

## SAMUEL SMILES PRESENTATION, BATH

*SELF-HELP* PUBLISHED SAME DAY AS THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

TITANIC OF A BOOK THAT WAS SUNK BY THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY'S WISH TO DEBUNK THE EARNESTNESS OF THE VICTORIAN WORK ETHIC.

ONLY RELATIVELY RECENTLY HAS SMILES COME BACK INTO APPRECIATION, AND I'VE CERTAINLY DONE MY BIT TO HELP THAT.

FIRST TALKS TO WORKING MEN. WHAT WAS THE TITLE?

SMILES' WORK BUILT ON THE ROWSING EXAMPLE AND ANECDOTE TO INSPIRE READERS

GOT THOUSANDS OF LETTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD FROM PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES HAD CHANGED AFTER READING THE BOOK

ONE MAN, A DRUGGIST, BROUGHT SMILES INTO 'SILENT PARTNERSHIP' WITH HIM, PUTTING HIS NAME ON HIS STORE. HE PROSPERED

BESTSELLER IN JAPAN AND ITALY,

GLADSTONE PRAISED IT

ORISON SWETT MARDEN, THE 'SAMUEL SMILES OF AMERICA', FOUND THE BOOK IN AN ATTIC WHEN YOUNG

WHAT WAS IT IN THE BOOK THAT GRABBED PEOPLE?

THE IDEA THAT *NO ONE IS BORN SUCCESSFUL*.

EVEN NOW, PEOPLE FIND IT HARD TO APPRECIATE THAT, NO MATTER WHAT OUR BACKGROUND, SUCCESS OR FAILURE IS NEVER PREORDAINED.

IN SMILES' TIME, WHEN SOCIAL MOBILITY WAS NOT AS GREAT, HIS IDEA THAT WE COULD ALL SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAME OUR WAY AND DO SOMETHING REMARKABLE, LIT A FIRE IN MANY PEOPLE'S MINDS.

SECOND: IT IS MUCH MORE INSTRUCTIVE TO LOOK AT WHAT PEOPLE WERE DOING *BEFORE* THEY ACHIEVED RENOWN OR FAME.

EVERY 'GREAT MAN' WAS ONCE A NORMAL PERSON, HAVING TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS EARLY IN THEIR CAREER, AND WORK LIKE A DOG OVER MANY YEARS TO SHOW THEIR WORTH.

SMILES' EXAMPLES OF THE GREAT ARE ONLY TO HIGHLIGHT THE YEARS WHEN THEY WERE NOT GREAT.

MESSAGE: WE ARE ALL CAPABLE OF DOING REMARKABLE THINGS. THERE IS NOT MYSTIQUE AROUND PERSONAL GREATNESS

THE RECIPE: LOOK TO THE EXAMPLE OF OTHERS, SEIZE SMALL OPPORTUNITIES, THEN WORK, WORK, WORK.

## A SCIENCE OF SUCCESS EMERGING

### THE TEN YEAR RULE BEARS OUT EVERYTHING SMILES SAID

#### 10 YEARS OR 10 THOUSAND HOURS

While the idea of ‘genius’ would have us believe that some people bypass these laws, the actual research into top achievers gives us a more intriguing truth. In the early 1970s, Nobel Prize winners Herbert Simon and William Chase made a study of top international chess players and noticed that none had reached their peak without a decade or so of intense study and practice. This ‘ten-year rule’, as they called it, was later confirmed by studies of people in a range of fields including maths, music, swimming, tennis and literature.

John Hayes, a psychologist at Carnegie Mellon University, noticed that there always seemed to be “ten years of silence”, a period during which remarkable people sift and refine ideas before they can make a real public impact (Freud and Martin Luther are good examples). The creativity researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi found that people rarely become truly creative in their field until they have first assimilated all its rules and passed all its tests – a process which takes at least a decade. In short, the view of achievement based on a belief in ‘genius’ and ‘talent’ – in which a glorious few are swept into the top ranks of their field without great effort – has crumbled, replaced by an appreciation of the role of time, work and environment in their success.

It is a mistake to look at a famous achiever and think, ‘I could never do that’. Instead, we should look to what they were doing *before* they became well-known, and how long they were in that phase. By embracing the law of lead time, we can productively relax into our life’s work, not deflected or weakened by thoughts of how long it will take.

**QUITE LACKING IN THE CURRENT FIELD OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT IS AN APPRECIATION OF *TIME* IN ACHIEVEMENT. SMILES RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD, AND SHOWED THROUGH HIS EXAMPLE, THAT SUCCESS TAKES DECADES. YOU MAY BE ABLE TO CHANGE YOUR STATE OF MIND IN ‘7 DAYS’, BUT GENUINE SUCCESS IS FIRST IMAGINED, THEN BUILT STEP BY STEP OVER MANY YEARS**

an awareness of how long it generally takes to master something, and the span of time we may have at our disposal to put in that effort, is surely fundamental to our understanding of how to live the great life.

## ALSO A **PHILOSOPHY OF SUCCESS**

### INFLECTION POINTS

PEOPLE SURPRISE, NOT JUST OTHERS BUT THEMSELVES  
HIS EMPHASIS ON CHARACTER. AS THE RECENT CRISIS SHOWS, YOU CAN CERTAINLY GO FAR WITHOUT IT, BUT AT SOME POINT WILL ALWAYS GET TRIPPED UP

### THERE IS EXTRAORDINARY UNUSED CAPACITY

AS ONE READER OF SELF-HELP SAID IN A LETTER TO SMILES, BEFORE HE HAD BELIEVED THAT LIFE WAS SOMETHING TO GET THROUGH WITH AS LITTLE PAIN OR BOTHER AS POSSIBLE. NOW, HE SAW HIS LIFE AS RIPE WITH POSSIBILITIES

### SUCCESS AS A *DISCIPLINE*:

THE LATEST RESEARCH FINDINGS, YES, BUT ALSO NEED TO ASK WHAT SUCCESS ITSELF IS, AND WHY TWO PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR RESOURCES, ONE PROSPERS AND THE OTHER DOES NOT.

### TRAJECTORY OF A LIFE

#### WHAT OF SMILES OWN TRAJECTORY?

WHEN YOU READ HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, YOU REALISE NEVER A BIG RISK TAKER

HAD TO SUPPORT A FAMILY, GAVE UP ON MEDICINE THEN JOURNALISM AS THEY DIDN'T BRING IN ENOUGH MONEY

OUT OF NECESSITY TOOK THE JOB OF A RAILWAY EXECUTIVE, BUT IN THIS WAS THE SEED OF HIS FAME, AS IT GAVE HIM VALUABLE EXPERIENCE FOR THE WRITING OF HIS *LIFE OF GEORGE STEPHENSON*, A SUCCESS THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR *SELF-HELP*.

ALSO A GREAT ORGANISER OF HIS TIME. WROTE MAINLY IN THE EVENINGS. HE SEIZED HIS OPPORTUNITIES

### FINAL:

COMPARED TO PEOPLE IN SMILES' TIME, WHOSE POSSIBILITIES WERE RESTRICTED BY THEIR SOCIAL CLASS AND POSITION AND MEANS, WE ARE INCREDIBLY LUCKY.

MORE THAN HALF OF THE PEOPLE SMILES WROTE ABOUT HAD NOT HAD ACCESS TO A PROPER EDUCATION.

TODAY, MOST PEOPLE IN THE WEST DO.

THERE ARE ALSO MANY MORE 'HELPING HANDS' TO HELP US ACHIEVE OUR DREAMS TODAY, BE THEY CREDIT, CHARITABLE SUPPORT – AND MUCH BIGGER AND MORE GLOBAL MARKETS FOR ANYTHING OF VALUE THAT WE PRODUCE.

BUT THERE IS ONE OTHER THING THAT WE GENERALLY HAVE MUCH MORE OF TODAY THAN PEOPLE IN SMILES' ERA: *TIME*.

IN 1812, THE YEAR OF SMILES HIS BIRTH, LIFE EXPECTANCY IN ENGLAND WAS...

A CHILD BORN A CENTURY LATER, ...  
TODAY?

SMILES HIMSELF LIVE INTO HIS 90s,  
WITH TODAY'S BETTER MEDICAL CARE AND DIET, A SIMILAR MAN WOULD  
PROBABLY LIVE ANOTHER ... YEARS.