on their knees up a long flight of stairs to gaze upon a holy urn – a climb that is no simple task for an athletically trained young person – I wondered again.

Business brought me into contact with the Mormons, and when I heard the story of Joseph Smith and the revelations on the plates of gold, I was again given to wonder. The Dukhobors of western Canada, who would doff their clothes when provoked, likewise made me wonder. While in Hawaii I heard much about the powers of the kahunas who could, it was claimed, cause people to die or live by praying. The great powers attributed to these kahunas profoundly impressed me.

In my early days as a newspaper man, I saw a famous medium try to make “spirits” respond before a crowded courtroom of antagonistic scoffers. The judge had promised to release the medium if he could get the “spirits” to speak in the courtroom. Yet they failed to materialize, and I wondered why – because the medium’s followers had testified to remarkable séances.

Many years later, I was commissioned to write a series of articles on what the police call the “fortune-telling racket.” I visited everyone from gypsy phrenologists to crystal-ball gazers, from astrologers to spiritualistic mediums. I heard what purported to be the voices of old Indian “guides” tell me the past, the present, and the future, and I heard from relatives I never knew existed.

Several times I have been in a hospital room in which people around me died, while others with seemingly worse ailments were up and – apparently – fully recovered within a short time I have known of partially paralyzed people who got over their condition in a matter of days. I have known people who claim to have cured their rheumatism or arthritis by wearing a copper band around their wrists – others by mental healing. From relatives and close friends I have heard stories of how warts on hands suddenly disappeared. I am familiar with the stories of those who permit rattlesnakes to bite them and still live; and with hundreds of other tales of mysterious happenings and healings.

Moreover, I have made myself familiar with the lives of great men and women of history and have met and interviewed many outstanding men and women in all lines of human endeavor. Often I have wondered just what it was that took them to the top. I have seen coaches take seemingly inferior baseball and football teams and infuse them with something that caused them to win. In the Depression days, I saw badly whipped sales organizations do an abrupt about-face and bring in more business than ever before.

Apparently I was born with a huge bump of curiosity, for I have always had an insatiable yearning to seek answers and explanations. This quest has taken me to many strange places, brought to light many peculiar cases, and caused me to read every book I could get my hands on dealing with religions, cults, and physical and mental sciences. I have read literally thousands of books on modern psychology, metaphysics, ancient magic, Voodoo, Yoga, Theosophy, Christian Science, Unity, Truth, New Thought, Coueism, and many others dealing with what I call “Mind Stuff,” as well as the philosophies and teachings of great masters of the past.

Many were nonsensical, others strange, and many very profound. Gradually I discovered that a golden thread runs through all the teachings and makes them work for those who sincerely accept and apply them, and that thread can be named in the single word – belief. It is this same element or factor – belief – that causes people to be cured through mental healing, enables others to climb high the ladder of success, and gets phenomenal results for all who accept it. Why belief works miracles is something that cannot be satisfactorily explained; but have no doubt that there’s genuine magic in believing. “The magic of believing” became a phrase around which my thoughts steadily revolved.

I am convinced that the so-called secret fraternal organizations guard a real “royal secret” which very few members ever grasp. The conclusion must be that “no mind ever receives the truth until it is prepared to receive it.” One order provides candidates with a very profound book (to be studied in connection with the degree work), which itself would be practically an open-sesame to life if the candidates could understand and follow its tenets. But few read it, complaining that “it is too deep” for them. I am convinced, too, that some of these organizations, like many

secret orders which possess a knowledge and understanding of life, use parables and misinterpretations to mislead.

When T.N.T. – It Rocks the Earth was first published, I imagined that it would be easily understood since I had written it simply. But as the years went by, some readers protested that it was too much in digest form. Others said they couldn't understand it. I had assumed that most people knew something about the power of thought. Now I realize that I was mistaken, and those who had an understanding of the subject were comparatively few. Later, over many years of lecturing before clubs, business and sales organizations, I discovered that most people were vitally interested in the subject, but that it had to be fully explained. Finally, I undertook to write this book in words that anyone can understand – and with the hope that it will help many to reach their goals in life.

The science of thought is as old as man himself. The wise men of all ages have known it and used it. The only thing I have done is to put the subject in modern language and bring to the reader's attention what some of today's outstanding minds are doing to substantiate the great truths that have come down through the centuries.

Fortunately for the world, people are coming to the realization that there is something to this “mind-stuff” after all. I believe that millions of people would like to get a better understanding of it – and prove that it does work.

Therefore, let me start by relating a few experiences from my own life, with the hope that they will give you a better understanding of the entire science.

Early in 1918, I landed in France as a “casual” soldier, unattached to a regular company. As a result, it was several weeks before my service record (necessary for my pay) caught up with me. During that period I had no money to buy gum, candy, cigarettes, and the like, since the few dollars I had before sailing had been spent at the transport ship’s canteen to relieve the monotony of the regular menu. Every time I saw a man light a cigarette or chew a stick of gum, it reminded me that I was without money to spend on myself. Certainly, I was eating, and the army clothed me and provided me with a place on the ground to sleep, but I grew bitter at having no spending money and no way of getting any. One night enroute to the forward area on a crowded troop train when sleep was out of the question, I made up my mind that on my return to civilian life, I would have a lot of money. The whole pattern of my life was altered at that moment.

True, I had been something of a reader in my youth; the Bible had been a must in our family. As a boy I was interested in wireless telegraphy. X-rays, high-frequency apparatus, and similar manifestations of electricity, and I had read every book on these subjects I could find. But while I was familiar with such terms as radiation frequencies, vibrations, oscillations, magnetic influences, etc., in those days they meant nothing to me outside of the strictly electrical field. Perhaps my first inkling of a connection between the mind and electrical or vibratory influences came when upon my completing law school, an instructor gave me an old book, Thomson Jay Hudson’s Law of Psychic Phenomena. I read it, but only superficially. Either I did not understand it, or my mind was not ready to receive its profound truths. On that fateful night in the spring of 1918, when I told myself that some day I would have a lot of money, I did not realize that I was laying the groundwork for a series of causes which would unleash forces that would bring accomplishment. As a matter of fact, the idea never

entered my mind that I could develop a fortune with my thinking and believing.

My Army classification card listed me as a newspaper man I had been attending an Army Training School to qualify for a commission, but the whole training-school program was discontinued just as we finished the course; thus most of us landed in France as enlisted men. However, I considered myself a qualified journalist and felt that there was a better place for me in the American Expeditionary Force. Yet like many others, I found myself pushing wheelbarrows and lugging heavy shells and other ammunition.

Then one night at an ammunition depot near Toul, things began to happen. I was ordered to appear before the Commanding Officer, who asked me whom I knew at First Army Headquarters. I didn't know a soul there and didn't even know where it was located, and I told him so. Then he showed me orders directing me to report there immediately. A car and driver were provided, and the next morning found me at First Army Headquarters in charge of a daily progress bulletin. I was answerable only to a colonel.

During the months that followed, I frequently thought about the commission to which I was entitled. Then the links began to form into a chain. One day, entirely out of a clear sky, came orders transferring me to the Stars and Stripes, the Army newspaper; I had long had an ambition to be on its staff, but had done nothing about it. The next day, as I was preparing to leave for Paris, I was called before the colonel who showed me a telegram signed by the Adjutant General's office at GHQ, asking if I was available for commission. The colonel asked whether I would rather have a commission than report to the Army newspaper. Foreseeing that the war would soon end and I would be happier among other newspaper men, I said I would prefer the transfer to the Stars and Stripes. I never learned who was responsible for the telegram, but obviously something was working in my behalf.

Following the armistice, my desire to get out of the Army became insistent. I wanted to begin building that fortune. But the Stars and Stripes did not suspend publication until the summer of 1919, and it was August before I got home. However, the forces I had unconsciously set in motion were already setting the stage for me.