The game of life and how to play it

by Florence Scovel Shinn · Language: EN

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Overview

The Game of Life and How to Play It" by Florence Scovel Shinn is a seminal work in the New Thought movement, presenting life as a game governed by universal spiritual laws. Shinn argues that individuals can master this game by understanding and applying principles such as the power of positive thought, spoken words, and unwavering faith. The book emphasizes that the subconscious mind plays a crucial role in manifesting one's desires, as it accepts whatever is impressed upon it and brings it into reality. Therefore, controlling one's thoughts and words is paramount to shaping one's experiences and outcomes.

Shinn illustrates how fear, resentment, and negative thinking act as blockages to prosperity, health, and happiness, while love, forgiveness, and non-resistance pave the way for divine abundance. She introduces the concept of "the law of attraction" and "the law of karma" (which she refers to as cause and effect), explaining that what one sends out, whether thought or deed, inevitably returns. The book also highlights the importance of intuition, or "inner leading," as a direct connection to divine guidance, urging readers to trust their inner voice for direction in all aspects of life.

Ultimately, Shinn's work is a practical guide to spiritual living, offering affirmations and denials as tools to reprogram the subconscious mind and align with the "Divine Plan" for one's life. It empowers readers to take responsibility for their reality by consciously choosing their thoughts and words, thereby transforming challenges into opportunities and manifesting their highest good. The book's enduring popularity stems from its clear, direct language and its message of personal empowerment through spiritual principles.

Key Takeaways

- Your spoken word is a powerful tool; use it to affirm your desires and blessings, not to express fear or lack.
- Cultivate unwavering faith in the "Invisible Supply" and the divine plan for your life, knowing that all good is available to you.
- Practice non-resistance to adverse situations, as resistance only amplifies what you are trying to avoid.
- Forgive yourself and others completely, as resentment creates energetic blockages that prevent your good from manifesting.

• Trust your intuition and inner guidance, as it is your direct connection to the infinite intelligence and divine wisdom.

• Understand that life is a boomerang; what you send out in thought, word, or deed will inevitably return to you.

• Actively deny negative thoughts and conditions, and replace them with positive affirmations of truth and abundance.

Chapter Summaries

The Game

This chapter introduces the core premise that life is a game, and to play it successfully, one must understand and apply spiritual laws. Shinn explains that our thoughts and words are powerful tools that create our reality, emphasizing the importance of positive affirmations. She illustrates how fear and negative beliefs block our good, while faith and expectation open the way for desired outcomes. The chapter sets the stage for understanding the 'invisible game' of cause and effect, where every thought and spoken word manifests in our experience.

The Law of Prosperity

Shinn delves into the principles of abundance and financial well-being. She asserts that God is the source of all supply and that true prosperity comes from recognizing this divine source, not from external conditions. The chapter discusses the importance of giving, particularly tithing, as a means of opening oneself to receive. It highlights how fear of lack and holding onto money can block the flow of wealth, encouraging readers to release these fears and affirm their divine right to abundance, using specific examples of unexpected financial blessings.

The Power of the Word

This chapter focuses on the creative power inherent in spoken words. Shinn explains that words are potent and manifest literally in one's life, acting as a 'magic wand.' She warns against careless speech and encourages readers to speak only what they wish to see manifest, emphasizing the importance of affirmations. Examples are given of how people have transformed their circumstances, from health to financial situations, by consciously choosing their words and speaking with faith, illustrating the direct link between speech and manifestation.

The Law of Non-Resistance

Shinn teaches that what one resists persists, and that by resisting adverse conditions, one gives them power. The chapter advocates for letting go of struggle, resentment, and anger, explaining that these emotions bind us to negative situations. She encourages readers to 'turn the other cheek' not as a sign of weakness, but as a spiritual strategy to dissolve difficulties. By blessing the situation or person one is resisting, one can release the negative energy and allow the path for

good to appear, often through unexpected means.

The Law of Karma and The Law of Forgiveness

This chapter explores the universal law of cause and effect (karma) and the liberating power of forgiveness. Shinn explains that every thought, word, and deed creates a ripple effect that returns to us. To clear one's karmic slate and move forward, forgiveness is essential—forgiving others and, crucially, forgiving oneself. She illustrates how holding onto resentment or guilt can block one's good, while sincere forgiveness releases past burdens and opens the way for new opportunities and blessings.

The Law of Non-Attachment

Shinn emphasizes the importance of releasing specific outcomes and desires to the Divine. She teaches that one must 'let go and let God,' trusting that the universe will bring the highest good, often in ways beyond human expectation. Clinging too tightly to a particular manifestation can block its arrival or prevent an even better outcome. The chapter encourages readers to make their demands, then release them with faith, allowing the 'Infinite Intelligence' to work out the perfect solution in divine timing.

The Law of Divine Design

This chapter focuses on the idea that each individual has a unique and perfect divine plan for their life. Shinn encourages readers to seek guidance and intuition to discover and align with this plan, rather than striving for what others have or what society dictates. She explains that when one aligns with their divine design, life flows effortlessly, and all needs are met. The chapter provides examples of individuals finding their true calling and experiencing fulfillment by trusting their inner guidance.

The Law of Health

Shinn addresses physical well-being, asserting that disease originates from fear, resentment, or other negative thought patterns, rather than solely physical causes. She teaches that by changing one's consciousness and speaking words of health and perfection, one can heal the body. The chapter emphasizes the power of the subconscious mind to manifest health or illness based on the beliefs held within. It encourages readers to affirm perfect health and to release any mental blocks contributing to physical ailments.

The Law of Love

This chapter highlights love as the supreme power and the fulfilling of the law. Shinn explains that love dissolves all negativity, fear, and resistance, and that by radiating love, one attracts all good things and experiences harmonious relationships. She teaches that love is not merely an emotion but a powerful spiritual force that can transform any situation. The chapter encourages unconditional love for oneself and others, illustrating how this expansive love opens the door to joy, peace, and abundance.

The Law of Intuition or Divine Guidance

Shinn concludes by emphasizing the importance of listening to one's inner voice and trusting divine guidance. She explains that intuition is God speaking directly to us, providing solutions to all problems and leading us to our highest good. The chapter encourages readers to develop their intuitive faculty through quiet contemplation and by asking for clear guidance. It illustrates how following these inner promptings, even when they seem illogical, always leads to the right path and perfect outcomes.

Themes

- Power of Thought
- Law of Attraction
- Faith and Affirmation
- Divine Guidance
- Non-Resistance
- Prosperity Consciousness

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The game of life and how to play it about?

The book is about understanding and applying spiritual laws to achieve success, happiness, and prosperity in life. It teaches that life is a game, and by mastering the power of thought, spoken words, and faith, individuals can manifest their desires and overcome challenges.

Is The game of life and how to play it worth reading?

Yes, it is considered a foundational text in the New Thought movement and self-help genre. Its clear, concise teachings on manifestation, positive thinking, and spiritual principles have influenced millions and remain relevant for those seeking personal empowerment and spiritual growth.

How does The game of life and how to play it end?

Spoiler: The book does not have a narrative ending. Instead, it concludes by summarizing its core spiritual principles and offering practical affirmations and denials. It encourages readers to continuously apply these teachings to master the "game of life" in all its aspects.

Who should read The game of life and how to play it?

This book is ideal for anyone interested in New Thought philosophy, the law of attraction, positive thinking, or spiritual self-help. It appeals to those looking for practical methods to improve their circumstances through mental and spiritual discipline.

How long does it take to read The game of life and how to play it?

Given its concise nature, most readers can complete "The Game of Life and How to Play It" in about 1 to 2 hours. It's a relatively short book, often read multiple times for deeper understanding and reinforcement of its principles.

Best Quotes

“The game of life is a game of boomerangs.”

The Game

This opening line from the first chapter establishes the core principle that whatever one sends out in thought, word, or deed, returns to them. It emphasizes the law of cause and effect, urging readers to be mindful of their contributions to the universe and their own destiny.

“Your word is your wand.”

The Law of Prosperity

This powerful statement from the second chapter highlights the creative power of spoken words. Shinn teaches that words are potent tools for manifestation, shaping one's reality. It encourages conscious and positive speech to attract desired outcomes and fulfill one's intentions.

“Man's only enemy is himself.”

The Power of the Word

Found in a chapter discussing inner obstacles, this quote means that external challenges are often reflections of internal fears, doubts, or negative thought patterns. Shinn asserts that true mastery comes from conquering one's own limiting beliefs and self-sabotage, rather than fighting external forces.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

The Game

Shinn frequently references biblical passages to support her teachings. This quote, often used in affirmations, reminds the reader of their inherent divine power and authority to shape their life. It encourages taking responsibility for one's creative capacity and exercising spiritual dominion.

“There is no lack in divine mind.”

The Law of Prosperity

This fundamental principle from the chapter on prosperity asserts that the universe is abundant and limitless. Shinn encourages readers to release beliefs in scarcity and to align their consciousness with the infinite supply available through divine intelligence, trusting in universal provision.

“The subconscious mind, which is simply 'mind-stuff,' has no power of selection.”

The Power of the Word

Shinn explains that the subconscious mind uncritically accepts whatever thoughts and images are impressed upon it, whether positive or negative. This emphasizes the importance of consciously directing one's thoughts and words to create desired realities, as the subconscious will faithfully execute the instructions it receives.

“Man can only receive what he sees himself receiving.”

The Law of Prosperity

This quote underscores the power of visualization and mental imagery in manifestation. Shinn teaches that one must mentally accept and vividly picture their desired outcome before it can materialize in their physical experience, emphasizing the crucial role of belief and expectation in attracting one's desires.

“Fear is man's only enemy.”

The Power of the Word

Shinn repeatedly emphasizes that fear is the primary obstacle to manifesting one's desires and living a fulfilling life. It paralyzes action and attracts negative experiences, making it crucial for individuals to overcome fear through faith, positive affirmation, and trust in divine protection.

“The perfect plan of God for me is now unfolding.”

Perfect Self-Expression or The Divine Design

This is a powerful affirmation Shinn recommends for aligning with one's divine purpose and receiving guidance. It encourages trust in a higher intelligence to reveal the right path and bring about ideal circumstances, fostering peace, clarity, and the manifestation of one's true potential.

“Non-resistance is a state of mind.”

The Law of Non-Resistance

From the chapter on non-resistance, this line clarifies that true non-resistance isn't passive inaction, but an internal state of peace and acceptance. It means not fighting against adverse conditions, but rather rising above them through spiritual understanding and faith, allowing

divine solutions to emerge.

“Every man is a magnet, and draws to himself that which he loves.”

The Law of Prosperity

This quote explains the law of attraction, stating that one's dominant thoughts and feelings act like a magnet, drawing corresponding experiences into their life. It highlights the importance of cultivating love and positive emotions to attract desired outcomes and repel unwanted circumstances.

“The law of supply is immutable.”

The Law of Prosperity

Shinn asserts that the universe operates on an unchanging principle of abundant supply, always ready to meet human needs. This quote encourages readers to trust in this law and to align their consciousness with it, rather than focusing on perceived lack, knowing that divine provision is constant.

“All disease comes from sin.”

The Law of Karma, and The Law of Forgiveness

Shinn defines 'sin' not as moral wrongdoing, but as 'missing the mark' or breaking spiritual law, particularly the law of love. This quote suggests that physical ailments are often manifestations of unharmonious thoughts, emotions, or actions, emphasizing the mind-body connection in health.

“Man's success depends upon his own faith.”

The Game

This statement emphasizes the crucial role of belief in achieving one's goals. Shinn teaches that unwavering faith in divine power and one's ability to manifest desires is essential for overcoming obstacles and realizing success in any endeavor, as faith activates the spiritual laws.

“The game is played with words.”

The Power of the Word

This reiterates the central theme that spoken words are powerful creative tools. Shinn advises readers to choose their words carefully, as they are constantly programming their subconscious mind and shaping their reality, for good or ill, making conscious speech vital.

“What man has done, man can do.”

Perfect Self-Expression or The Divine Design

This quote inspires readers to believe in their own potential by observing the achievements of others. Shinn suggests that if someone else has accomplished something, it demonstrates the universal capacity for similar success, encouraging aspiration and effort, and removing self-imposed limitations.

“The law of forgiveness is the law of karma.”

The Law of Karma, and The Law of Forgiveness

Shinn explains that by forgiving others and oneself, one releases negative karmic patterns and clears the path for positive experiences. Forgiveness is presented as a powerful spiritual tool for dissolving past grievances and attracting harmony, thereby neutralizing the boomerang effect of negative actions.

“Love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Love

Drawing from biblical wisdom, Shinn presents love as the supreme spiritual law. She teaches that acting from a place of love, rather than fear or resentment, aligns one with divine principles and naturally brings about positive outcomes and fulfillment, as love is the highest vibration.

“Intuition is man's spiritual GPS.”

Intuition or Guidance

Shinn describes intuition as direct guidance from the divine, a reliable inner compass. This quote encourages readers to trust their gut feelings and inner promptings, as they lead to their highest good and reveal the perfect path, bypassing logical limitations and accessing divine wisdom.

“Denials and affirmations are a most important part of the game of life.”

Denials and Affirmations

This line highlights the practical tools Shinn provides for reprogramming the subconscious mind. Denials release negative beliefs, while affirmations impress positive truths, working together to transform one's consciousness and manifest desires by consciously directing mental energy.

Questions & Answers

What is the central metaphor Florence Scovel Shinn uses to describe life in her book?

Shinn uses the metaphor of 'The Game of Life.' She explains that life is a game where understanding and applying spiritual laws are crucial for success. The goal is to play the game

skillfully by mastering one's thoughts, words, and reactions, thereby manifesting desired outcomes and avoiding negative experiences. She emphasizes that the game is won by consciously directing one's consciousness towards good and aligning with divine principles.

According to Shinn, what is the significance of 'the word' in manifesting one's desires?

Shinn teaches that 'your word is your wand,' meaning spoken words have immense creative power. The subconscious mind, being 'mind-stuff,' accepts whatever is impressed upon it, and words are a primary way to impress it. Therefore, consciously choosing positive, faith-filled words and affirmations is essential for programming the subconscious to attract desired experiences and manifest one's intentions, as words literally shape reality.

How does Shinn explain the concept of 'non-resistance'?

Shinn defines non-resistance as a state of mind, not passive inaction. It means not fighting against adverse conditions or people, but rather rising above them spiritually. By refusing to react negatively or engage in conflict, one prevents negative energy from attaching to them, allowing the divine plan to unfold and often dissolving the problem itself through a shift in consciousness and trust in a higher power.

What role does the subconscious mind play in Shinn's philosophy?

Shinn explains that the subconscious mind is a powerful, uncritical servant that accepts and acts upon whatever thoughts, words, and images are impressed upon it. It has no power of selection, meaning it doesn't discern between positive or negative input. Therefore, consciously feeding it with positive affirmations, visualizations, and faith-filled beliefs is crucial for manifesting desired realities, as it faithfully executes its programming.

What does Shinn mean by 'casting the burden'?

'Casting the burden' refers to the act of releasing worries, fears, and problems to the Divine or Infinite Intelligence. Shinn teaches that by consciously surrendering one's anxieties and trusting that a higher power will handle the situation, one frees themselves from mental strain and allows the perfect solution to manifest. It's an act of faith, letting go of control, and allowing divine wisdom to work.

How does Shinn connect the Law of Karma with the Law of Forgiveness?

Shinn explains that the Law of Karma dictates that whatever one sends out comes back to them. The Law of Forgiveness is the mechanism to dissolve negative karma. By genuinely forgiving others and oneself, one releases past grievances and negative emotional ties, thereby clearing the karmic record and preventing further negative returns, allowing for new, positive experiences and a fresh start in life.

What is the importance of intuition according to Shinn?

Shinn regards intuition as 'man's spiritual GPS' – direct guidance from the Infinite Intelligence. She emphasizes that intuition is always accurate and leads to one's highest good. By learning to trust and follow these inner promptings, individuals can navigate life's challenges, make correct decisions, and align with their divine plan, avoiding mistakes and finding their perfect path with ease and grace.

What is the 'Divine Design' or 'Perfect Self-Expression' that Shinn discusses?

Shinn teaches that each individual has a unique 'Divine Design' or 'Perfect Self-Expression' – a specific, perfect plan for their life orchestrated by Infinite Intelligence. This includes their ideal career, relationships, health, and prosperity. The goal is to align with this divine blueprint through faith, affirmations, and following intuition, allowing one's true potential to unfold and manifest a life of joy and purpose.

How does Shinn advise readers to deal with fear?

Shinn asserts that 'fear is man's only enemy' and the greatest obstacle to success. She advises confronting fear directly by denying its power and replacing it with faith. Through affirmations like 'I am unafraid, for I am divinely protected,' and by focusing on divine love and power, readers can dissolve fear and prevent it from manifesting negative experiences, thereby attracting security and peace.

What is the significance of 'denials and affirmations' in Shinn's teachings?

Denials and affirmations are practical tools for reprogramming the subconscious mind. Denials are used to release and cancel out negative beliefs, thoughts, or conditions (e.g., 'I deny lack'). Affirmations are positive statements of truth used to impress desired realities onto the subconscious (e.g., 'Infinite Spirit is my instant, constant, visible supply'). Together, they transform consciousness and manifest desires by consciously directing mental energy.

What is Shinn's perspective on money and prosperity?

Shinn views money as 'God in action' and a symbol of divine supply. She teaches that prosperity is a spiritual right and that there is 'no lack in divine mind.' To attract wealth, one must overcome beliefs in scarcity, give cheerfully, and affirm their divine right to abundance, seeing money as energy to be circulated for good, rather than a limited resource to be hoarded.

How does Shinn suggest one should approach challenges or obstacles in life?

Shinn advises approaching challenges with non-resistance and faith. Instead of fighting or worrying, one should 'cast the burden' onto the Infinite Intelligence, affirming that the perfect solution is unfolding. She teaches that obstacles are often opportunities for spiritual growth and that by maintaining a positive mental attitude, one can transmute difficulties into blessings, trusting that divine wisdom will provide the way out.

What is the role of love in 'The Game of Life and How to Play It'?

Shinn states that 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' making it the supreme spiritual principle. She teaches that acting from a place of love—towards oneself, others, and life—aligns one with divine harmony and attracts positive experiences. Love dissolves fear, resentment, and negative karma, opening the way for perfect self-expression, prosperity, and health, as it is the highest creative force.

How does Shinn explain the concept of 'divine timing'?

Shinn emphasizes that there is a 'divine timing' for every manifestation. While one must affirm and visualize their desires, they must also release the 'how' and 'when' to Infinite Intelligence. Impatience or trying to force things can delay the perfect outcome. Trusting in divine timing means knowing that the perfect plan will unfold at the perfect moment, bringing forth the highest good in the most harmonious way.

What practical advice does Shinn offer for someone seeking a new job or career?

Shinn advises affirming, 'Infinite Spirit, open the way for my perfect plan to unfold; let the divine design of my life be made manifest; let my perfect work be given to me now.' She encourages visualizing the ideal job, expressing gratitude for it in advance, and trusting intuition for guidance on specific steps, rather than focusing on lack or competition, thereby attracting the ideal position.

What does Shinn mean when she says, 'Man can only receive what he sees himself receiving'?

This statement highlights the power of visualization and belief. Shinn teaches that one must mentally accept and vividly picture their desired outcome as already accomplished before it can manifest physically. If one cannot 'see' themselves receiving something, their subconscious mind will not create it, emphasizing the importance of mental clarity, conviction, and a strong inner image of success for manifestation.

How does Shinn encourage readers to use gratitude?

Shinn emphasizes gratitude as a powerful magnet for blessings. She teaches that expressing sincere thanks for what one has, and even for what one desires as if it has already been received, opens the channels for more good to flow into their life. Gratitude shifts consciousness from lack to abundance, aligning one with the law of prosperity and attracting further reasons to be thankful.

Spoiler: What is the ultimate goal or 'win condition' in Shinn's 'Game of Life'?

Spoiler: The ultimate goal in Shinn's 'Game of Life' is to achieve 'Perfect Self-Expression' and live in complete alignment with one's 'Divine Design.' This means manifesting perfect health, wealth, love, and happiness, and realizing one's full spiritual potential. It's about mastering the spiritual laws to live a life of joy, abundance, and divine purpose, becoming a conscious co-creator with the Infinite.

What is the significance of 'giving' in Shinn's teachings on prosperity?

Shinn teaches that giving is an essential part of the law of prosperity, stating, 'Man receives only that which he gives.' She emphasizes cheerful giving, whether of money, time, or love, as it creates an open channel for receiving. Giving with a generous heart, without expectation, activates the universal law of circulation and ensures a return of abundance, as it demonstrates faith in infinite supply.

How does Shinn suggest one should pray or make requests to the Divine?

Shinn advises praying with absolute faith and conviction, as if the request has already been granted. She encourages using clear, specific affirmations and then 'casting the burden' by releasing the outcome to Infinite Intelligence, without worrying about the 'how.' The key is to speak the word with authority and then trust the divine process, knowing that the perfect solution is already on its way.