

An Andalusian Dog
You knew this one was coming
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Canine Candidis

Every weekend, The Bitch sets aside eleven or twelve hours to sift through the e-mails caught in her spam filter in the hope of finding something enticing, like, say, a Website through which one could purchase pharmaceutical products. Hasn't happened yet. However, the pauper pup may have tapped into an inexhaustible well of financial gain and joie de vivre thanks to Miami-based motivational speaker Bert Oliva.

His May 15 e-mail was in newsletter form, headlined with this blast of knowledge: "Live Life, Don't Let Life Live You! — Bert Oliva." Too true! There was no choice but to look further into the self-proclaimed "most empowering newsletter in the world." It didn't take long to find more inspiration. Oliva's empowering letter to subscribers begins, "Dear Friends: Today I was working out at the gym; while I was on the treadmill, I was so empowered that I felt I was dreaming."

What followed was a missive so self-affirming, so goal-setting, so dream-achieving that The Bitch plunged into bertoliva.com in search of Stele of Hammurabi-size enlightenment. The 37-year-old Oliva came to the United States from Cuba at age eleven and was raised in Miami and New Orleans. He claims to have climbed out of the swampland ghetto by "reading as many motivational and self-help books [he] could get [his] hands on."

Today, judging by the photos of him looking extra-empowered in a nice suit, fashionable five-o'clock shadow, and John Rzeznik hair, Bert's many gigs have paid off: He speaks to all kinds of business groups and drives around in an RV with his picture on the side.

Website testimonials include the following from Oscar Peña, a commercial manager at Petrolera Ameriven: "You have that inexhaustible strength and that constant generation of ideas, good ideas, like if you had an infinite flow of knowledge!"

Indeed some of Oliva's infinite knowledge is available for free on his Website. For instance, "Fold your business card in half to win the raffles." (You have to book him for a speaking gig if you want the full thrust of his intellect). And for a measly \$9.99, you can purchase Bert Oliva wealth incense. ("Burn in your wealth corner. For best results, use for 30 consecutive days.")

A conversation this past week with Oliva revealed a bottomless well of motivation. The Bitch offers the following sample quotes for perusal by those who, like the narcoleptic hound, suffer from enthusiasm-deficit disorder:

Oliva on zeal: "You should be passionate at all times. I'm passionate when I mow the lawn."

On history: "The past does not equal the future."

On life: "If you do what you did, you'll get what you got."

The Bitch uttered a caninism ("um, okay") and bid Oliva a nice Sabbath, or something, to which the empowerment guru responded in a conspiratorial whisper: "We don't have weekends; we only have strong ends."