

THE BIG IDEAS

Turning on the Light
It's time.

Make Yourself Do It
Until it becomes second nature.

Giving Our Best
To each moment.

Your Mental Garden
Tend it well!

Let Life Flow
And all is good.

Mental Hygiene
How's yours?

Look for Good
Instead of evil.

Our Good
We must share it.

The Scent of Fear
You need a bath?

Becoming an Outlet
For all things good.

"Without faith it is impossible for one to do his best or get the most out of life. This does not mean faith in the personality only, but faith in the ocean of Life Itself."

~ Ernest Holmes



The Art of Life

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"God has been called a thousand names, but you and I, in the discussions which follow, are to think of God as Life, the presence and power in everything, which makes everything what it is. Let us use the word "Life" to symbolize everything God means to us; just the simple word "Life." Let us, then, see if we cannot discover what Life means to us and just how it operates through us. Let us discuss who and what the Self really is."

~ Ernest Holmes from *The Art of Life*

Ernest Holmes.

We have a Note on another one of his great little books, *Creative Mind and Success*. Holmes founded the Science of Mind churches and provides an inspiring picture of what we can become as we connect to Life.

His books are packed with wisdom on how we can connect to and express the Divine Presence within each of us.

For now, it's time to check out some of my favorite Big Ideas. Let's jump right in, shall we?

TURNING ON THE LIGHT

"You are using the Law of Life every time you think. No matter how long you may have been using It wrongly in your ignorance, the very day, that hour, yes the very moment, you begin to use this Power rightly, the effect of having used It wrongly will pass from your experience. Does it make any difference how long a room has been dark when you introduce a light; how long the earth has been parched when refreshing rain come to bring new life, a new seed time and a new harvest to the fields?"

Reminds me of Vernon Howard's similar wisdom in his great book *The Power of Your Supermind* (see Notes) where he tells us: "It is a mistake for anyone to think he has lived too long in his old, unsatisfactory ways to make the great change. If you switch on the light in a dark room, it makes no difference how long it was dark because the light will still shine. Be teachable. That is the whole secret."

Now, on one hand, I *love* this idea.

The fact is, when we switch on the light, the room will light up—regardless of how long it's been dark.

On the other hand, though, it *does* matter how long the room has been dark.

The fact is, the room might need some general cleaning up, dusting and all that jazz.

And, so it is with our lives.

When we stay teachable and switch on the light of our higher consciousness, we have the opportunity to step forward with a new sense of joy and enthusiasm.

*"The ancients said that
God's center is everywhere
and His circumference no-
where."*

~ Ernest Holmes

And...

If we've been living for years and decades with bad habits, the reality is that we have some cleaning up to do.

We need to diligently, patiently, persistently and playfully continue to live from our higher awareness day-in and day-out so our new "state experience" becomes a new "stage of development."

(We talk about states and traits a lot more in the Note on Ken Wilber. Check it!)

MAKE YOURSELF DO IT

"You must become the master of your own thinking. This is the only way you will realize freedom and joy. Therefore, you will have to turn your thoughts away from lack, want and limitation, and let them dwell on good. *Make yourself do this. Learn to think about what you wish to become.*"

We must become the master of our own thinking.

How?

By turning our minds away from the negative stuff and toward the positive.

How?

By MAKING ourselves do it.

Moment by moment by moment we train our minds so we can realize freedom and joy.

P.S. Here's how the [Buddha](#) puts it in [The Dhammapada](#) (see Notes): "As irrigators lead water where they want, as archers make their arrows straight, as carpenters carve wood, the wise shape their minds."

Here's to shaping our minds!!!

*"Just as water purifies
itself as it flows, so the
impure stream of our
mental life becomes purified
by applied constructive
thinking."*

~ Ernest Holmes

GIVING OUR BEST TO EACH MOMENT

"Only as we give the best we have to every passing experience can we hope to enter into the joy of living. Can anyone enjoy a game unless he enters into the spirit of that game? Every act of life should be a magical rite filled with wonder; every coming event should arouse pleasurable anticipation. Whatever we do, the whole of us should be engaged in doing it. There are no half measures to living. Life itself has no adversary; It has no limitation. Consequently It speaks a straight affirmative language only."

Ah, the importance of giving our best to every passing experience.

It's at the heart of living with virtue and the ticket to joy and enthusiasm.

Reminds me of [Don Miguel Ruiz's](#) fourth agreement (see Notes on [The Four Agreements](#)). He tells us: "There is just one more agreement, but it's the one that allows the other three to become deeply ingrained habits. The fourth agreement is about the action of the first three: Always do your best..."

Under any circumstance, always do your best, no more and no less. But keep in mind that your best is never going to be the same from one moment to the next. Everything is alive and changing all the time, so your best will sometimes be high quality, and other times it will not be as good."

The [Buddha](#) echoes this wisdom (see Notes on [The Dhammapada](#)) when he tells us: "If anything is worth doing, do it with all your heart."

So does [Seneca](#) (see Notes on [Letters from a Stoic](#)) who tells us: "There is nothing the wise man

"Know that nothing can hinder you but yourself. If you believe that you can, you can."

~ Ernest Holmes

does reluctantly."

And, finally, I just love the way Walter Russel puts it in [The Man Who Tapped the Secrets of the Universe](#) (see Notes) where he tells us: "There should be no distasteful tasks in one's life. If you just hate to do a thing, that hatred for it develops body-destructive toxins, and you become fatigued very soon. You must love anything you must do. Do it not only cheerfully, but also lovingly and the very best way you know how. That love of the work which you must do anyhow will vitalize your body and keep you from fatigue."

How are YOU showing up?

Let's turn it on and do our best.

And watch the joy follow! :)

YOUR MENTAL GARDEN

"Think of Mind as a mental garden into which you may consciously put seeds of thought. You can consciously remove any of the plants which you have already planted either in ignorance or through fear. If one kind of thought produces a certain result, it follows that an opposite type of thought will produce an opposite result."

How's your Mind garden?

Have you planted the kind of seeds you want to see come to fruition?

Pay attention!

Reminds me of [Pema Chödrön](#)'s wisdom from [The Places That Scare You](#) (see Notes) where she tells us: "This is the path we take in cultivating joy: learning not to armor our basic goodness, learning to appreciate what we have. Most of the time we don't do this. Rather than appreciate where we are, we continually struggle to nurture our dissatisfaction. It's like trying to get flowers to grow by pouring cement on the garden."

Let's plant the good seeds and remember not to pour concrete over our gardens! :)

LET LIFE FLOW!

"The Law of Life operates upon the images of your thought. If your thought is restricted and unhappy, you will be causing It to create restricting and unhappy circumstances. Only a two inch stream of water can flow through a two inch pipe. A gallon measure will hold but four quarts. This would be true even if you dipped your measure into the ocean. You are not limiting the ocean nor causing it to be evil because you dip up four quarts instead of a barrel. The ocean has no desire to limit you. In a personal sense, it can only give you what you take, for your taking is its givingness in the form of you taking. This is one of the greatest lessons of life. "It is done unto you as you believe.""

"Only a two inch stream of water can flow through a two inch pipe. A gallon measure will hold but four quarts."

Love that image.

There is an ocean of possibility.

How much are you allowing to flow through you?

...

Our #1 job needs to be allowing more and more of Life to flow through us.

How?

"If one were to take an inventory of his mental reactions to life, of his inward emotional states, of his faiths, fears, beliefs and hopes, he would be surprised to see how exactly they dovetail with his outward circumstances."

~ Ernest Holmes

"The question, then, is not do we have the power? It is merely, are we using it?"

~ Ernest Holmes

Through our thoughts.

By honoring our blisiplines.

By showing up moment to moment with a commitment to live from our Highest Selves.

HOW'S YOUR MENTAL HYGIENE?

"Mental hygiene is just as real as physical hygiene, and equally necessary. To be well one must have a sense of security. To be happy one must have confidence in himself, in those around him and in the universe itself. He must be unified with himself and with life."

Mental hygiene.

I just love that idea.

How's yours? :)

Reminds me of [Tim Sanders](#) and his commitment to being a healthy-thought nut. Here's what he tells us in his great book, [Today We Are Rich](#) (see Notes): "You should be as careful about what you put into your mind as about what you put into your mouth. Your mind is a machine. When you ingest a piece of information, your mind goes to work, chewing on it, digesting it, and then converting it into a thought. When good stuff goes into your mind, good thoughts emerge. People who maintain purposeful mind diets of positive stimuli think healthy thoughts."

He continues: "In my personal experience, positive thinking is the key to health. I believe my own health is shaped by my thoughts the way a sculpture is shaped by its creator. I am very careful about my mind diet and consider myself a healthy-thought nut."

It's time to turn our mental showers on and give ourself a nice, deep cleaning! :)

LOOK FOR GOOD INSTEAD OF EVIL

"The Science of Mind teaches us to look for good instead of evil; to praise and not to condemn; to bless and curse not; to live each day as though the Spirit were guiding us; to have a firm conviction that we are counseled by Divine Wisdom and protected by Infinite Love. We should at all times sense this overshadowing Presence and have implicit confidence in Its direction."

Sounds good to me!

And, reminds me of [Will Bowen](#) and his 21-day complaint-free challenge. (Check out the Notes on [A Complaint Free World](#) where Will challenges us to give up our complaining, criticism, and gossiping. Powerful stuff.)

Will tells us: "Less pain, better health, satisfying relationships, a better job, being more serene and joyous ... sound good? It's not only possible, it's probable. Consciously striving to reformat your mental hard drive is not easy, but you can start now and in a short period of time—time that will pass anyway—you can have the life you've always dreamed of having."

[Marci Shimoff](#) (see Notes on [Happy for No Reason](#)) tells us we need to "incline our mind to joy" and shares this classic story with us:

"One evening a Cherokee elder told his grandson about the battle that goes on inside of people. He said, 'My son, the battle is between the two 'wolves' that live inside us all. One is Unhappiness. It is fear, worry, anger, jealousy, sorrow, self-pity, resentment, and inferiority. The other is Happiness. It is joy, love, hope, serenity, kindness, generosity, truth, and compassion.'

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, 'Which wolf wins?' The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

"While you and I are living in this world we should be one hundred per cent alive, filled with joy and enthusiasm, filled with energy and power."

~ Ernest Holmes

"Let the enthusiastic ardor of living revitalize every part of your being."

~ Ernest Holmes

Marci also tells us: "Have the intention to notice everything good that happens to you: any positive thought you have, anything you see, feel, taste, hear, or smell that brings you pleasure, a win you experience, a breakthrough in your understanding about something, an expression of your creativity—the list goes on and on. This intention activates the reticular activating system (RAS), a group of cells at the base of your brain stem responsible for sorting through the massive amounts of incoming information and bringing anything important to your attention. Have you ever bought a car and then suddenly started noticing the same make of car everywhere? It's the RAS at work. Now you can use it to be happier. When you decide to look for the positive, your RAS makes sure that's what you see."

Here's to seeing more of the good stuff today and rewiring our brains!!

WE MUST SHARE OUR GOOD!

"Emerson tells us that we must beware lest we hold too much good in our hands. We must scatter it, he says, on every wind of heaven. Whitman said, "The gift is most to the giver and comes back most to him." Jesus proclaimed, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." It is the nature of Life that the more widely we use It, the more of It is delivered into our keeping for use."

Love that.

Reminds me of [Russell Simmons](#) and his wisdom from *Do You!* (see Notes) where he tells us: "Your purpose is to act on the resources God gives you. If God gives you a bucket of fish, you have to distribute those fish. If you don't, they're going to rot, attract a bunch of flies, and start stinking up your soul."

"Joy and enthusiasm are the very essence of life."

~ Ernest Holmes

In *Spiritual Economics* (see Notes), [Eric Butterworth](#) tells us: "The law is exact: If you give, really work in a giving consciousness, you must receive."

While [Deepak Chopra](#) tells us this in *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* (see Notes): "Practicing the Law of Giving is actually very simple; if you want joy, give joy to others; if you want love, learn to give love; if you want attention and appreciation, learn to give attention and appreciation; if you want material affluence, help others to become materially affluent. In fact, the easiest way to get what you want is to help others get what they want."

Here's to sharing our good and embracing the law of giving!

THE SCENT OF FEAR

"Did you ever read a little article called *The Scent of Fear*? In it the author says that animals will attack us only when we are afraid of them. Fear exudes a subtle scent which the animal smells. This arouses a corresponding fear in him and he makes the attack for self-protection. I have known persons who could walk through swarms of bees and never be stung because they had no fear. I have a friend who has no fear of snakes; he sat on a rock, under which a rattlesnake coiled, while he drew some plans.

The person who fears life gets but little pleasure from living. The antidote to fear is faith. The man with great faith has no fear. Faith is a mental attitude, hence it can be cultivated."

Isn't that fascinating that animals can pick up on our fear?

So can everyone. :)

It's time to do some mental hygiene and wash off that scent of fear!

Let's do it with a nice wisdom bath on the subject, shall we?

In *The Science of Being Great* (see Notes), [Wallace D. Wattles](#) tells us: "You can never become a

great man or woman until you have overcome anxiety, worry, and fear. It is impossible for an anxious person, a worried one, or a fearful one to perceive truth; all things are distorted and thrown out of their proper relations by such mental states, and those who are in them cannot read the thoughts of God.”

His remedy? “Fix upon your ideal of what you wish to make yourself.”

In [The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) (see Notes), [Emerson](#) tells us: “Fear is an instructor of great sagacity and the herald of revolutions. One thing he teaches, that there is rottenness where he appears.”

His remedy? “Always, always, always, always, always do what you are afraid to do.” Plus: “Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain.”

And, finally, in [Creative Mind and Success](#) (see Notes), [Holmes](#) tells us: “Fear brings failure; faith brings success. It’s just that simple.”

“In those moments when you let go of all restriction, of all sense of limitation, consciously using your word for definite purposes, you will discover a hidden power of which you have never dreamed.”

~ Ernest Holmes

BECOMING AN OUTLET FOR ALL THINGS GOOD

“Your place in Life is to become an outlet for Its wisdom, intelligence, love, beauty, and creativeness.”

Well that sums it up.

Our job is simple.

Let’s connect to the Highest within our Selves and “become an outlet for Its wisdom, intelligence, love, beauty, and creativeness.”

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

If you liked this Note, you’ll probably like...

[Creative Mind & Success](#)

[The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)

[Spiritual Liberation](#)

[The Science of Being Great](#)

[The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success](#)

About the Author of “The Art of Life”

ERNEST HOLMES



Ernest Holmes (1887 – 1960) was the founder of the worldwide Religious Science Movement. A uniquely gifted scholar with a vast command of the world’s spiritual philosophies, his magnum opus, *The Science of Mind*, has been in continuous print since 1926. Other inspirational works include *Creative Mind*, *This Thing Called You*, *The Art of Life*, *Creative Mind and Success*, *Love and Law*, *The Hidden Power of the Bible*, and many others. (from Barnes & Noble)

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.