

# You Will Be Remembered For One Of Two Things

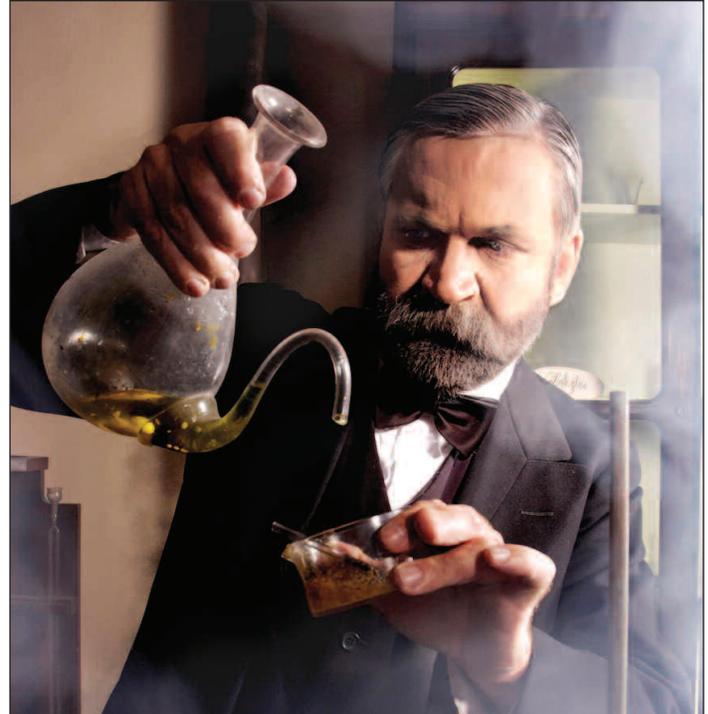
*When you think about it, we all will be remembered for one of two things ... the problems we solved or the ones we created. For the vast majority of us this legacy is created by accident with no conscious attempt to change its outcome in advance.*



**Keith Thomson**

This is a story about an individual born in 1833 who, not only had the unique experience of appreciating his legacy in advance, but also managed to change it just one year before his death. Many refer to it as one of the greatest "do overs" in the history of mankind. Not that he was all that average. In 1867 he patented the process to stabilize nitroglycerin, transforming it into the much more user-friendly substance we now know as dynamite. Perhaps ironically this invention originally was going to be called "Safety Powder", but the word dynamite was ultimately chosen from the Greek word "power". It would be an understatement to say that this invention brought him much financial success.

In 1888 this man's brother died, and a French newspaper erroneously published the wrong brother's obituary. It stated, "The merchant of death is dead" and went on to say that he "became rich by finding more ways to kill more people faster than ever before ... died yesterday." Now 55 years of age, so the story goes, our extremely



*In 1888, Alfred Nobel had a second chance to write his own legacy after a French newspaper falsely published news of his death.*

wealthy businessman was distraught by what he had read and vowed to change his legacy. On November 27th, 1895, Alfred Nobel signed his one page last will and testament in which he set aside the bulk of his estate to establish the Nobel Prizes to be awarded annually without distinction of nationality. At his death in 1896, just one year after his new will was drawn up, he left the equivalent of 250 million dollars to fund these prizes in perpetuity.

Today Alfred Nobel is best known, not as the inventor of dynamite, but as the man behind the prizes bestowed by

the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences on women and men in recognition of their outstanding achievements in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and the advancement of peace.

**Most of us will never have the chance of reading our own obituary in advance. But if you did, would you be satisfied with your legacy?**

## **Keith Thomson**

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**"The duty of the man of wealth is to consider all surplus revenue which comes to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer to produce the most beneficial results for the community."**

*Andrew Carnegie*