



GUIDEPOSTS FOR THE VOCATIONAL WORKER

—M. B.—

The vocational worker could be a miracle man of the age if he observes certain guideposts. Guidepost number one concerns the trait of honesty, which is believed to be the most important quality of the craftsman, besides his dexterity. Goodwill in business or in any other enterprise may be gained by the reputation established by the entrepreneur for his honesty in his dealings with his customers. A dishonest man is as transparent as glass, and once a customer is convinced that the shopman would cheat him, given the opportunity, he will not go back for more business. A satisfied customer will come back again and again.

If you are a mere employee in a government firm or a private enterprise, you will gain high credit for yourself by your practice of honesty in the protection of your employer's interests. The employer does not want employees who cheat on their time and who lose golden hours in idleness and other form of dissipation. Many an employee has lost the esteem and high regard of his employer when the latter is convinced that his men watch the clock more than they do their work. It is not of course desirable that one should devote more time than he needs to finish his work, and there is no sense in doing overtime work when that is not necessary. People who do over-

time work are generally those who are not efficient in organizing themselves. They waste a great deal of time in false moves and useless maneuvers. If one knows how to organize his work so that he sets time for doing every detail carefully and thoroughly, he need not fear that he has too much to do. It is the idle fellow and the one who does not do his work systematically that always lacks the time to do it. The people who are known to have a great deal of work are the ones who can do just a little more than the others and can therefore achieve more. Some wise man has said that if you want to get a thing well done in the shortest time possible, you should give that work to the fellow who is busy. He is the miracle man.

The matter of honesty also applies to such things as the conservation of the material resources of the enterprise. The employer who finds he has to keep an eagle eye on the materials of production lest they disappear or are wasted is not an efficient employer because he does not know how to select his workers. One who watches his workers all the time for fear they would waste the materials of production loses much time in doing so. The first thing he should do when he finds that he has men under him who cheat should be to fire those men. For if an employee

cannot be trusted to safeguard, protect, and conserve the materials of production, that same employee will also cheat a customer by making it appear that an inferior product is a first-class one. And the customer will always find out, because the inferior product will not last as long or will not render as effective service as the genuine one. A commodity establishes its reputation and therefore its market. And the same may be said of the employee who is honest. The price that he commands in the market will always be high, and he will never be in lack of a job or of customers.

The next guidepost for the vocational worker is this: *Get out of the groove*: An ordinary man of course does only ordinary things. It is the man who has extra ideas, who is always in search of something new and something useful that gets the benefits of achievement. It is not enough that one should do his regular portion of an assignment; he must look for something else to do in order to improve upon that assignment. The fellow who is satisfied to do only the routine work will never rise beyond the routinary things of life. One must always exert efforts to look out of the hole in which he finds himself, for in doing so he will be able to see the sunshine, as it were, and appreciate better the meaning of the pulsating life that takes place outside his dark hole. It is the man with vision, who gets out beyond the groove, the one who has new ideas and tries them out that becomes the pathfinder, the discoverer, the inventor, the miracle

man of the age in which he lives.

The third guidepost is this: *Strengthen your will power*. That sounds like a platitude, but it is not; it is the most practical suggestion to any one who is ambitious and wants to get on in the world. This is another characteristic of the miracle man. There is a principle of psychology over which learned men have argued for many centuries. The question involved in the principle is whether or not there is a will or what in ordinary language is called the disciplined mind. I do not attempt to enter into that discussion, as I feel I am not learned enough to do so. But I wish to talk about it from the point of view of the average layman. I believe that a man's nervous system can be so trained that he can control his emotions, his thinking, and his actions. Herein lies the hope of education, for if this were not possible, there would be no need for education. Everyone of us has had at one time or another, the experience of being confronted with some apparently insurmountable task, and yet once having determined to do it we summoned our most supreme efforts, plunged into the job by rolling up our sleeves, as it were, and in no time we find that the job is done. And when it is done, there is a strange feeling in us of having conquered a part of our innerself which used to make us take things easy. Somehow we have acquired some kind of strengthening of our vertebra, and that strengthening has become a part of ourselves. Thenceforth, our nervous system will function more easily, our efforts will be

better controlled and directed, and we shall be in a better position to do greater things. I call that power which made the achievement possible THE WILL, which is sometimes called the DISCIPLINED MIND.

Let us cite an example of what happens to a person who does not have a strong will. Let us use the simple illustration of brushing one's teeth. There are times when we are so fatigued or we are so preoccupied about many things that we may at one critical time say to ourselves, "I will *forgo* the matter of brushing my teeth just this once." And we go to bed without having performed that important part of our daily ritual. The nervous system has made a lapse, so to speak; it has made a path between the neurones and through the synapses in favor of not brushing the teeth. It will be easy after that to put up an alibi at any other time tending to *forgo* the matter of performing this important task. That is how the habit of brushing one's teeth has been broken.

Psychologists have oftentimes said that the nervous system is just like God; it is infallible. It

does not make a mistake. Once a neural path is established tending to impel the accomplishment or the neglect of a task, the nervous system will thenceforth invariably function in exactly the same manner.

To us who are workers, to us who have things to do, this psychological phenomenon assumes a great significance. Our habits of work may be formed favorably or unfavorably depending upon the kind of neural paths that we establish. Once the habit of doing and performing and exerting and achieving has been formed, our disciplined will tends to behave exactly as we want it. And conversely, once the habit of taking it easy, of procrastinating, of neglecting, of refusing to exert has been formed, we shall find our ill-disciplined will not easily controlled and directed. To be able to control ourselves results in freedom, because we are no longer the slaves of our emotions, our desires, and our attitudes. And once we become thus free, we can direct our efforts in any manner, and achieve the things that apparently are impossible to achieve. In other words, we become miracle men.

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He who is firm in will molds the world to himself.

—GOETHE

*He that will not when he may,
When he will he shall have nay.*

—BURTON—*Anatomy of Melancholy*