LEADERSHIP SERIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

VOLUME FIVE
COMPANION WORKBOOK



Persistence An Iron Will

"Life makes way for the determined man or woman."

ORISON SWETT MARDEN

Companion workbook by Richard Gorham

Leadership-Tools.com

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VOLUME FIVE

Persistence

An Iron Will

COMPANION WORKBOOK

Written by

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A companion to the Persistence ebook, based on
An Iron Will (1901) by Orison Swett Marden

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Leadership-Tools.com

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Richard Gorham wrote this companion workbook in 2006 to go with his ebook and audio edition of Orison Swett Marden's *An Iron Will* (1901). This 2026 edition has a new design with fill-in spaces you can type into or print, and links to free tools and articles that help with several of the exercises.

The ebook and audio edition are free at Leadership-Tools.com.

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CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK iii
Training the Will 1
The Rulers of Destiny 4
Force of Will in Camp and Field 6
Will-Power in Its Relation to Health and Disease 8
The Romance of Achievement Under Difficulties 10
Staying Power 12
The Degree of "O.O." 14
NOTES 15

Getting the Most From This Workbook

Read or listen to a chapter of *Persistence* first, then come back to the matching chapter here. Each one starts with a summary of the key points and ends with questions and exercises. The spaces are there for you to write in, by hand on a printed copy or by typing straight into this file.

Give the questions some time. A few of them are easier to answer after a day or two, and it's worth coming back to them once you've thought them over. Where a free tool or article on Leadership-Tools.com can help with an exercise, you'll find a link to it at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER I

Training the Will

"The education of the will is the object of our existence."

— Emerson

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The development and discipline of one's will-power is of supreme importance in relation to one's overall success in life.
- No man can ever underestimate the power of an iron will. It is a part of our human nature, and the quality of our very existence depends upon it.
- The achievements of history have been the choices, the determinations, the creations, of the human will.
- Most men and women fail, not through a lack of education or agreeable personal qualities, but from a lack of dogged determination, from a deficit of a dauntless will.
- The athlete trains for his race; and the mind also must be in constant training if one is to win the race of life.
- Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson which ought to be learned, and, however early a man's training begins, it is probably this one lesson that will most determine his destiny
- One of the secrets of a successful life is to be able to hold all of our energies upon one point, to focus all of the power of our mind upon one single place or thing.
- The way to learn to develop will-power is by the actual exercise of willpower.
- To stick to a thing till you are a master of it, is a test of intellectual discipline and power.
- There are no two words in the English language which stand out more boldly, like kings upon a checker-board, to so great an extent as the words 'I will.
- The man or woman who says "I will" is the one who believes in his or her ability to triumph over difficulties, to gain victory in the face of discouragement.
- The man who becomes stationary begins to deteriorate and eventually dies. Inactivity, is the beginning of the end — it precedes death. To live is to achieve, to press on, to will without ceasing."

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

List your top three most difficult barriers to happiness and success.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For each barrier you've listed, ask yourself the following questions:

- What caused this barrier?
- Is this a barrier I am responsible for?
- How could I possibly overcome this barrier?
- What would it take?
- Who could help me?
- What resources would I need?
- What tools could I use to begin the process?
- Is this truly a barrier, or does it only seem like one because it looks so large or would take so long to overcome?
- What must I learn in order to overcome it?
- Who could teach me?
- Is there information online, at the library, or in a club, association or group that could help?

Write your notes on each barrier here.

Resolve to do one thing today to begin facing your fears and make your claim to a happier and more prosperous life. What will you do?

TRY THIS FREE TOOL

Life Balance Wheel

Score each part of your life to see where things are going well and where a barrier is holding you back.

CHAPTER II

The Rulers of Destiny

"A strong, defiant purpose is many-handed, and lays hold of whatever is near that can serve it, it has a magnetic power that draws to itself whatever is kindred."

— T. T. Munger

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Where there is will-power, there is life, where it is not present, there is faintness, helplessness, and despondency. Let it be your first priority of study to teach the world that you are not made of wood or straw; that there is some iron in you.
- The achievements of will-power are almost beyond computation.
- Nothing seems impossible to the person who can will strongly enough and long enough. With a clear goal and a resolute will-power, all things are possible. One talent with a firm will behind it can accomplish more than any special gift without the will can ever hope for.
- There are three kinds of people in the world - the wills, the won'ts, and the can'ts. The "wills" accomplish everything; the "won'ts" oppose everything; the "can'ts" fail in everything.
- Strength of will-power is the test of a young man or woman's possibilities.
- It is irresolution or indecision that is worse than rashness.
- He that shoots, may sometimes hit the mark; but he that shoots not at all can never hit it.
- The most successful are not those who have waited for chances, but who have taken them; besieged the chance; conquered the chance; and made chance his servant.
- Personal power exists within the mind of every human being. Sometimes its existence is unrealized, but it is there.
- The man without self-reliance and an iron will is the plaything of chance, the puppet of his environment, the slave of circumstances.
- The world takes us at our own valuation. It believes in the man or woman who believes in him or herself.
- Those who have accomplished great things in the world have been, as a rule, bold, aggressive, and self-confident. They dared to step out from the crowd, and act in an original way. They were not afraid to be held accountable.
- The world steps aside to let any man pass who knows where he is going.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Our own self-doubts are our greatest enemies. To address them and eventually conquer our negative self-talk, we first need to name them and admit they exist. What are your self-doubts?

Our ability to succeed is limited only by the limits we set on ourselves. What limits have you placed on yourself? *(For example: I'm not smart enough; people won't want to buy from me; I'm so clumsy.)*

List any self-imposed limits that you tend to replay in your mind every day.

CHAPTER III

Force of Will in Camp and Field

"Oh, what miracles have been wrought by the self-confidence, and the self-determination of an iron will!"

— Orison Swett Marden

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Whenever you don't know whether to fight or not, FIGHT!
- History furnishes thousands of examples of men and women who have seized occasions to accomplish results deemed impossible by those less resolute
- The man or woman of an iron will is calm in the hour of danger.
- It is the will that drives all magnificent achievement, whether by heroes in our greatest battles, or the heroic fire-fighters and patrol officers of our most dangerous cities?

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Who in your local area do you consider to be the organizer, the leader, the person of influence? List the top three and rate their energy, enthusiasm and willpower from what you know. If you don't know them personally, take your best guess.

	Name	Energy	Enthusiasm	Willpower
1.				
2.				
3.				

Answer each of the following questions in one short sentence.

How do you compare to the people above?

How COULD you compare with them?

What time do you think these people get up in the morning?

How late do you think they work at night?

Do you believe they are happy doing what they do? Why?

Do you believe they make a lot of money? Why?

What sort of friends do these people spend time with? How do your friends compare in energy, enthusiasm and willpower?

CHAPTER IV

Will-Power in Its Relation to Health and Disease

"There is no doubt that, great decision of character is usually accompanied by a solid and unwavering resolve."

— Orison Swett Marden

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The great prizes of life often fall to the most robust, the strong, — not to a huge muscle or powerful frame necessarily, but to a strong vitality, a great nervous energy.
- To prosper you must improve your brainpower; and nothing helps the brain more than a healthy body.
- The race of today and tomorrow is only to be won by those who will study and work hard to keep their bodies and minds in good working condition.
- It is health rather than strength that is of the greatest importance
- Self-discipline has been called the equal to genius itself.
- The height of glory for every young man or woman is his or her level of reserve power; it is their greatest strength..
- Illness is one of those things which a man should resist on principle. Do not dwell upon your ailments nor study your symptoms. Never allow yourself to be convinced that you are not the complete master of yourself.
- There is a Divine remedy placed within us for many of the ills we suffer.
- The longest-lived men and women have, as a rule, been those who have attained great mental and moral development.
- Every physician knows that courageous people, with indomitable will, are not half as likely to contract contagious diseases as the timid, the vacillating, and the indifferent.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Everyone needs to feel a sense of significance. It's one of our basic human needs.

Think about someone you know who is always complaining about being sick. What must they be getting back in return for sharing their misery with others? What do they have to show for all that focused effort?

Now think about someone you know who is always talking about working out and staying in shape, taking a fun trip, reaching a goal or volunteering to help someone else. What do you suppose they have to show for all their focused effort?

Self-assess: Describe how you might turn some of your complaints, concerns, obstacles or fears into thoughts of praise, optimism, challenge or excitement.

READ NEXT

Choosing a Thoughtful Response

Step 6 of the 10 Steps series includes a short self-check on how you respond when things go wrong, and how to pause before you react.

CHAPTER V

The Romance of Achievement Under Difficulties

"What a fortune we each possess in the marvelous mechanism of our body and mind. It is individual effort that has achieved everything worth achieving."

— Orison Swett Marden

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Every man is equipped as only God could equip him.
- Money is nothing. It is what you do and how you contribute that is most important.
- Self-help has accomplished almost all the great things of the world.
- Success is the child of diligence and perseverance. It cannot be coaxed or bribed, get moving and begin to pay the price, and it is yours.
- A constant struggle, a ceaseless battle to bring success from inhospitable surroundings, is the price of all great achievements.
- He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill: our antagonist is our helper.
- What is defeat? Nothing but education; nothing but the first steps to something better.
- It is natural for barriers to rise up in front of anyone who would dare to rise above the circumstances in which he or she was born.
- Our many great men and women throughout history rose from meager beginnings. They rose by being greater than their callings.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

List the top 10 relationships in your life right now. Include the people you love the most, and who love you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

HINT

Whenever you're down, sad or lonely, come back to this list. It can be one of your greatest personal motivators.

List your top three contributions to others, to your community and to the world.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Remember that happiness comes from the quality of our relationships and our contributions to others.

TRY THIS FREE TOOL

My Favorite Things Recognition Tool

Learn what the people on your team enjoy most, so you can thank them in a way that means something to them.

CHAPTER VI

Staying Power

"Success in most things depends on knowing how long it takes to succeed."

— Montesquieu

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The power to hold on is characteristic of all men and women who have accomplished anything great; they may lack in some other particular area, or have many weaknesses or eccentricities, but the quality of persistence is never absent from the successful individual.
- No matter what opposition he meets or what discouragement overtakes him, drudgery cannot dishearten him, obstacles cannot discourage him, labor cannot depress him; misfortune and tragedy cannot break him.
- Those who succeed in life are the men and women who keep at it, who get-to-it and stick-to-it, who do not believe themselves geniuses, but who know that if they will ever accomplish anything they must do it through a determined and persistent work ethic.
- Press On! The difficulties you meet with will resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed; and light will dawn, and shine with increasing clearness on your path.
- I know there is no equal badge of honor or distinction, than that of having a clear mind, a healthy body, a great purpose and the determined will to see it through.
- Why, should we call ourselves men, unless it be to succeed in everything everywhere?
- Successful people know what they want. These men and women that have been conspicuously successful have all had one characteristic in common — doggedness and a rugged persistence of purpose.
- Everybody believes in the determined man or woman.
- People know that it is useless to oppose a man who uses his stumbling-blocks as stepping-stones; who is not afraid of defeat.
- The persistent man never stops to consider whether he is succeeding or not. The only question with him is how to push ahead, to get a little farther along, a little nearer to his goal.
- Three things are necessary for success; first, backbone; second, backbone; and third, backbone.
- A good chance alone is nothing. Education is nothing without strong and vigorous resolution and stamina to make one accomplish something in the world.
- Opposition gives us greater power of resistance. To overcome one barrier gives us greater ability to overcome the next.

- Men and women of success gain strength from God, they count on Him for guidance, but they count on themselves for action, as they pursue their great purpose in life.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Identify one goal you want to accomplish in the next 6 months. Write it down here.

The ability to plan well and anticipate barriers in advance is critical to your success. The better we prepare a backup plan for each obstacle, the quicker we can act to overcome it and keep moving. Below, list every obstacle or barrier that could come up as you work toward this goal, and what you will do if it does.

Possible obstacle	What I will do if it happens

TRY THIS FREE TOOL

Master Action Plan (M.A.P.)

Put your goal, your next steps and your backup plans on one page, and look at it every Monday.

CHAPTER VII

The Degree of "O.O."

"It is the glory of the human will to coincide with the Divine Will. In doing this, a man's Iron Will, instead of being an indulgent selfish power, will be useful in uplifting all of mankind."

— Orison Swett Marden

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- "O.O." stood for "Out and Out," as in out and out for God.
- Without a belief in the Divine, which provides the guideposts for quality living, a man is not a whole man, a woman is not a whole woman.
- The man or woman who travels through life, dismissing the inner voice, unaware of the greater vision for humanity, walks alone and is but a hollow version of their best self.
- A welcoming ear for all that is heavenly provides us with a clearer knowledge of right over wrong.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

It is for each of us to seek out, welcome in, and enthusiastically embrace the opportunities that our Maker has sent; to do our utmost to be our best selves.

What is one way your own will and effort could lift up the people around you this month?

NOTES

PUT THIS VOLUME TO WORK

Keep Going

The answers you wrote in this workbook name the barriers in your way and the goal you're working toward. These free resources help you stay with it until it's done.

- **Goal Setting for Success Course** Turn a big ambition into goals with dates.
- **Growth Roadmap Template** Map where you want to grow and the steps to get there.
- **Personal Development Plan Templates** Step 1 of the 10 Steps series, on putting your goals into a written plan.

THE LEADERSHIP SERIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

VOLUME ONE	Ambition
VOLUME TWO	Character
VOLUME THREE	The Hour of Opportunity
VOLUME FOUR	Diligence: Do It to a Finish
VOLUME FIVE	**Persistence: An Iron Will**

Each volume comes with the ebook, the audio edition and a companion workbook, free at **Leadership-Tools.com**.