

HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

THE SELF-HELP CLASSIC

DALE CARNEGIE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY TOM BUTLER-BOWDON

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HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

The Self-Help Classic

DALE CARNEGIE

With an Introduction by
TOM BUTLER-BOWDON



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*This Book is Dedicated to a Man
Who Doesn't Need to Read It*
MY CHERISHED FRIEND
HOMER CROY

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INTRODUCTION

BY TOM BUTLER-BOWDON

How To Win Friends and Influence People is a significant book on many levels.

Although it had many antecedents in the success literature of the Victorian and early modern era, it was the first self-help or motivational blockbuster of the twentieth century. Its rate of sales shocked author and publisher, and today the book has sold over 30 million copies in English, and many more in the world's main languages.

It is also a cultural phenomenon. A 2013 Library of Congress survey, based on responses from over 9,000 people, included *How To Win Friends and Influence People* as one of the 100 "Books That Shaped America," alongside *Moby Dick*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Great Gatsby*, the *Federalist Papers*, *Up From Slavery*, and *Silent Spring*.

As the cornerstone of the Dale Carnegie Course, *How to Win Friends* is one of the great peer-supported approaches to personal transformation, arguably in the same league as Toastmasters International, Weightwatchers, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

This Introduction provides a short biography of Carnegie, including how his book came to be written. I will highlight its key themes. Finally, I consider his ethics and personality, including why he changed the spelling of his name, and the wider cultural impact of his work.

EARLY YEARS: FARM BOY, STUDENT, SALESMAN, ACTOR

Dale Harbison Carnegie was born on November 24, 1888, to James and Amanda, in the hamlet of Harmony Church, ten miles from Maryville, Missouri. He had an older brother, Clifton. His mother steeped him in popular literature and made him memorize tracts from the Bible and orate them in church.

Dale's childhood was a constant round of hard farm work: milking cows, chopping wood, and raising pigs in freezing winters. It gave him a lifelong hatred of manual labour. "I was ashamed of our poverty," he later said.

Assailed by floods and pests, the Carnegies were forced to sell their smallholding. They started again with a rented farm, but times remained tough. James Carnegie turned for solace to populist leaders like William Jennings Bryan and tended to morosity, while Amanda was sunny, optimistic, and pious. His parents left him nothing except "the blessing of faith and sturdy character," an older Carnegie liked to say. They lived just long enough (Amanda died in 1939 and James in 1941) to see their son's success.

In 1904, the family moved to farmland near Warrensburg, Missouri, so that the boys could get a proper education. They attended Warrensburg Normal School and then the Missouri Teacher's College (now University of Central Missouri). The family could not afford to pay for Dale to live on site, so he had to ride a horse to school from their farm nearby.

Humiliated and poorer than his peers, college nevertheless opened his horizons. He gained self-esteem via public speaking,

including memorized declamations and debating. He found he could gain friends by his words, and began winning speaking and debating competitions and training other students. As a harbinger of his later writing style, Carnegie adopted an informal, chatty style, very different from traditional oratory.

After graduating from college in 1908, he saw his ticket out of poverty as being a travelling Chautauqua speaker. But the only path open to him was sales. He moved to Nebraska to sell correspondence school courses. He was a failure at it and, to boot, homesick. Things got slightly better with a sales position in Omaha with Armour and Company, the huge meatpacking company. He worked the rural districts of South Dakota selling canned meat, lard, and soap, and his work ethic put him into the top tier of Armour salesman. As a result, Carnegie was able to send a good chunk of his earnings home to help his parents pay the mortgage.

As a salesman, Carnegie learned to tell an amusing story. He found that smiles and positivity had a real effect on people, even if much of the time he felt like he was acting. He discovered the power of remembering people's names and letting them talk about themselves.

But Carnegie was too ambitious and intellectually curious to sell meat forever. In 1911, aged 22, he applied and was accepted into the prestigious American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. Over the decades, this institution, with its innovative techniques, trained Anne Bancroft, Grace Kelly, Spencer Tracy, and later Kirk Douglas and Robert Redford.

Yet Carnegie lasted only six months at the Academy before joining a travelling stage production of *Polly of the Circus*, a popular moralistic romance of the time. He played the part of Dr Hartley, plus many extra parts, and travelled around the East and Midwest. When the run ended, however, no other acting parts opened up. He was forced to return to sales.

Back in New York, Carnegie went into business with an acquaintance selling trucks, and then joined an auto sales company including

Packard cars. His heart was not in cars any more than it was in meat, but socially he enjoyed life in the city. He dated Jewish, Irish, French, and Canadian girls, and wrote home to a slightly worried Amanda to tell her about it all. But the reality of a job he hated and a dirty rented room made him feel his life was going nowhere.

Carnegie left Packard in late 1913. Now 25, he was desperate to move out of sales and have a speaking career. He gave a few one-off talks (on cowboys for the New York Board of Education, and on self-expression and oratory to the Masons) and took writing courses at Columbia University. As Columbia and New York University had turned down his ideas to teach evening extension courses, he now aimed a little lower. The director of New York's smallest Y.M.C.A., in Harlem, gave him a chance to give a course on public speaking. The course did well, and Brooklyn Y.M.C.A. asked him to run a course, followed by Y.M.C.A.s in Newark, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Teaching mostly young white-collar males who wanted to get ahead in business, he was earning a princely \$500 a month.

Carnegie also began having some success with writing, getting commissions for "how they made it" success stories for magazines. These potted biographies of well-known people would remain an important sideline for most of his life. He also wrote articles on war and Antarctic exploration, and how to make money from writing for the screen or stage.

CARNEGIE'S INFLUENCES: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TO PSYCHOLOGY

In 1915, Carnegie co-authored his first book, *The Art of Public Speaking*, with editor and writer Joseph Berg Esenwein. It was published (ironically) by one of the home correspondence schools that he had been a salesman for only a couple of years prior.

The Carnegie Course in Public Speaking, meanwhile, had become a mini industry. By 1920, it had been codified into a course—"Public Speaking: The Standard Course of the Y.M.C.A.

Schools”—that Carnegie could train others to give. What made the course different was its infusion with the motivational, psychological, and even metaphysical ideas of the day.

Carnegie's influences included the popular speaker Rev. Russell H. Conwell and his famous “Acres of Diamonds” speech (which promised readers they would find their fortune in their own back yard); Elbert Hubbard and his “Message to Garcia” story from the Spanish–American war, about a soldier who gets the job done without excuses; James Allen, the English metaphysical thinker and author of *As A Man Thinketh*; Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science and author of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*; and Orison Swett Marden, the founder of *Success* magazine and author of *Pushing To The Front, or Success Under Difficulties*.

Biographer James Watts (*Self-Help Messiah*) believes that Marden, the most famous motivational speaker and writer of his day, was Carnegie's secret mentor. Marden encouraged Carnegie to read as widely as possible across history, fiction, science, and philosophy. Indeed, *How To Win Friends and Influence People* references many great figures from history, philosophy, and religion—from Cicero to Confucius to Shakespeare to Napoleon. That said, Carnegie's childhood friend Homer Croy, whom the book is dedicated to, remembers Carnegie always trying first to find the condensed versions of books to save time and cut to the core ideas.

Carnegie was inspired by the American New Thought writers whose preoccupation was the metaphysics of abundance and “mind power,” but he knew that to appeal to the broadest audience he had to invoke the emerging science of psychology. He quotes liberally from William James, Sigmund Freud, and Alfred Adler, and from contemporary writers such as Harry Overstreet. Overstreet wrote one of the first popular psychology books, *Influencing Human Behavior* (1925), and it is mentioned several times in *How To Win Friends*. Carnegie's principle, “Arouse in the other person an eager want” was taken directly from Overstreet, as was his list of “basic human needs” that need to be satisfied.

The Art of Public Speaking

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Joseph
BY
J. BERG ESENWEIN

AUTHOR OF
"HOW TO ATTRACT AND HOLD AN AUDIENCE,"
"WRITING THE SHORT-STORY,"
"WRITING THE PHOTOPLAY," ETC., ETC.,

AND

DALE CARNAGEY

INSTRUCTOR IN PUBLIC SPEAKING, Y. M. C. A. SCHOOLS,
NEW YORK, BROOKLYN, PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON, AND BALTIMORE

THE WRITER'S LIBRARY

EDITED BY J. BERG ESENWEIN

THE HOME CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL
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PUBLISHERS

Title page of Carnegie's first book. Library of Congress.

INTERWAR YEARS: IMPRESARIO, HUSBAND, NOVELIST

Carnegey's prosperous new life ended with Woodrow Wilson's decision in 1917 to enter the United States into World War One. He was drafted and sent to Camp Upton, Long Island. Saved from weapons training by a missing finger from a childhood accident, he was given office duties with the rank of Sergeant, assisting a Major. Discharged at the start of 1919, he was happy to put this dull period behind him.

Back in New York, Carnegey restarted his public speaking business with the Y.M.C.A.s, adding new courses for bankers, engineers, and advertising men. He got into trouble with speech education professionals by submitting articles to their journals to promote his business. Unfortunately, the articles contained accounts of people that were fictitious, which forced him to make a retraction and apology.

The incident did not hold him back for long. In 1917, adventurer Lowell Thomas had sought Carnegey's help in giving a talk on his time in Alaska to the Smithsonian. The talk was a success, and Thomas gave Carnegey an endorsement for his courses. It was the start of a lifelong collaboration and friendship.

Thomas had created a touring act with film and slides based on his time with General Allenby in Palestine, and with T.E. Lawrence in Arabia. In 1919 he again sought Carnegey's help, this time to make the show more alluring. Carnegey, who had never left America, gladly accepted and became his business manager on a tour of England. The revamped show, given at the Royal Opera House in London, was a sellout, and as creative director and manager Carnegey earned a cut of the profits.

The show was later performed on the eastern seaboard of America, Canada, the north of England and Scotland, and in Australia. But when Thomas had to pull out as narrator, replaced by Carnegey, bookings and profits dwindled. Carnegey came close to

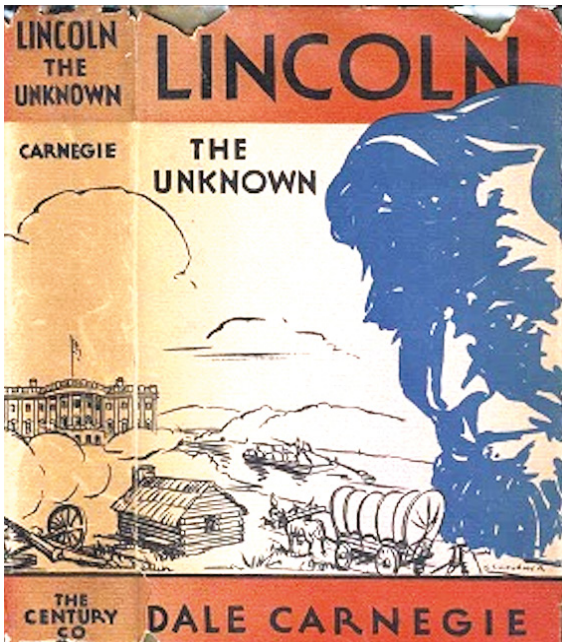
a nervous breakdown over the stress. Yet he seemed to like the role of impresario, and in 1921 created another show based on Sir Ross Smith's famous 1918 flight from England to Australia. This was also a hit, running for four months.

Carnegey's time in the UK had an unforeseen benefit: love. In July 1921 he married Lolita Harris in Dorking, Surrey. Born Lolita Baucaire in Ulm, Germany, she had emigrated to the United States and worked as an actress. Lolita had married a rich dentist, Charles Harris, but it ended in divorce. She met Dale while he was part of the Lowell Thomas show touring Baltimore. After marrying, the Carnegeys enjoyed travelling around Europe, including a year in Versailles outside Paris and on the French Riviera, plus some time in North Africa. This was at a time when U.S. dollars went far. Carnegey gave some speaking courses in Europe but was also earning \$3,000 a year from his book royalties.

In time, Lolita grew critical of Dale's basic Midwestern ways. He, apparently, tired of her pretentiousness and harrying nature. The marriage lasted a decade, but Carnegie tried never to talk of it. The two Carnegie biographers (Watts and Kemp/Claflin) contend that Carnegey's depiction of the difficult Mary Todd, Abraham Lincoln's wife, in his book *Lincoln The Unknown* (1932), is a veiled portrait of his own wife. They would finally divorce in 1931.

Perhaps inspired by other American emigres in Europe such as Hemingway and Gertrude Stein, Carnegey spent considerable time writing what he thought would be the next great American novel. Yet even his literary agent thought that *The Blizzard*, set in Missouri and with wooden characters and stilted dialogue, was poor. It was never published and remains a little-known detail of Carnegie's life as a writer, which we now associate with page-turning non-fiction.

At the time Carnegey was crushed by the rejection, but it forced him to return to what he knew best and what could earn him money: public speaking and human relations. In 1925 he changed his name from Dale Carnegey to Dale Carnegie. His public reasoning? The



Lincoln The Unknown (1932).

Source: Unknown/Wikimedia Commons.

Carnegie spelling was much easier for people to remember (given industrialist Andrew Carnegie, Carnegie Hall, etc.). It didn't hurt, either, that the Carnegie name in the 1920s had great lustre in the public imagination. Why not associate oneself with it?

HOW TO WIN FRIENDS: PUBLISHING PHENOMENON

In 1926, Carnegie published *Public Speaking: A Practical Course for Business Men*, based on his Y.M.C.A. course materials. He was earning enough to buy a relatively new English Tudor-style house in the pleasant (now affluent) suburb of Forest Hills in Queens, New York.

Three years later, however, like many at the time he lost money in the stock market crash of 1929. He managed hold onto the property, and it would remain his home until his death in 1955. The house was a quiet refuge where he could enjoy his garden and dogs, yet it was only ten miles from New York City.

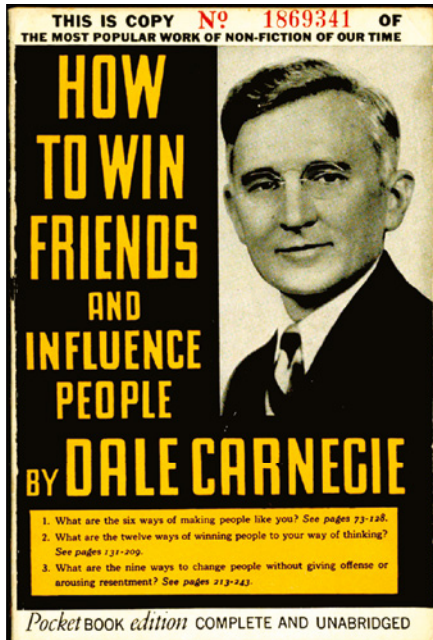
Fortunately, demand for Carnegie's courses continued through the early years of the Great Depression. But he was not run off his feet and in the summer of 1932 made a trip of many weeks to China. He would call it his "greatest adventure in living." After the ship berthed in Shanghai, he was shocked by the poverty. It was of a much greater level than even a very depressed United States and put his own struggles into perspective.

The Depression years saw him begin a weekly radio spot conveying fascinating biographical details about famous people on a show sponsored by Maltex, a cereal brand. He also published *Lincoln The Unknown* (1932) and *Little Facts About Well Known People* (1934). Neither were bestsellers, but Carnegie's publishing fate was about to change.

In 1934, a young executive at Simon & Schuster, Leon Shimkin, attended a promotional lecture by Carnegie. Shimkin was impressed, but Carnegie had been turned down by Simon & Schuster for a previous book and was cool to Shimkin's advances. Carnegie eventually relented, and spent whatever spare time he had in the next two years writing.

Published in October 1936, *How To Win Friends and Influence People*, including a ten-page biography-cum-testimonial by Lowell Thomas, was a success from the start. Shimkin had the bright idea of sending free copies to 500 graduates of the Dale Carnegie Course, which quickly brought orders for 5,000 more. He also put a full-page ad in *The New York Times*.

Carnegie had hoped the book would sell 20,000 copies. He was astonished when, in early 1937, it entered bestseller lists. By March of that year it had sold 250,000 copies. Earning 25 cents a copy, or around \$5 in today's money, his first royalty check was for



Early Simon & Schuster paperback edition. From “America Reads” exhibition, Library of Congress.

Source: Unknown/Wikimedia Commons.

\$90,000, or over \$2 million today. While most of America was still trying to claw itself out of the Depression, with 80 bread lines in New York City and over 9 million people were unemployed, Carnegie was becoming a millionaire.

CARNEGIE’S THEMES AND ETHICS

As Steven Watt has noted, Carnegie’s life covered a period of massive change and expansion in America, including the transition from a farming-based economy to an industrial, urban one. An era of staid Puritan morals, emphasizing duty, thrift, and self-control,

gave way to one of consumerism and entertainment. The desire for charisma, power, and attractiveness replaced the wish for rectitude and honesty. This shift from an ethic of “character” to “personality” is well documented; Stephen R. Covey discusses it in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

The America of Carnegie’s time also saw a move from an economic base of individual entrepreneurs to huge corporations catering to a mass consumer base, with layers of white-collar workers. If many were similar to you in terms of education, skills, training, and experience, “being a good people person” could be a distinct advantage.

Carnegie had kept in his mind a statement by John D. Rockefeller that the ability to handle people well was more valuable than all others, but he could find no book written on the subject. He and his researchers read everything they could find on human relations, including philosophy and literature and the latest works in psychology and biography. This research, combined with the experience of running hundreds of public speaking courses, gave Carnegie a unique insight into what made people tick, including their deepest fears and desires. In *How To Win Friends* he mentions a man who had driven his 300 employees mercilessly and was incapable of saying anything positive about them. But after taking a Carnegie course and applying the principle *Never criticize, condemn or complain*, the gentleman was able to turn “314 enemies into 314 friends,” inspiring loyalty and increasing profits at the same time. Applying the principle also transformed his relationship with his family.

Freud’s belief was that apart from sex, the chief desire was to be great. Lincoln said it was the craving to be appreciated. Carnegie made this craving for appreciation central to his method. Being aware of it enabled one to make others happy and to be valued oneself (“even the undertaker will be sorry when he dies”). Perhaps Carnegie’s most well-known example is the story of Charles Schwab, the first person to earn \$1 million a year by

running Andrew Carnegie's United States Steel Company. Schwab confided the secret of success as being "hearty in my approbation, and lavish in my praise" to the people under him.

Yet Carnegie was anti-flattery because it involved a calculated mimicking of people's vanities. Instead, he believed in sincere appreciation of someone's good points. Doing so requires you to really see that person, maybe for the first time. Warmth replaces mistrust: "If we merely try to impress people and get people interested in us, we will never have many true, sincere friends. Friends, real friends, are not made that way."

Carnegie's great insight was that it is not "soft" but smart to become more attuned to the feelings and motivations of others. When you do, it is natural that you would be liked more and your influence would grow.

His book's 30 rules or principles include:

- Arouse in the other person an eager want.
- The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it.
- Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say, "you're wrong."
- If you're wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.
- Begin in a friendly way.
- Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.
- Appeal to the nobler motives.
- Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to.

When it was published in 1936, *How to Win Friends* received plenty of negative reviews for being manipulative, shallow, or simply lacking taste. The fact that Carnegie was a former canned meat and car salesman did not help the perception that a bar had been lowered.

And yet, compared to the brazen darkness of a contemporary work such as Robert Greene's *The 48 Laws of Power* (1998), Carnegie's book is quite mild, even folksy, and often funny. His log

cabin sense of humour meant that *How To Win Friends* is not as earnest as many contemporary self-help books. For example, one of his principles is *Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language*. The title is more brash than the content, and it is not possible to argue that it is a manual for manipulation in the manner of Robert Greene or Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

His conversational style was a breath of fresh air to those who had tried to read academic psychology, and even more attractive to those who didn't read books at all. The action-oriented nature of the book set the tone for all motivational and business books to follow.

Yet it has always been an easy book to parody. Irving Tressler's wry 1937 tome *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People* gave life advice that was diametrically opposite to Carnegie's. The same title was used for Toby Young's 2008 memoir about failing to get ahead in advertising in 1990s New York.

The popular view is that Carnegie's book marked the shift from the "character ethic" to the "personality ethic." In fact Carnegie never renounced the "sturdy character" that his parents tried to instill in him and his brother. In Part Three of *How To Win Friends* he seems to say that the worse thing one can become is a blow-hard. This passage, from Part Three, is an example:

A lawyer once said to Cobb on the witness stand: "I understand, Mr. Cobb, that you are one of the most famous writers in America. Is that correct?"

"I have probably been more fortunate than I deserve," Cobb replied.

"We ought to be modest, for neither you nor I amount to much. Both of us will pass on and be completely forgotten a century from now. Life is too short to bore other people with talk of our petty accomplishments. Let's encourage them to talk instead."

IN A NUTSHELL

SEVEN RULES FOR MAKING YOUR HOME LIFE HAPPIER

RULE 1: Don't nag.

RULE 2: Don't try to make your partner over.

RULE 3: Don't criticize.

RULE 4: Give honest appreciation.

RULE 5: Pay little attentions.

RULE 6: Be courteous.

RULE 7: Read a good book on the sexual side
of marriage.

In its issue for June 1933, *American Magazine* printed an article by Emmet Crozier, "Why Marriages Go Wrong". The following is a questionnaire reprinted from that article. You may find it worth while to answer these questions, giving yourself ten points for each question you can answer in the affirmative.

FOR HUSBANDS

1. Do you still “court” your wife with an occasional gift of flowers, with remembrances of her birthday and wedding anniversary, or with some unexpected attention, some unlooked-for tenderness?
2. Are you careful never to criticize her before others?
3. Do you give her money to spend entirely as she chooses, above the household expenses?
4. Do you make an effort to understand her varying feminine moods and help her through periods of fatigue, nerves, and irritability?
5. Do you share at least half of your recreation hours with your wife?
6. Do you tactfully refrain from comparing your wife’s cooking or housekeeping with that of your mother or of Bill Jones’ wife, except to her advantage?
7. Do you take a definite interest in her intellectual life, her clubs and societies, the books she reads, her views on civic problems?
8. Can you let her dance with and receive friendly attentions from other men without making jealous remarks?

IN A NUTSHELL

9. Do you keep alert for opportunities to praise her and express your admiration for her?
10. Do you thank her for the little jobs she does for you, such as sewing on a button, darning your socks, and sending your clothes to the cleaners? ...

FOR WIVES

1. Do you give your husband complete freedom in his business affairs, and do you refrain from criticizing his associates, his choice of a secretary, or the hours he keeps?
2. Do you try your best to make your home interesting and attractive?
3. Do you vary the household menu so that he never quite knows what to expect when he sits down to the table?
4. Do you have an intelligent grasp of your husband's business so you can discuss it with him helpfully?
5. Can you meet financial reverses bravely, cheerfully, without criticizing your husband for his mistakes or comparing him unfavourably with more successful men?
6. Do you make a special effort to get along amiably with his mother or other relatives?



7. Do you dress with an eye for your husband's likes and dislikes in colour and style?
8. Do you compromise little differences of opinion in the interest of harmony?
9. Do you make an effort to learn games your husband likes, so you can share his leisure hours?
10. Do you keep track of the day's news, the new books, and new ideas, so you can hold your husband's intellectual interest?