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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2020
A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



Walk Our Talk

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

When I was growing up, every summer our family traveled the country. My dad was a salesman, and during the school year we were home with mom. He missed having his family around, and even though it was more expensive to travel with the family, he felt the benefits outweighed the costs. I am so grateful he did, because we

by massive sight 7 miles ahead! ...Turn up ahead! Turn NOW! Don't miss this amazing spectacle!

As kids, of course, we believed everything those signs said. Our parents knew better, but they couldn't help getting sucked into our enthusiasm. The "8th Wonder of the World" usually turned out to be pretty uneventful, but there was always a gift shop.

Those billboards still work today. When I have since traveled some of those familiar highways of my childhood, I have noticed a few of those old signs are still up. Maybe it's just too costly to take them down, but those outdated ads are still up "shouting" their stories.



saw some beautiful country and some interesting sites.

You have to remember this was back in the 60s when color TV and 3-D glasses were cutting-edge technology.

As my brother and I sat un-seatbelted, and peered out the window of our un-air conditioned station wagon, we were fascinated by the billboards.

Each one piqued our interest for the next one... *World's largest hole in the ground 15 miles ahead!... See the 8th Wonder of the World 10 miles ahead!... Scientist baffled*

"As my brother and I sat un-seatbelted, and peered out the window of our un-air conditioned station wagon, we were fascinated by the billboards."

We're a lot like billboards. Some of us have done some pretty elaborate advertising about ourselves. We may talk a good story, but the proof of what we advertise is not in our words, but in our living. This certainly is not a new idea. Both

the Bible and *A Course in Miracles* say, "By their fruits you will know them." In the new age movement, the catch phrase has been, "Walk your talk." As a matter of fact, when I Googled that concept, it came up more than 67 million times!

There's a lot of desire to "walk our talk,"

Continued on page 12

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.

Begin the New Year with Forgiveness

Seminar on ***A Course in Miracles***
Fundamentals of Forgiveness
with Beverly McNeff 
Saturday, January 18

A Course in Miracles advises us that we can "make this year different by making it all the same." We all yearn to be more consistent with our choices for peace, but we also know the feeling of not being very successful in our attempts. We finish a workbook lesson, feel the peace of God, and then the phone rings or we get behind the wheel and all the success of a moment before seems to disappear in rage and anger. But, it doesn't have to be that way.

This on-demand seminar will delve into the practical Answer that God has given us for our despair: forgiveness. Forgiveness is not only possible – it is the only way to heal this impossible world. As the Course tells us, "Forgiveness is the end of dreams, because it is a dream of waking." Let's wake up together!

Beverly brings her forty-three years of study and insight into the Course to this seminar to explore the steps to forgiveness. For reservations call:

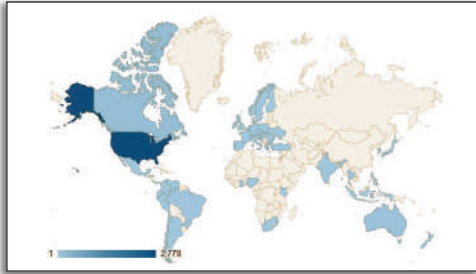
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On-Demand Starting, Jan. 18, 2020

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

For more information go to
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- Join with viewers from more than 60 countries around the world! Our weekly live



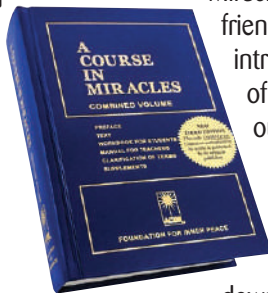
streaming video meeting with our founder Beverly Hutchinson McNeff welcomed viewers from sixty-seven countries during the first half of this year, including students from locations as remote as the Seychelles, Cyprus, and even one viewer in Ukraine. The map shows international viewership in light blue and U.S. viewership in dark blue. We invite you to tune in Wednesdays at 7:00 pm Pacific Time to watch free, or become a subscriber to watch meetings at your convenience and participate in the meetings through our chat room.

- Retreat Experience Made Easy** – Now is the perfect time to reserve your place at our next **Holy Encounter Retreat** on **September 18-20, 2020**. These retreats give students time to go deeper into the experience of *A Course in Miracles* while enjoying the peaceful setting of the incredible ranch property. See the facing page for more details. Space is limited and some room types will sell out. Our **convenient payment plan** allows you to make a deposit of \$99 now to reserve your room. Low monthly payments throughout the year will complete your registration.

- 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 memory of ... my Mother's passing from Joseph Bryson in South Carolina. Gifts in honor of ... Beverly Hutchinson McNeff from a dear friend in Florida.*

- ACIM Free Overview** – Would you like a brief, written overview of *A Course in Miracles* to help introduce it to a friend? Or perhaps a two-hour audio introduction? We offer a free version of each on our website. Just go to our website and click on "About", then "About A Course in Miracles." You can print it out, send a link to a friend, listen to the audio version, or download an mp3.



- Lessons in Light series** – Beginning **February 26** and continuing through the forty days leading up to Easter, this popular series shines a new light on the concepts surrounding this season. As Rev. June in Salinas, California, shared with us about this series, *"Lent is not my favorite time, as thoughts and acts of sacrifice lead away from communion with God. The Workbook lessons you chose brilliantly keep us aligned with the Presence. Thank you."* The lessons in this series will be listed in the next issue, but for now, starting on February 26, you can go to our website where the weekly lessons will also be listed. We will be discussing these lessons as part of the Center's Weekly Live Stream meetings, so

consider joining us as a listener! Contact the Center for details.

- FREE Valentine ACIM e-Cards** – Share a thought from the Course electronically with friends and family this Valentine's Day! We have come up with a variety of beautiful, full color e-cards with poignant Course quotes for every occasion so check it out. It's easy and **FREE** at our website!



- "I am the holy Son of God Himself."** This lesson (191) in the Course is our "declaration of release from bondage to the world." As we correct our perception of ourselves, we are released and so is everyone else. The gift we give ourselves becomes the blessing we offer this world. We invite you to join us in this release by uniting daily in prayerful thought for yourself, your loved ones, those in the **Miracle Prayer Ministry**, and all who walk this world with you. Every day at **4:30pm (Pacific Time)**, we invite you to stop and pray. It doesn't take more than a moment to give the gift of release by proclaiming the truth. The gift you give is the gift you 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: *Light and joy and peace abide in me.* (Lesson 93)

Thoughts in the Miracle Prayer Ministry 2020

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)
February: I place the future in the Hands of God. (194)
March: Light and joy and peace abide in me. (93)
April: God is the strength in which I trust. (47)
May: God's Will for me is perfect happiness. (101)
June: I choose the joy of God instead of pain. (191)

July: In quiet I receive God's Word today. (125)
August: My grievances hide the light of the world in me. (44)
September: Forgiveness offers everything I want. (122)
October: I share God's Will for happiness for me. (102)
November: Love is the way I walk in gratitude. (103)
December: I am the holy Son of God Himself. (191)

Please send your prayer requests to: prayer@miraclecenter.org – Include a postal address for a personal response.

call 1-714-632-9005 or at miraclecenter.org

It's Here!

Request your **FREE** full-color bookmark today which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2020

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SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2020

Holy Encounter Retreat



This retreat is designed to help students to not just talk about A Course in Miracles but to deeply experience its healing power. Through lectures, meditation, group sharing, music, and laughter, you will be helped to see, and look beyond, the limitations of this world and experience the possibility of God in every aspect of your life.



Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

is an international lecturer, author, and founder of the Center. She brings over forty years of Course study to this weekend that will leave you

with the tools and understanding you'll need to experience miracles in your life.

Known for her ability to take seemingly complex lessons and reveal their truth and simplicity, Beverly will help you open up to the worth and beauty inside you now.

"I came away with down-to-earth principles that helped me make sense of things in terms of forgiveness, judgment, etc. The environment and food were great... I just had a great time overall!"



**Register Today!
Space is
Limited**



"Beverly made the Course so easy to understand. I'm always getting this message that the Course is so hard and she makes it so simple."



Everything is included: the weekend retreat activities, well-appointed lodging, and six organic, chef-prepared meals. Our caring and experienced staff, coupled with an oasis in the heart of Southern California, will provide you a safe and



wonderful atmosphere for learning and sharing – a weekend where you can truly spend time on your own internal healing.

Please join us as we take a "journey without distance" to find that even in a world of chaos, our goal of peace and forgiveness has never changed.



Registration begins at \$549 and includes all retreat activities, six organic meals, and lodging.



To register visit **www.miraclecenter.org** or call **1-800-359-ACIM (2246)**





Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Happy New Year... Happy Timelessness

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

When I, Jerry, got my new Apple Watch, I had "Timelessness" printed on the wristband so I would always remember that only this instant is real, not the past, and not the future. God knows no time, only timelessness, where only this moment exists.

A *Course in Miracles* teaches us that linear time does not exist. In one of our favorite lessons, the Course tells us "I place the future in the Hands of God." (W-214) We can connect with God only by listening to His Voice in this present moment. This holy instant is the only thing that is real.

The ego is very clever at keeping us out of the present, creating conflict and regret about the past and fear and worry about the future. We are grateful that God doesn't have a calendar!

The ego does have a calendar – one that goes back years! On the ego's calendar, there is a past to feel unforgiving, judgmental, and regret over. There is also a *future* in which to live in trepidation of events that may or may not occur.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could periodically set aside our phones and calendars, reminding ourselves and each other that this holy instant, right now, is the only time there is? Let us remind each other that this holy instant is available only in this present moment. So, when we say *Happy Timelessness*, we are reminded there is no real time except this holy instant when we are one with each other and with God.

God also does not have a *To-do List*. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could let go of our busyness and listen to the Voice of the Holy Spirit, guiding us about what to think,

say, and do, each moment? We continue to share our *To-Be List*, which keeps us very present and in a timeless experience of what the Dalai Lama calls the "relative reality," in which we live day to day.

Isn't it about time we let go of worry and realize worry is only a function of a fearful ego? When we believe we are one with God and know God is here only to love us, not judge us, we begin to experience lasting inner peace.

All judgment is embedded in the ego; if someone hurts us, we are justified in hurting them back. Conflict is the friend of the ego, while peace is its enemy. There are

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could periodically set aside our phones and calendars, reminding ourselves and each other that this holy instant, right now, is the only time there is?"



no judgments in God and there are none in me. When we know we are one with God, Love is our only reality, and we are living in the eternal present.

Let's think for a moment about what we really are. We are love that never dies. The peace of God is eternal. The Course infers that what is eternal is a gift of God and only that which is eternal – Love – is lasting.

Many years ago I, Jerry, had a special relationship with Judy Skutch Whitson. It turned out to be a love-hate relationship for each of us. When Judy was introduced to the Course by Bill Thetford and Helen Schucman giving her the manuscript, she immediately knew that we could heal our special relationship by studying it together.

When Judy shared her experience of the Course with me, she said it would change our relationship. I asked her what it was about, and she said it was about Love, Peace, and God. I said, "Judy, you know I am a very committed atheist, and I'm not interested in the things you are talking about." Judy asked me to just read one page. I tried hard to say "no," but I knew in my heart that "yes" was the answer. While reading that one page, I heard a Voice that said, "Physician heal thyself. This is your way home."

Somehow this Inner Voice didn't sound like something strange or foreign. It sounded like something real. When I heard the quiet words saying, "Your only job is to give love to everyone, regardless of their behavior," I knew I was hearing the Truth.

I'm happy to say that Judy and I healed our relationship, because we both feel completely united with God's Love. We changed from a "special" relationship to a "holy" one. We know God is not here to judge us, but to love us.

When Diane and I were thinking of being together, and then decided to marry, we wanted to have a single purpose for

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Nightingale
Conant

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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 from the Center at www.miraclecenter.org



Recognizing Spirit Grace Through Acceptance

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

When you are attached to an outcome and knowing the “right” answers, you secretly live in fear of something else happening, and as a result, your mind adopts a defensive posture. Like a boomerang, your defenses sooner or later bring what they were meant to guard against.

I, like most, find that when everything is going my way, it is easy to embrace the moment, but when all is not perfect, my ego resists. Another word for “resists” is “fights.” Both of these words often have a positive connotation in our culture, such as resisting oppression or fighting cancer. Though I certainly am not saying do nothing about oppression and disease, there is another level of this we would do well to also recognize.

Paradoxically, often when we fight something, we strengthen it, and what we resist often persists. Though this may not be always readily apparent on the material level, it is always true on a psychological and metaphysical level.

When I look deeply into my resistance, I see it is born from believing I know what is best, or at least am capable of such knowledge.

Over the years of contemplative practice, I come face to face with the arrogance of this habit and see the limitations and suffering it brings. In contrast, I have said to myself, “What state of mind would come to me if I did not believe things needed to be a certain way or that all events were either good or bad?” Though not perfect at it, I have found the answer is antithetical to what my ego puts forth about resisting or fighting. When I can let go of my attachment and dependency to form and outcome, and turn to the Holy Spirit, my life and level of inner peace improve.

I am interested in the state of grace and how to live more consistently there. When I am not offering any resistance to my life in

the moment, there comes a more exceptional ability to see an opportunity to Love, no matter what is happening. With this comes gratitude, a lightness of being, and effortless-ness. Grace.

“Try not to resist the changes that come your way. Instead, let life live through you. And do not worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the side you are used to is better than the one to come?” Rumi

“If you realized that you do not perceive your own best interests, you could be taught what they are. But in the presence of your conviction that you do know what they are, you cannot learn.” (W-24.2)

Most people want to be confident, but mistakenly believe that confidence



stems from always being sure. The mind that still thinks it knows what is right, or what should happen, will

fail to be open-minded about the possibility of a higher option or different outcome. In other words, there is no state of grace. To be open-minded is, therefore, what brings real confidence, living without an egoic conviction that you know what is best and right.

“In no situation that arises do you realize the outcome that would make you happy. Therefore, you have no guide to appropriate action, and no way of judging the result. What you do is determined by your perception of the situation, and that perception is wrong. It is inevitable, then, that you will not serve your own best interests.” (W-24.1)

Despite its directness, the above A Course

in Miracles quote is not an easy spiritual pill to swallow. You want to believe you know your own best interests, or at least that you can! Who doesn't? You want to rely on your thinking and be sure that you know what should happen. But when you think and believe that something must happen a certain way to make you happy, safe, and secure, you engage in the way of thinking and behaving that makes several demands on a situation. In contrast, when you practice acceptance, you are reminding yourself that there is a way to look at every moment in life, every situation, as an opportunity to become more open-minded, safer, and graceful in the direct experience of Love and compassion. From a

spiritual perspective, the most beneficial mental state we can adopt is one where we humbly and gratefully say, “I don't know what the outcome of this situation should be, but I do know it holds an opportunity to Love.” So, what does all of this mean on a practical level in my life? One

thing I have noticed is that in the present moment, unencumbered by resistance, ways to love reveal naturally, and the effects are easy to see. Thus, I am learning to go to a place of quiet when the resistance shouts, to step back, and to ask my inner guidance for direction. When I do this, I become a happy learner remembering there is a Source of Love in my mind always ready to shine and direct.

The ego resists, proclaiming, “Nothing good will come of this.”

Spirit embraces, proclaiming, “Behold the Love you can bring to this.” ❖

Remember...

When you buy your Course-related materials from the Center, you help support its many free services.



Miracle Musings...

Who Walks With You?

by Paul McNeff

"And Jesus spoke to the disciples saying: Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

(Matthew 28:20)

"If you knew Who walks beside you on the way that you have chosen, fear would be impossible."

(T-18.III.3)

A famous saying goes: "Man plans, God laughs." Have you ever felt like that? We plan our lives for success, but when adversity hits us we scream, "So, where's God now?!"

Years ago, as a director of music at a church I served, I was asked to program music around a sermon series on the life of the Biblical character, Joseph. Yes, the same Joseph from Andrew Lloyd Webber's first Broadway musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. My planning was made easy, as I researched the Lloyd Webber musical and found several choral and solo pieces that would work with the appropriate passage of scripture to be covered in the sermons.

What is very clear from this story was that here was a guy, Joseph, who must have thought, "I've got all these big plans for my life. I'm from a great big, well-to-do Hebrew family... I'm going to the best schools, getting the best education; I'm gonna get a great job, get married, have lots of kids, and retire a rich, successful old man."

WHOA!! Hold on there! It didn't happen that way, did it? Actually, no, Joseph's life took some major detours along the way. But, the key to his life did not lie in his "success" in the world. It did, however, come as a result of his following God's lead in his life, regardless of his circumstances.

Even though Joseph was sold into slavery, forced into jail after being unjustly accused

of sexual impropriety, and forgotten by his brothers and friends, he continued to trust in God. Though he was promoted to second in command to the Pharaoh in the end, he still spent many years in jail. He walked with God along his journey despite everything that happened.



"...Joseph's life took some major detours along the way. But, the key to his life did not lie in his 'success' in the world. It did, however, come as a result of his following God's lead in his life, regardless of his circumstances."

That frame of mind was his rock and the secret to his success in overcoming his circumstances.

And so it is with us. We often characterize our relationship with God as our walk. So how's your walk? Do you feel close to God

throughout the day? A *Course in Miracles* says: "If you knew Who walks beside you on the way that you have chosen, fear would be impossible."

(ibid)

Joseph knew



"As a four-year-old kid visiting my grandmother on her Nebraska farm, I took a little detour by way of a very painful and traumatic experience."

who walked beside him. Has your life been like Joseph's? Well, perhaps it hasn't been

quite as dramatic, but I'm willing to speculate that we all have experienced major detours in our lives.

As a four-year-old kid visiting my grandmother on her Nebraska farm, I took a little detour by way of a very painful and traumatic experience. My seven-year-old aunt had been pulling a recently-sharpened push lawn mower across the farmyard and did not see me as I stealthily approached.

Curiosity had gotten the best of me, and I foolishly thought I could stop the spinning blade by inserting my hand to stop it. Before you could say "golly gee" the finger had been cleanly cut with only a small piece of skin

still attaching it. I remember walking into the farmhouse, taking care not to get blood on the door handle, with my juvenile aunt screaming to the assembled family members, "Pauly cut his hand off!"

My parents quickly threw me in the car and rushed me to the old country doctor. Upon my arrival, he callously snipped the delicate piece of skin still holding the last joint on my finger, calmly threw it in the waste basket, bandaged my hand, and I was good to go. That's just the way it was in those days.

For years I suffered from being self-conscious about my finger, especially in my early teens when impressing the girls had become a top priority. But even at that early age,

I was learning to trust in God in all things. Something good came out of my loss, however. I excelled in my little league pitching career as a curve ball thrower who could not be matched. I always attributed my success to

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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, afterschool children's chorus. The program has won many awards and been featured on *Good Morning America*. Learn more at: www.kidsingers.org



My Lucky Rabbit's Foot

by Joseph Miller

References to “magic” appear throughout *A Course in Miracles*. What first comes to mind for most students are statements early in the Text having to do with illness and medicines.

“Physical illness represents a belief in magic.” (T-2.IV.2:7)

“Physical medications are forms of ‘spells,’ but if you are afraid to use the mind to heal, you should not attempt to do so.” (T-2.V.2:2)

The net effect of focusing only on these statements might be depression. We feel like miracle weaklings or failures every time we reach for the aspirin bottle. But the more we study the idea and its myriad references, the broader and more fundamental the implications become. Magic is more integral and fundamental to the Course’s teaching than it first appears.

There are fifty-four references to “magic” in the Course, and ten times that many references to “illusion.” My favorite statement linking the two is found in the Psychotherapy supplement: “Yet that is magic’s purpose; to make illusions true through false perception.” (P-2.IV.7:4) This statement really cuts to the essence: magic is the misuse of the mind that makes illusions seem true; appearances seem real.

Think of stage magic, or the art of the illusionist. The stage magician manipulates appearances in persuasive ways, to compel us to believe the impossible has occurred. “I saw it – the handkerchief burst into a ball of flames and flew away as a pigeon!” All of this is metaphysically suggestive. Recall that the Course teaches the world is an illusion that the ego interprets as compelling evidence for the reality of sin and separation.

Yet, the evidence is false, the impossible has not occurred, and sin and separation are unreal.

The Holy Spirit reinterprets the world in terms of love and light. It is like turning up the lights after the magic act, and clearly seeing the mirrors, wires, and hidden compartments that made the illusion so compelling. “But eyes deceive, and ears hear falsely,” the Course reminds us. (W-PII.3.2:6)

Another helpful way to think about the concept of magic is to



consider examples of idolatry. The Jews in the wilderness constructed a golden calf to worship. What but false perception could imbue a pile of

jewelry with life and power?

As a kid in the 1970s, I coveted a “lucky” rabbit’s foot that I bought from a gumball machine for 25 cents. I was sure it possessed the power to steer good things my way and shield me from adversity. And only yesterday I overheard a realtor discussing the pervasive (but hushed) practice of burying a little plastic statue of St. Joseph in the yard of a listed property to attract a buyer. (This particular realtor gains an edge on the competition by burying two!)

In all these cases, and many more we could think of, our minds imbue lifeless objects with imaginary power. “The whole distortion that made magic rests on the belief that there is a creative ability in matter which the mind cannot control.” (T-2.IV.2:8)

How pervasive is the practice of idolatry? Lesson 50 gives a familiar list. “Your faith is placed in the most trivial and insane symbols; pills, money, ‘protective’ clothing, influence, prestige, being liked, knowing the ‘right’ people, and an endless list of forms of nothingness that you endow with magical powers.” And in Lesson 140 there is reference to “our amulets, our charms and medicines, our chants and bits of magic in whatever form they take.”

The Course speaks of correcting “the magic-miracle confusion.” (T-2.VIII.1) The suggestion here seems to be that magic is a sort of anti-miracle. If miracles are instances of real power and lasting transformation, magic is only a weak, inverted simulation. It is as if the Son of God, forgetting who he is, retains a vague sense that power is available, but he can’t remember where it is. He looks everywhere except within his own heart.

Magic is “...the miscreative use of mind.” (T-2.V.2) It conjures images. It deals in surface projections, not the depths of truth. Magic is the gullibility of the foolish. It is the whimsy of wish, not the substance of will. Magic is the misdirected power of belief that makes mountains out of molehills, not the faith that moves mountains.

Faith in truth is liberty, but faith in falsehood is slavery. “Whatever you accept into your mind has reality for you. It is your acceptance of it that makes it real. If you enthrone the ego in your mind, your allowing it to enter makes it your reality. This is because the mind is capable of creating reality or making illusions.” (T-5.V.4)

Magic is the unmindful use of mind – mind adrift in dreams. The practice of mindfulness – basic to all Buddhism and cultivated, too, in *A Course in Miracles* – introduces a dimension of self-awareness to all activity. You not only observe your action, but also your thinking. And you direct and tether your thought according to your values

“As a kid in the 1970’s, I coveted a ‘lucky’ rabbit’s foot that I bought from a gumball machine for 25 cents. I was sure it possessed the power to steer good things my way and shield me from adversity.”

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Lessons on a Swing

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Do you remember swinging on a swing? And the fun of going higher and higher as you tucked your legs under on every backward swing, then thrusting them out on the forward swing?

When our son was little, I recall that swinging was a learned skill. When we first put him in those bucket swings, he squealed with delight as we pushed him. Then he

graduated to the big-kid swing, where he learned the coordination skills to make the swing work on his own. It was exciting to watch him learn that each backward swing was not a retreat but

a momentary opportunity to pump forward, even higher. He always enjoyed every part of his journey on the swing.

I think of swinging as a good metaphor for life. It is so easy to focus on the things that are not working – situations where we feel we are stuck or have gone backward. In reality, those seemingly momentary retreats are nothing more than the preparation for us to swing even higher.

The Course tells us “we walk to God.” What if we really believed that? We are not on a hopeless path wandering aimlessly around, we are on a mission. No matter how much our ego thinking tries to distract us with failures, insecurities, worries, and seeming disasters, we are still walking to God because in truth there is no other journey to make.

We need to keep this single thought in mind. There may be many decisions we have to make today, but if we can remember our purpose, it can help bring us back to a healed and productive focus. As we are told in the Course, the vocation of our mind is to remember the spirit of joy that God blessed us with...

“The Holy Spirit is the spirit of joy. He is the Call to return with which God blessed

the minds of His separated Sons. This is the vocation of the mind.” (T-5.II.2)

This is our job now: To remember. When we are not feeling that sense of joy, that sense of contentment and purpose, we have forgotten our true vocation. Just like we

“Just like we needed to acquire the skills to swing, we need to acquire the truth that we feel we seem to have lost.”



needed to acquire the skills to swing, we need to acquire the truth that we feel we seem to have lost. It is time we practice joy through the gift God has given us in the Holy Spirit.

Let’s not think that we’re abandoned when life feels like we’re going backward, not improving, or falling apart. Just like the swing’s preparatory movement back, we can then move even higher, forward. Remember, we walk to God and we have a Helper on this walk. Our Helper’s only purpose is to remind us of the worth and value that abides within us all.

Now it’s time to go find a swing and take a joyous ride. As you pump higher and higher, remember any seeming backward motion is only a momentary pause. Our way is secure, and we are not alone. Think of all the issues that are causing you pain or concern, and then pump through them to the truth that you walk to

Keep Connected to the Inspiration!

Every week, Miracle Distribution Center sends out an inspirational email. The article “Lessons on the Swing” is one such piece of inspiration. This particular article received so many responses that we wanted to share it with readers of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** who might have missed it. Thanks to Lucy for her heartfelt comment.

“This is exactly what I needed to read this morning! I have been feeling very lost since my husband died. Having to downsize the big house, pack, and put it up for sale. As well as finding a smaller house and getting it ready to move into. With every step, there have been issues and problems and grieving along with all of it! I am having a hard time finding purpose in life. I will begin today to remember in every situation I am walking to God. I will let that be my mantra! Thank you and God bless.”

We are honored to be able to offer support and inspiration through so many different formats: on computer via our live stream (which, if you are a subscriber, can be viewed at a time convenient for you), on our website, and also through the printed version of our magazine, **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**.

Your support of MDC’s free services is appreciated and tax-deductible. Thank you.

If you would like to receive these weekly emails of inspiration, please send your email address to the Center at: **info@miraclecenter.org**

God, and you have a Teacher to lead you to that truth in every encounter.

“Now it’s time to go find a swing and take a joyous ride. As you pump higher and higher, remember any seeming backward motion is only a momentary pause.”

Enjoy the ride, you deserve to be happy. This is the Will of God for you.

“Forget not once this journey is begun the end is certain. Doubt along the way will come and go and go to come again. Yet is the ending sure. No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do. When you forget, remember that you walk with Him and with His Word upon your heart. Who could despair when hope like this is his?” (M-Epilogue)

“Today I wake with joy, expecting but the happy things of God to come to me.” (W-285)



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When God Calls, Say "Yes!"

by Rod Chelberg

It was at the end of my ER shift, and I was ready to go home when my partner asked me to see a two-year-old infant who was coughing. When I saw the child sitting with his mother, he was obviously in severe respiratory distress, and she was sheet-white with terror. Just then, the x-ray came up on the computer, and I saw that the child had bilateral pneumonia.

As I turned to examine the child, he gave his last breath, leaned forward, became unresponsive in his mother's arms and died. In that instant, I saw the child's white aura leave his body, and his last thought

was "Shall I leave this world?" In that instant, Christ appeared as a red aura on my right and said to me "Place your hand on the child's back." As I did this, Christ said to the child "Stay little one." Then I witnessed the child's aura merge back with his body, and he started to breathe again. I called a pediatric code blue and was able to fully resuscitate the child and save his life.

A 15-year-old boy fell down while running at school. He was brought into the emergency room for evaluation. Aside from skinned knees I found no obvious problems. Christ whispered in my ear that the child had a heart attack because he has a disease called "Metabolic Syndrome." This young man was found to have had an acute heart attack with 95% closure of his left main artery which is called the "widow maker," in medicine. The child was transferred to Boston and successfully treated. Had I not listened to Christ, this young man would have died.

These are two of many examples that I talk about where Christ guided me in saving someone's life while I treated them in the emergency room. From my daily practice of meditating and studying *A Course in Miracles*,

I learned to remain calm and listen for His guidance.

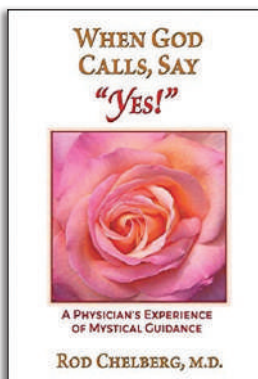
Roger was an alcoholic and was dying of liver failure. I admitted him to hospice for end-of-life care. One night when I went to see Roger, he was crying and felt extremely guilty for all of the abusive acts that he had committed in his life. So I held Roger's hands

and helped him with a prayer of forgiveness. His wife joined hands with us. After a few

"So I held Roger's hands and helped him with a prayer of forgiveness. His wife joined hands with us. After a few attempts, Roger was able to forgive himself and others."



attempts, Roger was able to forgive himself and others. In that moment, God spoke through me to Roger and here's what He said. "Out of love you were born, free to create and explore this life, and now it is time to return to Spirit, to Love and to Peace. Forever are you sinless and free of guilt, for I have loved you always. The memories of your life will end with this body and trouble you no more. Your light will shine again because you are still one with me."



"I wanted to share with you my personal journey and what it is like to be a mystic."

Roger passed away several weeks later completely at peace. With Christ's vision, I could see the unreality of death and dying. Christ has helped

me "Birth people into Heaven," each time I asked that a loved one be guided home during this process of dying. "...Love itself has called. And each has been surmounted by the power of the attraction of what lies beyond. (T-19.IV.D.5:6) Death is simply not real to me anymore.

I have had beautiful experiences of awakening, being held by God, feeling His love, and becoming pure consciousness.

God has asked me to help Him in healing others. I have had the unbelievably wonderful experience of helping God heal the world and also helping heal individuals. His direct help, once I learned to step aside and let Him lead the way, has led me to many individuals who desired help. Miracles were always the result of His grace and His Love

given to those who needed it.

I wanted to share with you my personal journey and what it is like to be a mystic. Here paraphrased are several guidelines to help you along your journey towards the divine.

"Don't be afraid," Once you've begun a mystical journey, don't be afraid, don't go back, and don't give up... As soon as you

allow Christ to touch your soul, you are on the path of your resurrection. **"Minds are joined,"** when someone has died and left this material plane,

in spirit their mind is still present with yours. All minds are joined because there is only one mind. **"Trust Christ,"** I trust Christ to be there, even when I cannot hear or see him. **"Uncovering your light,"** you can do all of these things that I have done, for you too are a mystic in your heart. You too are the "Light of the World." (W-61)



Rod Chelberg, M.D. has been practicing medicine for nearly thirty years including serving as medical director at St. Joseph's Hospital in Bangor, Maine. He lectures occasionally on spirituality and *A Course in Miracles* and is the author of a new book entitled, *When God Calls, Say "Yes!"* You can contact Rod and purchase his book at www.rodchelberg.com

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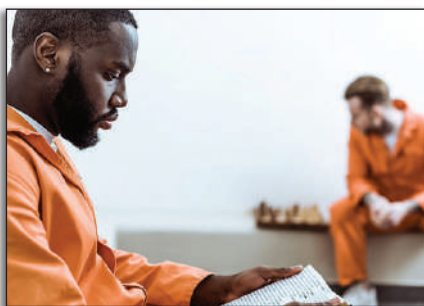
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Update: Prison Project

The **Prison Project** of Miracle Distribution Center sends *A Course in Miracles* and other Course-based items to those in prison.

Through your generous donations, we have been able to supply many newly-started spiritual libraries in prisons. In some cases, we have been able to provide multiple copies of books so more inmates can read about the love that is their essence. These principles are truly making a difference and quenching a thirst for truth that many in prison have found no other place.

The following letter gives an indication of the importance of our **Prison Project** in many inmates' minds and hearts. We are grateful that we are here to supply books and **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine to those who are incarcerated, so they might experience the hope and healing *A Course in Miracles* offers.



Dear Prison Ministry,

Thank you for your part in allowing me to discover *A Course in Miracles*. I have finished reading and studying the whole Course now, and my life has changed. The "Voice for God" guides me daily in revisiting various chapters and lessons. The perceived separation and awakening through forgiveness makes perfect sense to me now. Much in my experience has greatly improved for the better. I am learning to practice non-defensiveness. I am learning to step back and let God lead the way. I am learning to judge nothing, grieve nothing, condemn nothing, and attack nothing.

I am beginning to see the "forgiven world." Miracles light up my daily experience as I allow myself to see each individual through the "vision" or "eyes of Christ."

I enjoy receiving **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. And I would like to request a new copy of *An Introduction to A Course in Miracles* for my use and to carry the torch to light up lives of others.

Thank you in advance, Andrew, Washington State Correctional Center

We feel honored to be able to meet Andrew's request and each request that is sent to us because of your generous support of the Prison Project. If you would like to support this project, we invite your tax-deductible donations.

If you are aware of an inmate who would like to receive books related to the Course, or **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine, let us know. Because of strict rules for sending items into prisons, please check with the particular prison authorities before you request items to be sent.

Thank you for your support! Together we can experience healing by demonstrating healing through our willingness to be truly helpful to others.

To read more click on "Prison Project" under "Services" at www.miraclecenter.org



but it's not the easiest thing to do. The Course's suggestion that all decisions are a choice between love and fear seems simple enough until we are faced with that irritating person yet again.

We are told in the Course that neither time nor season means anything in eternity, but often the dawn of a new year seems to give us more willingness to start again on a path of awareness. Fortunately for us, the Holy Spirit can certainly make use of this willingness. We need not change our job, move, or find a new relationship to experience the peace and fulfillment of life that is right here now — we just have to be willing.

If you are willing, perhaps these steps from the Course's workbook lesson 302 might be just the nudge you need. What I like about this lesson, "Where darkness was I look upon the light," is that it doesn't say anything new. Instead, it lays out the basic premise of the Course's thought system in four points to help you walk our talk.

1. We remember our Source: "We thought we suffered. But we had forgot the Son whom You created." (W-302.1:3-4)

The Course tells us this is the basis of all our problems: an identity issue. We are creations of God, imbued with all the attributes of our Creator, and light and joy and peace abide in us because our Father put them there. As creations of love, what is not love cannot be a part of us; therefore, fear, suffering, or darkness cannot be our reality. With that said, the fact that we are co-creators with God means we have the power to experience our reality or not, but we can't lose it. As the Course tells us, "You can wait, delay, paralyze yourself, or reduce your creativity almost to nothing. But you cannot abolish it." (T-1.V.1:5)

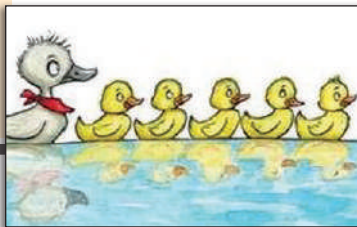
The reality of who we are remains available to us whenever we are ready to accept it. Much like the fairytale of the ugly duckling who never quite fit in with the other ducks

because he was really a beautiful swan, we don't fit into the world of pain, suffering, and fear because we are holy creations of a loving Father.

2. We accept responsibility: "Now we see that darkness is our own imagining, and light is there for us to look upon." (W-302.1:5)

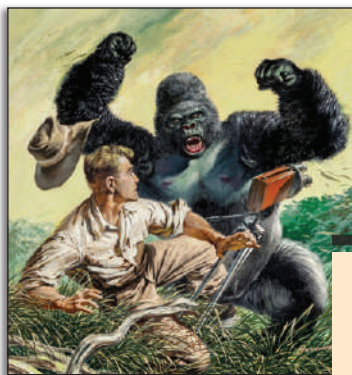
This reality starts to dawn on us naturally as we begin accepting the first premise. If we are co-creators with God, then the world is a reflection of our power to choose. In the case

"Much like the fairytale of the ugly duckling who never quite fit in with the other ducks because he was really a beautiful swan, we don't fit into the world of pain, suffering, and fear because we are holy creations of a loving Father"



of the world, we fell asleep to our reality in God and in our dreaming made a nightmarish world of fear, hate, attack, and guilt. This is not the world of a loving God; it's a parody of a childish mind out of control. Have you ever seen a two-year-old throw a temper tantrum? We are much like that — we are out of control. This world seems to be beyond us, but it is *our* dream and therefore can be changed from a nightmare to a happy dream.

When I was a little girl, I had a recurring dream of planting black seeds outside our house, watering them, and having a gorilla grow



from them. The gorilla would chase me inside the house, pushing open the front door I'd slammed behind me. I would run to the bathroom, lock the door, and then wake up in terror as the gorilla pounded on the door. The last time I had that dream, I ran into the house, again closing the front door behind me, but instead of the go-

"The gorilla would chase me inside the house, pushing open the front door I'd slammed behind me."

rilla chasing me inside, he rang the doorbell. My grandmother (who had never been in my dream before) opened the door, and invited the gorilla in for tea. I thought she was insane, as I ran for the bathroom, but the next thing I saw was the gorilla having tea with her. She invited me to join her strange tea party, which I did, and that was that.

I never had that dream again. I had faced my fear (with the help of my grandmother), and it was not so terrifying after all. I can see now that I planted and cultivated the seeds that grew the fear I then thought was chasing me. When my grandmother (who symbolized Christ's vision) helped me to view my self-created darkness in its true light, the story changed. I had no more need of the nightmare.

In nature, the antidote to every poisonous plant grows within close proximity. The same is true of our thinking; within every seemingly dark and fearful thought is the potential for light, the truth. Where will we dwell? As we accept responsibility for the experiences of our lives, it is not so we can make ourselves guilty, but so we can affect a real and lasting change — from darkness to light. As the Course reminds us, "...the Holy Spirit has another use for all the illusions you have made, and therefore He sees another purpose in them. To the Holy Spirit, the world is a place where you learn to forgive yourself what you think of as your sins." (W-64.2:2)

3. We are never alone: "Christ's vision changes darkness into light, for fear must disappear when love has come." (W-302.1:6)

This is a critical step in our understanding. We can't escape from fear on our own because we are the ones who insanely thought we could make an opposite to love (fear), and

therefore believe in our "creation," even if it is an illusion.

From our current perspective, we can see no way out. Much like the little boy who put his finger in the hole

of a dike to plug a leak, only to have another leak pop up in need of another finger, we keep trying to fix a "leaking" world from the same fearful, limited, and lacking perspective, and it never works. Nothing changes until we move our focus from the problem to the

solution. This is not denial, but instead a decision to join our minds with the Holy Spirit and look directly at what the problem seems to be so that we might move past it to the solution beyond. We are guaranteed that Help will be given us, and we will succeed... "For His [Holy Spirit's] promise is always, 'Seek and you will find,' and under His guidance you cannot be defeated. His is the journey to accomplishment, and the goal He sets before you He will give you. For He will never deceive God's Son whom He loves..." (T-12.IV.4)

As we look at the darkness and invite Christ's vision into our thoughts, our minds become open to the miracles that are our inheritance. The Course quite dramatically and poetically puts it this way...

"A miracle has lighted up all dark and ancient caverns, where the rites of death echoed since time began. For time has lost its hold upon the world. The Son of God has come in glory to redeem the lost, to save the helpless, and to give the world the gift of his forgiveness. Who could see the world as dark and sinful, when God's Son has come again at last to set it free?" (W-191.8:1)

Wow, what a thought! To realize that, as we allow Christ's vision to light our minds, we begin to dissolve all those thoughts of fear and darkness we have grown so comfortable with. It does not take time, but willingness. Why would we not be willing to arise in our glory so we might help those who feel lost or helpless, and in the process heal ourselves? We forgive so we can be healed, but everyone is helped by our "self-ish" (or should I say "selfless") act, as well.

4. We walk our talk: "Let me forgive Your holy world today, that I may look upon its holiness and understand it but reflects my own." (W-302.1:7)

As each of the preceding thoughts gently leads to the next, this is a natural outcome of allowing Christ's vision to lead the way. Our evolutionary thinking can begin to change us on a cellular level, because, as our thoughts change, our world will respond.

When you look back through time, you

see the physical process of evolution on man, but we can also see our emotional evolution. The founders of this country were slave owners. Even though they may not have condoned the harsh treatment of slaves, they did not abolish it. Even Jefferson said the issue of slavery is for another time, and that time was about one hundred years later. We know now that even Lincoln would have forgone

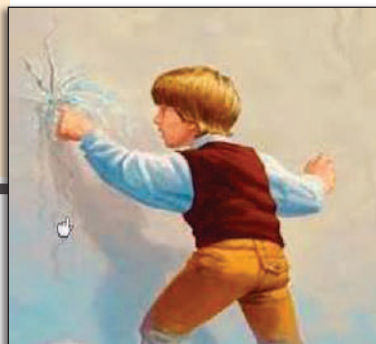


a civil war. Of course today the idea of enslaving someone is unconscionable.

We are evolving into the truth of who we have always been. Imagine a future where forgiveness does lead the way. Where our first thought is a willingness to see the holiness in this world and each other, since we know that is our only reality. Why would we condemn another if we truly understood we

would be condemning ourselves as well?

John Lennon sang in his classic song *Imagine* that to imagine a world of love, unity, and peace wasn't hard to do; and, I would



add, when we even consider the possibility — have a little willingness — it's the beginning of our evolution into the Self we have always been.

Let's Begin Again

It's time we begin to look at the shackles we perceive in the world and realize

they cannot stop the Holy Son of God from accomplishing his mission of healing the thoughts of separation. Let us no longer be comfortable with thoughts of hate, fear, and attack. Let us look directly at them and invite

Christ to be our vision. We may not know how to remove them (that is the job of Christ, the Holy Spirit), but we no longer value their presence. As the Course tells us...

"Freedom is given you where you beheld but chains and iron doors. But you must

change your mind about the purpose of the world, if you would find escape. You will be bound till all the world is seen by you as blessed, and everyone made free of your mistakes and honored as he is. You made him not; no more yourself. And as you free the one, the other is accepted as he is."

(W-200.5:1)

So we let Christ show us the world that would set us free and the reality of those we have judged either good or bad. Now we can see them as they truly are, without their past or ours as well.

This is a process of choosing again and again for healing and help. Just as a baby stumbles and falls as he learns to walk, but he never gives up. Every adorable attempt is met with laughter and applause because he tried. So when we stumble, let's laugh away the feelings of defeat and guilt and remember we walk with and to God; "could any way be holier, or more deserving of your effort...?"

(W-155.12:3)

As we enter into this New Year, let's walk our talk as we start again on our journey without distance to a goal that has never changed — to be excited to know each thought of forgiveness is a healing balm, not just for us but for this world.

Pick up that workbook from the Course and dust it off. Start again or for the first time. It's not a race, but be consistent. When you fail, try again and again and again.

"Forget not once this journey is begun the end is certain. Doubt along the way will come and go and go to come again. Yet is the ending sure. No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do." (M-Epilogue)



our relationship. After praying about it, we realized our only purpose was to be messengers of love to each other and to everyone. Thirty-nine years later, we hold this to be true more than ever. We have discovered that our willingness to be messengers of love is much more powerful than the ego voice that calls us to be in conflict and battle with each other.

Isn't it amazing how many of us still find value in anger, in feeling jealous, feeling hopeless? Once we see the value of loving everyone, regardless of their behavior, as much as we love ourselves, there is openness to accepting God's Love and the experience of abundance and gratitude it brings forth.

It is so easy to get caught in our fearful egos. The craziness in the world today is due to the crazy thoughts we carry around with us. We get caught in the ego's distorted belief that being in control, keeping score, and exacting revenge are more important than God's Love. We get caught in the habit of judging ourselves and others for trivial things, thinking that the momentary satisfaction of being right is more important than being happy.

We live in a world that is very competitive. We often think that more money or material

possessions will make us happy. I remember years ago, I bought a green Austin Healy car with a hat to match. I really loved that car and thought it would make me eternally happy. Of course, the initial glow of the car was only temporary. It is not money or possessions that make us happy. What will make us happy

is a life devoted to being messengers of love.

Our egos like us to think we live in a world where things are hopeless. Divorce rates are getting higher and

"We get caught in the habit of judging ourselves and others for trivial things, thinking that the momentary satisfaction of being right is more important than being happy."

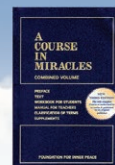


higher and people are suffering from loneliness, and there seems to be nothing that can be done.

Let us share one thing we know for sure. When you are feeling united with God and surrounded by the gentleness of God's Love, it is easy to extend God's Love to everyone. We don't have to stop and think if someone is loveable or not. We are all worthy of love even if behaviors scream, "I am not loveable!" We are lovable because God made us from Love. And that is timeless!

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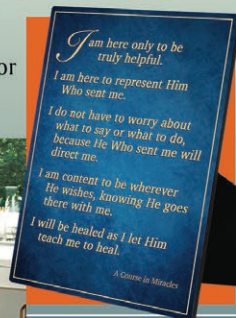
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Who Walks With You?

Continued from page 6

the missing joint on my finger that caused a better rotation of the ball. And, even better, it worked as a good sympathy vote-getter from the girls, too!

When walking with God, it doesn't matter how small the hand we have, even if it is missing one digit. I remember a time many years ago when I exited a department store with our son, Jeffrey, then only three years old. On the way to our car in the parking lot, we had to negotiate walking across a busy street. I gently reached down, took little Jeffrey's hand, and walked safely across that street to our car.

Even at the time, I remember thinking, here he is... this little guy, not really even knowing much about the danger of getting run over by a car, but yet he held onto my hand, or even more importantly, I firmly held onto his, as he put his complete trust in Daddy's ability to get him safely across that street. You know, I don't think he ever doubted me.

What a beautiful teaching moment for us. Just as I would never leave little Jeffrey to cross that street alone, God never leaves us alone on our journey through those busy and dangerous thoroughfares of life. He's always with us.

The Sunday came for the closing sermon

on the life of Joseph. I had the perfect solo to perform as a lesson of how Joseph walked with God and, indeed, we could too. It was taken from the musical *The Student Prince*, about a mythical young prince who, after his grandfather had passed away, was about to ascend to his



grandfather's vacated throne as king and take on all the responsibilities it entailed. Fear had gripped his heart, causing him to doubt his abilities to rule wisely as his grandfather had.

"...I firmly held onto his, as he put his complete trust in Daddy's ability to get him safely across that street. You know, I don't think he ever doubted me."

Driven to his knees, he uttered this beautiful prayer. The song and prayer that came forth was *I'll Walk With God*.

The lyrics remind me so much of *A Course in Miracles'* themes, I think they bear repeating for the purpose of this article. But before I do, ask yourself, "Who walks with you?" and

then reply with the answer given us in the Course's lesson 156, "I walk with God in perfect holiness." Fear, uncertainty, or loss may enter our minds, but let it be quickly dispelled as we are assured, "If you knew who walks beside you on

the way that you have chosen, fear would be impossible." ❖

I'll Walk With God By Nicholars Brodsky

I'll walk with God from this day on,
His helping hand I'll lean upon, This is my prayer, my humble plea,
May the Lord be ever with me.
There is no death, tho' eyes grow dim, There is no fear when I'm near to Him.
I'll lean on Him forever And He'll forsake me never,
He will not fail me as long as my faith is strong,
Whatever road I may walk along;
I'll walk with God, I'll take His hand,
I'll talk with God, He'll understand;
I'll pray to Him, each day to Him and he'll hear the words that I say.
His hand will be my guide and stay,
And I'll never walk alone while I walk with God!

My Lucky Rabbit's Foot

Continued from page 7

and principles. You are awake both in your mind and to your mind.

One big problem with magic is that it reinforces itself. Dream problems persuade us to

search for dream solutions, when in fact the only genuine solution is to wake up. Magic is the galvanizing power that "makes the error real;" and once it appears real, we naturally search for solutions under those terms.

If as a child I became distraught because I lost my "lucky" rabbit's foot, my mother would

naturally help me find it. Out of kindness she would indulge my child's fancy. But she also would know that the power I need is already within me. Better than

"Dream problems persuade us to search for dream solutions, when in fact the only real solution is to wake up."



finding the rabbit's foot would be to awaken to the fact that I never needed it in the first place. This, you'll recall, was Dorothy's lesson at the end of her visit to Oz. She appeared to be stranded on the

wrong side of the rainbow, as the wizard's balloon drifted away without her. But Glinda assured Dorothy that she possessed the power to return home all along. "If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again," Dorothy finally resolves, "I won't look any farther than my own back yard because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with." ❖

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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2020

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- Happy New Year... Happy Timelessness
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- Who Walks With You?
- My Lucky Rabbit's Foot
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