

Published Tuesday, June 19, 2007 11:15 PM PDT

Features

Break through barriers with positive thought

Resident finds a new outlook on life by joining a local group based on the ideas prescribed in the book "The Secret."

By Heidi Schultheis

When Brad Axelrad's father died in October 2005, his life spiraled downward. As the Costa Mesa resident grieved, his neighbors got on his nerves, a tire on his car blew out and he sank into debt.

Then an answer came to him, neatly packaged in the form of "The Secret," a book and DVD by Rhonda Byrne, both released in 2006.

The book, which was on the New York Times Bestseller list for weeks, and the DVD investigate the power of positive and negative thoughts, with an emphasis on thinking in terms of abundance rather than scarcity and possibility rather than limits.

Following his father's death, "I was completely lost, and all this horrible stuff was happening to me, and then I watched the movie and it turned my life around," Axelrad said, adding, "It just removes the victim mentality from everything; it's all very positive-based."

Axelrad, a 34-year-old branch manager of Hoffman Financial Group, said that the power of positive thought explained in the book and DVD is essentially that of the Law of Attraction.

"An example [of the Law of Attraction] would be focusing on a higher purpose in life to attract people or finances or pretty much anything you would need to build an organization or nonprofit or for-profit using vibrations to attract scenarios and people who could launch you."

After becoming well-versed in the theories of "The Secret," Axelrad felt compelled to share his knowledge with others. He set up a page at Meetup.com, and soon The Costa Mesa Secret/Law of Attraction Meetup Group was gathering weekly in a friend's garage.

Since then, the group has met 22 times and has grown to more than 40 members. At their meeting Monday night, a diverse group of young professionals gathered to discuss such topics as "infinite possibility" and what they are thankful for.

One member cited her purchase of a new pickup truck as evidence that "The Secret" has helped her build self-confidence and positive energy. Others said they have learned to wake up every morning in a good mood.

Group member Dr. James Slusher, whose Costa Mesa office serves as the group's meeting facility, said that thanks to "The Secret," "I concentrate on what I want to happen, not what has happened in the past or dwelling on, 'I need to lose 15 pounds,' instead saying, 'I'm prosperous and I have abundance' — it's a whole shift in what you think."

- **HEIDI SCHULTHEIS** may be reached at (714) 966-4625 or at heidi.schultheis@latimes.com.

[CLOSE WINDOW]