



## ***Who Wants to be a Millionaire?***

*Howell Lewis*

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I first came across affirmations through a friend's involvement with *A Course in Miracles*, but the religious aspect caused me to back off more hastily than mere resistance alone would have done. Several years later I came across affirmations again while on a course with Jessica Macbeth. Although Jessica had written a solid, no-nonsense paper, and there were no religious connections, my resistance to the whole concept made it difficult for me to accept the possibility that there might, just might, be something to them.

I was in a well-paid temporary job. I hated it and was considering leaving, but could not as I desperately needed the money. How was I going to continue when every minute felt like a million years of hell? Having nothing to lose I thought I'd try an affirmation. Ready-

made affirmations left me feeling uneasy; I didn't think in such flowery language, and how could someone else's situation and needs match mine? Based on the 'three Ps' of Personal, Positive and Present, I came up with "I am happy, glad and grateful to be here": the opposite of what I felt. As I wheeled white goods up and down the warehouse, I repeated it to myself under my breath. Within ten minutes I felt my crown centre starting up like cranking an old car. My despair had gone, and my mood had changed to 'happy, glad and grateful'. Using this and similar affirmations I was able to continue in the job, including twenty hours a week overtime, until my contract ran out three months later.

At about this time I became interested in — no, obsessed by — horse racing. I

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had been winning quite large sums for very small bets, not because I knew what I was doing, but by intuitively picking them. I found that the better I felt about myself and the world, the more I won. I wondered whether feeling good about myself meant I was more able to allow myself to win. But I didn't feel that good that often. Based on the premises that as time is an illusion and all life is one, I affirmed that "I know the winner of every race". Sometime later I woke in the night, half way out of bed in a panic, having had a gut-churning dream (resistance?). I could not remember the dream except for 'Mr G' and 'Armytage'. I had come across the name Armytage in the horsey world and thought he was a trainer, but several weeks later I noticed a Mr Frisk with jockey Marcus Armytage was running in the Grand National at 16/1. Thanks to the job I had some savings, and agonized over whether to wager several hundred or stick to my usual 50p stake. Having worked long and hard for the money I was reluctant to lose it, and at

the bottom line (despite positive evidence to the contrary) I still did not believe in affirmations, or that because all life is one it is possible to know everything. Another problem was my tendency to give away responsibility, and as my partner did not like the idea of wagering large sums I ended up betting £5, my largest bet to date. Mr Frisk ran away with the race and I won £100. Determined to avoid making the same mistake I decided to go for it in a big way if I had another 'prophetic' dream.

Months later, and leading up to the Derby, I had another horsey dream, but without the panic and falling out of bed routine. The message was 'French connection'. A French horse called Septième Ciel was running with good form and a good jockey. This was my chance finally (if only!) to prove to myself that life is one, that affirmations work, and to win several thousand pounds in the process. Seventh heaven! Days before the big race, and after I had taken the money out of the bank, I had another dream in which a woman I know to be very sensible and a male friend who likes gambling on a small scale were installing an alarm on a ceiling. Ignoring the message in this dream I went ahead with the bet and — you guessed it — lost the lot (seventh what?). I'm too embarrassed to say how much. One consolation was the way my heart centre glowed hot for about 20 minutes afterwards. Both dreams were right; the winning horse had French owners, 'connections' as they are known in the racing world.

I then tried affirmations about taking responsibility for my life/soul, and found the best time to use them was when I had

woken up at night and, although relaxed, could not get back to sleep. Perhaps the snug warmth and comfort leads to lower resistance, rather like the relaxed state of yoga nidra. The results were astonishing. I experienced convulsive energy rushes from my crown right down to my feet, and blasts in my throat centre that took my breath away. As a result I was left feeling more solid and grounded, and more able to deal with the issue I was working on. Or was the affirmation work enough? My life has continued to improve, including being given £10,000 to buy a house which then enabled me to consider a master's degree, and then gain a place on it . . .

Despite my mistakes, affirmations are very healing and cause a glow in my heart centre followed by a deep and peaceful sleep. It seems to be a case of finding the right affirmation at the right time. I change them until there is a discernible effect. I once experienced waves of releasing energy washing out from the last tight spot in my back, and often find my stomach and intestines start to gurgle once the affirmation takes effect. I have noticed that problem issues cause my heart rate to speed up, and with less problematic stuff my breathing goes into a mode similar to meditating. It would be interesting to see the effect on a mind mirror. If I am pushing too hard, my solar centre tightens. It seems that it is not possible for affirmations to work if they are not spontaneous, and in touch with my feelings or too far ahead of where I am at the time. If they are obviously not going to have an effect, I no longer push to produce it; it just will not happen. They work best when I do not have any expect-

tations or try too hard, and am open to whatever happens. One difficulty has been finding a powerful affirmation at night, only to forget it the next day and seemingly forever after, rather like trying to remember a dream if you haven't written it down. Perhaps this is indicative of resistance gaining control again once I am fully awake. We would all like to be content in our own way, so how come we are not?

I chose alliteration by chance because I liked it but it seems to be effective; if one word doesn't get through there is more probability the next similar one will. Rhythm seems to be important too. I find it easier to repeat one-line, bouncy sentences, and find they become mantra-like after a while. More recently I have found the words changing; thus 'protect' became 'reject', 'heal' turned into 'steal' and 'love' into 'loath'(!?). The biggest change to date was when 'Self-discipline makes me strong' turned into 'Self-criticism makes me wrong'. I suspect these slips show the importance of deeper levels of resistance and self-perception.





They seem to occur when I am trying to override 'negative' traits instead of accepting these aspects and then forgiving myself. I suspect using affirmations to deny this kind of stuff causes an almighty strain and poor results, if any.

Two years on, the convulsive rushes are rare and I'm no longer able to produce major mood changes, but there are subtler effects. Perhaps this is like the diminishing potency of repeated homeopathic remedies. While working with forgiving affirmations I have been experiencing a caduceus sensation from my base centre, the same sensation I experience while healing, and there have been

smaller convulsive releases in my sacral centre while affirming trust in a positive future (the power of faith?). Grateful affirmations cause instant energy rushes in which an invisible barrier surrounding me disappears, thus enabling me to see and hear more clearly as I am more open to the experience. It was quite a shock recently suddenly to see the colour and texture of the flower I was looking at more clearly; it was as if I had never really seen it before.

I suspect that affirmations are not working as dramatically as they did at first because of my resistance to creating new thought, feeling and belief patterns. Perhaps it is a case of not having found the right affirmations, or that the effect and consequent change is slower because I'm working on more fundamental and deeply-entrenched issues? I have met people who have been using affirmations for years, but who have never experienced the effects I have. Is this due to my fifteen years of personal growth and relative clarity and freedom from distress? Judging by a recent dream in which I walk through a door labeled 'karmic', something is happening down there . . .

