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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



July / August, 2013

A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



The Golden Rule Revisited

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff



"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Christianity

"Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful." Buddhism

"What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary." Judaism

"No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." Islam

"Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself." Baha'i Faith

"When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. As you see him you will see yourself. As you treat him you will treat yourself. As you think of him you will think of yourself. Never forget this, for in him you will find yourself or lose yourself." A Course in Miracles

We were all taught the Golden Rule, no matter where we were raised or our religious background. The idea of only doing to others what we would want done to us is understood by even those with no religious background – it's just what decent people do. But just because we have heard this rule since time immemorial does not make it an old or out-dated concept – to the contrary, this concept is our salvation. The fact that it's stated in every religion and taught in every culture shows us its universal truth. It seems to make sense to our collective consciousness, so perhaps it's time to practice it if we have been remiss as of late... and who among us has not?

In this day and age with all that's

happening in our world, business, and political institutions, it might be good for us to revisit the Golden Rule. Maybe you try to apply the Golden Rule but don't see much

"The fact that it's stated in every religion and taught in every culture shows us its universal truth. It seems to make sense to our collective consciousness."

grace given back to you by the "powers that be." After all, we have heard about the 99% and the 1%! We hear the message that banks or certain companies are too big to fail, but it seems to be okay if the average person loses his or her home or job. Where's the equity there? It's enough to make one a little angry towards those 1%-ers!

As a Course student, we are reminded that forgiveness is the key to happiness, that the world of pain and suffering is not real, and that we are entitled to miracles. But if we are not feeling this awareness, have we failed? Are we supposed to deny

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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.

MDC has Googliness

What? Googliness? This word is so new it's not even in the urban dictionary, but it is a word. Coined by Google, "googliness" is really more of a feeling than a definition. It means the ability to solve problems in a new way... sort of a stepping-out-of-the-box way; risking or daring to be different in a way that is helpful and supportive of each other and humanity. Well, that is definitely what Miracle Distribution Center has done for the past 35 years! So, we are definitely googly!

If you have been reading our series of articles about how MDC got started (the newest installment is on page 4), you have read that ours was not the typical business plan. It was a backwards, upside down approach - sort of a "if you build it, they will come" idea. Our goal was to be of service to students in their study, connection, and application of the Course's life changing principles. We figured if we were of service, that's all we needed to do. And, that's worked pretty well so far.

Over the last 35 years our approach has certainly integrated new technology. When we started, there were no personal computers, cell phones, and the Internet wasn't even an idea. The change we have seen, though, has been remarkable. And, we have done a good job keeping up. On our interactive website where you can read articles, interviews and commentaries

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

● MDC enters its 35th year of service

Not sure what the Center has been doing for 35 years? Well, go to our website at www.miraclecenter.org and watch a video by Center founder, Beverly Hutchinson McNeff. It's inspiring to hear all that the Center has done and continues to provide. While you're there, surf around and get familiar with the services. You'll be glad you did!

● Giving a truly meaningful Gift

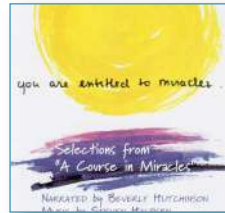
Here's what many students of the Course have done: Given a tax-deductible donation to MDC in someone's honor or memory. If you would like to give in such a way, send your donation and request, and we will send him, her or their family a personalized letter acknowledging your appreciation and support. 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... Connie Daley*** a Happy Mother's Day wish from her son Michael. ***Gifts in memory of... Miriam and Karen Clark***, beloved girls of Wilbur in California, who says his girls are making music in Heaven now!...

Geoffrey, beloved son of Aileen Bosworth in Pennsylvania who was a great teacher! We are honored to acknowledge these wonderful souls.

● **Grammy Nominee!** Earlier this year **Steven Halpern** was nominated for a Grammy Award for his album "*Deep Alpha*." We are thrilled for Steven who has created with Beverly (Center founder) a series of recordings with readings of the Course by Beverly surrounded by his healing music. Steven will be joining us at our Conference in August. You can watch a brief interview in which he explains his musical

approach at <http://tinyurl.com/k34jcfm>

● **Turning 30!** 2013 marks this landmark anniversary for "*You Are Entitled to Miracles*"—the first recording in the series of seven by Beverly Hutchinson and Steven Halpern. Combining the power-filled words of the Course with the timeless, healing music of Halpern, these recordings have touched the lives of thousands and become best-sellers to a worldwide audience of listeners. As Marianne Williamson has said, "*These recordings are wonderful! They bring the Course right to your heart. I find them very moving.*" To read an interview with Beverly and Steven or to order, call MDC at: 1-800-359-2246 or go online to www.miraclecenter.org



● **You are entitled to miracles on August 10-11, 2013!** - Our annual International Conference on *A Course in Miracles* will take place in Irvine, CA on **August 10th and 11th, 2013.**

Commemorating our landmark anniversary of 35 years, we have assembled a stellar group of presenters to help us celebrate! Joining **Beverly** will be **Marianne Williamson, Jacob Glass, Steven Halpern, Carol Howe, Paul McNeff, Jon Mundy**, and screenwriter **John Viscount** who will be screening his short film based on the Course. These conferences are always an inspiration. Mark your calendar and plan on joining us in person or via our live streaming video link. Now there's no excuse to miss this event! Go to www.miraclecenter.org to watch a video on the event.

● **Did you know that...** the founder of Whole Foods, John Mackey, is a student of *A Course in Miracles*? He says, "I was reading the text one day and getting

ready to go argue with my friends, and I came upon this statement in the text that just blew my mind. It said (I'm paraphrasing), Lifetime after lifetime after lifetime you have been angry at God. You have blamed God for all the problems in the world. And not once have you ever looked at the real source — you and all your brothers and sisters have created this state of being that you're in. Not God. God is just pure love... I got up. I started running around my house, because when I read it, it intuitively rang true for me." To read an article from *The New Yorker*, go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/ya68arc>

● **Nominated for Best Foreign Language Film**, 2004's *As It Is in Heaven* tells the story of an internationally renowned conductor who returns to his hometown after suffering a heart attack. Most interesting to our readers is that its director, Kay Pollak, is also a fellow student of *A Course in Miracles*. Themes from the Course are evident throughout the movie and several quotations from the book are included as part of the dialogue. The movie became one of the most popular movies of all time in Sweden. It is available for viewing on Netflix streaming. We highly recommend it!

● **Try a sample!** A new sample recording of our Course group meeting is up online. This very interesting meeting dealt with the concept of time, safety, and the end of doubt. It was a powerful section and so was the meeting that followed it... they're all good! That's why students from around the world listen to the Center's recordings every week. It's time for you to join the party! Call the Center at 1-800-359-2246 or go to our website to sign up!

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Miracle Musings... In Our Own Backyard!

by Paul McNeff



"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
(Romans 12:2)

"I made up the prison in which I see myself. All I need do is recognize this and I am free. I have deluded myself into believing it is possible to imprison the Son of God. I was bitterly mistaken in this belief, which I no longer want. The Son of God must be forever free." (Lesson 57)

Not many stories have impacted me the way this one has. It's the story about a young girl's tragic abduction and her eventual jubilant liberation. I'm profoundly touched by her experience and the life lessons she so powerfully offers us. Though not a Course student, she unwittingly drew upon ancient spiritual principles in a sanctuary deep within her, helping her to survive. As they are in us all, these deeply embedded, life-giving truths eventually help us all to gain our freedom from pain and anguish. She just had to come to them much sooner in her life than most of us do.

As the memoir *A Stolen Life* by Jaycee Lee Dugard begins, it was a beautiful early summer day in June of 1991 and eleven year-old Jaycee was walking to school near Lake Tahoe, when she was suddenly and brutally kidnapped by a repeated sex offender, Phillip Garrido. Violently forced into the abductor's car by the use of a taser gun, she was taken to a dilapidated old home in Antioch, California where she was constrained to live in a make-shift shack, a prisoner in a backyard home. For the next eighteen years she would bear her kidnapper two children and eventually work for him in the family printing business. Incredible as it may sound, in 2009, after having frequent run-ins with Garrido's parole officer, the family (which now consisted of Phillip, his wife Nancy, Jaycee, and her two daughters) went to visit Garrido's parole office to clear things up.

Little did Jaycee know that this was her day of destiny; she would be free. After several hours of interrogation, the sordid ordeal unfolded to the amazement of everyone. As co-partners in crime, Garrido and his wife confessed to the kidnapping and imprisonment of Jaycee.

But what happened in the intervening years to the eleven-year-old child who had been so brutally abducted? She had now grown into a beautiful twenty-nine year old woman with two children in tow. How could this normal looking family be

"Miraculously, she viewed the two children she unwillingly had with Garrido as sources of love and purpose."

embroiled in a history of such horrendous acts? As the answers started to unfold, in a separate interview room away from the Garridos, the true accounting of this young woman and her two daughters began to come into focus. When asked to say her name, she answered Allissa, the cover name given to her by her kidnappers to shield them from their crime. Incredulously, she could not bring herself to say her real name. Finally, she acquiesced to writing it down and when she did, she wrote her real name; the name she was not allowed to say. In doing this, she reclaimed her identity; she was free.

You may be familiar with the sensational story of Jaycee Dugard, and perhaps you were inspired by her journey as I was. We know some of the gruesome details surrounding her kidnapping and captivity, but in a much more positive vein, we have now learned how the horror of Jaycee's nightmare was transformed into a life of enlightened purpose and meaning. Dugard says: "I'm so lucky and blessed for all the wonderful things I do have." Life is too short to think of all the things you don't have... but, for many, it is so much easier to live in a self-made "backyard" that it can be tough and scary to venture out and leave that comfort zone behind." After she was released from her captivity, Jaycee went into years of therapy (implementing principles very similar to the Course). As she learned to embrace the path of true spiritual release, she would continue on the path to ultimate and lasting freedom.

I find it comforting to know that we are on this healing journey together. No matter what we go through, we know that so many before us have faced similar circumstances. We all have, in one form or another, experienced the repression and control of an overbearing parent, spouse, or our own ego. We have created our own little "backyard" prisons and furthered our predicament by subjugating our freedom to the ego. Another trauma that Jaycee encountered was known as the Stockholm syndrome. The Stockholm syndrome can be described as a form of traumatic bonding, which develops into strong emotional ties between the abductee and abductor. Certainly this dynamic played out in the early months of Jaycee's captivity and set the stage for many years to come.

Is this story sounding familiar yet? Are you starting to draw parallels with your own life journey – your own "backyards" of impris-

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



35 Years in Retrospect...

The life of Miracle Distribution Center

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

*In celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Center, we will be sharing its journey with you throughout the next several issues. Even though the Center was founded by Beverly and Richard Hutchinson, it has developed a life of its own. These articles will share the Center's birth, growth, life, and purpose as it continues to evolve and support students of **A Course in Miracles**.*

Part IV: Divine Decisions

"We will not let the beliefs of the world tell us that what God would have us do is impossible. Instead, we will try to recognize that only what God would have us do is possible." (W71/W-45.4:5)

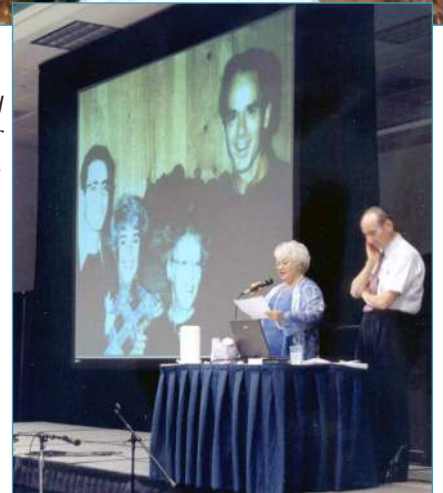
The Course spends a great deal of time inviting us to withdraw our belief in what the world shows us and to listen to God's Voice to guide and direct our lives. This certainly makes sense considering that for most of us, trusting in the world is a teeter-totter ride at best. Of course, the world and our ego want us to believe that God can't be trusted, or at least He isn't too terribly interested in our lives. The world can be a shining example of failure and despair, if we let it be. *A Course in Miracles* says, "There is no limit to the power of a Son of God, but he can limit the expression of his power as much as he chooses." (T64/T-4.IV.8:2) In this same passage Jesus goes on to say, "Your mind and mine can unite in shining your ego away, releasing the strength of God into everything you think and do. Do not settle for anything less than this, and refuse to accept anything but this as your goal."

This passage highlights the way we at Miracle Distribution Center (MDC) have made our "divine decisions." We do our best to release the strength of God into everything we think and do. If we are making a decision from fear or lack, we realize that we are closing God out. Then it becomes our choice: with God or without God. It is amazing how often we have tried to "run our own show," only to find that when we let God in, the "show" not only



MDC's premiere of the movie *The Story of A Course in Miracles* in 1987.

Judy Skutch Whitson and Ken Wapnick at our conference in 2001.



runs more smoothly but practically runs itself!

A good example of this is the name of this publication. We struggled over its name for years — and I would venture to say that the reason **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** didn't have an earlier birth was we didn't

"The decisions we make at the Center are effortless, not because they always appear easy but because they are made 'by releasing the strength of God' into them."

know what to call it! We would sit and discuss it for hours. It is clear to me now that during all those discussions we were not inviting God in — we thought we could come up with the perfect name — it seemed a holy purpose, but we were

leaving out our strength. It wasn't until one late night, when I couldn't sleep, that I got up and prayed that my eyes be opened to the perfect name for our magazine. As I opened my Course my eyes lit on the section entitled "*The Holy Encounter*." As I read those words, I knew that this was the perfect name since our goal for this publication was to remember our real purpose: joining together to heal the mistaken thought of separation between ourselves and God and the way to do that is by healing the thought of separation between ourselves and our brothers. Also the first paragraph in that section again reminded

me, "Ask and it shall be given you... If you want understanding and enlightenment you will learn it, because your decision to learn it is the decision to listen to the Teacher Who knows of light, and can therefore teach it to you." (T141/T-8.III.1:2) Yes, we had asked for a name, and all it finally took was a decision to listen and learn from the strength of God.

Many of the "decisions" at MDC don't seem to occur in the traditional "decision making manner." For example, decisions we have been advised to make from those who "know" the way to "get the message



Judy Skutch Whitson and Richard Danielpour in 1990 at MDC's West Coast premiere of the symphony based on *A Course in Miracles*.

out" have suggested advertising in magazines that target our "market," trying to make more people aware of us by using other people's mailing lists, wanting us to spend more money than we have in order to give people a reason to support our organization, calculated donation appeals, and the erroneous belief that there is some need to get the Course's message out more than any other (the Course may certainly be *our* way, but it is not the *only* way). All of these approaches just don't "feel right" for us, even though they may be the sound, worldly approaches. The decisions we make at the Center are effortless, not because they always appear easy but because they are made "by releasing the strength of God" into them.

I remember when we were going to present the premiere of *The Story of a Course in Miracles*. This would be the first public showing of the 2-1/2 hour documentary film produced by a director from the BBC. The film was on video, so we needed to rent a projector unit and a screen that would be large enough for 500 people to view at one seating. The cost of the equipment rental alone was almost

prohibitive. The decision did not seem easy, but the answer did,

"...[release] the strength of God into everything you think and do. Do not settle for anything less than this, and refuse to accept anything but this as your goal. Watch your mind carefully for any beliefs that hinder its accomplishment, and step away from them. Judge how well you have done this by your own feelings, for this is the one right use of judgment." (T64/T-4.IV.8:3)

We went ahead and rented the necessary equipment. Exactly one week before the showing, when the rental payment was due, we received a letter and donation from a woman who had received counsel-



Judy Skutch Whitson and Bill Thetford lecture for MDC in 1987.

ing and support from MDC during a very difficult time in her life. Her financial gift was the exact amount needed for the equipment.

There really is only one decision we ever have to make at the Center: does this bring peace or conflict? When we choose peace, we invite the strength of God into our minds and actions, and our decisions are apparent. But when we get caught up in conflict, we split our minds. And the way to get back on track is this: "Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. Search sincerely for what you have done and left undone accordingly, and then change your mind to think with God's. This may seem hard to do, but it is much easier than trying to think against it." (T63/T-4.IV.2:4)

Deciding with God is not so impossible – it is actually the only thing that is possible and inevitable! ✧

Next issue . . . "Vocation of the Center"

"The weekly lessons are a 'life saver' for me."

That's how Jennifer in Hillsborough, California feels about MDC's recordings. She goes on to say...

"The weekly lessons are a 'life saver' for me. I appreciate the lesson from the Course, interpretations from Beverly, and all the participants. Such a great way to be reminded to 'walk with God' and to stay sane as I am driving. Blessings and light to all of you at MDC."

We are so honored to hear that the Center's weekly recordings have become a "life line" for so many. Each CD or mp3 download gives you an 80 minute experience into the Course's healing perspective on your life. Lead by Center founder and Course student for 36 years, Beverly Hutchinson McNeff, who has a knack for making the Course practical and livable.

We invite you to sample a free recording or become an ongoing listener.

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A Mature Innocence

by Jacob Glass



"The lion and the lamb lying down together symbolize that strength and innocence are not in conflict, but naturally live in peace." (T-3.1.5:3)

There was a time when many of the problems I had came simply because I did not know what I did not know. I didn't yet know all the variables of what could go terribly wrong in a situation, and I would end up not even knowing I was doing or saying exactly the wrong thing, making the wrong choices, hurting or disturbing other people, and setting a lot of negatives into motion. I was innocent. That doesn't mean I wasn't responsible for what would happen but it does mean I had no malicious intent. I was innocent and perhaps naive.

But as soon as I would realize, usually through very negative consequences, what the ramifications of my actions or non-actions were, I began "covering my butt" as much as possible and lived in a lot of fear and defensiveness, always preparing for the worst that could happen and somewhat expecting the worst. The worst very rarely actually manifested in physical form, but it manifested instantly in my awareness. As long as I was thinking about it, it may as well have been happening physically because I was just as anxious and upset as if it had been. I'd lost my innocence and began to withdraw more and more from things that looked like there were too many variables beyond my control. Now, I was "wise" in the ways of the world... I thought. Really, I was just a different kind of uninformed and naive.

The Miracle Worker is a different kind of wise. This wisdom is the deliberate cultivation of a mature innocence. In this consciousness we KNOW things could go terribly, terribly wrong at any given moment. In fact, we may even know many of the exact ways in which it could go wrong and all the ca-ca that might hit the

fan. Because of this, we are extremely diligent in doing OUR part by keeping our integrity, doing what we said we would do, having a good attitude, and staying in our own yard. We are aware our actions and non-actions have consequences and we are often aware of what some of them may be. We are not reckless or foolish... but we are not defensive or paralyzed with fear either. We seek Guidance, and if we follow that Guidance, even though we DO know many of the things that could go terribly, terribly wrong, we find our path is lit by miracles and true Help.

"Most of us these days are Urban Mystics. We are not safely tucked away in a cave in the mountains or in an ashram. We are all Urban Mystics because even if you are living out on the farm by the lake, life can find you quite easily these days."

The innocence of a child is a beautiful thing to see, but that innocence pales in comparison with the inspiring beauty of the innocence of an adult who has walked the Earth and seen some things. The child does not yet know how many things can go wrong -- that people die, that the world is full of pain, that not everyone has good intentions for you. The Miracle Worker is aware that much can go wrong and yet she still CHOOSES to participate and go forward in life -- walking in trust and under the cover of the Grace of God.

Most of us these days are Urban Mystics. We are not safely tucked away in a

cave in the mountains or in an ashram. We are all Urban Mystics because even if you are living out on the farm by the lake, life can find you quite easily these days. We are somewhat urban now because of the modernized world and how connected we are electronically. And, as an Urban Mystic, I can tell you life still frightens me at times and I can become a bit freaked out about all that could go wrong when I am taking a risk and stepping beyond my comfort zone. But I am deliberately innocent these days because I CHOOSE to believe the best. Even though I know the ca-ca can still hit the fan at any moment, I choose not to dwell there or to become hyper-vigilant about trying to control conditions in my life. I trust in the State of Grace to guide and direct me. I trust in the Christ Consciousness to gently correct any errors I may make. I show up, on time, prepared, doing what I said I would do, WITH A GOOD ATTITUDE... and I leave the rest to Spirit to handle.

A mature innocence is respectful, kind, thinks of the effect of an action on others, makes good choices... but leans on the Christ Consciousness to encircle everything with White Light and Divine Love and follows Divine Guidance even when that Guidance makes no "logical" sense. Grace is the undeserved favor of God. We can EXPECT to walk in FAVOR today. We can expect things to go well, for the right doors to open, for the path to unfold with ease and joy, that all our needs will be met and that all things are held perfectly in the hands of God -- and we think this not because we are "innocent" of knowledge of what could go wrong but rather because we have decided to focus on God as the Cause of our days and nights upon the Earth.





Everyone is Entitled to Miracles!

by Carol Howe



On moving to Florida many years ago, I bought my house specifically because of the large, mature trees in the area. Last week the trees in two neighboring yards were all cut down, for no reason that I could possibly fathom. They were not dead, diseased, or posing any apparent danger. The missing canopy made my view less attractive (notice the “my”). Being a great tree enthusiast, my initial response was some distress and wishing this hadn’t happened --- to say the least!

And thus it presented the perfect opportunity to ask for that miracle to which we’re guaranteed entitlement. In an unpublished transcript of a conversation between Bill Thetford and several others, Bill notes that not once in the *A Course in Miracles* is a miracle specifically and completely defined. In his own words:

There is no one definition of a miracle in the Course. I always thought that was rather startling. I define a miracle as a shift in perception which removes the blocks to our awareness of love’s presence. That is the message of the Course and that is what it is saying, but it doesn’t quite combine it in that one sentence. A miracle is a shift in our perception. The fundamental concept is that there is no order of difficulty in miracles. We are simply looking at forms and forms can change...

So how does this miracle-inducing perceptual shift occur? By preferring, looking for, and valuing love and wholeness rather than the ego’s separated state featuring fear and “it’s all about me.” Certainly not a mere intellectual process, it is simply a sincere desire to be willing that a miracle occur, wanting to see the entire situation differently – with greater love, kindness, and inherent wholeness – rather than wanting to be right. And given the vastness

of the creativity and power inherent in our very being, if that’s what we want, that’s without a doubt what we will receive. The universe always says “yes” to our heart’s desire, be it war or peace.

So back to the trees. The chain saws buzzed and the chipper/shredder screeched as large branches were fed into it, and I kept remembering that I was not required to relinquish my peace just

“So how does this miracle-including perceptual shift occur? By preferring, looking for, and valuing love and wholeness rather than the ego’s separated state featuring fear and ‘it’s all about me.’”

because my ego’s notion of “how things are supposed to be” was being violated. I was not being violated, the fact of wholeness was not being violated, and this could be an occasion of healing, of changed perception, of miracles. I could literally hear and see differently thanks to the way our brains work.

The brain is a pattern-seeking organ and always tries to fit each new experience into some category it recognizes. *And the categories we have are the ones we want.*

If an experience, sensory or internal, doesn’t match a pattern, it falls through the perceptual cracks and simply doesn’t register with us consciously; we literally do not see or hear. For instance, one early spring when the azaleas were all in glorious bloom on our street, I commented to my partner about those beautiful flowers and my hope that he had enjoyed them. His surprised response was that he hadn’t seen any flowers. Conversely, he asked me not long after if I had ever noticed the interesting little out-buildings (he was, among other things, a general contractor) behind all the fast food eateries. I said I had never seen such a thing. In both cases, what we were not interested in, what didn’t match a preference was literally invisible. It did not register because it was not a priority. *Endlessly we presume others see what we see, hear what we hear, value what we value, and they don’t.* They are responding to their own matrix of brain patterns, priorities, and conditioning, and much of the programming we lug along with us includes a substantial quotient of fear and guilt. And therein lies the problem. Primarily, we have sought and found proof of fear-inducing separation rather than stillness and peace of mind. Hardly a prescription for happiness.

Now the good news is that we get to change our preferences, our filters for

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by Carol Howe

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Boston Strong...



A review of MDC's

by Karen Scopetski

Holy Encounter -- WEEKEND

Editor's Note: We want to thank everyone who attended the conference in April. It was a wonderful and healing event. As always, we are grateful for all the kind comments we received after the event, and have printed a few excerpts following this review. If you still want to share your comments, we'd love to hear from you. We want to express our thanks to Karen for the following article which showed us the real world implications of the Course's healing power.

On April 5th and 6th, I attended Miracle Distribution Center's spring conference in Boston. It was great to see my friends from the Center, and even introduce them all to my husband and kids. I met new friends as well, some of whom I hope to connect with again. Hello Susan, Christina, Sheila and Joe! The energy was high on Friday night with people from all over the Eastern U.S. and Canada in attendance. Right away I could feel the connection to those around me. Beverly Hutchinson McNeff was dynamic as she presented the first lesson and theme for the weekend. We all stood and recited lesson 237 together, "I will arise in Glory and allow the light in me to shine upon the world throughout the day." What a powerful statement of purpose and personal responsibility! I was inspired!

On Saturday I enjoyed meeting participants at the listener breakfast. We went around the room so that all of us had a chance to share what brought us to the Course and why this path is important in our lives. Throughout the day, the theme "arising in glory" continued. Using Course lessons and passages, Beverly expanded on three ideas from the Course that the Center has incorporated in to its peace pledge. These ideas became the basis for the three parts of Saturday's presentation.

1. The peace of God is **my purpose** — peace must become our primary goal every day, every moment.
2. The Peace of God is **my function** – to experience peace our focus must be on the power of forgiveness; the Course offers us an understanding of forgiveness that is accessible and often quiet different than they way we have learned in the past.
3. The Peace of God is **my life** – we must realize our connection to each other and how we find ourselves in each other."

Beverly guided us through the lessons from the Course so that we could leave with a clear idea about how to apply the principles in the real world. One important point that was emphasized is that "it is impossible to remember God in secret and alone." We need each other! Forgiveness was discussed in depth. One participant shared that she could apply forgiveness to most situations except toward madmen like Hitler. This led to a lively discussion about what forgiveness is and is not. We talked about how forgiveness is a tool that helps us to remove the blocks to the awareness of love's presence. It helps us see. Forgiveness is not about condoning behavior for loveless actions. It is about rising above the battleground as we offer willingness to perceive

through the eyes of love. Later we watched *Admissions*, by John Viscount. This short film offered us an opportunity to think about how forgiveness can be used to heal the "destructive cycle of attack and counter attack" that accompanies most acts of war and violence. As I left the conference, I felt ready to embrace the section in the text that begins with: "When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter..." (T-8.III.4) and concludes with the idea that in order to receive salvation, it is necessary that we offer it to our brother.

Little did I know how important these conversations and lessons were going to be for me. Soon after the conference, a terrible tragedy occurred close to my home. On April 15th, two terrorist bombs exploded near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three people (including an 8 year old boy) and injuring 264.

The conferences's message became my anchor, a touchstone for peace in a seemingly insane world. As I look back over the past several volatile weeks, it seems as though every time there was a cry for help in this Boston crisis, someone was there to answer the call. Today I continue to witness first-hand: a joining, a commitment to an unspoken pledge to protect the truth, a faith in the spirit of the marathon and a belief that this spirit cannot be broken. A symbol "**Boston Strong!**" has emerged helping people of all ages, come together in unity. This symbol represents humanity's natural inclination to choose the power of love over fear and unity over separation. In our last study group meeting, Beverly talked about how "a symbol is something that is small but represents something greater. It is a thought planted in the mind and that thought can take root." Boston's loving response gives me faith that Miracle Principle #6 (from the Course) is true: "Miracles are natural. When they do not occur something has gone wrong."

As I am writing this article, I glance down at our local newspaper and there is a picture of a bombing victim who has lost his right leg. His young niece is sitting on his left leg and his brother stands behind him pushing the wheel chair, and they are all smiling! As I stare at this picture, I can feel the strength of this family. Directly under this picture is a different kind of article, about the



Several members of our Nashua, NH study group were present at the weekend and I just want to say to you (Beverly) what we have been saying to each other about the wonderful time we had. Paul's wonderful music was a very rich addition to assist in weaving together the emotional content of the event. What you (Beverly) offered us was such a clear understanding of the Course's teaching, especially through examples from your personal experience which you were willing to share. Your use of humor was so effective and "we got it." Your joy and enthusiasm were contagious, and we were all touched by the "golden wand" of your love. We say thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Ken Fiery, Facilitator Nashua Study Group, NH



I have been attending medical and other semi professional conferences for 25 years, so I am comparing this conference with Beverly against my other experiences.

I was impressed by Beverly's knowledge of the Course material. She

allowed the group to flow into areas that needed to be touched upon and then she would bring up quotes from the Course to answer the question. Then, with the use of a computer and projector, we could read the quote on the screen that she was referring to. I found this technique very helpful. In addition, she showed us MDC's website and how to navigate it.

Overall I thought the conference was very well organized and the material was presented clearly. The diversity of music and group activities made it enjoyable. To me it was up there with the best of the Harvard Medical School courses that I have

attended. So, if you have any reservations about going to spend a day with Bev, don't. Go and enjoy her presentation. You will not be disappointed.

**Rod Chelberg, M.D.,
Hermon, ME**



Our most sincere gratitude for our Miracle weekend. Thank you all for bringing this transformative event to us. Gordon and I both received so much peace, love, and understanding from our time together. The exercises in oneness, songs, stretching, and the real simplicity of the Course was something we both wrapped around ourselves and each other. Thank you!

**Barbara Grandolfo &
Gordon Dexter, Harrison, ME**



bombing suspect, and about how he allegedly "scribbled a note on the boat where he was captured, justifying his actions" by saying that he was "protesting against the U.S.'s involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan" and that the victims were "collateral damage." It reminds me that symbols and anything in the world can be used either by SPIRIT (true thoughts of oneness, peace, joy, and love) or by EGO (delusional thoughts, filled with darkness, fear, separateness, pain, and evil).

A Course in Miracles gives a clue as to which thought system is more likely to prevail. The Course says, "The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite" and that "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God." Miracle principle #34 from the Course, reassures us of our safety: "Miracles restore the mind to its fullness. By atoning for lack they establish perfect protection. The spirit's strength leaves no room for intrusions."



Heal Your Mind, Heal Your World

Never Close the Door to Love

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

When our children are in the infant stage of life, there is nothing they can possibly do to take our unconditional love away from them. Newborn infants can vomit all over us or poop all over us while we are trying to get a diaper on them; no matter what they do, the Spiritual DNA in our hearts just sees the innocence of their souls. Unfortunately, when they get older, there are many things they might do that our egos might interpret as making them unlovable. Then there's a temptation that our egos might convince us what they did deserves our anger and rejection.

EXAMPLE 1

I have a friend who divorced his wife about ten years ago. His 16-year-old daughter became so angry that she legally changed her last name from his to her mother's maiden name. Her father became furious. It was hard for him to let his anger dissolve and disappear. He had read some of our books, and decided to write her a letter that showed only his love and not his anger.

He proceeded to write a three page letter to her with an attempt to convey his continual love for her. He had some second thoughts about the letter and thought he might have slipped in some angry, unloving, and judgmental thoughts. So, he phoned me and asked if I would be willing to edit his letter. I replied that I had never done something like that before, but if that is what he wanted, I would be glad to try.

I went over each paragraph with him carefully. For example, I would say, "I think this paragraph still shows some of your negative judgment," or "This paragraph still shows some of your anger," or "This paragraph shows some of your resentment." After my edit was finished, there was just

one sentence left which said, "I love you." He laughed and said, "Well then, what I'm going to do is send that one sentence letter."

I also shared with him that I felt our responsibility to our children is to never close the door to love on them... or on anyone, for that matter, including ourselves.

I had not seen this person for a number of years. When I did, he told me how helpful my remarks had been and that he has told the story of my editing to several people. He went on to keep the door open to his daughter; their relationship im-

"I also shared with him that I felt our responsibility to our children is to never close the door to love on them... or on anyone, for that matter, including ourselves."

proved. Ten years later, she told him that she had just changed her legal name back to his. Part of the power of love is the infinite patience it requires to keep the door to love open.

EXAMPLE 2

A wonderful friend had become a volunteer at our Center for Attitudinal Healing and later moved to another part of the country. She married and had children.

After several years of marriage she called to tell me she was going to see a lawyer the next day and file for divorce. I asked why she was telling me this, and did she feel that she wanted some help from me?

She replied, "That was not my intention, but, yes, is there anything you might say

that could be helpful?"

I replied, "The only suggestion I have is that for one week you be willing to put all your judgments aside, to let go of all your interpretations that blame your husband for your difficult marriage, and simply become a love finder rather than a fault finder. Then phone me back at the end of the week."

She agreed and called me back a week later. With her voice full of joy, she said, "You will never believe what happened. In that one week, my husband changed in a miraculous way!" She then laughed and continued "Of course I realize it was me who changed my attitude and brought about love and forgiveness on my part. It was me who first needed to heal my own mind and go back to the Principles of Attitudinal Healing."

It is amazing the healing that can take place in our lives when we see no value in blaming others or condemning ourselves, when we become love finders rather than fault finders, and when we do our very best to become messengers of Light, Love, and Forgiveness. ✧

The Envelope Please...

In this issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**, you should have found an envelope addressed to Miracle Distribution Center.

If you appreciate this magazine (and our many other projects and services), we hope you will take a moment and return the envelope to us with a contribution enclosed.

Printing and postage costs continue to escalate, and the troubled economy has negatively affected donations. We are counting on our readers and supporters to help us make up the difference.

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Thanks in advance for your generosity!

Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. and Diane Cirincione, Ph.D., international lecturers and bestselling authors, share their insights and experiences in applying the principles of *A Course in Miracles* in our world. Jerry and Diane's books and other items are available at www.miraclecenter.org

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Steven Halpern



Nominated for a Grammy Award

Our friend Steven Halpern was nominated for a Grammy Award earlier this year for his album, *Deep Alpha*. A pinnacle of his 60-album, 40-year career, *Deep Alpha* and its predecessor, *Deep Theta*, broke into the Billboard Top 10 New Age charts. Beginning in the 1970s, Steven was one of the pioneers of "New Age" music, a genre which focused on healing instead of entertainment.



We first got to know Steven in the early 1980's when he wrote a letter to us suggesting that we combine the beautiful words of *A Course in Miracles* with his trademark healing music. The result was Beverly and Steven working together to create *You Are Entitled to Miracles*, an album we released in 1983. Six additional albums followed, each focusing on a different aspect of the Course's approach to healing.

This year we are thrilled to be celebrating the 30th anniversary of our first collaboration with Steven. A special musical experience is planned for our **International Conference on *A Course in Miracles*** in August when Steven will join us.

Watch a video in which Steven discusses his Grammy Nomination and his music:

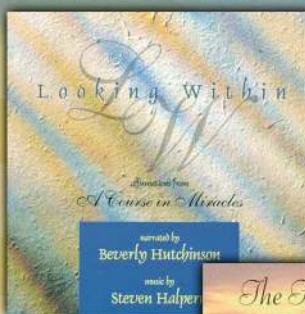
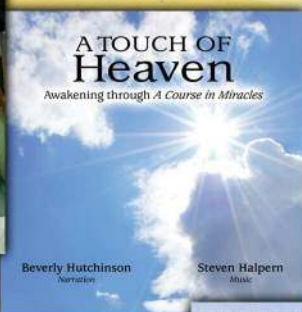
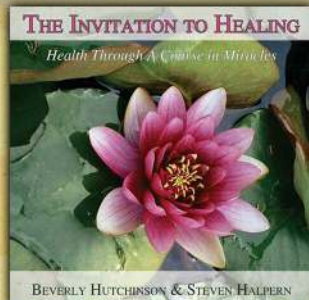
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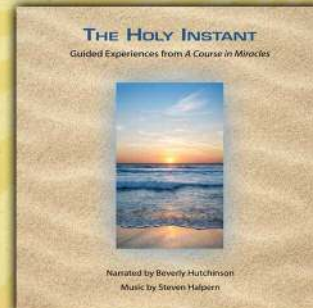
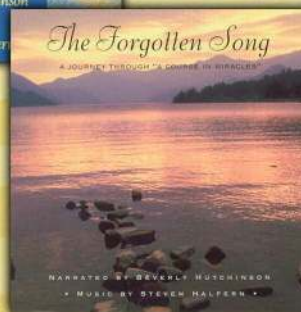
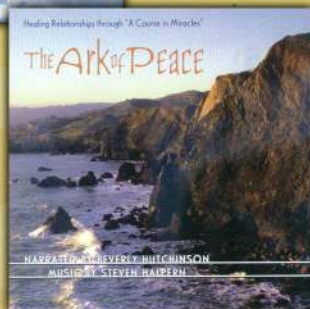
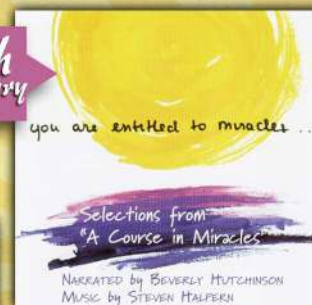
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onment? You might even ask, as I have: Have I Stockholmed myself? Have I let my ego take me hostage? Well, we can all take heart, there is a way out, and it resides within us.

In therapy, Jaycee discovered that she now had the freedom to make choices that would truly serve her best interest and not the insanity of her captor's ego. The Course teaches that we have the freedom to make choices, ones that truly serve our higher Self. To be fully free, Jaycee knew she had to embark on the path of forgiveness and not down the road of hate and attack.

As a Course student for twenty-seven years, I have learned that the power to overcome the imprisoning thoughts of the ego stems from our initially being aware that ego is talking. One might think this is a small step, but the Course says this awareness is a quantum leap and a necessary stride to our emancipation.

Next, we must be responsible for what we see. Do we see somebody else who is making us a victim of pain and suffering? Or, on the other hand, do we take responsibility for what we see and believe? "The mind that thinks it is a sin has but one purpose; that the body be the source of sin, to keep it in the prison house it chose and guards and holds itself at bay, a sleeping prisoner to the snarling dogs of hate and evil, sickness and attack." (T31.III.5) Do we really want to see this type of viciousness in another person, or for that matter, in ourselves? In the end, Jaycee ultimately chose to surrender her intention to see Garrido through that lens of love, not attack. Miraculously, she viewed the two children she unwillingly had with Garrido as sources of love and purpose. An evolutionary process no doubt, but an assured path to sanity and healing.

The Course says: "Yet is the body prisoner, and not the mind. The body thinks no thoughts. It has no power to learn, to pardon nor enslave... It holds in prison but the willing mind that would abide in it." (T31.III.4) The Course suggests an antidote to this kind of wrong thinking: "My mind is part of God's. I am very holy. As I share the peace of the world with my brothers, I begin to understand that this

peace comes from deep within myself. The world I look upon has taken on the light of my forgiveness, and shines forgiveness back at me. In this light I begin to see what my illusions about myself kept hidden."

(Lesson 57 paragraph 5)

The more acquainted I became with Jaycee's story, the more I kept telling myself when I encountered the ego's temptations to imprison my mind... Well, if Jaycee can do it, I can do it. And, YOU can do it! As the Bible says, we need to be "transformed by the renewing of our

"To be fully free, Jaycee knew she had to embark on the path of forgiveness and not down the road of hate and attack."

minds." To experience that transformation, however, we need to come to grips with our "backyard" stuff. Am I comfortable with anger, attack, and irresponsibility? Or is all that stuff, like a broken down old shoe, just too familiar for me to change? My ego would see it as much more convenient to merely *exist* in that "backyard" prison, rather than to vibrantly live by breaking free of it. Just as the Garrido shack and the name of Allissa became the counterfeit home and identity of Jaycee Dugard, so too our "backyards" of suffering, attack, and ego identity become our bogus residences and false identities.

The Course encourages us to embark on the path of healing. "Let us be glad that you will see what you believe, and that it has been given you to change what you believe. The body will but follow... The innocent release in gratitude for their release. And what they see upholds their freedom from imprisonment and death. Open your mind to change, and there will be no ancient penalty exacted from your brother or yourself." (T31.III.6-7)

Our spirits long for freedom. To truly find it, *A Course in Miracles* teaches us that we first must identify the problem; we have to be aware of what imprisons us, before it can be solved. Our lives intersect in so many ways; we are inextricably connected. By my going through the process of finding my creative freedom, so too, do you. Were Jaycee given the choice whether or not to be abducted, she undoubtedly would have emphatically said, "No." But she was abducted and yet still entered the ark of safety and healing. Her story now reverberates as a beautiful testament to how we all can overcome our "backyards" of imprisonment. I am grateful that the Course ever so gently teaches us that our salvation is, and always has been secure. Even though we may sometimes go kicking and screaming, imprisoning ourselves with unimaginable walls, we eventually will acquiesce to our true reality and the freedom it holds for us. Freedom lies within all of us and yet not one of us can achieve it without the other.



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Update: Prison Project

by Maria Zakich



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.

It was September 2011 when I received a manuscript from a prison inmate by the name of Mickey Owens. Mickey has been the recipient of many books and support from Miracle Distribution Center through our Prison Project. When he sent me the book he'd written about his life, I was fascinated and touched by it on many levels.

He'd hoped that I would have some way of getting it published. I was sorry to report that publishing wasn't what we do nor did I know of anybody who would. We agreed to release our expectation of what should be done and simply thought "we would step back and let Him lead the way."

About a week later, I heard from a woman, Kim Whiting, who found our website while randomly looking for inspirational short stories by prisoners. Kim wrote and asked if we knew of anybody who would want to share their story... AHA!!!! "As a matter of fact, I DO!"

I connected Mickey and Kim, and together they came up with a marvelous story – Mickey with his life

sentence and Kim with her life's purpose. The book finished and published is called, *Life Sentence, Life Purpose*.

I am in awe at the Divine order and timing of this collaboration. We here at MDC were the conduits – Spirit's avenues for connecting these two souls. We are happy to have the book available through our online catalog. You will be brought to tears and inspired by their story; Kim says, "Our story is testimony to the surprising and creative

ways that Spirit brings meaning, light, and fulfillment into our lives when we are open to it."

We are honored that over the last thirty-five years, we have been God's messengers of love and miracles to prisons, thanks to your donations. I know we'll hear more and more of these stories as inmates heal and are released back into the world with new awareness and willingness to share God's love. We thank you for your support. ✧

Available from the Center

Life Sentence - Life Purpose

by Mickey Owens

Mickey Owens, through his life story, takes us on a journey into the bowels of prison and the minds and souls of inmates. He shows us that love, peace and purpose can be found anywhere, even in the hard and shadowed landscape of prison. Mickey is a student of *A Course in Miracles* and part of our Miracle Prison Ministry.

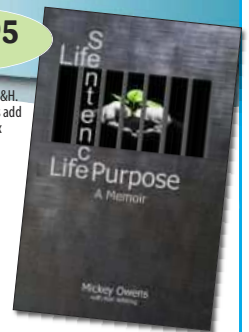
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Maria Zakich coordinates The Prison Project at MDC. You may e-mail her at maria@miraclecenter.org

Googliness

Continued from page 1

on the Course by noted authors, listen to podcasts or study group meetings, find a study group in your area, read the complete Course or look up key concepts, and a number of other activities.

But one "old-fashioned" service that has been here for the last 35 years is our dedicated staff. We have always seen the value of people connecting with people. And, as the Course reminds us,

we truly find God in each other -- not a computer screen or automated service. We think it's important that you know, whether you ever contact us or not, that you can! We are here. Monday through Friday from 9am to 4pm (Pacific Time) you can reach one of our caring and knowledgeable staff by ...
...phone at **1-800-359-2246**,

...on the web at **www.miraclecenter.org**,
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So, there we have it! We are here to serve you. Now that's Googliness! ✧

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our feelings if we really do feel upset and frustrated?

The Course tells us the world is not real. As a matter of fact, it says there is no world; it's a projection of our thinking. I find the deep metaphysics of the Course fascinating and I love discussing it, but it's probably not the most helpful thing to tell someone who's in deep distress that all this is not real - especially when their pain seems very real to them.

In *The Song of Prayer* we read, "There are decisions to make here [in the world], and they must be made whether they are illusions or not." As long as we have given the world value in our minds (and if you are reading this, you have given the world value), then to deny this experience is an unhelpful form of denial. That being said, we are asked to begin the process of releasing our attachment to the world of form, but we can't do that alone. The Course tells us we believe in the problem (we made it - as hard as that may be for us to wrap our minds around) and therefore we need help from outside of the problem so we can begin to question its power and hold over us. That's where God comes in. He has given us the Holy Spirit, the Voice for God within, the spark of sanity in our crazy minds to look with us at what we have given value to and say, as the Course counsels us in Lesson 134, "My brother, what you think is not the truth." It is just this type of "doubt" that begins the dawn of sanity.

The Course values our peace and happiness far more than we do. But the need that really should be addressed in this whole thing is: Are we at peace or can we ever be at peace (or even happy) when we are angry, hateful, or vindictive toward another? Can separating ourselves with our "rights" and "wrongs" from another part of society help us to feel lasting peace and happiness?

All through *A Course in Miracles* we read different forms of the Golden Rule:

"Today I learn the law of love, that what I give my brother is my gift to me." (L344)

"My sinless brother is my guide to peace. My sinful brother is my guide to pain.

And which I choose to see I will behold." (L351)

"Teach no one that he is what you would not want to be. Your brother is the mirror in which you see the image of yourself." (T7.VII.3:8-9)

"You understand that you are healed when you give healing, You accept forgiveness as accomplished in yourself when you forgive. You recognize your brother as yourself, and thus do you perceive that you are whole." (L159)

"...exempt no one from your love, or you will be hiding a dark place in your mind where the Holy Spirit is not welcome. And thus you will exempt yourself from His healing power, for by not offering total love you will not be healed completely." (T13.III.9:2-3)

"Are we at peace or can we ever be at peace (or even happy) when we are angry, hateful, or vindictive toward another? Can separating ourselves with our 'rights' and 'wrongs' from another part of society help us to feel lasting peace and happiness?"

These are just a few of the hundreds of places in the Course where we are told that our salvation lies in how we treat each other and even how we think about each other.

In the book, *Saved by the Light*, author Dannion Brinkley tells about the two near-death experiences which transformed his life. His near-death experiences taught him first-hand not only the importance of the Golden Rule, but that there was really no other way to live - what we do to others, we actually experience ourselves.

In the story, we see Brinkley as a man who has always lived his life for himself. He is a mean, vindictive person. He loves to pick fights and never sees any value in kindness or charity. His first near-death experience happens as the result of being

struck by lightning which leaves him dead for twenty-eight minutes. During this experience, he is "shown" his life up to this point. He not only sees all the vicious acts that he perpetrated on others, but he literally feels the pain he has inflicted on them. The pain is excruciating. He is then told that love is the way to live. He is told that we all are powerful spiritual beings and he is being sent back to his life because he is not done with this life experience.

Once back in his body, he finds himself in great pain and very confused. Not only does his body need to heal (after all he was struck by lightning), but he has to heal his mind by changing the way he treats others. The interconnectedness that we all share, he literally experienced. The hurtful things he had done to others, he felt; and the loving things he did, he felt as well.

Well, you can imagine, as his story progresses, he begins helping others - offering his loving support and kindness. He has another near-death experience, and he is again shown his life. This time, he not only reviews the first part of his life with the painful acts he did but now he sees and feels the loving things he has done since the first near-death experience, and he feels great joy. There's no longer a choice for him - love is the only way to live his life. He cannot see another's needs or hurts as apart from him. He cannot treat another with hate or cruelty and not feel their pain. He has felt another's pain and joy and knows it is his as well.

The Course tells us over and over again that we *are* our brother - there is no separation. And it tells us that we cannot know our Self or God if we see ourselves or our needs as separate from another. Unless we start applying the Golden Rule to all situations, we are not living because we are not really alive - how can there be life when we are cut off from our Source, which is God, and, in a practical sense, our brother? As the Course tells us, *"I cannot come to You [God] without my brother. And to know my Source [God], I first must recognize what You created one with me. My brother's is the hand that leads me on the way to You."* (L288)

So the next time you feel depressed, angry or unhappy, check to see if you have missed a chance to apply the Golden Rule. How do we choose the Golden Rule when we think we are so right in our views? Well,

perhaps with just a little willingness and a prayer like this:

“Father, help me to see this person as you see them, so that I may be joined with them and not apart. I want to know my Self and You, so I am willing to know my brother.”

Then let God do the rest. Don't try to figure out how He should do His job (how He can make that person acceptable in your sight.) Just be willing to let His will be done through you. He knows the Golden Rule works... now let Him show you it does as well. ✧

What's Happening

Continued from page 2

● “God is my refuge and security,” says Course lesson 261. It goes on to remind us that we will identify with where we think our safety is. If we believe that the world gives us our safety and security, we'll have a pretty shaky ride, at best. What can really be counted on in this changing world? But we live in God, not the world. Whether we believe this or not does not change God - He knows we are always with Him - but it does change us. Knowing Who really holds us, Who is our refuge, can work miracles in our lives. And, aren't you entitled to them? Turning to God and resting in His loving presence is what prayer is about. Let's not try to figure out how to fix the world, let's just turn to Him. Join us through the Miracle Prayer Ministry each day at 4:30 PM (Pacific Time). We invite you to pause for a moment of prayerful support for yourself, a loved one, and all those whose names and needs are in the prayer ministry as we rest in Him and let Him do the rest. If you have a prayer request, please send it to the Center by post or email. Request your free, full-color bookmark today which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2013.

Affirmations for:

July: “Your peace is with me, Father. I am safe.” (L245)

August: “I am spirit.” (L97)

September: “Forgiveness is the key to happiness.” (L121) ✧

Entitled to Miracles

Continued from page 7

perceiving, and the Course lessons are designed exactly for that purpose. We can learn to prefer and value the commonality of all things and their inherent loving nature and refuse the ego a vote. And since miracles are expressions of love, we simply need to make giving and receiving love the essential priority in our lives.

Our world of form is a mirror and no one can negotiate with that fact. It will always reveal what we really prefer, not that to which we give lip service. Thus, through practicing forgiveness, seeing that everything is actually harmless and remains part of the greater whole, we gradually shift our notions of ourselves. And if we are doing no harm, we might be lovable after all. We steadily transform the way we regard ourselves and others – from being lowly, unimportant creatures to being magnificent, deserving and lovable. We are literally cooperating in a reprogramming process and the conditions of our world keep steady pace.

Inevitably, the forms change as Bill notes above. And sometimes the new, improved forms – the people that show

up, the opportunities suddenly before us -- seem to appear out of the blue. Not at all! They are simply the upgraded forms -- situations or people, subjective experiences – that correspond to our increased capacity to love ourselves and others. They do not appear because we are clever, work hard, know the right people, or have mastered the art of negotiation, but because the forms are exact mirrors of our increasingly truthful ideas about ourselves and that desire to see all things as part of an infinite whole.

So, what stupendous news! I can choose to regard the neighbors as doing what they thought best, what they believed kept them safe, and honor that. For my part, I now hardly notice and my peace is not disturbed. Instead of labeling the new view as barren or ugly, I regard it simply as different and all is well, *if I even notice it at all*. The Course reminds us that all encounters are potentially helpful, especially when they “encourage” a more charitable outlook. The main thing to keep foremost in mind is that we are all equally entitled to miracles, tree lovers or not, because we are all equally lovable in truth and our grand mission is to find that out! ✧

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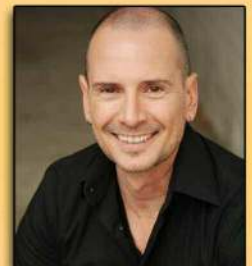
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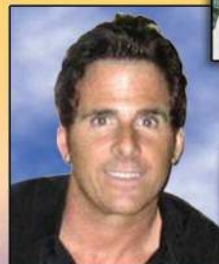
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