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My Method

By Emile Coué

Foreword

by

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Due to the tremendous successes I've experienced with it, I felt a strong need to bring attention to Emile Coué's method of auto-suggestion. It is, in my opinion, incredibly brilliant in its simplicity.

Having heard the phrase, "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better," many people have sought to improve on it. However if they had read his book, they would truly understand Coué's method and realize why it is important to not attempt to improve it by adding specifics.

Even José Sylva of the world famous Sylva Method, in his attempt to personalize the phrase, only added an extra “better” to it.

The subconscious mind, or our higher self if you prefer, knows what we need. There is no need, in fact it is inadvisable, to add specifics to our auto-suggestion. The awesome power of the subconscious mind enables it to know far better than we consciously do, exactly what our needs are. Why then should we get in its way? There may very well be needs that must first be met, before we can even begin to work on the needs that we’re aware of.

During a particularly troubling period in my life I kept a journal, faithfully entering my thoughts into it every night. I entered the bad occurrences as well as the good things. I got into the habit of every now and then, reading back into the pages of my prior week’s entries. Soon it became very evident to me that many of the “bad” events I wrote about, had triggered “good” things. In fact, many of the good things I wrote about could never have happened if the bad thing hadn’t occurred first. In no time at all, I became convinced that I didn’t really know what was good for me, or what was bad for me.

What then should I meditate about – or pray for? If I don't really know what's good for me, what then should my goals be? Someone much smarter than me advised, "Just ask for knowledge of what is best for you, and as that knowledge becomes apparent or available, try to act accordingly." Then they said, "Just keep doing the next right thing."

In that light, Coué's statement makes all the sense in the world. Even though we may not know exactly what we need most, our subconscious, or higher self knows, and we can use that knowledge by keeping the statement simple, and trusting our subconscious for the results.

Some hypnotists say that our subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between a real or an imagined experience. I don't even begin to buy that theory. I think our subconscious mind can operate in dimensions that we haven't yet been able to wrap our minds around. We don't know exactly how it works, but we have begun to know a little about how to use it. Some have even said that it doesn't respond to negative suggestions – then turn around and do "regression to cause" therapy to remove the effects of past negative impressions.

Well then, what is your subconscious mind? Smart – or dumb? I believe it's powerful and awesome, and a long time ago Coué found a good way to use it.

Read on – use it, and watch the results prove it.

THE REALITY OF AUTO-SUGGESTION

CHAPTER I

THE REALITY OF AUTO-SUGGESTION

I wish to say how glad I was to come into personal contact with the great American public on their own side of the Atlantic. And at the same time I could not help feeling just a little embarrassed. I had an idea that people on that continent expected from me some wonderful revelation, bordering on the miraculous, whereas, in reality, the message I have to give is so simple that many are tempted at first to consider it almost insignificant. Let me say right here, however, that simple as my message may be, it will teach those who consent to hear it and to

give it fair thought a key to permanent physical and moral wellbeing which can never be lost.

Autosuggestion disconcerting in its simplicity. To the uninitiated, auto-suggestion or self-mastery is likely to appear disconcerting in its simplicity. But does not every discovery, every invention, seem simple and ordinary once it has become vulgarized and the details or mechanism of it known to the man in the street? Not that I am claiming auto-suggestion as my discovery. Far from it. Auto-suggestion is as old as the hills; only we had forgotten to practise it, and so we needed to learn it all over again.

Think of all the forces of the Universe ready to serve us. Yet centuries elapsed before man penetrated their secret and discovered the means of utilizing them. It is the same in the domain of thought and mind: we have at our service forces of transcendent value of which we are either completely ignorant or else only vaguely conscious.

Power of auto-suggestion known in the Middle Ages. The power of thought, of idea, is incommensurable, is immeasurable. The world is dominated by thought. The human being individually is also entirely governed by his own thoughts, good or bad. The powerful action of the

mind over the body, which explains the effects of suggestion, was well known to the great thinkers of the Middle Ages, whose vigorous intelligence embraced the sum of human knowledge.

Every idea conceived by the mind, says Saint Thomas, is an order which the organism obeys. It can also, he adds, engender a disease or cure it.

The efficaciousness of auto-suggestion could not be more plainly stated.

Pythagoras and Aristotle taught autosuggestion. We know, indeed, that the whole human organism is governed by the nervous system, the centre of which is the brain—the seat of thought. In other words, the brain, or mind, controls every cell, every organ, every function of the body. That being so, is it not clear that by means of thought we are the absolute masters of our physical organism and that, as the Ancients showed centuries ago, thought—or suggestion—can and does produce disease or cure it? Pythagoras taught the principles of auto-suggestion to his disciples. He wrote: “God the Father, deliver them from their sufferings, and show them what supernatural power is at their call.”

Even more definite is the doctrine of Aristotle, which taught that “a vivid imagination compels the body to obey it, for it is a natural principle of movement. Imagination, indeed, governs all the forces of sensibility, while the latter, in its turn, controls the beating of the heart, and through it sets in motion all vital functions; thus the entire organism may be rapidly modified. Nevertheless, however vivid the imagination, it cannot change the form of a hand or foot or other member.”

I have particular satisfaction in recalling this element of Aristotle’s teaching, because it contains two of the most important, nay, essential principles of my own method of auto-suggestion:

1. The dominating rôle of the imagination.
2. The results to be expected from the practice of auto-suggestion must necessarily be limited to those coming within the bounds of physical possibility.

I shall deal with these essential points in greater detail in another chapter.

Unfortunately, all these great truths, handed down from antiquity, have been transmitted in the cloudy garb of abstract notions, or shrouded in the mystery of esoteric secrecy, and thus have appeared inaccessible to the ordinary mortal. If I have had the privilege of discerning the hidden meaning of the old philosophers, or extracting the essence of a vital principle, and of formulating it in a manner extremely simple and comprehensible to modern humanity, I have also had the joy of seeing it practised with success by thousands of sufferers for more than a score of years.

Slaves of suggestion and masters of ourselves. Mark well, I am no healer. I can only teach others to cure themselves and to maintain perfect health.

I hope to show, moreover, that the domain of application of auto-suggestion is practically unlimited. Not only are we able to control and modify our physical functions, but we can develop in any desired direction our moral and mental faculties merely by the proper exercise of suggestion: in the field of education there is vast scope for suggestion.

From our birth to our death we are all the slaves of suggestion. Our destinies are decided by suggestion. It is an all-powerful tyrant of which, unless we take heed, we are the blind instruments. Now, it is in our power to turn the tables and to discipline suggestion, and direct it in the way we ourselves wish; then it becomes auto-suggestion: we have taken the reins into our own hands, and have become masters of the most marvelous instrument conceivable. Nothing is impossible to us, except, of course, that which is contrary to the laws of Nature and the Universe.

How are we to attain this command? We must first thoroughly grasp at least the elements of the mechanism of the mental portion of what constitutes the human being. The mental personality is composed of the conscious and the subconscious. It is generally believed that the power and acts of a man depend almost exclusively upon his conscious self. It is beginning to be understood, however, that compared with the immensity of the rôle of the subconscious, that of the conscious self is as a little islet in a vast ocean, subject to storm and tempest.

Dominance of the subconscious over the conscious. The subconscious is a permanent, ultra-sensitive

photographic plate which nothing escapes. It registers all things, all thoughts, from the most insignificant to the most sublime. But it is more than that. It is the source of creation and inspiration; it is the mysterious power that germinates ideas and effects their materialization in the conscious form of action. If we agree that the point of departure of our joys, our sorrows, our ills, our well-being, our aspirations, of all our emotions, is in our subconscious self, then we may logically deduct that every idea germinated in our mind has a tendency to realization.

Hundreds of examples drawn from little incidents of everyday existence enable us to verify the truth of all this. To illustrate action of thought on the emotive faculties we have but to remember any grave accident or harrowing spectacle of which we have been a witness immediately to feel the sensations of pain or horror, with greater or less intensity, according to our individual temperament.

Imagine you are sucking a lemon. A simpler and perhaps even more striking example is the classic one of the lemon. Imagine that you are sucking a juicy, sour lemon, and your mouth will inevitably and instantaneously begin to water. What has happened? Simply this: under the influence of the idea the glands have gone to work and

secreted an abundant quantity of saliva—almost as much, in fact, as if you had actually taken a bite of a real lemon. Again, just think of a scratching pencil being drawn perpendicularly over a slate, and you cannot avoid shuddering and screwing up your face under the shock, while contracted nerves send a shiver from the back of the head all down your spine.

Impossible to separate the physical from the mental. We must therefore realize that it is impossible to separate the physical from the mental, the body from the mind; that they are dependent upon each other; that they are really one. The mental element, however, is always dominant. Our physical organism is governed by it. So that we actually make or mar our own health and destinies according to the ideas at work in our subconscious. I mean by this that we are absolutely free to implant whatever ideas we desire in our subconscious self, which is a never-flagging recorder, and those ideas determine the whole trend of our material, mental, and moral being. It is just as easy to whisper into our receptive subconscious self the idea of health as it is to moan over our troubles; and those who do may be certain of the result, because, as I hope I have convinced them, it is based on Nature's laws.

THE RÔLE OF THE IMAGINATION

CHAPTER II

THE RÔLE OF THE IMAGINATION

Before beginning to explain the practical application of auto-suggestion and the extremely simple method by which it is possible for every one to gain complete mastery over his or her physical organism, I must speak of the all-important rôle of the imagination.

Dominance of the imagination over the will. Contrary to the generally accepted theory the will is not the invincible force it is claimed to be; in fact, whenever imagination and will come into conflict it is always imagination that triumphs. Try to do something while you

are repeating: “I cannot do it”—and you will see this truth confirmed. The mere idea of inability to accomplish a thing paralyzes the will power.

Self-mastery is attained when the imagination has been directed and trained to conform with our desires—for although, in one sense, the imagination is inclined in the subconscious, yet it dominates the latter, and therefore, if we know how to guide it, our subconscious self will take charge of our material being and do its work just as we wish it to be done; or, in other words, exactly in conformity with our conscious suggestions.

I cannot too strongly insist that in the practice of auto-suggestion the exercise of will must be strictly avoided, except in the initial phase of directing or guiding the imagination on the desired lines. This is absolutely the only manifestation of will necessary, or even desirable. Any other voluntary effort is positively harmful in connection with auto-suggestion, and will almost certainly have an effect contrary to the one desired.

Analyze the so-called strong-willed characters of history, Caesar, Napoleon, etc. You will find that they were all men of big imagination. Certain ideas were

implanted in their minds, and their tenacious suggestions impelled them into action.

This, however, is a digression.

Law of converted effort. What I want to drive home for the moment is the law of what my friend Charles Baudouin calls “converted effort.” Suppose a man suffering from insomnia decides to try the effect of auto-suggestion. Unless previously warned, he will repeat to himself phrases like this: I want to sleep; I will sleep; I am going to sleep. And all the time he will be making desperate efforts to coax sleep. That is fatal. The very fact of exerting effort has converted the latter into a force acting in a sense contrary to the original suggestion, with the result that the poor man tosses and turns in his bed in sleepless wretchedness.

The imagination should be unhindered. Let the imagination do its work alone, unhindered. Be quite passive. Through mysterious, still unexplained processes, our subconscious self accomplishes marvelous things. Think of the very commonest movements of the human body and ask yourselves how they are operated. What has set in motion the complicated mechanism when you stretch

your arm to reach a glass on a table or when you take a cigarette from your case? No one knows. But if we cannot explain the phenomenon we do know that, in actual fact, it is an order resulting from a mere suggestion which is transmitted through the nervous system, and translated into action at a speed infinitely greater than that of lightning.

Examples of the power of the imagination. Thousands of examples of the power of imagination may be found in every-day life. There is the one given by Pascal, and so often cited, which I cannot help repeating here, because it is such a perfect illustration. No one would have the slightest difficulty in walking along a foot-wide plank placed on the ground. But put the same plank across a street at the height of one of your American skyscrapers. Blondel himself would not have dared trust himself on it. Anyone who did would assuredly fall to death. No clearer proof of the power of an idea could be desired. There is, however, another striking example in the impunity with which sleep-walkers perform the most perilous feats, such as wandering about on a roof, hugging the extreme edge of it, to the terror of their friends who may happen to perceive them. If awakened suddenly a sleep-walker in such a position would inevitably fall.

Here is another. Doctor Pinaud in his book "*De la Philosophie et de la Longévité*" relates that in the middle of a large dinner party the cook rushed in to announce that she had made a mistake and mixed arsenic with the food instead of some other ingredient! Several persons were immediately seized with pains and sickness, which only ceased when the cook came back to say that it was a false alarm: there had been no such dreadful error!

I have said enough to prove the irresistible influence of the idea, or imagination, over the physical organism. It determines pain, movement, emotions, sensations. Its effect is both moral and physical. We may logically conclude, therefore, that human ailments, which are nothing but disturbances of the natural equilibrium of all the elements of our being, can be cured by the right kind of idea or suggestion.

The moral factor in all disease. To begin with, there is in every disease, of no matter what nature, a moral factor which no doctor can afford to ignore. Some medical authorities in France estimate this moral factor as representing from 40 to 50 per cent of the chances of recovery. A patient who says to himself "I am getting better" vastly increases his vital forces and hastens his

recovery. By gently putting our imagination on the right track we are sure of aiding Nature, who manifests herself through the medium of our subconscious self. The instinct of self-preservation is but a manifestation of Nature. At the first sound of alarm she hastens to the rescue. A cut finger or other wound is followed by a rush of red globules to the injured part. That wonderful subconscious self of ours does it. For it knows and commands every movement of our being, every contraction of our heart, the minutest vibration of every cell in our organism. It is the sublime instrument which we are so apt to misuse by allowing bad, disturbing, or discouraging thoughts to interfere with its work, instead of allowing it to function smoothly and harmoniously.

Miracles are attributed to the Fakirs of India. Legend or fact, I know not, but it is certainly true that they do some most wonderful things simply because they are taught from their infancy to know and make use of the limitless unseen and yet unexplained forces latent in us—which can be awakened by thought.

The limitations of auto-suggestion unknown. I am often asked: What are the limitations of auto-suggestion? I reply: I really do not know. The cures I have seen have

appeared sometimes so amazing, so incredible, that I decline theoretically to place any limit at all, although, of course, I must insist, nothing must be expected from auto-suggestion which is obviously outside the domain of material possibilities. For instance, it would be absurd to ask for the growth of a new arm or a new leg—despite the fact that the lobster seems to know how to grow a new claw when it is necessary!

There are persons who, by long practice and concentration, have acquired an amazing power over their bodily functions. Cases are known to the medical Faculty of Paris of men able to increase at will the speed of their heartbeats from 90 to 120, or diminish it to such a degree that the heart seems almost to stop.

In another chapter I shall talk of the diseases actually cured by auto-suggestion, and in general of its sphere of curative possibilities. Let it be thoroughly realized that thought, or suggestion, is able to mould the human body as a sculptor chisels his clay. Thought is an act; it is more than Bernheim believed when he wrote: “Suggestion is an idea which can be transformed into action.”

Certain it is that cases declared to be incurable have been cured by auto-suggestion. And not only diseases of a functional nature. Sores and wounds of long standing which had resisted all other treatments have been healed rapidly by suggestion. Was it not Doctor Carnot who said “the wounds of victorious soldiers heal more rapidly than those of the vanquished”?

I can declare without hesitation that whatever the illness, the practice of rational auto-suggestion will always effect an appreciable improvement in the patient’s condition, even if the disease itself be incurable.

AUTO-SUGGESTION IN PRACTICE

CHAPTER III

AUTO-SUGGESTION IN PRACTICE

After the preceding explanations of the theory of auto-suggestion my readers are certainly anxious to be initiated in the method of putting it into actual practice. We have seen that our physical organism is completely dominated by our subconscious self which, obeying every suggestion, of no matter what nature, transmits it as an order to every fibre of the body, and that the latter responds or reacts immediately. The only obstacle to the perfect accomplishment of the operation is the intervention of the conscious will or reason at the same time. What we want to know, therefore, is the mechanism by which we may

acquire control of our subconscious self—in other words, achieve self-mastery.

Simplicity of controlling the subconscious. The method is simplicity itself. So simple that it has been scoffed at, as all simple solutions of seemingly complicated problems have been scoffed at. But its logic is irrefutable, and its effects are demonstrated ever day of our lives.

All that is necessary is to place oneself in a condition of mental passiveness, silence the voice of conscious analysis, and then deposit in the ever-awake subconscious the idea or suggestion which one desires to be realized.

Every night, when you have comfortably settled yourself in bed and are on the point of dropping off to sleep, murmur in a low but clear voice, just loud enough to be heard by yourself, this little formula: “Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.” Recite the phrase like a litany, twenty times or more: and in order to avoid distracting your attention by the effort of counting, it is an excellent idea to tick the number off on a piece of string tied in twenty knots.

“Puerile!” Perhaps. Yet it suffices to set in motion in the desired direction the stupendous forces of which we may be masters if we will. It is a mere suggestion, but that suggestion cast into the mysterious laboratory of the subconscious self is instantaneously translated into an active, living force.

Like the Oracles of the Ancients. The Ancients well knew the power—often the terrible power—contained in the repetition of a phrase or a formula. The secret of the undeniable influence they exercised through the old Oracles resided probably, nay, certainly, in the force of suggestion.

Yes, my method of self-cure, by auto-suggestion, is undoubtedly simple. It is easy to understand and just as easy to practise. Yet the human mind is today what it was in the days of the Oracles: it insists on associating the healing of the body or mind with complicated theories and processes which, in reality, are quite unnecessary. Why complain if things are made easy for you?

People may wonder why I am content to prescribe such a general and apparently vague formula as “Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better” for all

and every ailment. The reason is, strange as it may seem, that our subconscious mind does not need the details. The general suggestion that everything “in every way” is going well is quite sufficient to set up the procedure of persuasion which will carry its effects to the different organs and improve every function. I have had remarkable demonstration of this in the course of my long teaching and experiments. Time and again I have seen patients cured, not only of the particular disease for which they sought relief, but also of minor disabilities which they had almost forgotten.

Why a general suggestion is better than specific suggestions. The fact is, our subconscious knows much more than we can ever know ourselves about our physical organism. Fortunately for us! Just think what a mess we should make of things if we had to look after every function: breathing, digestion, for instance. Who is it that takes charge of such a complicated job? The subconscious mind, and if it ever does its work badly, it is always because, in some way or another, we have voluntarily meddled with it. Every organ or function is connected with and depends in some degree upon others, and if the ordinary man or woman were to begin ordering the subconscious tinkering with a particular organ, he or she

would certainly be obeyed, only the chances are that something else would then go wrong as a result of insufficient knowledge or perhaps complete ignorance of physiology on the part of the conscious mind.

Don't concentrate. So just leave it to the subconscious. Avoid all effort. When you recite your phrase "Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better" you must relax all strain and tension. Do not seek to concentrate your thoughts. Concentration is very valuable and necessary when conscious reasoning is to be done, but fatal to the success of auto-suggestion. Isolate yourself from everything likely to distract your attention, however. Close your eyes if possible. You can obtain mental isolation in a crowd, in a street car, if need be, and there is no reason why you should not practise auto-suggestion in such conditions in the daytime, always providing you succeed in putting yourself in the right state of passiveness. At the risk of being accused of tedious repetition, I must insist on the necessity of passiveness and inertia. Do not think you must *struggle* to impose your suggestion. The very fact of making it an effort will bring into play the conscious will, and that will actually raises a barrier between the subconscious and the suggestion and prevents the latter from penetrating.

Now, from what I have said of the superiority of a general formula of auto-suggestion, it must not be thought that I altogether discourage the application of suggestion to specific complaints. On the contrary, it is to be recommended unreservedly in all cases, where it is desired to relieve pain, correct functional disorders, or alleviate their symptoms.

How to banish pain. For such purposes here is my procedure: to cause pain to vanish, rub the affected spot lightly but rapidly with your hand, at the same time repeating in an undertone, so swiftly as to make of it a mere gabble the words “ca passe” (pronounce “*sah pass*”). In a few minutes the pain should disappear, or at the very least, be considerably diminished. The reason for *gabbling* the words is to avoid the risk of any other extraneous or contrary thought slipping in through fissures which might result from a more distinct but slower diction. For the same reason I advise English-speaking people to stick to the French version: it being much easier to say “ca passe” quickly than the longer and more awkward expression “it is passing” or “it is going.”

How to go to sleep. Sufferers from sleeplessness will proceed in another way. Having settled themselves comfortably in bed they will repeat (not gabble), “I am going to sleep, I am going to sleep,” in a quiet placid, even voice, avoiding, of course, the slightest mental effort to attain the desired result. The soporific effect of this droning repetition of the suggestion soon makes itself felt; whereas, if one actually tries to sleep, the spirit of wakefulness is kept alive by the negative idea, according to the law of converted effort. Insomnia indeed affords a striking demonstration of the disastrous effect of the exertion of the will, the result of which is just the contrary to the one desired.

Stammering, lack of confidence, and paralysis cured. Stammering, again, is a painful affliction which readily yields to auto-suggestion. I have known cases of cures being effected in one sitting, though this, naturally, is rare. What is the cause of stammering? Merely the fear or the idea that one is going to stammer. If you can substitute for that idea the conviction or the suggestion that you are not going to stutter, that if you can say ten words without stuttering there is no reason why you should stumble over the eleventh, then you are cured.

Nervousness, timidity, lack of confidence, and still worse, nervous phenomena, can be eradicated by the practice of auto-suggestion, for they are simply the consequences of self-suggestion of a wrong, unnatural character. Those who suffer from such infirmities must set up a different train of suggestions by saying: "I am not nervous; I am well and full of confidence; all is going well." In a fit of anger, try the effect of suddenly murmuring "I am calm," and you will be surprised.

There are quite a number of cases of paralysis which are due only to the patient's belief in his or her inability to use the affected limb or member. They can all be cured, easily, certainly. Implant the notion: "I can walk, I can move my arm (or leg, or finger)," and the cure is accomplished. Why? Because, although the lesion which originally produced the paralysis has healed already, the patient has lost the habit of using his limb, and still thinks he is unable to do so. It is obvious that, strong as that subconscious notion may be in its effects, those of a contrary notion must be equally strong if only the suggestion can be conveyed to the subconscious mind. That is the whole secret.

DISEASES THAT CAN BE CURED

CHAPTER IV

DISEASES THAT CAN BE CURED

Let us now talk a little about specific diseases which can be cured by auto-suggestion.

I must repeat what I have said in a previous chapter—that it is very difficult to place any limit to the powers of auto-suggestion (within the bounds of possibility, of course), for, even in cases of maladies described as incurable I have had occasion to observe such extraordinary improvement effected in the patients' condition that the most extravagant hopes would seem justified.

Organic diseases can be influenced. It can be affirmed without hesitation that even organic disorders come within the influence of auto-suggestion. I am aware that this contradicts the theory of a number of doctors who, perhaps, judge the matter rather too hastily. But my affirmation is supported by many other eminent members of the fraternity in France and elsewhere who have found its truth demonstrated by actual facts. Doctor Vachet, professor at the School of Psycho-Therapeutics at Paris, and a distinguished member of the growing corps of physicians who have begun to employ auto-suggestion and suggestion as an adjunct to the ordinary resources of medicine, cited recently the case of a young woman cured of ulcers in the stomach by the new method. There was no diagnostic error. X-ray photographs had been taken. A surgical operation had been prescribed. By means of suggestion, unaided by drugs or other treatment, the patient was cured within two months. In the first week the vomiting had ceased.

The same practitioner mentions the rapid disappearance of a tumor on the tenth rib, the sufferer being a young girl who was also afflicted with a fissure of the anus. The girl had been ill for two years, and in bed for

three months. Her temperature was high, and her general condition bad. The power of suggestion cured her in a fortnight, the tumor disappearing completely and the fissure healing without leaving a trace.

Showing how symptoms may be cured even when the disease itself may not. In the course of my own experience, one of the most remarkable cases which I can call to mind is that of a boy who, if not actually cured of a serious heart affection—endocarditis—at least got rid of all the symptoms, and lives and enjoys life as though in perfect health. One day the door of my study was opened and a pale, thin youth entered, leaning heavily on the arm of his father. At every step he paused, and every breath he took was like the painful gasp of an exhausted animal. Poor little chap! I did not expect to be able to do much for him. However, after his father had explained his malady I took him in hand, demonstrating the force of auto-suggestion by means of a few simple experiments such as I usually make during my lectures. For instance, I made him clasp his hands tightly, and then showed him that he could not unclasp them while thinking and saying, “I cannot, I cannot.” The boy was convinced. He went away full of confidence, promising to recite my formula regularly and to practise conscientiously the principles of auto-

suggestion. I saw him a few weeks afterward. There was already a considerable change. He could walk better; his breathing was easier; but he was still in a pitiful condition. The lad persevered, however, and he did, indeed, “get better and better every day,” and when I heard of him next he was playing football! He was exempted from military service during the war, for medical examination showed him to be still suffering from his heart trouble, although to all intents and purposes he was a well-grown, muscular young man. Which proves that symptoms can always be relieved by auto-suggestion, even when the disease itself is incurable.

Diabetes. Take diabetes. According to certain modern authorities this affection may sometimes have its origin in nervous trouble. Generally, of course, it is organic. In any case, I have known it frequently to yield to auto-suggestion practised with perseverance. Recently, a patient succeeded in reducing the amount of sugar from 80 grams to 59 in less than a month, while several painful symptoms disappeared.

Tuberculosis may be helped. Without venturing to declare that tuberculosis can be cured by auto-suggestion, I do say that in many cases it can be fought successfully. By

the practice of auto-suggestion the resistance of the organism is strengthened, and the patient aids Nature's own tendency to react against disease. This is true, indeed, in all cases of general debility. I know a lady of sixty who had been ailing for the best part of her life, and who, when she came to me first, believed she was near death. She weighed barely ninety-eight pounds. Auto-suggestion transformed her. The idea of health implanted in her subconscious gave her self-confidence unknown to her previously. Her health improved to such an extent that she recovered from an attack of pulmonary congestion which her doctor believed she could not possibly resist, and she has increased her weight by twenty-six pounds.

Sciatica, gastric troubles, constipation, asthma, and headaches readily helped. Sciatica, gastric troubles, constipation, asthma, and headaches readily give way to auto-suggestion. There is a man who had suffered from headaches for thirty years, taking aspirin and similar drugs regularly on certain days of the week. (Notice the power of suggestion: he was convinced he would have a headache on such and such a day, and he did have one.) Now he has set his mind working along other lines, and has cured himself of his chronic headaches. I also know a man who suffered from sciatica, and who, according to a letter

which he wrote the other day, has had practically no pain since the day he came to hear me explain the practice of auto-suggestion. And a young woman who now thinks nothing of walking eight miles, although by her doctor's orders she had considered herself an "invalid" for many years, scarcely daring to stir from her bed or her sofa.

Wasted tissue may be repaired. Astonishing as these results may appear, they are perfectly logical and natural, since it has been demonstrated that, in certain conditions, wasted tissue may be repaired by the exercise of auto-suggestion.

Women may hold and enhance their beauty. And now, here is a word of comfort for my fair readers who are fearful (and how many are not?) of losing their good looks. Of course you are right to want to remain young and fresh and good-looking. And you can do so if you only realize that you possess the secret yourselves. It is that little fairy who dwells in your subconscious and who asks nothing better than to smooth away those impertinent wrinkle, to put firm cushions of healthy flesh under sagging cheeks, or restore the laughing sparkle to dulled eyes. Yes, just train your imagination to visualize your face or body as you would like it to be, and you will have a very good chance

of seeing them approach pretty near your ideal. Mind, I don't tell you that you can change the colour of your eyes or hair, or modify the shape of your chin or nose: we must always keep to the materially possible. But you can really improve your appearance and ward off the attacks of age and fatigue. Fatigue, by the way, ought not to be possible if you practise auto-suggestion. It is so largely a matter of imagination. Suppose you have a task to perform. If you think to yourself beforehand, "this is going to be difficult and tiring," it surely will be so, and you will yawn over it and feel quite tired and bored. But if you are in a different frame of mind, and say, "This is going to be easy, I shall enjoy doing it," then you will not feel the slightest trace of fatigue. The best way of making a hard job easy is to buckle down and do it.

One must observe the ordinary rules of health. It goes without saying that the practice of auto-suggestion will not dispense one from the observance of the ordinary rules of health and hygiene. Remember, we are using the forces of Nature, so it would be silly to attempt to fight them at the same time. Lead a rational life. Do not overeat. Masticate your food thoroughly. Take sufficient exercise. Avoid excesses. They are Nature's Laws. Their observance, combined with the knowledge of the all-powerful effects

of auto-suggestion, will keep you in good physical and moral health, and enable you to combat successfully any of the ills to which the human body is heir through tradition and heredity.

The doctor a necessity. Let me add most emphatically that I do not advise you to dispense with a doctor's services. Obviously there are many cases in which his advice and medicine and care are absolutely indispensable. And always a doctor's presence and prestige and cheering words are helpful to the patient, especially if he also takes advantage of the wonderful instrument at his disposition, and accompanies his prescription with the proper suggestions. The results will be attained with much greater rapidity. I want both patients and doctors to understand that auto-suggestion is a most formidable weapon against disease.

MORAL POWER OF AUTO-SUGGESTION

CHAPTER V

MORAL POWER OF AUTO-SUGGESTION

Leaving for awhile the subject of physical health cures effected by auto-suggestion, let us discuss the rôle of the latter in relation to our moral well-being. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” said the Man of Wisdom thousands of years ago; and his words are as true now as they were then. And what is such “training” if not the art of implanting a mass of suggestions in the young, receptive mind? Those suggestions may be good or bad, and upon them depends the child’s whole destiny.

I shall have more to say on the subject of the rational and scientific education of children later on, but for the moment I should like to insist upon the importance of suggestion and auto-suggestion for society. Moral health is essential to physical health, and it is to the interest of the community at large to improve the moral health of its feebler elements. Granted the efficacy of auto-suggestion in the accomplishment of this task, it must be clear to all that the new method opens up a magnificent vista of possibilities in the direction of social progress.

It furnishes us the means of combatting victoriously the bad streaks in our nature, whether inherited or acquired, and of developing our intelligence; of curbing a wayward imagination, of adding balance to our judgement, modifying our mentality, correcting our moral weaknesses, while curing our bodily ills. Its generalization must conduce to individual and social reform, and the time may come when, freed of the evil suggestions which are so many poisons debilitating humanity both spiritually and physically, the world having purged itself of all its morbid elements—the criminal classes—may embark upon a new and glorious phase of fuller harmony.

Psychic culture as necessary as physical. We all recognize the value of physical culture. It is not too much

to say that to its renaissance in my own country and the consequent building up of a generation of robust, strong-limbed young men, full of stamina and resistance, is due in a considerable measure our victory in the Great War. Well, psychic culture is equally necessary. It will teach us to think simply, sanely. It will teach us to realize that we can be, and should be, the masters of events, and not their playthings. Psychic culture, through the medium of suggestion and auto-suggestion, corrects our moral deformities, just as physical culture corrects our bodily defects. We cannot all become champions, but we can all develop our personality in the spiritual or moral domain as we can all increase our muscular force by appropriate exercises.

Auto-suggestion to be used to combat criminal tendencies. Auto-suggestion, then, I am persuaded, is destined to be applied more and more generally in the world's efforts to stamp out crime. I have had occasion to try my method at Nancy upon a few boys of bad character whose precocious criminal instincts had led them to the reformatory. I believe good results were attained, but unfortunately I was unable to pursue the experiments over a long period, as the poor youths, sent in batches, remained only a few weeks before being transferred to the central

establishment in another town. However, the French authorities are quite in favour of a prolonged trial of my method being made and I hope to devote myself to this task in the near future. I may say, too, that I found great interest manifested in America in this question of auto-suggestion as a remedy against the growth of crime.

Power of suggestion in crime. It is a well-known fact that crime is contagious. From time to time every country has crime waves or epidemics—simply because the mind is influenced by suggestions from no matter what source, more or less according to the degree of sensitiveness or strength of character of the individual. In France some time ago the papers were full of details of a daring train robbery. Immediately afterward there was a repetition of the crime perpetrated in exactly the same manner, and within a fortnight five or six similar train assaults took place, the details of execution being identical in all cases. The epidemic was the result of suggestion.

Only recently Paris had a strange and striking illustration of the power of suggestion and auto-suggestion, the one provoking the other and translating them into acts. A maniac pricked a woman shopping in a dry-goods store with a needle or a syringe, injecting some

liquid which caused a swelling of the part affected. The papers published a few lines about it, and the next day two or three other similar cases were recorded. The number continued to grow till the victims were counted in scores, and not the least strange feature was that, while suggestion created the “prickers,” auto-suggestion created the victims, numbers of women being led by sheer imagination to believe themselves “pricked” and to feel the pain of a sudden jab. Curiously enough there was a similar epidemic in the time of Louis XV!

Another example of crime contagion is to be found in the “scalping” series in the seventeenth century, when for a certain period not a day passed without one or more women being shorn of their hair by mad-brained ruffians. Twenty years ago there was a similar epidemic.

The cinema—the movies—again must be regarded in some respects as a school of crime by reason of the terrible effects of suggestion on ill-balanced or unformed minds. And the craze of the Nick Carter style of story has been responsible for the wrecking of many young lives in my country.

Suggestion in reformatories. The rôle of suggestion in provoking crime being thus demonstrated, it is logical to

assume that suggestion is equally effective as an arm against crime. The idea is everything, since it carries the germ of action. There is vast scope for suggestion in reformatories. It could be practised collectively. With the seed of suggestion sown indiscriminately at first, the good ground would soon be discovered by its fruit. Then the good should be separated from the bad, for, by virtue of the eternal law of the contagion of ideas, the subjects influenced by the suggestions would strengthen each other, while the neighbourhood of the refractory ones would tend to add to their resistance to good suggestions.

Vice can be conquered. To people who ask if vice really can be conquered I answer emphatically yes. By suggestion, long and oft repeated, the character can be modified. A proof that education (or suggestion) does modify character is that the instinct of self-preservation—the strongest of all—can be overcome; as witness the many acts of sublime and total self-sacrifice in favour of others recorded by every epoch.

Suggestion acts as a break to bad instincts; that is its negative rôle. It has a positive part to play in acting as a propelling force for good impulses. Applied systematically, scientifically, there is no doubt that a large

portion of the classes branded as “criminal” could be reclaimed, and thousands of outcasts transformed into clean-thinking, clean-living, and useful citizens.

This is naturally especially true in regard to the young, with their keen, vigorous imaginations open to every impression. Surely it is the duty of those in authority to see that their imagination be fed with something better than the germs of crime. The susceptibility of youth is such that it is easy (save in the fortunately rare cases of wholly bad characters) to create vivid images or ideas of good actions in their minds. Once anchored in the subconscious those ideas must inevitably develop and eventually exteriorize themselves in acts.

AUTO-SUGGESTION IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

CHAPTER VI

AUTO-SUGGESTION IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Paradoxical as it may appear to those who have not fully understood the principles and working of auto-suggestion, the education of a child begins even before it is born! Without going back to explanations which I have given in previous chapters, I need only say that the imagination plays the supreme rôle in every function of life, and that by disciplining it, or, in other words, by exercising auto-suggestion, a prospective mother can not only determine the sex of her child (that has been demonstrated by certain medical authorities) but also, to a

large degree, its physical and moral characteristics. She has only to let her imagination deposit in her subconscious mind the image of the son or daughter she desires and the qualities she wishes the still unborn infant to possess. The result is assured.

Even more important, perhaps, is the fact that such a child will yield more readily than most to suggestion. Which does not mean that its character is likely to be weak. On the contrary, the probabilities are that it will, as it grows up, exchange suggestion for auto-suggestion, and achieve perfect self-mastery. Only it must be remembered that our acts and deeds are, for the most part, the result of past outside suggestions or example. The importance of beginning a child's education early and of controlling the suggestions destined to influence and mould the young mind must therefore be obvious to all. Parents and educators must be careful to implant in it only good suggestions and protect it at all costs from bad ones.

How is that done? I shall try to give a few indications—or suggestions. They must be taken as general ones, of course; they may be modified or adapted to individual subjects and circumstances.

How to treat children. Be of an equable temper with them, speaking in tones gentle but firm, persuading them to obey without giving them the temptation to resist your influence. Never be rough with a child, for to do so is to risk provoking a sentiment of fear accompanied by sullenness or even hate.

Avoid talking ill of people in the presence of children; they will inevitably follow your example later on. And backbiting often leads to disaster.

Seek to awaken in their minds the desire to understand Nature. Keep them interested. Answer their questions clearly, with good-humour. Do not put them off, as so many of us are tempted to do, with such replies as, “Oh, you bother me,” or “You’ll know all about that later.”

Above all, never on any account tell a child that he or she is a “story-teller,” or lazy, or a dunce, or worse. Remember that such suggestions have a very strong tendency to become realities, just as the better kind of suggestions have.

Encouragement particularly necessary to children. Rather say to a child inclined to be lazy or negligent, “Well, you have done much better than usual to-day; I am

very pleased with your work; you are improving.” It may not be true. No matter. The idea of improvement, of excellence, of endeavour, will sink into the child’s mind, and gradually, with judicious encouragement, will be transformed unconsciously into fact.

Avoid discussing diseases before children; auto-suggestion is quick to carry the idea to the physical plane and develop the very illness you wish to avert. Teach them, on the contrary, that good health is normal; sickness an anomaly, a humiliation which is only a consequence of the non-observance of Nature’s laws.

Never frighten children. Do not let a child fear the elements; man is made to stand cold, heat, rain, wind, etc., without ill effects; it is merely an idea that creates weakness. It is a cruel thing to frighten children by talking of “bogies” and goblins and the like; fear thus instilled may persist in after life and ruin a child’s later life and destiny.

Make work attractive. It is easy to make a child like work and study by making the lessons attractive by means of anecdotes appropriate to the subject, and by explaining the difficult points with a smile and conveying the

impression that it is all quite simple. The educator's ideal should be to make his pupils look forward to the next lesson.

Naturally, one must instill the love of labour, with the idea that labour is natural and indispensable; that idleness is abnormal, unhealthy, and conducive to every kind of physical and moral evil. A child's pliable mind easily assimilates such suggestions, which become permanent and will mould and build his character.

Set only good examples. It is unnecessary, and not in the scope of this chapter, to enumerate all the qualities which a child should possess. What I wish to explain is the employment of suggestion and auto-suggestion in his education and training. We all know that "example is better than precept," but we realize the truth of it with greater force after studying the power of auto-suggestion. And children are particularly sensitive to suggestion; they are always ready to copy what they see, good or bad. So the first duty of parents and educators is to set only good examples.

Suggestion to children while falling asleep. Suggestion may be practised with wonderful effect to correct any defect in a child's character, and to develop missing

qualities. Every night, just as the child is about to fall off to sleep, or when it is already asleep, stand about a yard away from them, and murmur in a low undertone what you wish to obtain, repeating fifteen to twenty times the qualities it is desired to provoke and the defects to be corrected. Do not be afraid to repeat the same phrases monotonously; that is the most powerful means of reaching the subconscious. The latter needs no eloquence to be impressed. A plain statement of the idea is sufficient. More than that defeats the ends to be attained.

Suggestion in schools. In schools remarkable results should be obtained by teachers practising suggestion on their classes every day before beginning lessons. The pupils should be told to shut their eyes and then they might be addressed something after the following fashion: “Children, I am sure you are all going to be good, polite, and amiable to every one, and obedient to your parents and teachers. You will always take note of their observations, because you know that it is for your own good. You are intelligent, so you love your work, even the subjects which you used to dislike. In class your attention will be always alert and attentive to what your teacher says. You will only be sorry for other children who may be foolishly wasting time and playing during the lesson. So, as you are very intelligent, you will have no difficulty in understanding the

lesson, no matter on what subject, and you will remember everything you are told. It will all be stored away in your mind ready for use directly your knowledge is called upon.”

Character formed by imagination. Of course the above is merely a sample of what might be said in the way of suggestion. It can be modified and certainly improved by teachers to suit their particular needs. The important point is to practise suggestion in this form. It does not matter if the children laugh a little at first, or if their attention wanders, or if, when the morning suggestion (it is not desirable, naturally, that they should know the purpose of it) has become a regular thing, they listen automatically to the words without hearing them. The words reach the subconscious mind all the same, and the ideas conveyed do their work just as efficiently.

In a word, it is essential that a child should be impregnated with the right kind of suggestions. Everything depends upon it. Play upon the imagination. Character is formed by imagination. More often than not that which is attributed to heredity, in the moral domain as well as in the physical, is the consequence of ideas germinated by example. It is impossible to believe a child is born a

criminal. He becomes one by auto-suggestion, just as he may become a valued member of the community as the result of auto-suggestion guided in the right direction.

MASTERS OF OUR DESTINIES

CHAPTER VII

MASTERS OF OUR DESTINIES

Monsieur Jourdain, the “Bourgeois Gentilhomme,” “spoke prose without knowing it.” In the same way we all practise auto-suggestion, but often without being conscious of it. To a certain extent auto-suggestion may be automatic, in the sense that it may not be inspired or guided by deliberate reflection. But how much more potent a factor it must be in our lives when we have learned its mechanism and discovered how to make use of it for our own ends! The act of breathing is automatic; yet we can modify at will our manner of breathing; we can improve our health by learning to breathe in a certain way, and by

doing regular breathing exercises. So it is with auto-suggestion. Once we realize its force and learn to control it we are the masters of our destinies.

Babies automatically practice auto-suggestion. Let me give you an illustration of the automatic practice of auto-suggestion. A new-born baby, in its cradle, begins to cry. Immediately its mother takes it in her arms the infant stops crying, and is replaced in the cradle. Whereupon the crying begins over again, only to stop once more if the baby be lifted from its cradle. The operation may be repeated an almost unlimited number of times, always with the same result. The child—lacking conscious thought—is automatically practising auto-suggestion. It obtains the gratification of its unconscious desire to be taken into its mother's arms by crying. If resisted, on the other hand, if left to cry alone in its cradle, its subconscious mind will register the fact, and the baby will not take the trouble to cry, because it knows it will have no effect.

Self-mastery means health. And it is like that with every one, from birth to death. We live by auto-suggestion; we are governed by our subconscious mind. Happily, we are able to guide it by our reason. Like everything else, however, the science of auto-suggestion has to be learned.

It is a matter of educating oneself up to the point where complete control of the subconscious mind is attained. That means self-mastery and health.

Prevention is better than cure. The idea of good health begets good health, and if by accident we are attacked by disease, we are certain to have an infinitely greater chance of resisting and of rapidly throwing off the malady by practising auto-suggestion than if we know nothing of its principles. Have you not noticed this during epidemics? It is a well-known fact that persons who, in such times, go serenely about their business, not worrying for themselves, and not giving thought to the epidemic except to tell themselves that they are sure not to catch the sickness, are almost always immune and escape contagion. On the other hand, nervous people, frightened by the cases around them, and allowing their thoughts to run constantly on the prevailing malady, are certain to fall ill, despite all their precautions. Amazing instances of the power of suggestion are recorded in the annals of the Faculty of Paris. Professor Bouchet relates the following among many others. An old lady, after undergoing a desperate surgical operation, was dying. Her son was due to arrive from India two days later. Humanly speaking, it was impossible for her to live so long. The method of suggestion was resorted to. She was

told that she was better and that she would see her son on the morrow. The result was a complete success. A fortnight later the old lady was still alive. And, from a medical point of view, that was a miracle.

Equally miraculous, to all appearance, was the case of a man occupying an important position at Nancy a few years ago. He came to me suffering from sinusitis. He had undergone eleven operations, but the terrible disease continued its ravages. He was in a horrible condition, physically and morally. Day and night, without intermission, the unfortunate man was tortured by excruciating pains in the head which prevented him from sleeping. His weakness was extreme, and his appetite nonexistent. Most of the time he remained helpless on a sofa. I confess that I had little hope of being able to do anything for him. However, I took pains to convince him of the efficacy of suggestion, and though there seemed to be no amelioration during five or six sittings, I could see that the man, sick as he was, had gained absolute faith in the soundness of the theories I had expounded to him. He told me he was daily directing his subconscious mind to the idea of healing his sickness. Then, one day he said he believed that he felt a slight improvement, but was not quite sure. It was the truth, however, and the improvement

continued. A complete cure followed rapidly. Today that man is perfectly healthy, able to work without fatigue. The discharges from the nose which occurred daily have ceased.

I remember another remarkable case of collective auto-suggestion—more or less “automatic” this time. It happened in the hospital services of Doctor Renaud, in Paris. A new serum, an alleged cure for tuberculosis, had just been discovered. It was tested on the patients. Apparently as a result of the injections all showed an immediate improvement. The coughing diminished, and other symptoms disappeared, and the general condition of all began to be very satisfactory. Alas! Shortly afterward it became known that the famous serum from which the patients unconsciously hoped for so much was nothing but an ordinary drug which had been previously tested with negative results. At once, with the fading away of their illusions, the sick men and women lost all the improvement gained, and their old symptoms reappeared.

Modern miracles. Miracles happen in our time as they have done in the past. I mean the things that are *called* miracles. For, of course, there is no such thing as a miracle. The modern miracle is worked by auto-

suggestion, the wonderful force entrusted to us by Nature, and which, if we will only probe its mysteries, shall make us all-powerful within the limits of human possibilities. Fatality, fatalism shall lose their meaning; nay, they cannot exist, save in our erring imagination. For it is we ourselves who alone shall shape our destinies, rising always above the external circumstances and conditions which from time to time may be thrown across our paths.

THE FUTURE OF AUTO-SUGGESTION

CHAPTER VIII

THE FUTURE OF AUTO-SUGGESTION

It may be interesting at this point to move forward a little and take a glance at the future of auto-suggestion. I have no doubt in my mind that the principles of auto-suggestion are now firmly established, and that a sound basis for their practical application has been prepared. That application is bound to become more and more general as the principles become more widely known, especially among medical practitioners. I cannot too strongly insist that auto-suggestion, so far from being in conflict with medical science, is perfectly in harmony with it, and is

destined to develop into one of the most powerful curative elements at the disposal of physicians.

There was a period of considerable activity in psychological research at the end of the last century, when Charcot and the famous Salpetriere Schools took the lead in proclaiming the curative possibilities of Idea or Suggestion. Liebault and Bernheim at Nancy were also in the vanguard of the same movement.

Psychological research halted by materialism and fatalism. Then followed a spell of skepticism and materialism. Thought was declared to be nothing but a secretion of the brain, and conscience a mere mass of sensations condemned to be the plaything of circumstances. Our ills were irreparable, because inherited, and it was of no avail to fight against the legacy of the past. This conception coloured the philosophy of the day, transformed poets into pessimists, and made doctors fatalists. Psychology seemed to be severed completely from philosophy. Ideas were considered to be effects, and incapable of ever being causes.

Doubt and pessimism gained the minds of the intellectual classes, and percolated through to the masses.

Abstract philosophical ideas practically applied for therapeutic purposes. But the reaction was at hand. Soon a new and brighter and saner philosophy emerged, with Bergson and others, to reveal the amazing natural forces at our own command, which had been so long ignored or neglected. If I mention myself here it is simply to say that I have done nothing more than to demonstrate the possibility for every one of utilizing for his own physical and moral well-being the force of the subconscious revealed by the diffused, abstract notions of the new School of Philosophy. Others will carry on the work, but I think I may say that the basis of a new practical philosophy with definite therapeutic applications has now been laid. It is admitted that the human mind is a much greater force than was believed formerly. Facts—cures obtained by suggestion and auto-suggestion in cases even of organic diseases—have come to prove the importance of the Idea in the treatment of bodily ills.

Institutes for practice of auto-suggestion being built up in London, Paris, and New York. From the purely experimental stage, the doctrine of auto-suggestion is ripe enough to enter the domain of universal application. Already, in Paris, it is being carried forward to the crest of

a big scientific movement which bids fair to grow rapidly under the leadership of a group of enthusiastic members of the medical faculty, philosophers, and savants. An institute for the teaching and practice of auto-suggestion has been founded, and I hope to see others created in other cities in all parts of the world. One will soon be in existence in new York. At the Paris Institute a corps of trained men and women, some belonging to the medical profession, like my disciple, Dr. Pierre Vachet, professor at the École de Psychologie, and Doctor Veriot constitute a permanent teaching staff whose mission is to spread, by explanation and experiments, the knowledge of the so-called mysterious forces which we all possess, and to show patients how to use them to the advantage of their own health.

Auto-suggestion, then, is becoming more and more an experimental science and an element of the first order in the domain of therapeutics as well as in those of sociology and education. The creation of institutes such as that of Paris will, I am convinced, be a powerful stimulant to the study of the wonderful resources of our subconscious self.

Development of applied psychology just beginning. Applied psychology, the vast developments of which are

only just beginning, will teach us to know ourselves better, to possess ourselves more completely, to control the supreme powers with which Nature has endowed us and to use them for the development of our character and of our physical, intellectual, and moral well-being.

The subject far outstrips the individual; society as a whole will benefit by man's self-mastery. The doctor has been called "the last of the magicians." But we can all be much greater than the magician by merely utilizing the stupendous moral power and cerebral energy latent within us. Revivify intelligence paralyzed by doubt or ignorance, regenerate the physical organism, strengthen the moral fibre—such are the aims to be attained, presaging an ennobling of human nature the consequences of which cannot easily be calculated. By means within reach of all we shall secure an advancement of humanity, and it will be possible for everyone to feel within himself or herself the growth of that sublime force which elevates one both morally and physically.

Perhaps one day the dreams of Utopists may be realized and humanity will shake off the chains of materialism which still separate us from what we think to be supernatural knowledge, but which, in reality, is already

in us, only waiting to be discerned. Who knows? Perhaps prisons may become unnecessary when we shall have learned how even evil and evil-doing can be overcome by suggestion. Backward children will be made normal, and the wayward ones taught through their subconscious to become good and useful citizens.

People are still ignorant of the immense benefits to the individual and to society to be obtained by auto-suggestion employed for curative and educational purposes. But the light is spreading. And it will not be long before the new science has its place definitely among psychological, sociological, and medical studies.

Auto-suggestion may develop more rapidly in America than in Europe. Perhaps the study and practice of auto-suggestion is destined to make swifter strides on the American side of the Atlantic than in Europe. I do not know. I do know, however, that hundreds of American men and women have not hesitated to cross the ocean in order to probe my system at Nancy. In America I found myself among a host of friends and followers, all keen to help the propagation of the idea of auto-suggestion. Converts of such energy must necessarily be a tremendous power, so that I am quite prepared to see the science

pushed forward and developed more extensively in the dynamic atmosphere of the New World than in my own country.

I AM NOT A HEALER

CHAPTER IX

I AM NOT A HEALER

When, under the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, I found myself bombarded with questions by a score of newspaper representatives who had come aboard the *Majestic* specially to meet my humble person, I began to have a faint idea of the interest awakened in America by the announcement of my lecture tour. When I found myself escorted soon afterward by stalwart American policemen from the ship to the automobile waiting to convey me to my temporary home with friends, and when I caught sight of the crowds gathered to welcome me, I was inexpressibly surprised and touched that I should be

considered worthy of such a reception. Shall I be accused of lack of modesty if I say that I am proud and gratified to have been greeted thus? I think no; because I know that all this sympathy and interest must be attributed to the characteristic keenness of Americans to learn and probe to a deeper degree the methods of auto-suggestion associated with my name.

Since my arrival in New York, the memory of which will never be effaced, I have not ceased to marvel at all I saw and heard and read. Of my general impressions I shall have a lot to say later on. I am still somewhat dominated by that feeling of surprise which seized me at my first contact with the American people. In fact, my wonderment has grown every day with the realization of ideas which many people seem to have formed of me and my powers. I do not want people to have a sort of fanatical belief in me. It is true, of course, that blind faith is always an asset in favour of a sick person's chances of getting well. People who come to me with the belief already established in their minds that they are going to be cured are more than half-way on the road to recovery before they see me. But the number of persons who can come into direct contact with me must of necessity be relatively small, and even if I possessed any extraordinary magnetic power to heal—

which I emphatically declare I do not—the results of such power would be limited, for obvious reasons; whereas, there are no limitations to the potentialities of the system I teach. I mean that *I* cannot reach every one, but every one can practise auto-suggestion. My aim, therefore, is solely to show you how to cure yourselves. Rid yourselves of the utterly wrong idea that I can cure. I AM NOT A HEALER.

Not a healer. I had a first inkling of the mistake America was making when newspaper reporters on the *Majestic* addressed me as “Doctor” and “Professor,” and I was obliged to correct them with reminders that “I am not a doctor; I am not a professor.” The papers continue to talk of the cures *I* have effected in my “clinics”—a bad word, by the way, for the little gatherings at which I meet a selected number of patients in order to endeavour to convince them that by following my methods of auto-suggestion they can cure themselves, or at least gain appreciable improvement. Yes, it has been my joy to see many of these poor sufferers benefit from my teaching; but my joy will be still greater if I succeed in spreading faith in those methods to hundreds of thousands of others and instill in them the knowledge that they can cure themselves without seeing me at all. And it will be impossible to attain that goal if the impression be allowed to persist that it is

necessary to come into personal contact with me in order to obtain results.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to convince some people that I do not exercise a certain influence over them. When I tell them that they must count upon themselves, not upon me, they often reply: “I don’t care what you say, you do wield power, and when I am with you I get better results than when I am alone.” Well, that may be true in many cases. But the reason is, as I have already indicated, that a person who has faith enough to come to me is already half cured by that very faith.

There is another aspect of the question. If I possessed any real power, surely it should have the same effect upon all. Yet that is not the case. Upon some my influence is absolutely nil. Upon others it may be immense. Which proves that it is not and cannot be an essential factor in the efficacy of my system. It exists merely in the imagination of certain persons, and as I have explained—I hope convincingly—in previous chapters, the imagination is all-powerful, so in such instances it really does aid recover of health. But it would be a sorry action to allow it to be thought that personal contact with me is necessary. I want American citizens all over the continent to understand that

all they need is a proper comprehension of the principles of auto-suggestion—that is simplicity itself—together with a belief in its effectiveness.

Merely applying truths known for thousands of years. I do not claim to have invented anything. I have merely reduced to a simple formula for every-day use and practice theories which were known to be truths thousands of years ago. Still less have I invented a new faith, as some would appear to infer. One day a gentleman, interviewed by one of the newspapers, described my method of auto-suggestion as a “direct challenge to the Church.” I confess I fail to see any relation between religion and auto-suggestion. Is medicine a challenge to the Church? Auto-suggestion is only the use of natural forces and functions of our being, and can be practised by Catholics and Protestants, Islamists or Buddhists, without violating any of the precepts or doctrinal principles of those churches or religions. Did not Saint Paul write of the “Faith that moveth mountains”? Surely it cannot be wrong to make use of the faculties which the Creator Himself has given us!

No connection with religion. Other religious leaders look askance at auto-suggestion because it has come to be

associated with alleged “miracles” which I am supposed to have worked. Now, miracles do not exist. I have never accomplished any, and never shall. As a matter of fact, the so-called “miraculous” cures are the simplest and the most easily explained of all. They prove that, actually, the sufferers only *thought* they were sick. Thought produced (or prolonged) the symptoms; and in that respect they were really sick. But directly they were made to realize that their ills could be overcome by imagination they were cured.

It may seem rather unnecessary for me to answer the few criticisms of which I have been the object in the atmosphere of exceptionally sympathetic interest in which I found myself in America. But I am anxious to clear away all misunderstandings. I wish to be taken seriously by serious-minded people. I want every one to be convinced that the theories I advance, reduced as they are to their simplest expression, are nevertheless built upon a groundwork of scientific fact.