

Snakes on a tram

By Ruth Ostrow

I HAD coffee with a respected business colleague in Sydney and he told me an extraordinary story about the power we have to manifest our thoughts.

As a child he had a pathological fear of snakes. For reasons he could never explain, he used to lie in bed at night and worry that a snake was slithering over his feet and up his legs. He would often wake his parents in the middle of the night to check his bed and put him back to sleep.

One day he was sent off to school camp. Unexpectedly the campsite was rained out on the first night by a torrential downpour and rather than risk parental wrath, the teachers hired a bus in the wee hours to take the boys home.

Meanwhile, earlier that day, his younger brother, who'd been kept in the dark about his snake terror lest he get it too, was at school innocently trading a frog, among other treasures, for a friend's carpet snake. The eight-year-old brought it home and hid it in a box in the yard but, due to the rain, felt sorry for it and brought it indoors, putting it inside his absent brother's warm bed.

The rest of the story is predictable. But my friend said the experience was worth the horror it caused him just to see the expression on his parents' faces when they discovered a real snake under their "crazy" son's doona.

According to his therapist, the most remarkable part of the story was his power to manifest the thing he most feared. Snakes were not common in the Melbourne suburbs in the 1970s.

But the power to manifest is not seen as unusual in some circles. Whilst abroad I watched the docu-drama *The Secret*, which has become a cult hit and is due for TV release in Australia in the next few months. The program proves this point: what we most want at a deep unconscious level, we manifest; what we most fear, we attract.

In the show, many current-day philosophers assert that the secret of success behind many of the world's greats - Plato, Newton, Beethoven, Shakespeare, Einstein and many of today's leaders and entrepreneurs - is the principle of attraction. "They understood and used this power," the show asserts.

What we dwell on, what we obsess over - good or bad - is drawn mysteriously, even magically, into our lives. The lesson: make every thought positive, lest the slithery snakes get you.

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