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COSMIC COUNTDOWN



MOVIES LIKE *THE SECRET* AND *WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW!?* HAVE MADE COSMIC ORDERING COMMON CURRENCY. ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE. STEPHANIE VERMEULEN, AUTHOR OF *EQ: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EVERYONE* AND *STITCHED-UP: WHO FASHIONS WOMEN'S LIVES?*, LETS THE CAT OUT THE BAG AND SEPARATES LOOSE TALK FROM DEEP TRUTH

When I was young *Aladdin* was my favourite story. Rub-a-dub-dub on a little lamp and three wishes were mine. Mmm... so many choices. I always settled for making my parents magically grant my every wish in the future. Obviously I was born to ideas like those put forward in movies like *The Secret*.

the lows of attraction

Last year everybody was talking about *The Secret*; from Oprah to business execs; even popular preachers traded their cumbersome tomes for the lighter matters of the mind. Daily, my mailbox was flooded with ads for screenings or discussions about this movie's disclosure of a previously hush-hush universal decree: The Law of Attraction.

Quite simply, this law makes the curious claim that any of us unenlightened plebians can access *Aladdin's*

genie. The difference being, the lamp is actually our thoughts and desires. Taking it at face value, all I need to do is think about Brad Pitt and strongly desire him to have him? About as likely to happen as George Bush conducting a soulful meditation.

I'm aware that my cynical attitude may make this hard to accept, but I am actually a believer. My beef is the way the material is presented. In an instant world, quick fixes sell and this particular gift to instant wealth, health and happiness is painfully misleading. For starters, there's nothing new about these ideas. John Kehoe – he of mind power guru fame – has been touting these principles for over 30 years. And Napoleon Hill kick-started the movement in the 1930's with his book *Think & Grow Rich*.

In fact, contextualising these ideas as Western concepts is the only thing that is

"ABUNDANCE IS NOT SOMETHING WE ACQUIRE; IT IS SOMETHING WE TUNE INTO"

– Dr. Wayne Dyer

new. Regardless of how much you focus your thoughts and desires on creating a blissful life, the celestial dispatch department will experience delivery delays if your feelings and actions contradict your thoughts. I know dozens of people who truly desire wealth, but money eludes them. These aren't bad people but their scarcity-mentality cancels out any thoughts of abundance.

Encoded in our tribal thinking are "proven" pearls of wisdom like, "money doesn't grow on trees" or "nobody promised you a rose garden." Because we learnt them at a young age, we seldom questioned their validity.

This all adds up to the irrational belief that "I don't deserve" and this is the primal fear that shows up again and again in our less than abundant lives. So before we can wave our magic wand and transmogrify a loaf of bread into a bar of bullion, those old closets blocking delivery need to be aired. Author Dr. Wayne Dyer said, "Abundance is not something we acquire, it is something we tune into."

"WHEN COMB-OVER TRUMP WAS ASKED ON THE APPRENTICE WHY SO FEW PEOPLE LIVE THEIR PASSION, HIS BLUNT RESPONSE WAS: 'BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO DARNED LAZY TO FIND IT.'"

the "gratitude attitude"

The Secret's forerunner, *What the Bleep Do We Know!?*, delves into the messy emotional issues causing our magic wand to become impotent. Trying to think positively while bemoaning life's woes is like coating a pile of cow dung in whipped cream and covering it with sprinkle-spread to pretty-up the pie. The proof of the pudding, though, is in the bleating because positive thinking is always obliterated by negative actions, like whining. Instead of hosting pity parties (those tedious ones about crime, corruption, traffic and taxis), gurus like Kehoe suggest the unthinkable; start by being grateful for what you've got.

quick fix fantasies and drive-through delivery

Motivational movies attempt to condense aeons of deeply considered philosophy into 90 minutes worth of sound bites. Consequently vital information can appear glib and this leads devotees to mistakenly believe that the road to success is paved with the encrusted sweat of frenetic striving. The field of "Positive Psychology" shows that most of us are looking in all the wrong places. The only thing that keeps us happy is knowing our lives matter because we're making a difference. When comb-over Trump was asked on *The Apprentice* why so few people live their passion, his characteristically blunt response was, "Because they are too darned lazy to find it."

Finding a meaningful context within which to live creates the foundation for a happy life. Happiness in turn carries potent energy which propels the law of attraction into action. Life can be decorated with many splendid things but it throws out some perplexing paradoxes, and materialism is no exception. The more our real needs are met, the less value we place on fancy things.

Another myth beget by philosophy-in-sound-bite documentaries is that success appears as an overnight phenomenon. Feeling good is a side-effect of action. I must confess though, the bit in *The Secret* about how to sell thousands of books instantly is enormously appealing. I'm currently ordering a spot on *Oprah* and the sale of 15 million copies.

how to get what you want: setting goals and achieving them

"Getting what you want is about having a great vision, a defined mission and achievable goals," says Marc Steinberg, head of Creative Consciousness International (CCI) in SA. With over 20 years of experience as a life coach, Steinberg offers important insights into what the secret really is.

the big three: I. M. T.

Goals are not obligations. They must give you a sense that your soul is smiling, that you're serving some higher vision. Here's the checklist:

- Inspiring (the mind doesn't need to think about them)
- Moving (one must feel driven to action)
- Touching (one must be emotionally involved).

the bigger picture

Goals need to be realistic, but one's vision must inspire beyond the boundaries of realism. A vision must be refined into a mission, which must be further refined into tangible goals. We need to break our goals down into exactly what steps need to be taken to affect the change we wish to make.

the 20 percent rule

Set goals that are 20 percent out of your comfort zone. I arrived at the 20 percent mark through years of life coaching experience. The risk factor is key. If goals go beyond 20 percent of our comfort zone, the risks are too great, and we feel overwhelmed. If goals are under-ambitious, we aren't taking great enough risks and don't feel sufficient drive.

milestones

We need to work from the future back to the present. Start with the end goal which you'd like to achieve in, say, 12 months. Work backwards, setting goals for each month. When you reach the current month, set daily and weekly goals. Essentially, you are defining what you can do today to help achieve your ultimate goal.

in the beginning was the word: a clue to conscious co-creation

Integrity means doing what you said you'll do by when you said you'd do it. It combines speaking, thinking and action in a single entity. Our subconscious cannot think or reason, it is purely a registering faculty. When we fail to follow through with things, this registers with our subconscious, creating a negative self-image. But if we act with integrity, our subconscious believes in ourselves – herein lies its power. The beauty of the subconscious is that keeping small promises makes as great an impact as keeping larger ones. The key to harnessing the law of attraction lies in acting with integrity and disempowering negative behaviour to ensure our subconscious and our envisioned goals align. What's important is setting ambitious goals and the impact on the subconscious when achieving them. The ultimate aim: an accomplished consciousness where we experience the future as now and feel complete in the present. ■