

POSITIVELY BLACK

Concept of faith universal, misunderstood

By Junious Ricardo Stanton
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Many people are under the misunderstanding that faith is strictly a theological concept. We have been admonished by people with vested interests in perpetuating their positions and organizations to blindly accept their doctrines and dogmas as truth. They want us to think faith and tenets are synonymous. They have confused indoctrination with faith! Faith is not about creeds or doctrine. Faith is a cognitive process. It is what you believe is possible, what you can fashion with your inner vision. There is no such thing as "blind faith." Faith utilizes inner perception and imagination to visualize and form shapes, images and scenarios in your mind and give them lasting substance by energizing and re-enforcing them with emotion. This idea or image becomes what you expect to happen.

Everyone has faith, even a so-called atheist. Everyone uses their personal faculty of faith (dynamic visualization) everyday. In fact, our whole life to one degree or another reflects our faith. Unfortunately most of us misappropriate this power. Most people visualize, expect and energize self-defeating images, scenes of deprivation, lack and under achievement. We worry and forecast worst case scenarios in our minds and charge these ideas and images with great emotion (like fear, resentment and anxiety). We end up like Job lamenting "the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, the thing I dreaded has come to pass."

Faith is a precursor to reality. What we have faith in tends to materialize in our lives. It's not magic or mumbo jumbo nor is it mind over matter. Faith is mental perception projecting our minds into the future. What do you have faith in? Do negative thoughts permeate your consciousness? Does your belief in the power of racism, sexism and class distinction prevent you from even attempting or accomplishing your goals and aspirations? Am I suggesting that racism or class, sex and discrimination don't exist or they will not impact you in some form or fashion? Of course not. They are very real factors in our lives. However, they are not the end all. We can surmount and transcend limitations and restrictions with faith, planning and hard work.

As I said earlier, faith has little to do with religion. There are numerous religions throughout the world. The adherents of each religion think

their religion is the true and correct one and all others are woefully misguided or wrong. The real issue is not whether one religion is true or correct. It is whether the adherents believe their religion to be the only true religion!

Religious leaders over the centuries have been able to whip their followers into a frenzy and engage in so-called holy wars or inquisitions in order to stamp out opposition or expand their hegemony. That is not what I am talking

"According to your faith, be it unto you."

— Yeshua Ben Joseph

about.

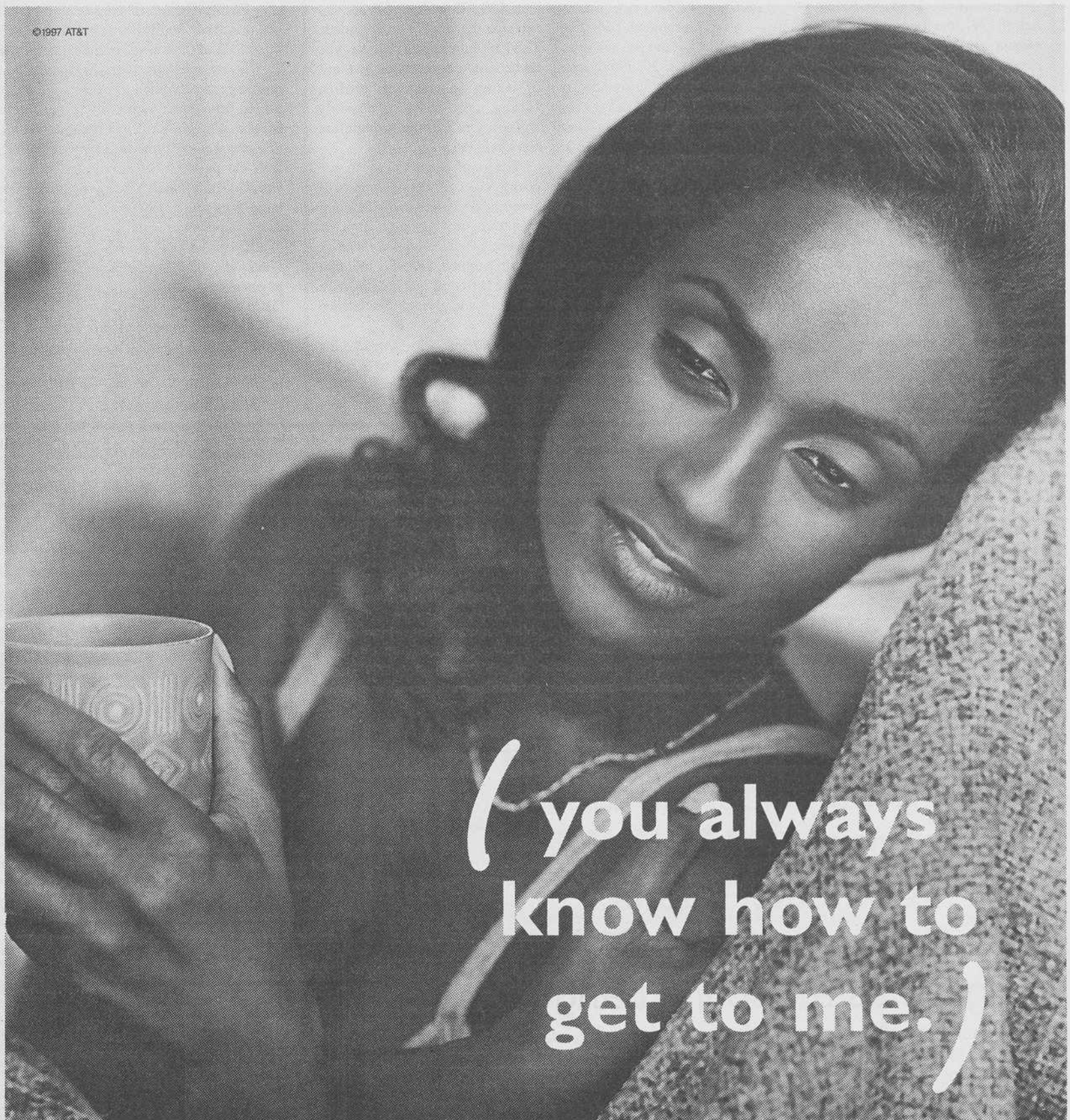
Faith is belief in what is possible, what you envision and expect to happen. Our improved situation is the result of our ancestors' faith and efforts to ameliorate their conditions. Even if all they did was pray for strength to endure

the unbearable, that enabled them to make it through another day. Whether they were traditional African religionists, Christian, Islamic, agnostic or atheist was immaterial. The important issue was they believed was possible and they worked to make it happen.

Likewise, we must use our faculty of faith righteously, use it to envision health, prosperity, wholeness and personal empowerment.

Have confidence in your abilities, in your resiliency and your capacity to bounce back when life throws you a curve or knocks you for a loop. Have faith in the power of faith. It doesn't take a lot. If you have, as Yeshua Ben Joseph so graphically put it, faith the size of a mustard seed and you energize it with a strong belief

and you strategize and work to accomplish what you want, it will be done unto you. One example is Michael Jordan who was cut from the ninth grade basketball team but envisioned himself as a player. He worked hard to make himself good enough to make the varsity team and go on to succeed in high school, college and the pros. Faith is more than religion, it is very real for every part of your life. Ask yourself how you demonstrate your faith.



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