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**PSYCHOTHERAPIST/AUTHOR HAS STRONG CRITICISM FOR “THE SECRET,”
OFFERS THE ANTIDOTE FOR WHAT HE SAYS IN POISONOUS.**

Harper Collins author and veteran psychotherapist, Thom Rutledge, describes the mega-selling book/DVD project as ridiculous, irresponsible and even dangerous.

“Oversimplification in self-help publishing is not unusual,” says Rutledge, “but *The Secret* goes well beyond oversimplification. It basically offers a solution to all of life’s problems that comes down to magical thinking.”

“The success of *The Secret* would be just a reason to scratch our heads in disbelief,” says Rutledge, “except that there is something potentially very dangerous about what this group of self-proclaimed meta-physical gurus is teaching.”

Specifically, Rutledge is talking about *The Secret*’s singular emphasis on “the law of attraction.” We are told that everything that happens to us, both negative and positive, is the result of our thoughts. According to the authors, we can all have exactly what we want in life simply by applying a 3-step process of asking, believing and receiving.

Rutledge says that neither the gross oversimplification of the power of positive thinking, nor the highly materialistic value system presented by *The Secret*, would have been enough to inspire his outrage, but the message that we are each personally to blame when bad things happen to us, has been more than enough to move him to action.

Rutledge says, “As a psychotherapist, I am working constantly with people who blame themselves for circumstances and abuses that were completely outside their control. The damage of self-condemnation based on erroneous self-blame is immense. But *The Secret* tells these self-blaming people that they are right, that they, in fact, attracted whatever happened to them because of their negative thinking and/or their feelings of fear.”

“That is the poison,” says Rutledge. “These authors cross the line when they insist, without an ounce of humility or doubt, that victims of crime and abuse are to blame for what has happened to them, and that any physiological illness we have is the direct result of our negative thinking and inability to handle stress. This is a return to Dark Age superstition.”

In response to what Rutledge calls *The Secret*’s Poison, he has launched a new web site that he calls **The Antidote**: www.theseantidote.com. The web site offers Rutledge’s article, “**The Antidote**,” that is a more in depth criticism of *The Secret*, and a list of 15 questions to challenge *The Secret*’s contributing authors, and other explanations of his objections.

“At the very least,” Rutledge says, “I want my secretantidote.com web site to be available for people who are confused, discouraged and hurt from what they have been presented by *The Secret*.”

“And,” Rutledge adds, “the antidote is free.”

To read **The Antidote**, visit www.theseantidote.com.

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Some of Thom Rutledge's criticisms of *The Secret*:

- *The Secret* is recycled new age rhetoric familiar to any of us who were around in the 1980's, presented as a revelation. "Create your own reality" was the standard phrasing back in the days when I was all things metaphysical. And the claim that this is an ancient "secret" hidden from the masses throughout the ages --- well, the only ancient thing about that is the timeless art of the scam.
- *The Secret* is an oversimplification of the tried and true "power of positive thinking" to the point of the ridiculous. All of us in the people-helping business teach that how we interpret our circumstances --- positively or negatively --- greatly influences our sense of psychological wellbeing, and that the most effective ways to accomplishing our goals includes positive thinking. But *The Secret* tells us that our thoughts are manifested literally and directly into our lives, that when we think about something we want in a positive way, it will be given to us "by the universe."
- *The Secret* represents a highly materialistic, self-serving value system. The multitude of examples of applying the law of attraction are of people wishing for money and material possessions. Although there are some rather vague allusions (toward the very end of the dvd version) to massive problems in our world, such as poverty, the emphasis always returns to how we can use the magical secret to get things for ourselves. At no time, to my recollection, is there an example given of someone making use of the law of attraction to help someone else.
- *The Secret* is completely devoid of any work ethic. There is no mention of willingness to work for what we get. There is only wishing and believing and getting. In the movie, we see a little boy wishing for a bicycle, gazing at the bike through a shop window, gazing at a picture of the bike from a catalog, and then we see the little boy discovering the bike at his front door. Wishing, believing, getting. Not a word about working.
- *The Secret* distorts (and ignores) the relationship between cause and effect. We are told that worrying about debt is what causes debt, and that money will appear in our mailboxes, instead of bills, if we are thinking the right way. (I am not making this up, folks.) There is no mention of the fact that spending money we don't have is what causes debt. In the same way, we are told that all disease is caused by stress and that any illness can be cured with right thinking.
- The authors of *The Secret* misrepresent themselves by way of their massive oversimplification. Jack Canfield tells the story of his initial success, but neglects to tell us about how innovative and creative and persistent and smart, not to mention tireless in his efforts, he was in creating his own success. I imagine the same is true for most, if not all, of the other contributors.
- *The Secret* blames misfortune on the unfortunate. We are told that the law of attraction is basically the only law that counts in what manifests in our lives, and that it is as reliable as the law of gravity. If we are having good thoughts and good feelings, good will happen to us. If we are having negative thoughts and bad feelings, then we will experience bad things and difficult times.
- *The Secret* completely ignores all complexities of their premise. We are told that everything that happens to us is the result of our thoughts, of the law of attraction. Is this so in all cases or are there exceptions? Are all victims of accidents ultimately to blame for their accidents? What about someone who is hurt or killed by someone else's poor judgment? What about a 4-year-old child? Is SID's (sudden infant death) the result of the law of attraction? Etc, etc.
- *The Secret* is elitist and judgmental. Essentially, this is a group of materially successful people claiming that their successes are all because of "the secret." I have no doubt that positive thinking, believing in themselves, visualizing specific outcomes, etc are among the things these people share in common, but I am also certain that an examination of each of their stories would reveal that other variables contributed to their success (hard work, for example). The message here from the authors is "we are hugely successful, and if you are not, there is something wrong with you." This brings to mind a line from the novelist, Tom Robbins: "The only people who get rich off of get-rich-quick books are the people who write them."
- *The Secret* rejects the scientific method. Although the authors claim that the law of attraction is as reliable as the law of gravity, they offer only anecdotal evidence for their claims. Scientific method would hold that if there is even one circumstance in which their predicted results cannot be replicated, it cannot be considered fact. The authors do claim multiple times that there are no exceptions to the predictable workings of the law of attraction.

The Secret ignores contradictions to its premise. For instance, if negative, fear-based thought always attracts the circumstances of those thoughts, how do you explain the obsessive hypochondriac who remains physically healthy?

For more information about "The Antidote" and Thom Rutledge: www.thesecondantidote.com
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