

# Get to It. “The sweet smell of success. From an ignorant child you’d never learn it”

By [Edward Curtin](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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From an ignorant child you’d never learn it.  
Yet the sophisticated know it is work  
That is the secret of the good life. God forbid,  
Not labor that breaks your back, picking  
Vegetables, cleaning toilets, laying down  
That steaming hot blacktop on summer days.

Nothing that crushes your body to fine powder.  
No, no, nothing as crude as dirty work like that.  
They are, after all, wise in the world’s ways, those  
Who mean a career, achievement, a steady craft,  
Day in and day out whether you like it or not,  
Whether it involves crushing others or ignoring  
Them, playing dumb and innocent, bad  
Faith to be sure, tapping at a keyboard as you  
Lie or steal to build your innocent dream  
House, construct your illusions to hide from truth  
As you sell your soul to the money lenders, those  
Who hunt and kill the poor everywhere. Sometimes  
It is couched as art or intellect. Get something down  
Every day. It is not important what it is or that  
It doesn’t serve to salve the wounded ones. Regularity is what  
Counts, a daily drop in the bucket of fugacious waste,  
Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, creeping  
Through a petty pace in petty pursuits in petty lives.

All wise and happy people know it.

A career a work a task to call your own, to say  
I am a lawyer, a professor, a journalist, anything  
With a name, a title, a way to be but not become,  
A way to say that dusty death can never  
Claim that you have lived an idiot’s life, wasted  
Work in time that you will never have again.

Real work true work regular work,  
So merry Rodin advised the sad young poet Rilke,  
Work, work, work, my boy, never cease  
From toiling over your clay world of words.  
Exactly why he never said exactly,  
Except I guess he meant it would bring benefit.  
And bubbly Freud’s advice is legendary.  
You need work that is yours, so too  
Some love, but mostly work to keep you jolly  
Sane. Life is a long and lonely vale  
Of tears, so you must find your work and do it  
Whether you like it or not. Civilization is a

Valley of deep discontent, pleasure  
Might come to you later, a little here  
Or there, once you get regular, down to it  
Daily. Success will rise to greet you,

From an ignorant child you'd never learn it."

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