

The Eagle's Nest *By Philip J. Lawson, J.D.*

The Strangest Secret

How to Live the Life You Desire

(... What the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.)



I first listened to the recording of ***The Strangest Secret*** in 1964. It was a defining moment in my life. It was then, and still is, the most powerful message I've ever heard. It became a mantra for my life of overcoming learning disabilities and stuttering, and the completion of my dream to become an attorney.

The Strangest Secret was written in 1957 and later recorded by Earl Nightingale. It earned the first gold record for the spoken word, with sales exceeding one million copies. Nightingale, known as the "Dean of Personal Development," revealed how he discovered and lived the *Secret to Success*.

Nightingale notes that the late Nobel prize-winner, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, was being interviewed in London, and the reporter asked him, "Doctor, what's wrong with men today?" The great doctor was silent a moment and then he said, "Men simply don't think!" It's about this that I want to address in this month's column.

Nightingale related that we live in a golden age today. "It's an age that humanity has looked forward to, dreamed of, and worked toward for thousands of years but that we pretty much take it for granted." Nightingale continued, "We in America are particularly fortunate to live in the richest land that ever existed on the face of the earth... a land of abundant opportunity for everyone."

He then states an unbelievable statistic. "If you take 100 individuals who start even at the age of 25, do you have any idea what will happen to those men and women by the time they are 65? These 100 people who start even at the age of 25 believe they are going to be successful. If you ask any one of these people if they want to be a success, they will tell you they did... and you

would notice that they were eager toward life, that there was a certain sparkle in their eye, and life seemed like a pretty interesting adventure to them."

But by the time they're 65, one will be rich, four will be financially independent, five will still be working and 54 will be broke.

Nightingale pointed out that only five would make the grade! He then asked the question... why do so many fail? "What has happened to the sparkle that was there when they were 25? What has become of their dreams, their hopes, the plans... and why is there such a large disparity between what the people intended to do and what they actually accomplished?" In answering the question Nightingale provides his own definition of success:

"Success is the progressive realization of a worthy idea."

He then explained that if someone is working toward a predetermined goal, and knows where he or she is going, that person is a success. If they're not doing that, they are failures. "Success is the progressive realization of a worthy idea." "Rollo May, a distinguished psychiatrist wrote a wonderful book called Man's Search for Himself. Rollo states "The opposite of courage in our society is not cowardice... it is conformity." Therein lies the problem today –

"Conformity – People acting like everyone else... Without knowing why or where they are going. The trouble is that we're acting like the wrong percentage group – the 95 who don't succeed."

Nightingale states that of the millions of people 65 years of age or over... "Most are broke and dependent upon someone else for life's necessities. By the time we are 65, we haven't learned how to become financially independent in the richest land that has ever been known. Why? We conform!"

"People who conform believe that their lives are shaped by circumstances... by things that happen to them... by exterior forces." They are outer-directed people.

Nightingale questioned whether or not there was a key that would in large part guarantee a person's success if they knew how to use it. He determined that –

"People with goals succeed because they know where they're going."

"You may have noticed that some people who become successful tend to continue to be more successful; on the other hand, you've probably seen that someone who is a failure tends to continue to fail. People with goals succeed because they know where they're going. It's that simple."

"Why do people with goals succeed in life... and people without them fail?"

***"We become what we think about."
"Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."***

"The only person who succeeds is the person who is progressively realizing a worthy idea. He/She is the person who says, 'I'm going to become this...' and then begins to work toward that goal." Nightingale states that "...The human mind is the last great, unexplored continent on earth." What a profound statement! Nightingale cautions however that what we plant and know in our minds... success... or failure... will produce success or failure. You have a choice and you must understand choices and consequences. If you entertain negative thoughts, in time, your negativism will control your life. Likewise, positive thoughts will bring positive results.

IMAGINATION --- PERSPIRATION --- AND DESIRE !!

I am reminded of the teachings of my successful father who would often say that success over a period of time will come through demonstrating success's three elements.

First, you must have imagination. You must be creative, but [imagination](#) and creativity is not enough. The second element is [perspiration](#). You must be willing to sweat. You must dedicate yourself to hard work and discipline. If there is no perspiration, everything you think about in your good imagination is just fairytales. But inspiration and perspiration is not enough. The third element is [desire](#). Desire provides the energy and momentum to move forward. All three of these elements work together when you understand clearly your goals and the price you must pay to accomplish them.

I recently ordered *The Strangest Secret* book and CD from SimpleTruths®, www.simpletruths.com, (800) 900-3427, for one of my children. The book and CD provide many wonderful concepts on how to demonstrate *the strangest secret* in your life. It is one of the finest gifts you will ever share with your children, friends, and fellow employees. In autographing the book, I indicated that it was a special gift I was sending his way. I pointed out that as a father of four children, my sincere hope was to share with them "the simple truths" I learned from my father. It was my sincere hope and prayer that my son would embrace the lessons of *The Strangest Secret* and someday pass them on to his children.

For a number of years I have carried a small card in my billfold with a statement written by author Charles Swindoll. He states the following:

ATTITUDE

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life.

Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.

We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot

change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you.....

...An outstanding statement that you should embrace and make your own.

...*Think on these things!*

Sincerely,

Philip J. Lawson

Each time I prepare an Eagle's Nest column, I am reminded of the other eagles in my life... who have added special value to me along the way.

This edition I would like to dedicate this column to Cathy S. Hulsey, ACP. A member of the Smoky Mountain Paralegal Association and a friend extraordinaire.

Phil is the founder the Knoxville law firm of Wimberly Lawson and retired from active practice on December 31, 2004. Phil has lectured and taught widely on a variety of aspects of labor, employment law, leadership, and personal growth.

