

5. Never ever, ever, ever think or ask questions about failure or obstacles or negative stuff, even if it's just trying to figure out why it happened in the past or how you might deal with it if it happens again, because that'll attract this negative stuff into your orbit.

As I mentioned, there are many variations. Proponents will argue that the subtleties matter, and that the reason one approach might work and another might not is about the little things.

I'm open to the idea that sometimes your best answers and opportunities come from hard work followed by space and surrender. I'm also good with the possibility that when you get very clear on what you want to create, your brain has what Harvard Medical School professor and neuropsychiatrist Srinivasan Pillay calls a hidden GPS system that sets in motion all manner of less-than-conscious processes needed to reveal the steps to make it happen.

But what I don't understand is the need for mystical explanations for why a process of manifestation might work, when there's actual hard science about what's happening. Nor do I buy the proclamation that even thinking about the possibility of obstacles and failure, or planning for them, makes you less likely to get what you want. The research, in fact, has been done, and the answer is clear. The exact opposite is true.

Maybe now you're starting to see why I have a bit of a love-hate relationship with the whole self-help version of manifesting. The word, alone, had a pretty great history until a few years back. At its root, it's really just about making things real. Taking something that exists in the ether of ideas or energy and turning it into something you can touch, feel, see, hear, or in some other way experience. Something horrible and feared can manifest as easily as something wonderful and desired. A hidden illness can manifest in symptoms. An idea can manifest as a book or business.

But in truth, manifesting is just a more passive version of goal achievement. And there's a ton of research on what it takes to turn dreams into realities. In. Real. Life.