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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



MAY / JUNE 2018

A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



The Audacity of Happiness

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

"Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." — Abraham Lincoln

I have always liked this quote by Lincoln, but when I first read it, I didn't believe it was from him. He never seemed happy to me, and why would he have been? When he was a boy, his mother and sisters died. His father treated him like an indentured servant, renting him out to work for people to make money. As president, he faced a country divided, a war that caused the death of an entire generation of young men, and the hostility of taking a stand against slavery. He had a terrible personal life, including the death of a child and a bipolar wife. Lincoln suffered from severe melancholia; had he been alive today, he'd probably be on some sort of antidepressant. Why go on? Well, he made up his mind to.

In the book *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin, on which Steven Spielberg's movie about Lincoln was based, Goodwin tells that friends of Lincoln would say that they never saw a sadder face, and yet there was a spirit behind that face that had great joy and would light up the moment he began to tell a story... and Lincoln loved to tell his yarns.

No one would probably use the adjective

"happy" when it came to Abraham Lincoln, and yet I do believe he was happy — beyond every reason to not be. You may not have seen it on his face, but it was an inner happiness, contentment, a purpose that made him go on. He could not or would not be stopped by the world. He made up his mind!

Screen legend Bette Davis is quoted as saying, "Getting old is not for sissies." Well, I believe that happiness is not for sissies, either. It takes a great inner resource to know

that no matter where you are or what is going on, you have the power to choose your experience — to be happy. That is the audacity of happiness.

I have often found myself happy at memorial services. I am compassionate for those who mourn the loss of a loved one, but I can't help but be happy for the soul who, as The



Bette Davis

Song of Prayer says, has once again earned to look upon the Christ without blinders, and no longer needs to walk the world of limits. Some might think my happiness out of place,

"Screen legend Bette Davis is quoted as saying, 'Getting old is not for sissies.' Well, I believe that happiness is not for sissies, either."

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.

40 Years in Retrospect

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

The life of Miracle Distribution Center

Part III: Partners on the Path

Nothing you undertake with certain purpose and high resolve and happy confidence, holding your brother's hand and keeping step to Heaven's song, is difficult to do. (T-26.V.2:5)

Through our forty years of service, we have had the opportunity to take the hands of many brothers, and each one has brought a blessing to Miracle Distribution Center (MDC.) I have written in previous articles about how my brother, Richard, was the moving force in starting the Center, but I also want to mention the impact that our parents have had on MDC's growth, for it truly has been a "family affair."

As students of *A Course in Miracles*, our parents spent many long hours in support of this work. Both my mom and dad have made their transitions into eternal life, but during the years they graced us on this earth, it was common to see our dad, Clarence, repairing a leaky faucet, changing a light bulb or helping out in any number of ways. Tona, our mom, was a familiar voice to many since she was often the voice you'd hear when you phoned the Center.

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In celebration of MDC's 40th Anniversary, we will be sharing our journey through six articles that highlight the Center's birth, growth, life, and purpose, as it continues to evolve and support students of *A Course in Miracles*.

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

For more information go to
www.miraclecenter.org or call 1-714-632-9005

● Smashing Pumpkins and the Course -

Billy Corgan, frontman of the alternative rock band *Smashing Pumpkins*, recently mentioned the influence *A Course in Miracles*

has had on his life, saying, "It occurs to me that my music has been (and still is) a road map out of Hell, and not back to it, and I'm graced by the support of so many wonderful

people in this moment. Which if you've read *A Course in Miracles* means this moment is Our collective moment, and how we choose to live it has much to do with the kind of dream we are having."



Smashing Pumpkins

● **ACIM Summer Retreat** - Now is the perfect time to reserve your place at our **2018 Holy Encounter Retreat** (see facing page for details). To celebrate our 40th anniversary, we are implementing a year of more in-depth study and experience of *A Course in Miracles*. And, this is exactly what our **Holy Encounter Retreats** provide. If you are ready for a transforming experience, we encourage you to join us. Space is limited and some room types will sell out. Visit our website to watch our retreat video, then click the "Register" button to reserve your spot!

● **Take a Moment for yourself** - Our latest **Miracle Moment Podcast** is available online and it now includes a video option. Join Center founder Beverly Hutchinson McNeff



and her husband Paul (both students of the Course with over 70 years of combined study!) for these free podcasts which cover Course concepts as they apply to questions sent in from people all around the globe. Just

go to our website at www.miraclecenter.org, click on "Services," then "Miracle Moment." And, send us your questions, as well!

● "Wow! My order shipped 20 minutes from when I placed it. This truly is a "Miracle Distribution Center!"

We thank Nannette in Nevada for her kind comment about our online bookstore. Since our founding in 1978, we've tried to provide the level of service we ourselves would like to receive. Unlike

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

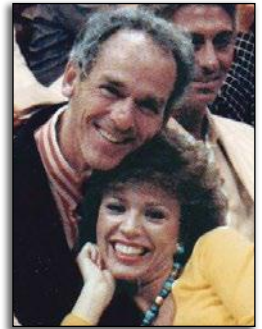
● **Choose-A-Quote** - "I just want to say how the "Choose-A-Quote" web page is appreciated daily. I have it "saved" on my work computer and just one click away when I want a quick reprieve / respite. Thank you so much!" We want to thank Patricia in Chico, California, for letting us know how this new service of the Center is benefiting her. It's because of the loving tax-deductible support of our readers that we can create these inspiring free services. You can go to "Services" and click on "Choose-A-Quote."



● **Course Lookup Improved** - Have you ever tried to find a favorite quote in the Course? Perhaps you had some idea of its location, but couldn't quite pinpoint it? Then our **ACIM Lookup** is just the tool for you! Type any word or words into the box and click "Search." You'll immediately find any and all references contained in the Course, highlighted in yellow to make their exact

location easy to find. We recently made some improvements to the search results page, and we think you'll find it is even more accurate than before. You'll find it under "Services" on the menu bar at our website.

● **July 4th of this year will mark the 30th anniversary** of the passing, or as the Course would say, "liberation" of Bill Thetford, co-scribe of *A Course in Miracles*. Days before Bill's death, he was dancing around and commenting to friends that he was now flexible – that all his relationships were so perfectly at peace. The practice of the Course had allowed him to move past the blocks to the awareness of love's presence and embrace the peace of God that is within us all now. May we follow Bill's advice and use each day as a day to be liberated from the chains of the ego, embrace the freedom of God's love, and live a flexible life of joy! Thanks for the reminder, Bill. We remain grateful for you!



Bill & Beverly, in 1987.

● **"Let me be still and listen to the truth."** This lesson (106) in *A Course in Miracles* shares the secret to our healing. We are entitled to miracles, but we will never experience them as long as we are distracted by our frenetic world and lives.

God does not ask us to give much, just an instant – a holy instant – to allow truth to reign in our life. We invite you to take that holy instant with us daily in prayerful thought for yourself, loved ones, and those in the **Miracle Prayer Ministry**. Every day at 4:30pm (Pacific Time), we invite you to stop and join us. Together, let us be still and listen to the truth. Thoughts for:

May: *There is no will but God's.* (L74)

June: *The Light has come.* (L75)

July: *Your grace is given me. I claim it now.*

(L 168)

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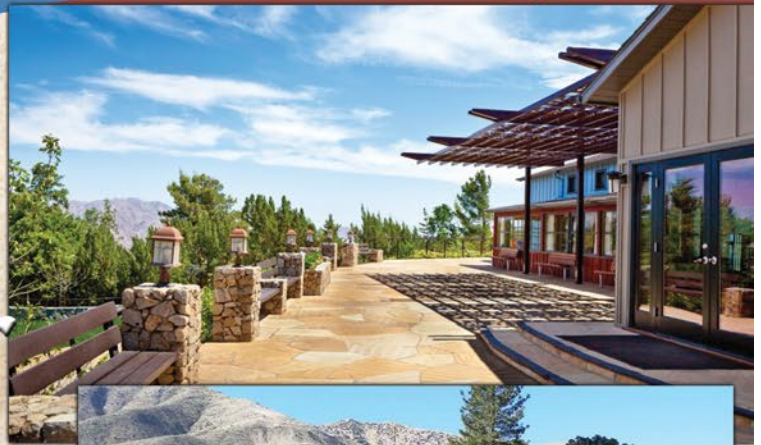
SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2018

Holy Encounter Retreat



International lecturer, author, and founder of the Center, Beverly Hutchinson McNeff, brings her 41 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 a really good feeling and some down-to-earth principles that helped me make sense of things in terms of forgiveness, judgment, etc. The retreat was great, the environment was great, the food was great... I just had a great time overall!"



"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."



This retreat is designed to help students to not just talk about the Course 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.

The Holy Encounter Retreat will be held at the majestic RW Ranch Spiritual Retreat Center in Lucerne Valley, California. Sessions will be conducted in comfortable meeting rooms and time for reflection and meditation may be experienced in various landscaped parks, intimate flower

gardens, beside a tumbling stream, or peaceful ponds... each offering privacy, seclusion, and a distinctive setting.

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 \$499 and includes all retreat activities, six organic meals, and lodging.



To register visit www.miraclecenter.org or call 1-800-359-2246





Miracle Musings... Beautiful City

by Paul McNeff

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:1-2)

"You do not really want the world you see, for it has disappointed you since time began. The homes you built have never sheltered you. The roads you made have led you nowhere, and no city that you built has withstood the crumbling assault of time." (T-13.VII.3)

This past January on our family's European trip, we were able to visit the captivating city of Florence, Italy. Because many writers and influential artists sprang from this geographic area, Florence became commonly known as the birthplace of the Renaissance. During the fifteenth century the city state of Florence became politically and economically dominated by the powerful Medici family who were grand supporters of all things art, boasting the residency of many of the art world's most famous names including Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and Botticelli, to name a few. You might say Florence was the very definition of a beautiful city.

So what exactly makes a beautiful city? As an Evangelical Christian, I was always fascinated by the last book in the Bible, Revelation, which widely celebrates the spiritual construction of the beautiful heavenly city, the New Jerusalem (otherwise known as heaven). According to the prophetic teachings of Revelation, after the final judgment, only if you are a Christian, saved by the "blood of the lamb," will you have the credentials to enter the New Jerusalem. Once there you will walk the streets in your "glorified" (spiritual) bodies and exist with Jesus forever. If you do not meet this set of criteria, well, your forever destination will be in hell, separated from Jesus in "the lake that burns with fire and brimstone" to quote Revelation 21:8. Scary stuff!

When I became a student of *A Course in Miracles*, I gladly learned of a much different perspective. Heaven and hell are not so much physical destinations but rather, states of mind that are not defined by the space/time continuum. Distilled down, time can only be

experienced in the now. The Course calls this spiritually defined state as the real world.

"Sit quietly and look upon the world you see, and tell yourself: 'The real world is not like this. It has no buildings and there are no streets where people walk alone and separate. There are no stores where people buy an endless list of things they do not need. It is not lit with artificial light, and night comes not upon it. There is no day that brightens and grows dim. There is no loss. Nothing is there but shines, and shines forever.'" (T-13.VII.1)

Now that qualifies as a beautiful city.

"During the fifteenth century the city state of Florence became politically and economically dominated by the powerful Medici family who were grand supporters of all things art, boasting the residency of many of the art world's most famous names..."

The United States of America has often been called a beautiful city. I would contend it has been referenced this way not only because of our beautiful countryside, abundance of natural resources, agricultural plenty, and great cities, but rather because of the spiritual foundations enunciated in the preamble to our Constitution:

"We the People of the United States, in

Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

In order to form a more perfect union, it has at its basic core the idea of growth toward perfection. It's all in the journey. As in our spiritual existence, the perfection of our state of mind is a journey of practice. As we rehearse the ideas of forgiveness, remove the blocks to love's awareness and see our



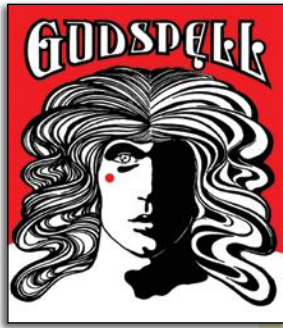
brother's interests as not separate from ours, we further our happy experiences in the real world. In parallel fashion, as our country strives for "a more perfect union," it will only be achieved as we establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility and promote the general Welfare of all.

As many of you know, Beverly and I are the founders of **KidSingers**, an inner-city youth chorus based in Santa Ana, California. As part of our seasonal concert series, we produce a Spring Concert in May, this year with the title of: *America... A More Perfect Union*. As our title song, **KidSingers** will be performing *Beautiful City* from the 2011 Broadway revival of *Godspell* by Stephen Schwartz of *Wicked* fame. *Beautiful City* was not contained in the original Broadway version of *Godspell*, but was part of the 1972 film. The song was later added to the play as an inspiration to rebuild the city of Los Angeles after the 1993 Rodney King riots devastated many parts of that community.

In the revised version of the musical, the

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

scene begins as Jesus overturns the tables at the Temple before the Pharisees. Fearful of violence against him for what he has done, he flees. His disciples shouted at him, "Where are you going? Can you take me with you?" They are then reunited with Jesus, and sing *Beautiful City*, realizing they had a vital part to play in bringing the beautiful city (Kingdom of Heaven as Jesus called it) to earth.



In introducing **KidSingers** to *Beautiful City*, I explained we want to see this song as symbolic for our country. These past fifteen months, with our current administration's condemning rhetoric and harsh immigration policies coming down the pike, have made it very difficult for many of our immigrant families, causing them a lot of fear and uncertainty. Some of our older kids are DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and now reside in the U.S. due to no fault of their own, as they were brought here as children. I went on further to explain that the United States is a great country, but it is not perfect. There are many areas we the people must continue to fix. And that is where we all have the opportunity to participate in making it a more perfect union.

I explained how this song was not only about rebuilding a brick and mortar city, but rather about rebuilding a community from a spiritual perspective as well. I posed the question to them: What are some of the ingredients we will need to build a beautiful city from a spiritual perspective? Listing their answers on a grease board, here is what they came up with: love, kindness, respect, hope, courtesy, honesty, humor, ingenuity, motivation, and hard work. Yes! Are these not great parallels with Course teaching? So we set the stage as we all must do in bringing this peaceful mind set to our illusory world.

Just as **KidSingers** will realize their *Beautiful City* by rehearsing and working hard to bring about an inspirational performance, by the same token we all have our own beautiful city to pursue. Let's not waste our time in the now living in a nightmare. It is our choice which world we want to see: beautiful or illusory. As the Course says, the illusory world of pain and anguish is but a mistaken thought. Call it for what it is... fake news! We have within us the power to change that by giving in to what has never left us — love.

"Yet the real world has the power to touch you even here, because you love it. And what you call with love will come to you. Love always answers, being unable to deny a call for help, or not to hear the cries of pain that rise to it from every part of this strange world you made but do not want. All that you need to give this world away in glad exchange for what you did not make is willingness to learn the one you made is false." (T-13.VII.4)

"Beautiful City was not contained in the original Broadway version of Godspell, but was part of the 1972 film. The song was later added to the play as an inspiration to rebuild the city of Los Angeles after the 1993 Rodney King riots devastated many parts of that community."

I challenge you, with **KidSingers**, to be a part of this grand real world and come out of the ash heap of our illusory thinking. As the lyrics of *Beautiful City* by Stephen Schwartz say:

"Out of the ruins and rubble, out of the smoke, out of our night of struggle, can we see a ray of hope?"

One pale thin ray, reaching for the day.

We can build a beautiful city, yes, we can, yes we can.

We can build a beautiful city, not a city of angels, but we can build a city of man.

We may not reach the ending, but we can start, slowly but truly mending, brick by brick, heart by heart.

Now maybe now, we start learning how.

We can build a beautiful city, yes, we can, yes, we can.

We can build a beautiful city, not a city of angels, but we can build a city of man.

When your trust is all but shattered, when your faith is all but killed, you can give up, bitter and battered, or you can slowly start to build a beautiful city, yes, we can, yes, we can.

We can build a beautiful city, not a city of angels, but finally a city of man, of man..."

Join **KidSingers** and me as we build our *Beautiful City* together. ✦

If you are interested in seeing **KidSingers** perform *Beautiful City*, please check it out on **You Tube** under *Beautiful City - KidSingers*.

Join in the Celebration!

To commemorate MDC's 40th year of service... we'd love to hear from you if our work here at Center has blessed your life in any way. Your comments will be shared with our readers in upcoming issues and on-line.

Please limit your submission to 300 or fewer words.

We look forward to hearing from you

E-mail your comments to info@miraclecenter.org or mail to our postal address

Dear Beverly,

I really relish this chance to tell you and all your staff how much I admire the great work you have done. Having been a student since 1987 and had the privilege of meeting some of your major supports, I feel a quiet, but sincere part of it. Forever grateful for A Course in Miracles and the great part you have played in its sharing in these past years.

Grace Merrick, Australia



Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Jesus At Last I Have Found You

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

I (Jerry) have had trouble with the word “Jesus,” as far back as I can remember. He represented to me all that was Christian, and, even though Jesus was clearly Jewish, his name was never to be mentioned in my Jewish home or my synagogue.

I became a militant atheist at the age of sixteen after a close friend was killed in an automobile accident. It was not until 1975

at the age of 50 that my commitment to atheism and alcoholism changed drastically. It was then that Judith Skutch Whitson first brought me the unpublished manuscript of *A Course in Miracles*, which had just been given to her by Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford.

When I asked her what it was about, she said it was about God and spiritual transformation. I immediately reminded her that as a militant atheist I was not interested in anything like that. She then asked me, “Could you just read one page?” I did not know how to say no to her for such a simple request.

When I opened the manuscript and began to read, I had a life-transforming experience in which I heard an Inner Voice that said clearly, “Physician, heal thyself. This is your way Home.” At that moment I had the experience of being joined with all that is and I knew my life was going to be devoted to service and to God.

Even though I had this defining spiritual epiphany, I still harbored a deep seated confusion as to where Jesus belonged in my life. There was a time when I so very much wanted to have “a personal relationship” with Jesus that I began asking for Guidance, and received answers to my pleas. I was so filled

with joy and couldn’t wait to tell Helen. When I shared with her that I was having these “conversations with Jesus,” she yelled at me, “Jerry, do not tell anyone this. They will think you are crazy!”

Calling on Jesus as my Elder Brother became easier to relate to as I asked for Guidance often as what to think, say, or do in a given situation. And when I had confusion as to even what the question was, I would ask, “What is it that I need to know?”

I humbly asked to find Jesus in my life and one day in 1977, I received the following writing which then gave me the gift for which I had asked.



Jerry & Helen Schucman, in 1976.

“I was so filled with joy and couldn’t wait to tell Helen. When I shared with her that I was having these ‘conversations with Jesus,’ she yelled at me, ‘Jerry, do not tell anyone this. They will think you are crazy!’”

Jesus, At Last I Have Found You

Oh Jesus, my Elder Brother, you have been here, within my still mind all the time.

It was but my guilt and fear that kept You Presence hidden from me.

Your Quiet Certainty, Your Gentleness, Your Song of Unending Love resonates in my heart as an ancient melody that makes all creation dance with joy.

You have touched me, and I feel the abundance of God’s Love within me and within everything I see.

The sky is bluer, the mountains more majestic, the trees more serene, the ocean more gentle, and the Light of Christ is shining in everyone I behold.

Oh Jesus, my Dear Brother, My Savior, the

completion of myself, You have touched me and purified my thoughts and my heart.

You have touched me and made me free of my physical identity.

You have touched me and for this everlasting instant, I am once again free. I am free of all illusions.

I am free of fear.

I am free of guilt. I am free of pain. I am free of all problems, of all questions, and of all preoccupations, worries and concerns about tomorrow.

You have touched me and for this eternal instant every aspect of myself knows that there is only joy in the now, there is only peace in the now, there is only love in the now.

Oh Jesus, my Beloved Teacher, I release all. I let go of all.

I come toward God with empty hands and complete myself with You.

Oh dear Jesus, my Beloved Brother, I know that all I need do is be.

I thank you for Your patience. The essence of my being is full of joy and laughter, as the song of gratitude continues to resonate from my heart to God, to myself, and to all of God’s Creation.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you. Thank you. I will never walk alone again.

Listening to Jesus became easier as I affirmed each day with Diane that “I am not a body. I am free. I am still as God created me.” I gradually learned that “unconditional listening” came from Unconditional Love. This was how I learned to gradually differentiate the voice of my ego from my Inner Voice.

When I listen to the voice of my ego, I am hearing inner conflicts projected outward and seen as external fears. When I listen to my Inner Voice (the Voice of the Consciousness of Jesus, The Holy Spirit) my ego voice is silenced and only Love remains. This is how

Continued on page 11

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 Beauty Beyond Illusions

Inspirational Psychology on Overcoming the Blocks to Love

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

"What Is the World? The world is false perception. It is born of error, and it has not left its source. It will remain no longer than the thought that gave it birth is cherished." (W-pll.3.1:1)

When you look outward into the world, what is it you are seeing? Do you see all as it is, or are you seeing through a lens of thought and belief that distorts, alters, hides, and overlooks the love that is ever-present? Do you see the world as it is, or are you creating an endless parade of people and things to pursue and to attach yourself to? When you think you understand someone or something, what is it that you know? Are you understanding the true essence of the person, or are you "understanding" by way of a series of thoughts about the person of your own making?

To see love and beauty each day, we first need to realize we have likely been blind when we thought we were seeing, and thus we perceive very little as it is.

Many people unwittingly overlook opportunities to love, but how quickly we can awake to all love has to offer! There is always tenderness and calm that can be found in the present moment, no matter what is happening. I am not saying it is easy to see this in the midst of chaos and conflict, but beyond all that we thought were reasons not to love and all we thought was real, Love waits patiently.

Can you imagine how beautiful those you forgive will look to you? In no fantasy have you ever seen anything so lovely. Nothing you see here, sleeping or waking, comes near to such loveliness. (T-17.II.1:1)

Usually, we embark on a path toward personal change or spiritual growth for two reasons, even though we may not realize them at the time — we want to escape a painful past, and we want to have happiness, purpose, and meaning in our lives. These are admirable goals and can serve as initial motivation. However, there is something beneath and beyond these goals that is central.

Most people who are seeking help or entering a spiritual path are ready on the one hand, and on the other, still resisting. We want change, we want relief from pain, but we are not too big on the disciplined and contemplative approaches to be undertaken to undo our thinking (the ego) that is causing us hurt in the first place. Many people resist the path of taking full responsibility for their thinking which is necessary for peace of mind and to have increased awareness of love. This has only worsened in the era of smartphones, where we often want to consume wisdom as a commodity or quick fix, like fast food with empty calories, not long-term, sustainable nutrition for the soul.

"Many people resist the path of taking full responsibility for their thinking which is necessary for peace of mind and to have increased awareness of love. This has only worsened in the era of smartphones, where we often want to consume wisdom as a commodity or quick fix..."

These days the primary task I am undertaking on my path is a simple one: I am doing my best to remember who I am and remember the love that abounds purely and eternally in each of us. To fully recognize this and be conscious of it, I have had a lot of cleaning up to do, a lot of forgiving, a lot of accepting. I am slowly but surely learning how to direct my mind to beauty.

This loveliness is not a fantasy. It is the real world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. Nothing is hidden here, for everything has been forgiven and there are no fantasies to hide the truth. (ibid)

It would be most challenging to find a single beautiful gem within a house full of accumulated garbage. In the same way, it has not been an easy undertaking for me to see the beauty of who I am amidst my judgments,



misunderstandings, and fears. Thus, my path to remembering has been a journey of letting go, relinquishing, forgiving. Most days, now, I see the gem, the light of love within me and within you. Perhaps not all of the time, but I do

always see it within reach. I am grateful that even during my most challenging days, I now also remember to love and to be tender. Even on the days I make my most substantial mistakes, I am quicker to make amends, be tender, forgive, and love. What I am saying is that I don't expect to be without blunders in my relationships, but it is possible for me never to let a day go by without the practice of forgiveness. This has become a reachable goal for me, and one that I think can be for all of us.

This little step, so small it has escaped your notice, is a stride through time into eternity, beyond all ugliness into beauty that will enchant you, and will never cease to cause you wonderment at its perfection. (ibid)

This practice for me was not always so. Quite evidently, there have been times when I was terrified to surrender, to let go of my defensive and fearful thinking, and to forgive. I was okay with little bits of letting go,

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Dr. Lee Jampolsky is the founder of Inspirational Psychology and the author of ten books in fourteen languages. For free articles and free online courses visit www.drleejampolsky.com. He is a retired psychologist and currently offers online spiritual mentoring and coaching. He can be reached at lee@drleejampolsky.com



The Kissing Hand

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Sorting through things and giving them away is always hard for me, especially when it comes to books. Each book has a message for me and a story behind each story, so my shelves get fuller and fuller as I stack and double stack my bookshelves. Our son Jeff is just as bad. He also can't give books away. He has some wonderful volumes from his childhood that neither of us wants to give away. One such book is *The Kissing Hand*.

It's the story of Chester Raccoon who was afraid to start his first day of school and wanted to stay home, safe with this mother. She tells him how much fun he will have in school meeting new friends, swinging on swings, and learning new things. Additionally, she tells him she has a secret to make school feel just as safe and cozy as home. "It's a very old secret called the Kissing Hand."

You can probably guess what happens. Mother Raccoon opens Chester's little paw and kisses it. Chester feels the kiss rush from his hand, up his arm, and into his heart. His

mother tells him that whenever he feels lonely or afraid, he need simply press the palm of his hand to his face and he will feel the safety and love of home. Chester goes to school knowing his mother's love would always be with him. But, before he leaves, he gives his mother a kiss in her palm so she would feel the love and safety, as well.

Isn't this the same promise God is giving us? There has

"Additionally, she tells him she has a secret to make school feel just as safe and cozy as home. 'It's a very old secret called the Kissing Hand.'"

never been a moment when the loving Hands of God have not been holding us; it is time we recognize this, so it can be experienced.

Lately in our live-streamed meetings, we have been discussing the section in the text entitled, "The Call for Faith." It tells us that

when we have faith in God (love), we awaken not only a strength in us but also in others. Our faith that the healing answer will be found for



ourselves as well as all who walk this world with us is how true transformation begins. We will leave behind the shackles of the past because we are focusing on the answer instead of the problem. Every great achievement in the annals of history was accomplished not by those who focused on the failures, but by those who learned from their seeming failures and used them to find the solution.

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**KEEP
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to the
Inspiration!**

MDC offers support and inspiration through many different formats: **Computer**, via our live stream (which subscribers can view at any time that is convenient to them), our **Website**, and also through the printed version of our magazine, **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. To receive **weekly emails** of inspiration, send your email address to **info@miraclecenter.org**

Every week, MDC sends out an email blast of inspiration and information. The article "The Kissing Hand" 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. Read below how it impacted Phillis in Beavercreek, Ohio...

As a full time care-giver for my husband of 62 years, I seldom have the energy or time to watch your web broadcast on Wednesday evenings. Your printed articles are another story! I can read them when I have the time and print off the ones I want to share with my Course Study Group on Sunday evenings.

I especially love this article! I forwarded one to my sister out of town who is not an official follower of the Course, but she already thinks along those lines. I printed off copies and will share them Sunday evening with my group.

My sister and I are already pressing our palms to our cheeks to remind us of the Love of God. Pretty soon there will be many of us doing that!

I find that especially helpful during the nighttime hours when worries of the day keep me awake. That's when I need to most remember to put the Course into action.

Your support of MDC's free services is appreciate and tax-deductible. Thank you.

the Holy Encounter WEEKEND

A Miraculous Blessing in Chicago!

with Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Our weekend (April 6-7) in the Chicago area was miraculous! Each who attended was committed to finding that "better way" to live in this world. Through love, laughter, and sharing we started the process of focusing our full attention on the kingdom we are entitled to. Everyone walked away with some "tools" from *A Course in Miracles* that could provide practical help in areas of their lives. The Course tells us that teachers of God are needed now more than ever before. They are not needed to run away from life and its challenges, but to fully face those challenges and embrace them with peace. I think there are some very powerful miracle workers in this area of our country focusing on just this task, and I am honored to walk this path with them.

The following are a few comments and photos from our weekend. I hope you enjoy this brief glimpse into the weekend and I hope you will consider joining us in **September** for our **Holy Encounter Retreat** (see page 3).

Beverly,

I'm still basking in the LIGHT and Love I experienced this miracle filled weekend. I've been a subscriber for many years now and always feel connected to you guys whenever I listen to my weekly meeting CD from MDC. The CD'S are my constant companion when I'm driving. So it was especially nice to see and touch ya'll. (LOL) Will forever be grateful that I accidentally found MDC (as the Course says there are

no accidents) because studying with MDC has made a profound difference in how I understand the Course, which has made a monumental difference in how I now perceive the world.



Most of my days are filled with joy and love. When I'm faced with challenges, I quickly know how to find my peace!

So thanks, Beverly, for my bag of tricks!! I plan on visiting California next year and will definitely attend a group meeting to see and touch the rest of my MDC family.

Audrey in Chicago, IL



L to R: Paul, Belinda Stein wachs, & Beverly

Dear Beverly and MDC Team,

Thank you for a wonderful conference in Chicago. It's a joy to be able to celebrate your 40th Anniversary. Your energy and total commitment made it a golden opportunity to get deeper into our beloved Course. Meeting you and other students was such a reminder of our shared experience of the Course, and as I go through my day, it is lovely to think of them, knowing that we are always connected.

Peggy in Rochester, MN



L to R: Arlene Thompson, Beverly & Tess

Hi Beverly,

I've been studying the Course for a little over 20 years, yet have often struggled to understand much of what I read. Listening to your teaching over the years with the weekly CD's, live streaming, THE HOLY ENCOUNTER articles, and especially this weekend, has helped me immensely to understand the Course teachings. This weekend was a true blessing, the humming exercise that Paul did was really neat, and I loved Tess's beach ball game.

Donna in Coatesville, IN



L to R: Marge Orchard, Beverly, Audrey Brown, Liz Haythorne, & Randy Gunn, Alumni from MDCs 2007 Chicago Weekend



Emotional Healing

So Why Do We Need A Center to Distribute Miracles?

by Dick Gayton, Ph.D.

"I am the light of the world." (Lesson 61)

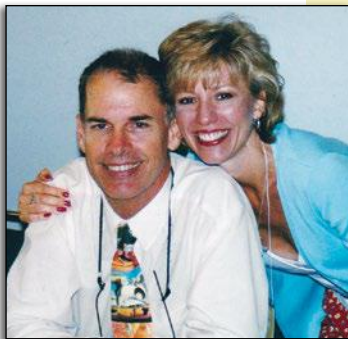
If we are the light and thus already home, why do we need a blue text with gold letters that confronts us a thousand times in a hundred ways on how to change our minds and return to peace? Why do we need to read a workbook with mind training exercises? Why do we listen to others talk about peace or forgiveness or love? Why do we pause to watch people practicing love in everyday life: the man stopping to move a cat sitting in the middle of the street or the child comforting a classmate when she falls down or a politician praising the accomplishments of an opponent? Why will we stop our everyday lives to stare at these acts of grace?

I need constant reminding of who I am. A lot of the time I do not feel like the light of the world; instead I feel like causing trouble. I walked into Miracle Distribution Center in 1987 because I was vengeful and self-destructive, and my friend thought it might bring me peace. The love of the people I found there brought joy and serenity that I thought I would never find again. What if this small industrial building with an odd bookstore in it had not been there in Fullerton just down the street from Froggy's Bar? Perhaps I would have found peace somewhere else, but because Beverly, Paul, Conrad, Darin, Maria, and Tess were there, I did not have to go anywhere else. They were enough and *A Course in Miracles* was enough for me to return home as quickly as I would allow myself – and what a relief it was to give up suffering from the revenge and self-hatred of murder.

If Miracle Distribution Center (MDC) was not there, we would find other people and

centers to help us go home. But why would we look anywhere else? My mind is not into finding peace. There must be an easier way than studying and practicing love. Because MDC has been there for 40 years, I don't look and look and look anymore. The ego wants to keep searching for the answer even though we have been shown where it is. MDC and *A Course in Miracles* constantly point us to where to find the Kingdom of God: within. Externally, we buy a book, look in our mail for *THE HOLY ENCOUNTER*, or go a lecture, attend a study group, listen in on a streaming session

"I walked into Miracle Distribution Center in 1987 because I was vengeful and self-destructive, and my friend thought it might bring me peace. The love of the people I found there brought joy and serenity that I thought I would never find again."



Dick and Beverly at MDC conference in 2004

on the internet, go to a conference, or just listen to Beverly laugh, or see Paul give us his smile or Darin and Maria and Tess just quietly handle what needs to be handled. Yet all of this outward activity is done in service of looking inward and letting ourselves be the light.

You run into all kinds of God's characters of light if you hang out at Miracle Distribution Center, people like you: quiet, peaceful folks who just make you want to relax and let go of the thinking that is driving you crazy, or loud, silly characters like me who joke and laugh away the illusion of this world. You are one of those characters that add to the energy of Miracle Distribution Center as it touches people with study group information, prison support, and conferences where you meet people from across the

country and around the world.

As our minds join with the MDC, we project our light in an ever-expanding arc around us – and who benefits from that? Everyone benefits – but particularly us. Have you noticed how you feel and what you do after being involved with the center? I am always happier, lighter, and reassured that home is nearby and just my personal choice away.

But if *A Course in Miracles* is not your way, that's okay too, because it is not The One and Only course, it is just one of many ways home. But for some reason it's mine and maybe it's yours. If it is yours, then show up for class, practice your course work – or don't. That's okay, too, yet I know what happens with me when I fail to guard my mind; it wanders into Yahoo News. Pretty soon I no longer love my neighbor; I want to throttle him: school shootings, porn stars chasing presidents and a million dollar giveaway for every senior. Carefully perusing Yahoo News for signs of hope in the world is like trying to get my spaniel, Jack, to clean the house; it won't happen. Yet I want the world to work, I try to make the world work. To stay sane in an insane world, I read *A Course in Miracles*, I support the MDC, I do workbook lessons, I pray, and I teach love when I am able.

But are they really giving away a million dollars free to seniors for a limited time only? Look! Magic hair growth formula and the Miracle pill that stops aging. Maybe I could go to the Church of Eternal Holiness and read *Ways to Peacefully Grow More Hair and Get Free Stuff*. It says so on the internet. Wow, if I just take a quick survey, I get A Lot of Free Stuff, Hair Grow Plus and a Free Book for nothing but shipping and handling with 100% money back guarantee.

Here comes Jack with the vacuum cleaner. The world does work! ❖

Remember...

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

Dick Gayton is a psychologist and a writer. His books *The Forgiving Place* and *The Mind Travelers* are on Kindle. He is currently developing *Love in Country*, a feature film. You can follow its progress on: Loveincountrymovie.com and on Facebook and Instagram.

The Kissing Hand

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The Wright brothers did not achieve flight by being afraid or feeling like failures when a prototype crashed.

Every day we face the world with a choice: whether to experience love or fear. One is all encompassing (love) and the other does not exist. We have given our illusion of fear a lot of power over us, but illusions only have the power we give them. We don't need to fight back against fear thoughts, we just need to look at them and find them wanting. After all, we each have a "kissing hand" given us by God, and that truth can never be extinguished by a lie. Let God's Answer ignite our hearts.

Open your hand right now and look at your palm. God has placed a kiss there to remind you of His infinite love and faith that you will awaken to your power as a Holy Child of God, and release the blocks (fears) to the awareness of love's presence. Now, put your palm to your cheek and feel the love of God that is your strength and safety and then go share that with the world!

I am blessed as a Son of God.

Herein lies my claim to all good and only good. I am blessed as a Son of God. All good things are mine, because God intended them for me. I cannot suffer any loss or deprivation or pain because of Who I am. My Father supports me, protects me, and directs me in all things. His care for me is infinite, and is with me forever. I am eternally blessed as His Son. (Lesson 58)

Jesus At Last I Have...

Continued from page 6

I attempt to differentiate between the two.

My ego thoughts are born from my fears, which are transitory illusions based on bodies. My spiritual thoughts are born from Love, which is always unfolding. I cannot hear both at the same time because I choose only one at any given moment. I make my choices and choose my thoughts either from love – or from fear. And what I choose, I experience. Learning to trust the Inner Voice continues to be very much a part of my spiritual journey.

At age 93 I am happier and more peaceful than I have ever been in my life. Even though I have days when doubts come into my mind and I am affected by my judgments and fears, I am no longer afraid of dying. I know at the deepest level that there is no death and that the child of God is free.

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

"I have been so inspired by Beverly's weekly meetings. I am so grateful to be able to watch her online."

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but I feel God is asking us to look past the world of pain and suffering — not in denial but in full awareness of the truth that it is God's Will we experience our happiness.

A *Course in Miracles* spends a great deal of time telling us of the value of happiness. The Course rarely talks about how the separation from our oneness in God occurred other than to say the impossible could never really have happened. There is one place, however, where we do read, "Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh."

(T-27.VIII.6:2) At the moment we lost our joy and forgot that we had a choice as to how we would react to the insanity of suffering, we forgot our reality. All is not lost, though. We are told in the Manual for Teachers that "the world will end in laughter" for its



"In any learning situation, the way we start to learn the task becomes a neural pathway in the mind, so you don't want to learn the notes or tempos, at that critical time, incorrectly or it will be harder to relearn it."

purpose will be seen... our happiness will be valued.

There are so many passages in the Course where we see the great value of happiness when it says, "Then realize that your part is to be happy. Only this is asked of you or anyone who wants to take his place among God's messengers." (L100) In another section we are told, "In lightness and in laughter is sin gone, because its quaint absurdity is seen." (L156)

It doesn't take much to begin to see that from the Course's perspective, the seriousness we have ascribed to the world is the real block to our salvation. We want to blame our circumstances: job, money, possessions, family, health, society, politics, and a myriad of other idols we have endowed, as the Course says, "with magical powers" — powers that seem to be out of our control, but we believe are responsible to make us happy or not.

There's no lack of mentions in the Course of the importance of our happiness and joy:

I share God's Will for happiness for me. (L102)
God, being Love, is also happiness. (L103)
My present happiness is all I see. (L290)
A happy outcome to all things is sure. (L292)
Forgiveness is the key to happiness. (L121)

As a matter of fact, happiness is mentioned almost as many times as forgiveness, so we can begin to gather that they are synonymous from the Course's perspective.

Most people who know me think of me as a pretty happy person. This perception has made some think that I'm not a serious or deep thinker, and, frankly, that really doesn't bother me much. Jesus tells us our function is happiness, and forgiveness is the key to happiness. So a happy person is one who has

realized the value of forgiveness and done the work of allowing their grievances to be healed. I don't see much in the Course about being a serious or deep thinker. As a matter of fact, the Course seems to tell us all our thinking and analyzing is what is keeping us locked into the lies of the ego and a future that will forever be chained to our past.

As the Course counsels us, it's time to "Let it all go." We can't understand anything from our current perspective, and so we need to open our minds and hearts to a truth that is in us, but not of us or the world. This is antithetical to the world's way of thinking, but it is the start of miracle mindedness that the Course defines as "the decision to heal the separation by letting it go." (T-5.II.1:4)

Lesson 124 in *A Course in Miracles*, "Let me remember I am one with God" is a powerful lesson often featured in the Center's Miracle Prayer Ministry. It is a lesson of thanks for our Identity in God that cannot be lost, but can be ignored. Even when it is ignored, though, the power of this awareness quietly waits. It is not diminished by our diminishing thoughts, and when we turn to it, we are given the strength to face whatever the world puts forth.

As the *Bible* gives us Ten Commandments by which to live, this lesson gives us three commitments to practice so we might begin to access God's power in our lives.



No doubt

"Today we will not doubt His Love for us, nor question His protection and His care."

No fear

"No meaningless anxieties can come between our faith and our awareness of His Presence."

No separation

"We are one with Him today in recognition and remembrance. We feel Him in our hearts. Our minds contain His Thoughts; our eyes behold His loveliness in all we look upon. Today we see only the loving and the lovable."

This lesson goes on to tell us the benefit of living a life in which these three commitments are embraced. It says that when our focus is to "see only the loving and the lovable," appearances of pain give way to peace; the frantic, sad, distressed, lonely and afraid are restored to tranquility and peace of mind in which they were created; and the dying and dead are restored to life. "All this we see because we saw it first within ourselves."

We are told in the Course that the thoughts we hold within our minds are very powerful and transformative for us and the world. As it says, "No miracle can ever be denied to those who know that they are one with God. No thought of theirs but has the power to heal all forms of suffering in anyone..." (ibid)

For us, however, this transformation takes practice. We're building our neural pathways, if you will. Our son Jeffrey plays the piano. When he is learning a new song, Paul (my husband/his dad) who is a musician is always emphasizing that

"No matter how big or complex the problem, Felix could reach into that little bag of tricks he carried around with him and pull out a ladder or an airplane — there was no limit to the answers that bag provided."

Jeff get the tempos correct (even if he might slow it down at first) as well as the notes. In any learning situation, the way we start to learn the task becomes a neural pathway in the mind, so you don't want to learn the notes or tempos incorrectly, at that critical

time, or it will be harder to relearn it. It's not impossible, but it is harder.

That is much the same way as it is for us. We have developed a lot of "neural pathways" based on the ego's way of thinking, which has brought us much pain and sadness. But we can begin again. That's what a miracle does... it gives us a new start.

If you are like me, you are often confounded by computers. When my computer has a problem and I contact a professional, the first thing they usually say is why don't you just turn it off and start it again and see if that fixes it. Nine times out of ten, it cures my problem. Sometimes a computer just needs to reboot, and so do we! We just need to start again and the Course's daily practice is offering us a compassionate and helpful daily reboot for our minds.

If we can see the benefit of embracing this practice, then maybe we won't sit there in our sorrow saying it's impossible. Instead we can find that it is possible because it is not we, but the Christ within, that does the work.

These three commitments are worth the effort, because they are the truth and cannot fail to bring our lives a sense of joy, contentment, and purpose that the world will never supply. They simply are the truth, and there is nothing opposite to them. With this in mind, time spent on these commitments is time well spent... so let's spend some...

No doubt

The Course spends a great deal of time telling us how much God loves and cares for us, not because it's trying to convince us of this but because it simply is the truth. There is never a time when we are not protected, cared for, and loved. This is the type of conviction we need to practice now until it becomes the "neural" (or natural) pathway in our minds and hearts.

Remember the cartoon "Felix the Cat?" If you're old enough to remember, the theme song to Felix said, "Whenever he gets in a fix, he reaches into his bag of tricks." In that magical bag, Felix would find the answer to any problem. No matter how big or complex the problem, Felix could reach into that little bag of tricks he carried around with him and pull out a ladder or an airplane – there was no limit to the answers that bag provided.

This is the way we need to go to God with our problems... realizing that there is no limit to His Answers for us. I think of it the way the Course invites us to make its thoughts part of our problem-solving repertoire that we turn to

whenever we get in a fix. Turning to God, to a power greater than ourselves for help, we are immediately answered. That is the definition of a miracle... a shift from the limited thinking of fear to the limitless awareness of love.

"Today we will not doubt His Love for us, nor question His protection and His care."

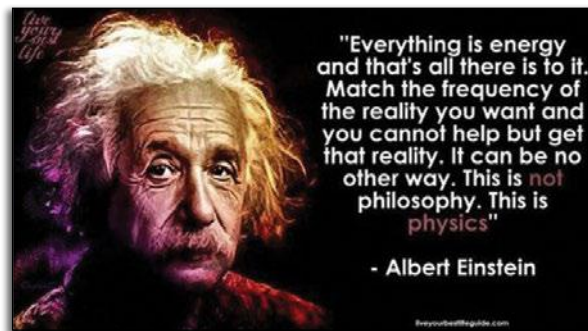
No fear

Fear is insidious. It can grip us for no reason and for plenty of seemingly "good" reasons. As the Course says, the opposite of love is fear, not hate, *fear*. Fear is the block to the awareness of God's care and love for us. It needs to be clearly looked at and found wanting.

In the book *Proof of Heaven*, a man experiences a near-death experience and comes back from his encounter with heaven with three basic truths. They are...

- 1) You are loved and cherished, dearly, forever.
- 2) You have nothing to fear.
- 3) There is nothing you can do wrong.

This sounds so similar to the Course's message. We are told not to doubt God's love, protection, and care for us – it is eternal. We are told not to allow our fears to come between our awareness of His constant Presence. And, we are told we are "His beloved Child in whom He is well pleased."



Imagine how life would be if we embraced these three statements: 1) You are loved and cherished, dearly, forever. 2) You have nothing to fear. 3) There is nothing you can do wrong. How about the Course's thought that we are all God's Children in whom He is well pleased? Wouldn't life take on a more peaceful, relaxed, and happy perspective because the great weight of fear and guilt would be lifted?

"No meaningless anxieties can come between our faith and our awareness of His Presence."

No separation

What does "no separation" really mean?

This quote from Lesson 124 gives us some context:

"We are one with Him today in recognition and remembrance. We feel Him in our hearts. Our minds contain His Thoughts; our eyes behold His loveliness in all we look upon. Today we see only the loving and the lovable."

This idea counsels us to have a focus on our oneness with God – to realize that our minds can only contain the thoughts of God, since we are His Creation. When we dwell in fear or judgment, we are simply not thinking – we sort of check out.

Have you ever just "checked out" for a minute? When you bring yourself back, you've really done nothing wrong – you've just done nothing. Hence the idea of a focus on "no separation" would be one where we continually bring our attention back to the truth. When we find ourselves attracted by fearful and judgmental ideas (that "nothing thinking"), we are quicker to identify them and choose again (with the help of the Holy Spirit).

The above quote also addresses another concept that is illustrated in the biblical passage where Jesus says the greatest commandment is to love God and that the second (commandment) is like the first: to love your brother as yourself. Beholding the loving and lovable in each other, and all we look upon, is the experience of healing the separation – that's how we know we are one with God and how we feel Him in our hearts.

With all that is going on in the world (and perhaps in your life) it seems almost impossible at times to have this type of focus. There seems to be an endless string of irritations and problems. The Course assures us, though, that peace is possible here... it "is simply a matter of motivation."

And, perhaps physics! Einstein said, "Everything is energy and that's all there is to it. Match the frequency of the reality you want, and you cannot help but get that reality. It can be no other way. This is not philosophy. This is physics."

At first this quote can seem somewhat "magical" from the Course's perspective. If we want abundance, for example, we might think it's about focusing on the acquisition of things or hanging around with financially "successful" people. In one way, the universe is abundant and will match what you think you want, but as the Course is quick to remind us, we don't really know what we want.

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The Audacity of Happiness

Continued from page 13

The most healing focus for us to have, therefore, is one that feeds our deepest need of peace, healing, and happiness. If we are at peace, we will experience abundance no matter what we have or where we find ourselves. If healing is our goal, we will be extending that by our mere presence, and by doing so we can't help but reap the benefits. If happiness is our goal, we will naturally forgive (since forgiveness is the key to happiness) and in so doing, open our awareness to the abundance of God that is in every holy encounter.

These three commitments (no doubt, no fear, no separation) give us a focus that the universe will not only match, but will transform to a heaven on earth. And, it all begins with you... and me... and everyone.

Happiness is so much more than a smile — although a smile is pretty powerful. Happiness embodies the practice of faith, love, and unity, as well. That is the audaciousness of it! You have to be brave to live without doubt, without fear and recognizing your oneness with God. But we are not unsupported in this practice. As we read in the Epilogue in the Workbook,

"The end is certain, and the means as well... You will be told exactly what God wills for you each time there is a choice to make... And so we walk with Him from this time on, and turn to Him for guidance and for peace and sure direction. Joy attends our way. For we go homeward to an open door which God has held unclosed to welcome us." ❖

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40 Years in Retrospect...

Continued from page 1

She was an invaluable helper to us, and we fondly called her our best secret "weapon," for she was our ambassador of love to all who called or visited MDC.

Since our mom's death in 1997, we have been blessed by a series of wonderful receptionists: Monica Castillo, Gina Wolf, Jennifer Fitzgerald, Roxana Spencer and presently Tess Patton and Maria Zakich, who continue to provide the same love and nurturing spirit my mom started back in 1978. I know this makes my mom smile.

My family has been involved with MDC from the beginning, but another part of our "family" joined us in 1982. At that time, we were growing and needed to become more knowledgeable in the ways of business. Darin Zakich, who has a degree in Economics, came on the scene and was an answer, quite literally, to prayer. He found out about *A Course in Miracles* through his mother, Rhea Zakich (creator of The Ungame and an international lecturer on inner healing). Darin became a student of the Course and began attending our study group. As time went on, it became apparent that he was the missing piece in our puzzle. He became a part of the Center and now serves as our administrator.

In the "old days," when the Course only came in three hardcover volumes, we were sent large cases of individual texts, workbooks for students, and manuals for teachers. These books were then repacked into small boxes which held one of each of the hardcover books. It was a tremendous job to repack hundreds of sets of the Course each week to be mailed out to eager students — we needed help!

Darin invited two friends to come and help us at MDC — Susan and Robert Perry. From this beginning in 1985, Susan remained on as the receptionist of the Center for four years before moving to Arizona. Robert, whom Darin had known since high school, was also

involved with the Center and assisted in editing part of our recorded series with Steven Halpern and collaborated with us on the writing of a booklet entitled *An Introduction to A Course in Miracles*. His involvement with the Course started at Miracle Distribution Center and from there he has gone on to form his own organization, The Circle of Atonement.

Also in 1985, we invited Conrad Hanson to join the Center as director of education and counseling. He had served for years as director of counseling at the Crystal Cathedral. With over two thousand study groups worldwide, he had the mighty task of updating the listing

on a daily basis. Conrad retired at the end of 2010 after twenty-five years of service.

In the mid 1980s, Howard and Donna Sell found the Course through Gerald Jampolsky's book,

Love is Letting Go of Fear. The Sells became invaluable to MDC. If you recall, in the mid 1980s, personal computers were just coming into fashion, and the Sells were the first to get us set up on computer so our study group information could be digitized. They also helped us produce the first issues of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** magazine.

For years, Donna came into the Center to volunteer

her time and to help us duplicate our study group meetings on cassette tapes. After Donna retired from this volunteer position, Mary Mount stepped in to take over. Mary's dedication was invaluable. After she retired, Maria Zakich filled the void without missing a step.

As the popularity of MDC's recorded study group meetings continues to grow, Maria continues to meet the need. Cassettes have gone the way of 8-track tapes. We still duplicate onto CDs, but mp3 downloads are now becoming the popular choice and so is the video stream of our meetings on-demand, so things are changing!

No mention of "partners on the path" would be complete without the names of



L to R: Paul McNeff, Beverly, Jeffrey, Conrad Hanson, Roxie Spencer, Darin and Maria Zakich at MDC, 2010



Bud Mendoza and Beverly help build MDC's new location in 2001.

Bud Mendoza and Steve Doolittle. These two dedicated friends completely rebuilt and improved the Center's computer system and brought us into the information age. We owe a great thanks to Steve for designing our web-site in 1996 and for his incredible help with live streaming many of our events. Bud (who made his transition into eternal life in June of 2007) will always have a place in our hearts not only for his expertise in fixing computer malfunctions, but for his loving spirit that touched every aspect of the Center. We truly miss him, but we are grateful that these two "miracle workers" continue to touch our lives.

As our office family began to grow, our partners on the path began to find their own partners. Those partners have become part of our family as well.

When I was married in 1988, my husband Paul became a vital part of MDC. His forty years of choral music direction and vocal performance allowed us to add the inspiration of music to our conferences, retreats and group meetings. As an ordained Baptist minister (back in his youth), Paul brought a deep understanding of the traditional perspective of Christianity delivered in the *Bible* which has allowed us to understand and address questions students raise in light of the Course's revolutionary approach.

Darin's wife, Maria, and Tess's husband, Tim, have also joined the family. The children that have come from these unions have also touched the life of MDC. Darin and Maria's two girls, Lauren and Emily, Tess and Tim's girls, Casey and Tara, and the apple of my and Paul's eyes, Jeffrey, provide us with the best lessons for joy and learning than any of us could imagine.

There are so many other dear friends who have touched the life of MDC. We have been truly grateful for each and every one of them. Whenever there was a need, a loving brother was directed our way. A good example of this is Ed Foote who lives in Pennsylvania and serves as our ambassador-at-large, scouting new locations for our Holy Encounter Weekends across the U.S. and helping to spread the word about the Center's services. A few years back we also welcomed Bill Kasal into our "family," and have appreciated his professional help with video production. Bill now oversees weekly video live streaming of our meetings and our annual conferences.

Finally, we are thankful for our friends across the country who have stepped forward to help us with the events we present in other states. For instance, subscriber and supporter

Arlene Thompson in Illinois assisted us with a recent Holy Encounter Weekend in the Chicago area. We are always so honored by the support of those who are blessed by the Center, proving lesson 126 from the Course, "All that I give is given to myself."

Thanks to these earth angels, even though

Beauty Beyond Illusions

Continued from page 7

maybe... but complete surrender to a Higher Power, to Love, to forgive – that was much more of a task. What I have learned in my darkest moments is that there is no moment in life without the existence of a concealed awareness of the beauty that tenderness and gentleness can uncover.

Though not perfect at it, today I have a daily practice of letting go, of honestly and soberly looking at what I can release that is causing pain. It requires a willingness to become naked and raw – to let go of a painful past and find purpose and meaning that creates a peaceful and worry-free existence. These days I do my best to remind myself throughout the day:

The real world is attained simply by the complete forgiveness of the old, the world you see without forgiveness. (ibid)

And so I do my best to come to each moment willing to release what I see and think is real, and to release judgments. I remind myself if I am anything other than peaceful, I have overlooked the opportunity to love, and I question the thought system that leads to anything other than a calm, compassionate view of all beings.

The key to any stressful situation is to look deeply into who you are, which paradoxically means looking past all of what you thought you were. There you will see beauty. There you will see that you have no purpose other than to bring a bit of peace, love, and beauty to your world today in a moment of compassion, a moment of tenderness. Such moments provide the map to our purpose and meaning, and in a genuine sense may be what saves the world.

we work long hours, the task of the Center has never seemed difficult, for "Nothing you undertake with certain purpose and high resolve and happy confidence, holding your brother's hand and keeping step to Heaven's song, is difficult to do."

Next issue . . . "Divine Decisions" ❖

Awaken to Love Exercise: Find and Share Beauty

When you find yourself upset, consciously direct your mind to go past what you think you see and, instead, look at what you think. This shift from focus on the outer situation to your thoughts is a vital one. "Seeing what you think," means gaining awareness to the source of blocks to love, which is always some form of attack and judgment (i.e., lack of forgiveness). This awareness will show you how incorrect your judgments can be, blinding you to the beauty of who you are. Beauty and Love are intimately connected: Experiencing beauty awakens love, and experiencing love awakens beauty. Thus, an aspect of creating a loving life comes from the ability

to find, experience, and share beauty.

Today choose to spend more time looking for beauty within yourself, others, art, and nature, rather than focusing on what is wrong or why you believe you have reason to be upset. The statement "beauty is in

the eye of the beholder" recognizes that it is the way we see someone or something (our perception) that determines beauty. If you want to be sure today that you are exactly where you are supposed to be, with whom you are supposed to be, remind yourself to look into the center of the heart of whoever is in front of you or in your thoughts. Today practice seeing the beauty within whomever your eyes land upon, wherever you are.

All this beauty will rise to bless your sight as you look upon the world with forgiving eyes. For forgiveness literally transforms vision, and lets you see the real world reaching quietly and gently across chaos, removing all illusions that had twisted your perception and fixed it on the past. The smallest leaf becomes a thing of wonder, and a blade of grass a sign of God's perfection. (ibid) ❖

The HOLY ENCOUNTER

MAY / JUNE 2018

In This Issue...

- The Audacity of Happiness
- Beautiful City
- Jesus, at Last I Have Found You
- Beauty Beyond Illusions
- The Kissing Hand
- Why Do We Need a Center?

...and more!

September 14-16, 2018

Holy Encounter Retreat

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information
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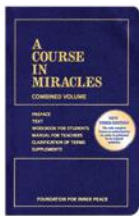
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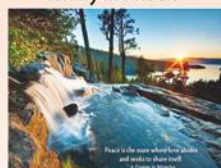
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