

The day that I met Noil, my life changed. I had not been looking for Noil; Noil just happened. In hindsight this encounter reminds me of a story I once read, and it went something like this –

Once upon a time, young King Arthur was out hunting with his falcon. It was a new falcon and still needed to be tested. The moment the falcon was released to hunt down its prey, it flew off toward the distant forest. King Arthur had spent hours and days in raising the falcon and was not about to lose it, so he followed it in an attempt to lure it down onto his hand again. But as the king came closer, the falcon took off and flew deeper into the forest and thus the king followed its flight path deeper and deeper into the forest. After many frustrating, failed attempts to call the falcon down, the king ended up in an open glade with the falcon sitting in the top branches of a tree on the opposite side of the glade. This, the king promised himself, would be his last attempt to call the falcon down before he would give it up for lost. Then all of a sudden, a long-bearded, silver-headed man in a cape appeared beside him (apparently he did this often) and without much effort, called the falcon down. Merlin and Arthur became life-long friends and Arthur often wondered what life would have had in store for him had he not followed the falcon – and Merlin often reminded Arthur that it would be presumptuous of him to think that their meeting was by chance?

And so it was with Noil and I; did I bump into Noil or had Noil been waiting for me all along? It really does not matter because either way, it changed my life and it is what I take away from the encounter that is important, rather than the encounter itself.

Noil's appearance was indiscriptive – I can't say whether Noil was a man or a woman, nor could I guess how old Noil was; I would lose all bets if I had to place a wager on the origin of Noil, but Noil's presence was overpowering, it consumed me and even though this encounter happened nearly a year ago, I remember it as if it only happened yesterday. So let's start from the beginning.

Nalyd and I had agreed to go to the lookout fairly early so that we might catch the early morning traffic between the watering hole and the salt lick. We were on our annual hunting trip in our ever-pursuing attempt to harvest some biltong for family and friends, in which we rarely ever succeeded. Nevertheless, our intentions were sincere but the fact that our reminiscing of old days gone by, reliving events and repeating old jokes with the obligatory chuckle probably scared away shootable buck for miles around, was neither here nor there.

The guinea fowl were still in the tree tops when we approached the water hole and the plan was that Nalyd would shift into his clandestine super stealth mode to approach the water at a chance of seeing some kudu there – an early shot would take the pressure off of us for the rest of the day. Just as Nalyd gestured for me to stay back, I saw in the corner of my eye an old leather satchel half-hidden under the down-hanging branches of a wag-'n-bietjie. Nylad forgotten, I extended my shooting

stick, went down on my haunches and attempted to drag the satchel into arm's length so that I could retrieve it. My focus was totally on the satchel and it was only once I could grab hold of it that I noticed a person sitting on the opposite side of the tree and I immediately assumed that the satchel must belong to him. Moving around the tree I came face-to-face with Noil.

At first I was annoyed because there weren't supposed to be other people here and for all I knew I was dealing with a poacher but as I was about to ask a question, Noil said "So you found the satchel, which means my time has ended."

The statement was nonsensical and my facial expression must have yelled it across the valley because Noil gestured me to sit down, saying "Let me explain".

My having found the satchel was an indication to Noil that I was to be the next custodian of the content thereof. Noil had been around for some time already but the prophecy had stated "only he who sees it, will benefit by it". Thus my having seen it and having picked it up was, according to Noil, a sign that I was to be the next custodian.

As you can imagine, I had dozens of questions – who was Noil?, was I dreaming?, what is this mumbo-jumbo of a prophecy?, custodian of what?, where was the candid camera hidden?, and so forth but Noil cut in and said "You must have many questions (do I ever?) but time is running out". Noil handed me the satchel and instructed the following in a clear, yet commanding voice :

"Listen closely as I will not have the strength to repeat my words. As soon as you had presented yourself before me with the satchel in your hand, I knew I had found the next custodian and I now realize my time has come. I now pass this satchel and its valuable contents to you, but first there are certain conditions to which you must agree."

In the far distance I could hear cattle bellowing and goats bleating as they were let out into the veld to graze and here I found myself sitting in front of Noil and had to agree to something I was not even sure I wanted to agree to. Noil saw my hesitation, grabbed my hand with urgency and asked "Do you accept?"

"Ja okay" I replied and Noil continued. "When you get back home, open the satchel and take out the scroll marked One. Read it over and over until you fully understand the principle it contains and then, only then, proceed to the next scroll. As you learn from each scroll your wealth will increase; and if you combine what you learn with the experience you acquire and continue to study each scroll as instructed, your wealth will grow each day. My first condition then is that you must swear under oath that you will follow the instructions contained in the scroll marked One. Do you agree!?"

Wealth? Did Noil say wealth? Katjinnngggg, I struck jackpot, and I meant it when I replied “Yes, I swear.”

“And now for the most important condition of all. As you master the scrolls, you have to share the scrolls or the wisdom they contain with as many people as you possibly can. Will you promise to carry out this condition?”

“I will” I replied sincerely.

Noil sighed in relief as if a heavy weight had been lifted off the frail shoulders. With a weak smile Noil cupped my face and said “Take the satchel and depart. I will see thee no more. Go with my love and with my wishes for success and my you and your loved ones share all the happiness and wealth your future will bring you.”

Nalyd’s dumb-struck expression when he found me under the tree, the kudu, the biltong all seemed to blur by and my first clear recollection was when I eagerly opened the satchel as soon as I got home again.

I had stated earlier that the day I met Noil my life changed. I am happy and wealthier – not necessarily in terms of money – and I am ready to share with you what I had learnt.

The prophecy is true; “only he who sees it will benefit by it” and whilst I can share and show you the content of the scrolls, as per my last promise to Noil, only you can actually see it, if you want to, and act on it.

I too wish you success and hope that you and your loved ones will share in the happiness and wealth your future will bring you.

(As mention in the introductory document, this is not my story; but I learnt the principles, I have lived them and now I have adapted them and want and want to share these with you in my Pursuit of Shining Eyes. Credit is given to OG Mandino)

Scroll i

Today I begin a new life

If you want to do something, there is no point in doing it, unless you do it well. Sure, we can take chances and cram for exams; we may even pass, but we would not have gained the necessary insight and knowledge to practice was has been learnt. We can also procrastinate and postpone things until urgency forces us to do a half job or, never getting to what needs doing.

Thus, if we want to do something and we want to do it well, the “law of the farm” has to apply. The only thing that endures over time is the law of the farm. According to natural laws and principles, the ground must be prepared in time, the seeds must be planted on time, these need to be cultivated, weeded and watered and if one wants to reap a good harvest these things need to be done well – there are no quick fixes, no instantaneous success formulae.

Time teaches all things to he who lives forever but unfortunately, we are all mortals. However, within our allotted time we must practice the art of patience, for nature never acts in haste. To create an olive, a hundred years is required. An onion plant is old in nine weeks. We choose what we want to be and if we choose to be happy, if we choose to have wealth, we need the patience to reach this destination. There are no short cuts.

Only principles endure and with the understanding of the scrolls, you will understand the laws that will lead you to greatness. What the scroll will teach you is more a matter of preventing failure than to gain success, for what is success other than a state of mind. Success is relative, for which two among thousand wise men, will define success in the same words; yet failure is described in but one way. **Failure is man’s inability to reach his goals in life, whatever they may be.**

In truth, the only difference between those who have failed and those who have succeeded lies in the difference of their habits. Good habits are the key to all success. Bad habits are the unlocked door to failure.

Success requires a solid foundation. Cornerstones need to be laid down upon which new life can be built. The first cornerstone of new life reads as follows :

I will form good habits and become their slave

Fortunately, I had asked you in the very first newsletter to list the habits you wish to live by and I trust you have done so by now. If not, then this is an ideal opportunity to make your list, the list of habits you want to form and whose slave you intend to become.

We are all creatures of habit. Our free will has been surrendered to the years of accumulated habits and our past actions have already marked out a path which has already or will threaten to imprison our future. If you believe that “you are what you repeatedly do, then excellence is not an act, but a habit”, then it is your choice now, to choose good and sound habits.

You will form good habits and become their slave.

The second cornerstone is based on an absolute conviction that you are the master of your own destiny; you control how you act or react in a situation – it is your choice. To this end memorise the following :

Failure shall not overcome me if my desire to succeed is
stronger

How will you form good habits and become their slave and how will you convince yourself you are master of your own destiny? By following the principle of this, the first scroll : **Today I begin a new life**

Step 1 : on two separate pieces of paper write out the words of the two cornerstones mentioned above

Step 2 : stick these papers onto your mirror, keep them in your wallet, keep them in your diary, wherever, but make sure you physically have sight of them, every day.

Step 3 : you will read these two sentences for 21 days in the prescribed manner, before proceeding to the next scroll

“First, you will read the words in silence when you arise in the morning.
Then, you will read the words in silence after you have partaken of your
midday meal. Last, you will read the words again just before you retire at
day’s end, and most important, on this occasion you will read the words out
loud.”

Step 4 : read your list of good habits, whose slave you intend to become and ensure you are still committed to these.

And what will you accomplish with these 4 steps? Herein lies the secret of all man’s accomplishments. As you repeat the words daily they will soon become part of your active mind, but more important, they will also seep into your other mind, that mysterious source that never sleeps, which creates your dreams, and often makes you act in ways you do not always comprehend.

Once you have mastered the principle of scroll 1, you will proceed to scroll 2 and repeat steps 1 – 4, as related to scroll 2, for a further 21 days. And so forth until all scrolls have been read. Eventually you will find yourself reacting to all situations which confront you by falling back on the good habits you have chosen to guide you through life. Good habits are born for when an act becomes easy through constant repetition it becomes a pleasure to perform and when it is a pleasure to perform it is man’s nature to perform it often. When you perform it often, it becomes a habit and you become its slave, and since it is a good habit, excellence, happiness, wealth, etc. will prosper.

Today I begin a new life

I have taken the liberty to add to your list of good habits :

| Habit | Reason | Outcome |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Get up the moment the alarm rings | Less stressed when running out of time | Small beginning, great victory |
| Schedule Lions meeting and attend | Meet my obligation | Get involved again |
| Put on my Lions pin every day | To honour my undertaking when I promised to do so at my induction | Show my friends, colleagues and all whom I meet that I am proud to be a Lion |
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