

CHAPTER 8

IMAGINATION

Dad told many stories about imagination and, as well as sharing some of those stories, it is important to consider what he actually meant by imagination, and what I now understand as a result of my studies of human potential and human behaviour.

Hill wrote a chapter on imagination, in which he described it as ‘the workshop within which everything is fashioned and planned before it is created by humans.’ He said that any impulse or desire is given shape, form, and action with the aid of the imagination. Imagination is an intellectual tool that humans were gifted and perhaps animals were not. It has been said that a man or woman can create anything that he or she can imagine.

Our current time is the most favourable era ever for the development of the imagination because it is an age of rapid change. The time of Covid-19 is clearly a time of rapid change, and if we use

our imagination, we can transform various sectors. On one hand, we have the ideas, and on the other hand, we have the imagination to push those ideas into products.

‘With the aid of imagination, man has discovered and harnessed nature’s forces,’ Hill said. We have discovered that our own brains are both a broadcasting and receiving station for the vibration of thought, and we can create ideas and turn those ideas into reality.

He wrote that there are two types of imagination that we need to consider. First is synthetic imagination – effectively an idea that is already there, that you take to a different level. The other is creative imagination – an idea that is not there. Dad talked more about creative imagination. He used to tell me that I had to come up with ideas that no one else had come up with before. He said that this was something he was not necessarily good at, but he saw the importance of it.

Creative imagination works automatically in human beings, who have been given that power. The creative faculty becomes alert and receptive to vibrations from our desire to achieve certain things. Then, imagination is a creative tool, like a physical muscle. If you want to improve the muscles in your body, you need to do lots of exercise. The same thing applies if you want to improve your imagination.

Hill said that the great leaders of business, industry and finance, and the great artists, writers, and musicians, all became great because they developed the faculty of creative imagination. Both the synthetic and creative faculties of imagination become more alert with use, just as any muscle or organ that the body develops through use.

And Dad always said that desire is only a thought, an idea, but imagination takes that desire and turns it into reality. Your imagination will die if you do not use it. If you do not have imagination and do not use it, it can be revived and made alert, but use is especially important. The faculty does not die, though it may become quiet or sleeping. Once you start using it, it grows.

Dad used to tell a story about how – in reality – things will absolutely happen. He believed that, and as I have said previously, he never had a savings account, he only had a current account. Whatever he earned, he never worried about tomorrow. He knew, and he always said, ‘When I want something, I will have it.’

He talked about somebody who wanted to set up a project to support a particular cause, to create something for children who did not have a proper education. This man had a great plan for many years, but nothing happened because he thought about it a lot and did nothing. He had purpose, but he could not achieve the relevant financial backing to set it up. This is exactly what most people would do.

One day, this man thought about this and said, ‘Why am I only thinking about this and imagining – how can I make this happen? For two years, I have done nothing but thinking.’ Thinking alone is not enough; thinking alone is not going to give you the success that you seek.

The time had come for action, which is when imagination needs to integrate to get a reaction. He wanted to find a way forward, to find a way to get his project off the ground. He was not concerned about how – the most important thing was his decision to get what he wanted, to source the finance to back it, and to make it happen.

Even though this person took action as a result of his desire, in my last book, *Thinking into Character*, we discuss how internalising the desire into the subconscious mind is key to success.

A strange feeling of assurance comes over us when we are in that space. The rest of the world might not see it, but you can feel something that you have never experienced. And, as the story goes, the man took action. For a few months he was still not able to raise finance, but one day, thanks to persistence, he got what he wanted.

That story shows that imagination is key, but it is also especially important that you do not just sit on imagination and do nothing; if you do not take action, your imagination will not deliver results.

Synthetic imagination is used more often in the process of creating success from a financial standpoint. Meanwhile, the success that you create in relation to coming up with new ideas sits on the creative side of the imagination. Let us look at some of Hill's ideas here in more depth.

'The earth on which we live is the result of evolutionary change through which microscopic bits of matter have been organised and arranged in an orderly fashion,' he wrote. The imagination is the opportunity to create a picture in your mind.

Moreover, and this statement is of great importance, on earth, every one of the billions of individual cells in our body and every atom of matter began as an integral form of energy. Everything was intangible and became tangible. When it is intangible, it is in the form of imagination.

Hill also believed that desire is a thought impulse and thought impulses are forms of energy. He said that when you begin with the thought impulse, desire to become successful and achieve something is fuelled by the imagination. As far as science has been able to determine, the entire universe consists of two elements: matter and energy. Dad talked a lot about that.

‘Everything has been created through the combination of energy and matter, from the largest stars that float in the heavens down to the smallest beings, including ourselves,’ Hill said. Imagination has been a key part of that. And I would urge you – whoever you are, however you may live and whatever your occupation, to remember the story Dad told about Coca-Cola.

I loved Coca-Cola when I was young, and every time I drank it, he would tell me about how that huge successful global business had grown out of one single idea, which was the secret recipe behind Coca-Cola. ‘The biggest secret is imagination,’ he always said, and I think of that every time I drink a Coke.

‘The problem is,’ Dad said, ‘that everyone can develop imagination.’ Now, I have a better understanding of how you can work imagination into action, because imagination and ideas sit in your conscious mind and your body does not act until they are transferred to your subconscious mind. As soon as they reach your subconscious mind, you can automatically take action. That’s where my *Thinking into Character* book connects. ‘Sometimes it is abstract,’ Dad used to say, ‘but now I can put the jigsaw together.’

What can we learn from Dad’s story of the man who finally took

action? There is nothing new and unique about this person. They were thinking about a goal and that is not unique; others before them and many since have had similar thoughts. But there was something unique and different about the decision that this person reached on that memorable day, when he put that vagueness into the background and definitely said I will get the financial backing by this date and make this work.

‘The story of practically every great success starts with the day a creator of an idea and a believer in that idea came together and worked in harmony,’ Hill said. Dad used to say he wanted to surround himself with people with the ideas and abilities he did not have. Some excel at having creative ideas, while others are better at putting ideas into action.

My dad said that millions of people go through life hoping to be given a big break, but the faithful plan is not to depend upon luck.

Hill defined luck as ‘a readiness to receive an opportunity’. I like that definition, but I know others feel differently; one colleague, my assistant, who I have worked with for 15 years, and who also worked alongside my father, is convinced that there is luck. In essence, what we are really saying is that an opportunity comes to you and if you are ready to receive it, then the rest of the world will say you are lucky. You have got to have gratitude within yourself that you have received that opportunity. So, it is a word that needs to be understood properly rather than taken out of context. It was a favourable break that gave someone the opportunity to succeed. But when that opportunity came, they took action.

One other idea we need to talk about is the concept of religious leaders. I am not talking about religion here, just the ideas. Hill said that ideas are intangible forces, but they have more power than the simple brains that give birth to them. They have the power to move on after the brain that creates has returned to dust. Think about that. Think about how any religion, such as Christianity, began with the simple idea born in the brain of one person, in that case Christ. There are lots of other examples. Think of the world around those religious leaders that carries on long after they are not there.

‘Success requires no explanations, failures permit no alibis,’ Hill said.

Dad and I talked a lot about the concept of a physical form of achievement and where you stop. Some people feel it is quite proper to visualise or imagine gaining material things. But the clearest form is necessary for self-recognition, and it is good for the spirit. From an individual’s standpoint, it is about carrying the creative process forward. Far from matter being an illusion, having imagination is critical and is the channel for the self-differentiation of the form from the spirit, or the non-form. It is not always the desire people have for that physical form that matters but having the imagination to enable you to achieve what you want to achieve.

Matter is any substance that has mass and takes up space by having volume. All everyday objects that can be touched are ultimately made up of atoms, which are in turn made up of interacting subatomic particles. Understand that this physics of matter, and the way in which the world has evolved, has always started with imagination. There is

nothing unusual or mysterious in the idea of the picture that we have in our mind coming into material being as a result of imagination. It is the working of natural laws.

The world was projected by the self-contemplation of the universal mind and this same action is taking place in its individualised branch – the mind of humans. This was written about by the French author Genevieve Behrend, who said that everything in our whole world has a beginning in our mind and comes into it in the same manner, from the hat on our head, to the boots on our feet. Dad used to say that our personal advance in evolution depends upon the right use of the power of imagination. The use of it depends on whether you recognise that you yourself are a centre in which an originating idea finds ever new possibilities for expression.

Hill said the mental picture is the force of attraction, the powerhouse that evolves and combines the originating substance to create a particular shape. The creative action is limitless, without beginning and without end, always progressing and orderly. It proceeds stage-by-stage, each stage being in preparation for the one to follow, he believed. This is where the whole concept of opportunity and luck comes in; it happens stage by stage, and when that happens, you can see that a picture is forming.

When a child is conceived, it forms, and that is nature. Whether it is a human being, a product, a business, anything; if you give birth to that idea, it will grow. The best analogy Dad shared was that if you want to build a house, but you do not have a detailed plan, then clearly the building will not end up in good shape. Therefore, having that clear

idea of exactly what we want, and having that mental picture is critical. Dad explained to me that you must have a picture to achieve a passion.

Huge emphasis should be put on taking action. Dad said that imagination has to be linked to action. He believed that each day consists of a series of acts of all kinds. The success of the day depends on the successful completion of most of these acts – that is something that Paul O. Roberts wrote about too. In each day, if each of these acts is done to the best of our ability, we can fall asleep at night safe in the knowledge that we have done our very best, that the day has been a success, and that one more stone is successfully in place. That one more stone is part of your biggest imagination. So, you had the imagination, you created that picture. You go back to that idea of a beautiful building that you are creating and just think that you are putting in one more stone. If you don't put that stone in the proper way each day, then it will not be a good building.

'This is the way to really live,' Dad always said. He lived every day without concerning himself about tomorrow, he just lived each day and each day he did all that could be done. He told me that there was no need to overwork, or rush blindly into work or trying to do the greatest number of possible things in the shortest possible time. He would only do a certain amount of work and then he would say that he was done for the day. Mum sometimes would say he was lazy, but it was not that. I think I understand that now. My girls say that I am lazy and it is lovely to hear the way that say it.

It is not so much the number of things you do, but the efficiency of each separate act that will gradually create success. That is the habit

of success and is one reason why successful people go from one success to another, because it is a happy time for them. To get the habit of success, we all need to succeed with small acts each day. This makes a successful day, then a successful week, month, and year. Stephen R. Covey has explored these ideas in some depth, as have others.

Imagination creates a picture: you take action every day, you have successful days, and then it will happen. We should not give any energy to thinking about how. I realise now, after 50 years, that I have always worried about my weight and that has gone into my subconscious mind. I have lost weight several times over the years. Now, I do not say I have lost weight, because by losing it you gain it. Over my last 50 years, the pattern has always been that I've lost weight, gained it and then lost it again. Dad told me I should just release it and it would not come back. That is one way to understand the whole body concept.

One thing that is so sad, is that the week before Dad passed away, he had a party at home and I was, as usual, trying to lose weight, so I did not want to stay. I wanted to achieve this particular weight by a particular day, so I walked away. That is perhaps the biggest regret I have; the last Saturday that Mum and Dad hosted a party together in their house, I left early because I was trying to lose weight.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, I was reading and thinking about weight. About what I was getting right, and Dad's belief came to me that said always release it, never lose it, because if you lose it, you will regain it. That made me make a committed decision – that I will change my approach. This book will be published on 20 August 2020, when I turn 50, and that is my tribute to my dad; for giving me a life

to live in this world for 50 years. From that day, I will never say, ‘I am losing weight.’ I have done that for 49 years. The image I had was not working, but now I have an image and I am working towards that. What is success? Success is the progressive realisation of a worthy goal. So, it might help people, because every one of us is concerned about body weight. If we can use the word release, then we can let go of that weight.

Dad said, ‘You do not succeed because of luck; you know you will get it if you follow this plan. Almost before you realise it, you will have achieved your goal. Looking back, you realise that you are successful. You cannot pinpoint your success happening on one particular day, week, or month. You cannot end a day and say you are successful. You achieve success through consistently successful single days.’ This is the way that human life should be tackled – one successful day at a time. Each day should comprise a collection of successful acts, one at a time.

To finish this chapter and to bring some of these ideas together, we should remember not to be impatient. You can be in a rush to get things done, but you must not be impatient. Do not let the hundreds of little disruptions that happen each day put you off course or bother with your peace of mind.

When we were in Sri Lanka, in those days some people had little ants that would bite. Dad used to say that there was no point in taking an ant, putting it inside your shirt and then complaining of discomfort.

With this crude story, he was stressing that it is our own actions that make us suffer. So, pay no attention to ants; shake them off and get on with work. Concentrate on each day and on each act of the day from

morning to night. Do each of your acts as successfully as you can, knowing full well that if each of your acts is performed successfully, or at least the great majority of them, then that day has to be successful. 'There is no other answer.' Hill said that, and so did Dad.