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## What's the fuss about?

By ANDREW SIA

**Malaysians share their passion for a documentary and book that has been making waves in the United States and elsewhere.**

Hugely influential talk show host Oprah Winfrey, in the first of two shows dedicated to it this February, said she has, unknowingly, long lived her own life according to its tenets. And hard-bitten news hound Larry King featured it, twice too, on *Larry King Live* last December. Byrne is much better known now....

Not bad for a documentary that has had zero TV and magazine ads or distribution in theatres. It is, in fact, the biggest success story of "word of mouth" marketing – ever, dare I say. "Secret" support groups have formed around the United States. In southern California, real estate brokers show it to motivate sales staff. It's become A Phenomenon.

So, just what is so special about it?

"The secret," explains renowned motivator Bob Proctor in the film "is the Law of Attraction. Everything that's coming into your life ... is attracted to you by virtue of the images you're holding in your mind."

Proctor is one of 25 writers, philosophers, doctors and scientists in the documentary (and book) who explain that when you think of, visualise and believe in positive things that you want, then, like a magnet, you will attract those things you desire in health, wealth, happiness and relationships.

Conversely, as entrepreneur John Assaraf says in the movie, "Most people are thinking about what they DON'T want, and they're wondering why it shows up over and over again."

It may sound like Napoleon Hill and Norman Vincent Peale (authors who helped start the whole motivational publications thing) being recycled. What *The Secret* offers is indeed nothing new as Byrne herself acknowledges, saying at her website, [www.theseecret.tv](http://www.theseecret.tv), that the roots of this philosophy go back 3,000 years. What she has done is package it as a powerful Hollywood-like movie with a *Da Vinci Code* twist.

No matter what her detractors say – and she has quite a few – *The Secret* has taken America by storm, thanks to the video's engaging, heartfelt presentation (no, it's not like *SmartShop* at all – I can testify to that!) as well as testimonials by people who've seen and practised it.

And it has reached Malaysia. The book quietly entered local best-seller lists and has remained there for the past few months, again without marketing of any sorts. The DVD is also available with the book at MPH Bookstores.

I was invited to a home viewing of the documentary in Kuala Lumpur in January by life coach Sharmini Hensen and was powerfully moved. A colleague was supposed to write this story but at the last minute on Monday, the assignment landed in my lap – just as I was arranging a lunch appointment with Hensen on another matter. Sheer coincidence? Well, these people I spoke to would say it isn't, because they're convinced by *The Secret's* efficacy.

**Sharmini Hensen, 36, science graduate who is currently a life coach and found the Sistas Network support group**

"Every morning, I meditate in my garden on what I want for my family and in relationships, work and money. Now, projects are coming in. I don't even have to go out and look for them.

"Years ago I was a different person. I couldn't trust people, I thought they'd bitch about me. And you know what? My expectations became my experiences! Now I am beginning to vibrate at a higher energy level and I am attracting similar people. It's like monks or nuns. The people they attract are peaceful.

I am also attracting books into my life. People just give them to me. I wanted this book by Robin Sharma (who wrote *The Monk Who Sold His*

only two lucky gifts for 40 guests.

"*The Secret* is quite similar to NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming, a more established motivational technique), which explains how it works.

"I showed clips from *The Secret* when I was training 150 real estate agents. Even though it was the after-lunch "graveyard shift" when people are usually sleepy, they gave such great feedback."



Sharmini Hensen (left) and Sharifah Norlia.

**Camelia (Dayang Nor Camelia), 32, Sarawak-born award-winning singer with five albums**

"My good friend (model/actress) Carmen Soo first told me about *The Secret*. She was so passionate about it. Months later I found myself at the airport, buying my usual magazines and just happened to ask if they had *The Secret*. I finished reading the book on the plane in record time!



Camelia

"I was excited and inspired. Does it work? Only time will tell.... But I must say I have already seen improvements in my life. It seems pretty simple, really, but such things are normally overlooked in our hectic lives.

"It's about staying focused and, most importantly, believing in yourself. Set your goals. Think big! Dream big! And go out there and get them. People around you will start to notice your positive energy and their energy in turn will help you along on your journey.

**Ong Poh Neo, 51, retired accountant currently helping her husband run his software**

company

"Even before I heard about *The Secret*, I was practising its methods in my (human development) training with Asiaworks.

"For example, you can say I want a Ferrari. Once the thought is there, the reality is already being formed. Then your doubts creep in. Aiyo, where to get money, ah? Nowhere to park-lah. People come and rob me, how? Doubts will cancel out the power of creation.

"It even works in the stock market. Of course, I do my research and analysis also. But the ability to pick the right stocks is sharper. Before that, I was often wrong. Sometimes, I will even declare that I want, say, RM1,000 from the market today. And it happens!



Ong Poh Neo

"Now I live in a million-ringgit bungalow with a swimming pool. But do you know how to slice one salted egg to feed eight people? I can show you how. That's how I grew up. That's how much my life has changed."

**Gary Tan Khia Peng, 28, project officer with a Business IT degree, captain of the Malaysian ice hockey team and the country's only certified ice hockey coach**

"The Asian Winter Games (AWG, in China in January) was the first time ever a team from Malaysia participated in any winter sports, so we needed all the help we could get. We invited Julian Leicester from (motivational organisation) Beat Fear to help us.

"He introduced *The Secret* to us. At first, we were sceptical, but we trusted Julian. Before every game, we gathered as a team, closed our eyes and focused on what we wanted to attract to be ready to take on the big teams.

"Before we left for the AWG, we set two goals: to win at least one game and to give the more experienced teams a good fight. We accomplished both! *The Secret* helped us achieve the unthinkable.

(The team was praised for its spirited display at the AWG by Malaysian Olympic Council deputy president Datuk Dr M. Jegathesan and secretary Datuk Sieh Kok Chi. "The boys gave a good account of themselves ... they finished eighth (out of 11 teams) and that augurs well for future," said Sieh.)

**Sharifah Norlia Al-Aidid, 40s, Human Resource practitioner at a multinational, Canadian economics graduate**

"The practise from *The Secret* that works most is my asking with clarity, believing that I will get it and allowing myself to receive it by having the good feeling as if I already got it.

"I even tested the law of attraction by visualising a blue crystal rat because I thought it was not an easy item to get. Within three days, I actually found it in a crystal shop. Exactly as I had pictured in my mind!

"The biggest change I have experienced is that I feel good most times these days! And I know that the happier I am, the easier it is to get what I want."

**V. Bawani, 30s, assistant registrar at a local college**

"After watching the movie about how we create our own experiences, I realised that my recent divorce was something that I had attracted into my life through my fears and insecurities, even though I initially blamed him for the break-up.

"Now, it's behind me. I have left the old way of thinking and blaming others and started taking control of my thoughts and life. I began using the law of attraction to manifest all sorts of good things – I wrote myself a cheque stating the yearly bonus that I'd like to receive and two months later, I received that exact amount!

"I am a much happier person since I realised that everything that appears in my life does so because I summoned it into being. Even when not so nice things happen to me, when I reflect on my past thoughts, I find the connection.

"I know that if I change the way I think, I can change all the unpleasant things into pleasant ones. It may take a little time to learn how to think right but it's an exciting game to play.



V. Chandran

"What I have learnt from *The Secret* is that each person is responsible for his or her own experiences. You cannot do something for someone, even if they are your closest and dearest, unless they are ready to receive. So, I leave my loved ones to create their own experiences and assist when I am asked. Instead of struggling with why they are doing this or that, I visualise having a happy relationship regardless of what they choose to do.

"I believe freedom to choose is everyone's right and we shouldn't impose ourselves on others."

**V. Chandran, 40s, engineering projects leader**

"There have been times in the past when I have been at wits end over some problems. But solutions have appeared in the form of thoughts or even people who have delivered messages. Coincidence? However, when coincidences appear so often, you tend to think that there are greater forces at work. I was blissfully unaware of some of these laws until I watched *The Secret*.

"The key to achieving results is to know exactly what it is you want. Your purpose, belief and faith has to be unwavering. The Universe operates according to certain laws. If we take the time to understand them, we can learn to align ourselves with these laws, and achieve our goals."

**Mohd Marzuki bin Mohamed, 47, former construction engineer, now a management trainer**

"My first significant experience with the law of attraction was in 1998 when Rozieta, my wife, and I were performing the Haj in Mecca. At Mina, we were supposed to complete the ritual stoning of the pillars. So that we could return to Mecca before Maghrib (dusk prayers), we wanted to complete the ritual by 4.45pm.

"I made a clear image in my mind of us standing adjacent to the third pillar reciting the prayer of completion at 4.45pm. I replayed the image over and over again in my mind. We could only leave our tents at 4.20pm that day

hundreds of thousands of people there. It was as if the sea of people parted to grant us smooth passage.

"When I was about to recite the prayer of completion, I glanced at my watch: exactly 4.45pm. God is Great!

"After viewing *The Secret* last year, I better understood that this was about the law of attraction. Since then, I have been applying it consciously in all areas of my life, from setting my intention for the lights to turn green at every intersection to the type of loving relationships I want to have with my wife and children.



Mohd Marzuki Mohamed and wife Rozieta Shaari.



Thevi Sinnadurai

"My wife and I run a small business conducting training programmes. Ever since we consciously put *The Secret* into practice, our business turnover has increased four-fold. All praises be to God!"

**Thevi Sinnadurai, 50s, former pharmacist who is now a personal trainer and an NLP Master Practitioner**

"I had declared to my group of friends from the Sistas Network that I would start dating. Days went by ... then my friends called me up and asked what was going on? I got serious, put out my thoughts again to the Universe – I basically communicated with very positive energy. And within two hours, a friend calls and gives me a contact number (of someone she was interested in). And guess what? I went on that date. And it was a good one too!