

Chapter 15

The Laws of Karma and Attraction

Topics in this Chapter:

- * Seeing how your thoughts and actions affect your world
- * Appreciating the power of words
- * Considering some theories about how karma works

Long before Newton discovered and elucidated the laws of gravity, gravity was nevertheless happening. Things would fall down, and people knew they would fall down, without understanding exactly why. Nevertheless, until the laws of gravity were discovered, observed, expressed, and applied, they couldn't be harnessed for all the great technological advances that were to come, including amazing capabilities such as aerodynamics.

In the same way, exploring, understanding, and applying spiritual laws in your life-journey can help you achieve great and amazing things. This chapter gives you an introduction to the laws of karma and attraction.

The Laws of Karma

Spiritual Wisdom

Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

One notable concept from ancient eastern philosophies is the law of *karma*. No English translation does justice to this Sanskrit word, although the statements, “Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (from Galatians 6:7), the common saying, “What goes around, comes around,” Newton’s third law of motion, “For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction,” and the childhood retort, “I’m rubber, you’re glue. Whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you,” give some sense of karmic law.

Here’s another simple definition of karma: Karma is the currency of your life. With the currency of karmic actions, you purchase and create all your life experiences — good, bad, pleasant, and unpleasant. Karma is the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words, and deeds.

According to the theory of karma, you have a cupboard filled with karmas: personal karmas, cultural karmas, and karmas that involve the entire human race. The life you experience is a mesh of all your karmas interacting with one another like a big, unique, karmic thumbprint.

Consider

If you want to see what your karma looks like, just open your eyes right now and look around. Every thought you have, every word you say, and every action you perform ripples out into the world around you. These ripples then reflect back to you, although not always in the most obvious ways, and not always right away. For example, someone who performs bad actions may still become materially successful, appearing outwardly to have good karma, but they may have other unseen challenges to go through now or in the future.

If you're in a body, you have karma

Every human being is constantly performing actions. You can't not act. Even in breathing the air, untold worlds of smaller-than-small creatures and microorganisms are destroyed. Every time I water the little garden area in front of my house, it is obvious from all the ant activity that I've created a full-blown disaster for some of these little creatures. I can imagine the ant headlines: "Flooding in the southwest, hundreds killed, thousands injured!"

If even 1 percent of all the rules, commandments, and injunctions listed in the religious texts of every culture are accurate and true, we all have some serious karmic debts on our hands. For example, one rule from ancient yoga philosophy is to refrain from harming any living creature. Some religious sects, such as the Jain religion from India, even go so far as to cover their mouths with cloth to avoid breathing in small insects and to sweep the ground before each step so that their steps won't harm any unseen creatures. What if, by chance, they're right? Can you imagine how many karmas you have created in your life just from breathing and walking?

Karma is a natural law

God does not play dice with the universe.

—Albert Einstein

Basically, if you push something, it moves. Now expand this idea and realize that the entire universe is made up of movements and reactions to movements. Your body was created by the lovemaking movements of your parents and then movements of the sperm burrowing into the egg, zygotes replicating, organs forming, and nutrients being assimilated. Everything that keeps your body alive right now is made up of movements: visible movements, invisible movements, and millions of teeny-tiny electro-chemical movements.

The entire universe consists of spinnings upon spinnings — from galaxies to communities, to electrons circling the nucleus of an atom. Movement is the nature and quality of all creation. So what's keeping it all going?

You can think of the universe as running on the fuel of karma. Have you ever seen those desk ornaments that have a line of silver balls hanging in a row? You pick up the ball on one end and let it go. As it hits the row, a silver ball on the other end flies up into the air. When that ball comes back down and hits the row, the silver ball on the other side again moves up. Once the process is set in motion, you don't have to plug it in, nor do you have to fill it with gas. As Newton's law of action says, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Thus work the ways of karma.

One good way to grasp the intricacies of karmic law is to watch how karmas manifest inside and around you. Life is a living textbook on the laws of karma. You can

- Observe how life so often creates exactly what you most desire or fear.
- Watch as the most vehement persecutors in any situation seem to inevitably become the persecuted.
- Notice how your own good actions can lighten your heart and create an opening for more goodness to enter your life.

Consider

Even movie scripts and novels generally reflect an intuitive understanding of these laws, as good wins over evil nearly every time — even if only moments before the final credit roll!

You already know these laws

Human beings have been using the laws of karma from their beginning — when an unknown caveman first discovered that placing his hand into a fire created pain and didn't do it again.

Basically, karma is a law of the universe like any other, but not yet fully understood by society at large. So it's sometimes used as a joke, as in “ha, ha, that must have been your karma!” This line would be akin to making a joke after someone falls down, that “ha, ha, that must have been the gravity!” Well?

Karma is like the wind

Beware of spitting into the wind.

—Nietzsche

In visualizing the idea of karma, you can imagine a large, deep lake — the lake of your soul. When the lake is still, you're able to see into its life-filled depths. But on a windy day, with leaves and twigs hitting the water's surface, the lake becomes covered with ripples to the degree that your view into its depths is obscured.

In this metaphor, you can find examples of two kinds of karma:

- **Fresh karmas:** The wind is analogous to the current winds of karma that are being freshly whipped up by your own never-ending thoughts, speech, and actions.
- **Old karmas:** The twigs and leaves on the water's surface would be analogous to old, solidified karmas that aren't so easily discarded — such as karmas relating to your family or cultural traditions. You're more or less stuck with these karmas.

Now, here's the deal. You may not have much control over all those leaves and twiggy old karmas, but you do have a choice of how the winds of the karmas you're creating right now will blow. Even if you have a lot of old karmic debris on your soul lake, if the current winds remain calm, the karmic clutter moves to the perimeter of the lake, leaving the depths visible through the lake's clear surface.

However, if you generate a lot of blustering winds by performing all kinds of noisy, ego-based actions, you're going to have a messy and obstructive surface. With a lot of current karmic winds, even if you only have a small amount of old debris from past actions, your lake's surface will still be obscured by whatever is there, and also by the ripples created on the lake directly by the fresh karmic winds.

Consider

The winds of new karmas become still when you enter into a state of inner peace. You can find inner peace by allowing your thoughts and actions to flow through you unsullied by selfish desires or ego-based motives. When your surface waters are clear, you have a chance to see more clearly what is really at the core of your being — the great light of your spiritual soul.

Spiritual Wisdom

If you help others, you will be helped, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps in one hundred years, but you will be helped. Nature must pay off the debt. . . . It is a mathematical law and all life is mathematics.

—George I. Gurdjieff

So, is the idea to make lots of good karma?

Well, making good karma certainly rates higher than making bad karma, right? At the same time, even the pleasures of this world are said to pale before the universal bliss of regaining one's place as the fountainhead of all creation — living in a state of enlightenment and inner freedom. Therefore, those who are serious about reaching these higher goals are enjoined to give up all karmas, both good and bad.

Be Careful

Giving up all karmas doesn't mean that you shouldn't perform helpful actions or that you get to sit around doing nothing all day. Giving up karmas means to give up your limited ego-based attachments and identifications with your actions.

In fact, it is impossible to live in this world without acting. Just think of the most basic actions that are necessary to maintain life in your body. Every living thing must act. Even so-called inanimate rocks are made of vibrating atomic matter!

The basic process of creating good karma

Here's a simple formula for creating blossoms of positive karmas in your life:

- 1. Plant powerful and positive seeds.**
- 2. Have faith.**
- 3. Be good.**
- 4. Wait patiently.**

Good karma, bad karma — stop making karma!

The purpose of clearing up your karmas is

- To uncover the bright, divine spiritual sunlight that had been obscured by clouds of limited self-identification and desire-based actions
- To become free from the bondage of this world
- To live an enlightened, free-spirited life

Don't Forget

The ultimate goal of processing your karmas is to rise back up through the levels of creation (see Chapter 14) to a state of enlightenment, nirvana, Heaven, and pure consciousness. To clear all the illusions from your pristine pure Self, follow spiritual practices and uplift your actions into non-karma-forming ones.

The idea is to uplift all your karmas into higher vibrational energies and to process your old karmas without creating new ones. Here are two ways you can help to clear your karmic waters of impurities:

- **Make a decision and effort to move with the universal Will.** Pay attention to the motivations behind your actions. You may even notice signs from the universe that you've made an error of judgment, or that you are headed in the right direction.

Maybe you think about changing your place of employment, and open a magazine to find an article about another company that is hiring people to do just what you're wanting to do. Or you may come across an article about how unstable that field has become. You think about getting in touch with an old friend, and their business card falls out of your files, or perhaps an old note from the friend that reminds you of why you stopped seeing the person. You may decide to have children and walk by a park where a beautiful laughing child runs up to give you a wildflower, or go into a toy store to see a child driving his mother crazy by screaming at the top of his lungs for a toy.

- **Accept and even relish your karmic lessons.** When challenging situations arise in your life, go through them with a positive attitude. According to the laws of karma, negative experiences can actually be beneficial in the long run if they are clearing up some of the negative karmas from your past actions, thoughts, and words.

For example, if people are saying untrue, harmful things about you, they may be actually taking on some of your bad karma — through general karmic law and also the law of attraction, which draws to them more of what they are focusing on (More on the law of attraction later in this chapter). You may even find that these gossipers end up with some new struggles while your burdens become lighter. Therefore, when challenges arise in your life, while still making efforts to heal the problems, you can make the most of their karma-clearing potential by accepting and even relishing them with a positive attitude. Look at everything as an opportunity to grow and evolve, and make sure all those old karmas are burned to a crisp!

Consider

Listening to your karma-o-meter

You know that sinking feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when you say or do some-thing wrong? Give thanks for it! This is your karma-o-meter, letting you know that you may be planting some seeds you don't want in your field!

Cleaning up your karmas

Spiritual Wisdom

Each man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes well — he has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

One way to act without creating karma is to act without any attachment to the good or bad fruits of your actions. Withdraw the importance you place on things of the ephemeral, physical world, and begin to deposit your energy toward the eternal, spiritual realm.

Another way to clean up your karmas is through intense devotion and complete surrender to God's will. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna, a representational form of the universal Lord, says, "Whatever you do, make it an offering to me — the food you eat, the sacrifices you make, the help you give, and even your suffering. In this way, you will be freed from the bondage of karma, and from its results, both pleasant and painful. Then, firm in renunciation and yoga, with your heart free, you will come to me."

According to the theory of karma, you also have to balance your checkbook of action and reaction before you get to graduate from this cycle of *samsara*, this wheel of birth and death, rebirth and redeath, through which you are said to come and go over and over again — until one day your soul becomes free from the noose and bondage of your karmas and rises into greater realms.

Analogies of what clearing karmas is like

Here are some metaphors to help you understand how to become free from the burdensome weight of karmas:

- **Burning karmas is like burning fat.** When you start to burn karma, it's like when you stop eating too many calories so that your energy system has a chance to burn some of your body's old stored fat. When your karma furnace isn't being constantly stuffed with countless actions, and more importantly, constant interpretations of actions (for example, I did this great thing, I shouldn't have said that, and so on), then the karmic furnace has a chance to begin to burn the stored karmas that hold you down just as surely as excess fat does.
- **Cleansing karmas is like washing dishes.** You can wash each dish right after using it, or you can let them pile up a bit and then have an occasional big "dish cleansing" with a full tub of hot suds. However, if you don't know how to clean your dishes (karmas) or don't even know that they're dirty or that they *can* be cleaned, then the dishes may pile up in your sink, and eventually all over your entire kitchen.
- **Keeping your karmas clean is like keeping your house clean.** Your house may start out clean, but then it gets messy and you have to clean it again. After guests come for a visit, you may have some extra cleaning to do, just as when certain people come into your karmic life. It is also necessary to continually clean here and there, because dust inevitably builds up.

Don't Forget

This analogy isn't just about dishes or house cleaning, but about the karmic residues that accumulate in everyone's life, creating all kinds of unwanted situations.

You can clean your karmas with practices such as contemplation, higher knowledge, meditation, devotion, selfless service, and by letting go of limited desires.

Consider

Just as when you clean your house, cleanliness inspires cleanliness. You can keep your karmic house clean with little cleanings or a massive clean up — or you can live with it being not-so-clean.

Two good signs

Here are two signs that together may indicate that you're acting without creating karma:

1. Your actions bear greater fruit (results).
2. You don't care so much about the fruits anymore.

Ramana Maharshi, a great sage from India, has said, "If the fruits of action do not affect the person, he is free from action."

Picture your accumulated karmas as being like a spider web, with you in the center. The people and things in your life all have threads going to and from them like the web of a spider. Part of your job is to cut the harmful threads while strengthening your connection with good, powerful threads and the divine source energy behind the whole web.

Spirituality in Action

Here is an inner process that can help clear your web of karmas from within, without your having to take any actions outwardly:

1. Think of a person who creates obstacles in your life. It can be someone you are currently involved with or someone from your past. It can be someone you're not speaking to or someone you love. Or both! Bring up all the feelings you have toward this person and evoke memories of things they may have said or done that hurt or upset you.
2. Cut the subtle, unhealthy, karmic threads going from you to that person, using your mind and intention. Depending on your preference and circumstances, you can even shout, inside or outwardly, "Cut the karmas!" Take back your energy like tendrils coming back into yourself. "I take back my energy! I cut these karmas!"

Improving your karmas through mindfulness

Mindfulness means being completely focused on the present moment. Whatever you're doing, you do it while being fully present right here and right now. If you're planning what to do tomorrow or next year, that's okay, too. Just make your plans consciously and in the present moment.

Consider

Being focused on the present moment is a kind of meditative state. The ripples and thoughts of your mind calm down and create an opening for you to see more clearly into the waters of spirit. With this focus and openness, you open the door to receiving and experiencing “new and improved” karmas.

Two more ways to clear karmas

Here are two more paths you can take to clean up old, unwanted karmas:

- You can clean up old bad actions by balancing them with new good ones. If you’ve caused some harmful actions to someone, you can make efforts to balance that harmful action out by doing something helpful to that person or to another person. In fact, looking for ways to be helpful in general is a great idea because your kind actions may balance out negative karmas you didn’t even know existed!
- You can clear old bad actions with a deep process captured by the Catholic sacrament of confession — by humbling yourself at the feet of the Lord and asking for forgiveness, redemption, and grace. A more eastern approach to this method would be to use spiritual practices to raise your awareness into a higher consciousness view of universal creation, from which you can look upon yourself and your actions with compassion and forgiveness (while still committing to behave better in the future.)

Here’s a formula for bringing more positive karmas to all your actions:

1. **Before you do something, stop and feel the energies of the moment.** Become focused on the present moment as you approach the threshold of beginning an action.
2. **Invoke positive energies in yourself and the action.** You can add your own touches to this practice, such as speaking a devotional phrase or using a ritual to solidify your positive intention.
3. **Become so completely focused in the present moment that your limited sense of individuality disappears.** According to spiritual vision, the experience of yourself as a limited being has its roots in the past and future. In the present moment, there can be no roots, because the present moment is pure freedom, pure clarity, pure light, and pure spirit. Being completely present allows your actions to flow from a greater place than your usual levels of self-effort (not that there’s anything wrong with a good dose of self-effort!)

4. **When you've completed the action, pause again and feel good about the action you've done.** Faith and gratitude can bless your action even after you've completed the action, because grace and spirit exist beyond time.

Examples of karma in action

Here are some examples Buddhist scriptures use to explain the way actions can manifest as karmic circumstances in your current or future lives:

To be free from want in food is the result of your providing food to the poor in your previous life.

To be miserly and unwilling to help the needy gives rise to future starvation and clothlessness.

To have ample housing is a reward for donating food to monasteries in your past life.

To abstain from eating meat and to pray constantly to Buddha will assure that you'll be born a very intelligent child in your next incarnation.

To have good parents is a reward for your respecting and helping those who were lonely and desolate in your past life.

Being short-lived is the result of your committing too many killings in your previous life.

To distort truths habitually will cause you to suffer blindness in your next life.

To be pretty and handsome is the reward for your respecting and offering flowers to Buddha's altar in the past.

To have committed evil with your hands in your past life is the cause for you having disabled hands now.

To be struck by lightning or burned by fire will be the punishment for dishonest trade dealings.

To build temples and public shelters will give you future prosperity and happiness.

Consider

One way to stay centered in divine grace and positive actions is to offer every action to the divine. When you understand that the divine exists in everything, large and small, you respect every moment as equally significant and precious. Then, cleaning your house, watering your garden, washing your clothes, filling your car's tank, and feeding your children or pets can become just as spiritually potent a ritual as bowing before an altar, lighting a candle flame, or closing your eyes and praying.

The Law of Attraction

The basic idea of the *law of attraction* is that your thoughts determine your experience. You attract what you think about, whether you want it or not.

Like karma, the law of attraction is not about blame or guilt — it's just a simple reaction, a law of the universe that applies to everyone equally, regardless of whether you are a saint or a sinner. What you focus your attention on tends to increase. Of course, this law is just one of many coexisting universal laws, so I encourage you to keep your mind from settling into a simplistic view of any one universal law without taking into account the unavoidable potential for exceptions and conflicting views.

The law of attraction is based, in part, on the idea that the universe is made up of vibrations being drawn to other vibrations that are most like themselves — in the same way that plucking a string on one violin will cause a string on a nearby violin tuned to the same note to also vibrate.

This *metaphysical* (more than physical) philosophy says that your power of thought affects the outer world in ways that go beyond the physical realm, and that you have the power to effect changes in your outer world not just through strenuous outer efforts, but also by shifting how you think.

For example, if you are wanting to lose weight or relieve yourself of your financial debts, the law of attraction would suggest that you not focus too much on the problems at hand — in these cases on the larger sizes and unpaid bills — but that you spend time visualizing what you would like your life to look like. This way, you're feeding the details of that vision with your thought energy, and if you do it right — so the testimonials say — you end up with the very house you visualized or the car you cut out from a magazine and pasted above your desk. Or even better, on spiritual levels you become happier, healthier, and more spiritually attuned, peaceful, and beneficial to the world.

What is better than a parlor game kind of approach to metaphysics is to learn the useful principles from these manifestation theorists — such as the idea of focusing your attention on what is good — and to combine these principles with solid spiritual information, wisdom, virtues, and practices to really uplift your whole life in ways you may have never imagined. Don't just vision for an expensive new car, vision for a great, spiritually vibrant, divinely inspired life! Two main steps help you benefit from these metaphysical laws:

1. **Discover what the universal laws of attraction are.** Getting to know metaphysical laws is an interactive and ongoing process of personal evolution and exploration into new vistas of understanding. You can't simply learn metaphysical laws by only reading books or taking courses, because universal laws are like life itself — big, flexible, and endless in their expressions.

Along with reading and hearing information about metaphysical laws, pay attention to how these laws manifest in your life. See whether you can find examples of when you've personally experienced these laws so that you can explore those events and develop a more personal and intuitive sense of how metaphysical laws work in action.

2. **Apply the universal laws to your life.** This step sounds easy, right? After you discover a metaphysical rule or universal law, all you have to do is follow it. Yet how many people apply all the physical laws they already know in their own lives? People know, for example, how much money they earn, but what do they do anyway? Overspend. They have studied nutrition and health enough to know the laws of proper digestion, but then they go out and eat huge, greasy meals anyway.

Spirituality in Action

Experiment with trying out different universal laws in your own life situations. For example, you may decide to stop thinking negative thoughts for a certain amount of time or to follow more austere rules of integrity, honesty, and faith. See if shifting to more positive thoughts and actions brings positive shifts to your outer life as well as your inner experience.

Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens.

—John Homer Miller

Checking out some laws

Okay, these laws of attraction are not as neat and well-documented as government laws. Wouldn't things be easier if you could just read a list of clearly coded laws explaining exactly what kinds of punishments or benefits you'd receive for following each one? But, alas, all you have are the breadcrumbs that have been left by those who have explored these laws. Here are a few of these laws for you to contemplate, consider, and explore. Let these aphorisms unfold in your own deep wise soul:

- Everything comes from the universe and is delivered to you through people, circumstances and events by the law of attraction.

- Be careful how you think. Your life is shaped by your thoughts.
- All that we are is the result of what we have thought.
- Whether you think you can or can't, either way you are right.
- Life is a mirror of your consistent thoughts.
- What you resist persists.
- Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors for you where there were only walls.
- It is done unto you as you believe
- Imagination is everything.

Applying the laws

The best way to apply these laws of attraction is to keep them in mind as you act, think, and express yourself into the world. Notice how you think about things and experiment with ways to create more positive with your words, thoughts, and actions. Also understand the power of the company you keep. Do your best to keep your mind focused on people, places, and things that are in harmony with your greater goals.

To share a personal example of how I apply this law of attraction theory in my life, I personally choose not to watch some of the popular shows that take place in hospitals, because I don't want to draw more hospital experiences into my life. Some of the law of attraction teachers also suggest staying away from people who are undesirable in one way or another — whether sick, poor, or fat — so that you won't take on their qualities. This teaching suggests that someone who works with people who have been harmed or violated in one way or another may be inviting similar experiences into their own life.

Be Careful

However, this somewhat heartless approach of avoiding anyone who is not perfectly free from flaws may actually end up attracting more of what you don't want, because avoidance of things can also attract them to you. It is the energy of your mental focus that makes certain events or things manifest more powerfully. Who would really want to live in a world where people are so selfish that they don't help others out of fears of getting some kind of "karmic cooties" from them? Taking a simplistic or selfish approach to universal laws can create these kinds of strange interpretations that are less likely to come about when the metaphysical laws are allowed to express naturally as part of your spiritual maturation (See Chapter 16 for more on why it's not always good to fool Mother Nature).

Consider

Therefore, along with paying attention to what you are creating with your mind, thoughts, and words, and along with being careful about the company you keep, you want to also follow the law of allowing. Don't put too much thought, attachment, or avoidance toward anything that you don't wish to increase in your life. Keep your attention focused on higher spiritual matters even while in the midst of so-called "bad company." Your higher focus will not only protect you from the potential ill effects of their company, but will also help you to be good company for them (which equals more good karma for everyone concerned!)

The Universe likes to say, "Yes"

One metaphysical law is that whatever you focus your attention on gains more power in your life. If you have a bad habit and think day and night about how awful it is that you have the habit and how you wish it would go away, you may find the habit becoming stronger instead of following your wishes.

This is because the universe is a conscious field of spiritual awareness that likes to say "yes." It's like a doting grandmother that only wants to please, but doesn't always get things right according to your preferences.

The universe says "yes" to whatever you focus on. Even if you're saying "no," the universe is nevertheless saying "yes." For example, if you're saying to yourself, "Don't eat chocolate, don't eat chocolate," the universe is editing out your "don't" and replacing it with "yes!" Because of this universal tendency to say "yes," it is less beneficial to focus on a habit you want to get rid of than to focus on the positive thoughts and freedom you'll feel after the habit is gone.

You are a co-creator

There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full.

—Henry Kissinger

According to the law of attraction, you are ultimately the cause of every event and experience of your life. Whether this principle is in fact always so, nobody can really know or prove. Still, you clearly have many lines of input into the circumstances of your life — from the power of your intentions and efforts to your attitude and frame of mind, along with the metaphysical connections and communications between you and your world.

Be the player

Here is a contemplation that can help you understand your own power: For a moment, think of the entire universe as an interactive video game, in which one person is playing on one screen. All the characters are animated and moved by the same person, the player — you!

In this metaphor, the player has a choice of whether to identify with the characters in the game or to remember himself as the player who is expressing through those characters. Perhaps during particularly intense moments of the game, the player may forget himself and become completely identified with the different characters in the game. He may become upset if he misses a target in the game or is “shot at” by “other players.” He may forget that he is the one who specifically set the parameters of those enemy warships. He is the one who chose the difficulty levels before pushing the start button!

A player who gets absorbed in the video game may not even notice that he’s getting tired while sitting there. He doesn’t think about what he is going to have for dinner after he finishes the game. He loses awareness of himself as himself and becomes completely identified with the false characters in an illusory game-world.

This scenario, according to some spiritual philosophies, is what has happened to all of us. We are really the player of this game of life, but we have so identified with the characters and small battles that we’ve forgotten our true nature and our profound personal power.

The philosophical model in Chapter 14 gives one way to understand how your thoughts communicate with the great universal Creator, how your vision connects with the divine vision, and how your dream resonates within the divine dream.

Your mind is like a contracted form of the universal mind — like a chunk of ice floating in the ocean. Your mind is the universal mind’s “Mini Me.”

Understanding your position as a co-creator allows you to use your power to bless and uplift your life and the entire world. Right now, settle into this awareness of your power as a co-creator and pray for a blanket of protection and grace over you and your loved ones, over your city, your country, over the world, and throughout the solar system, galaxies, the entire visible universe, and the entire invisible universe.

Untangling the web of desires

Spiritual Wisdom

Let people hold on to these: Manifest plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, have few desires.

—Tao Te Ching

The web of desires is made up of all the strands of information and misinformation that have been built around you since the day you took birth into this world. It is this web of multifaceted desires that drives you into so many different directions. Here is a technique that can help you look at and uplift everything in your life:

1. **First you accept that on some level, you're creating everything in your life.** If you don't fully understand or believe that you are a co-creator, you can still use this technique as a contemplation exercise and pretend that you are ultimately responsible for everything in your life.
2. **Next figure out why you're creating certain things that you don't want to have in your life.** For example, if you have problems with your boss, co-workers, family, and friends, you can look at what subtle perks may be coming from those conflicts. Why would you have created a particular hostile situation? Maybe you like the drama, or maybe having other people look at you in a negative light helps keep you humble or feeds some dark corner of your own shadow beliefs about yourself or others. In this step, you consider and contemplate what the possible reasons might be for creating certain seemingly unwanted things in your life.
3. **Once you've accepted your seat as co-creator and have considered what may be motivating you to create certain things in your life, then you accept everything in your life with nonresistance and a sense of gratitude.** This combination of acceptance and gratitude breeds the very powerful state of contentment.
4. **Now, from a position of contentment, authorship, and empowerment, you decide what changes should be made in your life.** If some useful benefit is coming from an unwanted situation, find ways to derive the same kind of benefit from positive, wanted situations.

Spirituality in Action

Giving your stamp of approval

Here's a contemplation you can use the next time you're about to send an important letter or e-mail, maybe to someone you love or to a potential employer:

- 1. As you're about to put the letter into the mailbox or hit the Send button, stop for a moment.**
- 2. Pause and align yourself with the present moment awareness.**
- 3. Dip into the grace of the present moment and from there, bless your letter or e-mail.**
- 4. Then put your message into the mailbox or hit the Send button with a feeling of confidence and trust.** If you have a favorite phrase, blessing, or mantra, you can repeat it as you hit the send button.
- 5. After the e-mail or letter has gone its blessed way, pause again and turn your attention inside yourself.** Savor the flavor of the moment. Can you taste it? Does it taste like success and blessings?
- 6. Offer your gratitude to spirit, along with your own version of "God's will be done."**

This practice can turn an ordinary moment into a power moment and your ordinary awareness into the state of mindful grace!

Ask for the whole cosmos!

Spiritual Wisdom

As we express life, we fulfill God's law of abundance, but we do this only as we realize that there is good enough to go around — only as we know that all God's gifts are given as freely and fully as the air and the sun.

—Ernest Holmes

One powerful practice is to imagine that you could create anything at all in your life and see what you choose. Sometimes you may think that you want something, but if you really had the chance to create a desired object or circumstance — along with all the attending necessities for maintaining it — you may very well choose what you have now rather than the greener looking pastures over the fence of your previous desires. Taking time to contemplate what you really want in life is a great practice for self-discovery and self-empowerment.

Many people don't even know what their hopes and dreams are, beyond the basic necessities of each day. Taking a few moments to contemplate and even write down your dreams and goals — from your highest aspirations to your most basic requirements — can be an excellent use of a few minutes of your time.

Don't Forget

Remember that many of your desires and goals may be based on societal and culture-based ideas that may or may not be in harmony with the highest will of God or your heart's deepest aspirations.

Appreciating the Power of Words

Spiritual Wisdom

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
—St. John 1:1

Your entire thought structure is bound together with the threads of language, and these word-based thoughts create the world you experience. Therefore, understanding the nature and power of words isn't only an artistic endeavor, but a personally and spiritually beneficial one as well.

The ability to use words well can uplift all the elements in your life — from your state of mind to your relationships to your career, to winning your case in traffic court. An improved relationship with language also brings improved personal and spiritual growth. According to success coaches, for example, the process of clarifying your desires by writing them down as definitive goals can work wonders in helping you to fulfill your dreams and aspirations.

How life is like an improvisational play

Have you ever seen an improvisational comedy team in action? A group of actors gathers on stage, and the audience calls out words that will decide the nature of their play, such as where they are, who they are, and what they're doing. Well, you can say that life is also like an improvisational play. We are the actors on stage, and we are also the audience calling out the circumstances that determine the details of the play.

Now imagine that some of the people in the audience don't even know that the words they're calling out will have anything to do with the plot unfolding on stage. They're just randomly saying words like "donut shop!" and the next thing you know, the drama is unfolding in the context of a donut shop. The audience member may not even notice the correlation or may feel surprised, thinking, "Hey, what a coincidence. I was just thinking about a donut shop!"

Empowering your affirmations

I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and gosh darn it, people like me.

—Stuart Smalley (played by pre-senator Al Franken on *Saturday Night Live*)

Affirmations are statements you make to yourself — declarations of what you wish to be. Affirmations have been used for many centuries, such as in the form of mantras or prayers, mainly because they tend to work. Of course, it is important that you present your affirmations with the right words. Just saying, “I want to have a million dollars” isn’t necessarily going to mean you’ll wake up tomorrow morning with a whole new bank account, although far be it from me to say it couldn’t happen.

Positive affirmations allow you to consciously activate and elevate principles such as love, selfless service, creative expression, truth, generosity, prosperity, faith, surrender, and divine guidance in your life.

Even if you learn about affirmations from spiritual teachers or texts, you should eventually be able to create your own personalized affirmations as you go through life. Your own guiding force knows the specific combination of what you need within your specific circumstances, and affirmations can help you to open up to its guidance.

Before stepping into an event, you may want to say an affirmation or prayer that the event will be positive, successful, and wonderful. You can even affirm a positive experience from going to the grocery store, blessing the event so that you’ll meet whatever people will be mutually beneficial to meet.

Several elements affect the potency of your affirmations:

- Your affirmations should be carefully composed.
- Be sure your affirmations are positive and focused on a vision of what you desire instead of on what you want to get rid of. Remember that whatever you think about, you empower.
- The best way to speak an affirmation is to declare your vision to already be true. “My life is filled with divine grace” or “I see that divine grace fills my life” are better affirmations than saying, “I *want* my life to be filled with divine grace.” With the last version, you may actually be empowering your *wanting* of divine grace rather than affirming its presence.
- Your affirmations should be spoken with one-pointed intention and faith.
- If you just toss out one desire here and another there, forgetting about earlier requests as you continually make new affirmations and resolutions, you’re doing two things:

- Dissipating your power by fragmenting the rays of your attention in conflicting directions.
- Planting too many seeds without enough consistent focus of energy to nourish any one intention so that it can grow and fully blossom.
- Your affirmations should be in harmony with universal laws.
- If your desires and declarations are contrary to the universal laws, they won't be truly sincere. You may think you want the declarations to come true, but if your deep inner being knows these desires aren't in harmony with the highest universal good — which is also your highest good — then you won't have the full force and confidence of your whole self behind the affirmation.
- For example, you may be in a relationship that's not really good for you, but your codependent nature causes you to nevertheless want the person to love you and stay with you. You may repeat affirmations that this person and you are becoming closer. However, if deep inside you know that it really isn't the best relationship for either of you, and that your desire of strengthening the connection is really coming from fear or codependency, your affirmations may not have a strong impact on the outer events.

Don't Forget

Faith is the heart of all affirmations. As Jesus said, "It is done unto you as you believe."

How affirmations affect your mind

Affirmations work when your super-powerful subconscious mind hears your words and programs your experience and behavior to reflect and give life to them. Your subconscious mind is so powerful that some of the magic ascribed throughout history to wizards, psychics, gods, and goddesses can be explained as powers of the subconscious mind.

Affirmations also work on a mundane level. Believing that you're destined to be wealthy inspires you to act with a greater assurance and to make decisions based on a sense of empowerment and security rather than fear or neediness. Approaching life with positive and confident qualities would tend to bring about more favorable and prosperous circumstances.

If you affirm that you will succeed in getting a particular job and convince yourself that this job is already yours, then you'll walk into the interview free from the baggage of doubt, fear, and needy desire, none of which are good friends to take with you into a job interview. If you can walk into the room feeling secure and steady, you'll be much more likely to make a good impression and get the job.

If you're saying to the interviewer, "I know I'm the right person for this job because I have all the right qualifications," but your body language and subliminal speech are saying, "I know you probably don't want me," this inner doubt would likely hamper your efforts.

The interviewer may not necessarily think, "Hey, he says he is qualified, but subconsciously he is communicating what a loser he thinks he is." However, her subconscious mind may read your subtle signals and decide that you're not the right person for the job — perhaps inspiring the interviewer's mind to come up with an unrelated excuse to justify her subconsciously guided decision.

If, on the other hand, you walk into a job interview after using affirmations to set yourself in the certainty that you're absolutely qualified and that the job is already yours, this confidence would do much to bring your subconscious communications in harmony with your outer presentation.

Affirmations are more than just repeated phrases; they're contemplations, visualizations, and emotion-based vehicles that can open and access the magical power of your own imagination. Even beyond the outer words you use, what you think, feel, and desire in your heart is what most determines your life. If you're repeating, "I'm a winner, I'm a winner," and what your subconscious mind sees is someone who thinks they're a loser saying they're a winner, then these robot-style affirmation repetitions won't help you move significantly closer to being a winner.

How affirmations transform the world

Affirmations not only affect your thoughts, actions, and attitudes, but they also affect the world in metaphysical ways. As Chapter 14 explains, you're not ultimately separate from the world around you. Everyone and everything in this world is made from the same divine universal Consciousness and is living, as it were, in the Mind of God. Your thoughts are also expressions of that universal Consciousness and are therefore more powerful than you would probably like to think they are!

This truly is a magical world, and the more you can open to the possibility of this magic, the more you're able to experience it. You don't have to learn all kinds of incantations at Harry Potter's Hogwarts School for the Magical Arts to affect the external world. Just understand that whatever words you speak with a strong focus and intention do have an effect on the world around you.

Spirituality in Action

New Year's resolutions have long been a way to tap into the power of affirmations to create new, more positive karmas. Can you remember the resolutions you've made in years gone by? Consider writing them down so that you can read and remember your goals as you move forward into new phases and new goals.

Grasping the power of your thoughts and words requires that you accept a new level of responsibility, just as you've had to do while growing through various stages of personal growth and development throughout your life. If you go around saying that this or that makes you sick, well, what do you think the outcome of those words may be? If you sing songs about failure and heartbreak over and over with a recording by your favorite singer, guess what kind of words you're expressing into the universe for your recipe of life experience? And I hope I'll never again hear a mother yell to her playing child negative affirmations like, "I know you're going to crack your head open!"

Be Careful

Many an affirmation is said in jest! Remember that everything and anything you say can be an affirmation, especially as your spiritual power becomes stronger and more powerful.

The Universe is always listening

Most people aren't aware of all that they're asking for through their thoughts and actions. The best way to find out what you've been asking for is to look at everything around you — all the circumstances of your life. If you don't like what you see around you, it means one or more of the following:

- You're asking for the wrong things.
- You're asking for too many conflicting things.
- You're asking in the wrong way.
- You're asking without enough spiritual power to back up your goals.

Don't forget that there's more going on than in life you can possibly comprehend, so sometimes you may just have to surrender to some circumstances you don't like, trusting that the "universe knows best."

Be Careful

Certain possible pitfalls may arise when you get good at using affirmations.

- One problem with gaining more control over having your desires fulfilled is that many of your desires are certainly — if not for the wrong things — coming from a limited perspective (see Chapter 16).

- Another possible obstacle comes when you have a specific idea of how you want your goal to come about. You may not realize that a reshuffling of other elements in your life would be necessary to make your wish or desire come true. For example, you may repeat affirmations for a specific change in your career, without realizing that this goal will bring shifts and changes in other areas of your life, such as your relationships or living conditions.

Don't Forget

Affirmations don't have to be for specific worldly acquirements! You can affirm your connection with the divine, your commitment to remembering your own greatness, or your beautiful creative spirit. Affirmations plus surrender to God's will are an excellent combination for creating more great experiences in your life.