



Reflections on James Allen's *As a Man Thinketh*

by

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Preface

This is not the first time I read *As a Man Thinketh*, nor will it be the last. The first time I read it, years ago, I wasn't ready for it. The second time I was laying the ground work without realizing it: I had already been changing myself and seeing and feeling the differences. This book helped me understand why my efforts were working and encouraged me to stay on the right track.

That is why I want to share with you what I learned. I hope this booklet will inspire you to read the original work ([which can be found here on Project Gutenberg](#)), and hearten you if you do not see immediate impact. Instead, keep working on yourself and return to *Thinketh* again, and like me, you may be surprised to see what wakes up inside you.

Let me know how it, and this booklet, works for you by commenting on the [blog post version here!](#)



Central Idea of *Thinketh*

So here is the main point of the book: Your conscious and unconscious thoughts shape your character, circumstances, and even physical health. By working on your thoughts, you can change yourself; you can become what you want to be and have what you want to have.

This is not an easy process. It involves controlling your thoughts and paying attention to their impact on your life and on the lives of others. After all, as the book points out, you get out of life what your efforts earn.

Here are few efforts, pulled from the book and reflected upon, to reap positive results from your life:

1. Input positive things into your life.
2. Think good, positive things, and your life will change because of them, for they influence your actions and your circumstances.
3. Have visions for different areas of your life, and focus on them so they guide your life.

These three points will be explored in separate sections below.



FIRST EFFORT: INPUTS

If you want good and positive things in life, you must make sure the “inputs” into your life are good and positive.

According to *Thinketh*, by default, your inputs are not positive. It takes effort to make sure negative and non-useful things do not come in.

My suggestions?



Read positive material, whether it be blogs or books.



Some of my favorites are (using [Goodreads](#) links):

- ❖ [See You at the Top by Zig Ziglar](#)
- ❖ [Over the Top by Zig Ziglar](#)
- ❖ [I Can, You Can Too! by Mamie McCullough](#)
- ❖ [Get it Together and Remember Where You Put It by Mamie McCullough](#)
- ❖ [How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie](#)
- ❖ [How to Stop Worrying and Start Living by Dale Carnegie](#)

- ❖ [*Success One Day at a Time* by John C. Maxwell](#)
- ❖ [*The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg](#)
- ❖ And, of course – [*As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen](#)

Some that others found useful (but I haven't read yet, need to reread, or haven't finished at the time of this booklet):

- ❖ [*The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale](#)
- ❖ [*Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill](#)
- ❖ [*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey](#)
- ❖ [*Don't Sweat the Small Stuff . . . and It's All Small Stuff* by Richard Carlson](#)
- ❖ [*Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz](#)
- ❖ [*Awaken the Giant Within* by Tony Robbins](#)
- ❖ [*The Greatest Salesman in the World* by Og Mandino](#)



Listen to motivational material while commuting to work.



One podcast I suggest if you are business-inclined. For the last few weeks, I've listened to it going both to and from work:

- ❖ [Dan Miller's 48 Days Podcast](#)

If you are Christian and religious, I found this motivational helpful in the past:

- ❖ [Joel Osteen's Podcast](#)

Some that others found useful (I haven't checked these out, but I hope to someday soon):

- ❖ [The Ziglar Show](#)
- ❖ [Genius Types](#)
- ❖ [Lifhack Live](#)



These were the steps I had been taking before I read *Thinketh* for the second time. So its words fell on ready soil and took root.



SECOND EFFORT: POSITIVE THINKING

If you want good, positive results in life, you must have good, positive thoughts. If you want your outer world to change, your inner world must be in harmony with it. Your inner world affects your outer. Your thoughts must match your actions, and your actions must be aligned with the results you want.

After years of struggling and not getting much of I wanted in life, my mind began to play a lot negative tracks. They told me I didn't deserve good things. They told me I'd never be able to get good things. They implied I was simply a failure in life. And these negative messages seemed stuck on repeat. There are ways to replace these.

Some suggestions:



Start an accomplishment list.



Instead of obsessing over what I did wrong or what is wrong in my life, I began to list a few things I did well or right. If you are already negative about yourself or too hard on

yourself, you won't remember the things you do well or is good in your lives. There is a lot you do well, and there is a lot that is good in your life. It's far better to pay attention to that than the negatives.



Change your point of view on setbacks and upsets.



Once you start seeing the good things you do and have, then you can work on changing your perspective on mistakes, failures, and problems. You can handle them better if you have a positive mental foundation, even if the foundation is somewhat fragile. When you make a mistake or fail at something, ask yourself what you can learn from it. In this way, you have found something positive in the situation. And when you face problems, remember this quote by Norman Vincent Peale:

❖ “When God wants to send you a gift, he wraps it up in a problem. The bigger the gift that God wants to send you, the bigger the problem he wraps it up in.”

Whether or not you are Christian and religious, it is a great reminder to look for the opportunities in the obstacles to your chosen life. It is a way for you to change your perspective and regain a little control.



You will be astounded by how much better and more confident you feel about things, good or bad, if you take those two simple steps. You will be surprised by the energy being positive gives you and how positivity creates more of itself. This is a good start to making sure your inner world matches your actions and your end results.



THIRD EFFORT: DREAMS

You must have a purpose or vision that you are dedicated to, for if the bulk of your thoughts are aimless, you will not get the important things in life you desire. A purpose has power, however. The more energy and effort you put into it, the more you get from it. Not only will you be changed by it, but so will your circumstances and your successes.

After you have made inroads into your inner world through positivity, it is easier to work toward a purpose or vision. In fact, that may be when you see what your purpose really is. You see, for years, I read about and made half-hearted efforts at being a more positive, motivated person. But once I became fed up with who I was and where I was in life, I began to see real change, and that is when I discovered a passion that was already there: I wanted to not only find ways to keep me going this way, but to help others start. Hence, the motivational posts on [my blog](#), and even this free booklet!

Some suggestions to work on your dreams, from someone who, at the time of this writing, is still in the trenches:



Look at what you spend time on now.



Your driving passion may be right under your nose. Look at your inputs in your life. Look at the things that really helped you or made you feel better. Look at areas where you have skills and using those skills bring you joy. Those are good places to start.



Set your goals.



Once you know what you want to work on, write it down. Write down what you want, what you need to do or have to achieve it, and how you will get what you need. Put a deadline on this goal. Even if you have to revise the deadline, it gives you boundaries to work within. It motivates you to start the work and to work harder.



Start immediately.



Once you make your plan, start immediately. For example, I intend to write a book on what I learned from *Thinketh*, but I have enough thoughts and reflections now to make this booklet. If you wait for the perfect time to start, you may never start.

Think of it like a Minimum Viable Product, which is popular in business now. A MVP is where you create a smaller but valuable version of a product, something to whet people's appetites and give them a taste of the better things to come.

Whet your own appetite by creating a smaller or simpler version of what you want so you can have a tangible result in your hands now, something to give you incentive to create the “big one” later.



Epilogue

So, those are three important but simple-to-start lessons I learned from *As a Man Thinketh* by James Allen.

1. Input positive things into your life.
2. Think good, positive things, and your life will change because of them, for they influence your actions and your circumstances.
3. Have visions for different areas of your life, and focus on them so they guide your life.

One last point to remember from *Thinketh!* Your thoughts shape your character. Your character shapes your actions. Your actions shape your results. You are in control of your life!



Author's Note

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Thanks!

J. Lynn Ralston



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