

believe you can

the power of a positive attitude

John Mason

SPIRE

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10 11 12 13 14 15 16 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Introduction 9

If You're Not *You*, Then Who Are You Going to Be? 11

Alibis Lie 14

Don't Build a Case Against Yourself 17

Enthusiasm Takes You Where Talent Alone Can't 20

Thomas Edison Was Afraid of the Dark 23

Honesty Is Still the Best Policy 26

Persistence Prevails When All Else Fails 29

Destiny Draws 32

You Can Only Live Today 34

Be a Little Kinder Than You Have to Be 37

Contents

- A Parking Meter Reminds Us That We Lose Money
Standing Still 40
- Do Something 43
- Don't Stop Faster Than You Start 46
- You Can't Stop a Pig from Wallowing in the Mud 50
- People Don't Fail So Much As Give Up Easily 54
- You Have the Potential and Opportunity for Success 57
- You Grow to the Extent That You Give Out 60
- Change Is Here to Stay 64
- Your Words Reflect What You Believe
about Your Future 66
- The Person Who Expects Nothing
Will Never Be Disappointed 69
- When You Stretch the Truth, It Always Snaps Back
to Hurt You 71
- Don't Let Regrets Replace Your Dreams 74
- Become an Authority on Something 77
- Spend Your Time and Energy Creating,
Not Criticizing 80
- Momentum Doesn't Just Happen 83
- Begin Somewhere 86
- Dare to Reach Beyond Yourself 88
- Strong Convictions Precede Great Actions 91

Contents

- The Reward for Conformity Was That Everyone Liked You
Except Yourself 94
- “I Used to Be Indecisive, but Now I’m Not Sure” 97
- When You Fall, Pick Something Up 100
- Be the First to Forgive 103
- People Who Take Risks Are the People
You’ll Lose Against 106
- It Is More Blessed to Give . . . Than Anything 108
- Comparison Doesn’t Prove a Thing 112
- Invest in Others 114
- Time Flies, So Grab It 120
- If You Wait, It Will Probably Be Too Late 122
- Excellence Is Never a Surprise 126
- Opportunities Hide Behind Obstacles 130
- Invent or Improve 134
- Criticism Is a Compliment When You’re Doing
the Right Thing 136
- Envy Grabs at Others and Steals from Itself 139
- Real Winners Keep on Winning 142
- Enthusiasm Is an Inside Job 144
- Fear Is Faith in Reverse 147
- Go Out on a Limb—That’s Where the Fruit Is 149
- Passion Is Powerful 152

Contents

- There Is Simply More to Life Than Increasing
Its Speed 156
- Opportunities Are Everywhere You Are 159
- Forgive Them—It’s the Last Thing Your Enemies
Want You to Do 162
- Are You Trying to Go Somewhere in Neutral? 164
- I Dare You to Live by Faith 167
- To Compare Is Never Fair 169
- Knowledge Doesn’t Speak Loudly 173
- What Force Is More Potent Than Love? 176
- Be Like a Teflon Pan: Don’t Let Things Stick to You 178
- When God Is Number One, Everything Else
Adds Up 180
- Sometimes the More You Do, the Less You Get
Done 185
- You Can Succeed Best and Quickest
by Helping Others Succeed 187
- Position Yourself to Receive, Not Resist 190
- God Rejoices Over You 193
- Every Successful Person Is Being Helped
by Someone Else 196
- Faith Is Like a Toothbrush: Use It Daily,
but Don’t Use Someone Else’s 199
- At the End of Life, No One Says He Wishes
He’d Spent More Time at the Office 201

Introduction

God's creation of you put a smile on His face. Yes, that's what Paul's first letter to the Corinthians tells us. Why, then, do so many people not accept the way God made them? And, even more incredibly, why do they try to change their identity?

God made you *on purpose for a purpose*. He has a job for you that no one else can do as well as you. Out of billions of applicants, you're the most qualified.

It's been said that the biggest enemy of great is good. The biggest enemy most of us will face is ourselves, the nagging voice that says, "Be like him; you're not worthy; do what she does; go where the crowd is going." You see, when you're trying to be like someone else, the best you can ever be is second best.

It's time to get our eyes off of others and onto God. People will detour you, but God will always keep you on track. To become the person He intended you to be, use what He has given you. Follow your unique plan: Resist imitation and live the unlimited life.

If You're Not *You*, Then Who Are You Going to Be?

A middle-aged woman had a heart attack and was rushed to the emergency room. On the operating table she had a near-death experience; seeing God, she asked if this was it. He said, "No, you have another forty-three years, two months, and eight days to live."

Upon recovery, she decided to stay in the hospital and have a face-lift, liposuction, a tummy tuck, the whole works. She even had someone come in and change her hair color, figuring that since she had so much life remaining, she might as well make the most of it.

She was discharged after the final procedure; however, while crossing the street outside, she was killed by a speeding ambulance.

Arriving in God's presence, she fumed, "I thought you said I had another forty-plus years."

He replied, "I didn't recognize you."

Be yourself. Think about it: Aren't most of the discontented people you know trying to be someone they aren't or trying to do something they're not supposed to do? A Congolese proverb asserts, "Wood may remain ten years in the water, but it will never become a crocodile." Jeremiah asks, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?" (13:23). Julius Hare advised, "Be what you are. This is the first step toward becoming better than you are."

The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change.

CARL ROGERS

Frederic Klopstock remarked, "He who has no opinion of his own, but depends on the opinions of others, is a slave. To only dream of the person you are supposed to be is to waste the person you are." Nobody is as disappointed and unhappy as the person who spends her life longing to be somebody else.

The person who trims himself to suit everybody will soon whittle himself away. If you don't have a plan for your own life, you'll only become a part of someone else's. Never wish to be anything but yourself. Andre Gide counseled, "It is better to be hated for what you are, than loved for what you are not."

Until you make peace with who you are, you will never be content with what you have.

DORIS MORTMAN

There is only one life for you—your own. The person who walks in someone else's tracks never leaves his own foot-

prints. Most of our challenges in life come from not knowing ourselves and ignoring our true virtues. John Stuart Mill observed, "All good things . . . are the fruit of originality."

Most people live their entire lives as complete strangers to themselves. Don't let that happen to you. Leo Buscaglia admonished,

The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don't let them put you in that position.

The opposite of courage is not fear but conformity. Nothing in life is more exhausting and frustrating than trying to live it as someone else.

Consider these words from one of history's greatest artists:

My mother said to me, "If you become a soldier you'll become a general; if you become a monk you'll end up as the pope." Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso.

No one ever became great by imitation: Imitation is limitation. Don't be a copy of something. Make your own impression. Dare to be who you are.