

“THE 8 LIES TOLD BY *The Secret*”

By Cameron C. Taylor

The *Secret* by Rhonda Byrne is a 90-minute DVD and a 200-page book which is a transcription of the DVD with additional content. *The Secret* claims to reveal for the first time all the pieces to achieve success. *The Secret* was released in 2006 and has become a worldwide craze. By March 2007, the DVD had sold 1.5 million copies and 3.75 million copies of the book were in print. This article has been written to correct the misguided advice of *The Secret*. The developers of book and video *The Secret* are much like the dishonest trader in the following story who took advantage of the Blackfeet tribe of American Indians. The story goes as follows:

A trader went to a certain Indian nation to dispose of a stock of goods. Among other things he had a quantity

of gunpowder. The Indians traded for his clothes, hats, axes, beads and other things, but would not take the powder saying: “We do not wish for the powder; we have plenty.” The trader did not like to carry all the powder back to this camp, so he thought he would play a trick on the Indians, and induce them to buy it. Going to an open piece of ground near the Indian camp he dug up the soft, rich soil; then mixing a quantity of onion seed with his powder he began to plant it.

The Indians were curious to know what he was doing, and stood by greatly interested. “What are you doing?” said one. “Planting gunpowder,” replied the trader. “Why do you plant it?” inquired another. “To raise a crop of powder. How could I raise it without planting?” said the trader. “Do you not plant corn in the ground?” “And will gunpowder



“A foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.”
Matthew 7:26, KJV



“A wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”
Matthew 7:24, KJV

grow like corn?” exclaimed half a dozen at once. “Certainly it will,” said the trader. “Did you not know it? As you do not want my powder, I thought I would plant it and raise a crop which I could gather and sell to the Crows.” Now the Crows were another tribe of Indians which was always at war with this tribe (the Blackfeet). The idea of their enemies having a large supply of powder increased the excitement, and one of the Indians said; “Well, well, if we can raise powder like corn, we will buy your stock and plant it.” But some of the Indians thought best to wait, and see if the seed would grow. So the trader agreed to wait a few days.

In about a week the tiny sprouts of the onion seed began to appear above the ground. The trader, calling the Indians to the spot, said; “You see now for yourselves. The powder already begins to grow, just as I told you it would.” The fact that some small plants appeared where the trader had put the gunpowder was enough to convince the Indians. Every one of them became anxious to raise a crop of gunpowder. The trader sold them his stock, in which there was a large mixture of onion seeds (which it closely resembles) at a very high price and then left. From this time the Indians gave no attention to their corn crop. If they could raise gunpowder they would be happy.¹

Just as the trader lied to the Indians and promised a gunpowder harvest to get the Indians’ money so do the creators of The Secret profit from the selling of lies which produce false hope and the illusion of happiness. The trader mixed in onion seed to give the illusion of growth and to mask his lies. Likewise, the most convincing lies taught in The Secret are masked by the slight addition of truth. By following the advice of the trader, the Indians were much worse off. They had less money because they had spent it on gunpowder seed and no corn because they neglected their corn crops. Equally, those who follow the advice of The Secret will ultimately be worse off.



Lie 1: “Whatever the mind . . . can conceive it can achieve.”²

The story of the Blackfeet continues that the Indians finally realized they had been cheated when they harvested onions rather than gunpowder. If we looked at this outcome through the lens of The Secret’s teachings, we could assume that the Indians should

have had a great gunpowder harvest because they really thought and believed that gunpowder would grow. Why then did the gunpowder not grow even when the Indians strongly believed? It was because the growth of gunpowder was not based on truth. The Secret preaches that positive mental attitude can achieve anything. The teachers of “the secret” would invite the Indians to a seminar and tell them to think more positively. They would convincingly lead the Indians to feel that with more belief and hope onion seeds would surely grow gunpowder. The Indians would also be taught that if they don’t succeed at growing gunpowder, it would be their own fault for not having enough belief and hope.

A powerful illustration of the long-term effect of the belief that “whatever the mind...can conceive it can achieve” can be found in the study of various prison camps “. . . where everyday human nature, stripped bare, can be studied under a magnifying glass of accelerated time. Lessons spotlighted and absorbed in that laboratory sharpen one’s eye for their abstruse but highly relevant applications in the ‘real time’ world of now.”³

The following account of a prisoner in a Nazi prison camp during World War II illustrates the devastating effects of false hope and false expectation which will be created if one practices “the secret.” In February 1945, a fairly well-known composer in the camp believed that on March 30th he would be liberated and his sufferings ended. He was “full of hope and convinced his dream would be right. But as the day drew nearer, the war news which reached our camp made it appear very unlikely that we would be free on the promised date. On March 29th, [the composer] became ill and ran a high temperature. On March 30th . . . he became delirious and lost consciousness. On March 31st, he was dead.”⁴

The Secret is dangerous because it will eventually break people. It promotes believing and doing things based on false teaching, just like planting gunpowder. Then when there is no success, blame is placed on the person instead of the false teaching. Just as a false belief in the prison camps of a rescue by a certain date will

eventually break and kill the prisoner when it doesn't come to pass, so also the setting of goals and positive thinking not based on truth will eventually break the goal setter when the goals are not achieved.

The authors of "the secret" teach that we should ignore the facts and place our hopes and expectations on anything our minds can think of. This process creates a false world of fantasy. The student is also to pretend bad things do not happen or to dissociate from them so they don't have to deal with the bad or negative. The end result in the prison camp was repeated disappointment and eventual death. The results of applying "the secret" in other aspects of life will be much the same: repeated disappointment, self blame, and eventual death of our ambitions.



Lie 2: You can defy the laws of nature with your thoughts.

The Secret claims, "The law responds to your thoughts, no matter what they may be."⁵ The law of attraction as taught by *The Secret* is false because it teaches that you can defy the laws of nature with your thoughts. For example, *The Secret* teaches, "Food is not responsible for putting on weight. It is your thought that food is responsible for putting on weight that actually has food put on weight. . . Food cannot cause you to put on weight unless you think it can."⁶ This is as absurd as saying, "You will only die of dehydration if you think you will. If you think you can live months without water you can."

The false claim of weight loss from thinking that is found in *The Secret* greatly appeals to many because it requires no work, no exercise, and allows you to eat what ever you want and as much as you want. This misguided hope is illustrated in a comic where a woman seeing an ad reading, "Eat chocolate cake for breakfast, lunch and dinner and lose weight," replies, "Finally, a diet that makes sense." The problem is that just like the chocolate cake diet, "the secret" doesn't work.

The Secret teaches, "Beliefs about aging are all in our minds. . . You can think your way to the perfect state

of health . . . and eternal youth." I guess now that millions have learned this secret, that morticians had better start looking for a different line of work because people are going to stop aging and dying.

The Secret also teaches, "It takes no time for the Universe to manifest what you want. . . Any time delay you experience is due to your delay in getting to the place of believing, knowing, and feeling that you already have it."⁸ According to *The Secret*, a seed only takes four months to grow to harvest or a tree only takes years to grow tall because you think it does. If you think it will grow instantly, it will.

The Secret's formula for getting out of debt is just as ridiculous as it's formula for weight loss. You simply have to change your thinking by saying to yourself "I can afford that. I can buy that." . . . Say it over and over." The truth is that the attitude that you can buy and afford everything you see and want will in reality create more debt as people make purchases on credit without the financial backing. Saying you can afford it doesn't make it so. Oh, I forget, "the secret" is that purchasing things on credit will create debt only if I think it will.



Lie 3: All of life's struggles are a result of your thoughts.

Why didn't God create a world where pain and suffering wasn't necessary? Wouldn't life be better if there were no adversity, pain or opposition? *The Secret* teaches the following, "Up until now you may have been thinking that life is hard and a struggle, and so by the law of attraction you will have experienced life as hard and a struggle. Begin right now to shout to the universe, 'Life is so easy!'"¹⁰

Given the two scenarios below, which of the two schools would you prefer to attend?

School #1

You are required to study and work. Your grade is based on performance, so some will get A's and others will fail. Only those who fulfill the requirements will earn a degree. It is challenging and at times painful.

School #2

You must take tests, but all the tests are multiple choice. “C” is always the correct answer. You are required to answer “C” for each question, and everyone who takes the test receives a perfect score. Everyone receives a degree and graduates with a perfect 4.0 GPA. It is easy. It is free from work, pain and struggle.

When I have posed these two options at various Universities, the majority of the students will choose School #2. I will then ask, “How many would like to have a surgery performed by a graduate of School #2?” Obviously, no hands are raised. If such a medical school existed, everyone would graduate with a perfect score and a medical degree. They could be called doctor, but learning the necessary skills of surgery would not have been achieved, thus the diploma from such an institution would be worthless. Work, pain, struggle, and failure are part of the necessary education process to produce an individual with the specialized skills of a surgeon.

When work, pain, and suffering are taken out of school, the purpose of school is defeated. Likewise, if God created a world where no pain or suffering were necessary, it would defeat the purpose of life. Life was not designed to be an existence of endless bliss. Life was designed to create greatness in each of us. C. S. Lewis stated, “The command *Be ye perfect* is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command . . . [God] will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into . . . a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said.”¹¹

The Secret falsely claims that you can eliminate all pain, suffering, work and adversity by changing your thinking.



Lie 4: “*Like Aladdin’s Genie, the law of attraction grants our every command.*”¹²

The Secret teaches, “*It’s like having the Universe as your catalog. You flip through it and say, ‘I’d like to have this experience and I’d like to have that product and I’d like to have a person like that.’ It is you placing your order with the Universe. It’s really that easy. . . You get to choose what you want . . . you can have, be or do anything, and there are no limits.*”¹³ According to The Secret, if you want to be a mermaid, and live under water, simply ask the Universe and like a Genie, it will turn you into a mermaid. In the scores of biographies I have read, I have yet to find a person, who is not a cartoon, whose success formula was a genie.



Lie 5: *No work required—the Universe does all the work for you.*

The Secret teaches, “*How it will happen, how the Universe will bring it to you, is not your concern or job. Allow the Universe to do it for you. When you are trying to work out how it will happen, you are emitting a frequency that contains a lack of faith—that you don’t believe. . . The how is not your part in the Creative Process. . . If you are in action to try and make it happen, you have slipped backward.*”¹⁴

The Secret not only teaches that action and work are not required but that they are bad because they show a lack of belief and faith in the Universe to do it for you. *The Secret* book and video claim that Thomas Edison’s and the Wright Brothers’ success came as a result of using “the secret.” A simple look at the lives of Thomas Edison and the Wright Brothers clearly illustrates they did not practice “the secret.” Thomas Edison taught, “I never did anything worth doing by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident; they came by work.” His biographies reveal an incredible work ethic, often working 16 hours a day.¹⁶

The Wright Brothers’ biography also reveals an action plan and a great deal of work to make their dreams a reality. In 1899, they began their flight experiments.

Over the next four years, the Wright Brothers performed thousands of tests, experiments and flights. In 1901, they created the world's first wind tunnel and tested over 200 different wing shapes¹⁷ and just in the months of September and October 1902 they made 700-1,000 glides.¹⁸ After 4 years of work, on December 17, 1903, Orville, age 32, and Wilber, age 36, achieved their dream of a controlled, powered flight.

According to *The Secret*, farmers are doing it all wrong. The physically demanding labor and long hours are simply unnecessary. Farmers only need to think about and ask for a harvest and the Universe will plant it, water it, weed it, harvest it, and put the product into a barn that the Universe built for him. Ask a farmer what would really happen with this business plan.



Lie 6: “Your job is You . . . It is imperative that you tend to You first. Attend to your joy first.”¹⁹

The Secret teaches, “What’s really important to the whole Secret is feeling good . . . Sacrifice does not feel good . . . Sacrifice will eventually lead to resentment . . . Many people have sacrificed themselves for others, thinking when they sacrifice themselves they are being a good person. Wrong! . . . If it ain’t fun, don’t do it! . . . If it doesn’t feel good, then let it go . . . The only thing you need to do is feel good now.”²⁰ If Satan wrote a book, I am sure he would cite these passages from *The Secret*. Abiding by such a selfish rule as “tend to You first” will result in neglected children and spouses and in the rapid degradation of families, communities and nations.

“Tend to You first” is the opposite of the words of Jesus Christ who taught, “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”²¹ The more you make the fulfillment of your needs your target, the further from the bull’s eye you will get. True fulfillment of your needs cannot be obtained by direct pursuit. True fulfillment of your needs will come as a result of your personal dedication to God and the service of others.



Lie 7: Truth is relative.

The Secret teaches, “You have nothing to do but convince yourself of the truth which you desire to see manifested . . . When you conceive something in your mind, know it is a fact . . . Whatever you choose is right.”²² According to *The Secret*, truth is whatever you think it is. The irrational nature of this idea is illustrated by the following paraphrased dialog of the ancient Greek philosophers Protagoras and Socrates.

PROTAGORAS: Truth is relative, it is only a matter of opinion.

SOCRATES: You mean that truth is mere subjective opinion?

PROTAGORAS: Exactly. What is true for you is true, and what is true for me, is true for me. Truth is subjective.

SOCRATES: Do you really mean that? That my opinion is true by virtue of it being my opinion?

PROTAGORAS: Indeed I do.

SOCRATES: My opinion is: Truth is absolute, not opinion, and that you, Mr. Protagoras, are absolutely in error. Since this is my opinion, then you must grant that it is true according to your philosophy.

PROTAGORAS: You are quite correct, Socrates.²³

Just as there are truths which govern nature, such as gravity, there are also truths which govern our happiness, peace and prosperity. It is by learning and living these truths that we experience true joy and peace. The Savior said in relation to truth, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”²⁴ If we are committed to anything other than the principles of truth, we will ultimately be unsuccessful. No matter how genuine one’s belief may be in a falsity, it will not change that falsity into truth.



Lie 8: Your mind is the Creator.

The Secret teaches, “Your mind is the creative power of all things. . . Your ability to think is unlimited, and so the things you can think into existence are unlimited. . . We are the creators not only of our own destiny but also of the

Universe . . . Every beautiful thing [earth, ocean, birds, sun, stars] . . . None of it can exist, without You . . . You are the master of the Universe.” According to *The Secret*, a person’s achievements are a result of their mind with no honor or credit given to God or others who helped in their achievements. Again, if Satan wrote a book, I am sure he would cite these passages from *The Secret*.

The truth is God is the Creator and Master of all. The first verse of the Bible reads, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”²⁶ The New Testament says of Jesus Christ, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”²⁷ The teachings of *The Secret* would lead you to believe that you are the master of the Universe. Believing that “success is a result of your mind” will create the vices of pride, selfishness, and ungratefulness. The reality is that once we realize our total dependence on God and believe that all we have and are is a gift from Him, the virtues of humility, generosity, and gratitude will fill our hearts, minds, and souls. Only then will success and happiness be manifest in our lives.

Conclusion

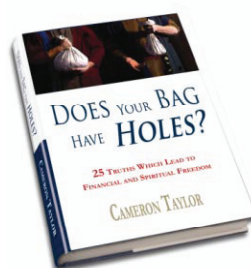
The ideas taught by *The Secret* can be summarized by this false statement found at the beginning of the final chapter of the book. It reads, “*There is no blackboard in the sky on which God has written your purpose, your mission in life . . . So your purpose is what you say it is. Your mission is the mission you give yourself. Your life will be what you create it as, and no one will stand in judgment of it now or ever.*”²⁸ The teachings of *The Secret* are false and the author is the devil, who is “the father of all lies.”²⁹ *The Secret* is Satan’s counterfeit of true success principles. Teaching via secrets is the method of Satan. In contrast, when asked about His doctrines, “Jesus answered . . . in secret have I said nothing.”³⁰

Unfortunately, many will believe the lies of *The Secret* because of its illusion of ease. *The Secret* may include slivers of truth, but they are coupled with grand lies. Following *The Secret* will provide temporary and false hope and the illusion of happiness, but the end result will be disappointment and despair. The result of following the teachings of *The Secret* will not be success,

but misery. We must be careful to avoid the allure of *The Secret* and its vicious cycle of false hope as well as the eventual breaking of our body and spirit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Cameron C. Taylor is the founder and president of the Does Your Bag Have Holes? Foundation, an organization focused on teaching the principles of Christ-centered leadership, business, government and success. He is the author of the book “Does Your Bag Have Holes? 24 Truths Which Lead to Financial and Spiritual Freedom.” To order a copy of the book, visit www.DoesYourBagHaveHoles.org or call 1-877-No-Holes (664-6537).



¹ Norman Wood, *Lives of Famous Indian Chiefs*, Aurora, IL: American Indian Historical Publishing Company, 1906, p. 704-706

² Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 95

³ Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, *A Vietnam Experience*, (Stanford, CA, Hoover Press, 1984) p. 28

⁴ Victor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1984) p. 96

⁵ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 7

⁶ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 59

⁷ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 131

⁸ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 68, 63

⁹ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 102

¹⁰ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 41

¹¹ C.S Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) p. 176

¹² Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 68

¹³ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 48, 47

¹⁴ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 51, 55

¹⁵ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. ix, 82

¹⁶ Harold C. Livesay, *American Made*, (New York : Pearson-Longman, 2007) p. 122

¹⁷ *Academic American Encyclopedia*, (Princeton, NJ: Arete Publishing Co., 1980) p. 212

¹⁸ “Wright Brothers”, *Wikipedia*. Retrieved December 7, 2006, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wright_brothers

¹⁹ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 119

²⁰ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 85, 108, 118, 178, 179, 184

²¹ Matthew 6:33, King James Version

²² Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 144, 169, 184

²³ William S. Sahakian, Mabel Lewis Sahakian, *Ideas of the Great Philosophers*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993) p. 28

²⁴ John 13:17, King James Version

²⁵ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 148, 175, 183

²⁶ Genesis 1:1, King James Version

²⁷ John 1:3, King James Version

²⁸ Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret*, (New York: Atria Books, 2006) p. 177

²⁹ John 8:44, Contemporary English Version

³⁰ John 18:20, King James Version