



## What's My Motivation?

I keep in touch with several friends from my distant past (which is becoming more distant all the time). One of these friends always seems positive, cheerful and enthusiastic. At his chronological age, most people have long since retired, but he continues to work and take on huge projects. Where does he get all his energy? I'm not sure, but I do know that he follows motivational gurus. He wanted to know what I thought of one of his favorites.

I told him I believe some motivational teachers can help us to develop purpose, goals and vision. My friend's favorite teacher emphasizes that we become what we think, and that positive or negative thoughts can bring positive or negative experiences and opportunities. So far so good. As the Apostle Paul advises, "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

But wait. There's unfortunately more. My friend's teacher, like many of his ilk, touts what is called the Law of Attraction. In other words, if you think on something long or hard enough—wealth, health, success, power—it will happen! By the power of your own mind, you can bend reality to your will! Early 20th century success huckster Napoleon Hill described it this way "...you can never have riches in great quantities unless you work yourself into a white heat of desire for money, and actually believe you will possess it" (*Think and Grow Rich*, 1937).

My friend's guru goes on to explain the "science" behind all this. The way he tells it, the universe consists of "vibrations." From the comfort of our own living room, we can attune the vibrations of our desires to those of the universe, and the universe will deliver our desires to us. Really? As I told my friend, this is not science. It's magical thinking.

It also sounds like the Word of Faith and

Prosperity Gospel movements, aberrations within Christianity which teach that you can harness the power of faith merely by speaking your desire (name it and claim it) and God will hand you health and prosperity on a platter.

Not surprisingly, such movements are a mishmash of religion, New Thought and upward mobility, spiked with commercialism. Each teacher offers to reveal their particular secret of success, health and prosperity in exchange for donations and purchases of their products, books and seminars—making *them* far more wealthy than their hapless followers will ever be.

Further, if you *don't* prosper or enjoy good health, it's your own fault. You haven't been diligent—you haven't aligned the vibrations correctly, you lack faith, or you are harboring some secret sin that keeps God or the universe from bombarding you with limitless health and wealth.

Frankly, this treadmill doesn't sound very motivating or inspiring to me. I don't need it and I don't think my friend does either.

But instead, what about this? "*For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together*" (Colossians 1:16-17).

This passage speaks of someone who is the supreme Power behind the entire universe. Beyond that, he's our best Friend. All we have to do is ask, and we will receive exactly what we need (of course as we journey with our Friend, we may discover that what we ask and what we need are two different things—but that's part of the process).

Why, then, would we need some arcane secret to manipulating the universe when we already share friendship with the Creator himself—Jesus? What could be more positive and motivating? □

—Monte Wolverton