

ROBERT COLLIER

# THE SECRET OF POWER



**Robert Collier**

# **The Secret of Power**

**Enriched edition.**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Colin Everett*

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# Introduction

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In *The Secret of Power*, the enduring question is how the intangible currents of thought and desire can be trained to shape tangible results without drifting into wishful thinking, and Robert Collier urges readers to reconcile inner conviction with disciplined, outward effort, to harness imagination without surrendering to fantasy, to build a resilient habit of attention that converts ideas into movement, and to treat personal power not as domination over others but as steady command of one's own mind, choices, and energies in the face of circumstance, and to recognize that every gain in outer fortune begins with an inner decision sustained over time.

Robert Collier's *The Secret of Power* belongs to the American tradition of self-help associated with New Thought, a genre that blends practical counsel with a philosophy of mind and achievement from the early twentieth century. It is nonfiction rather than narrative, written to address readers confronting work, ambition, and everyday setbacks. Without relying on elaborate historical scene-setting, Collier situates power as a personal capacity available in ordinary circumstances. The book emerged amid a broader culture of success manuals and inspirational tracts, and it reflects that era's emphasis on initiative, character, and mental discipline while proposing methods a general audience can apply.

Readers encounter a persuasive, conversational voice that balances encouragement with clear demands for effort. The premise is straightforward: one cultivates inner resources: clarity of aim, steadiness of thought, and readiness to act, to influence outward conditions. Collier

presents ideas in compact sections that move from principle to application, often using everyday examples from commerce and personal endeavor to keep abstractions grounded. The tone is confident but not strident, inviting reflection rather than spectacle. The result is a reading experience that feels like a sustained mentorship in self-mastery, oriented toward practical steps while preserving a sense of possibility and ethical responsibility.

Instead of promising sudden transformation, the book elaborates a discipline of attention: determine what you want, form a definite mental picture, and sustain concentration while taking consistent action. Collier repeatedly urges the reader to examine assumptions, replace unhelpful habits of thought, and reinforce useful ones, presenting power as the cumulative effect of focus plus follow-through. He illustrates how discouragement, distraction, and vague desire dissipate energy, and how purpose channels it. The style favors repetition for emphasis, short illustrative anecdotes, and direct appeals to the reader's agency, creating momentum without requiring specialized background beyond willingness to practice and observe.

Several themes organize the argument. Thought, for Collier, is not mere commentary but a creative instrument that shapes perception and directs action. Desire becomes effective when clarified into aims and yoked to persistence. Imagination provides the pattern, but only conduct completes it, so integrity and responsibility matter as much as enthusiasm. Power also carries an outward orientation: you advance by creating value, solving problems, and serving needs rather than by manipulation. Throughout, the book encourages readers to convert setbacks into instruction, to keep faith with their purposes, and to measure progress by steady gains in competence and character.

For contemporary readers, its relevance lies in a disciplined approach to attention and intention at a time of constant distraction. The emphasis on clarifying goals, focusing on essential tasks, and translating belief into repeated practice aligns with current conversations about mindset, habit formation, and purpose-driven work, even though Collier writes in the idiom of his era. Business and personal aspirations alike can benefit from its insistence on service and value creation. Some examples may feel dated, yet the core counsel (think clearly, choose deliberately, act consistently) remains portable across fields, offering a sturdy framework for resilience, initiative, and ethical influence.

Approach *The Secret of Power* as a manual to be read deliberately rather than rushed, pausing to translate principles into concrete experiments in daily life. If you hold its central lesson, that personal power grows where attention, imagination, and action converge, you will find each section reinforcing the habits that make achievement sustainable. Collier's calm urgency resists both cynicism and magical thinking, proposing a middle path of purposeful effort. Taken in this spirit, the book serves as a durable companion for setting aims, meeting obstacles, and building a character equal to one's goals, whatever the scale of those goals.

# Synopsis

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Robert Collier's *The Secret of Power* presents a New Thought-oriented exploration of how individuals can develop inner agency to shape outward circumstances. Collier frames the book around a practical question: how to translate ideas and desire into tangible results in work and daily life. He writes in a formal yet encouraging voice, proposing that the mind, when properly directed, serves as a conduit for creative forces. The discussion stays focused on usable principles rather than abstract speculation, establishing a foundation for readers to approach goals methodically while maintaining an ethical emphasis on constructive motives and service to others.

The opening movement emphasizes desire and definiteness of purpose as the initiating spark of achievement. Collier argues that vague wishes dissipate energy, whereas a clearly chosen aim concentrates attention and action. He introduces the technique of forming a vivid mental picture of the desired outcome, not as idle daydreaming but as a blueprint for effort. This picture, he suggests, guides priorities and decisions, helping the reader refuse distractions. Early guidance stresses self-examination, the naming of a central objective, and the cultivation of confidence that purpose, consistently held, begins to organize circumstances toward its fulfillment.

Collier then treats belief and expectancy as the vital atmosphere surrounding a goal. He presents the conscious and deeper mind as partners, asserting that conviction impresses the deeper levels with direction. Prayerful reflection or quiet contemplation, in his view, aligns personal aims with a universal intelligence and opens

channels for ideas and opportunities. Throughout, he underscores ethical alignment: objectives framed in terms of value offered to others purportedly draw more enduring support. The argument links inner attitude with outward readiness, contending that sincere confidence reduces hesitation and keeps attention steady during the early, uncertain stages of pursuit.

From principle, the book shifts to method. Collier advocates translating vision into definite plans and steady, measurable effort. He recommends daily practices that reinforce the central image—affirmations, review of aims, and orderly scheduling—while allowing room for intuition to suggest adjustments. Obstacles are treated as signals for refinement rather than reasons to quit. Persistence, he maintains, is not grim endurance but the organized repetition of right causes until results appear. The practical tone emphasizes concentration, habit formation, and the conversion of inspiration into constructive tasks that accumulate toward the envisioned end.

Applications follow across familiar life arenas without technical digression. In business or livelihood, Collier highlights the usefulness of a clear proposition, service-minded intent, and courteous persistence. In personal affairs, he suggests that the same mental discipline fosters better choices and steadier relationships. Illustrative anecdotes show individuals clarifying aims, noticing unexpected avenues, and coordinating resources more effectively. The point is not miraculous change but the compounding effect of sustained direction. Communication skills, thoughtful planning, and readiness to seize openings are presented as natural extensions of the inner program rather than separate techniques.

Attention is also given to common inhibitions—fear, discouragement, indecision, and the influence of negative suggestion. Collier's remedy is twofold: deliberate mental hygiene and constructive action. He proposes replacing



unhelpful narratives with affirming ones, guarding attention, and practicing gratitude to maintain morale. Simultaneously, he urges readers to take proportionate steps that keep momentum alive. Minor successes are treated as proofs that strengthen belief; failures are reframed as feedback that clarifies the next attempt. Patience is counseled, with the reminder that causes often mature out of sight before visible effects appear.

The book closes by reasserting its central thesis: that disciplined thought, ethically directed desire, and persistent, organized effort can awaken a practical form of personal power. Collier invites readers to test the principles in modest, concrete experiments, building confidence through experience rather than mere acceptance. Without relying on dramatic revelations, the work's enduring resonance lies in its union of aspiration and method, offering a framework that many later motivational texts echo. Its promise is conservative yet hopeful: that inner order tends, over time, to express itself as outer order, making purpose something lived rather than merely imagined.

# Historical Context

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The Secret of Power by Robert Collier emerged from the American self-help and New Thought milieu of the early to mid-twentieth century. Collier (1885–1950), an American writer and nephew of Collier's Weekly founder Peter F. Collier, built his career in advertising and direct-mail marketing before turning to motivational literature. His professional base in the United States publishing and advertising industries shaped his didactic, persuasive style. The period's expanding print culture—magazines, mail-order catalogs, and correspondence courses—provided the channels through which Collier reached national audiences. The book belongs to a body of work that sought practical formulas for achievement amid rapid urbanization, mass media, and competitive commercial life.

Collier's outlook was rooted in the New Thought movement, a loose coalition of metaphysical philosophies that took shape in the late nineteenth century. Influences included the healing practices of Phineas P. Quimby, the teachings of Emma Curtis Hopkins, and bestselling popularizers such as Ralph Waldo Trine, whose *In Tune with the Infinite* (1897) advanced mental causation and visualization. Wallace D. Wattles's *The Science of Getting Rich* (1910) supplied a prosperity-oriented template. Organizationally, the Unity School of Christianity (founded 1889) and the International New Thought Alliance (established 1914) gave the movement networks and conferences. Collier's books translated these ideas into accessible, results-focused language for general readers.

Turn-of-the-century psychology lent New Thought a vocabulary of the subconscious and habit. William James's

Varieties of Religious Experience (1902) examined mind-cure phenomena sympathetically, helping legitimize attention to belief and suggestion. In the 1910s and 1920s, Émile Coué's autosuggestion method—summed up in the line “Every day, in every way, I’m getting better and better”—swept American lecture halls and newspapers. Popular readers encountered concepts like visualization, affirmation, and mental imagery as tools for self-mastery. Collier's works, including *The Secret of Power*, adopt this practical-psychology framing, arguing for disciplined thought, goal formation, and persistent action rather than occult ritual, while promising tangible, worldly results.

The book also reflects the rise of modern advertising and salesmanship as respected crafts in the 1910s–1930s. The 1920s saw consumer goods marketed through national brands, persuasive copy, and image-driven campaigns. Bruce Barton's bestseller *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925) famously recast Jesus as the ultimate executive, signaling cultural approval of business acumen. Collier himself authored *The Robert Collier Letter Book* (1931), a landmark in direct-mail copywriting that distilled appeals, headlines, and offers. His motivational writing borrows this language of benefits and proofs, presenting mental discipline as a reproducible technique. Mail-order systems and installment buying made self-improvement courses and books readily obtainable.

Economic upheaval sharpened the audience for success literature. After the 1929 stock-market crash and the onset of the Great Depression, readers turned to pragmatic guidance on income, enterprise, and morale. Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) and Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* (1937) sold widely by promising actionable methods. Collier's earlier *The Secret of the Ages* (1926) remained in circulation, and later titles such as *The Secret of Power* addressed similar appetites for mental resilience and directed effort. Rather

than endorsing speculation, such books stressed personal initiative, planning, and persistence as antidotes to economic volatility and discouragement.

The spiritual infrastructure supporting Collier's approach was robust. The Unity School of Christianity headquartered near Kansas City disseminated lessons on affirmative prayer and practical Christianity. Ernest Holmes's Science of Mind (1926) and his Institute of Religious Science and School of Philosophy in Los Angeles (founded 1927) offered courses blending metaphysics and psychology. New Thought congresses, local study groups, and metaphysical bookstores sustained a marketplace for lectures and serialized lessons. Collier's books fit this ecosystem: they referenced universal law, creative imagination, and disciplined thought while promising practical dividends in business and personal affairs. This institutional milieu normalized metaphysical self-help for mainstream, middle-class readers.

In the 1940s, self-improvement literature intersected with a broader culture of training and advancement. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill) expanded access to education and entrepreneurship, while returning veterans entered sales, management, and technical fields. Mass-market paperbacks, pioneered by Pocket Books in 1939, and inexpensive reprint houses broadened distribution. Trade journals and night schools taught sales psychology and goal setting. Collier's *The Secret of Power* fit this practical orientation, offering mental frameworks compatible with postwar ambition and organizational life. Its language of purpose, persistence, and visualization resonated with readers pursuing upward mobility in expanding corporations and small businesses.

Read in context, *The Secret of Power* exemplifies an American synthesis of metaphysical optimism and managerial pragmatism. It translates New Thought's mind-power claims into a program aligned with sales-era metrics

—goals, plans, testimonials, and case examples—while framing success as a moral and practical duty. The work reflects its era's confidence in individual agency within mass society and critiques resignation by insisting that belief and sustained effort can alter outcomes. By drawing on advertising rhetoric, popular psychology, and institutional New Thought, Collier offered a culturally legible route to prosperity and poise, mirroring the aspirations and anxieties of modern, commercially driven life.

# **The Secret of Power**

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“I am the owner of the sphere,  
Of the seven stars and the solar year,  
Of Caesar’s hand and Plato’s brain, Of Lord Christ’s  
heart  
And Shakespeare’s strain.”