



## Pyramid scheme

**Ancient Egyptian texts urged people to let go of guilt and remorse. Sounds like a good basis for life.**

It is one of the most familiar images from Ancient Egyptian – a group of figures gathered around a set of scales. Until I attended one of Amber St Clare's workshops, I would have assumed that any meaning had long been lost. Now I see it through different eyes.

Amber is a physical, emotional and spiritual healer who has been studying Ancient Egyptian spirituality since she was a child. As a psychic, she believes she has a particular ability to understand and translate the Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead – a kind of guidebook to the afterlife. She also believes that the Book of the Dead and, particularly, the Negative Confession contained within it, continue to provide a blueprint for our happiness, fulfilment and spiritual development.

Her one-day workshops are open to anyone interested in spiritual growth. Along with 15 other people of varying ages, occupations and lifestyles, I attended one at the new Hope Island Golf Club on the distinctly unspiritual Gold Coast.

## Happy to be spiritual

I was relieved to find that I was not alone in knowing little more about Ancient Egypt than you could read in the average travel brochure. We had been drawn together by curiosity, intrigued to know how the world of pyramids, pharaohs and strangely-drawn figures could possibly relate to us today.

Amber's first words were reassuring. "Over the centuries, we've come to believe that you can only be good if you suffer, but that just isn't so." she told us. "The Ancient Egyptians knew that it's possible to have a happy and prosperous life that is also spiritually sound. They also knew that this is what the gods want for us, and that the Negative Confession can help us to achieve it."

The Negative Confession consists of 42 denials of wrong doing and, according to Amber, it is spoken in front of the gods shortly after death. The heart, or conscience, has a chance to speak in its own defence – pointing out, for example, that we are truly sorry for any transgressions. Then comes the ceremony represented in the famous painting – the heart is weighed against the feather of Ma'at, the goddess of truth and justice.

Most translations hold that, if the heart is heavier than the feather, it is weighed down by evil. Ammit, the god with the crocodile head and hippopotamus legs, will then devour it, condemning the deceased to eternal oblivion. If the feather outweighs the heart, the deceased has lived righteously and may join the afterlife.

Amber teaches that the two aspects of eternal life are either endless reincarnation or living with the gods. If the scales are against you, you will be sent back to earth to continue your spiritual growth. If you have been evil enough for Ammit to get your heart, your fate is not eternal oblivion but rather having to start again from scratch by being reincarnated without the benefit of any growth achieved in past lives. On the other hand, if you have abided by the laws of the Negative Confession, you will have the same pure energy field as a god and will be welcomed to live with them for eternity.

### **Live like an Egyptian**

So does the Negative Confession have any relevance today? Well, if everyone lived according to its rules, there would be no war, no wanton pollution, no cruelty and no crime – which is how, Amber argues, the Egyptians maintained a stable society for almost 6000 years. There would also be no useless remorse, guilt, rage or grief, so I'll just have to find something else to do with my Saturday mornings.

Amber's teaching style is to encourage discussion, and some of our discussions were surprisingly lively. In fact, I was fascinated to find such a range of political opinion in a space traditionally populated by left-wing hippies. But the guided meditation with which we ended the day left us all feeling mellow and inspired - inspired not only to try to live a better life, but also a more enjoyable and abundant one.

It's true that nowhere does the Negative Confession suggest that you have to be miserable, celibate or poor; the only reference to money simply warns us to restrict increasing our wealth to just actions. What a relief to know I'm allowed to win Lotto without jeopardising my place among the gods!

Amber St Clare runs workshops all over Australia. She also works privately with clients, in person and by phone. For details, call 07 5547 5669.
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