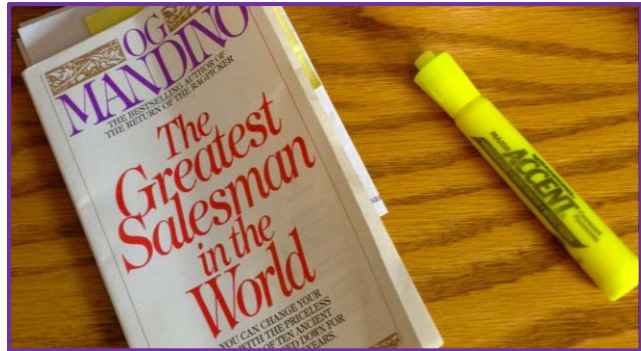


Wisdom from the Ragpicker

Augustine (Og) Mandino II (1923 – 1996) was an American author whose books have sold more than 50 million copies and translated into 25 languages. Chief among his works was the bestselling book *The Greatest Salesman in the World*.



In that book, he introduced a character named Simon Potter, who called himself a Ragpicker. Why? Because he had devoted his life to rescuing people who had ended up on life's refuse pile. Fifteen years later, Mandino brought Simon back in another classic work entitled *The Return of the Ragpicker*.

In this book, Simon, now a hearty and still vigorous 95-year-old man, was still changing lives by his ability to see to the heart of things and his continued commitment to reaching those on the refuse pile of life.

In this second volume, Simon makes the profound observation about modern society: "What are we doing to ourselves?" he asked. "The number of heroin, cocaine and crack addicts is growing too swiftly for us to tally, and we are now consuming more booze per capita than at any other time in our history.

"More than 300,000 individuals tried to take their lives in this beautiful country of ours last year," he continued. "That's an entire city! Each month, more than 5 million prescriptions are being written for Valium, and we are now treating more than 4,000 new cases of mental illnesses every 24 hours."

So, Simon the Ragpicker proclaimed: "There must be a better way to live!"

Then he added: "There *is* a better way to live!" And that better way has to do with faith in God and living a life of character.

The Bible offers such instruction in many places; here are a couple:

- *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?* (Micah 6:8 ESV).
- *Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with their whole heart* (Psalm 119:1-2 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter