

CONFIDENCE

DARE TO BE ALL YOU CAN BE



A GUIDEPOSTS OUTREACH PUBLICATION

BY NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

GUIDEPOSTS OUTREACH MINISTRIES

Guideposts, founded by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and his wife Ruth Stafford Peale in 1945, is a non-profit interfaith ministry dedicated to helping people from all walks of life achieve their maximum personal and spiritual potential. Its inspirational products and programs spring from two major beliefs: that true stories are a powerful way to motivate people to lead better lives and that faith in God can be strengthened by applying spiritual truths to daily life.

Guideposts Outreach Ministries strives to fulfill our mission by providing inspirational publications free of charge to hospitals, nursing homes, churches, military personnel, correctional facilities and other organizations that serve the public. In addition, we invite our readers to send their prayer requests—by mail, by phone, by e-mail (the contact information is in the back of this booklet). Every working day, Guideposts staff and volunteers pray for these requests by name and need.

*For additional information about Guideposts Outreach Ministries, please e-mail **outreach@guideposts.org**.*

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INTRODUCTION

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE IS REMEMBERED for his captivating sermons and the life-changing difference his concept of positive thinking has made for millions. But there was a third component that impresses me just as much. He devoted his life to others. When a stranger would stop him in an airport for counsel or just to say hello, he not only obliged, he lingered. Ruth Stafford Peale, his wife, can't even count the times she had to take his elbow and guide him gently away so they wouldn't miss their plane. If someone wanted to talk, he would listen; if someone wanted his advice, he would give it.

He once told a colleague, "I always like to have a full schedule because it guarantees a good future." This "good future" invariably involved others. Norman Vincent Peale never said, "I need more time for me." I believe that this was the secret to his long, productive and

confidently lived life. Bringing out the best in others defined and enriched Norman Vincent Peale. How could he not have lived confidently?

A soldier gives a candy bar to a child and then, seeing the gratitude in his eyes, hugs him. A housewife takes time to offer a kind word to an unhappy grocery cashier. A teenager tells his elderly neighbor how nice she looks in that hat. These are the people who bring joy to the world, who inspire confidence in others and themselves. Join them in encouraging someone in a simple way. Today.

God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pablo F. Diaz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PABLO DIAZ

*Vice President
Guideposts Ministries*

CONVICTION



I will be with you. I will not leave you or forget you.
(JOSHUA 1:5)



I want to ask you a very personal, but very serious, question. Do you honestly believe you have a solid confidence in yourself? If you can answer yes with conviction, you have one of the greatest blessings you can get in this world. If you can't, then I can help you!

Since God created you, it is a given that he has confidence in you. It has been my experience that people do not break down because they are defeated, but because they *think* they are. They do not believe in their own possibilities. You need to trust in the abilities that God has given you.

Why shouldn't you believe in yourself? You are a child of God; therefore, you have within you the great powers of God. Remember God's promise that he will never leave you alone or forget you.



When you truly believe this, you are on your way to confident living. You do not have to fight your battles alone. God is at your side. He will stand by you and protect you for all of your life.



POSSIBILITY



The Lord is my light and the one who saves me.

(PSALM 27:1)



Have you ever noticed how it is that so many of the greatest among us have risen from disadvantaged circumstances? There is one trait they all share; they are possibility thinkers. Not one of them said, "I'm afraid I'll never make it" or "I haven't got what it takes." Thoughts like these are dangerous. If you go along telling yourself that you are a worm, your subconscious is going to believe it after a while. Your subconscious is very accommodating. It will send up to you exactly what you send down to it.

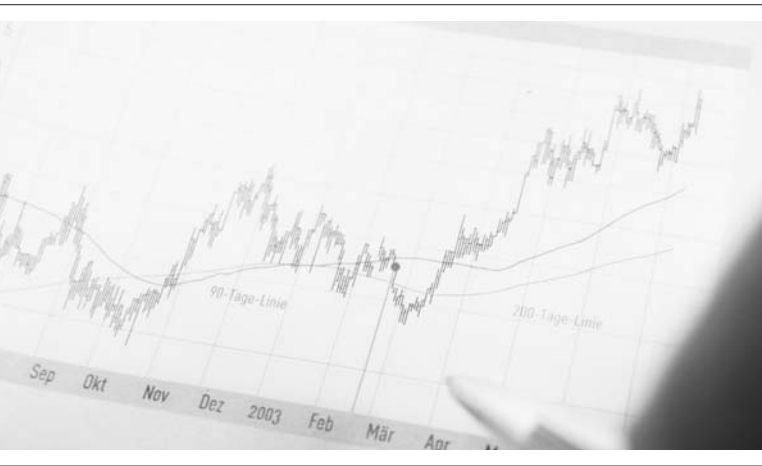
Never mind your circumstances. Listen to these lines from the poet, William Wordsworth: "Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home." This means *you!* You are a child of God, and there is greatness within you. You can be confident that the Lord is the strength



of your life. Dare to be what God created you to be. Dare to be what you dream to be. Dare to be the finest you can be. God is your Father, and he has great hopes for you.



FAITH



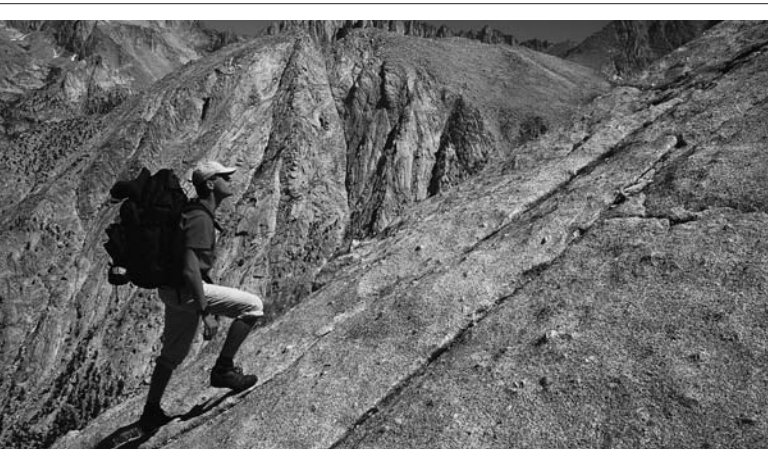
With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.

(EPHESIANS 3:20)



Have you ever thought that there might be a lesson in the stock market? When you have a moment, take a look at a long-term graph of the Dow Jones Industrial Average in a newspaper. Notice how it rises and dips, rises and dips, but especially take note of how, over time, it *always* rises. So it is with your life. You are going to have setbacks and defeats; sometimes, like the stock market, you will have an extended “dip” in your fortunes. Do not let this defeat you.

Instead, plant in your mind pictures of accomplishment, achievement and personal fulfillment. Fill your conversations with words of faith and optimism, until faith and positive thinking become a part of your life. Don't let your down times get the better of you, for good



times will surely come. Surrender your discouragement to God and then surrender yourself to him. Lose yourself to him, become a part of him. He is strength, and he believes in you. If you have his love in your heart, nothing can defeat you.



STRENGTH



*I can do all things through Christ,
because he gives me strength.*

(PHILIPPIANS 4:13)



I once met a gentleman who told me that he'd heard me preach at a service that changed his life. Then he admitted he didn't remember a thing I had said in my sermon! This is not what you would call complimentary. But, after all, a person's primary purpose in church is to visit with God. However, I did quote a text that Sunday that made a significant impression. One of the fortunate things about preaching is that you don't have to depend on your own words, and, quite certainly, my gentleman friend didn't depend on mine! You have the Bible to draw on.

The verse that carried my visitor from depression to dynamic optimism is: "I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength." When he left church on that transforming day, he walked up Fifth



Avenue repeating those words. Block after block after block he repeated them. He repeated them on the plane taking him home. And then he lived with them day by day. "This verse," he told me, "built up my confidence and changed my life." He found out that the words in the Bible are the truth: the truth about God and truth about man. And the truth in just one Bible verse set this man free. Take these words to heart, and they will do the same for you.



HARMONY



No one has ever imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.

(I CORINTHIANS 2:9)



There is no greater victory in life than when you know that you are more than equal to any difficulties that come your way. The philosopher William James said, "Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact." When you are in loving harmony with God, then uncertainty and self-doubt melt away.

How can you achieve this happy condition? By applying creative thinking to unpleasant or defeating circumstances. The first step is to *believe* that I have what it takes to change them. Then I must humbly surrender myself to God, seeking his wisdom and guidance. Then I must work at the problem, sometimes through pain and suffering. First believe, then surrender, then work. These three actions will combine dynamically to effect positive change.

HUMILITY



*Wait for the Lord's help. Be strong and brave,
and wait for the Lord's help.*

(PSALM 27:14)



A good friend of mine asked that I talk to his son who was failing out of college. My friend prepared me for this conversation by saying, "Young people today aren't like their parents." Personally, I think that's often just as well! The young man proceeded to tell me at great length what was wrong with his teachers. I never heard of such a poor bunch of professors in all my life! Finally, I said, "Bill, it seems to me the first thing you must do is get a little humility." After we prayed about this, Bill looked at me and said, "O.K., I'm getting the message. The fault is all mine." *All right*, I thought, *now we're getting started*. It is always a good beginning to stop blaming others for your failures. But Bill grew despondent. "I have so many faults," he moaned.



I brought him a pad and pencil and told him to list on one sheet all his negatives and on another, all his positives. The second sheet would include all the qualities that represented him as he would like to be. When he got his lists done, I asked him to put the first one away. "That's the old Bill," I told him. Then I suggested he fold up the positive sheet, keep it handy and read it a dozen times a day.

A few years later, Bill graduated in the top third of his class and got a good job. He still carried the positive sheet in his pocket and consulted it to make sure he was measuring up. He kept the negative one in his desk and, gradually, was crossing out his faults as he overcame them. He said, "Don't worry, I'm not going to get cocky. I know it was God who gave me the strength." And so God had, but only after Bill had dismissed his negatives and concentrated on his positives.

PARTNERSHIP



He gives strength to those who are tired and more power to those who are weak.

(ISAIAH 40:29)



Many of us, unhappily, have not done a very good job with the original material God built into us. We see others who we think are more gifted, smarter, better looking or who have had better luck. We doubt our strengths and abilities. Too often self-doubt prevents people from living abundantly.

If this is your condition, you can change it. Daily say to yourself: "God is now, this very moment, leading me into confident living. He is turning my weaknesses into strength. He has faith in me." See yourself as God sees you. Remember he has created you in his image. Every day picture yourself as a person created in God's image. Think of God and you as joint partners in reaching all the potential that he has already wired into you. Cultivate a sound, humble



awareness of the qualities within yourself that make for strength and power. Since God believes in you as your Creator and acts as your full Partner, how can you not succeed?



MODESTY



Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud.

(I CORINTHIANS 13:4)



Jesus was born in a stable for a reason. It was God's choice for his son to be a man of the people and to live modestly. Jesus was comfortable among all, but he chose ordinary people to help him deliver the Good News. And what was the central message of this Good News? Love. Read chapter 13 of I Corinthians to learn all the power and qualities of love and, in particular, that it is "not proud."

There is an inevitable and marvelous connection between modesty and confidence. If you want to live confidently, be modest about your circumstances, no matter how high or low. For the content man "does not brag and is not proud." And God loves him.

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE was, for more than 50 years, minister of New York City's Marble Collegiate Church. He became celebrated as "minister to millions" through weekly Sunday radio broadcasts. His book *The Power of Positive Thinking*, first published in 1952, is still in print, having sold more than 20 million copies worldwide in 42 languages. He authored 47 books and founded with his wife, Ruth Stafford Peale, *Guideposts* and *Positive Thinking* magazines. Dr. Peale received 22 honorary doctoral degrees and more than 30 major awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



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