

587 The Law of Attraction (*this is an edited version of my blog 587; see also blogs 829 & 836*)

A friend made that ubiquitous comment, "you've gotta think positively ... it may just work out" (doh! ... of course it may, for chrissake; then again, it may not). Believers credit The Law of Attraction (LoA) with all sorts of good fortunes. Its definition states - beyond "Like attracts Like" - "Your thoughts create your reality. You attract whatever you think about, positive or negative, and manifest it into reality. You create your own reality." Which of course is great, just think: You receive an envelope in the mail. If you think a bill will be inside, then a bill will be inside; but if you think a check will be inside, then you will open the envelope and find a check. Here is a quote from the book *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne (yes, I've read it; from the painful beginning all the way through to the painful end): (David Schirmer:) "When I first understood *The Secret*, every day I would get a bunch of bills in the mail. I thought, how do I turn this around? The LoA states what you focus on you'll get. So I thought, what if I just visualize checks coming in the mail?" Well, he did ... and they came, "It's amazing, today I just get checks in the mail!" For my thinking the LoA is an awful cliché, a profound misunderstanding of the processes that create fortune and make man great. There is a book *Bright Sided* by Barbara Ehrenreich, about how the relentless promotion of positive thinking has undermined America, where middle America (and dare I say middle Australia) is littered with the carcasses of people being crushed by un-fulfilled dreams, as they believe in the meaningless mantras prescribed by the Law of Attraction (and *The Secret*; I have an essay SECRET). I want to get to the bottom of the enigma of the LoA and the perceived power of wish-thinking. What is it about the concept that so unhinges people, leads them to throw logic to the wind and fall for such humbug? Obviously the LoA contains ideas that are compelling, but the universal truth: *Any one of man's achievements is preceded by a thought*, is bastardized, where the LoA now claims: *Any thought of man can manifest any desired achievement*. The original principle has been hijacked, turned into clichés that are rolled out aplenty; mis-quotes abound and are taken out of context ad nauseam. Just *think about* this nonsense: "Your thoughts create your reality. You attract whatever you think about and manifest it into reality. You create your own reality." What devilish deception. What treacherous a delusion. I shudder at the thought what R. W. Emerson, who nevertheless believed in the *infinitude of man*, would think of his ideas being misused for the Law of Attraction; how on Earth can he or a man like Albert Einstein - with his quote "*imagination is everything; it is the preview of life's coming attractions*" - been drawn upon to instill in people the notion that if they just imagine riches (or *anything*) ... they will come to them. What are the world's refugees doing wrong, that they cannot - for the life of them - attract the better existence they so crave and so vividly imagine? And when the LoA is used in the context of health, the idea becomes scary, outright dangerous. It is a belief among many New Age thinkers that affirmations can heal; however, if one's belief in the power of the mind prevents one from taking their medication ... the outcome can be dire.