

How to Win Friends

Influence People

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LINCOLN THE UNKNOWN

**LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT
WELL KNOWN PEOPLE**

FIVE MINUTE BIOGRAPHIES

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A SHORT-CUT TO DISTINCTION

BY LOWELL THOMAS

ON a cold, winter night last January, two thousand five hundred men and women thronged into the grand ballroom of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York. Every available seat was filled by half past seven. At eight o'clock, the eager crowd was still pouring in. The spacious balcony was soon jammed; presently even standing space was at a premium and hundreds of people, tired after navigating a day in business, stood up for an hour and a half that night to witness—what?

A fashion show?

A six-day bicycle race or a personal appearance of Clark Gable?

No. These people had been lured there by a newspaper ad. Two evenings previously, they had picked up a copy of the New York *Sun* and found a full-page announcement staring them in the face.

“Increase Your Income
Learn to Speak Effectively
Prepare for Leadership”

Old stuff? Yes, but believe it or not, in the most sophisticated town on earth, during a depression with twenty per cent of the population on relief, twenty-five hundred people left their homes and hustled to the Pennsylvania Hotel in response to that ad.

A SHORT-CUT

And the ad appeared—remember this—not in a tabloid sheet, but in the most conservative evening paper in town—the New York *Sun*; and the people who responded were of the upper economic strata—executives, employers, and professional men with incomes ranging from two thousand to fifty thousand a year.

These men and women had come to hear the opening gun of an ultra-modern, ultra-practical course in “Effective Speaking and Influencing Men in Business”—a course given by the Dale Carnegie Institute of Effective Speaking and Human Relations.

Why were they there, these two thousand five hundred business men and women?

Because of a sudden hunger for more education due to the depression?

Apparently not, for this same course had been playing to packed houses in New York City every season for the past twenty-four years. During that time, more than fifteen thousand business and professional men had been trained by Dale Carnegie. Even large, skeptical, conservative organizations such as the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, Brooklyn Union Gas Company, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and the New York Telephone Company have had this training conducted in their own offices for the benefit of their members and executives.

The fact that these men, ten or twenty years after leaving grade school, high school, or college, come and take this training is a glaring commentary on the shocking deficiencies of our educational system.

What do adults really want to study? That is an important question; and, in order to answer it, the University of Chicago, the American Association for Adult Education, and the United Y. M. C. A. Schools made a survey that cost \$25,000 and covered two years.

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That survey revealed that the prime interest of adults is health. It also revealed that their second interest is in developing skill in human relationships; they want to learn the technique of getting along with and influencing other people. They don't want to become public speakers; and they don't want to listen to a lot of high-sounding talk about psychology—they want suggestions that they can use immediately in business, in social contacts, and in the home.

So that was what adults wanted to study, was it?

"All right," said the people making the survey. "Fine. If that is what they want, we'll give it to them."

Looking around for a textbook, they discovered that no working manual had ever been written to help people solve their daily problems in human relationships.

Here was a fine kettle of fish! For hundreds of years, learned volumes had been written on Greek and Latin and higher mathematics—topics about which the average adult doesn't give two hoots. But on the one subject on which he has a thirst for knowledge, a veritable passion for guidance and help—nothing!

This explains the presence of twenty-five hundred eager adults crowding into the grand ballroom of the Hotel Pennsylvania in response to a newspaper advertisement. Here, apparently, at last was the thing for which they had long been seeking.

Back in high school and college, they had pored over books, believing that knowledge alone was the open sesame to financial and professional rewards.

But a few years in the rough-and-tumble of business and professional life had brought sharp disillusionment. They had seen some of the most important business successes won by men who possessed, in addition to their knowledge, the ability to talk well, win people to their way of thinking, and "sell" themselves and their ideas.

They soon discovered that if one aspired to wear the

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captain's cap and navigate the ship of business, personality and the ability to talk are more important than a knowledge of Latin verbs or a sheepskin from Harvard.

The advertisement in the *New York Sun* promised that the meeting in the Hotel Pennsylvania would be highly entertaining. It was.

Eighteen men who had taken the course were marshaled in front of the loud speaker—and fifteen of them were given precisely seventy-five seconds each to tell his story. Only seventy-five seconds of talk, then "bang" went the gavel, and the chairman shouted, "Time! Next speaker!"

The affair moved with the speed of a herd of buffalo thundering across the plains. Spectators stood for an hour and a half to watch the performance.

The speakers were a cross section of American business life: a chain-store executive; a baker; the president of a trade association; two bankers; a truck salesman; a chemical salesman; an insurance man; the secretary of a brick manufacturers' association; an accountant; a dentist; an architect; a whiskey salesman; a Christian Science practitioner; a druggist who had come from Indianapolis to New York to take the course; a lawyer who had come from Havana, in order to prepare himself to give one important three-minute speech.

The first speaker bore the Gaelic name of Patrick J. O'Haire. Born in Ireland, he attended school for only four years, drifted to America, worked as a mechanic, then as a chauffeur.

At forty, his family was growing up, he needed more money; so he tried to sell automobile trucks. Suffering from an inferiority complex that, as he put it, was eating his heart out, he had to walk up and down in front of an office half a dozen times before he could summon up enough courage to open the door. He was so dis-

couraged as a salesman that he was thinking of going back to work with his hands in a machine shop, when one day he received a letter inviting him to an organization meeting of the Dale Carnegie Course in Effective Speaking.

He didn't want to attend. He feared he would have to associate with a lot of college men, that he would be out of place.

His despairing wife insisted that he go, saying, "It may do you some good, Pat. God knows you need it." He went down to the place where the meeting was to be held and stood on the sidewalk for five minutes before he could generate enough self-confidence to enter the room.

The first few times he tried to speak, he was dizzy with fear. As the weeks drifted by, he lost all fear of audiences and soon found that he loved to talk—the bigger the crowd, the better. And he also lost his fear of individuals. He lost his fear of his own customers. His income mounted and skyrocketed. Today he is one of the star salesmen in New York City. That night at the Pennsylvania Hotel, Patrick O'Haire stood in front of two thousand five hundred people and told a gay, rollicking story of his achievements. Wave after wave of laughter swept over the audience. Few professional speakers could have equaled his performance.

The next speaker, Godfrey Meyer, was a gray-headed banker, the father of eleven children. The first time he attempted to speak in class, he was literally struck dumb. His mind refused to function. His story is a vivid illustration of how leadership gravitates to the man who can talk.

He works on Wall Street and for twenty-five years he has been living in Clifton, New Jersey. During that time, he had taken no active part in community affairs and knew perhaps five hundred people.

Shortly after he had enrolled in the Carnegie Course, he received his tax bill and was infuriated at what he considered unjust charges. Ordinarily, he would have sat at home and fumed, or taken it out in grouching to his neighbors. But instead, he put on his hat that night, walked into town meeting, and blew off his steam in public.

As a result of that talk of indignation, the citizens of Clifton, New Jersey, urged him to run for the town council. So for weeks he went from one meeting to another, denouncing waste and municipal extravagance.

There were ninety-six candidates in the field. When the ballots were counted, lo, Godfrey Meyer's name led all the rest. Almost overnight, he became a public figure among the forty thousand people in his community. As a result of his talks, he made eighty times more friends in six weeks than he had been able to do previously in twenty-five years.

And his salary as councilman meant that he got a return of one thousand per cent a year on his investment.

The third speaker, the head of a large national association of food manufacturers, told how he had been unable to stand up and express his ideas at meetings of a board of directors.

As a result of learning to think on his feet, two astonishing things happened. He was soon made president of his association and, in that capacity, he was obliged to address meetings all over the United States. Excerpts from his talks were put on the Associated Press wires and printed in newspapers and trade magazines throughout the country.

In two years, after learning to speak, he received more free publicity for his company and its products than he had been able to get previously by a quarter of a million dollars spent in direct advertising. This

speaker admitted that he had formerly hesitated to telephone some of the more important business executives in lower Manhattan and invite them to lunch with him. But as a result of the prestige he had acquired by his talks, these same men now telephoned him and invited him to lunch and apologized to him for encroaching on his time.

The ability to speak is a short cut to distinction. It puts a man in the limelight, raises him head and shoulders above the crowd. And the man who can speak acceptably is usually given credit for an ability out of all proportion to what he really possesses.

A movement for adult education is sweeping over the nation today; and the most spectacular force in that movement is Dale Carnegie, a man who has listened to and criticized more talks by adults than has any other man in captivity. According to a recent cartoon by "Believe-It-or-Not" Ripley, he has criticized 150,000 speeches. If that grand total doesn't impress you, remember that it means one talk for almost every day that has passed since Columbus discovered America. Or, to put it in other words, if all the men who have spoken before him had used only three minutes and had appeared before him in succession, it would have taken a solid year, listening day and night, to hear them all.

Dale Carnegie's own career, filled with sharp contrasts, is a striking example of what a man can accomplish when he is obsessed with an original idea and afire with enthusiasm.

Born on a Missouri farm ten miles from a railway, he never saw a street car until he was twelve years old; yet today, at forty-six, he is familiar with the far-flung corners of the earth, everywhere from Hong Kong to Hammerfest; and, at one time, he approached closer to the North Pole than Admiral Byrd's headquarters at Little America were to the South Pole.

This Missouri lad who once picked strawberries and cut cockleburs for five cents an hour is now paid a dollar a minute for training the executives of large corporations in the art of self-expression.

This erstwhile cowboy who once punched cattle and branded calves and rode fences out in western South Dakota later went to London and put on shows under the patronage of his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales.

This chap who was a total failure the first half-dozen times that he tried to speak in public later became my personal manager. Much of my success has been due to training under Dale Carnegie.

Young Carnegie had to struggle for an education, for hard luck was always battering away at the old farm in northwest Missouri with a flying tackle and a body slam. Year after year, the "102" River rose and drowned the corn and swept away the hay. Season after season, the fat hogs sickened and died from cholera, the bottom fell out of the market for cattle and mules, and the bank threatened to foreclose the mortgage.

Sick with discouragement, the family sold out and bought another farm near the State Teachers' College at Warrensburg, Missouri. Board and room could be had in town for a dollar a day; but young Carnegie couldn't afford it. So he stayed on the farm and commuted on horseback three miles to college each day. At home, he milked the cows, cut the wood, fed the hogs, and studied his Latin verbs by the light of a coal-oil lamp until his eyes blurred and he began to nod.

Even when he got to bed at midnight, he set the alarm for three o'clock. His father bred pedigreed Duroc-Jersey hogs—and there was danger, during the bitter cold nights, of the young pigs' freezing to death; so they were put in a basket, covered with a gunny sack, and set behind the kitchen stove. True to their nature,

the pigs demanded a hot meal at three A.M. So when the alarm went off, Dale Carnegie crawled out of the blankets, took the basket of pigs out to their mother, waited for them to nurse, and then brought them back to the warmth of the kitchen stove.

There were six hundred students in State Teachers' College; and Dale Carnegie was one of the isolated half dozen who couldn't afford to board in town. He was ashamed of the poverty that made it necessary for him to ride back to the farm and milk the cows every night. He was ashamed of his coat, which was too tight, and his trousers, which were too short. Rapidly developing an inferiority complex, he looked about for some short cut to distinction. He soon saw that there were certain groups in college that enjoyed influence and prestige—the football and baseball players and the chaps who won the debating and public-speaking contests.

Realizing that he had no flair for athletics, he decided to win one of the speaking contests. He spent months preparing his talks. He practiced as he sat in the saddle galloping to college and back; he practiced his speeches as he milked the cows; and then he mounted a bale of hay in the barn and with great gusto and gestures harangued the frightened pigeons about the necessity of halting Japanese immigration.

But in spite of all his earnestness and preparation, he met with defeat after defeat. He was eighteen at the time—sensitive and proud. He became so discouraged, so depressed that he even thought of suicide. And then suddenly he began to win, not one contest but every speaking contest in college.

Other students pleaded with him to train them; and they won also.

Graduating from college, he started selling correspondence courses to the ranchers among the sand hills of western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming.

In spite of all his boundless energy and enthusiasm, he couldn't make the grade. He became so discouraged that he went to his hotel room in Alliance, Nebraska, in the middle of the day, threw himself across the bed, and wept with despair. He longed to go back to college, he longed to retreat from the harsh battle of life; but he couldn't. So he resolved to go to Omaha and get another job. He didn't have the money for a railroad ticket so he traveled on a freight train, feeding and watering two carloads of wild horses in return for his passage. Landing in South Omaha, he got a job selling bacon and soap and lard for Armour and Company. His territory was up among the Bad Lands and the cow and Indian country of western South Dakota. He covered his territory by freight train and on stage coach and on horseback and slept in pioneer hotels where the only partition between the rooms was a sheet of muslin. He studied books on salesmanship, rode bucking bronchos, played poker with squaw men, and learned how to collect money. When an inland storekeeper couldn't pay cash for the bacon and hams he had ordered, Dale Carnegie would take a dozen pairs of shoes off his shelf, sell the shoes to the railroad men, and forward the receipts to Armour and Company.

He would often ride a freight train a hundred miles a day. When the train stopped to unload freight, he would dash uptown, see three or four merchants, get his orders; and when the whistle blew, he would dash down the street again lickety-split and swing onto the train while it was moving.

Within two years, he had taken an unproductive territory that stood in the twenty-fifth place and boosted it to first place among all the twenty-nine car routes leading out of South Omaha. Armour and Company offered to promote him, saying: "You have achieved what seemed impossible." But he refused the promotion

and resigned—resigned, went to New York, studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and toured the country playing the role of Dr. Hartley in *Polly of the Circus*.

He would never be a Booth or a Barrymore. He had the good sense to recognize that. So back he went to sales work again, dispensing automobile trucks for the Packard Motor Car Company.

He knew nothing about machinery and cared nothing about it. Dreadfully unhappy, he had to scourge himself to his task each day. He longed to have time to study, to write the books he had dreamed about writing back in college. So he resigned. He was going to spend his days writing stories and novels and support himself by teaching in a night school.

Teaching what? As he looked back and evaluated his college work, he saw that his training in public speaking had done more to give him confidence, courage, poise, and the ability to meet and deal with people in business than had all the rest of his college courses put together. So he urged the Y. M. C. A. schools in New York to give him a chance to conduct courses in public speaking for business men.

What? Make orators out of business men? Absurd. They knew. They had tried such courses—and they had always failed.

When they refused to pay him a salary of two dollars a night, he agreed to teach on a commission basis and take a percentage of the net profits—if there were any profits to take. And inside of three years they were paying him thirty dollars a night on that basis—instead of two.

The course grew. Other "Y's" heard of it, then other cities. Dale Carnegie soon became a glorified circuit rider covering New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and later London and Paris. All the textbooks were too