

The HOLY ENCOUNTER



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2016
A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

**...when you meet anyone, remember
it is a holy encounter.**



To be Free or Not to be Free... ...That is the Question

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

If this question were posed to us, of course, we would choose freedom. After all, only a fool would want to be imprisoned! And yet, many of us walk around feeling imprisoned by time, circumstances, and a variety of other events in our lives. Our minds have the power to impose many more limits than this world ever could, but our minds can also free us from a world of seeming limitation with merely one thought.

A Course in Miracles tells us this world is not our home. It says the world was made as an attack on God, the foremost expression of separation. This can seem rather startling, but every spiritual truth reminds us "something" has happened to distance us from our Creator. Christianity states its rendition of this "fall from grace" in a couple of different ways.

In the Bible when it says God created the world, it's referring to the world expressed by Eden (which represents our pre-separation state) wherein Adam (who represents our pre-separation awareness of our oneness with God) abides. And yet, when he (and Eve) ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

(duality or an opposite to what is all-encompassing), he was banished from (or no longer aware of) this perfect home. Even Eve, who is considered the "temptress" in this scenario, signifies a counter to the idea of our oneness by introducing male and female into the equation. As you can see, the moment perception of duality enters our minds, it continues to introduce separation upon separation until oneness and unity seem like impossible, far away fantasies instead of our birthright.



This Old Testament rendition of the "fall from grace" is recalled by Jesus in the New Testament through the parable of the prodigal son, but with a different twist. This story gives us a clear way to return home to our Father, by releasing our guilt (through the power of forgiveness) and turning to Him. Therefore, even though this world

may be a place of pain, limit, and suffering, at any moment we can choose to come home and thereby experience the peace, freedom, and limitlessness we desire and that God is holding out to us.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the

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Beverly is the co-founder and president of MDC, one of the longest running organizations based on *A Course in Miracles*. As a student, lecturer and author on the Course since 1977, her recorded weekly commentaries on Course principles have become a wonderful source of inspiration and study for many around the world. Receive a FREE recording by contacting MDC.

A New Year's Resolution

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Heaven on Earth is up to me.

A decision must be made, and it can be made now. It is simply this: "I will begin." And what must we begin? We must try to be kind now – not appear kind, but be kind. We must make the effort, no, the struggle, to be happy now – and not first gain what we "need" in order to be happy. We cannot just add the concepts of kindness and happiness to our life. They must become our life.

Philosophers and poets have pondered the thought, "Where is Heaven?" But this thought from Hugh Prather's perpetual flip calendar seems to give us the simple answer as well as a perfect decision with which to begin the New Year.

As *A Course in Miracles* tells us, "Heaven is a decision I must make."

(Lesson 138) Heaven is not some far-off place we will get to when we have earned enough points. Heaven is a choice to live as God created us. If we are not living from the truth as we were created by God, we are simply not living. We really have no choice but to live from our truth of kindness, love, happiness, and joy – there is nothing else. Nothing God did not create has any meaning in our lives; and that may be why we feel life is often meaningless.

Let us not start another new year without a purpose and a function. Let us live as we were created. We were not created to just work, earn money,

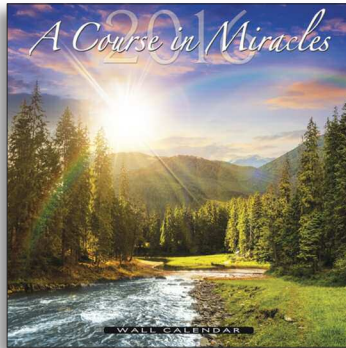
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What's Happening...with the Course and the Center

● **What was viewed by all 50 states and 44 other countries in December?** The free Live Stream study group of the Center with Beverly Hutchinson McNeff! It's exciting for us to see how far-reaching the appeal for the Course's message is. Here is a list of the countries from where viewers watched: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Mexico, Greece, Switzerland, Netherlands, Denmark, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Cyprus, Germany, Honduras, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, Colombia, India, Thailand, Chile, Philippines, Hong Kong, Austria, Malaysia, China, Italy, Viet Nam, Spain, France, Ireland, Belgium, French Polynesia, South Africa, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Romania, Singapore, Poland, Argentina, Trinidad, Brazil, Israel, and Bangladesh. We hope you will join us on a Wednesday at 7:05 pm (Pacific Time) as Beverly tackles the Course in a practical and livable way. As a member recently said, "Listening to the Wednesday night meetings and now live streaming them has saved me many times! I'm so thankful for this family!!!" We hope you will join us. Go to our website: www.miraclecenter.org and follow the study group link.

● **"Wow! My order shipped 20 minutes from when I placed it. This truly is a 'Miracle Distribution Center!'"** We thank Nannette in Nevada for her kind comment about our online bookstore. Since our founding in 1978, we've tried to provide the level of service we ourselves would like

to receive. Unlike the larger online super-stores, we are always happy to talk with you on the phone to help find the perfect books and recordings to help with your study of the Course. And, all of the proceeds from your purchases help to fund our many free services, including **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. Just go to our website and click on "Store".



● **Our 2016 A Course in Miracles Wall Calendar** is the perfect way to keep you on time and at peace as you enter into this New Year! Featuring stunning full color photos along with inspiring quotes from the Course for each month, this calendar is

sure to keep the Course's message of peace and healing forefront in your mind all year long. The dates are also coordinated with the Course's workbook. A great gift to give to family and friends any time of the year... and we're offering discount prices! Go to www.miraclecenter.org and visit our online catalog for all your shopping needs!

● **Save the Date –** Our annual International Conference on *A Course in Miracles* will take place **August 20-21, 2016** in Irvine, California. These annual gatherings are a long-time tradition for



students of the Course from around the world. Watch for more details in our next issue, but save the date now!

● **"Can't wait for the April conference in Florida..."** we Floridians miss you greatly!" We want to thank Debbie Rubin for her beautiful email thanking Beverly for her recent meeting dealing with the events in Paris in November and for her reminder to have you join us in Florida at our **Holy Encounter Weekend in St. Petersburg on April 8-9, 2016**. For more details see the back page of this issue and then make plans to attend!

● **Giving a truly meaningful Gift** Here's what many students of the Course have done: Given a tax-deductible donation to MDC in someone's honor or memory. If you would like to give in such a way, send your donation and request, and we will send him, her or the family a personalized letter acknowledging your appreciation and support. It's a wonderful honor for that dedicated someone or their family. And, what a blessing it will be to those the Center serves, for your donation will go to support its free services! **Gifts in honor of...**

MDC, "I can't say enough about ACIM, and MDC does so much to support the Course and bring it to so many people around the world and help people understand

what it is saying. Thank you for always being there,"... Sue Conley in California.

Gifts in memory of... **George Nicholas Reeves** from his daughter Rita Daniele in California... **Dennis Reger & George Sirbu** longtime students of the Course who led groups in Palm Springs, CA, from Rev Charlene Hancock... **Dwayne & Alma Copp** with love from their children, Kristine & David Copp in California.

Thoughts in the Miracle Prayer Ministry 2016
Each day at 4:30 p.m. (Pacific Time) we stop for a moment of prayer as we join our minds with God for the healing of all His children. We hope these lessons from the Workbook of A Course in Miracles will serve as a guide for your prayerful joining.

January: I am the holy Son of God Himself. (191)	July: In quiet I receive God's Word today. (125)
February: I place the future in the Hands of God. (194)	August: My grievances hide the light of the world in me. (69)
March: Love holds no grievances. (68)	September: Forgiveness offers everything I want. (122)
April: I will there be light. (73)	October: I share God's Will for happiness for me. (120)
May: God's Will for me is perfect happiness. (101)	November: I thank my Father for His gifts to me. (128)
June: I choose the joy of God instead of pain. (190)	December: I am the holy Son of God Himself. (191)

If you have a prayer request, please send it to: prayer@miraclecenter.org. Include a postal address for a personal response.

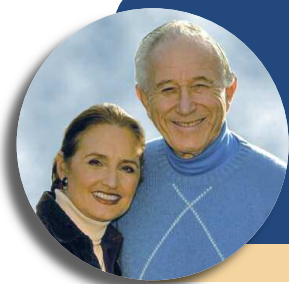
It's Here!

Request your **free**, full-color bookmark today which lists all

the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2016.

call **1-800-359-ACIM(2246)** or at **miraclecenter.org**

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Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Measuring Ourselves To Death

by Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. and Diane V. Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D.

Our egos work overtime encouraging us to measure and compare ourselves and others constantly. And what are we really doing? In one way or another, we are measuring or comparing aspects of our bodies and enforcing the illusion that they are our true realities.

Our true reality, the very essence of our being — love — is beyond comparison and is immeasurable. Even though we may

know this at some level, we still seem to evaluate each other as soon as we meet someone new. There are many silent questions we process either consciously or uncon-

sciously when we are with others, especially on first meeting them. “Am I good enough? Is this person good enough? Is this person honest or will he try to manipulate me? Is that person safe to be with or will I have to keep up my guard? Can I trust her? Is this person loveable or not?”

Every measurement we make is the ego’s way of solidifying our belief that the body is our reality — projecting from one body to another. Our egos tell us to look in the mirror and say to ourselves, “My ears are too big; my nose is ugly; my body is too fat; my hair color is awful — I like the way blondes look so I’m going to dye my hair blonde.” Egos constantly measure something about the body, comparing it to “the perfect body,” like that of a movie star.

Measuring and comparing the size, shape, and value of everything fill our lives; from our cars to our houses; our kids to our bank accounts; our friends to our foes. Parents can fall into the unconscious trap of comparing their kids and measuring one against the other. Whether we want to

admit it or not, at some time in their lives kids get it, and the repercussions are often painful, confusing, and long-lasting.

Much of the genesis of measuring comes from our education systems, in which teachers are obliged to measure their pupils all the time. For example, when I (Jerry) was near the end of my time in kindergarten, the whole class moved on to the first grade, and I had to repeat kindergarten. When I finally graduated to first

grade, they divided the class into groups. I was in the group called Blue Birds. The teachers tried to hide the fact that the Blue Birds were the ones who were slow to learn. We

students, however, all knew the Blue Birds were the dumb ones.

There are many measurements made amongst students. Who are the smartest ones? Who are the fastest runners? Who is a winner? Who is a loser?

I remained at the bottom of my class all through elementary school. I struggled greatly to learn how to spell, how to use good grammar, or how to remember sequential things when I heard them.

At home I was being measured and graded on how clumsy I was, how often I would spill my milk, and how often I would

forget to get something at the market for my mother.

In class I learned not to raise my hand even if I thought I had the right answer because of the shame I felt at having the wrong answer and hearing the kids laugh at me. The measurements I made on myself and the ones others made on me, comparing me to my two older brothers or to my “potential,” gave me low self-esteem, and for years I thought I was a second-class citizen. After that, a good deal of my youth was spent attached to the belief that I was dumb and stupid as I didn’t learn until decades later — that I was dyslexic and learned better in nontraditional ways.

As I grew older, I found ways to compensate and gradually finished my education, medical school, military services, and built a successful career as a psychiatrist. But deep inside, the residue of having failed when compared to and measured against my older brothers and others throughout the years left a sadness and hollowness within me.

It wasn’t until the second half of my life that *A Course in Miracles* opened my heart to experiencing the Oneness of that Love that I am and the Love that God Is. It was like coming Home to see the Love coming from our Creator is beyond any measure-

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“In this consciousness there are no winners or losers. There is no ego greed because we have everything we need.”



Diane V. Cirincione, Ph.D.

Counseling through Practical Spirituality

“Love is always more powerful than fear”

It is with great happiness that I share with you that I have recently re-opened my counseling practice focused on practical spirituality and inner healing. Sessions are conducted by phone and can be done from anywhere in the world.

Four decades of my experience include family dynamics and personal relationships, marriage, divorce, loss and grief, death and dying, life threatening illness, caregiving, and challenges in business.

If you are guided that we might work together, please call me at 415-725-1622.

Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. and Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D., international lecturers and bestselling authors, share their insights and experiences in applying the principles of *A Course in Miracles* in our world. Diane’s therapeutic counseling practice specializes in applying ACIM to all aspects and situations in life. Their books are available at www.miraclecenter.org



Miracle Musings...

An Answer to Terrorism – Vigilance!

by Paul McNeff

“Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen...” (Luke 21:36)

“Your vigilance is the sign that you want Him to guide you. Vigilance does require effort, but only until you learn that effort itself is unnecessary. You have exerted great effort to preserve what you made because it was not true. Therefore, you must now turn your effort against it.” (T-6.V.C. 10:3)

On Saturday morning, November 14, 2015, newspaper headlines around the world read “Call for Vigilance in the Wake of Paris Attacks.” All too common, terrorist attacks; the call to be vigilant rang out loud and clear. Americans heard the same clarion call after the terrorist attack on 9/11. Be vigilant, be watchful, be on the alert. Keep doing what you do, leading your normal way of life, BUT BE VIGILANT!

Ray Kelly was the longest-serving police commissioner, twelve years, in New York City history. He took over at the beginning of 2002, four months after the worst terrorist attack in American history that brought down the World Trade Towers, and took almost 3,000 souls with it. In the awesome responsibility given him of protecting the people of NYC from any further terrorist attacks, he knew it would take leadership, teamwork, expertise, and collaboration with Federal law enforcement agencies and intelligence gathering sources such as the FBI and CIA. But more than anything, Kelly stated, “the post-9/11 terror fight required vigilance – constant, relentless, tireless, and creative vigilance.”

Kelly also described how vigilance thwarted an imminent New York City terrorist attack not long after 9/11. This time the target was the Brooklyn Bridge. An Al-Qaeda sleeper agent and American citizen, Lyman Faris, had planned to

sabotage the bridge by using a gas-powered blowtorch to slice through several of the bridge’s heavy suspension cables, thus undermining its integrity and subjecting it to collapse. Had he been successful in attacking the heavily traveled mile-long bridge, thousands more American citizens could have lost their lives. But, because of increased security measures, and the deployment of more police in strategic locations around the bridge, the installation of 24/7 surveillance cameras and yes... vigilance about their jobs... the Brooklyn Bridge was spared from a certain disastrous attack.

“I caught my ego mind wishing the U.S. military would, with all its destructive might, unleash the powers of hell and annihilate all ISIS jihadists.”

So the \$64,000 question is... what can we do to combat terrorism? Do we bomb the hell out of our enemies, then get our guns, get our “boots on the ground” and go kick the living *&%! out of these radical fundamentalists? Many want to do just that. Perhaps that is the right course of action. Our country will have to decide. These are difficult days we live in. I have to confess, when first confronted with news of yet another terrorist attack, I caught my ego mind wishing the U.S. military would, with all its destructive might, unleash the powers of hell and annihilate all ISIS jihadists. But after taking a pause, I had to ask myself, haven’t we already done that before? How has that worked to bring a lasting peace?

Still, for you and me, the normal Joe

and Jane, a big nagging question remains... I’m not in the military, I’m not a politician who makes those kinds of decisions to commit our armed forces into yet another war. WHAT CAN I REALLY DO?... NOW!

The worldly level will always play out and we can take sides for war or against it. But on a much more lasting level, I believe we can do something, but it must be on a spiritual plane. I submit we can do something but we have to know exactly what the problem is before we formulate a strategy that will ultimately bring us peace. The Course implores us to identify the problem before it can be solved. The problem is that ultimate systemic sickness: Seeing ourselves as separate from our brothers and from God.

Healing that thought of separation is a process. To further identify that problem, the Course says, “*A brother separated from yourself, an ancient enemy, a murderer who stalks you in the night and plots your death, yet plans that it be lingering and slow; of this you dream. Yet underneath this dream is yet another, in which you become the murderer, the secret enemy, the scavenger and the destroyer of your brother and the world alike. Here is the cause of suffering, the space between your little dreams and your reality. The little gap you do not even see, the birthplace of illusions and of fear, the time of terror and of ancient hate, the instant of disaster, all are here. Here is the cause of unreality. And it is here that it will be undone.*” (T-27.VII.12)

Does the preceding passage from the Course sound like the reason for every war and every terrorist attack that has ever taken place? I admit it is hard to see a terrorist as one with me. The mind of a terrorist (how he or she can justify the killing and wounding of innocent people?) is something I do not understand. I can get just a glimmer, though, when I have thoughts of terrorism in my own mind and

Paul McNeff is married to MDC’s founder and has been a student of the Course since 1986. He is a professional singer and conductor and holds a master’s degree in vocal performance. In 1997, along with Beverly, he founded *KidSingers*, an inner-city, after-school children’s chorus. The program has won many awards and been featured on *Good Morning America*. Learn more at: www.kidsingers.org

I entertain hatred and separation as the solution to my problems. I know, however, that loving my “enemy” is not something I can do in my ego mind, but only through the power of spiritual transformation as I begin to see the solution for healing. There is hope and it comes from being vigilant in holding the truth about our brother instead of participating in the ongoing narrative of nightmares and illusions.

Webster describes vigilance as “the quality or state of being wakeful and alert.” Jesus was constantly addressing his followers to be vigilant. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” was a phrase he often used when he wanted his friends to wake up and really listen. Something very important was coming down the pike. Jesus knew that we all get used to the routine, worldly distractions, and we all get caught up in assigning lasting values to the worthless.

According to the Course, vigilance plays a very important role in “awakening” to the truth about ourselves. Let me try to illustrate it this way. Just as the truth about the Brooklyn Bridge is that it is an important byway for thousands of commuters traveling to and from lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, so too is our spiritual vigilance an important byway to the truth about ourselves. A basic premise of the Course is the wholeness and oneness of our Sonship as part of God’s Kingdom.

To teach the whole Sonship without exception demonstrates that you perceive its wholeness, and have learned that it is one. Now you must be vigilant to hold its oneness in your mind because, if you let doubt enter, you will lose awareness of its wholeness and will be unable to teach it. The wholeness of the Kingdom does not depend on your perception, but your awareness of its wholeness does. It is only your awareness that needs protection, since being cannot be assailed. Yet a real sense of being cannot be yours while you are doubtful of what you are. This is why vigilance is essential. Doubts about being must not enter your mind, or you cannot know what you are with certainty. Certainty is of God for you. Vigilance is not necessary for truth, but it is necessary against illusions.” (T-6.V.C. 8)

I was brought to tears as I watched a boy and his father being interviewed by the shrine of flowers outside the Bataclan con-

cert hall in Paris where 89 people were killed in the terrorist attack. I can’t think of any better way of illustrating to us how, through our vigilance, we can protect the truth and be part of the solution rather than adding to the problem. The conversation begins when the reporter asks the young boy, who can’t be much more than three years old, a series of questions. Here’s a rough transcript of the exchange beginning with the reporter’s question and the little boy’s answers:

“Do you understand what happened? Do you understand why those people did that?”

“Yes, because they’re really, really mean. Bad guys are not very nice. And... we really have to be careful because we have to change homes.”

The boy’s dad jumps in and consoles him, saying, “Oh, no, don’t worry, we don’t need to move out. France is our home.”

“But there’s bad guys, Daddy!” the boy says.

“Yes, but there are bad guys everywhere,” his dad reminds him.

“They have guns, they can shoot us because they’re really, really mean,” the boy continues.

“It’s okay, they might have guns, but we have flowers,” his dad says.

“But flowers don’t do anything,” the boy argues. “They’re for, they’re for...”

“See all the flowers?” his dad asks, gesturing off screen. “It’s to fight against the guns.”

“It’s to protect?” the boy asks.

“Exactly,” his dad says.

“And the candles, too?” the boy wonders.

“There you go,” his dad says. “It’s to not forget those who are gone yesterday.”

“The flowers and the candles are there to protect us,” the boy concludes.

At this point, the reporter jumps back into the conversation and asks the boy, “Do you feel better now?”

“Yes,” the little boy responds. “I’m feeling better.”

Every time I read this account or view it online, I tear up. Tears of grief for the dear souls that were killed in the attack, for the family and friends that are left behind and what anguish they must feel to have a loved one taken so brutally... but also tears of a quiet understanding that are born out of the demonstration of love between the father and the little boy, their beautiful exchange as they try to make some sense out of the scene at the shrine. Finally and most respectfully, tears of joy... that peace and protection are not just an abstraction, but are for us to experience here and now, regardless of the horrendous actions of life assaults we all face. Yes, the world, this illusion, has lots of terrorism in it. But, the next time we are subjected to the action or thought, I ask that you remember the Course’s teachings...



From the viral video of a father and son discussing the Paris shooting.

“Your vigilance is the sign that you want Him to guide you. Vigilance does require effort, but only until you learn that effort itself is unnecessary. You have exerted great effort to preserve what you made because it was not true. Therefore, you must now turn your effort against it. Only this can cancel out the need for effort, and call upon the being which you both have and are. This recognition is wholly without effort since it is already true and needs no protection. It is in the perfect safety of God.” (ibid)

Join me in offering the flowers of vigilance, just as the Parisian boy and his father offered flowers as protection from guns and terrorists. Do you feel better now?

I’m feeling better.





Recognizing Spirit

One Minute Shifts: What to Know When Things Aren't Going Well at Work or in Life

by Dr. Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

Author's Note: This article is edited from a free ebook on happiness that I have on my website. Please go to www.drleejampolsky.com if you would like the entire book for free as a download. This article and ebook are for all teachers and students of *A Course in Miracles*, but is especially useful if you would like to practice or share Course principles with people who may not be Course students.

Happiness is more about removing the blocks to Love and remembering who you are than changing your situation or another person.

If you believe you are an effect of the world around you – that your happiness is dependent on this thing or that person – then you are always going to be a victim of circumstance to one degree or another.

Most of the time, we seek happiness; as people, we are trying to be happier. And yet our efforts, even though seemingly

positive, may never really bring lasting happiness and peace of mind. Why is that? This question is central to Inspirational Psychology, and, I believe, to *A Course in Miracles*; it is so very important, and yet it is seldom asked

with any depth or recognition of the problem behind these efforts to be happier. The real problem, the one that tends to be overlooked, is one of causation.

In other words, in order to be happy we need to know two things:

- 1) We need to know what the true source of our happiness is.
- 2) We need to know what the self-imposed blocks to this source are, and how to remove them.

The Course tells us the answer to the first question is Love, and the answer to the second is fear and forgiveness.

Consider the following:

What if you had no problems, only opportunities? How would your life be different then? In actuality, this is the

case. There is never a circumstance, no matter how catastrophic, that also does not hold within it an opportunity to better things, to better yourself. Every moment brings with it an opportunity to love, to forgive, to grow beyond your shortcomings. For me, the more I don't foolishly waste my life wishing for a better past, the freer I am today to create, grow, and love. Freedom rests on finding the meaning and lessons even in our greatest pain.

There are important things to know if

you want to truly address chronic dissatisfaction and unhappiness. These are shifts in thinking that take less than a minute to apply and anyone can do. It is recommended that even when your life is going well, you review these every couple of

days. Doing so will give you better ability to use them when you are most in need.

Some of the following principles were presented in previous chapters, and are reintroduced here because of the importance to embrace them, and to see the mind's reluctance to do so. The repetition is deliberate. The ideas are also applied more to work situations in this chapter, but their application to any situation will be readily apparent.

1. Know that all situations are completely neutral from the standpoint of having the power to choose our response.

"Live as if you were living a second time, and as though you had acted wrongly the first time." - Viktor Frankl

Some people are happy with their lives and jobs, while others are not. What's the difference? Is one group just luckier than the other? Chances are, that's not the case. Those who are unhappy in their life and profession often feel dissatisfaction with a situation happening outside of their control (such as downsizing, or a divorce). But their unhappiness and stress actually began with their thoughts, fears, and perceptions about the situation. In other words, situations are completely neutral – it is our thoughts about the situation that lead to dissatisfaction. Hard to grasp and easier said than done? Sure, because fear can easily take over our thinking. But as long as you believe you are a helpless victim, you will not see a positive and effective response to every situation. Once you see all situations as being essentially neutral, you can decide what you want to bring to them:

Do you want to make something beautiful with Love and forgiveness, or do you want to create more conflict with blame and anger?

2. Know that fear, guilt, anger, and worry hold everyone back.

Countless people – from entry-level employees to CEO's – make unsuccessful job changes each year because they either felt that they could not overcome their mistakes, were fed up and angry, or were overly worried and preoccupied about the future of their jobs. For example, Larry is a manager who had a poor performance review and is working for a company that reported less than stellar profits over the last three quarters. What would be the best use of this manager's mental energy? Is beating himself up about his past mistakes and excessively worrying about his future going to lead to effective action and happiness? No.

Decide to stop wasting valuable time and mental energy being fearful, guilty,

"Be it in work or in our daily living, with most people you can see that as stress increases so does blame. The two feed off of one another in a vicious cycle of fear that is difficult to break."

angry, and worried. If you want to find solutions to life dissatisfaction and stress, start by asking yourself: Is my current thinking taking me where I want to go, or perpetuating my unhappiness? (For more on this, please see my free course on developing Love at www.drleejampolsky.com)

3. Know that being a fault-finder does not create motivation for change or inspire anyone.

The following is a work example, but it is easily applied to any aspect of life. Randy was a vice president who was committed to creating growth for the insurance company he worked for. Randy inherited a department that was lackluster in morale and performance. In an effort to quickly improve the department, he immediately gave a motivational speech, citing the usual “we can all do it together” and “we have unlimited potential.” However, in the months to follow he began being critical, daily pointing out problems and what should be done differently. He was becoming a fault-finder. Randy spent more time on what was wrong in the past than on a positive approach to reaching a shared goal. He was critical of the previous manager, which didn’t give his current position a positive light. Even though he had the best of intentions, the department actually became less effective, and Randy became increasingly unhappy in his position.

Be it in work or in our daily living, with most people you can see that as stress increases so does blame. The two feed off of one another in a vicious cycle of fear that is difficult to break. Sometimes blame is toward others, and other times self-directed. Begin to break this cycle by knowing that happiness and inspiring others does not come from over-focus on what is wrong and who is to blame. The solution that Randy found was that being quick to extend help in a positive manner, rather than being a constant fault finder, improved every aspect of life.

4. Know that making a change in the situation doesn’t always make things better.

The core of the solution to both job and life satisfaction is knowing that nothing needs to change in your situation in order for you to have peace of mind. As I have

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My Path to MDC

by Bill Kasal

This is how I read *A Course in Miracles*:

Do you not see the opposite of frailty and weakness is sinlessness? Innocence is strength, and nothing else is strong. The sinless cannot fear... if the new season of Blue Bloods will be on Netflix soon. The lawn will need to be mowed before this weekend and—

Do you not see the opposite of frailty and weakness is sinlessness? Innocence is strength, and nothing else is... on cable. I have six-million channels and there’s nothing on! That’s why I watch what I want on Netflix—

Do you not see the opposite of frailty and weakness is... pickles? I need to remember to get pickles at the store when—

It takes some real focus for me to get through even a paragraph. I have read quite a lot of the text, yet I wonder if any of it is sinking in through my thick skull to my ever-wandering mind.

I am blessed to live only 15 miles from the Miracle Distribution Center (MDC). I can still recall how, a few years ago, when I was Googling for a Course quote, and I stumbled across MDC’s website. Once I found the quote for which I was searching, I thought I might look around for a study group. There were a few within a reasonable distance, and I emailed one with some questions as to time and location. Before I received a reply, I noticed that the actual center was also quite close. So I emailed a question as to time and location of the meeting and Darin immediately replied.

This was my return to *A Course in Miracles*. After decades of on-again/off-again study, I was getting my weekly dose of the course and those things which appeared to be beyond my ability to comprehend were explained each Wednesday evening by Beverly. Attending the weekly study group led me to keep the Course in the forefront of my mind; daily recalling insights as I trudged my path.

And there’s been more. Over the decades I have attempted the daily

lessons. I start and stop. I restart and stop. My best estimate is that the farthest I ever got into the daily lessons was the mid-hundreds. I’d made it there twice. I think. After months (or years?!) of not reading my daily lessons, I’d think about beginning again but most times I’d resist because I felt that I’d only get some distance and then, once again, quit.

But this year when MDC came out with their Daily Lesson Email service, I immediately signed up. And, for the first time in my life, I have crossed the threshold of Lesson 300! Each morning, my lesson is emailed to me, and I make it a point to read it every day. Do I get everything the lessons convey? My answer to that is: I’m still here! I’m still reading! Obviously there’s more to learn.

If you knew Who walks beside you on the way that you have chosen, fear would be impossible. (T-18.III.3:2)

But MDC’s Daily Lesson Email service has brought me deeper into the series than I’ve been in nearly three decades. And there are so many valuable services at www.miraclecenter.org I can look up a Course quote. I can get a random Choose-a-Quote; and those of you who try it know that it is always the perfect quote.

I’ve struggled for decades – actually

Continued on page 13

Bill Kasal has more than thirty years in radio and television production. His books *One Shining Moment*, *the Real-life Adventures of a Volunteer Police Officer*, and its sequel, *Ketchup on the Badge*, can be found at BillKasal.com



Sacrificing Sacrifice

Lessons in Light... Shifting our Perception of Lent

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

As lesson 323 in *A Course in Miracles* says, "I gladly make the 'sacrifice' of fear." If the idea of releasing fear and sacrifice appeal to you, then perhaps we can use the traditional time of Lent as a way to do just that. The Course invites us to look with a new vision, guided by the Holy Spirit, to view the ideas of Christianity in a new light. Not one that separates us from each other, but one that unites us in healing. Therefore, during this time that leads up to Easter which is referred to as the Lenten season, we will offer a series entitled: Lessons in Light.

Why even deal with Lent, since the Course does not speak about it? Well, it may not say the word but it does address the concept that is the focus of Lent, and an important one it is: sacrifice. So, as most in the western world might approach this

time from the perspective of sacrifice, perhaps we can offer an alternative: light!

In the Course, light represents knowledge or truth and can be radiated into this world. Just as the light of the sun causes life to exist on this planet, so does the light we radiate allow others to realize their true life/purpose and thereby allow us to know it as well. So, we symbolically allow our light to shine during this time of Lent so the darkness and illusion of sacrifice may be shone away.

In the Christian tradition, Lent is a time of fasting and penitence that begins with Ash Wednesday and continues until Easter. It is a time of sacrificing something we value, such as a certain type of food, a particular activity, etc., so that we might be

closer to God, become more holy, and so on. In this scenario, God's love is seen as something we must bargain for, as the Course says, "giving to get" (T-4.II.6:5), which is the central belief of the ego's thought system. "When you associate giving with sacrifice, you give only because you believe that you are somehow getting something better, and can therefore do without the thing you give." (ibid)

Under the Holy Spirit's guidance there is no sacrifice, for there is nothing to pay or atone for. We are God's perfect children – heirs to His Kingdom. In His Presence, all

pain is healed, and all thought of loss is met with peace. We are asked only to make the "sacrifice" of sacrifice (of suffering, sadness, anxiety, doubt, etc.) and to allow God's love and light to come streaming into our awareness.

Therefore, let us use this time of Lent as a

symbolic way of releasing the idea of sacrifice – a world of suffering and pain – and to learn to live in the world while not being of the world. The Course says that truth does not demand that we give up the world, for that would appear as sacrifice if we still value it, nor does it advocate we cherish the world. It invites us to walk a path that is between these two, one that leads away from loss, sacrifice and deprivation. To follow this path, we are asked to step back and let Him lead the way. We are asked to think of Him a while each day, so that He may speak to us and tell us of His limitless love and great trust. (paraphrase Lesson 155)

This is our dedication as we begin these Lessons in Light together, that we may place into God's hands the pain, fear,

worry, suffering, sickness and burdens of life, so that we may awaken to the resurrected child of God we truly are. As the mythical bird, the Phoenix, arose out of the ashes, we too dust off the years of sacrifice by affirming our desire to "step back and let Him lead the way."

Lessons in Light

(The following lessons will be done at MDC's study group starting on Wednesday, February 10 – March 23. These lessons need not be a substitute for your regular workbook lesson from the Course, but rather a supplement, if you so choose. The printed series is available online at www.miraclecenter.org)

1st Week of Light

Ash Wednesday (February 10),
Workbook Lesson 157:

"Into His Presence would I enter now."

This is our dedication, to enter into God's presence and allow Him to lead the way. This awareness and willingness becomes a blessing that touches everyone we meet, think of or who thinks of us. It becomes a vision that can truly transform this world and assure us that peace and healing are possible, for it is God's will for us.

2nd Week of Light

(February 17), Workbook Lesson 93:

"Light and joy and peace abide in me."

"Salvation requires the acceptance of but one thought; – you are as God created you, not what you made of yourself. ...Your sinlessness is guaranteed by God." We have forgotten our true identity and made

a self which contradicts God's opinion. It is time for us to stop believing in a lie and join our will with God's Will. This is our resurrection, our salvation and the world's.

3rd Week of Light

(February 24), Workbook Lesson 46:

"God is the Love in which I forgive."

"God does not forgive because He has never condemned," but through His love we find the strength to look at the pains of our lives and only see the calls for love. And as we recognize the "pains" for what they are, we recognize our innocence and that of all our brothers.

4th Week of Light

(March 2), Workbook Lesson 68

"Love holds no grievances."

"You who were created by Love like Itself can hold no grievances and know your Self." Therefore if we are to know God's gifts and help for us, we must be willing to "sacrifice" grievances. "Love holds no grievances. I would awake to my Self by laying all my grievances aside and wakening in Him."

5th Week of Light

(March 9), Workbook Lesson 34:

"I could see peace instead of this."

"Peace of mind is clearly an internal matter. It must begin with your own thoughts, and then extend outward. It is from your peace of mind that a peaceful perception of the world arises." It is our choice to experience peace!

6th Week of Light

(March 16), Workbook Lesson 47:

"God is the strength in which I trust."

Our own strength has failed us, but God is our safety and strength in every circumstance. "Use it [this thought] as your answer to any disturbance. Remember that peace is your right, because you are giving your trust to the strength of God."

7th Week of Light

(March 23), Workbook Lesson 50:

"I am sustained by the Love of God."

"Put not your faith in illusions. They will fail you. Put all your faith in the Love of God within you; eternal, changeless and forever unailing. This is the answer to whatever confronts you today."



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"Bev's knowledge of the Course and all of her explanations are wonderful. I'm so glad you have the archives available of the classes, as seeing her when she teaches is so much more effective and enjoyable for me. And I can watch the class when it's convenient for me, too."

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Go to our website & you'll find a link in the right hand column

www.miraclecenter.org

What's Happening

Continued from page 2

● ***"All power is given unto you in earth and Heaven. There is nothing that you cannot do. ...let the Son of God awaken from his sleep, and opening his holy eyes, return again to bless the world he made."***

As this New Year begins, let's take to heart what Lesson 191 says and become the blessing this world truly needs. Let us affirm this truth by taking time each day to join our minds with God in prayer. Every day at 4:30pm (Pacific Time), we invite you to stop and join us for a moment of prayerful support for yourself, your loved ones, and everyone in the prayer ministry. Let us awaken our world to the power of healing by extending our blessings. After all, the

gift we give is the gift we will receive!

Thoughts for:

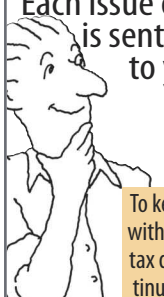
January: *I am the holy Son of God Himself.*
(Lesson 191)

February: *I place the future in the Hands of God.* (Lesson 194)

March: *Love holds no grievances.* (Lesson 68)

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The World is Not Forever

by Robert Rosenthal, M.D.

Some time ago I read a review of *A Course in Miracles* on Amazon that left a lasting impression on me, because it articulated an all too common criticism of the Course. The reviewer felt the Course painted such a bleak picture of life that she just couldn't relate to it. Her life was good, or at least good enough. Problems generally worked themselves out, and where they did not, she was no doubt optimistic that things would improve with time. Given such life experience, why seek anything different? Who attempts to escape from the prison of their contentment?

To be honest, the Course's view of the world is indeed rather dim. It does not deny you can have the occasional good time here – maybe even a good run lasting years. Nor does it deny you will come upon goals you hope to achieve and relationships you deem worthy of investing in. Winning the Super Bowl or a Nobel Prize, closing a lucrative deal, meeting someone with whom you really click, jamming on a Saturday with friends, watching your child perform on stage, or simply sighing into the caress of a gentle breeze on a cloudless day – these are all experiences the world offers. We've all had them, and they feel pretty darned good. Why then is the Course so down on the world?

Because, however wonderful any given moment might be, it will pass. Whatever aspect of this world of form you cherish – a vacation retreat; a coin collection; the sensual body of a lover – it will change. "No form endures." (W-pl.187.4:5) Such is the nature of time.

Card 10 of the Tarot deck, the Wheel of Fortune, portrays this inevitability of change: what goes up in life must come down, and what was down will give rise to unforeseen heights – which will in turn

crash and burn. Medieval scholars called it *mutability*. The German poet Goethe, in his masterpiece Faust, portrayed the stark futility of ever finding and holding onto lasting happiness. And the idea of impermanence is a cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy. Change and death are inevitable here – the ultimate indictment of this world and its seeming pleasures.

"The world you see is merciless indeed, unstable, cruel, unconcerned with you, quick to avenge, and pitiless with hate. It gives but to rescind, and takes away all things that you have cherished for a while. No lasting love is found, for none is here. This is the world of time, where all things end."
(W-pl.129.2:3-6)

"To be honest, the Course's view of the world is indeed rather dim."

If we seek for what the world judges as valuable, we seek for nothing. And if we fill

our plates with nothing, with empty form, with illusion, then we leave no room for what would really nurture us – the Truth – and we must starve.

"You do not ask too much of life, but far too little. When you let your mind be drawn to bodily concerns, to things you buy, to eminence as valued by the world, you ask for sorrow, not for happiness. This course does not attempt to take from you the little that you have. It does not try to substitute utopian ideas for satisfactions which the world contains. There are no satisfactions in the world."
(W-pl.133.2:1-5)

Like the writer of that Amazon review, we try to look away from the inevitability of change and death. Sure, the good times will not last, we know that, but it's too depressing, so why think about it now? Until someone we love dies. Or we turn on the news to a world of suffering. Or we look in the mirror and spy another wrinkle, an-

other blemish, and know that we are that much closer to the end.

Workbook Lesson 133 lists the criteria by which we can assess what is truly valuable and therefore worth seeking, or not. The first of these is, "if you choose a thing that will not last forever, what you chose is valueless." (W-pl.133.6:1) Intellectually, we can make sense of this: all things of this world are impermanent; they will not last forever. Yet still we have trouble grasping the teaching, and for a very good reason. We cannot comprehend the nature of *forever*. To value only what will last forever must therefore strike us as preposterous. Our entire 'existence' as a separate mind housed within a body of flesh, separated from other bodies and from God, defies all notion of forever. The ephemeral, the impermanent – that's us, or at least how the ego would have us see ourselves. Therein lies the whole terror of the separation.

The ego-mind is incapable of understanding *forever*. The best it can manage is to project time out as far as it can imagine... and that becomes "forever." Yet even the stars and galaxies will eventually succumb to entropy and die. So what then is left to value in this world that will last forever? Absolutely nothing. And that's the ego's whole problem. And if we choose to believe that the ego is *us* (oh, by the way... we have), then it becomes our problem too.

The Course offers us a way out of this bind, a different path: the Holy Spirit's plan of Atonement. The Atonement will not last *forever*, but it understands forever and gives us a taste of it here. In response to our sadness, our anxiety, our guilt, our fear of death, it reassures this *need not be*. (T-4.IV) It leads us gently to the recognition that we remain exactly as God created us – wholly loving and eternal within the embrace of His Oneness. We just need to

Continued on page 15

Robert Rosenthal, M.D. is a practicing psychiatrist and the author of *From Plagues to Miracles: The Transformational Journey of Exodus, From the Slavery of Ego to the Promised Land of Spirit*. He has served on the board of the Foundation for Inner Peace for the past 20 years.



Share a Miracle

Thoughts on Not Knowing

by *Samantha Keith*

This column shares the everyday “miracles” or, as *A Course in Miracles* says, the “shifts in our perception” that are constantly taking place in our lives to remind us of our unity and love. We invite readers to share their “miracles” with us.

“I do not know what anything is for.”
(Lesson 25) This lesson from *A Course in Miracles* comes to mind this morning as I wake and read about yet another shooting, this time in Oregon at a community college. I have given up trying to figure out what would motivate someone to do such a terrible act. Nor do I try to figure out how things like this could happen. For these things are unknown to all of us, no matter how much we try to make sense of it. Lesson 14 reminds us “God did not create a meaningless world.”

I pray. I pray for the victims. I pray for the community. I pray for the shooter. I pray for the shooter’s family. I pray for all the troubled souls in the world. My hope is they may find the shimmer of hope, the light at the end of their tunnel, the feeling of peace, if only for a fleeting moment. I bring compassion to myself and count the blessings in my life which are abundant. It’s true that events like this can bring perspective to a lot of us who might be stressed about silly things. Perhaps it’s the printer not working the night before my son’s homework is due, or my system crashing at the office during month-end crunch time, or my blender breaking. All of a sudden, these things don’t seem like such a big deal.

I turn to spiritual nourishment in times like these. Yoga, meditation, journaling, and reading books that open my heart. They say what we focus on grows. So I try to focus on the world I wish to see in the future. I choose to inspire whenever I can. I choose compassion. I choose to

lend a helping hand whenever I can. I choose to donate to causes that touch my heart whenever I can. I choose to make a difference in my small corner of the world whenever I can. There is no such thing as too much love or too much kindness. If anything, there is a drought of love and kindness. The world needs more love and kindness. Once I nourish myself spiritually, then I feel energized to go out into the world and take action.

“I pray, I pray for the victims. I pray for the community. I pray for the shooter. I pray for the shooter’s family. I pray for all the troubled souls in the world.”

I have never been a fan of watching the news. I have always preferred to read instead. This way I have more control over what I allow to be absorbed into myself. For instance, I don’t necessarily need to know the specifics of the injuries to feel the pain of the victims. Too many details can actually fill my mind with more fear, which then makes it extremely difficult to pray for the peace of others when I am fighting off my own fearful thoughts. Instead I turn to spiritual food. The Bible and *A Course in Miracles* feed my soul. Spiritual nourishment is just as important as physical

nourishment (if not more so!).

Yesterday, my workbook lesson for the day was number 104; “I see but what belongs to me in truth.” And I devoured it all through the day. My favorite line in this lesson is “And we need not wait to have them, they [peace and joy] belong to us today.” Truth be told, this is such a beautiful and comforting line; however, clearing away the illusions I have made in their place is easier said than done. But don’t we owe it to ourselves and the world to keep trying? If we have fully integrated all the lessons in *A Course in Miracles*, would we still be on this Earth? I doubt it. All we can do is our best, let go of the rest, and pray to God for peace on earth. Show compassion and kindness for everyone we meet. Life is filled with joy but it’s also filled with sorrow. The question is can we sit with the sorrow? Can we feel the depth of our sorrow? For me, the sooner I accept my feelings about a situation, the sooner the situation transforms. Pain and disappointment, even tragedy is part of life, but misery and suffering are optional. Bring it all to God, lay it down, let it go and be the light of the world. Never give up, use every day as a chance to begin again. ✨

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Samantha Keith was introduced to the Course by Marianne Williamson’s book, *A Return to Love*. She didn’t begin seriously studying the text and workbook lessons until discovering the weekly study group meetings led by Beverly at MDC back in 1999.

son tires of the world and finally realizes he needs his father's help. Once he moves past his shame and guilt for thinking he has abandoned his father and returns home, he doesn't experience punishment but rather he is welcomed by his father's love and abundance. The same can be experienced by us. The Course tells us it comes by a change of mind, not a change of the world. The Course says, *"The world you see does nothing. It*

has no effects at all. It merely represents your thoughts. And it will change entirely as you elect to change your mind, and choose the joy of God as what you really want." (Lesson 190)

It seems so hard for us to believe that through our choice, freedom can be experienced, but that is what the Course assures us. It tells us even though we wander in a world of loneliness and pain, God's gifts go with us.

"Yet in his [our experience of separation] lonely, senseless wanderings, God's gifts go with him, all unknown to him. He cannot lose them. But he will not look at what is given him. He wanders on, aware of the futility he sees about him everywhere, perceiving how his little lot but dwindles, as he goes ahead to nowhere. Still he wanders on in misery and poverty, alone though God is with him, and a treasure his so great that everything the world contains is valueless before its magnitude." (Lesson 166)

How do we escape this lonely, suffering world? How do we change our minds? How do we experience freedom and the gifts of God? It does not come by our denying the world or condemning ourselves for the choices we have made. Instead we must look clearly (and with understanding) at the choices we have made (the compromises to love's presence) and allow them to be transformed through the power of God's love.

We will never find freedom by turning

off the television, not reading the newspaper, or running away from painful relationships, but neither does it come to us by beating ourselves up for the choices we have made or staying in an abusive environment. Healing comes as we gently take responsibility and remind ourselves there is another way, and our realization that we do not know how to find this "other way." This not-knowing phase will allow the Answer God has given us, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to show us a healing solution in every challenge. The Holy Spirit

only needs our willingness to let Him step in and carry us through the problems of life in such a way that we feel His peace and value it more than our suffering. Problems will still come to us, but through His Vision we will see only the loving acts or the calls for love, and our desire will be to answer in like form.

"Correction is for all who cannot see. To open the eyes of the blind is the Holy Spirit's mission, for He knows that they have not lost their vision, but merely sleep... Christ's eyes are open, and He will look upon whatever you see with love if you accept His vision as yours. The Holy Spirit keeps the vision of Christ for every Son of God who sleeps. In His sight the Son of God is perfect, and He longs to share His vision with you. He will show you the real world because God gave you Heaven. Through Him your Father calls His Son to remember. The awakening of His Son begins with his investment in the real world, and by this he will learn to re-invest in himself." (T-12.4.1-9)

If we can merely hold in our minds the truth that we are God's holy children, inheritors of His Kingdom of love and peace, then we will have begun to question the reality of a world where we are held prisoners of pain.

We will look at the wars, attacks of terrorism, and even those feuds in our personal lives and realize these are not God's will. If it is not God's will, then it must be our will to see this pain. And if it is our will, then it can be changed *"by One*

Whose only purpose is your good." (Lesson 135)

When the world seems to imprison you, when it seems like there is no hope of finding peace on the world scene or in your own personal life, perhaps we can remember these choices:

1. Invest in the real world. We are all God's holy children. Even if we cannot understand how this is true from our current perspective of ourselves or others, let us hold in our minds the guarantee that God loves and cares for all of us. If we can hold onto this truth, we will have given the "little willingness" that is asked so that healing may reign.

The Course asks us to call upon a miracle in the midst of our challenges so we might realign our thinking with the Mind of God, the Mind we share with Him. A miracle is a shift in perception that allows us to experience the reality of God's love that has always and will always be. This reality is present even when our willingness wanes.

In the fairytale of the ugly duckling, even though the "duckling" tried and tried to be what he was not, his reality never changes. When he finally acknowledges he is not a duck but a swan, he sees his real beauty and actual purpose.

2. Re-invest in yourself. We are not powerless in the face of what is happening in our lives. Even if we are upset by events taking place thousands of miles away from our homes or taking place in our own backyards, we have the power to choose freedom from the fear and frustration of these occurrences. As we realize we do have control over our choice of experience (though perhaps not the outer situations), we are re-investing in ourselves. We are taking back our power of mind, our power to choose how we will react.

Dr. Viktor Frankl said, *"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."* Frankl experienced the Nazi concentration camps and saw his parents, brother, and pregnant wife killed, and he still held fast to this belief of life. A very devout man of God, Dr. Frankl always believed there was a purpose for our lives and that our attitude can either help or hinder us to experience God's purpose for us. As he said, *"When we are*

no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves."

3. Let the Holy Spirit invest with you. Even though you must decide to choose freedom, you do not know what will bring you freedom, but the Holy Spirit does. Your job is not to judge the situations in your life, but only to decide whether or not you want to experience healing. If you want to be healed from the things that bind you, realize that of yourself you do not know what to do; but, in and through the power of God, the wisdom and vision will be given you to handle every situation so only healing will result.

I once heard a lecture by Dr. Robert Barnes who was the president of the Institute of Logotherapy. Logotherapy was developed by Dr. Frankl and is based on his view that we can choose the way we view life and that outward situations of life cannot rob us of our peace. It is not the world which must change for us to be happy, but our view of life.

Carrying on the work of Dr. Frankl, Dr. Barnes incorporated Logotherapy into his own practice. Dr. Barnes told a story of a woman who had come to him for counsel after the death of her daughter, Sally.

One day before Sally's fourth birthday, she was run over by a car. The mother heard it happen from inside the house. She ran outside only to see her little girl lying on the ground bleeding from her eyes, nose, mouth and ears. As she held Sally in her arms, the little girl died.

The mother came to Dr. Barnes for help because she could not get the picture of her daughter's bleeding body out of her mind. "I see her suffering image when I close my eyes to go to sleep and when I wake in the morning. I held Sally in my arms. She couldn't talk, but she was still breathing. Sally's eyes looked directly into mine. I see them still - I see her bleeding body. Why did I have to see her die? Why me? Please help me," she said, sobbing.

Dr. Barnes lovingly responded to her, "I am so sorry your precious little girl is dead. I am so sorry for your pain. But I am so thankful it was you who held your little girl in your arms in her last moments of earthly life. As she closed her eyes to this earthly experience, her last vision was not of a stranger holding her, but of her loving mother. And when she next opened her

eyes, her vision was of her heavenly Father who loves her so very much, as well."

The mother, in tears, was so grateful for this change in perception. She was freed from the pain and suffering of her mind. She had experienced freedom at last.

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

— Viktor Frankl

Freedom dawns on our minds the moment we remember, "His [God's] care

for me is infinite, and is with me forever." (Lesson 58) Between the problem and our response lies the space where our freedom is found, it is God's infinite love.

God loves and cares for us and only wants our peace. As we recognize the choice is ours to know His Answer, we become willing to allow His vision to be given us through the Holy Spirit. He will guide us as to how we might extend His healing answer to a world crying out with pain and suffering. Freedom is a choice. Let us choose "the light of Heaven for the darkness of the world." (Lesson 190) ✨

My Path to MDC

Continued from page 7

my entire life - with depression. From what I understand, for people with depression, the highs are higher and the lows are lower. Wait. Maybe that's for people who are bi-polar. Heck, I don't know. There are so many things with which you can be categorized nowadays, I get confused. Of course, if I'm OCD, I want to make sure I'm labeling my dysfunction(s) with the proper label! I may have APD (Addictive Personality Disorder). Also SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder). Probably SAD (Social Anxiety Disorder). And definitely SAD (Sick of Acronyms, Definitely). For the most part, I don't care what the labels are, I just know I've gone through periods of financial success and then I'm unemployed, broke and alone. And then I do well again. And then... well... you get the picture.

Of course, my ego is never at a loss to explain to me that I'm worthless and should be depressed because I'm a talentless, miserable slug. Then, when I buy into that chatter, it lets me know that I have so many things going for me, which others around the world do not, I should be ashamed of myself for feeling depressed. The ego is so insidious! But, if I take a moment to ponder its dogged determination and its incredible ability to keep hammering away at me, I can actually appreciate it. Once there is some appreciation, I can accept that it is a part of me and no longer judge it nor fight against it. I can step aside, see what it is doing and not buy into its discourses.

Here is my own beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. (T-24.VII.10:6)

But every week I get to attend the meetings at MDC. When I was travelling I was able to watch the live stream. And every day my Daily Lesson shows up in my mailbox. Yes, I struggle with my (in)ability to grasp the Course. But some of it is beginning to seep through; to sink in. It's the daily reminders that help keep me from giving up. It's the weekly meetings and interactions with the staff that assist me in catching loving glimpses of my True Self.

The reasons I am grateful I have found MDC are many. But for me, getting so far into the daily lessons is a quantifiable demonstration of the gratitude for which I feel. ✨

"I really appreciate the recent addition of the *Daily Lesson E-mail Service*. I would like to increase my monthly donation!"
— A subscriber in Texas



Experience this new, **FREE** service as you increase your mindful meditation of the Course. Find out more under "Services" on our website.

"I am thrilled to get my daily workbook lesson via e-mail every morning. I sit down with my coffee, pull out my iPad, and have a sacred moment as I start my day. What a brilliant idea to offer this service. I am grateful."

— A subscriber in North Carolina

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A New Year's Resolution

Continued from page 1

raise families, and all the other things we think we must do in this world – not that there is anything wrong with that or spiritually limiting. Every circumstance in this world contains the potential for us to experience Heaven; but we will not experience it if we are waiting for others to act or do things differently. Heaven is not contingent on actions but on willingness. “Heaven is here. There is nowhere else. Heaven is now. There is no other time.” (M-24.6:4)

We have to uncover the awareness of Heaven. How do we do that? Hugh Prather gives us the hint; he says we must begin. We must begin to be kind; we must begin to be happy.

Yes, it is that simple. It is a simple decision, but not a simple process. We must be kind when faced with a casual slight, we must be kind when faced with a horrendous injustice, and we must be kind when it seems like it is the last thing we think is called for. This kindness will bring us the reprieve from our judgmental and guilty mind so we might experience happiness now. As Hugh says, “We cannot just add the concepts of kindness and happiness to our life. They must *become* our life.”

How do they become our life? By asking for Help. Help from the Guide that God

has given us. The One Whose only purpose is our good, the Holy Spirit. He is here to help us transform our lives so that we might know who we truly are and live the life that we were intended to live. As we read in the Course, “Make this year different by making it all the same. And let all your relationships be made holy for you.” (T-15.XI.10:8) This is the Holy Spirit’s job, to transform your relationships... to heal your life. Let’s make that decision together to employ Him, and reap the dividends of a kind and happy life. Perhaps then we will realize that we don’t need any keys to open the doors of Heaven; we are already there.

I pray that Miracle Distribution Center can be of help to you as we walk this path of healing. I am excited to be presenting a Holy Encounter Weekend in **St. Petersburg, Florida on April 8-9, 2016**. As a student of the Course since 1977 (for 39 years) I have designed these weekends to ignite and deepen new and long-time students with the life-changing and practical power of the Course. These weekends have been called jump-starts for helping people to understand and actually experience the message of the Course.

I hope those of you who live in and around the St. Petersburg area will join me and my loving staff of the Center. To find out more about the conference, go to the

back page of this issue, call us, or visit us online.

We had a wonderful time joining all our friends in Florida a few years back in West Palm Beach, and we are excited to be back, but your participation is key! Our conference costs are the lowest prices around – we want to make sure anyone who wants to attend, is able to! Hope to see you there! Have a blessed New Year. ✧

Measuring Ourselves...

Continued from page 3

ment, beyond any kind of comparison. It is a Oneness that recognizes all form, including our bodies, are illusions. There is, ultimately, no “I.” There is no “You.” There is no “We” when we know we are One with the Love that created us. There is no separation. There are no judgments, comparisons, measurements, and no interpretations. There is joy and happiness beyond the comprehension of the body’s intellect.

In this consciousness there are no winners or losers. There is no ego greed because we have everything we need. Our only reality is Love. When we are in the Consciousness of God, we let go of such concepts as good people, bad people, dangerous people, depression, unhappiness and rejection, which are all aspects of the ego’s attempt to make us feel that the world we see with our eyes is real and dangerous.

How do we say goodbye to measurements? When we see that measurements are just another illusion of the ego, we start to see no value in measuring each other and see great value in celebrating our spiritual identity; celebrating our gratitude and our oneness with Love. In this consciousness we are grateful for being co-creators of Love.

We celebrate that we are Spiritual Beings, not limited to body identities. We celebrate our oneness with all of life and the end of separation. We celebrate, while we are in these bodies, letting go of all judgments and blame. We celebrate the at-one-ment we have with each other and All That Is. We celebrate releasing our measuring sticks and realizing there is no death, no comparisons, because we know there is only Oneness when we are in a consciousness of Love. ✧

the **St. Petersburg, FL / April 8-9, 2016**

Holy Encounter

WEEKEND

With Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

These weekends are designed to go deeper into the life-changing principles of *A Course in Miracles*. Lectures, discussions, meditations and music all combine to help you understand and experience the healing power of the Course. These popular weekends are offered across the country in answer to students’ desires for a more everyday understanding of the Course, and no one is better at simplifying the complex with humor and practicality than Beverly!

DATES: April 8-9, 2016 **COST: \$149.00** (includes lunch)
LOCATION: Holiday Inn 3535 Ulmerton Road, Clearwater, FL 33762

• Visit our website for complete information including times and hotel registration •

Register @ **www.miraclecenter.org** or call **1-800-359-2246**



One Minute Shifts

Continued from page 7

said in previous chapters, at first such a notion may seem implausible. This idea is foreign to the typical way of thinking, which states “If you’re unhappy, change something – change jobs, change the organizational structure, find a different career, a different mate, a different place to live.”

Rather than giving in to the thinking that tells you “If you are not happy, change something,” instead tell yourself “If you are not happy, learn something or give something.” Inspirational Psychology teaches that a key to a successful and satisfying life and career is to know two things:

- 1) That all situations have a lesson for us to learn to make us more aware of love.
- 2) That all situations have the opportunity within them to give love.

I have a commitment to myself to learn to love more deeply even from the situations I believe are not as I want them to be. This way there is no such thing as a “bad situation,” only “learning situations.”

Know your success and happiness are not dependent upon changing something; they are dependent on learning something and giving something. ✨

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The World is Not Forever

Continued from page 10

remember. And to *want* to remember. Consistently. It is *our* responsibility to remove the obstacles to the awareness of love’s presence – because we put them there, not God – and to do this in every moment, because every moment is the *only* moment.

And so the world fades into the light of eternity, which we reenter with the calm understanding that we never truly left. And God Himself takes the final step. ✨

Free Support!

It’s easy to forget how many free services Miracle Distribution Center provides. Our interactive website allows you to access these services anytime, around the clock.

Holy Encounter Magazine



Our free bi-monthly printed (and online) Course Magazine

ACIM Groups



Worldwide listing of Course Study Groups with online map plotting the groups.

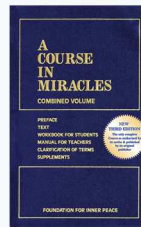
Weekly Meeting

At MDC, taught by Beverly Hutchinson-McNeff. Available on mp3, CD or live stream.



ACIM Lookup

Course’s entire text, workbook, and manual for teachers is available in an online searchable format.



Miracle Moment Podcasts

Everyday questions from listeners are discussed from the basis of the Course in these practical and personal podcasts.



Miracle Prayer Ministry



Join our worldwide family for prayer support each day at 4:30pm (PST)

The Prison Project

Sending Course-based items and support into our prisons.



Wall of Innocence



Send us your photo as a child to be part of the Wall of Innocence and declare the truth about yourself!

Pledge for Peace

Take a pledge for peace and watch our virtual globe light up with peace around the world!



Create & send e-cards

Send a free e-card with a Course quote to a friend or family member.

e-card

Choose-a-Quote



Have a quote chosen just for you each time you visit our Choose-a-Quote page.

Daily Lesson e-mail

Receive your Course lesson in an e-mail each day. You can begin at any lesson number.



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Or you can receive help by calling:
1-800-359-2246 (ACIM)
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The HOLY ENCOUNTER

And Now in This Issue...

- To Be Free or Not To Be Free
- Measuring Ourselves to Death
- An Answer to Terrorism
- One-Minute Shifts
- My Path to MDC
- The World is Not Forever
- Thoughts on Not Knowing *and more!*



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A Course in Miracles at

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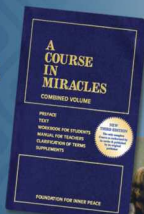


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**Beverly Hutchinson
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opportunity to go deeper into
the life-changing principles
of *A Course in Miracles*.

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Beverly helps students to experience
an everyday understanding of the
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with humor and practicality.

A Friday evening lecture sets the stage
for an all day Saturday holy encounter!



St. Petersburg, Florida
April 8-9, 2016



*"I'm so grateful for Bev's
ability to make A Course in Miracles practical for
me in ways that I can understand, while making me
laugh at the same time. That is a gift!"*



*"I just LOVE, LOVE,
LOVE Beverly's style of
teaching, it is mesmerizing
and powerful."*

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