

To qualify for the World Billion Dollar Contest, the participants were first pre-selected. The chief criteria were that the contestants should not be afraid of the dark, hidden obstacles and danger, including death. Only 100 entered the final with a live, world-wide audience of billions.

The winner was going to be propelled to instant fame and financial wealth. All he or she had to do was this: walk into a 1,000 square meter Dark Room dressed in a new white suit or dress. The contestant had to continue walking for one hour with 10-second pauses allowed every minute and come out looking as impeccable as s/he went in.

The finalists could quit the contest or the Dark Room by shouting “Stop” into a tiny microphone attached to their ankles. Upon leaving the Dark Room, they would be immediately escorted to the casualty ward for a check-up before joining the other contestants and sharing their experiences with them.

The walk was seen by four billion people through infra-red cameras strategically placed inside the room, which transmitted to two giant screens projected in an auditorium where thousands were able to share in the experience at close proximity. A 13-member jury judged the contenders on the distance covered during the walk, and the winner needed a two-third majority vote to win the prize.

Contestants were chosen at random to enter the Dark Room. They were unaware of the types of obstacles in the room, but were warned that some of the objects could be extremely dangerous.

The first contestant who strode into the room fell with a heavy thud 60 seconds after opening the door with a palpitating heart. Soon after the door was shut behind him, he noticed he could not even see his hands. It was pitch-black, eerily silent and empty, or so he thought, until he stepped on what seemed like a raw egg on the floor. The audience gasped when they witnessed this huge chunk of a man plummet to the floor.

The reminder that he had to keep on walking kept ringing in his ears. The man got up after the fall and bravely advanced forward, only to be stopped by the protruding edge of a small table. Boy, that really hurt when it collided with his kneecap! He did not walk this time, he limped, with the sympathy of the half-sadistic audience.

Two minutes later, he stepped on a patch of oil and again hurled toward the concrete floor as he grappled for support and found a razor sharp sword lying beside him. He thought: “I could have cut myself!” He did. His hand landed on the blade and he could now feel black blood oozing from it. It was not red but black, as all he could see was black around him. He thought it was insane to continue, and shouted “Stop!” towards the mic strapped around his ankle.

The door swung open and he was escorted to the casualty ward to be examined before

joining the group. He was the first loser in a rapid string of other losers who fell over chairs. Some slipped on banana skins, rammed their heads against thick wooden cupboards. Tripped over holes to fall on knives and broken bottles, much to the anguish of those watching it on their TV screens at home.

Did they really want to watch this show, or was it the enormity of the prize and the hype that compelled them to suffer alongside the challengers? After each round, those who gave up after skating on the treacherous floor emerged like war casualties. Their perfectly tailored suits and dresses were stained with blood and patches of black oil, their hair in disarray. The look of defeated men and women was displayed for all to witness on a grand scale.

Was it greed or insanity that drove these people to take up this “mission impossible” with all the pain and risk of death? One was carried out on a stretcher. He fell and was knocked unconscious when his head was crushed by a heavy metallic pole that tumbled down with him. The spectators jolted in unison as if they experienced the cold, heavy steel smack their own skulls.

Nevertheless, the contestants were able to share their ordeal and talk about their helplessness once outside. But this did not provide any useful tactics or hindsight to the remaining two dozen still to undergo the Dark Room treatment.

One by one, they were eliminated with such alacrity that the whole world was ready to cry out, “SCAM!” No one could ever succeed walking in the Dark Room, they concluded. No one!!! But suddenly, the last contender’s name was called. She jumped in with a smile and displayed an unusual degree of confidence and grace. She even waved at the panel of jurists and the audience before the door swung open and the darkness swallowed her.

Once in the Dark Room, she took off her dress and carefully hung it on the door knob. She then undid her Wonderbra, took off her ring, and tied it to the bra while the audience watched with intrigue. What could this woman be doing?

The woman then placed her right hand firmly on the wall next to the door and started walking slowly while her left hand swung the bra in a forward movement as if to shoo away flies. “Flies in the room? No, you dummy,” reflected one member of the jury. The woman was using her bra-ring to identify possible UFOs in her way! “Hey, that is her nunchaku against the big, bad boards barring her route,” thought another. With each swing, she gained more distance and momentum with her feet, while her right hand remained firmly planted on the wall.

The wall was her chief guide round the room, and the bra her radar! Thus, she was able to predict her immediate future whenever the ring encountered an object. She would also know for sure that when she again touched her unblemished dress on the door, she would be impeccably clothed again, and would emerge to collect the billion-dollar prize.

She was now topless. “Who cares! It is pitch-black in here. Nobody will see a thing,” the woman thought. She was not aware that an inquisitive infra-red camera was zooming in on her lovely pair of boobs! The most famous boobs in the world were now making everyone forget there ever was a contest. One could see smiles lighting up, spanning the globe from cheek to cheek.

As the woman continued to advance, cheers broke out. Jaws dropped in utter amazement at the uncanny strategy that she deployed. Guys hoped that it was just an ordinary ring, not a *wedding* ring, that was tied to that bra. Keep hoping, guys!

When she was finally proclaimed the winner of the World Billion Dollar Contest, she had this to declare during an hour-long interview: “You may not realize it yet, but you are all in the Dark Room. Every minute of the day! Every time you worry, are impatient, angry or discouraged, you are hitting one of those objects in your Dark Room, which is your subconscious mind!

“You and I are constantly in our thoughts! Aren’t we? That is equivalent to walking non-stop! How many hours do we ‘walk’ in our subconscious minds? Do we ever stop thinking? No, we don’t. We have been slipping on delusions and banging into hard blocks of data, bleeding emotionally and psychologically. We have no solid guidelines to help us proceed through the darkness in our minds!

“You need a solid guideline, as I had the wall, to pull through life and to focus on the immediate future, not wander aimlessly. Contrary to how it might seem, living day-by-day does not prevent you from seeing the long-term future and planning for it. It is simply managing paradox. You do not want long-term planning to strangle your ability to adapt to reality – to what is happening right now or in the very near future. For instance, when my ring hit an obstacle, I would immediately react by changing my course.”

When she was questioned about her motive as to why she entered the contest, she replied that she loves challenges. She loves experiences. And quoting Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, she said: “**We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.**” Then she added, “And I am here on Earth for the experience!”

Boy, what can you say, but ask what she was going to do with that billion dollars on Earth? “Give it away!” she shot back. “All of it?” “Yes!” But why? Well, ever since she read “*How To Feel Like a Billionaire – Without A Dime In Your Pocket!*” she has been feeling like a billionaire! “A happy billionaire,” she intoned.

Next came a cheeky remark from a member of the jury: “Did you know that we were able to enjoy the harmonic movements of those lovely boobs while you were swinging your nunchaku?”

She was pleased that he found them lovely. “You know, they are not mine! This entire body is on loan to me. I can lose it at any time, just as I can lose all other material things like my house, my car and this ring!” (Keep hoping guys, she could lose that ring.)

The audience was now sitting on the edge of their seats with eyes and ears popping in all directions and not wanting to miss a word she said. They spent hours in anguish watching 99 mortals from 99 countries struggle to win that billion and now they had in front of them someone who could be from another planet. Whatever her name was, and it was unpronounceable, we simply called her The Champ. The name of her country was equally unpronounceable. Asked where her country was located, she replied that it was somewhere on Earth. So The Champ is an earthling, made of flesh and blood.

But others still thought: What is this ET trying to tell us? They were thrown back by her nonchalance and they were getting really hungry to know more. Though many felt empathy with the contestants who suffered all the way until they emerged from darkness, they themselves wanted to know immediately how to get out of their own Dark Rooms.

“Hey, I am no Superwoman,” the Champ reassured everyone. “It’s dead simple. Can you guys turn your head from left to right and back again? OK, do it now.” To see thousands of synchronized head turns on gigantic movie screens throughout the world was a rare sight. Even those watching the World Billion Dollar Contest in faraway auditoriums followed the wave of turning heads.

“What is she trying to get us to do?” Many wondered, but few disobeyed when she again instructed the audience to turn their heads to the right. “OK, when your head is turned to the right, you are out of your Dark Room and into the light. You can see things around you. So focus on a few objects intently as if you are seeing them for the first time.” Many who were political leftists groaned. They were not happy! They could only see light on the left and had to be reassured that they can choose either way to represent the light.

“OK,” she continued. “The right turn...” (we hear that groan again) “would mean you are turning to the present here and now. You can turn your head to the left as long as you are focused on past or on future positive data or experiences. But the second you get hit with negative emotions or feelings, you should turn your head back to the right, and be here and now! And leave the Dark Room that is filled with subconscious illusions.

“Yes, your thoughts are illusions! If you think you can or cannot do something, you are bathing in your illusions, because you have not yet proven them through your actions to be facts or reality.” The audience was reeling back. So, they had just discovered that all of their lives were nothing but series of illusions. Now, that is tough medicine. Some countered the observation with cynicism. Does she know what the hell she is talking about? Nobody loves admitting that they can be wrong.

The woman continued. “In the subconscious mind are spontaneous thoughts of the past and

the future. If you regret having done something yesterday, then you are dwelling in the past. The past is gone and is now a passive 'illusion' having no correlation with the present. It is just a thought or series of random thoughts that can trigger regrets, discouragement or sheer unhappiness.

“Now, if you worry about tomorrow, you are projecting into the future. The future is also an illusion, as no one knows for sure what's going to happen or if he or she will be alive to see another day. **All thoughts of the past and the future are just passive illusions** with which you collide while in the Dark Room or your subconscious mind.

“However, not all illusions are negative. If you had a series of happy events last week, your passive illusions could influence your outlook today, making you more cheerful. But what if you had lost your job last week? How would you deal with a negative past situation which can influence you to feel as if you are at a funeral today?”

To illustrate a passive illusion, she took the example of Ted, a salesperson who had to knock on one hundred doors, one door per day. There were three major potential clients needing the product that he had to offer. The first was at the 51st door, the second at the 73rd door and the third at the 82nd door. The combined orders from these three potential clients would have largely broken his sales record for the year. But Ted was swimming in his passive illusions. When he reached the 51st prospect, he had only 50% confidence in himself after he had experienced “No, we are not interested,” for the past 50 doors.

If he had turned his head to the right after leaving each door, he would have been living in the present and discovering that after each experience, he still had time. He still had energy. And with these two precious resources – time and energy – he could create new opportunities and start afresh as he did when he knocked on the very first door with 100% confidence. Imagine Ted appearing on the 51st door with 100% of his confidence and enthusiasm intact after 50 refusals! This is what makes for success. The woman reminded those who were still skeptic by invoking Winston Churchill: “Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.”

“No matter what happened in your life, you must put your counter back to zero and set new objectives in action. Of course, this would mean turning your head again to the left, but you would then have greater control as your thoughts towards the future are focused and not random. And if you have a strong guideline, such as the wall in the Dark Room, you would eventually reach your goal. This left/right head turning exercise is also one way to control your negative emotions.

“By shifting and focusing on the moment, you would be mastering illusion. **All thoughts of the past and of the future are illusions.** However, if you are in the process of changing your behavior,” she pointed out, “or trying something new, you are into your active illusion. Whatever illusion you create and put into action will be your reality, as you will be mentally and physically living the experience. Furthermore,” she reminded us, “we are the

sole producer, director and actor of our own life.”

The audience wanted to know what else the woman had learned. Which illusion was she currently living in? Was she not afraid that she could fall victim like the 99 other contestants who preceded her? Moreover, would she still have won if she had been amongst the first to enter that room?

She admitted that she probably would have lost if she had happened to be amongst those whose names were called first. She would not have been aware of the degree of danger, of the oil, the eggs and the knives scattered on the floor. There were serpents and huge spiders hanging from the wall. Though they were rendered harmless, those who came into contact with them were completely freaked out. It was a collective experience, so it was no big deal for the final contestant to have won the contest. She relied on the experiences of others to teach her what not to do. She had succeeded through deduction, strategic reasoning and firm conviction that it could be done. She felt that if it had been impossible for anybody to succeed in the contest, then this event would never have been organized on such a scale with billions watching.

Questions from a teenage girl in Nicaragua came next: “Do you have any hobbies? How do you survive and succeed today in this world?” The woman answered that she does have some hobbies like everyone else, but nothing worth recounting. As to the second question, here is the startling response from The Champ: “How do I survive? I don’t! I’m dead..and alive! If you can call it a hobby, then this is one of my hobbies. It is super-ghosting! I materialize and dematerialize at will. When I materialize, I am alive. When I dematerialize, I am dead, a ghost, and nothing is important!

“You know, when you are dead and become a ghost, you cannot lick that delicious ice-cream cone on a hot summer day, but as super-ghost you can, because you have the power to materialize. That is the only difference between super and ordinary ghosts.

“Imagine that you are now dead and have become a ghost. You are sitting on a side-walk café in this *active* illusion you created. No one can see or talk to you. You are invisible to people around you. You have no access to your friends, members of your families or even the waiter standing in front of you. You’re DEAD! How important is your career, job, business, projects, pets, or the ton of worries you carried on your back, now that you are a ghost?

“When dead, you are free of the worldly burdens and feel as light as a feather.” The audience was bewildered. Some people were shaking their heads. The majority did not want to be ghosts! “True, we do not want to be ordinary ghosts, but as a super-ghost, you have the power to materialize and to be born again,” she cried into the mic. “That is exactly how you would feel by turning your head to the right: born again into the present to experience life anew!

“Humanity has recently been driven left into the Dark Room. We are no longer living in the present and discovering the beauty of things around us, but constantly running into blocks of information. Some of this information could frustrate or kill us.”

The Champ warned, “Unless you are able to identify what is blocking your way, you will never be able to advance and reach your objectives.” The CEO of a multi-national company who was currently experiencing total precariousness agreed with The Champ's observation. He thought “There is so much uncertainty in the hidden future. And you have only one choice: imagine the worst or the best. This is tantamount to creating your own *active* illusion in the Dark Room. Without this ability, you slip and you are out,” he concluded.

“So what are some of these blocks of information or barriers,” queried the interviewer. The Champ answered, “One nasty sword that can slice you in half if you fall on it, is 'What are they going to think?' How many times have you been cut by this sword lately? If I had been afraid of going topless and wondered 'What are they going to think,' then I would never have won this contest.”

She was right. And we would be the poorer without this interview and the sheer pleasure of watching her snake through that dark torture chamber with wonderful skill and agility.

The show's broadcast time was running out. But nobody was leaving! It was past midnight. Questions were still being fired from all corners of the globe. Is she married? What does she think of abortion? Is she gay? “Can I invite you to dinner?” This last question came from a multi-billionaire. Where will she be vacationing next summer? Will there be a currency war? Do you believe in God, reincarnation, the power of money, ignorance...

Author: “I need to stop this article here, otherwise it is going to be too long for some ezines to publish. So, I hope you enjoyed this fictitious contest. I must apologize about The Champ: it is going to be hard for anyone to locate her, as she was created in my Dark Room and disappeared into obscurity once I decided to end this paragraph.

“Good luck with your real adventures!”



Dan Low, a self-improvement and behavioral expert at SelfGrowth.com, is also a corporate trainer. He spent more than 25 years helping individuals control negative emotions and life situations through Eastern / Western behavioral modification techniques and is the author of “*Maximize Your Potential with Powerful Tools... And No Stress*”. Discover how and download your free PDF copy at: www.maximizeyourpotential.info.