



The Secret of the Will

William Walker Atkinson was an occultist and an American pioneer of the New Thought movement. He also wrote under various pseudonyms, including Theron Q. Dumont and Yogi Ramacharaka, and was possibly the author (or one of the authors) of *The Kybalion*. Atkinson included various philosophies about the will in his writings.

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Chapter V from: [Thought Vibration or the Law of Attraction in the Thought World](#)

by *William Walker Atkinson*

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While psychologists may differ in their theories regarding the nature of the Will, none deny its existence, nor question its power. All persons recognize the power of strong Will – all see how it may be used to overcome the greatest obstacles. But few realize that the Will may be developed and strengthened by intelligent practice. They feel that they could accomplish wonders if they had a strong Will, but instead of attempting to develop it, they content themselves with vain regrets. They sigh, but do nothing.

Those who have investigated the subject closely know that Will Power, with all its latent possibilities and mighty powers, may be developed, disciplined, controlled and directed, just as may be any other of Nature's forces. It does not matter what theory you may entertain about the nature of the Will, you will obtain the results if you practice intelligently.

Personally, I have a somewhat odd theory about the Will. I believe that every man has, potentially, a strong Will, and that all he has to do is to train his mind to make use of it. I think that in the higher regions of the mind of every man is a great store of Will Power awaiting his use. The Will current is running along the psychic wires, and all that it is necessary to do is to raise the mental trolley-pole and bring down the power for your use. And the supply is unlimited, for your little storage battery is connected with the great powerhouse of the Universal Will Power, and the power is inexhaustible. Your Will does not need training – but your Mind does. The mind is the instrument and the supply of Will Power is proportionate to the fineness of the instrument through which it manifests. But you needn't accept this theory if you don't like it. This lesson will fit your theory as well as mine.

He who has developed his mind so that it will allow the Will Power to manifest through it, has opened up wonderful possibilities for himself. Not only has he found a great power at his command, but he is able to bring into play, and use, faculties, talents and abilities of whose existence he has not dreamed. This secret of the Will is the magic key which opens all doors.

The late Donald G. Mitchell once wrote: "Resolve is what makes a man manifest; not puny resolve, but crude determination; not errant purpose – but that strong and indefatigable will which treads down difficulties and danger, as a boy treads down the heaving frost-lands of winter; which kindles his eye and brain with a proud pulse-beat toward the unattainable. Will makes men giants."

Many of us feel that if we would but exert our Will, we might accomplish wonders. But somehow we do not seem to want to take the trouble – at any rate; we do not get to the actual willing point. We put it off from time to time, and talk vaguely of "some day," but that some day never comes.

We instinctively feel the power of the Will, but we haven't enough energy to exercise it, and so drift along with the tide, unless perhaps some friendly difficulty arises, some helpful obstacle appears in our path, or some kindly pain stirs us into action, in either of which cases we are compelled to assert our Will and thus begin to accomplish something.

The trouble with us is that we do not want to do the thing enough to make us exert our Will Power. We don't want to hard enough. We are mentally lazy and of weak Desire. If you do not like the word Desire substitute for it the word "Aspiration." (Some people call the lower impulses Desires, and the higher, Aspirations – it's all a matter of words, take your choice.) That is the trouble. Let a man be in danger of losing his life – let a woman be in danger of losing a great love – and you will witness a startling exhibition of Will Power from an unexpected source. Let a woman's child be threatened with danger, and she will manifest a degree of Courage and Will that sweeps all before it. And yet the same woman will quail before a domineering husband, and will lack the Will to perform a simple task. A boy will do all sorts of work if he but considers it play, and yet he can scarcely force himself to cut a little firewood. Strong Will follows strong Desire. If you really want to do a thing very much, you can usually develop the Will Power to accomplish it.

The trouble is that you have not really wanted to do these things, and yet you blame your Will. You say that you do want to do it, but if you stop to think you will see that you really want to do something else more than the thing in question. You are not willing to pay the price of attainment. Stop a moment and analyze this statement and apply it in your own case,

You are mentally lazy – that's the trouble. Don't talk to me about not having enough Will. You have a great storehouse of Will awaiting your use, but you are too lazy to use it. Now, if you are really in earnest about this matter, get to work and first find out what you really want to do – then start to work and do it. Never mind about the Will Power – you'll find a full supply of that whenever you need it. The thing to do is to get to the point where you will resolve to do. That the real test – the resolving. Think of these things a little, and make up your mind whether or not you really want to be a Willer sufficiently hard to get to work.

Many excellent essays and books have been written on this subject, all of which agree regarding the greatness of Will Power, the most enthusiastic terms being used; but few have anything to say about how this power may be acquired by those who have it not, or who possess it in but a limited degree. Some have given exercises designed to "strengthen" the Will, which exercises really strengthen the Mind so that it is able to draw upon its store of power. But they have generally overlooked the fact that in autosuggestion is to be found the secret of the development of the mind so that it may become the efficient instrument of the Will.

Autosuggestion

I AM Using My Will Power

Say these words several times earnestly and positively, immediately after finishing this article. Then repeat them frequently during the day, at least once an hour, and particularly when you meet something that calls for the exercise of Will Power. Also repeat them several times after you retire and settle yourself for sleep. Now, there is nothing in the words unless you back them up with the thought. In fact, the thought is "the whole thing," and the words only pegs upon which to hang the thought. So think of what you are saying, and mean what

you say. You must use Faith at the start, and use the words with a confident expectation of the result. Hold the steady thought that you are drawing on your storehouse of Will Power, and before long you will find that thought is taking form in action, and that your Will Power is manifesting itself. You will feel an influx of strength with each repetition of the words. You will find yourself overcoming difficulties and bad habits, and will be surprised at how things are being smoothed out for you.

Exercise

Perform at least one disagreeable task each day during the month.. If there is any especially disagreeable task which you would like to shirk, that is the one for you to perform. This is not given to you in order to make you self-sacrificing or meek, or anything of that sort – it is given you to exercise your Will. Anyone can do a pleasant thing cheerfully, but it takes Will to do the unpleasant thing cheerfully; and that is how you must do the work. It will prove a most valuable discipline to you. Try it for a month and you will see where “it comes in.” If you shirk this exercise you had better stop right here and acknowledge that you do not want Will Power, and are content to stay where you are and remain a weakling.

Editor's Notes:

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The Will Project

Roberto Assagioli, the founder of the Psychosynthesis movement, outlined the Will Project in *Part Three* his book [*The Act of Will*](#) [1973]. He stated that this book "*should be considered as a beginning, and not as an end. The resources of the human will are immense and the purpose of this project is to help in actualizing them.*" He goes on to suggest an outline for the various areas of Will Project, which he described as "*a program of research on the will and its applications.*" His idea was to look at all aspects of the human will, and all ideas and philosophies relating to the will. As such, the Will Project was intended to explore volition and the will far beyond the core teachings from Psychosynthesis.

The current initiative for the online presence of the Will Project stated in 2006 with the establishment of a [website](#). This site offers articles relating to the will, categorized according to the structure suggested by Assagioli. Everyone is welcome to contribute articles or suggestions to this website.

A second website, [The Will Project Research Library](#), has been established to provide original research and a library of public domain books and articles. Most books and articles are provided free of charge, although various books are also for sale.

To discover more about the potential of the Will, or to contribute, please visit [The Will Project website](#):

<http://willproject.org/>

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