

store

inoffs. To get
of several new
and Lakeline Mall:

Associated Press BLOOMINGDALES

A COFFEE WITH ... JOE VITALE

By Jenny Miller

SPECIAL TO THE AMERICAN STATESMAN

It's 10:45 a.m. and Joe Vitale has already harnessed the powers of the universe several times.

On the drive from his Wimberley home to the Barnes & Noble at the Arboretum, the doctor of metaphysics, marketing guru and author of "way too many books to mention" used a tool called the law of attraction to ask for the following: a safe trip with no traffic (which he gets); that he be early for the coffee interview (which he is); and that we easily find each other in the bookstore's cafe (which we do).

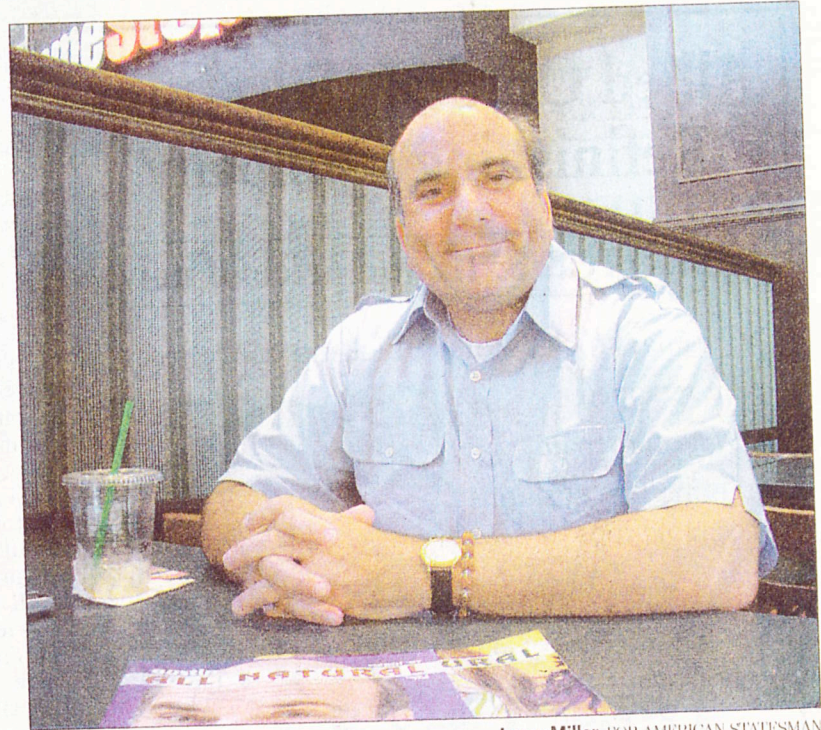
The law of attraction — the theory that we "attract" into our lives whatever it is our minds are focused on — is the central message of the best-selling self-help book and film "The Secret," in which Vitale appears. If you haven't gotten in on "The Secret" yet, you've probably at least heard of it. The DVD, released in March 2006,

has already sold more than 1.5 million copies. The corresponding book has 3.75 million copies in print, and both have topped the charts at Amazon.com.

Those who have seen the film will remember Vitale as the dimpled, middle-aged man in a black T-shirt and brown prayer beads who uttered some of the most memorable lines. "You are the Michelangelo of your own life. The David that you are sculpting is you," is one. Another: "The universe likes speed," meaning that to reach our goals we should take action in the very moment we feel inspired.

The speed line is so frequently referenced that Vitale declares it will be carved on his tombstone, though the 53-year-old adds that he has plenty of time before then.

The movie's message is somewhat radical, and, as much as the English-speaking public seems to be gobbling it up, there's been criticism, too. One major complaint (the



Jenny Miller FOR AMERICAN STATESMAN

thesis of a recent Newsweek story) is the focus on attracting money and material goods over more altruistic goals. (And indeed, sports cars and luxurious houses play as big a role in

See **COFFEE**, E7

hungry to re-establish a collective status quo."

A dress is also practical, and modern women like that, he says. "Casual dressing got so complicated with the layering, it took too much time. What could be simpler than a dress?"

Wearing dresses has caught on big time in Austin, and any time spent downtown at night will pony up the proof.

"It's an easy statement," says Wendi Koletar, owner of Kick Pleat on South First Street. "You have a really cute outfit with one piece without looking for the pants and the

See **DRESS**, E6

& Fitch

S
K

OUTFITTERS

& Fitch

stores, E6)

TELL ME ABOUT IT

friends with kids have time?

friend busy, or me, you do up... I've d to ts. I get hat tay- re do ay? no dry ngs, is: why call way lus in- ng ax 1't Is ch re id ee 1. 1- 3

friends with kids. Or you're taking them at their word that they actually have kids, because you haven't personally been in the same room with them.

I keep wavering between giving you a straight answer and giving my forehead some keyboard. To claim you want to understand, while in the same breath implying that the only logical conclusions are that your mom-friends are either lying or competing with you, is disingenuous indeed.

So, because it's validation you seem to want, the real answer is what you get. When you have young kids, your typical day is: constant attention, from getting them out of bed, fed, cleaned, dressed; to keeping them out of harm's way; to answering their coos, cries, questions; to having two arms and carrying one kid, one set of car keys, and supplies for even the quickest trips, including the latest-to-be-declared-essential piece of molded plastic gear; to keeping them from unshelving books at the library; to enforcing rest times; to staying one step ahead of them lest they get too hungry, tired or bored, any one of which produces checkout-line screaming.

It's needing 45 minutes to do what takes others 15.

It's constant vigilance, constant touch, constant use of your voice, constant relegation of your needs to the second tier.

It's constant scrutiny and second-guessing from family and friends. It's resisting constant temptation to seek short-term relief at everyone's long-term expense.

It's doing all this while concurrently teaching virtually everything — language, manners, safety, resourcefulness, discipline, curiosity, creativity. Empathy. Everything.

It's also a choice, yes. And a joy. But if you spent all day, every day, with this brand of joy, and then, when you got your first 10 minutes to yourself, wanted to be alone with your thoughts instead of calling a good friend, a good friend wouldn't judge you, complain about you or marvel how much more productively she uses her time. Either make a sincere effort to understand, or keep your snit to yourself.

Tell Me About It is written by Carolyn Hax of The Washington Post. Her column appears on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. E-mail her at tellem@washpost.com.

HOROSCOPES

world, partnerships are equal. In the real world, there are all kinds of relationships in various states of imbalance. Recognize where you're holding up more than your own responsibility.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You've reason to believe that your way of doing things is faster, more cost-efficient and better all around. Lay down the law with a kind but not

you assistance. This is no time to doubt what you want!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You wisely realize that the shortcuts will take longer. Be willing to take on your task again and again until it's even better than the best you've ever achieved.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): In scale, how you manage your money is a reflection of

COFFEE: Think positively, and good things happen

Continued from E1

"The Secret" as any of the people quoted.)

Vitale himself is a sports car aficionado. He owns a limited edition Panoz, which he "attracted" last year on a day when he drove to San Antonio merely wanting to lay eyes on one of the rare automobiles. As it turned out, the car had been a prize in a charity raffle, and the winner was thrilled until he got his tax bill. Vitale ended up driving away with the car that day having paid less than half of the usual \$150,000 sticker price, he says.

To Vitale, his Panoz and two BMWs are "proof that the law of attraction works." When asked whether that's a rather materialistic outlook, he seems prepared for the question. "People have a belief that the material is not spiritual," he says. "It's our cultural programming."

What Vitale and the other "teachers" in the film want us to learn is that the material, ac-

ording to metaphysical thought, is a direct manifestation of the spiritual. As he puts it, "Your thoughts and feelings are creating the outer reality."

Though Vitale lives what he describes as a "life of luxury," that wasn't always the case. More than 30 years ago, before he discovered metaphysics (or writing, or marketing), the Ohio native lost his savings to a fraudulent company that promised work overseas, he says. He then spent six months homeless in Dallas, sleeping in doorways and churches. A relative eventually helped him get work in Houston, and he spent years in that city in "virtual poverty" going from one low-paying job to another.

"It felt like there was no way out, and then I started learning about the law of attraction," Vitale says. A few years later he published his first book, "Zen and the Art of Writing." He

learned marketing while publicizing that book, and things took off from there.

"The life I have right now compared to the life I had 30 years ago is so dramatically different that it feels like a past life," Vitale says. "I want people to realize that if you keep being positive, you keep moving forward, you can get to a place that's so different from where you are now it will blow your mind."

That seems like an inspiring note to end on, and as we toss our drink cups in the trash I'm relieved that the self-described bookaholic plans to browse the store's titles before he leaves. If we walked out to the parking lot together, he might see my dusty 8-year-old Honda Civic, which I would have washed if I'd known it was a direct manifestation of my inner reality. Maybe I should spend the drive home attracting some spiffier wheels.

play

Terra Toys

Plenty of toys! Come see!

2438 W Anderson • 445-4489

www.Chez-Zee.com

Cookin' til Midnight
Fri & Sat

Chez Zee

AMERICAN BISTRO • BAR • DESSERT BAKERY
New Private Dining Room • Gallery

1200 Bellevue Dr. S. Austin, TX 78704 512-451-2550

NEW PRIVATE DINING ROOM

Live Piano Tonight
5:30PM - 8:30PM

Invisible Fence

Brand by PetSafe



Invisible Fence dogs agree: there's no place like home.

474-PETS (7387)

learn more at invisiblefence.com

MEMORIAL DAY 20% OFF SALE

May 25th & 26th

Bluebonnet Yarn Shoppe



259-4646

2800 E. Whitestone Blvd. (141)
Cedar Park

www.bluebonnet.com



Cadillac