

Chapter 2

The First Three Habits A Neophyte Should Adopt

THROUGHOUT our studies of the occult the thing we find stressed most is the importance of character. The character and I the soul are assumed to be identical. And it is recognized that in the presence of a given inner-plane weather, in the presence of a certain influence radiated by an object, in the presence of a specific thought, or in the presence of the same external circumstances, an individual possessing one kind of character will behave in a very different manner than will an individual possessing another type of character. The effect either an outer-plane environment or an inner-plane environment will have upon an individual is determined by his character. And occult training as well as religious precepts mostly have for their aim the development of a superior type of character.

Now what is this thing we call character?

This question can be answered by stating that it is the sum total of all the states of consciousness the soul has experienced as these are organized within the finer form of the individual. But in addition to such a bare statement of fact, in order to make the matter clear, there should be added information both as to how the character was formed, and how it manifests.

It was formed, as is so often repeated in various B. of L. lessons, by the sum total of all the soul's experiences registering in consciousness and entering, according to the manner thus registered, into the mental organization, where such registered experiences persist, either as they were registered or as modified by later experience.

Thus persisting in the finer bodies as an organization of mental factors, the character determines all the acts of the individual in the presence of whatever environment he contacts. The character manifests as behavior, and the type of behavior depends upon the kind of character. In the same kind of environment, if the character is changed, the behavior also is changed. What we accomplish, therefore, and what we fail to accomplish, is determined by character. And if we wish to pursue the matter still further, taking into consideration the psychokinetic power of the internal harmonies and internal discords organized as thought-cells and thought structures, to bring conditions into the life, we find that not only is behavior in the presence of environment determined by character, but that the kind of environment attracted to the individual also is determined by his- type of character.

Character determines both the external conditions which call for decision and action, and the kind of decision and action resulting from the condition

thus attracted. Both to the individual, and to society which tolerates or benefits by the individual, character is the one thing of paramount importance.

In its manifestation, character is the manner in which we habitually think, feel and act. And whenever we arrive at a stage where we think, feel and act habitually in a manner different than we have previously thought, felt and acted, we have clear evidence that our character, by that much, has changed.

And this is the object of Personal Alchemy; to change the character in such a manner that the individual lives better than previously, and to keep making changes in the character, one after another, that will enable him to advance step by step up the ladder of spiritual attainment until the state of adeptship, the state of the perfect man, is reached.

As the manifestations of character are the habits of life, the proper method to follow in thus changing the character beneficially is resolutely to set about the elimination of such habits as are not conducive to the high spiritual state one wishes to attain, and as resolutely to set about forming all those habits which are in the direction of adeptship. For whenever the proper habits have been formed and have been exercised over a sufficient period of time, they prove that the internal character also has changed to a corresponding extent. In fact, not only are the habits of life an accurate index of the character within, but the habits of life also act as forces by which the internal character is altered.

It will thus be seen that the neophyte who, let us say, has lived much as the world about him, can hope to make a rapid ascent to a higher type of life only by markedly changing his habits. If his habits remain as they were, his life will make only such progress as is customarily made by other people who have similar habits. Yet he is not content just to drift along, just to gain a little intellectual comprehension of the truth. He is ambitious to make swift progress. And he can only do this through adopting a manner of living which, while not making him conspicuous in eccentricity, nevertheless is really markedly different from the life of the majority of those by whom he is surrounded.

There is no occasion that I can see for the one who aspires to the state of adeptship to withdraw from contact with his fellowman, to shirk the responsibility of making a living, or to refrain from taking an active part in the management of the affairs of the community in which he lives. An adept is not one who goes off alone and meditates, and thereby gains some wonderful power for himself which he never uses to benefit mankind. On the contrary, an adept is a man or woman who has developed a very high degree of spirituality, and who has gained both power and knowledge for the purpose of using them to benefit humanity, and who does so use them to benefit as many as possible.

In one's own home, or during the lunch hour of a business day, one can go into the silence, one can meditate, and one can do other things which are desirable in the matter of developing occult powers. Powers develop fastest when used. And among people there are always opportunities to use such abilities as develop for some constructive purpose. In reference to learning, as I have pointed out elsewhere, it is commonly recognized that quicker progress in knowledge of any subject is made in the effort to teach it. Undertake to explain something to another, and not only do you find out whether or not, and how much, you know, but in the process of explanation you tune in on the source of such knowledge and are surprised at the additional information, about which otherwise you never would have thought, which comes streaming into your consciousness. When teaching, especially in teaching any

occult subject, new examples and additional material customarily present themselves to the mind.

Of course, to do much studying and original research there must be time devoted to them; but adeptship, which we are now considering, is not merely a matter of intellectual attainment. It is even more the development of character, a progress from a less spiritual to a more spiritual state. And the circumstances of everyday life afford far more opportunity for the development of spirituality and real soul power than is afforded by a monastery or a wilderness. Everyday life affords just those obstacles by which we are able best to test whether or not, and how much, we are advancing.

If an individual is capable of living a perfectly spiritual life, such as an adept lives, he can live it in any environment where he finds himself. If he can only live the perfect spiritual life when apart from his family and friends and business associates, it is not a perfect spiritual life he is living, but merely an artificial life which, like a hot-house plant, seems beautiful only while under special care and protection.

Do not think the real adept lives apart in the mountain fastness. The real spiritual giants live and work among men, contributing their energies and powers to alleviate human ignorance and suffering, and in all ways possible aiding in the realization of God's Great Plan.

To become such a spiritual giant the neophyte must make a small beginning and gradually, one step at a time, change his habit-systems until, as a matter of steady growth he has those habits of life which distinguish the adept. The adept, or perfect man, must, of course, master all the 21 branches of occult science. He must be an individual marked for his wisdom. And in the course of his development he must attain to certain occult powers. Furthermore, his efforts lead him to a refinement of thoughts, emotions and actions, so that he is a being of superior appreciations and perceptions. But above all, and at all times, the mark of the adept is his strong adherence to the perfect moral code: A SOUL IS COMPLETELY MORAL WHEN IT IS CONTRIBUTING ITS UTMOST TO UNIVERSAL WELFARE.

The real adept has arrived at the state of adeptship, not through any selfish desire to be superior to other men, and not through a desire to exercise uncommon powers. Instead, he has arrived at this exalted goal because, as a neophyte, he has realized that in the attainment of a higher type of spirituality, by the attainment of unusual powers and abilities, and through the use of more comprehensive knowledge, he could do more to assist in the furtherance of God's Great Plan. He has arrived at adeptship not through any "holier than thou", motive, but through his earnest desire and endeavor to contribute the most possible to cosmic welfare, and perceiving that ability, wisdom and increasing power would lead him to this objective.

Therefore, the sooner the neophyte adopts this universal and perfect moral code as the one dominant motive and guiding power in his life the more speedily will he advance toward adeptship. And never, in this life or in any other, will he attain adeptship until he does thus become completely moral in this universal sense.

The neophyte should make a permanent habit of analyzing every habit and process of life as it now exists in the light of his present understanding with a view of perceiving how much each contributes, in the long run, toward assisting or hindering universal welfare. Then let him start making the changes in his life that will enable him to contribute more to, and hinder less, cosmic progress.

The First Habit to Adopt is to Make All Thoughts, Feelings and Actions Conform to the Universal Moral Code

Unless the neophyte has had wide experience, and has had the opportunity to observe the results obtained by many people in their application of theories, he will almost surely believe certain habits and practices are in the direction of contributing to universal welfare that his actual experience in time will cause him to abandon. The literature of the time is redundant with theories on gaining knowledge, with theories on how tremendous occult powers can be developed, and with theories on what constitutes spirituality. And it is hardly to be expected that the neophyte at start will escape being attracted to some of the many highly embellished theories that in practice do not work.

And the neophyte who expects to get actual results from some practice, and diligently follows instructions all to no avail, is apt to feel discouraged. He is led to expect something that does not happen, and thus feels there must be something wrong with himself because his expectations are not realized. But far more frequently than might be supposed he is on a sounder basis of fact and reality than those who propounded the theory; and the reason he does not get the expected results is really because he is so sound of nerve and brain that he does not readily yield to suggestion and suffer delusion.

In saying this I certainly do not wish to disparage the independent development of the psychic faculties; for their cultivation and the development of the higher states of consciousness are not abnormal. They are in the direction evolution is moving. They can be cultivated on as sound a basis as one can cultivate a taste for high class music. But the awakening of the kundalini, the amazing results to be had by certain postures and rhythmic breathing, and various types of psychic phenomena, other than the exercise of extrasensory perception and entering into the higher phases of consciousness, are not apt to yield the neophyte all that is claimed for them by their enthusiasts; and they have associated with them some very real dangers.

Unless the neophyte is over zealous and enthusiastic, he usually is aware when things are not going right for him; and thus is warned before meeting danger or actual difficulty. And, because the temperaments of people vary so widely, it is hardly wise to draw the rules too tightly as to what should and what should not be attempted, and as to what may or may not be expected from following a given practice. What is most helpful to one often is of no help to another, and what is dangerous to one may hold no peril to someone else.

About the best general rule that can be laid down is for the neophyte to be constantly alert and observing, and to note carefully the effect of his practices and his habits as affecting his life and usefulness. The thing that is best for him is the thing that works best in practice, whether or not it follows the rules laid down in someone's book. After trying something out conscientiously for a time, usually some result, either positive or negative, can be discerned; and this can be used as a gauge of the value of the exercise or habit which has been adopted.

I have more to say in the next lesson about the development of the psychic senses and the higher states of consciousness. I merely mention them here to point out that beginners often get discouraged through not obtaining the results they are led to expect. Perhaps they need to change the method they are using; perhaps they need to give the matter careful thought and analysis; but they should not permit themselves to be discouraged; for the feeling of discouragement is pernicious and a hindrance to the neophyte's main purpose.

As I have taken much pains to point out in Chapter 4, Course 19, *Organic Alchemy*, the soul is educated through pleasure and pain. The sensation of pain has been developed by the soul to enable it to become aware of those conditions which threaten the destruction of its organism or in other ways tend to thwart its desires. And pleasure has been developed by the soul to enable it to be aware when it has triumphed over the condition which threatened its form or its desires and thus is being successful.

Now, however, if we continue to register pain, in this instance the pain of discontent and discouragement, when we do the very best of which we are capable under the circumstances, the soul reacting in the normal manner from pain loses incentive to further similar effort. When one has done the very best he can under existing conditions, no amount of painful prodding will cause the soul to do more. When a horse is doing its best to pull a heavy load, further prodding will cause him to cease effort. Most balky horses at some time in their past have been educated, by some incompetent driver, in this manner to become balky. And the individual who continues to prod and annoy himself when in reality he is doing his utmost is quite as apt to become disheartened and cease making as much effort as he previously did.

If you beat a dog when he gives a good performance as well as when he makes a mistake, in a very short time the dog will no longer give a good performance. And the best animal trainers find that the less they use the whip on occasions of error, and the more they rely upon kindness and reward for good performance, the more success they have with their charges. This means that they have ceased to employ the pain technique and in its stead have adopted the more superior pleasure technique in the education of the creatures under their instruction.

If you have the narrow viewpoint that men have souls and that dogs have not, you may object to illustrating the education of the human soul by referring to the most successful practice of animal trainers. But in truth your soul and my soul are different than the souls of animals thus trained not in kind, but only in degree. And experimental psychology illustrates that the same basic principles of training are equally effective when applied to any living thing; plant, animal and man included.

Therefore in your effort to become a master, one of the first things you should do is to make a careful appraisal of yourself as to what, at any given time, you should expect of yourself. You may have either an inferiority or a superiority complex which will warp your judgment. Your contacts with life may be such as to cause you habitually to expect far more from yourself than you have ability to accomplish, or to expect far too little of yourself. Your temporary standards may be either too high or too low, and need readjusting.

I do not mean that the state of adeptship is too high for you. It is not too high for any earnest person; although those of marked deficiency may not be able to reach it completely until after they have passed to the next plane of existence. But it is very easy to expect to do more or less than is possible toward this ultimate end in a given interval of time. Failures there are bound to be. But a failure to accomplish as much as hoped for, so far as personal advancement is concerned, is infinitely better than not trying. We often learn as much by our failures as by our successes. Every failure should leave us in possession of greater ability for the next attempt.

Because pain, such as discontent and dissatisfaction with oneself, builds discordant thought-cells within the finer form, and these use their psychokinetic energy to bring into the life unfortunate events, I do not advo-

The Second Habit to Adopt is to Feel Pleased When You Have Done Your Best

cate that when one has not lived up to what he normally should expect of himself that he should permit any such discord to persist. Instead, the energies should be centered on the next attempt, and a confidence built up that the next attempt will be more successful. Instead of dwelling on the failure, it is far better to picture the success of the next attempt, and to picture with this success a glow of happiness, and as many other pleasant feelings and emotions in connection with it as possible.

In this manner, while not permitting the soul to lag in effort toward accomplishment; it is possible to build up a high degree of satisfaction in the consciousness that, regardless of temporary results, one is doing the very best he can. And this is the objective which early in the neophyte's training should earnestly be sought; to build as many, and as pleasurable, associations around the effort to do one's utmost regardless of apparent failure and adversity. This habit of feeling thus should become so ingrained in the essential nature that however difficult external environment becomes, there will be a finer and stronger satisfaction felt in meeting each situation and problem as it arises in the best manner, and that this satisfaction will outweigh in pleasure the pain and discomfort caused by the things which, in spite of these efforts, remain beyond control.

**The Third Habit to
Adopt is that of an
Invincible Will**

It goes without saying that to accomplish anything really worth while requires the exercise of considerable will-power. And because, in his endeavor to become an adept, the neophyte must master his own mental processes and a number of studies, as well as develop his character so that it is superior in nature to the characters of the mass of mankind by whom he is surrounded, it is essential, to be able to carry out such an ambitious program, that he should possess a strong and vigorous will.

Occult training in all lands and during all periods has stressed the importance of developing will-power. And in the Orient are to be found a large variety of artificial systems which have been devised through which the neophyte can thus gradually, though effectively, develop his will.

Although these Eastern systems of will culture undoubtedly do develop will-power, an analysis of what comprises will-power reveals that, to one who will take the trouble to avail himself of the opportunities offered, everyday life can be made to develop will-power quite as rapidly and quite as effectively as can any Oriental or Occidental artificial system of will culture. And the utilization of everyday life for this purpose has two additional advantages. It does not crush the soul or stun the finer emotions, and in the process of its development there is constantly something constructive accomplished for the benefit of society.

An invincible will, when reduced to its simplest terms, is merely the habit of carrying out to its completion whatever one sets out to do. And a vigorous will, when thus reduced to simple terms, is the ability to direct a strong volume of energy steadily into the accomplishment of predetermined purposes.

A strong and vigorous will implies the ability to direct the energies into some chosen channel of accomplishment, and the ability not to be deterred from accomplishing the purpose thus selected. And the only way by which any individual ever learns thus to direct energy and learns not to be swerved from his purpose is through the gradual development of a habit-system in which energy is directed strongly to accomplishment, and in which obstacles which might be permitted to swerve him from his purpose are battered down, overcome, or circumvented.

I repeat, the only way by which any life-form, man included, gains a powerful will is through its gradual development in overcoming obstacles and not being swerved from the predetermined course by difficulties. And I am sure that no one, with all the things that need to be accomplished in the world, is required to invent artificial obstacles, such as holding one's arm aloft until it shrivels, or sitting on sharp spikes, to find difficulties on which to practice. These devices, of course, are not employed by the more enlightened devotees even in the Orient. But everyday life affords even better opportunities for the culture of willpower than the other and less painful artificial devices offered either by East or West.

The essential thing in the culture of will is to make up your mind what you are going to do, then do it energetically, and let no difficulty nor obstacle deter you until it has been finished. Each and every time you do this you have increased your will-power. And if, one time after another, you thus accomplish what you set out to do, you will gradually develop a powerful will. Other life-forms than man develop their will-power in the same manner. Will-power is developed by accomplishing whatever has been determined upon, and it is developed in no other way.

But when man, or any other life-form, determines resolutely to accomplish something, to do something, and permits himself to be deflected from his objective, his will-power is weakened. And every time he determines to do something and fails to do it, or starts something which he expects to finish and fails to accomplish it, he weakens his will. And if he continues to make resolutions and breaks them, in time his will becomes so flabby that he is considered by others, and looks upon himself, as a person of weak character.

You will now perceive that the development of will is merely a conditioning process by which the habit is developed of reacting to a decision in a particular way. The powerful will has gradually conditioned itself to react to a decision by always accomplishing the thing decided upon, and the weak will has gradually conditioned itself to react to a decision by seldom accomplishing the thing decided upon. Will-power is merely a habit-system which has been strongly conditioned to act in a given way.

Additional information as to the conditioning process is contained in Chapter 5, Course 14, *Occultism Applied to Daily Life* and Chapter 4, Course 19, *Organic Alchemy*. Chiefly it consists of associating as many pleasurable elements as possible with the thing which is to determine the direction of desire and action in the future. In the matter of will culture, as many and as strong pleasurable thoughts and emotions as possible should be associated with the accomplishment of each thing which is attempted.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the proper development of will is the tendency of the neophyte, moved by the desire to accomplish great things, to undertake more at one time than he can reasonably expect to carry out. It is quite natural, suffused with enthusiasm, that he should wish to become a full fledged adept in the short space of twelve months. He outlines for himself a systematic course of study, certain hours to be devoted to concentration and other mental practices, and sets for himself high standards of conduct. The trouble is that for as many years as he has been alive in human form he has been cultivating different habits of thought and action. And mere resolution is insufficient to displace these old habits. They come in and in a short time he finds that he has fallen deplorably behind what he hoped to accomplish.

To develop the will from a none too vigorous state, the very first thing is to form a habit of not making a definite decision to do a thing until all its

possibilities and probable obstacles have been fully weighed. It is much better to decide to do less than later is actually accomplished than to decide to do much in a given space of time and then fall far below the mark. For every time you do the thing you set out to do your will is strengthened, and you have a right to have more confidence in yourself in the future. But every time you fall short of what you set out to accomplish your confidence in yourself is weakened. Therefore, at start, the greatest caution should be exercised not to make a definite decision to do something unless it is something you are sure you can do and are willing to make sufficient sacrifice to do.

Start in with the little things. Make no definite decision about other things, except that sometime, as soon as possible, you will master all the occult sciences, all the soul senses and states of consciousness, and arrive at the state of perfect man, the exalted adept. This you can safely do, because you have set no time limit. And it is good to have some ideal or objective toward which the whole life and energies are directed. It leads to the most effectual progress.

But whatever little thing you decide to do, place the decision in writing, state it publicly, or in some way set it apart from the various desires and wishes that are half decisions but have not yet reached a state in which you have decided irrevocably that you will do them. The thing of importance in this respect is always to have it clear in your own mind, and not subject to hedging, that you actually have decided to do the thing. And having decided, always keep faith with yourself and do it. That is really what it amounts to; it is keeping faith with yourself, it is keeping your own credit good.

Your soul knows how many times you have promised to do something and then have failed of performance. Would your grocer, if you had as often failed to pay him as promised, still consider your credit good? Your decision is your promise to pay, given to your soul. Your soul, having trusted or mistrusted you since birth, has an opinion as to your ability to keep your pledges to it, and these opinions are based upon your past performances.

If your financial credit was poor at the various merchants in your community, how would you go about it to make that credit good? Would you do it by starting to pay cash for every purchase? If you always paid cash no one would ever know whether or not your credit is good. People who always pay cash for purchases seldom can borrow much without furnishing collateral. It is the man who borrows money or owes bills, and who always pays when he promises to pay, who has the highest credit rating. The fact that, over a number of years, he has always met every obligation squarely induces a confidence that he will meet all obligations squarely in the future. And your soul knows whether you have kept your promises to it or not.

To establish the confidence of your own soul that you will do what you decide to do, what virtually you promised it you will do, it is essential that your soul should have frequent experiences in which both you make promises, and at the appointed time and in the appointed manner, honor them. Just as you would establish credit in the purchase of merchandise, you start in with very small promises. The essential thing is that you do not make decisions, or promises, and then break them. For every decision not carried out decreases the faith of your soul that you will fulfill your obligations to it. Therefore, it is essential that matters of formal decision, matters which your soul regards as a compact with it, should be very easily carried out at first, so that there may be no slip in the matter of fulfillment.

Every time you make a bargain with your soul and that bargain is carried out to the letter the soul gains faith in you, that is, in its own power to do what

it sets out to do. But if you promise to do some big thing, something entirely beyond your power of accomplishment, the inevitable result is non-fulfillment and loss of faith, which means loss of willpower. Yet by beginning with small things, with promises to your soul that are easy of accomplishment, and gradually increasing the difficulties which you promise to overcome, being careful always not to take on something which you are not willing and able to carry through to the finish, your credit with yourself may be increased. And in time, because you have thus formed the habit of paying your bills to yourself, your soul will have faith that you can do anything that you, after analyzing its feasibility, decide upon doing. You will then be in possession of an invincible will.

And that you may be energetic, as well as inflexible, the habit-system should be formed of concentrating energy in volume and intensity upon the thing which is to be accomplished. When you have promised your own soul you will do something, made a formal decision to do it, instead of permitting the matter to drift along and drag in accomplishment, pour enough energy and intensity into it to do it with proper expedition. Even though it requires energy drawn from other important things, if you have formally decided to do something, marshal sufficient energy toward its accomplishment that it can be put through in a reasonable amount of time. Do this with everything, small or great, if there has been a formal decision regarding it. Make it a part of your payment, a part of what your soul always may expect of you when you have made a promise.

A powerful and energetic will is an essential to great accomplishment, and it should be the endeavor of every neophyte to cultivate such will-power. And anyone can develop a powerful and energetic will who will persist in conditioning himself through the processes just outlined.

Procrastination is a habit-system which may be developed from a number of different factors. It may be just the habit of not doing the thing that should be done because there is not energy enough, or because of inertia, or in other words laziness. But more often the habit-system is developed through deciding to do more things than can possibly be accomplished with the customary energy and time at the individual's command. It arises from lack of proper management of the time and energy factors available.

Therefore, the things that one desires to do should be analyzed to find out which are most important. And the decision should be made to do only those most important. With the will-power already strengthened through applying it to lesser matters, it should, after careful consideration of all factors, be decided also when the start will be made to do some important thing, and adequate time should be set aside in which to accomplish the important thing. Then, faithfully following the pattern of the decision thus made, the time that has thus been decided to use for the accomplishment of this particular thing should be so used until the job, whatever it is, is finished. This often requires setting aside some given period of each day in which to study, or work, or practice, until the desired end is reached.

Because there are so many things in life that seem to call for doing, some, of necessity must be neglected. But certainly you should not neglect the things which are really vital to you, merely that you may give attention to other things which are of little consequence. The first step, thus, in overcoming a habit-system of procrastination, is to form a habit of, at intervals, analyzing the things that seem to call for doing, with a view of finding out which are really the most important.

**Procrastination
Weakens and
Defeats the Will**

Then to start the new habit-system, select one of the most important things that needs doing, and for the time being neglect the other things. But be sure to do the one important thing at the time scheduled. Do not undertake too much at this initial attempt. Yet do it without fail..

After this select another important thing to be done — say, fifteen minutes, study of B. of L. lessons at a certain time each day — and do it on schedule. Permit nothing to block the performance of the job you have decided to do at the time decided on. You will find satisfaction in this, and the feeling of satisfaction experienced will aid you further in building the new habit-system. Do not, however, undertake to make too many changes in your life, or in your work, at one time. Make an easy start. Do the thing to be done at the time decided upon. Then step at a time add other important things.

Life should not be all work and no play. But if you will think about your friends you will, I am sure, agree with me that most people spend too much time and energy on trivial things, to the neglect of those things which are most important if they are to attain optimum living.

The Way to Form a Wanted Habit

Although in Chapters 5-7, Course 14, *Occultism Applied to Daily Life*, I have gone rather thoroughly into the details of how habits may be formed, just a few words on this vitally important subject will be said because every change in character which is contemplated in personal alchemy depends upon the elimination of certain habits and the adoption of new ones in their stead. In the first chapter of this course I outlined what I believe to be the three most important things every neophyte should know. And in this lesson I point out the three habits which I believe are most essential to any neophyte who sets his feet upon the pathway leading to adeptship.

The first of these is habitually to reflect upon your various thoughts, feelings and actions, day by day, with a view of determining whether or not they may be changed in some way that will increase your power to benefit society. That is, they are scanned to determine if you are living up to the perfect moral code, if you are Contributing Your Utmost, under the conditions and circumstances that obtain, toward the welfare and progress of society. And if not you should take such steps as are necessary thus to live up to that code. The second is the habit of feeling pleased and self-satisfied whenever such an analysis reveals that you have done your utmost, even though the results are different from those expected and desired. It is the habit of experiencing a high degree of pleasure in every thought, act and feeling which is prompted by the effort to aid cosmic welfare. The third is the habit of exercising an energetic and inflexible will; for without will-power nothing worth while can be accomplished, either for yourself or for others.

You will perceive that we first considered things a neophyte should know. This is the proper sequence. For action should be based upon knowledge. First we should know what to do; and then we should do it. And these habit-systems here advocated first to be adopted are based upon knowledge. But they are more than knowledge, for they require definite and predetermined actions. And to be sure that these actions are not neglected or postponed unduly, they should be built into the personality as permanent habits.

We have on the shelves of our class-room in Los Angeles, something over 2,000 occult books of different titles. And there are individuals who have read the greater part of these books, yet who have made practically no advancement in the practice of occultism, nor received appreciable benefit from such reading. They can tell what almost any book teaches; but they have never

made any of these teachings an integral part of their lives. For over a quarter of a century to my knowledge, they have been reading such books; but in that time there has been no change apparent in their characters. They possess a great mass of information, which can hardly be called knowledge because it has never been digested. But this information has merely meant entertainment to them. It has never influenced their conduct.

We must have knowledge, to be sure, and the more knowledge the better. But knowledge, valuable as it is, accomplishes nothing except when used in action. The mere studying of the 21 courses of occult science issued under the auspices of The Brotherhood of Light, or even the passing of examinations on all of them and becoming a Hermetician, results in no accomplishment unless this knowledge is put into practice. It is only when we build some great truth into our characters that the truth becomes of much benefit to us. The information supplied in these 21 courses is such that it can be, and should be, applied to the problems of life as they arise. And the way to be sure that the more vital attitudes and acts of life are not neglected in the hustle and bustle of competitive existence is firmly to establish them as habit-systems.

As the neophyte progresses, he will find there are many thoughts, feelings and actions, some of which will be mentioned later in this course which, to insure they are not neglected, should be made permanent habits. But it is a great mistake to undertake many such changes all at one time. You may be able, in a friendly contest, to throw any man in a village in a wrestling match. It is doubtful if you can throw any two men engaged at one time. And no matter if you are a champion wrestler, you cannot hope to throw all the men in a village if they are all engaged at once.

Any new habit adopted really means vanquishing some habit that has already been established, even if that habit is only the habit of inertia regarding the thing at hand. And you will do well to route the old habit by displacing it with the new one, if you take them on one at a time. But if you take on the whole crew of old habits at once you are vanquished even before you get well started.

Keep in mind that every new habit adopted routes some old habit, and that the one effective way to break some old habit is to adopt some other habit which, when entrenched, makes the old habit powerless to operate. The thinking about or paying attention to any old habit gives it additional energy and makes it that much harder to overcome.

When lapses occur, feelings of remorse, discouragement, sorrow, or other disagreeable emotions lend their energy to the very thing which is to be dispossessed. Therefore it is essential, no matter how much difficulty is caused by the lapse, that as little attention be paid to it as possible. It should be ignored, and the energies be mustered for, and the attention given to, the habit which it is desired should shoulder the old one out.

And right in line with this policy, be sure to give the new habit plenty of attention. When it is successful in manifesting in place of the old one be sure that you give as much play as possible to pleasant emotions. The new habit feeds upon attention, and upon pleasant feelings. Strengthen it through the pleasure technique.

By all means do not lightly decide to adopt a new habit. All that was said in regard to the development of will-power applies with full force here. Weigh the matter thoroughly to perceive if you really are prepared to undertake this particular struggle at this time. For the adoption of any new habit is always a struggle. It is a struggle between the old habit which resists displacement and

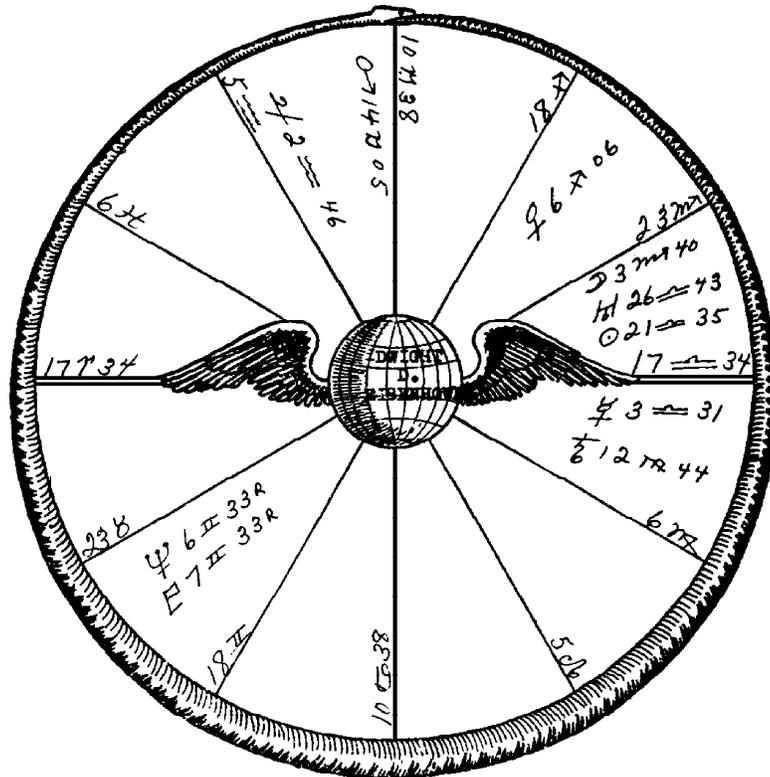
the new one which shoulders in. One who issues a challenge to a formidable antagonist while quite unprepared for such a contest is commonly considered lacking in wit. And I am sure one who, without weighing the chance for victory, enters upon the struggle to adopt some new, even though highly beneficial habit, is lacking in wisdom.

The entering of a contest should be preceded by a careful weighing of the factors both for and against possible victory. Then, having decided there is a reasonable hope of success, a plan of campaign should be outlined. Strategy should be developed and the various assets collected for the struggle.

One of the most powerful weapons of the antagonist in such a contest is neglect and forgetfulness. If the fact slips from the mind that such a struggle is in progress, the old habit easily gains the victory. Therefore, some method should be devised which, whenever the conditions are such that the new habit should manifest, will surely draw the attention to this fact. And a carefully thought out campaign will then insure that sufficient energy, particularly pleasurable feelings and emotions, is associated with the new habit to carry it over the top to success.

As I have pointed out, the finer details of developing habit-systems are set forth in Chapters 5-7, Course 14, *Occultism Applied to Daily Life*. Here I have merely attempted to show that the adoption of any new and desirable habit follows precisely the lines laid down for the successful culture of the will. For will-power is merely the habit of accomplishing what one sets out to do. And other habit-systems, a number of which the neophyte will adopt, one at a time, on the upward road to attainment, are merely thinking, feeling and acting customarily in a certain manner under certain circumstances. That is, they are the habitual accomplishment of definite thinking, feeling and acting which have been decided upon. They are thus, when decided upon, specific exercises of will-power, and as such come under the same general rule for cultivation as will-power itself.

And the sum total of such habit-systems, as they exist at a given time, is a clear index of how far the neophyte has then advanced; for they express his character as it is constituted at that time.



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

October 14, 1890, 5:19 p.m. LMT. 96:32W. 33:45N.

Time as rectified by W. M. A. Drake.

1910, Oct. 11, to West Point: Sun sextile M.C. r.

1920, July 2, major: Mars conjunction Jupiter i.

1933, Feb. 20, D.S. medal: Sun sextile Mercury r.

1935, Oct. 26, assistant military advisor to Philippines: Sun conjunction Mars r.

1936, lieutenant colonel: Sun conjunction Jupiter p.

1942, Nov. 7, landed his troops in African campaign: Sun semisextile Mars

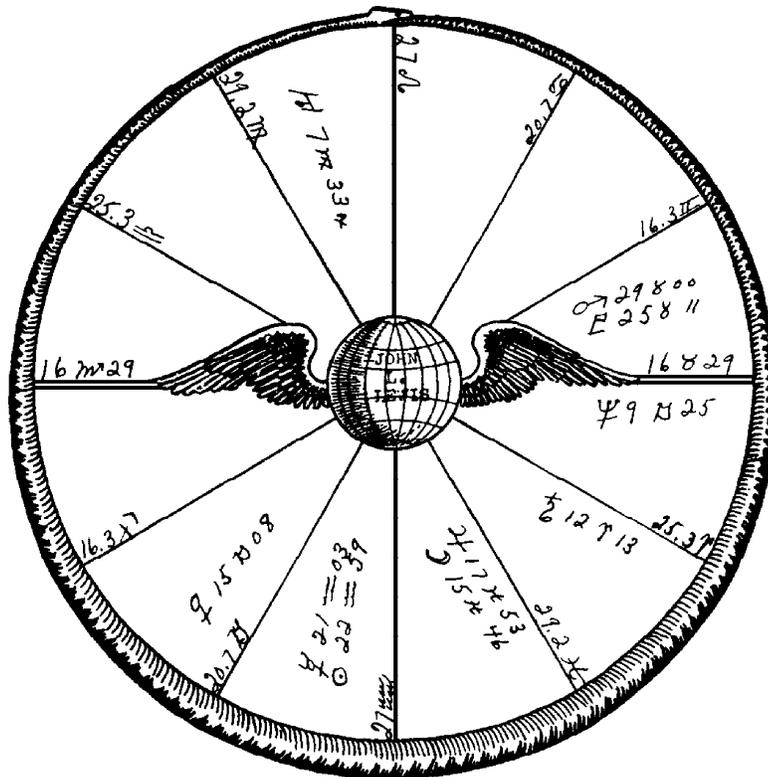
r.

1944, June 6, invaded Europe: Mercury sextile Uranus r.

1945, May 8, Germany surrendered: Venus sextile Jupiter p.

1948, president Columbia University: Mercury sextile Moon r.

1949, Feb. 12, Co-ordinator U. S. Defense: Mars trine Uranus r.



JOHN L. LEWIS

February 12, 1880, 00:30 a.m. LMT. 93:30W. 41:05N.

Data as given by his daughter.

1901, traveled studying labor: Sun semi-sextile Saturn p.

1906, delegate United Mine Workers: Mercury inconjunct Uranus r.

1917, vice-president U.M.W.A.: Venus semi-sextile Sun p.

1925, won anthracite strike: Venus sextile Neptune p.

1935, organized C.I.O.: Sun conjunction Saturn p.

1937, called steel and auto strike: Sun sesqui-square Uranus r.

1940, resigned from C.I.O.: Sun sesqui-square Uranus p.

1941, called strike of 53,000 workers in defiance of U. S. President's appeal: Mercury square Mars p.

1948, miners voted to celebrate his birthday each year: Mars sextile Uranus p.

