

From Maryville, Missouri

Dale Carnegie, American lecturer, author, and pioneer in the field of public speaking

Dale Breckenridge Carnegie (November 24, 1888 – November 1, 1955) was an American writer, lecturer, and the developer of famous courses in self-improvement, salesmanship, corporate training, public speaking, and interpersonal skills. Born into poverty on a farm in Maryville, Missouri, 12 miles from the nearest railroad, yet this farm boy became one of the best-known men of our time. He was the author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), a massive bestseller that remains popular today. He also wrote *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* (1948), *Lincoln the Unknown* (1932), and several other books.

His family moved to Belton, Missouri, when he was a small child. In his teens, though still having to get up at 4 a.m. every day to milk his parents' cows, he managed to obtain an education at the State Teacher's College in Warrensburg, Missouri. His family was too poor to afford the \$1 a day it cost for room and board, so Carnegie continued to live at home while riding to and from school daily on horseback. He took advantage of these solitary rides to practice reciting speeches and fine-tuning his oratory style. Carnegie frequently entered intercollegiate public speaking competitions and won the majority of contests in which he participated. His prowess as a public speaker was such that other students offered to pay him to train them. After graduating from college in 1908, Carnegie took a job as a traveling salesman for the International Correspondence Schools, based out of Alliance, Nebraska. He then took another sales job for the meatpacking business Armour and Company.

By 1911, Carnegie had saved up \$500, which was enough to quit his job, move to New York City and try to make it as an actor and attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, but found little success as an actor. Dale returned to New York, unemployed, nearly broke, and living at the YMCA on 125th Street. It was there that he got the idea to teach public speaking, and he persuaded the "Y" manager to allow him to instruct a class in return for 80% of the net proceeds. In his first session, he had run out of material; improvising, he suggested that students speak about "something that made them angry," and discovered that the technique made speakers unafraid to address a public audience. Carnegie was of the opinion that the quickest and most effective way to build up self-confidence and self-esteem is through public speaking and interaction. From this 1912 debut, the Dale Carnegie Course evolved. Carnegie had tapped into the average American's desire to have more self-confidence, and by 1914, he was earning \$500--the equivalent of nearly \$10,000 now--every week.

By 1916, Dale was able to rent Carnegie Hall itself for a lecture to a packed house. Carnegie's first collection of his writings was *Public Speaking: a Practical Course for Business Men* (1926), later entitled *Public Speaking and Influencing Men in Business* (1932). His crowning achievement, however, was when Simon & Schuster published *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. The book was a bestseller from its debut in 1936, in its 17th printing within a few months. By the time of Carnegie's death, the book had sold five million copies in 31 languages, and there had been 450,000 graduates of his Dale Carnegie Institute. It has been stated in the book that he had critiqued over 150,000 speeches in his participation in the adult education movement of the time.

During World War I, Carnegie enlisted in the United States Army and served for a little over a year at Camp Upton on Long Island during World War I. After his discharge from the military, Carnegie was hired as the business manager of a traveling lecture course taught by Lowell Thomas, the writer and broadcaster best known for his coverage of *Lawrence of Arabia*.

At the conclusion of the Lowell Thomas tour, Carnegie returned to New York and considered what to do next with his life. He recalled how students had offered to pay him money to teach them public speaking and realized that this skill was what helped him succeed as a salesman, so Carnegie had the idea to teach public speaking classes for adults. He successfully pitched the idea to the Y.M.C.A, which provided him a space to begin night classes in return for a cut of the profits.

Dale Carnegie was a tremendously successful person, and his career was spent making others understand how to be happy and successful. This was due in no small part to Carnegie's Christianity. Therein lay the source of his success.

Although he didn't write traditional "Christian" literature, Dale Carnegie was a professing believer. His worldview and creative material was clearly biblically inspired.

Carnegie died of Hodgkin's disease on November 1, 1955, at his home in Forest Hills, New York. He was laid to rest in the Belton, Missouri.

Mrs. Carnegie took control of company operations after Mr. Carnegie's death in 1955 and developed the business into a multinational one with offices in seventy countries and eight million graduates. She died in 1998 at age of 85.

Mr. Carnegie believed in losing himself in sacrificial service and finding contentment in God's will for his life. At a time of rising unemployment, anxious and volatile financial markets and shrinking personal retirement accounts, the story of Dale Carnegie's life -- and his wisdom -- serves as an inspirational and encouraging lesson.

Sidebar

You might have heard of these graduates of the Dale Carnegie Training Courses:

Mary Kay Ash, Founder, Mary Kay Cosmetics; **Joseph Antorini**, Past Chairman, K-mart; **Warren E. Buffet**, CEO, Berkshire Hathaway; **Donald C. Burnham**, Chairman, Westinghouse; **Jack Eckerd**, President, Eckerd Drugs; **William Ellinghaus**, President, AT&T; **Elliott Pete Estes**, President, General Motors; **Lee Iacocca**, President, Chrysler Corporation; **J.W. Marriott, Jr.**, CEO, Marriott Hotels; **Thomas Pownall**, President, Martin Marietta; **Orville Redenbacher**, Founder, Orville Redenbacher Popcorn; **Dave Thomas**, Founder, Wendy's; **Zig Ziglar**, Founder, Ziglar Training Systems; **Ann Landers**, Advice Columnist; **Chuck Norris**, Actor; **Joe DiMaggio**, New York Yankees Legend; **Dale Jarrett**, NASCAR Driver; **Mickey Mantle**, New York Yankees Legend; **Heather French**, Miss America 2000.

Quotes

Dale Carnegie was asked, "What is the secret of your life?" Dale Carnegie replied, "Every day I pray. I yield myself to God, the tensions and anxieties go out of me and peace and power come in."

"People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing."

"Be more concerned with your character than with your reputation. Your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are."

When we can't tell anyone else--we can always tell God.

"There are no atheists in foxholes."