

A Personal Look in the Mirror

One of the most powerful things you can do for yourself is look in the mirror. Not a casual glance, but a cold hard look at the person you see. When you have the courage to do this, what you will find sets the stage for a new and exciting journey – a journey of improvement.

Napoleon Hill's classic book, *Think and Grow Rich*, has helped thousands of people achieve financial freedom, happiness and peace of mind. One small portion of the book—The 31 Major Causes of Failure—can help you.

With one exception, each point that Napoleon Hill makes is followed by a rating scale. That scale is for you. Nobody else needs to see it. The reason to rate yourself is to find those areas where a little effort will make a huge improvement. This gives you direction – a compass.

Thank you for having the courage to do this. And please, don't be discouraged. Every life is forced to look in the mirror—before it can become truly awesome. Mirrors are part of the dues paying process that every successful person must go through.

The following is stated in Napoleon Hill's words, except for the rating scales. When he states "marketing of personal services" and "personal services" he is speaking of YOU and what you bring to the market place—your time, talent, knowledge and skills.

Napoleon Hill's 31 Major Causes of Failure

Life's greatest tragedy consists of men and women who earnestly try, and fail. The tragedy lies in the overwhelmingly large majority of people who fail, as compared with the few who succeed.

I have had the privilege of analyzing several thousand men and women, 98 percent of whom were classed as "failures."

My analysis proved that there are thirteen major principles through which people accumulate fortunes, and there are thirty-one major reasons for failure. The thirty-one causes of failure are listed below. As you go through the list, measure yourself point by point. It will help you to discover how many of these causes of failure stand between you and your success.

(1) Unfavorable hereditary background. There is little, if anything, that can be done for people who are born with a deficiency in brain-power. This is the only one of the thirty-one causes of failure that may not be easily corrected by any individual.

This is not a problem of yours. No need to rate this one. However, on the rest of the causes of failure, please give yourself a rating on the scale provided.

(2) Lack of a well-defined purpose in life. There is no hope of success for the person who does not have a central purpose or definite goal at which to aim. Ninety-eight out of every hundred of those who I have analyzed had no such aim. Perhaps this was the major cause of their failure.

No defined goal 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Defined and crystal clear

(3) Lack of ambition to aim above mediocrity. I can offer no hope for those who are so indifferent they do not want to get ahead in life, and are not willing to pay the price.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Will pay any price

(4) Insufficient education. This is a handicap that may be overcome with comparative ease. Experience has proven that the best-educated people are often those who are self-made or self-educated. It takes more than a college degree to make you a person of education. Any person who is educated has learned to get whatever they want in life without violating the rights of others. Education consists not so much of knowledge, but of knowledge effectively and persistently applied. You are paid not merely for what you know, but for what you do with what you know.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Will pay any price

(5) Lack of self-discipline. Discipline comes through self-control. This means that you must control all negative qualities. Before you can control conditions, you must first control yourself. Self-mastery is the hardest job you will ever tackle. If you do not conquer yourself, you will be conquered by yourself. By stepping in front of a mirror, you may see both your best friend and your greatest enemy.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Have total control

(6) Ill health. No person may enjoy outstanding success without good health. Many of the causes of ill health are subject to mastery and control. These, in the main, are:

- Overeating of foods not conducive to health.
- Wrong habits of thought, or negative thinking.
- Wrong use of, and overindulgence in, sex
- Lack of proper physical exercise.
- An inadequate supply of fresh air, due to improper breathing.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Have programs I am following

(7) Unfavorable environmental influences during childhood. "As the twig is bent, so shall the tree grow." Most people who have criminal tendencies acquire them as a result of bad environment and improper associates during their childhood or youth.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No garbage I'm carrying

(8) Procrastination. This is one of the most common causes of failure. Procrastination stands within the shadow of every human being, waiting its opportunity to spoil your chances of success. Most of us go through life as failures because we are waiting for "the time to be right" to start doing something worthwhile. Do not wait. The time will never be just right. Start where you stand, work with whatever tools you have at your command, and you will acquire better tools as you go along.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I never wait or put off anything

(9) Lack of persistence. Most of us are good "starters" but poor "finishers" of everything we begin. People are prone to give up at the first signs of defeat. There is no substitute for persistence. The person who makes persistence his or her watchword discovers that "failure" finally becomes tired and makes its departure. Failure cannot cope with persistence.

Don't care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Never give up

(10) Negative personality. There is no hope of success for the person who repels people through a negative personality. Success comes through the application of power, and power is attained through the cooperative efforts of other people. A negative personality will not induce cooperation.

Don't care - my life sucks 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 I'm always positive

(11) Lack of control of sexual urges. Sexual energy is the most powerful of all the stimuli that move people into action. Because it is the most powerful of the emotions, if controlled it can be converted into other creative channels.

You've got to be kidding 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I'm always in control*

(12) Uncontrolled desire for "something for nothing." The gambling instinct drives millions of people to failure. Evidence of this may be found in the Wall Street stock market crash of 1929, during which millions of people tried to make money by gambling on stock margins.

Video poker daily 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Never gamble*

(13) Lack of a well-defined power of decision. Those who succeed reach decisions promptly and change them very slowly. Those who fail reach decisions very slowly and change them frequently, and quickly. Indecision and procrastination are twins. Kill off this pair before they completely tie you to the treadmill of failure.

Unable to make decisions 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Decision method in place*

(14) One or more of the six basic fears (fear of poverty, criticism, ill health, loss of love, old age, and death). These must be mastered before you can market your services effectively.

Total basket case 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *None of these are part of me*

(15) Wrong selection of a mate in marriage. This is a most common cause of failure. The relationship of marriage brings people intimately into contact. Unless this relationship is harmonious, failure is likely to follow. Moreover, it will be a form of failure that destroys ambition.

My mate is killing me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *We are supportive friends*

(16) Over-caution. The person who takes no chances generally has to take whatever is left when others are through choosing. Over-caution is as bad as under-caution. Both are extremes to be guarded against. Life itself is filled with the element of chance.

Have problems with both 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I'm in perfect balance*

(17) Wrong selection of associates in business. This is another common cause of failure in business. You should use great care in selecting the people you will work with and the people you will work for. We emulate those with whom we associate most closely.

Don't really care 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I've picked perfectly*

(18) Superstition and prejudice. Superstition is a form of fear. It is also a sign of ignorance. Successful people keep open minds and are afraid of nothing.

Closed minded and angry 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Totally open, fearless and fun*

(19) Wrong selection of a vocation. You cannot have outstanding success in work that you do not like. The most essential step in the marketing of personal services is that of selecting an occupation into which you can throw yourself wholeheartedly. Although money or circumstances may require you to do something you don't like for a time, no one can stop you from developing plans to make your goal in life a reality.

Stuck without plans 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Love what I am doing*

(20) Lack of concentration of effort. The jack-of-all-trades seldom is good at any. Concentrate all of your efforts on one definite chief aim.

Going in circles 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Clear picture and have it nailed*

(21) The habit of indiscriminate spending. You cannot succeed if you are eternally in fear of poverty. Form the habit of systematic saving by putting aside a definite percentage of your income every month. Money in the bank gives you a very safe foundation of courage when bargaining for the sale of personal services. Without money, you must take what you are offered and be glad to get it.

No savings 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I have over one years wages saved*

(22) Lack of enthusiasm. Without enthusiasm you cannot be convincing. Moreover, enthusiasm is contagious, and the person who has it (under control) is generally welcome in any group of people.

Living dead 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Ball of positive fire*

(23) Intolerance. The person with a closed mind on any subject seldom gets ahead. Intolerance means that you have stopped acquiring knowledge. The most damaging forms of intolerance are those connected with religious, racial, and political differences of opinion.

Mind locked 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Totally open and caring*

(24) Intemperance. The most damaging forms of intemperance are connected with overeating, alcohol, drugs, and sexual activities. Overindulgence in any of these can be fatal to success.

I overdo them all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Squeaky clean and careful*

(25) Inability to cooperate with others. More people lose their positions, and their big opportunities in life, because of this fault than for all other reasons combined. It is a fault that no well-informed businessperson or leader will tolerate.

Me first – hell with others 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Totally a team player*

(26) Possession of power that was not acquired through self-effort. Power in the hands of one who did not acquire it gradually is often fatal to success. Quick riches are more dangerous than poverty.

Never fought a battle 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Fought for everything*

(27) Intentional dishonesty. There is no substitute for honesty. You may be temporarily dishonest, because of circumstances over which you have no control, without permanent damage. But there is no hope for you if you are dishonest by choice. Sooner or later your deeds will catch up with you, and you will pay by loss of reputation and perhaps even loss of liberty.

Cheating is fine 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Win-win is the only way*

(28) Egotism and vanity. These qualities serve as red lights that warn others to keep away. They are fatal to success.

I walk on water 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Humble and caring*

(29) Guessing instead of thinking. Most people are too indifferent or lazy to acquire facts with which to think accurately. They prefer to act on "opinions" created by guesswork or snap judgments.

Shoot from the hip 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always gather facts

(30) Lack of capital. This is a common cause of failure among those who start out in business for the first time. You must have a sufficient reserve of capital to absorb the shock of your mistakes and to carry you over until you have established a reputation.

No reserve 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 One years wages salted away

(31) Got another one? Name any particular cause of failure from which you have suffered that has not been included in the foregoing list.

Note from Dick Warn:

The hardest part of solving any problem is admitting that we have it. Yet, once we get honest with ourselves, finding the answers is fairly easy. No matter what you face, someone else has already climbed over it—through it—or around it.

You were designed to be a winner and it can be done, by dealing (one at a time) with those things that might be holding you back.

Nothing is beyond your reach if you are willing to go for it.

Would you like to know more about Napoleon Hill? Please read *Think & Grow Rich - The 21st-Century Edition*, published by Highroads Media, Inc.

I thank Napoleon Hill for writing such a meaningful book.

I thank you for your time.

May your breakthroughs result in blessings for yourself and others.

Dick Warn

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