THOROUGHLY to realize the true nature of affirmative power is to possess the key to the great secret. We feel its presence in all the innumerable forms of life by which we are surrounded and we feel it as the life in ourselves; and at last some day the truth bursts upon us like a revelation that we can wield this power, this life, by the process of Thought. And as soon as we see this, the importance of regulating our thinking begins to dawn upon us. We ask ourselves what this thought process is, and we then find that it is thinking affirmative force into forms which are the product of our own thought. We mentally conceive the form and then think life into it.

This must always be the nature of the creative process on whatever scale, whether on the grand scale of the Universal Cosmic Mind or on the miniature scale of the individual mind; the difference is only in degree and not in kind. We may picture the mental machinery by which this is done in the way that best satisfies our intellect--and the satisfying of the intellect on this point is a potent factor in giving us that confidence in our mental action without which we can effect nothing--but the actual externalization is the result of something more powerful than a merely intellectual apprehension. It is the result of that inner mental state which, for want of a better word, we may call our emotional conception of ourselves. It is the "self" which we feel ourselves to be which takes forms of our own creating. For this reason, our thought must be so grounded upon knowledge that we shall feel the truth of it, and thus be able to produce in ourselves that mental attitude of feeling which corresponds to the condition which we desire to externalize.

We cannot think into manifestation a different sort of life to that which we realize in ourselves. As Horace says, "Nemo dat quod non habet," we cannot give what we have not got. And, on the other hand, we can never cease creating forms of some sort by our mental activity, thinking life into them. This point must be very carefully noted. We cannot sit still producing nothing; the mental machinery will keep on turning out work of some sort, and it rests with us to determine of what sort it shall be. In our entire ignorance or imperfect realization of this we create negative forms and think life into them. We create forms of death, sickness, sorrow, trouble, and limitation of all sorts, and then think life into these forms; with the result that,
however non-existent in themselves, to us they become realities and throw their shadow across the path which would otherwise be bright with the many-colored beauties of innumerable flowers and the glory of the sunshine.

This need not be. It is giving to the negative an affirmative force which does not belong to it. Consider what is meant by the negative. It is the absence of something. It is not-being, and is the absence of all that constitutes being. Left to itself, it remains in its own nothingness, and it only assumes form and activity when we give these to it by our thought.

Here, then, is the great reason for practicing control over our thought. It is the one and only instrument we have to work with, but it is an instrument which works with the greatest certainty, for limitation if we think limitation, for enlargement if we think enlargement. Our thought as feeling is the magnet which draws to us those conditions which accurately correspond to itself. This is the meaning of the saying that “thoughts are things.” But, you say, how can I think differently from the circumstances? Certainly you are not required to say that the circumstances at the present moment are what they are not; to say so would be untrue; but what is wanted is not to think from the standpoint of circumstances at all. Think from that interior standpoint where there are no circumstances, and from whence you can dictate what circumstances shall be, and then leave the circumstances to take care of themselves.

Do not think of this, that, or the other particular circumstances of health, peace, etc., but of health, peace, and prosperity themselves. Here is an advertisement from Pearson’s Weekly: “Think money. Big money-makers think money.” This is a perfectly sound statement of the power of thought, although it is only an advertisement; but we may make an advance beyond thinking “money.” We can think “Life” in all its fullness, together with that perfect harmony of conditions which includes all that we need of money and a thousand other good things besides, for some of which money stands as the symbol of exchangeable value, while others cannot be estimated by so material a standard.

Therefore, think life, illumination, harmony, prosperity, happiness--think the things rather than this or that condition of them. And then by the sure operation of the Universal Law, these things will form themselves into the shapes best suited to your particular case and will enter your life as active, living forces, which will never depart from you because you know them to be part and parcel of your own being.