

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.* 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Just before Christmas, Rob Anderson went into a convenience store to purchase three \$1 Powerball lottery tickets as stocking stuffers. The clerk misunderstood Anderson's request and erroneously printed one \$3 ticket. When Rob called the mistake to the clerk's attention, the clerk offered to invalidate the ticket. Rob decided to just go with what was happening, so he accepted the ticket and purchased the three stocking stuffers in addition. Anderson went home and tossed the *mistake* ticket on his nightstand.

The day after Christmas the winning numbers were announced, and Rob figured he would check the mistake ticket just in case. It was then that he realized the mistake was no mistake. He had just won nearly \$129 million, the largest Powerball jackpot ever paid in the Kentucky lottery.

Many people imagine themselves winning the lottery, becoming wealthy and being happy. There's a secret to being prosperous and happy. *The secret is simply to know that you're already a winner and be grateful for what you have.*

In a Persian Sufi folk story, Mullah Nasrudin looked for something one night under a lamp post in the street. A friend is walking by and asks what he's doing. Mullah says *I'm looking for my key which I lost.* The friend decides to help and searches the ground under the lamp post. Half an hour later the friend asks, *Are you sure you dropped your key here?* Nasrudin replies, *Oh no, I lost it inside my house in my bedroom.* The friend screams, *Why in the world are we searching here?* Nasrudin smiles and says, *There is much more light here.*

We too sometimes search outside ourselves for happiness when the key to our happiness is within us. We, like Nasrudin crawling beneath the streetlight looking for his key, might be looking in the wrong place for our winnings.

In an article in *Psychology Today* magazine, the author states that researchers have discovered that many lottery winners experience alcoholism, depression, and even suicide. Research shows that lottery winners were often happy immediately after they won, but after time they would return to the same level of happiness that they had before they won.

When Rob Anderson told the convenience-store cashier he didn't need to void the ticket he had printed, *by mistake*, Rob became \$129 million richer. He decided to accept the event as possibly serving his good. Could things that seem to be going wrong really be going right? Might the universe be conspiring in our favor?

The word *conspiracy* comes from the Latin *conspirare*, meaning *to breathe together*. Often we associate *conspiracy* with an underground movement to overthrow an established order. But the word has far deeper meaning that can empower us as we understand it. When we breathe together with the universe, we find that it is working on our behalf. We don't have to subvert the established order because universal order is already set up for us to succeed.

Our pain derives not from what happens, but from resisting what is happening. When we can accept the current of events (a form of currency) and look for ways that change serves us, what we thought was a curse becomes a blessing.

Don't bet on the lottery to make you happy. Bet on yourself instead. Win by being happy. Align your thoughts, feelings, words, and acts with an attitude of gratitude. Allow the universe to conspire to make you happy, and positive events will follow.

Affirmation: *I have my winning lottery ticket and I am happy and successful.*