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DISCIPLINE

How often we hear the word discipline. A great many people, especially young people, think of it as meaning punishment. The root of the word means "to teach," not "to punish," and its first meaning is "development of the faculties by instruction and exercise." The broader and more educated a person becomes the more he realizes how valuable is the discipline of life; how valuable in every walk of life, be it in school, in business, or in any calling in which we are engaged.

Nobody wants to be disciplined, yet no one develops character without discipline. There are many kinds of discipline, and just so surely as one is never disciplined in some direction one is weak in that direction. In nearly every person there is some sort of weakness of character, an undeveloped sense of responsibility, an inability for concentrated effort, an inability to forge ahead, a weakness in seeing the other fellow's point of view, of being selfish, disloyal, a gossip, and numerous other inferior qualities, all of which could be remedied through proper discipline; that is, not through so-called punishment but through developing the faculties by teaching and instruction; not through bodily punishment but the kind that touches the heart and stays with you, for discipline that touches the heart and mind builds character.

If it were in our power we would not leave a single boy or girl in this school independent of the need of work. We believe that the discipline of work would be of such value to them that it would be wrong to deprive them of it.

Then there is the discipline of sacrifice. Think of the people we know who have never had it. Those people who grew up with no responsibilities, who are not required to sacrifice themselves in some serious way or other, develop hard, unlovely, narrow characters. The propensity for being kind, willing to help others, being polite and helpful, all comes through discipline. There is almost always a hard, unsympathetic quality in the character of people whose lives have gone on smoothly. No one can welcome the discipline of grief or suffering. That is asking too much, but what wonders it works in the characters of those who are compelled to pass through it if taken in the right spirit.

And when the discipline of trouble and anxiety are added to grief and suffering, unless the weakness has been permitted too grow strong, out of the trial or discipline comes strength and sympathy, patience and courage. There are a lot of people, a lot of students, who rebel against the effort to discipline them, who sulk, or fight or whine. The discipline is just as strong in the opposite and wrong direction for they get just as much bad discipline and none of the good.

You have to add self-discipline to life discipline, self-training we may say, for one must be willing to be taught and trained by life, by experiences; accepting the good instead of perpetually kicking and complaining, if one is to get the good that comes through work, grief, sacrifice, suffering, or any other of the experiences of life. We will say, too, that when there is a sufficiency of self-discipline other discipline of any character is superfluous.

We are challenged today to overcome worry through properly disciplining the mind. The matter of discipline enters into every phase of life, and those who are wise will studiously avoid permitting anything to enter their lives at school or throughout their career to make them miserable. Fear kills hope; worry and anxiety crush confidence, ruin the power to concentrate on any given subject and really paralyzes achievement.

Young people, while you are forming character, forming your lives, discipline yourselves against fear, worry—dominate your environment. Our greatest enemies live in our brain only, in our imagination, in our wrong ideas of life. We should be conquerors instead of slaves and there is no slavery comparable to a conviction that makes us cowards. Foolish ignorance mars the happiness of a lot of people who think there is something that is always working against them and trying to harm them. Cut out these erroneous feelings whenever you feel this foe. Discipline yourselves and overcome the greatest enemy called fear and let it not gain control of your imagination, for that is all fear and worry amount to—they are imagination—and let nothing prevent you from getting the most out of your lives at present.

The greatest enemy of the human race, the twin

(Continued on page 4)