

# Og Mandino

Bestselling author of  
*THE GREATEST SALESMAN IN THE WORLD*

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## The Greatest Mystery in the World

# THE GREATEST MYSTERY IN THE WORLD

Og Mandino

FAWCETT CREST • NEW YORK

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A Fawcett Crest Book

Published by The Ballantine Publishing Group

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<http://www.randomhouse.com>

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 97-97150

ISBN 0-449-22503-8

Manufactured in the United States of America

First Hardcover Edition: April 1997

First Mass Market Edition: April 1998

10 9 8



Dear reader . . . you are now holding in your hands what can be your guide to a better life. Use your imagination and think of this book and its message as if it were a unique ladder constructed in heaven, one which will take you high above the failure and futility you have endured in the past until you eventually reach a new plateau filled with joy and pride and success.

The advice and guidance contained on each rung of this special heavenly ladder is certain to assist and guide you to reach for the next rung, and the next until you finally have the know-how and motivation to transform your life into all you have dreamed it could be. . . .

At last . . . at long last . . . your life and your future are in your hands alone. You now possess the power, the knowledge, and the means to make all your tomorrows a special and unique heaven on earth.

You deserve a better way of life. At last your future is in your hands. Live it well!

—a letter found among the effects of  
Og Mandino's old friend Simon Potter

By Og Mandino:

THE GREATEST SALESMAN IN THE WORLD  
THE GREATEST SALESMAN IN THE WORLD,  
PART II: THE END OF THE STORY  
THE GREATEST MIRACLE IN THE WORLD  
THE GREATEST SUCCESS IN THE WORLD  
THE GREATEST SECRET IN THE WORLD  
THE GIFT OF ACABAR (WITH BUDDY KAYE)  
THE CHRIST COMMISSION  
THE CHOICE  
OG MANDINO'S UNIVERSITY OF SUCCESS  
MISSION: SUCCESS!  
A BETTER WAY TO LIVE  
THE RETURN OF THE RAGPICKER  
A TREASURY OF SUCCESS UNLIMITED  
U.S. IN A NUTSHELL  
CYCLES  
THE TWELFTH ANGEL\*  
THE SPELLBINDER'S GIFT\*  
SECRETS FOR SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS\*  
THE GREATEST MYSTERY IN THE WORLD\*

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For my grandson . . .

BENNETT LEWIS MANDINO

With love . . .

Compared to what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are dampened, our drafts are checked, and we are making use of only a small part of our mental and physical resources.

—*William James*



THE GREATEST  
MYSTERY IN THE  
WORLD



*From Og Mandino, the most widely read inspirational author in the world, come these deeply touching accounts of the path to self-fulfillment and self-enlightenment and the bumps along the way.*

Published by Fawcett Books.

## THE TWELFTH ANGEL

John Harding had it all: a wonderful wife and son and a high-powered career. Then, in a terrible twist of fate, he loses his wife and son in a tragic car accident and retreats to his small New England hometown, a broken man on the brink of suicide. When an old friend appears on his doorstep with kind words and a request that John manage the Angels, his old Little League team, John agrees, almost against his will. Drawn into a relationship with his most hapless young player, John discovers a wisdom in living that he thought had slipped beyond his grasp forever.

## THE SPELLBINDER'S GIFT

The miraculous story of a loving couple, their never-to-be-forgotten friend, a little girl, and a very special teddy bear. Retired from his long, successful career as an agent to motivational speakers, Bart Manning thought he was enjoying his retirement until he found himself drawn back—as if by a higher power—to the little office he had never given up. Then he discovered Patrick Donne, a motivational speaker the likes of which he had never heard before. This ordinary man of extraordinary wisdom would teach Bart that even tragedy and sorrow could be turned to a higher purpose.

## SECRETS FOR SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

Here is the heartwarming daily journal of Og Mandino, world-famous speaker and author, a special gift to all his friends and fans. Whether he is writing in his old New Hampshire farmhouse on a snowy winter day or in a hotel room just about anywhere in the country, whether he is refilling the bird feeder or comforting a sick friend, Og weaves his secrets of success into the fabric of his life and the pages of this book.

Living with Og and listening to his thoughts as the rich days unfold, we once again discover the sheer joy of wondering what tomorrow will bring, and the courage to banish regrets over the often painful past.

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Fawcett Books.

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# I



*M*emories. I can still hear his gentle but deep voice saying the words as if they had been spoken just this morning instead of so very long ago.

“How our earth was created and hangs suspended in space or how our minds and bodies repeatedly perform their daily miraculous functions is most difficult to comprehend but the greatest mystery still confronting mankind is that despite all the tools that God provided, both mental and physical, so much of humanity continues to stumble along the rocky paths of failure and sorrow, poverty, and despair.”

More than twenty years have passed since I



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first heard that wise declaration and yet I am certain that the sentence, despite its length, is being quoted to you verbatim. It was spoken by a wise old man, Simon Potter, whom I first met one snowy morning in the parking lot behind the building in north Chicago that housed the magazine I headed, *Success Unlimited*. He was feeding pigeons from a large brown paper bag as I slowly pulled into the lot and our initial brief greeting that morning was the beginning of a relationship that has affected my entire life.

Following that first meeting, in the mid-seventies, Simon and I soon became close friends. Very often, after a long and pressure-packed day of trying to run a national publication, with all of its challenges, I would walk wearily through the dingy parking lot, enter the old stone building across the street, climb the stairway to his second-story apartment, number 21, and visit with the old man before the long drive to my suburban home. His wise advice and counsel, always served with a glass of white sherry, often helped me to relax and see my problems in a more rational light, and I'm certain that his loving thoughts and wisdom have often been reflected in my work and how I've tried to deal with the world since those memorable days, long ago.



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Simon's tiny three-room apartment, clean and dust-free, had one distinguishing feature. Books! Books everywhere, not only crammed into several huge wooden bookcases but also piled tall and neat in columns against every available wall. The old gentleman proudly explained that they were his lifetime collection of "hand of God" books and in response to my puzzled expression he said that he truly believed that certain books were written with God's hand resting lightly upon the author's so that the words inscribed on paper or parchment were being presented directly to us containing God's principles, guidelines, and wise advice on how to lead a better life.

I am six feet tall but Simon was at least a head taller and although he was seventy-eight years old he also told me he was still a working man . . . self-employed as a "human ragpicker." He said that he spent most of his days and nights searching out people who had made a failure of their lives and found themselves on humanity's junk pile of misery and despair. Whenever he discovered such lost souls, and they were everywhere, he exclaimed, he would use his "hand of God" books to teach them how to regain their hope and self-esteem.

When Simon learned that I was not only an

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editor but had been fortunate enough to publish several books including a bestseller, *The Greatest Salesman in the World*, he told me that he had been working for years on writing a simple piece which contained short but powerful rules of life necessary for one's success. He admitted that he had used many of his "hand of God" books as his reference source and so he had been considering calling his finished work "A Memorandum from God." He even dropped hints, during several of my visits, that perhaps I might consider using his small piece in one of my future books so that it would be read by far greater numbers than he could ever possibly reach.

As our friendship strengthened during the summer and fall of 1974, Simon began addressing me as "Mister Og." In long discussions, where I did far more listening than talking, we covered a wide range of subjects from the benefits of good self-help books to the sorry state of our world. It was, by far, the most memorable time of my life and yet, for reasons I still do not understand, I never mentioned my relationship with Simon to anyone at the office nor did I ever say anything to my wife, Bette, about this giant who was gradually teaching me how to live a more fulfilling life.

Then, on a Monday morning I shall never for-

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get, my world suddenly shifted. I had been away from the magazine for several weeks, promoting *The Greatest Salesman in the World* on a nationwide tour, and I arrived at my office very early in order to tackle the expected backlog of challenges. On my desk was a large brown envelope, addressed to me, with its postage stamps still uncanceled. Upon reading the words "from an old ragpicker" in the upper left-hand corner, I immediately dropped the package and raced out of the office. When I reached the parking lot I dashed between cars, crossed the street, and entered Simon's old apartment building. I hurried up the stairs, ran down the hallway to his apartment, and began pounding on his door. Finally it was opened by a plump woman in a dingy robe with a small child in her arms. When I asked for Simon Potter she began closing the door. She said she didn't know any Simon Potter and in the four years she had lived in the apartment she had never seen the man I described to her.

I didn't know what to say or think. Finally she slammed the door in my face and I retreated slowly down the stairs. In the lobby I turned to a downward stairway and, luckily, found the building's janitor sitting next to the furnace reading a newspaper. He said he had worked there



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for eleven years and had never seen anyone answering to my description of Simon. In the next several hours of anguish I checked with the police station on Foster Avenue, Cook County Hospital, Missing Persons, and even the county morgue on West Polk. None had any record of a person fitting Simon's description. With a heavy pain in my chest I finally returned to my office and closed the door. I slowly opened the large brown envelope and read Simon's message to me. Enclosed, he wrote, was "The God Memorandum." He asked that I apply its wisdom to my own life for a hundred days and if it worked for me perhaps I might consider sharing it with the world in one of my books. I was not to worry about him. He was embarking on a special mission and although we would not see each other for a long time he wanted me to know that he loved me and would pray for me. I sat staring down at my hands for the longest time after finishing his letter. Then I picked up "The God Memorandum" and read it slowly. It was everything I expected and more and, like Simon's spoken words to me, it became a map by which I have tried to navigate my life, even to this day.

Not until several months after Simon's mysterious disappearance did I finally tell everything to



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Bette one evening as we were preparing for bed. She sat close to me, on my side of the bed, and listened intently for more than an hour, without interrupting, as I related all I could remember about my experiences with the old ragpicker.

Finally she grasped my hand firmly and asked, "In your search for him, did anyone . . . anyone . . . admit to ever seeing this man? Anyone in your office? Anyone in the neighborhood?"

I shook my head. "No one. It's as if he never existed except for me."

Bette kissed my cheek, rose, walked around me, and removed an old dictionary from the bookcase against the wall. She turned several pages before pausing and looking toward me before she began reading, "Angel . . . a spiritual being superior to man in power and intelligence . . . an attendant and messenger of God . . . any representative of God, as a prophet or teacher."

She replaced the book, walked slowly around to her side of the bed, pulled back the covers and said softly, "Good night, darling."

In my next book, *The Greatest Miracle in the World*, I told the Simon Potter story completely and, of course, shared "The God Memorandum" with my readers. I am so proud that the book has been in print, now, for more than twenty years and is used