

Five Keys to Sane Living That the Secrets of *Great Relief* Can Bring You – and Positive Thinking and Attraction Can't

... and two crucial elements of our 10-week “Great Relief Hero’s Journey” audio course that can add immensely to what you’ll read in the book

By Saniel Bonder

Dear Friend,

One day some years ago I was writing about remarkable discoveries my wife and partner Linda and I were making with people exploring my book *Great Relief*. I’d begun writing that book in late 1999 and we published it in 2004. Over the years the book and an audio online course we created for it, “The Great Relief Hero’s Journey,” have become key offerings of our work.

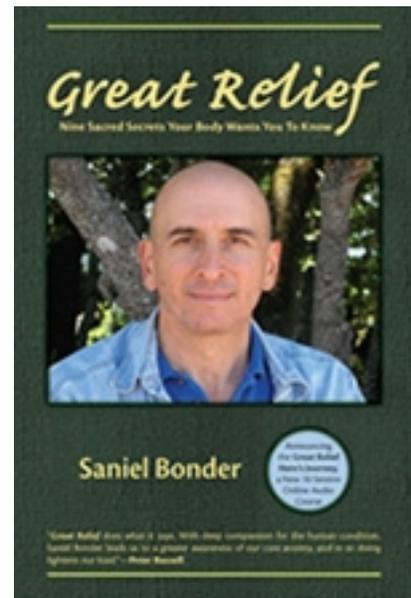
While I was writing that day, it suddenly dawned on me that I was talking about the book’s nine secrets at a time when millions of people were considering *The Secret*, Rhonda Byrnes’s massively marketed book and documentary. Since so many of us were being affected by *The Secret*’s presence even in the mass media, it seemed worthwhile to draw distinctions between that secret—and the whole view of life and self-development it represents—and the nine secrets of *Great Relief*.

I see a lot of value in *The Secret*, which teaches how to manifest what you desire through positive alignment with laws of attraction. I’m all for everyone outgrowing victim-consciousness and behavior and taking fullest responsibility for their lives.

But I also see in *The Secret* a lot of potential addition to and even compounding of many people’s frustrations, pain, and distress. It’s got a giddy, dogmatic hubris—“we’ve got The Answer!”—and its view of reality bears questioning.

Just so it’s clear: I myself practice manifestation. Linda has a whole teaching on it called “Active Conscious Dreaming™.” We passionately determine what we want in life, ask for and intend it, believe, visualize, and invoke it in advance of its full manifestation. (Such processes are taught in *The Secret* and many other similar presentations.) We have had both amazing successes—in our own lives and with others—and instructive failures, with key projects still in progress.

1. The #1 objective, goal, dream, and desire of my entire adult life was, for more than two decades, to achieve spiritual Enlightenment. It took 22+ years, but the



awakening that occurred far exceeds everything I had hoped for. Not only that: I've since been privileged to help many hundreds of others attain the same thing. For most of those 22+ years of seeking, the notion that I'd be serving others this way *was light years away from my thinking mind, conscious and subconscious*. Curious, hm?

2. All my life I longed for a superb intimate relationship. The adventure to find one took me in directions I never imagined when it began. I've had my share of failures: two divorces, a lot of heartbreak. But I am now married to the true love of my life, my precious Linda, so far beyond "happily" that words can't do justice to the depth, beauty, and power of our love and trust. Linda is also my total partner in our lifework. Here also, then, the outcome of my passionate quest to achieve my dreams has far exceeded what I even hoped for along the way. Never mind what I was able to consciously imagine, intend, believe, visualize and invoke.
3. Success has not yet fully manifested everywhere. At the time of this update edit on this essay, in early 2012, I am still working toward greater fulfillment of my vision for my work in the world, including full financial success. However, I know how my own secrets of success operate. I am confident that this area of life may come into equally optimal manifestation. Like the two mentioned above, it may exceed even my big dreams. However, I don't worry about whether I get negative sometimes or not. I don't micro-manage my thinking to make sure it stays positive. I freely give in sometimes to frustration, even despair. As it happens, at this stage none of that lasts very long. *And none of that even remotely gets in the way of this immense process of truly positive life-transformation. Once the process got activated, it never did.* In fact, I don't believe it ever can. Whether or not I ever do fully attract what I'm trying to.

Perhaps you can sense in this a distinct orientation to how to relate to what we want in life, and also a distinct orientation to how we are in life no matter what does or doesn't happen.

Great Relief is not fundamentally about "getting what we want." It's about finding love, freedom, and trust in the vital paradox of humanness that I call the "core wound." It's about learning to live to the fullest in the rich, really inescapable mystery of the "both/and's" that life continually presents us: both pleasure and pain, both success and disappointment, both freedom and limitation, both joy and sorrow. And so on.

So, here are **Five Keys to Sane Living That the 9 Secrets of *Great Relief* Can Give You—and That *The Secret* Can't:**

#1. A break from judging yourself based on what is or is not showing up in your life right now

Linda and I respect the achievements and convictions presented in *The Secret* and related teachings. But, for many people, its almost shouted emphasis on positive

thinking can't help but lead to even worse self-negativity than before – because they try but can't measure up to its standards.

What you will learn through *Great Relief* is a series of secrets so obvious anyone can see them—yet mostly hidden from our willful, opinionated minds. These secrets' orientation to the mysterious ups and downs of life won't move you to judge everything “bad” that takes place as if it were your fault for dumb thinking, sloppy manifesting, and unattractive attracting.

In a beautiful Chinese proverb, a wise old man continually asks his young, impulsive son, “Who knows what is good or what is bad?” As one overwhelmingly positive experience is followed by an equally powerful, seemingly negative one, and then another positive, then a negative, the boy reacts with predictable elation and then despair. All the while, the father keeps asking, “O my son, who knows what is good and what is bad?” In the end a severely broken bone from being thrown off a horse he had in effect won by chance actually saves the boy from, to him, the far worse outcome of conscription into the military. Who knew that something so bad could be the gateway to something so very good? (At least, by the boy's criteria for bad and good!)

We cannot finally judge what is good and what is bad in our lives. The ways of the world are far more mysterious than we can altogether fathom or even appreciate. Even when we are most conscious and responsible! *It's a Mystery.*

Some relevant secrets in Great Relief: numbers 1, 2, and 3.

#2. Relief from the notion that you actually can “have, be, or do anything you want”

This statement, central to *The Secret*, is at best naïve and at worst misleading. The world is not simply a treasure trove of delight we can learn how to mine with perfect success. And it's both the height of presumptuousness and a dangerous illusion to assume that we can have, be, or do literally anything we want.

This doesn't mean that we can't or shouldn't learn skills for how to attract, manifest, or realize things we truly desire. *The Secret* and similar teachings pass along much that can be of help. But the world is an immense, mysterious place in which all kinds of forces, as well as beings, are at play. According to many of our greatest teachers, learning and accepting real limits is part of the wisest dance.

I'm a golfer. I “want” to play “scratch” or par golf. I really do. I still fantasize about it. But I'm nowhere close and never have been. There is ample evidence that even if I were to try my utmost, with all the time, money, practice, and professional help I could possibly want—devoting my entire life to it—I'd still never get there. Not even close! Getting realistic about that has been a great relief.

I don't mean that the antidote to cheerleader-yell affirmations that literally *anything* is possible for anybody who really wants it is to tell people merely to “get real” and put all

their dreams on mute. It's not that we should not dare to dream, risk, and commit to great, even improbable things. It's crucial, though, to see how, when we don't reach our goals, sometimes it's because we *can't*. But we often then interpret failure and lack of perfect fulfillment as a negative read-out on our character and our skills at magnetic attraction. And that's neither wise nor true.

Relevant secrets in Great Relief: numbers 2, 3, and 6.

#3. Relief from *mind-over-matter fundamentalism*

One teacher in *The Secret* states categorically that if someone has amassed a fortune and then lost it, *their negative thoughts about possibly losing that fortune must have caused them to do so.*

The question of whether mind actually *causes* or *creates* physical or psychic reality is outside the scope of this brief report. But the notion that we are personally, in our conscious and subconscious thinking, 100% responsible for our entire reality may be extremely presumptuous—and may move us to regard ourselves and others with grave lack of compassion.

For example, when I was first writing this essay, I interrupted the work to spend much of a day viewing the news about the Virginia Tech mass murder, which took place just the day before (April 16, 2007). If you take the premises of *The Secret* seriously, it's difficult to avoid concluding that all those kids and their teachers must have “created their reality” that day to get them shot and killed by, for nearly all of them, a total stranger. To me, that conclusion is obscenely presumptuous and judgmental.

As a spiritual awakener, I take seriously the principles of karma—of action and reaction, and how forces set in motion tend to stay in motion unless changed or replaced. I feel the necessary changes that permit us to take the most profoundly life-changing responsibility for our karmic actions and reactions are deeper and more mysterious complex than any changes that can occur in our daily thinking minds and even our subconscious thought patterns. I say that with awareness of leading-edge, popularized science about the reticular activating system, quantum principles, and so on.

The dogmatic mind-over-matter cosmology, psychology, and methodology espoused in *The Secret* are worthy of serious questioning. *Great Relief* focuses on secrets your **body** wants you to know about freedom, love, trust, and the core wound or most intimate, vital paradox of your life. If you let them, these Great Relief secrets can relieve you of what we might call “mind-over-matter fundamentalism.” They'll at least give you an alternative orientation to explore so you can more freely determine what you really do believe and how you want to live.

Relevant secrets in Great Relief: numbers 2, 5, 7.

#4. An alternative to trying to exterminate all negativity – an alternative, moreover, that doesn't merely assume that if you can't get really good at banishing, overcoming, or transcending negative thoughts, doubts, and reactive emotions, you must therefore be ruled by them. And therefore you are not yet doing what you must to achieve what you want or live as you long to.

This alternative key to sane living goes beyond the question, "Who knows what is good or what is bad?" It goes to a truly quantum understanding—that every phenomenon always includes opposites within it. In his song "Silvio," Bob Dylan tells us that for everything we get, we also give something up. Always. And no matter what pleasure we experience, it always has "an edge of pain." Every time.

The secrets in *Great Relief* suggest that great positives are hidden in all our negatives. Not if we eliminate them, or after we wade through them to another side, but right in the midst of experiencing them. Therefore, in many ways the worst thing we can do when apparently negative experiences, thoughts, feelings, reactions, and assumptions arise is to try to banish them, get over them, or replace them with positives.

Entrepreneurial guru Dan S. Kennedy, who has helped thousands become millionaire-level successes, rails against "militant positive thinking." As Kennedy points out, for instance, not being willing and able to thoroughly anticipate negative possibilities severely restricts your repertoire of moves and responses to challenges. It's like deciding you will learn martial arts moves only with your right arm and leg. No left side allowed!

Unless you approach them with extraordinary creativity, many premises of *The Secret* will tend to move you toward militant positive thinking. In contrast, the secrets in *Great Relief* will tend to establish you in a truly quantum or "unknowing" disposition. On that basis, you never merely assume, in effect, that any given event is either altogether positive or altogether negative. Instead, you become inclined to participate deeply in the phenomena of your life as they appear and pass, without prejudice or separation.

Remarkably, this will make you more capable of making hard, clear choices in life—not less. You won't become wishy-washy, OK with anything that happens. You will become stronger and more fluid in your thinking, your responding, and your discernment. And you'll become capable of refined choices, courageous action, and forceful integrity, which include taking stands and risks for what you feel is right, true, and appropriate.

Relevant secrets in Great Relief: numbers 3, 6, and 9.

#5. A paradoxical view of the nature of reality – in terms that, while stated simply, echo some of the most profound teachings on the planet (some of which don't get a lot of press in *The Secret*).

Tibetan Buddhists have a phrase for what they regard to be the ultimate perspective on life, death, and everything else: The View. It's a nuanced holding of the joys and pains of life from a superior, encompassing yet unattached stance. If you listen closely to many

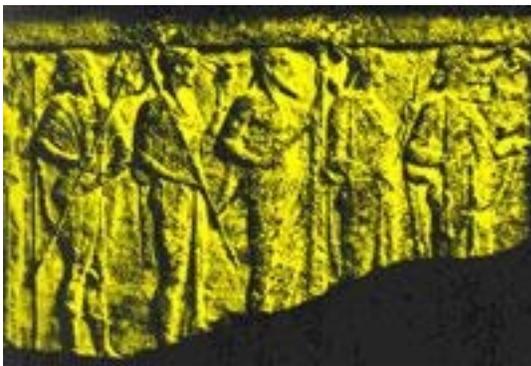
advanced commentators in that tradition and other wisdom circles, you'll hear resonances with the perspectives you'll find in *Great Relief*.

I set out to write *Great Relief* in the simplest possible language, from “the body’s point of view.” Basic. Down to earth. Ordinary. Yet it’s not simplistic. In fact, the book instructs *me*. Its teachings are so primal that sometimes when discussing or considering them, it’s as if I’m encountering the secrets for the first time myself. I don’t mean to imply that I “channeled” these teachings from some other source. No, I worked hard over several years to clarify the secrets and the book’s commentary on them. When I speak, then, of feeling as if I’m encountering them for the first time, I mean that they are so fresh and basic to every ordinary moment that, when I listen closely, it’s as though I myself am discovering them anew all over again.

If the secrets in *Great Relief* can give that gift to me, the author, I have a hunch they can do the same for you. And relieve you of all kinds of unnecessary stress and pain you may be motivated to add to the inevitable “edges of pain” we find even in life’s pleasures.

Relevant secrets in Great Relief: numbers 1, 7, 8, 9.

Great Relief Hero’s Journey: A 10-Week Audio Initiation into the Core “Wound-Wellness Mystery” of Your Life



Linda and I invite you to encounter the 9 secrets of *Great Relief*—including a tenth secret that is not even mentioned in the book, and ties it all together—by also taking our **Great Relief Hero’s Journey** audio course.

For each of the first 9 weeks you listen to a half-hour to hour-long audio recording by Linda and me that addresses one of the *Great Relief* secrets. You can of course also read that secret’s

chapter in the book and practice the exercises suggested there as you go. Then, in the final week, we present the “Tenth Secret” audio recording and outline how it relates to further possible explorations of our “White-Hot Way” and that of the “Waking Down in Mutuality” work that we have founded.

Here are two crucial elements of the 10-week audio course that will add so much to your study of *Great Relief*:

1. The content

Linda and I open the theme of the “core wound” into a larger, more paradoxical reality. In the audio course we talk about the full “Core Wound-Wellness Mystery” of life in ways that are not explicit in the printed book.

*What makes this a “Hero’s Journey” — or a Heroine’s? Take it and find out. We have consistently seen that when anyone takes the time to dive deeply into the stream of these secrets, they embark upon an odyssey into their own heart of hearts — and that of life itself. A sacred quest full of challenges, dangers, and wonderful potential rewards. *You can enjoy that odyssey and quest and those rewards yourself.**

2. The context

In the audio recordings you hear Linda and me address you directly as well as speak with and even interview one another. You’ll hear us share our own experience and understanding of these secrets, and also that of other people who we’ve helped embody this wisdom. And you will receive our transformation-accelerating Spirit-force in ways that are not possible just by reading a book — even though the *Great Relief* book (which you receive for free as part of the course) is also a vehicle of that “transmission.”

There is an ancient principle here. What makes our work so effective and powerful for so many people is precisely that it’s rooted in this transmission. And, as many people have attested, hearing our words this way adds dramatically to the likely impact and effect that your exploration of *Great Relief* can have for you.

This is just a taste of what you can find by reading *Great Relief* and especially by journeying into its deeper meanings through our 10-week Great Relief Hero’s Journey audio course. With all our hearts, Linda and I welcome you to explore these unique teachings and possibilities for your own conscious evolution.

Blessings and love,



Saniel Bonder & Linda Groves-Bonder



- To purchase your copy of ***Great Relief: Nine Secrets Your Body Wants You to Know***, at \$10 for the [ebook](#) or \$15 for the [quality paperback](#), go to our [webstore](#).
- To purchase the ***Great Relief Hero’s Journey***: a 10-Week Audio Initiation into the Core “Wound-Wellness-Mystery” of Your Life, go to our [webstore](#).

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