

A blue glass bottle is centered in the image, set against a dark blue background. The bottle's neck is at the top, and its body tapers slightly towards the bottom. The lighting creates a subtle gradient on the bottle's surface, highlighting its rounded form.

Do not be so open-minded
that your brains fall out.

– G.K. Chesterson

The Antidote

Responding to the
ridiculous & dangerous
over-simplifications
of The Secret

Thom Rutledge

The Antidote

Responding to the ridiculous & dangerous
over-simplification of The Secret

Thom Rutledge

The Antidote
© Thom Rutledge 2007
© Thom Rutledge 20016

All rights reserved.
Contact the author for information/permissions
for duplicated and/or reprinting this material:
thomrutledgeauthor@gmail.com

For more information about other books by the author:
www.thomrutledge.com

*I was sitting in the Royce Hotel in Melbourne, Australia, waiting to walk down the street to be interviewed on Australia's Channel 10, the national network where Rhonda Byrne had been a producer prior to publishing *The Secret*. I had not seen the dvd nor read the book at that point, but thought it would be a good idea to give the book a once over, so that I could say something nice about Channel 10's alumnus.*

*And that is how I came to pick up *The Secret*. TR*

The following critique is in response to the book, *The Secret*, edited by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words Publishing, 2006)

Preface to The Antidote

I have been in the people-helping business for 25 years. I was right there in the thick of the new age movement of the 1980's, facilitating past-life workshops, attempting astral projection, collecting this and that kind of crystal, believing most everything any psychic told me, all the while genuinely wanting to gain from the experiences and to help others do the same. Although I am amused looking back at my gullibility, I certainly do not dismiss everything I came to believe back then as untrue. The wisdom I have gained through the years, since my days as (what my wife calls) Metaphysical Man, has come in the form of healthy skepticism, not cynicism.

Knowing what I know now, I can see that I was certainly a fundamentalist, if not evangelical, new age thinker --- accepting my beliefs as absolute truth, with or without evidence. (By the way, to anyone I pushed those beliefs on, you have my apologies.) Today I see clearly the danger of anyone claiming to have an exclusive hold on "the truth." All we need do is look at a newspaper or watch the evening news to see how that is working out. The most well-meaning people become vulnerable to the contamination of judgment and arrogance when they insist that they "know the truth." I have witnessed this with countless belief systems. I even know some fundamentalist atheists, who claim absolute knowledge on God's non-existence. What's up with that?

After spending a year or so writing my book about fear (*Embracing Fear*), it seemed to me that the thing that scares us humans more than anything else is uncertainty. Uncertainty horrifies us. So we set out -- our resourceful unconscious minds and ourselves -- to create our illusions of certainty. Believing something to be absolutely true, especially a belief that insures that we are going to be just fine in the end, is --- as far as I can tell --- a psychological defense, protecting us from the frightening task of admitting that we really can't know with certainty what is going on here. Like I said, uncertainty horrifies us.

Which brings us to the subject of this web site: *The Secret*. As you will discover in reading what follows, I am a big supporter of many of the basic premises put forth by this collection of short vignettes by these highly successful authors. It is their collective claim on absolute truth that inspires my objection. And for the record, I have no particular need to argue about this. I would just appreciate it if these authors would help out a bit by acknowledging that they don't know these things with absolute certainty, that what they describe are their beliefs, not facts.

Last and certainly not least, what I hope to support with this article, more than anything else, is the value of independent thought. If I have a belief that I tend to think is absolutely true, it is that protecting our abilities and our rights to independent thinking is vital to the care and feeding of humanity.

Thank you for your attention. I hope you find "The Antidote" to be thought-provoking and enjoyable. It never hurts to have some fun in whatever we are doing, right?

The Antidote

Let me tell you a secret about *The Secret*: it is dangerous. If that seems like an extreme statement, then I am certainly not alone. The authors contributing to *The Secret* are right there with me. The claims made in *The Secret* are nothing if not extreme.

It is not dangerous for everyone, but for some (many, actually) it really can be poison to their already compromised psychological immune systems. Specifically, with its gross oversimplifications of the power of positive thinking (that literally *everything* emanates from our thoughts), it confirms the erroneous notion that if things are not going well in your life, it is entirely your fault. See what I mean? Poison for people who are already desperate self-blammers.

For the rest of us, if we really stop and think this “secret” thing through, *The Secret* is an insult to our intelligence.

Already, after only three short paragraphs, I will have many of you judging me as some poor soul who just doesn’t get it, some negativity-magnet destined to live my life out in misery, or maybe just a guy who, not embracing the belief that the “law of attraction” is the only universal law that really counts, will never see my full potential. The world is never short on fundamentalism, and now I have discovered that there are actually “Secret” fundamentalists. (Fundamentalist defined as someone who believes he has the truth and if you don’t see it his way, you are not different, you are wrong.)

If you are someone with no amount of healthy skepticism, with no inclination to look carefully at claims of absolute truth, and you are a “Secret” fundamentalist, then read no further. The points I am about to make will make no difference to you. They will only make you feel sorry for me. But if you are an independent thinker, and a person who can think in shades of gray, please read on, and consider what I have to say. (Hey, that rhymes.)

What I offer you here is an antidote for what is poisonous about the phenomenon of this mega-selling dvd and subsequent book, and an explanation for why I take such a strong stand against what Robin Byrne and her many co-authors are promoting so successfully.

Agreements

First, let me be very clear that I have no beef with the power of positive thinking, or even the “law of attraction,” as long as it is presented in realistic terms. As a psychotherapist and self-help author, I will speak out as emphatically as anyone that we --- individually and collectively --- can accomplish great things by examining and

changing the content and the language of our thoughts. We live in a culture of victim-thinking; there is no doubt about that. We do not even come close to identifying, let alone manifesting, our full potential, as individuals, as families, as communities, as nations, as a world.

An essential part of my approach to psychotherapy is encouraging people to examine the kind of negative, self-defeating belief systems that *The Secret* addresses. In the name of fairness, here are some of the basic tenets of *The Secret* with which I strongly agree:

- It is important to see the potential and possibilities in ourselves, and in all things. I have even written a manuscript (soon to be available as an e-book), *The Greater Possibilities*, on this very subject.
- To achieve a genuine sense of satisfaction, including happiness and a sense of contribution, we must address our victim thinking. I teach that victim thinking is defining ourselves by what happens to us, the cards we are dealt by forces beyond us, and that non-victim thinking is understanding that we are ultimately defined, not by what happens to us, but how we respond to what happens. I often point to role models in the public eye, such as Christopher Reeve, Michael J. Fox, and Cindy Sheehan.
- Living with gratitude, focusing on all that is good and worthwhile in our lives, not only is a more pleasant way to live, but actually helps us to be more productive. Living with gratitude is about living in the moment, not dropping our anchors into the past, and not leaning so far forward into the future that we fall on our faces. In a nutshell, I teach: Learn from the past, then get the hell out of there!
- Being clear and precise in envisioning what we want is essential to achieving our goals. Basically, it goes like this: I can't get someplace if I don't know where it is. *The Secret* is very big on recommending that we be specific about what we want. The one thing I do tend to add here is that we also need to remain open minded and flexible enough to change course in midstream. We never know what might change our minds. Being unclear and vague is one thing, being flexible is another. And many times, there may be something better for me than what I think I want. To quote the Rolling Stones: you don't always get what you want, but you just might get what you need. (And even that is not always true.)
- There is no area of our lives to which positive thinking cannot be effectively applied. For instance, when we believe that positive thinking is helpful in improving our self-esteem or becoming a better partner in relationship, but that our financial circumstances are beyond the reach of positive thinking, we are mistaken. Just after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/01, I began writing about what I call "positive opportunism." Positive Opportunism is the practice of living our lives according to the question, "How can I use this

circumstance to become a better person?” The key, of course, is applying the question to the worst of days, as well as the best.

- Positive thinking can be transformative. *The Secret* is all about transformation based on a shift in our thinking. I agree with this, with the one addendum of a requirement for positive action to accompany the shift in thinking.

So let it be noted that I believe strongly in these babies and certainly am not advocating that we throw any of them out with bath water.

The Basis of Objection

When I first heard people talking about *The Secret*, it seemed to me that some terrific marketing was being done. No objection there. I am in the business of selling books too. The idea of calling something “secret” to increase readers’ curiosity and to emphasize the power of the teaching is genius, no doubt. I wish I had thought of it.

Someone gave me a copy of the book for my birthday, but to tell you the truth, I never opened it. Only when I found myself in Melbourne, Australia, preparing for a television interview at the studio where Rhonda Byrne once worked, did I decide to take a look. Since Ms. Byrne is from Melbourne, I thought there might be some questions related to her very successful project.

As I began reading, I was not surprised by what I thought of as over-simplification of psychological principles. I had expected that much from the conversations about the dvd and book I had had with others. And oversimplification in the world of self-help publishing is hardly new. But something did surprise me, and it didn’t take long for my surprise to turn to amazement and then to outrage. I began skimming through the book quickly, having trouble believing what I was reading. “This is dangerous,” I said to myself, probably aloud.

What is dangerous about *The Secret* are not its oversimplifications. For the sake of clarity, I have learned that some amount of simplification is necessary in writing an accessible self-help book. What is dangerous about *The Secret* are the proclamations of absolute truth that appear throughout the book. I kept skipping back to the beginning, looking for some disclaimer, somewhere --- something on behalf of the many contributors, saying, “What follows are descriptions of our opinions, experiences and beliefs. Of course, none of us know with absolute certainty how this big vast universe works. We are as fallible as the next guy.” As I write this, I pause to go back one more time to look for some kind of disclaimer, at least some acknowledgement of human fallibility, if not a statement of respect for the vast range of belief systems that exist

throughout our culture and in other cultures. But no. Zip. Nada. There is no such disclaimer.

What I do find are statements claiming absolute knowledge of absolute truth. No fallibility here. And not a shred of complexity. At this point, I will let *The Secret* speak for itself. The following are direct quotations (underlining is mine, for emphasis on my objections):

"It doesn't matter who you are or where you are, the law of attraction is forming your entire life experience, and this all powerful law is doing that through your thoughts."

"When you think of the things that you want, and you focus on them with all your intention, then the law of attraction will give you exactly what you want, every time."

"Your thoughts are the primary cause of everything. Everything else you see and experience in this world is effect, and that includes your feelings. The cause is always your thoughts."

"Just like the law of gravity, the law of attraction never slips up."

"Remember that your thoughts are the primary cause of everything... When you are feeling good feelings, it is communicating back from the Universe saying, 'You are thinking good thoughts.' Likewise, when you are feeling bad, you are receiving communication from the Universe saying, 'You are thinking bad thoughts.'"

"Nothing can come into your experience unless you summon it through persistent thoughts."

"To lose weight, don't focus on 'losing weight.' Instead, focus on your perfect weight. Feel the feelings of your perfect weight, and you will summon it to you."

"It is impossible to feel bad and at the same time have good thoughts."

"Like Aladdin's Genie, the law of attraction grants our every command."

"It takes no time for the Universe to manifest what you want. It is as easy to manifest one dollar as it is to manifest one million dollars."

"Feeling happy now is the fastest way to bring money into your life."

"We've got a thousand different diagnoses and diseases out there. They're just the weak link. They're all the result of one thing: stress." [this from a medical doctor]

“When patients think and truly believe the tablet [placebo] is a cure, they will receive what they believe, and they will be cured.” [again, from a medical doctor. Can someone say malpractice?]

“When I discovered *The Secret*, I made a decision that I would *not* watch the news or read newspapers anymore, because it did not make me feel good... The news services and newspapers will change what they deliver to us when we emit a new signal and focus on what we want.”

Responding

Where to start. Okay, for starters, let's take a look at what medical doctors have written here. First, I am concerned that one M.D. thinks there are only “a thousand” diseases. Not sure where he went to medical school. Of course, there is also the problem of that same physician making the completely unsupportable claim that stress is the cause of all disease. He doesn't say that he suspects that stress causes some disease and probably contributes to many more; he says that stress is *the cause of all disease*.

Read for the themes in *The Secret*, and one theme that emerges is that of blame: if you are unhappy, if you are in pain, if you are suffering, if you are ill, you are doing it to yourself. It is your fault. There is no place this is more outrageous than in these insultingly simple, global generalizations about health and disease. But, as they say in the TV infomercial, wait -- there's more. The authors make no effort to address, let alone explain, how this principle of blame applies to events like the Holocaust, or to terrorist attacks or to children with cancer. (This list goes on and on, of course.) Are all the victims of such things really attracting their deadly fate, or are these people somehow exceptions to the law of attraction? And if there are exceptions, by what criteria are these exceptions made? But who am I kidding --- *The Secret* clearly states numerous times that there are no exceptions. If you have been raped, then your negative thoughts are to blame.

Here is a quick one: *The Secret* tells us that its “law of attraction” is as reliable and predictable as the law of gravity. (These must be the same people who give us the science that tells us the earth is 6,000 years old and that global warming is a conspiracy.) Since we are told that the law of attraction is as predictable as the law of gravity, and since we are told that it takes the universe no time to manifest what we request, I suggest the following experiment: One of the authors stand on top of a three story building, request of the universe that a big net to catch him, and then jumps. Seems like a reasonable experiment, given this revelatory information.

The gross over-simplification of these statements (and there are plenty more where those came from) demonstrates either stupidity on the part of the authors (and this is unlikely; I don't think these guys are dumb), or a disrespect for their readers. The

readers, they assume, will believe in the magic spell they are selling, without any evidence other than the anecdotal examples of the powerful Secret at work in their own lives and in the lives of people they know. Are we to believe that there are not countless other stories of people who have attempted to use the magical law of attraction and failed? Of course, to that, there is a fool-proof response from the authors: if you didn't succeed, then you weren't doing something right.

While we are on the subject of disrespect, these authors apparently have no respect for the scientific method, and consequently reject reason altogether, in favor of their own method of anecdotal evidence. If the "law of attraction" is, in fact, a fixed truth in our universe, there would be, as the authors claim, no exceptions. Scientific method holds that if there are circumstances under which the premise of a theory cannot be replicated, then the theory cannot be considered fact. If any reader believes that no exceptions to this "law of attraction" can be cited, I would ask you to consider the meaning of such a statement: among many other things, this would mean that everything bad that happens to people is the result of their own thinking/attracting. I am certainly not willing to go there, and I doubt that you are either.

Another quick one: Anyone who says that all that needs to be done to deal with weight problems is to focus on your "perfect weight," has never treated someone who has an eating disorder. Give this part of *The Secret* to someone with anorexia, and look out!

Look back over the short list of quotations I have shared above. See how we are told that absolutely everything emanates from our personal thoughts, and that for better or worse, this law of attraction is always true. Every wish is granted. Nothing can exist in our experience unless we specifically "summons" it. Whatever we believe will be true. Apparently we are to believe that the law of attraction trumps all other laws of nature. Or maybe we are being told that all other laws of nature are bullshit, that there is only their "secret" law.

Another quick one: one of the physicians, in describing the placebo effect, as it relates to *The Secret*, seems to believe that in scientific study, if someone believes a placebo is the real deal, that person will *always* respond as if they are being given the actual medication. Ask someone in the business of research about that one.

Which brings us to one of *The Secret's* fatal flaws: everything described implies that the nature of consciousness is singular, rather than multiple. We can't have any negative thoughts and still feel good, and we certainly can't have positive thoughts and feel bad. I don't know about you (now, there's a phrase you won't hear from the Secret-Givers), but I believe that the nature of my consciousness is multiple. Even when I am thinking positively about something, it is not unusual to simultaneously be aware of skeptical or even negative thoughts that are not in agreement with the positive thoughts. To be able to achieve the singular-mindedness, that these authors insist we have, is not humanly possible.

Another quick one: one of the authors doesn't like the state of the world (it doesn't make him feel good), so he stops listening to and reading news. This is a terrific idea given that we live in a time when people have become so disenfranchised from the political world, that effective representative democracy is dying. Excellent role model for the kids.

Whatever happened to stepping up, taking responsibility for ourselves, and the world we inhabit? Whatever happened to being part of community and not making everything about how we can magically make all of our dreams come true?

The Poison

The Secret is more than over-simplification. It is not just a harmless little book of magic spells. Certainly, the vast majority of its readers will not be harmed, and most will even benefit from the emphasis on positive thinking and personal empowerment. (Please reread the previous sentence; I really mean it.) I am not speaking out for those readers. I am speaking out for the other readers: the readers who are in danger of being poisoned by *The Secret*. I am speaking out for the person with low self-esteem who already believes everything is his fault, the person who has always believed that she is inherently bad. I am speaking out for the people who have considered suicide and who just might decide to act on those thoughts because *The Secret* validates his beliefs that other people may have what it takes, but not him.

I am speaking out for the readers who are desperate enough, vulnerable enough, and therefore gullible enough, to delay going to a physician, in the face of serious symptoms, because they believe that they need only correct their thinking in order to heal their bodies. This objection alone should be enough for us to shout our protests to the Secret-Givers.

I am speaking out for these readers and I am asking you to do so as well. Please help me object to this poisonous aspect of *The Secret*. Please join me in responding to this phenomenon by refusing to accept such an unrealistic, simplified, dumbed-down characterization of human beings, not to mention, the arrogant claim by these authors that they understand, with certainty, the nature of the universe. Move over, Stephen Hawkings.

The authors of this book may not even be aware of this --- they probably are not --- but their gigantic little project is, in and of itself, a symptom. The mega-success of this book is a symptom of the increasingly frightening loss of independent thought in our world. It is not a stretch at all to see that the very citizenry that has so easily accepted blatant deception by political leaders for their own gain, are the readers of, and believers in the magical thinking described in *The Secret*.

I think it may be a good time to dust off those old copies of Orwell's prophetic novel, 1984. Seriously.

The Antidote

Here is what I believe is at least a partial antidote to the poisonous Secret. The instructions for this prescription are to take daily, and encourage others to do the same.

- Know that the universe in which we live is, to say the least, a complex place. If someone claims to have solved this puzzle, look him or her straight in the eye and say, “You have got to be kidding.”
- Respect the complexities of the human body (including the brain) and the human mind. Brilliant minds have been at work on these projects for some time now, and the best of them (and most of the worst of them, now that I think about it) will tell you we have a hell of a long, long way to go in understanding mind and body.
- Embrace and celebrate independent thought, and encourage others to do the same.
- Express genuine humility. I believe that humility and wisdom are closely linked. My definition for wisdom is this: *Wisdom is the accumulated knowledge of our ignorance.* The older I get, the more aware I become of all that I don’t know and all that I don’t control. Since I don’t happen to believe that the meaning of my life revolves around knowing and controlling everything (I did when I was 20), this is perfectly okay with me.
- Look beyond your own Santa’s little wish list of all the things you want to “manifest” in your life, and encourage others to do the same. Even if I could conjure up a Ferrari today, would that really be the best use of my magical powers?
- Don’t focus so much on everything that you want, but instead on clarifying and living in congruence with your personal value system. Doing this is not easy, but it is rewarding beyond measure. (Contrary to what *The Secret* tells us, just because something is difficult, or even painful, it does not mean we are doing something wrong. Sometimes it means we are doing something right.)
- Don’t run from what scares you. And don’t try to make what scares you go away by hiding your head in the sand or casting a magic spell in its direction. Instead, know that moving toward your fears, coming to grips with what really scares you, is an important part of learning what we need to learn, part of being a full grown, healthy adult.

One thing the authors of *The Secret* don’t tell readers about the secret to their own successes is that every one of these people has been willing to do the hard work that is essential for success. Every one of these authors have faced and overcome many obstacles, both external and internal. And I would be willing to bet that most, if not all, of these authors, owe their successes to their own hard work, their willingness to take risks, including a willingness to fail. It is that kind of courage, that kind of nose-to-the-

grindstone work ethic, that kind of relentless persistence that has the best shot at guaranteeing success. When I approach life with these things in mind, even if I fail to achieve my goals outwardly, my integrity remains in tact. I can say that I have given it my best. When I die, you can come to my wake and say one of two things: 1.) Thom accomplished everything he set out to accomplish, or 2.) Thom may not have accomplished everything he wanted to in this lifetime, but that son of a bitch never stopped trying.

A life well lived is far more valuable than success well accumulated.

In my reading of *The Secret*, I can find no reference to the necessity of hard work or persistence. In fact, in many ways, this is discouraged. We are told that we only need ask the universe one time for something and that as long as we believe it to be so, and as long as we are willing to receive it, it will be ours. Well, just in case I am wrong, and this secret-thing really works, I am humbly asking the universe to place this article in front of every single reader of *The Secret*, so that they might be challenged to consider *The Secret* with a reasonable amount of critical thinking. And I am asking --- just asking once --- that everyone who reads this send me five dollars.

Thinking It Through

Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity and I'm not sure about the former.
—Albert Einstein

I have two (2) basic objections to *The Secret*. One is intellectual, and the other --- the more important one --- is ethical.

For anyone who enjoys thinking, batting ideas around, debating the issues, considering my intellectual objections can be interesting, even fun. However, there are always those who take these conversations too seriously, those who seem to be personally offended when someone does not see things their way. I, for one, do not need you to agree with me. All I am asking of anyone reading this is that you consider my point of view. After all, the very point I am making is that none of us really knows how the universe operates, so it would make no sense for me to claim to have some corner on the ultimate truth. For all I know, I will die one day, travel up to heaven, and be informed that the point of life was the accumulation of money and cars. Or, I might be told that the biggest mistake I ever made was not believing in *The Secret*.

“May I pleeeeeease have a do-over?” I will be sure to ask in either of those cases.

Which brings us to what I consider the more serious objection, the ethical objection. This one is quite simple. Extremely simple, in fact. If Larry King wants to bring me on his show with some of the Secret-Givers to try to stir some stuff up, beyond the fun part of intellectual debate described above, I will have only one important thing to say: Will you Secret-Givers please just publicly clarify that what you are imparting in *The Secret* are your opinions and personal beliefs, not any kind of ultimate truth? Just a little disclaimer -- that is all I am asking.

I love how the novelist, Tom Robbins, puts it in *Jitterbug Perfume*:

“Teachers who offer you the ultimate answers do not possess the ultimate answers, for if they did, they would know that the ultimate answers cannot be given, they can only be received.”

Thank you, Tom Robbins.

And while we are on the subject of quoting quirky authors I love, Kurt Vonnegut said this:

“Just because some of us can read and write and do a little math, that doesn't mean we deserve to conquer the universe.”

A bit off the subject, but it does go to the importance of humility. So thank you, Kurt Vonnegut. You may step down.

15 QUESTIONS

FOR SECRET-GIVERS & SECRET-DISCIPLES

I called a good friend of mine recently, asking, “Am I missing something?”

My objections to the oversimplification and erroneous applications of the principles of positive thinking seem so obvious to me that I keep thinking that there is some context being given for these outrageous declarations that I am overlooking. There is no such context given in either the dvd or the book. I’ve checked and double-checked. And my friend has taken a good look too.

However, I have heard some of the Secret-Disciples allude to such a context. One such context is apparently the voluminous work by H.P. Blavatsky called *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). Very interesting stuff, this *Secret Doctrine*, but it is anything but simple. Regardless of its legitimacy (I have no opinion about that at this point), this is some very complex reading --- certainly nothing that can be distilled into the 3-step method of the law of attraction described in *The Secret*.

So, for now, I remain focused on objecting to the over-simplification and massive generalizations specifically presented in the dvd and book. Toward that end, I offer the following 15 questions for the Secret-Givers. Of course, you Secret-Disciples are welcome to answer them as well. I do request that anyone answering these questions, answer with a simple yes or no. If you are not able to do so, then my point is made: things are not as simple as represented by *The Secret*.

The Questions

1. Do you believe that “the law of attraction,” as described in *The Secret*, is an absolute certainty?

[If the answer to this question is “no,” then I thank you for your time. You need not answer any of the rest of these questions. You and I are on the same side of this debate.]

2. Do you believe that the law of attraction provides an explanation for everything that happens to any of us?

3. Do you believe that there are other universal laws that might compete with, or affect the performance of, the law of attraction in any way?

4. Do you believe that what and how we think literally creates the reality of our lives?

5. Do you believe that when bad things happen to a person, it is related to what and/or how that person has been thinking?

6. Do you believe that the people who died in the terrorists attacks of 9-11-01, including those who gave their lives to save others, attracted their own fate by way of their thinking?
7. Are there exceptions to the law of attraction?
8. Is sudden infant death (SID's) the result of the law of attraction?
9. Do you think that your perceptions and beliefs regarding the law of attraction might be flawed?
10. Do you believe that the renowned physicist, Stephen Hawkings, would agree with your beliefs about the law of attraction?
11. Do you believe that a murdered child and a woman who is raped are ultimately responsible for what happened to them?
12. In the dvd of *The Secret*, one scenario shows us that a man being afraid that his bicycle will be stolen will actually cause his bicycle to be stolen with his fear-based thoughts. Given this belief, does this mean that locking our doors at night or having a security system installed in our homes, will actually increase our chances of having someone break into our houses?
13. If my fear of having my bike stolen can actually cause it to be stolen, does that mean that my thoughts have the power to make another person do something (e.g. steal my bike) that he would not do if my thinking was more positive?
14. We are told --- in the book and the dvd --- that the universe operates like the genie in Aladdin's lamp, that our every wish will be granted. This statement is made without caveat and without disclaimer. Bottom line: do you believe that this is true?
15. Do you believe that everyone who has sincerely asked the universe for something, has believed that her request would be fulfilled, and has been willing to receive the fulfillment of that request, has been given what she requested?

BONUS QUESTIONS for The Secret-Givers:

Given the infallible law of attraction, as you describe it, what happens if you and I both request of the universe the exact same pair of shoes and there is only one pair of these shoes in existence? Does your law of attraction have to arm wrestle my law of attraction?

How do you explain the hypochondriac who lives in constant fear of illness, yet remains physically healthy? Or the person who lives in fear of losing money and material things, yet continues to accumulate more of both?

Isn't it fair to say that there are probably more variables in play here than just the law of attraction?

Circular Logic

Only a monomaniac gets what we commonly refer to as results. –Albert Einstein

Consider the following conversation...

Secret-Giver (SG): If you want something to manifest in your life, all you need do is apply this simple 3-step plan: make your request to the universe, believe that your request will be fulfilled, and be willing to receive it when your request is fulfilled.

Thom (TR): Actually, I have attempted that on countless occasions, at various times in my life, and it just doesn't seem to work that way.

SG: This method always works.

TR: Then can you explain why it didn't work for me?

SG: If it didn't work for you, then you were doing something wrong.

TR: How do you know I was doing something wrong?

SG: I know you were doing something wrong because you said it didn't work for you, and I happen to know that it always works.

TR: Really?

SG: Yes, really.

TR: So if I were to gather maybe a dozen people here, or even a hundred people, who all say they have applied the 3-step method of The Secret, and it didn't work, then you would say that we were all doing something wrong?

SG: Yes.

TR: And you can determine that without knowing the details of any of our circumstances?

SG: Yes.

TR: And how would you know this?

SG: Because the 3-step method of the law of attraction always works. Therefore, if it does not work for you, then you are doing something wrong.

TR: Really?

SG: Yes, really.

TR: What if I gathered a thousand people with the same claim, all claiming that it hasn't worked for them?

SG: No difference.

TR: So let me get this straight --- you are so convinced that the law of attraction's 3-step method works every time that you are no longer open to doubt, even if some contrary evidence or reason for skepticism is given?

SG: It always works.

TR: Thanks for your time; I've got a bus to catch.

Hey, Maybe The Secret Works

Here's one that is just for fun. When I initially released "The Antidote," a woman wrote to me to tell me how disappointed she was in my negativity about *The Secret*. She said she was pretty sure I am close-minded and that I clearly had no practical experience with applying the methodology of *The Secret* (she definitely didn't know me in the 80's), and some other stuff to support the idea that she was right and I was wrong.

I made the mistake of entering into a little email conversation with this woman. After a few e-changes with her, I was ready to end the conversation, so I wrote to her that I was requesting of the universe that she stop emailing me. I made it clear that I believed that she was going to stop emailing me and that I was fully willing to accept her not emailing me.

I figured that put her in a bit of a bind: if she wanted me to believe The Secret works, she had to stop emailing me. And, in all fairness to my correspondent, perhaps her not emailing me means that it really does work.

About the Author

Thom Rutledge has been called "The Most Entertaining Tour Guide Along The Road Less Traveled." A psychotherapist and professional speaker, Mr. Rutledge is the author of several non-fiction books, including *Embracing Fear*, *The Greater Possibilities* & *The Self-Forgiveness Handbook*.

He is also the co-author (with Jenni Schaefer) of *Life Without Ed*.

Thom has been featured on NBC's Today Show, the FOX Network, Australia's Channel 10, CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 and has consulted with The Dr. Phil Show.



To learn more about Thom, his therapy practice, workshops and books, visit his web site:
THOMRUTLEDGE.COM

JOIN THOM ON FACEBOOK:
www.facebook.com/thegreaterpossibilities/

JOIN THOM ON TWITTER:
@thomrutledge