CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THE NEXT TIME YOU THINK YOU ARE A FAILURE

If you have made a botch of 1910, if you feel that it has been a failure, that you have floundered and blundered and have done a lot of foolish things; if you have been gullible, made imprudent investments, wasted your time and money, don't drag these ghosts over the new year line to handicap you and destroy your happiness all through the coming year.

Haven't you wasted enough energy worrying over what can not be helped? Don't let these things sap any more of your vitality, waste any more of your time or destroy any more of your happiness.

There is only one thing to do with bitter experiences, blunders and unfortunate mistakes, or with memories that worry us and which kill our efficiency, and that is to forget them, bury them!

The new year is a good time to "leave the low-vaulted past," to drop the yesterdays, to forget bitter memories.

Resolve that when you cross the line between the old and the new year you will close the door on everything in the past that pains and can not help you. Free yourself from everything that handicaps you, keeps you back and makes you unhappy. Throw away all useless baggage, drop everything that is a drag, that hinders your progress.

Enter the door of the new year with a clean slate and a free mind. Don't be mortgaged to the past, and never look back.

There is no use in castigating yourself for not having done better.

Form a habit of expelling from your mind thoughts or suggestions which call up unpleasant subjects or bitter memories, and which have a bad influence upon you.

Every one ought to make it a life rule to wipe out from his memory everything that has been unpleasant, unfortunate. We ought to forget everything that has been kept back, has made us suffer, has been disagreeable, and never allow the hideous pictures of distressing conditions to enter our minds again. There is only one thing to do with a disagreeable, harmful experience, and that is—forget it!

There are many times in the life of a person who does things that are worth while when he gets terribly discouraged and thinks it easier to go back than to push on. But there is no victory in retreating. We should never leave any bridges unburned behind us, any way open for retreat to tempt our weakness, indecision or discouragement. If there is anything we ever feel grateful for, it is that we have had courage and pluck enough to push on, to keep going when things looked dark and when seemingly insurmountable obstacles confronted us.

Most people are their own worst enemies. We are all the time "queering" our life game by our vicious, tearing-down thoughts and unfortunate moods. Everything depends upon our courage, our faith in ourselves, in our holding a hopeful, optimistic outlook; and yet, whenever things go wrong with us, whenever we have a discouraging day or unfortunate experience, a loss or any misfortune, we let the tearing-down thought, doubt, fear, despondency, like a bull in a china shop, tear through our mentalities, perhaps breaking up and destroying the work of years of building up, and we have to start all over again. We work like the frog in the well; we climb up only to fall back, and often lose all we gain.

You will find that just in proportion as you increase your confidence in yourself by the affirmation of what you wish to be and to do, your ability will increase.

No matter what other people may think about your ability, never allow yourself to doubt that you can do or become what you long to. Increase your self-confidence in every possible way, and you can do this to a remarkable degree by the power of self-suggestion.

This form of suggestion—talking to oneself vigorously, earnestly—seems to arouse the sleeping forces in the subconscious self more effectually than thinking the same thing.

There is a force in words spoken aloud which is not stirred by going over the same words mentally. They sometimes arouse slumbering energies within us which thinking does not stir up—especially if we have not been trained to think deeply, to focus the mind closely. They make a more lasting impression upon the mind, just as words which pass through the eye from the printed page make a greater impression on the brain than we get by thinking the same words; as seeing objects of nature makes a more lasting impression upon the mind than thinking about them. A vividness, a certain force, accompanies the spoken word—especially if earnestly, vehemently uttered—which is not apparent to many in merely thinking about what the words express. If you repeat a firm resolve to yourself aloud, vigorously, even vehemently, you are more likely to carry it to reality than if you merely resolve in silence.

We become so accustomed to our silent thoughts that the voicing of them, the giving audible expression to our yearnings, makes a much deeper impression upon us.

The audible self encouragement treatment may be used with marvelous results in correcting our weaknesses; overcoming our deficiencies.

Never allow yourself to think meanly, narrowly, poorly of yourself. Never regard yourself as weak, inefficient, diseased, but as perfect, complete, capable. Never even think of the possibility of going through life a failure or a partial failure. Failure and misery are not for the man who has seen the God-side of himself, who has been in touch with divinity. They are for those who have never discovered themselves and their God-like qualities.

Stoutly assert that there is a place for you in the world, and that you are going to fill it like a man. Train yourself to expect great things of yourself. Never admit, even by your manner, that you think you are destined to do little things all your life.

It is marvelous what mental strength can be developed by the perpetual affirmation of vigorous fitness, strength, power, efficiency; these are thoughts and ideals that make a strong man.

The way to get the best out of yourself is to put things right up to yourself, handle yourself without gloves, and talk to yourself as you would to a son of yours who has great ability but who is not using half of it.

When you go into an undertaking just say to yourself, "Now, this thing is right up to me. I've got to make good, to show the man in me or the coward. There is no backing out."

You will be surprised to see how quickly this sort of self-suggestion will brace you up and put new spirit in you.

I have a friend who has helped himself wonderfully by talking to himself about his conduct. When he feels that he is not doing all he ought to, that he has made some foolish mistake or has failed to use good sense and good judgment in any transaction, when he feels that his stamina and ambition are deteriorating, he goes off alone to the country, to the woods if possible, and has a good heart-to-heart talk with himself something after this fashion:

"Now, young man, you need a good talking-to, a bracing-up all along the line. You are going stale, your standards are dropping, your ideals are getting dull, and the worst of it all is that when you do a poor job, or are careless about your dress and indifferent in your manner, you do not feel as troubled as you used to. You are not making good. This lethargy, this inertia, this indifference will seriously cripple your career if you're not very careful. You are letting a lot of good chances slip by you, because you are not as progressive and up-to-date as you ought to be.

"In short, you are becoming lazy. You like to take things easy. Nobody ever amounts to much who lets his energies flag, his standards droop and his ambition ooze out. Now, I am going to keep right after you, young man, until you are doing yourself justice. This take-it-easy sort of policy will never land you at the goal you started for. You will have to watch yourself very closely or you will be left behind.

"You are capable of something much better than what you are doing. You must start out to-day with a firm resolution to make the returns from your work greater to-night than ever before. You must make this a red-letter day. Bestir yourself; get the cobwebs out of your head; brush off the brain ash. Think, think, think to some purpose! Do not mull and mope like this. You are only half-alive, man; get a move on you!"

This young man says that every morning when he finds his standards are down and he feels lazy and indifferent he "hauls himself over the coals," as he calls it, in order to force himself up to a higher standard and put himself in tune for the day. It is the very first thing he attends to.

He forces himself to do the most disagreeable tasks first, and does not allow himself to skip hard problems. "Now, don't be a coward," he says to himself. "If others have done this, you can do it."

By years of stern discipline of this kind he has done wonders with himself. He began as a poor boy living in the slums of New York with no one to take an interest in him, encourage or push him. Though he had little opportunity for schooling when he was a small boy, he has given himself a splendid education, mainly since he was twenty-one. I have never known any one else who carried on such a vigorous campaign in self-victory, self-development, self-training, self-culture as this young man has.

At first it may seem silly to you to be talking to yourself, but you will derive so much benefit from it that you will have recourse to it in remedying all your defects. There is no fault, however great or small, which will not succumb to persistent audible suggestion. For example, you may be naturally timid and shrink from meeting people; and you may distrust your own ability. If so, you will be greatly helped by assuring yourself in your daily self-talks that you are not timid; that, on the contrary, you are the embodiment of courage and bravery. Assure yourself that there is no reason why you should be timid, because there is nothing inferior or peculiar about you; that you are attractive and that you know how to act in the presence of others. Say to yourself that you are never again going to allow yourself to harbor any thoughts of self-depreciation or timidity or inferiority; that you are going to hold your head up and go about as though you were a king, a conqueror, instead of crawling about like a whipped cur; you are going to assert your manhood, your individuality.

If you lack initiative, stoutly affirm your ability to begin things, and to push them to a finish. And always put your resolve into action at the first opportunity.

You will be surprised to see how you can increase your courage, your confidence and your ability, if you will be sincere with yourself and strong and persistent in your affirmations.

I know of nothing so helpful for the timid, those who lack faith in themselves, as the habit of constantly affirming their own importance, their own power, their own divinity. The trouble is that we no not think half enough of ourselves; do not accurately measure our ability; do not put the right estimate upon our possibilities. We berate ourselves, belittle, efface ourselves, because we do not see the larger, diviner man in us.

Try this experiment the very next time you get discouraged or think that you are a failure, that your work does not amount to much—turn about face. Resolve that you will go no further in that direction. Stop and face the other way, and *go* the other way. Every time you think you are a failure, it helps you to become one, for your thought is your life pattern and you can not get away from it. You cannot get away from your ideals, the standard which you hold for yourself, and if you acknowledge in your thought that you are a failure, that you can't do anything worth while, that luck is against you, that you don't have the same opportunity that other people have—your convictions will control the result.

There are thousands of people who have lost everything they valued in the world, all the material results of their lives' endeavor, and yet, because they possess stout hearts, unconquerable spirits, a determination to push ahead which knows no retreat, they are just as far from real failure as before their loss; and with such wealth they can never be poor.

A great many people fail to reach a success which matches their ability because they are victims of their moods, which repel people and repel business.

We avoid morose, gloomy people just as we avoid a picture which makes a disagreeable impression upon us.

Everywhere we see people with great ambitions doing very ordinary things, simply because there are so many days when they do not "feel like it" or when they are discouraged or "blue."

A man who is at the mercy of a capricious disposition can never be a leader, a power among men.

It is perfectly possible for a well-trained mind to completely rout the worst case of the "blues" in a few minutes; but the trouble with most of us is that instead of flinging open the mental blinds and letting in the sun of cheerfulness, hope and optimism, we keep them closed and try to eject the darkness by main force.

The art of arts is learning how to clear the mind of its enemies—enemies of our comfort, happiness and success. It is a great thing to learn to focus the mind upon the beautiful instead of the ugly, the true instead of the false, upon harmony instead of discord, life instead of death, health instead of disease. This is not always easy, but it is possible to everybody. It requires only skilful thinking, the forming of the right thought habits.

The best way to keep out darkness is to keep the life filled with light; to keep out discord, keep it filled with harmony; to shut out error, keep the mind filled with truth; to shut out ugliness, contemplate beauty and loveliness: to get rid of all that is sour and unwholesome, contemplate all that is sweet and wholesome. Opposite thoughts can not occupy the mind at the same time.

No matter whether you feel like it or not, just affirm that you *must* feel like it that you *will* feel like it, that you *do* feel like it, that you are normal and that you are in a position to do your best. Say it deliberately, affirm it vigorously and it will come true.

The next time you get into trouble, or are discouraged and think you are a failure, just try the experiment of affirming vigorously, persistently, that all that is real *must* be good, for God made all that is, and whatever doesn't seem to be good is not like its Creator and therefore can not be real. Persist in this affirmation. You will be surprised to see how unfortunate suggestions and adverse conditions will melt away before it.

When you are "blue" or discouraged, get as complete a change of environment as possible. Whatever you do, do not brood over your troubles or dwell upon the things which happen to annoy you at the time. Think the pleasantest, happiest things possible. Hold the most charitable, loving thoughts toward others. Make a strenuous effort to radiate joy and gladness to everybody about you. Say the kindest, pleasantest things. You will soon begin to feel a wonderful uplift, the shadows which have darkened your mind will flee away, and the sun of joy will light up your whole being.

Stoutly, constantly, everlastingly affirm that you will become what your ambitions indicate as fitting and possible. Do not say, "I shall be a success sometime;" say, "I am a success. Success is my birthright." Do not say that you are going to be happy in the future. Say to yourself, "I was intended for happiness, made for it, and I am happy now."

If, however, you affirm, "I am health; I am prosperity; I am this or that," but do not believe it, you will not be helped by affirmation. You must believe what you affirm and try to realize it.

Assert your actual possession of the things you need; of the qualities you long to have. Force your mind toward your goal; hold it there steadily, persistently, for this is the mental state that creates. The negative mind, which doubts and wavers, creates nothing.

"I, myself, am good fortune," says Walt Whitman.

If we could only realize that the very attitude of assuming that we are the real embodiment of the thing we long to be or to attain, that we possess the good things we long for, not that we possess all the qualities of good, but that we are these qualities — with the constant affirming, "I myself am good luck, good fortune; I am myself a part of the great creative, sustaining principle of the universe, because my real, divine self and my Father are one"—what a revolution would come to earth's toilers!—Success.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

What I Heard Them Say

The dog and cat were sitting on the hearth-rug by the fire,
And the pet canary's cage was hanging near,
And while I sat so quietly, they thought I was asleep,
They said these things so loudly I could hear.
Said the cat "'Tis really shocking, how I am mauled around
By the best brought-up of children in this town!
The little folks who live here, have no feeling for their pets—
Now, would *you* like to be carried, upside down?"

"Your woes, my dearest Madam," the dog politely said,
"Are very sad, I answer, so are mine.
My little master loves me—at least he says he does—
And then forgets to feed me, half the time.
I run until I'm breathless, I try hard to do my best,
(He always scolds and whips me, when I fail)
But tell me, dearest Madam, pray how would it suit *you*
To be sic'd, and then held backward by the tail?"

The canary, all this time, had sat with drooping head,
"My friends," she said, "My trouble is not nice,
It is almost a shame to mention, in polite society,
But you never in your lives, were plagued with *lice*!
They never let me have some dust, or I could kill the pests,
They let me get as dirty as can be,
All my seed is gone, this long time, but some I do not like,
And my water-cup's a dreadful sight to see."

Just then, I sneezed, or coughed,—at least, they knew I was awake—
And you'd not believe they'd ever said a word!
But I pass along this story, which is true, you must admit,
Of their troubles and vexations, which I heard.
Now, little boys and girlies, there are pets within *your* home—
A birdie, or a doggie, or a cat—
Please remember what I've told you, of what I heard them say,
When the cat, and dog, and birdie had a chat.

—ETHELYN DYER in Our Dumb Animals.

WHEN THE SNOW MELTED

A girl who had borrowed an older sister's locket without the formality of asking permission, wore it to a friend's. She put it into her purse on her way home, that it might not attract attention as she entered the house. When she stole upstairs to restore the borrowed locket to its customary place, she found that her purse was missing.

There was nothing to connect her with the disappearance of the gold locket, unless she had been honest enough to make a frank and full confession. And this she could not bring herself to do. The mystery was discussed in the household for weeks, and at length was accepted as one of the problems for which there is no solution. And the girl who had sometimes considered confessing her fault, at last dismissed the idea from her mind.

The winter passed and the spring drew near. One day the delivery man, coming up the walk, stopped and picked up a small object which the melting snow had left partially uncovered.

"Any of you folks lost a purse?" he asked.

The girl who had opened the door for him looked hard at the little object, much the worse for lying under the snow all winter.

"Why, it's Esther's purse!" she cried. "I didn't know you had lost your purse, Esther."

She opened it and her gold locket dropped into her hand. The mystery was plain. The girl who had deliberated confession had put it off too long. Now her wrongdoing in borrowing her sister's locket, and the far greater wrong of concealing its loss, was glaringly revealed.

This is not a rare instance. No wrong can be concealed forever. "Murder will out," says the old proverb, and that is not the only sin which comes to the surface. Our wrong-doings may be hidden for so long that we shall be lulled into a false security, but sooner or later, in this world as a rule, but surely in the next, "every hidden thing shall be made known." Do not wait for the melting snow to leave bare the proofs of your guilt. Do not wait for the passing years to expose your sin and the false part you have played so long. No fault is so great that concealment does not make it worse.—True Voice.

GIRLS, BE VOLUNTEERS

"Yes, I suppose I should get more help from the girls than I do," said the weary-faced mother of a large family. "But sometimes I get so tired of asking them I would rather do the things myself." Girls, is that the reason that mother takes on her shoulders so many small burdens from which they might relieve her? Is that the reason why the lines of weariness are deepening on her face day by day? Save her the trouble of making a special request for every little duty that needs doing. Be on the lookout for your opportunity. In a word be volunteers.—Catholic Sun.

THE DAILY EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Nothing so much avails us in keeping our good resolutions as a daily examina- of conscience.

A few moments devoted to this duty are precious moments. You will find the study of self a very strange, and indeed a curious one. As the study progresses you will soon come to determine what is necessary to your spiritual growth, and wherein you are inadequate. The careful examination will be of value to this testimony.

"SUCCESS IN LIFE"

The first question that presents itself to a young man who has finished his work at school and is about to enter the business world is: "How shall I make my life a success?" Certainly, the first question to settle in his mind is: "What constitutes success in life?" Success is a term that has a great many definitions—not meaning the same to any two persons. It is a subject on which few will agree, but upon what it does mean to each one of us depends our future happiness.

A self-made business man tells me that the successful man is one who has conquered poverty. His only object in life is that of becoming rich. He has worked like a slave for a great many years that he may gain millions—he has ruined others in order to advance himself, yet he is called a self-made man He has been very successful as some rate success, but is he a type of true success?

Another man tells me that the successful man is the one who conquers temptation and sin. This man, early in life, succeeded in conquering poverty, but in order to accomplish it, used means, at times, to the detriment of others which afterwards caused him much unrest. His surplus money lead him into temptation and sin and later on to an unhappy marriage. Finally, finding himself very unhappy, he turned towards the religious side of life and after a desperate and conscientious struggle, succeeded in resisting temptation and sin. Not until this was fully and successfully accomplished did he consider he had made a success of life.

Now, the accumulation of money should not be the great aim of life. We are not sent into the world for the sole purpose of accumulating a large bank account, if in order to do so, we must sacrifice honor, peace and conscience. A man who builds his life on fraud, trickery and deceit is sure to end in dishonor and ruin. All the glory, glitter and glare of the gold which he so worshipped soon turns to dross—powerless to procure him a moment's peace. Of course, money-getting is not to be despised, because, if rightly applied, what a wonderful lot of good money can do!

Is it nothing to have a heart free from any stain of dishonor, a conscience free from the fear of exposure? Character, after all, is what counts most in this world. It is man's noblest possession. It gives us greater power than wealth and brings us honor without the jealousies of fame.

Unselfishness, kindness and self-sacrifice for others are the great factors in achieving true success. These qualities are worth cultivating, and have caused many a man to be sought after in business as well as in social circles. Nothing will pay you better and make you more popular.

Start in with a firm determination to win and let nothing discourage you if you honestly feel that your cause is a worthy one. It is lack of perseverance, hopefulness and ability that are the real enemies of success.

"Seek not by fraud to gain your brother's share;
Plead not with wealth to ope her gilded doors:
Do right, and Time will lead you where
Things worth the having will be truly yours."

EUGENIE LEFEVRE,
Russell House,
Ottawa, Canada.

THE VALUE OF THE COMMONPLACE

Walter Elliott, C. S. P., in the January Catholic World.

St. Francis De Sales, that minter of both the gold and copper coin of spiritual commerce, calls attention (Devout Life, III., xxxv.) to the double perfection of the Valiant Woman of the Book of Proverbs: "She hath put forth her hands," he quotes, "to strong things;" that is, to things high, generous and important, and yet she disdained not to "take hold of the spindle" (Prov. xxxi.) Never forget the distaff and the spindle, the saint insists, even if you are gifted to embroider tapestry of silk and gold. Then he utters one of his immortal maxims: "Take care to practice those low and humble virtues, which grow like flowers at the foot of the cross."

As a little signet ring can bind a whole kingdom, because it is worn on the king's finger, so a little hand's turn of gratitude for Christ's sake can win entrance to the kingdom of heaven. Truthfulness as absolute in little things as in great, delicate shadings of kindliness in conversation, cold shivers of sensitiveness to the divine honor in examens of conscience, rigidity of observance of a devout rule of life—behold perfection as far as it is a practical method. It is a comfort to know that God concerns Himself with all means of grace, great and little. To many, the disenchantment wrought by a second conversion, will be the tardy discovery that bigness is not greatness in spiritual things.

We read in wonder of the marvelous things our Lord revealed to St. Teresa in an almost continuous succession of ecstacies—we never dream of such privileges for ourselves. But do we remember that one of her notable books, The Way of Perfection, treats simply of how to say the Our Father with attention? Supernatural wisdom was never more worthily employed than in the diminutive doctorate of teaching little ones how to prattle their prayers. Our Lord did not reproach his Apostles for not watching with Him throughout the whole of that awful night before His crucifixion; but He did complain: "What? Could you not watch one hour with Me?" (Matt. xxvi. 40). That I can do, O Lord, once a week anyway—or I can give Thee the fraction of an hour. And I can hear Mass with decent attention; and make sure of not coming late; I can recite the Angelus; I can say my table prayers.

Fidelity to God is a permanent state only when it takes in little things for His sake with the fidelity due to Him in great things. No one was ever canonized for doing great things with the ease of native greatness; but many a saint is embalmed in eternal memory by the divine testimony of miracles, for living a routine life with miraculous fervor. The prime secret of holiness is how to do ordinary actions with extraordinary love. The obvious advantage of this doctrine, seldom known till after the chagrin of many spiritual disappointments, is that it makes the vestibule of perfection common ground for all, whether heroes or underlings. The daily life of all is the average humdrum of the commonplace. No other novitiate is open to the most gifted, nor refused to the dullest of souls. Habit makes the man, and habit depends on a constant succession of influences; but great events and heroic calls are not constantly repeated, but are rare. Little opportunities to be good are always at hand, are naturally successive, are supernaturally distributed everywhere, and supernaturally blest. What is naturally present with us daily and hourly, God makes supernatural and providential. Habits of virtue, like any other habits, must come at all. Happy is the Christian, who, for the love of God, fixes his mind on the divine opportunities of home and business, and loses none of them for the practice of virtue. Happy the Christian whose natural tendencies to good, are insensibly made in supernatural habits of virtue.

Never let your zeal outrun your charity.

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