

# The God Memorandum

*By Og Mandino*

Take counsel.

I hear your cry.

It passes through the darkness, filters through the clouds, mingles with starlight, and finds its way to my heart on the path of a sunbeam.

I have anguished over the cry of a hare choked in the noose of a snare, a sparrow tumbled from the nest of its mother, a child thrashing helplessly in a pond, and a son shedding his blood on a cross.

Know that I hear you, also. Be at peace. Be calm.

I bring thee relief for your sorrow for I know its cause ... and its cure.

You weep for all your childhood dreams that have vanished with the years.

You weep for all your self-esteem that has been corrupted by failure.

You weep for all your potential that has been bartered for security.

You weep for all your talent that has been wasted through misuse.

You look upon yourself with disgrace and you turn in terror from the image you see in the pool. Who is this mockery of humanity staring back at you with bloodless eyes of shame?

Where is the grace of your manner, the beauty of your figure, the quickness of your movement, the clarity of your mind, the brilliance of your tongue? Who stole your goods? Is the thief's identity known to you, as it is to me?

Once you placed your head in a pillow of grass in your father's field and looked up at a cathedral of clouds and knew that all the gold of Babylon would be yours in time.

Once you read from many books and wrote on many tablets, convinced beyond any doubt that all the wisdom of Solomon would be equaled and surpassed by you.

And the seasons would flow into years until lo, you would reign supreme in your own garden of Eden.

Dost thou remember who implanted those plans and dreams and seeds of hope within you?

You cannot.

You have no memory of that moment when first you emerged from your mother's womb and I placed my hand on your soft brow. And the secret I whispered in your small ear when I bestowed my blessings upon you?

Remember our secret?

You cannot.

The passing years have destroyed your recollection, for they have filled your mind with fear and doubt and anxiety and remorse and hate and there is no room for joyful memories where these beasts habitate.

Weep no more. I am with you ... and this moment is the dividing line of your life. All that has gone before is like unto no more than that time you slept within your mother's womb. What is past is dead. Let the dead bury the dead.

This day you return from the living dead.

This day, like unto Elijah with the widow's son, I stretch myself upon thee three times and you live again.

This day, like unto Elisha with the Shunammite's son, I put my mouth upon your mouth and my eyes upon your eyes and my hands upon your hands and your flesh is warm again.

This day, like unto Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, I command you to come forth and you will walk from your cave of doom to begin a new life.

This is your birthday. This is your new date of birth. Your first life, like unto a play of the theatre, was only a rehearsal. This time the curtain is up. This time the world watches and waits to applaud. This time you will not fail.

Light your candles. Share your cake. Pour the wine. You have been reborn.

Like a butterfly from its chrysalis you will fly ... fly as high as you wish, and neither the wasps nor dragonflies nor mantids of mankind shall obstruct your mission or your search for the true riches of life.

Feel my hand upon thy head.

Attend to my wisdom.

Let me share with you, again, the secret you heard at your birth and forgot.

You are my greatest miracle.

You are the greatest miracle in the world.

Those were the first words you ever heard. Then you cried. They all cry ...

You did not believe me then ... and nothing has happened in the intervening years to correct your disbelief. For how could you be a miracle when you consider yourself a failure at the most menial of tasks? How can you be a miracle when you have little confidence in dealing with the most trivial of responsibilities? How can you be a miracle when you are shackled by debt and lie awake in torment over whence will come tomorrow's bread?

Enough. The milk that is spilled is sour. Yet, how many prophets, how many wise men, how many poets, how many artists, how many composers, how many scientists, how many philosophers and messengers have I sent with word of your divinity, your potential for godliness, and the secrets of achievement? How did you treat them?

Still I love you and I am with you now, through these words, to fulfill the prophet who announced that the Lord shall set his hand again, the second time, to recover the remnant of his people.

I have set my hand again.

This is the second time.

You are my remnant.

It is of no avail to ask, haven't you known, haven't you heard, hasn't it been told to you from the beginning; haven't you understood from the foundations of the earth?

You have not known; you have not heard; you have not understood.

You have been told that you are a divinity in disguise, a god playing a fool.

You have been told that you a special piece of work, noble in reason, infinite in faculties, express and admirable in form and moving, like an angel in action, like a god in apprehension.

You have been told that you are the salt of the earth.

You were given the secret even of moving mountains, of performing the impossible.

You believed no one. You burned your map to happiness, you abandoned your claim to peace of mind, you snuffed out the candles that had been placed along your destined path of glory, and then you stumbled, lost and frightened, in the darkness of futility and self-pity, until you fell into a hell of your own creation.

Then you cried and beat your breast and cursed the luck that had befallen you. You refused to accept the consequences of your own petty thoughts and lazy deeds and you searched for a scapegoat on which to blame your failure. How quickly you found one.

You blamed me!

You cried that your handicaps, your mediocrity, your lack of opportunity, your failures ... were the will of God!

You were wrong!

Let us take inventory. Let us, first, call a roll of your handicaps. For how can I ask you to build a new life lest you have the tools?

Are you blind? Does the sun rise and fall without your witness?

No. You can see ... and the hundred million receptors I have placed in your eyes enable you to enjoy the magic of a leaf, a snowflake, a pond, an eagle, a child, a cloud, a star, a rose, a rainbow ... and the look of love. Count one blessing.

Are you deaf? Can a baby laugh or cry without your attention?

No. You can hear ... and the twenty-four thousand fibers I have built in each of your ears vibrate to the wind in the trees, the tides on the rocks, the majesty of an opera, a robin's plea, children at play ... and the words I love you. Count another blessing.

Are you mute? Do your lips move and bring forth only spittle?

No. You can speak ... as can no other of my creatures, and your words can calm the angry, uplift the despondent, goad the quitter, cheer the unhappy, warm the lonely, praise the worthy, encourage the defeated, teach the ignorant ... and say I love you. Count another blessing.

Are you paralyzed? Does your helpless form despoil the land?

No. You can move. You are not a tree condemned to a small plot while the wind and world abuses you. You can stretch and run and dance and work, for within you I have designed five hundred muscles, two hundred bones, and seven miles of nerve fiber all synchronized by me to do your bidding. Count another blessing.

Are you unloved and unloving? Does loneliness engulf you, night and day?

No. No more. For now you know love's secret, that to receive love it must be given with no thought of its return. To love for fulfillment, satisfaction, or pride is no love. Love is a gift on which no return is demanded. Now you know that to love unselfishly is its own reward. And even should love not be returned it is not lost, for love not reciprocated will flow back to you and soften and purify your heart. Count another blessing. Count twice.

Is your heart stricken? Does it leak and strain to maintain your life?

No. Your heart is strong. Touch your chest and feel its rhythm, pulsating, hour after hour, day and night, thirty-six million beats each year, year after year, asleep or awake, pumping your blood through more than sixty thousand miles of veins, arteries, and tubing ... pumping more than six hundred thousand gallons each year. Man has never created such a machine. Count another blessing.

Are you diseased of skin? Do people turn in horror when you approach?

No. Your skin is clear and a marvel of creation, needing only that you tend it with soap and oil and brush and care. In time all steels will tarnish and rust, but not your skin. Eventually the strongest of metals will wear, with use, but not that layer that I have constructed around you. Constantly it renews itself, old cells replaced by new, just as the old you is now replaced by the new. Count another blessing.

Are your lungs befouled? Does your breath of life struggle to enter your body?

No. Your portholes to life support you even in the vilest of environments of your own making, and they labor always to filter life-giving oxygen through six hundred million pockets of folded flesh while they rid your body of gaseous wastes. Count another blessing.

Is your blood poisoned? Is it diluted with water and pus?

No. Within your five quarts of blood are twenty-two trillion blood cells and within each cell are millions of molecules and within each molecule is an atom oscillating at more than ten million times each second. Each second, two million of your blood cells die to be replaced by two million more in a resurrection that has continued since your first birth. As it has always been inside, so now it is on your outside. Count another blessing.

Are you feeble of mind? Can you no longer think for yourself?

No. Your brain is the most complex structure in the universe. I know. Within its three pounds are thirteen billion nerve cells, more than three times as many cells as there are people on your earth. To help you file away every perception, every sound, every taste, every smell, every action you have experienced since the day of your birth, I have implanted, within your cells, more than one thousand billion billion protein molecules. Every incident in your life is there waiting only your recall. And, to assist your brain in the control of your body I have dispersed, throughout your form, four million pain-sensitive structures, five hundred thousand touch detectors, and more than two hundred thousand temperature detectors. No nation's gold is better protected than you. None of your ancient wonders are greater than you.

You are my finest creation.

Within you is enough atomic energy to destroy any of the world's great cities ... and rebuild it.

Are you poor? Is there no gold or silver in your purse?

No. You are rich! Together we have just counted your wealth. Study the list. Count them again. Tally your assets!

Why have you betrayed yourself? Why have you cried that all the blessings of humanity were removed from you? Why did you deceive yourself that you were powerless to change your life? Are you without talent, senses, abilities, pleasures, instincts, sensations, and pride? Are you without hope? Why do you cringe in the shadows, a giant defeated, awaiting only sympathetic transport into the welcome void and dampness of hell?

You have so much. Your blessings overflow your cup ... and you have been unmindful of them, like a child spoiled in luxury, since I have bestowed them upon you with generosity and regularity.

Answer me.

Answer yourself.

What rich man, old and sick, feeble and helpless, would not exchange all the gold in his vault for the blessings you have treated so lightly.

Know then the first secret to happiness and success - that you possess, even now, every blessing necessary to achieve great glory. They are your treasure, your tools with which to build, starting today, the foundation for a new and better life.

Therefore, I say unto you, count your blessings and know that you already are my greatest creation. This is the first law you must obey in order to perform the greatest miracle in the world, the return of your humanity from living death.

And be grateful for your lessons learned in poverty. For he is not poor who has little; only he that desires much ... and true security lies not in the things one has but in the things one can do without.

Where are the handicaps that produced your failure? They existed only in your mind.

Count your blessings.

And the second law is like unto the first. Proclaim your rarity.

You had condemned yourself to a potter's field, and there you lay, unable to forgive your own failure, destroying yourself with self-hate, self-incrimination, and revulsion at your crimes against yourself and others.

Are you not perplexed?

Do you not wonder why I am able to forgive your failures, your transgressions, your pitiful demeanor ... when you cannot forgive yourself?

I address you now, for three reasons. You need me. You are not one of a herd heading for destruction in a gray mass of mediocrity. And ... you are a great rarity.

Consider a painting by Rembrandt or a bronze by Degas or a violin by Stradivarius or a play by Shakespeare. They have great value for two reasons: their creators were masters and they are few in number. Yet there are more than one of each of these.

On that reasoning you are the most valuable treasure on the face of the earth, for you know who created you and there is only one of you.

Never, in all the seventy billion humans who have walked this planet since the beginning of time has there been anyone exactly like you.

Never, until the end of time, will there be another such as you.

You have shown no knowledge or appreciation of your uniqueness.

Yet, you are the rarest thing in the world.

From your father, in his moment of supreme love, flowed countless seeds of love, more than four hundred million in number. All of them, as they swam within your mother, gave up the ghost and died. All except one! You.

You alone persevered within the loving warmth of your mother's body, searching for your other half, a single cell from your mother so small that more than two million would be necessary to fill an acorn shell. Yet, despite impossible odds, in that vast ocean of darkness and disaster, you persevered, found that infinitesimal cell, joined with it, and began a new life. Your life.

You arrived, bringing with you, as does every child, the message that I was not yet discouraged of man. Two cells now united in a miracle. Two cells, each containing twenty-three chromosomes and within each chromosome hundreds of genes, which would govern every characteristic about you, from the color of your eyes to the charm of your manner, to the size of your brain.

With all the combinations at my command, beginning with that single sperm from your father's four hundred million, through the hundreds of genes in each of the chromosomes from your mother and father, I could have created three hundred thousand billion humans, each different from the other.

But who did I bring forth?

You! One of a kind. Rarest of the rare. A priceless treasure, possessed of qualities in mind and speech and movement and appearance and actions as no other who has ever lived, lives, or shall live.

Why have you valued yourself in pennies when you are worth a king's ransom?

Why did you listen to those who demeaned you ... and far worse, why did you believe them?

Take counsel. No longer hide your rarity in the dark. Bring it forth. Show the world. Strive not to walk as your brother walks, nor talk as your leader talks, nor labor as do the mediocre. Never do as another. Never imitate. For how do you know that you may not imitate evil; and he who imitates evil always goes beyond the example set, while he who imitates what is good always falls short. Imitate no one. Be yourself. Show your rarity to the world and they will shower you with gold. This then is the second law.

Proclaim your rarity.

And now you have received two laws.

Count your blessings! Proclaim your rarity!

You have no handicaps. You are not mediocre.

You nod. You force a smile. You admit your self-deception.

What of your next complaint? Opportunity never seeks thee?

Take counsel and it shall come to pass, for now I give you the law of success in every venture. Many centuries ago this law was given to your forefathers from a mountain top. Some heeded the law and lo, their life was filled with the fruit of happiness, accomplishment, gold, and peace of mind. Most listened not, for they sought magic means, devious routes, or waited for the devil called luck to deliver to them the riches of life. They waited in vain ... just as you waited, and then they wept, blaming their lack of fortune.

The law is simple. Young or old, pauper or king, white or black, male or female ... all can use the secret to their advantage; for all the rules and speeches and scriptures of success and how to attain it, only one method has never failed ... whomsoever shall compel ye to go with him one mile ... go with him two.

This then is the third law ... the secret that will produce riches and acclaim beyond your dreams. Go another mile!

The only certain means of success is to render more and better service than is expected of you, no matter what your task may be. This is a habit followed by all successful people since the beginning of time. Therefore I saith the surest way to doom yourself to mediocrity is to perform only the work for which you are paid.



Think not ye are being cheated if you deliver more than the silver you receive. For there is a pendulum to all life and the sweat you deliver, if not rewarded today, will swing back tomorrow, tenfold. The mediocre never goes another mile, for why should he cheat himself, he thinks. But you are not mediocre. To go another mile is a privilege you must appropriate by your own initiative. You cannot, you must not avoid it. Neglect it, do only as little as the others, and the responsibility for your failure is yours alone.

You can no more render service without receiving just compensation than you can withhold the rendering of it without suffering the loss of reward. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, these cannot be separated. The effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, and the fruit is always in the seed.

Go another mile.

Concern yourself not, should you serve an ungrateful master. Serve him more.

And instead of him, let it be me who is in your debt, for then you will know that every minute, every stroke of extra service will be repaid. And worry not, should your reward not come soon. For the longer payment is withheld, the better for you ... and compound interest on compound interest is this law's greatest benefit.

You cannot command success, you can only deserve it ... and now you know the great secret necessary in order to merit its rare reward.

Go another mile!

Where is this field whence you cried there was no opportunity? Look! Look around thee. See, where only yesterday you wallowed on the refuse of self-pity, you now walk tall on a carpet of gold. Nothing has changed ... except you, but you are everything.

You are my greatest miracle.

You are the greatest miracle in the world.

And now the laws of happiness and success are three.

Count your blessings! Proclaim your rarity! Go another mile!

Be patient with your progress. To count your blessings with gratitude, to proclaim your rarity with pride, to go an extra mile and then another, these acts are not accomplished in the blinking of an eye. Yet, that which you acquire with most difficulty you retain the longest; as those who have earned a fortune are more careful of it than those by whom it was inherited.

And fear not as you enter your new life. Every noble acquisition is attended with its risks. He who fears to encounter the one must not expect to obtain the other. Now you know you are a miracle. And there is no fear in a miracle.

Be proud. You are not the momentary whim of a careless creator experimenting in the laboratory of life. You are not a slave of forces that you cannot comprehend. You are a free manifestation of no force but mine, of no love but mine. You were made with a purpose.

Feel my hand. Hear my words.

You need me ... and I need you.

We have a world to rebuild ... and if it requireth a miracle what is that to us? We are both miracles and now we have each other.

Never have I lost faith in you since that day when I first spun you from a giant wave and tossed you helplessly on the sands. As you measure time that was more than five hundred million years ago. There were many models, many shapes, many sizes, before I reached perfection in you more than thirty thousand years ago. I have made no further effort to improve on you in all these years.

For how could one improve on a miracle? You were a marvel to behold and I was pleased. I gave you this world and dominion over it. Then, to enable you to reach your full potential I placed my hand upon you, once more, and endowed you with powers unknown to any other creature in the universe, even unto this day.

I gave you the power to think.  
I gave you the power to love.  
I gave you the power to will.  
I gave you the power to laugh.  
I gave you the power to imagine.  
I gave you the power to create.  
I gave you the power to plan.  
I gave you the power to speak.  
I gave you the power to pray.  
I gave you the power to heal.

My pride in you knew no bounds. You were my ultimate creation, my greatest miracle. A complete living being. One who can adjust to any climate, any hardship, any challenge. One who can manage his own destiny without any interference from me. One who can translate a sensation or perception, not by instinct, but by thought and deliberation into whatever action is best for himself and all humanity.

Thus we come to the fourth law of success and happiness ... for I gave you one more power, a power so great that not even my angels possess it.

I gave you ... the power to choose.

With this gift I placed you even above my angels ... for angels are not free to choose sin. I gave you complete control over your destiny. I told you to determine, for yourself, your own nature in

accordance with your own free will. Neither heavenly nor earthly in nature, you were free to fashion yourself in whatever form you preferred. You had the power to choose to degenerate into the lowest forms of life, but you also had the power, out of your soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.

I have never withdrawn your great power, the power to choose.

What have you done with this tremendous force? Look at yourself. Think of the choices you have made in your life and recall, now, those bitter moments when you would fall to your knees if only you had the opportunity to choose again.

What is past is past ... and now you know the fourth great law of happiness and success ... Use wisely, your power of choice.

Choose to love ... rather than hate.  
Choose to laugh ... rather than cry.  
Choose to create ... rather than destroy.  
Choose to persevere ... rather than quit.  
Choose to praise ... rather than gossip.  
Choose to heal ... rather than wound.  
Choose to give ... rather than steal.  
Choose to act ... rather than procrastinate.  
Choose to grow ... rather than rot.  
Choose to pray ... rather than curse.  
Choose to live ... rather than die.

Now you know that your misfortunes were not my will, for all power was vested in you, and the accumulation of deeds and thoughts which placed you on the refuse of humanity were your doing, not mine. My gifts of power were too large for your small nature. Now you have grown tall and wise and the fruits of the land will be yours.

You are more than a human being, you are a human becoming.

You are capable of great wonders. Your potential is unlimited. Who else, among my creatures, has mastered fire? Who else, among my creatures, has conquered gravity, has pierced the heavens, has conquered disease and pestilence and drought?

Never demean yourself again!

Never settle for the crumbs of life!

Never hide your talents, from this day hence!

Remember the child who says, "when I am big boy." But what is that? For the big boy says, "when I grow up." And then the grown up, he says, "when I am wed." But to be wed, what is

that, after all? The thought then changes to "when I retire." And then, retirement comes, and he looks back over it and somehow he has missed it all and it is gone.

Enjoy this day, today ... and tomorrow, tomorrow.

You have performed the greatest miracle in the world.

You have returned from a living death.

You will feel self-pity no more and each new day will be a challenge and a joy.

You have been born again ... but just as before, you can choose failure and despair or success and happiness. The choice is yours. The choice is exclusively yours. I can only watch, as before ... in pride ... or sorrow.

Remember, then, the four laws of happiness and success.

- Count your blessings.
- Proclaim your rarity.
- Go another mile.
- Use wisely your power of choice.

And one more, to fulfill the other four. Do all things with love ... love for yourself, love for all others, and love for me.

Wipe away your tears. Reach out, grasp my hand, and stand straight.

Let me cut the grave cloths that have bound you.

This day you have been notified.