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# THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PERSONAL MAGNETISM

William Walker Atkinson



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**WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON**



The Art and Science of Personal Magnetism by William Walker Atkinson.

First published in 1913.

This ebook edition was published by Global Grey.

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Global Grey 2025

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# Chapter 1. Personal Magnetism

It is a strange and almost amusing fact that there should be at the same time, on the part of the general public, such a general acceptance of the existence of personal magnetism, on the one hand, and such an ignorance of the nature of this wonderful force, on the other hand. In short, while everyone believes in the existence of personal magnetism, scarcely anyone possesses knowledge of the real nature of the same, much less a working knowledge of its principles of application.

A belief in the existence of a personal power, influence, or atmosphere, on the part of certain individuals, which enables the possessor to attract, influence, dominate or control others, has been held by the race from the earliest days of written history. Many of the oldest writings of the race contain references to the strange, mysterious power possessed by certain individuals, which enabled them to attract or influence others. And, following the course of written human history along the ages, we may perceive a constant reference to this strange power of the individual, so generally acknowledged and at the same time, so little understood. Coming down to the present age, an age in which great attention has been devoted to the study of psychology and psychic subjects in general, we find that while the old belief in personal magnetism has been strengthened, there exists, at the same time, very little general knowledge among the public regarding the real nature of the force or the best means of using and employing it.

But this lack of knowledge just alluded to is confined to the general public. In all ages there have been a few advanced individuals who have thoroughly understood and employed the force of personal influence. Not only have the occult students of the past possessed this knowledge, and have passed it on to their successors, but many of the greatest men of history have acquired a thorough knowledge likewise, and have employed it in advancing their own interests. In some cases, individuals of this last mentioned class have received direct instruction from occult teachers, but in many cases they have stumbled across the existence of the power within themselves, and then advanced in their knowledge of the subject by careful investigation and study, accompanied by constant experimentation. Many of them, in their writings or sayings, have testified to their knowledge and us of this most wonderful power. It is difficult even to correctly define the term "personal magnetism," so little are its principles understood by the masses of the people. The dictionaries give us but little help in the matter, so vague are their so-called definitions. Perhaps the best definition is the following: "the strong, peculiar, but little understood power, force, or influence, exerted by certain individuals, in varying degrees, by the means of which other persons are attracted to, controlled by, dominated, or influenced by the individual possessing the power; a form of mental influence exerted by certain individuals over those with whom they come in contact."

The principal objection that I, personally, have to the above otherwise fairly good definition, is it implies that only certain individuals possess personal magnetism, the implication being that the remainder of the race are devoid of it. This, in my opinion, is a sad mistake. The truth is, each and every individual is in possession of a certain degree of personal magnetism; that each person may increase the degree and strengthen the power by knowledge and practice.

Even the most "un-magnetic" person possesses personal magnetism, perhaps even to a considerable degree, but is generally so ignorant of the nature of the force or the means of its employment, that he or she actually repels other persons instead of attracting them. For, do not fail to note this fact, personal magnetism, like material magnetism, may repel as well as

attract - it has its positive as well as its negative side. Many very repellent persons are really manifesting a high degree of personal magnetism in a negative form, and are driving away persons from them in the same manner that others attract persons to them - it is all a matter of the use of the power.

The fact is that every person generates and throws off a certain degree (varying among different individuals) of personal magnetism, which affects the minds of other persons coming within the field of its influence. Not only does each person emanate and project a certain amount or degree of personal magnetism, additionally, each person is also constantly surrounded by a field of personal magnetic influence - a personal atmosphere, so to speak. This personal atmosphere affects to a greater or lesser degree other persons coming within its field of influence.

This personal atmosphere varies greatly in degree of strength, extent and general character, among different individuals. The average person has but a weak personal atmosphere, which extends but a short distance on all sides of him, while the strong characters of the race are surrounded by a widely spread personal atmosphere of great power, especially when they are aroused by any strong emotion, feeling or desire. The personal atmosphere of those strong individuals, who are generally recognized as leaders of the race, usually extends great distances from the person, and is fairly saturated with strong dynamic magnetism, which impresses itself strongly upon those coming within their field of influence.

But even the weaker individuals of the race, or using personal magnetism unconsciously, exert at least some degree of influence upon those around them. It requires but a moment's thought to recognize that some persons emanate an atmosphere of good-cheer, brightness, and happiness, which affects in a desirable way all persons with whom they come in contact. Others, in the same way, are surrounded by an atmosphere of gloom, pessimism and discouragement, which adversely affects persons coming near them. These things are too common to even excite interest among the average persons, but in this phenomena may be found the key to the higher forms of personal magnetism.

We are so accustomed to regarding personal magnetism as meaning only the positive, attractive phase, that it comes as a shock to some of us to be told that the repelling personal atmosphere is equally "magnetic" - that is, magnetic in the wrong direction. This should cause no wonder, when we remember that even the physical metallic magnet repels, under some circumstances, as strongly as it attracts under others. There are, it is true, certain individuals who seem neither to attract nor repel, but this does not affect the general rule. These neutral individuals are usually of weak magnetism, and weak character - that is to say they have no strong motives, aims or desires, or strong cast of character or personality. Each faculty of the mentality is neutralized by some other faculty of equal strength, and the result is a neutral condition akin to lukewarm water- neither hot nor cold. It follows, naturally, that such persons exert but a neutral influence, and have but a weak neutral personal atmosphere. They neither attract nor repel - they simply "bore" persons with whom they come in contact.

Some may raise the question that if, as I have said, each and every person is possessed of personal magnetism, then why should any one bother any more about the matter, or study the subject of personal magnetism at all. Such a question (and it is frequently raised, for that matter) causes a smile to manifest on the features of those who have knowledge of the subject; so childish does it seem to them. While it is true that each and every person is possessed of personal magnetism to some degree, it is equally true that the majority of persons have but a weak magnetic force, and that often of a negative or undesirable character. And, it is a fact positively known to those who have mastered the subject, that even the weakest and most negative person may so develop his or her personal magnetism as to