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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



MAY / JUNE 2021

A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



The Great Recycler

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

"God gave to all illusions that were made another purpose that would justify a miracle whatever form they took." (T-26.VII.15:3)

The other day I was looking at the mountain of trash I had put in the garbage cans and recycling bins at our house. As homebodies due to Covid, we have been creating more trash than usual and also cleaning out things that have been piling up. It's been wonderful, though, that we can now recycle so many things.

The idea of recycling really came into fashion in the 70s with the purpose of reusing our garbage instead of wasting our raw materials and filling up our landfills. Remarkable things can be made out of recycled products. As a matter of fact, this publication you are holding in your hands is printed on recycled paper.

From the world's perspective, we have tried to "clean up our act," so to speak. But, what about from a spiritual perspective? Is our mental garbage taking up space in our minds and hearts and robbing us of the valuable resource of God's help and healing in our lives?

Certainly, there seems to be a lot of "garbage" in our lives, whether it be the fear and

anxiety we have over the pandemic, or issues of judgement and anger we may be holding about current or past relationships. Many of us walk around filled with "garbage" that is taking up space and wasting the valuable resource we are as a child of God.



"From the world's perspective, we have tried to 'clean up our act,' so to speak. But, what about from a spiritual perspective? Is our mental garbage taking up space in our minds and hearts..."

cled.

"If you do not protect it, He will reinterpret it." (T-12.I.8:9)

The passage from *A Course in Miracles* that begins this article is an answer to such "garbage." God is like the great Recycler of life, for He takes all our illusions and transforms them into a miracle. His purpose is to help us look at our "garbage" and see that it can be transformed into something we can grow from – something that can be productive in our lives, a miracle. But, for this type of transformation to occur, we must be willing to make the choice for our "garbage" to be recycled.

Continued on page 13

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 streamed weekly commentaries on Course principles have become an inspirational study and spiritual family for many around the world. View her free weekly livestream meetings at miraclecenter.org

Tote the Truth

For many of us, this has been a challenging time in our lives. We have faced a global pandemic, seen loved ones make their journey into eternal life, lost jobs and homes, suffered food insecurities, and we as a country faced strife and division. But we are teachers of God – teachers of the message of love – it's time we arise in truth and allow the light in us to shine upon this world.

Miracle Distribution Center has been an oasis of support and guidance for students of *A Course in Miracles*.

This would not be possible without our Holy Helpers, a core group of donors whose support provides

us with a constant source of funding that guarantees the Center and its valuable services will be here when they are needed.

We invite you to become a Holy Helper. With your monthly donation of \$15 or more, we'll welcome you with our exclusive tote bag with the Course quote: "Teach only love for that is what you are," which matches our face mask.

We look forward to welcoming you to our family of Holy Helpers! For questions or to become a Holy Helper, contact us at:

800-359-ACIM(2246)
or miraclecenter.org



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

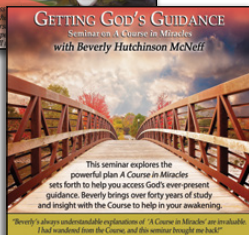
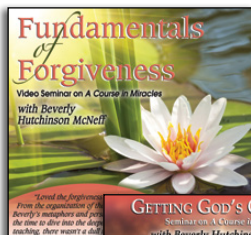
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● Tote the Truth wherever you go –

Now, when you become a new **Holy Helper** with an ongoing commitment of \$15 or more each month, you not only assure that the work of the Center will continue, but we will send you a versatile tote bag with the quote from *A Course in Miracles*: “Teach only love, for that is what you are.” This tote was exclusively designed and created by your Miracle Distribution Center family and is available only to new **Holy Helpers**. So, giving truly is receiving – and we are grateful. See back cover for details.



● **On-demand Seminars** – Continue your studies of the Course at your convenience, and in your own home, with these on-demand Seminars! We currently have two seminars on the principles of *A Course in Miracles* with Beverly McNeff for immediate viewing. Each seminar is six hours long, each having a unique focus. **Getting God's Guidance** offers the Course's look at how we can experience God's Will for us, and the **Fundamentals of Forgiveness** shares the Course's approach to its chosen path for our awakening. Beverly has a unique ability to cut through the complexity of the Course and put it in terms that will inspire your mind and touch your heart. Find out how to access these on our



site or call the Center.

● **Giving a truly meaningful Gift** – Here's what many students of the Course have done: Given a tax-deductible donation to MDC in someone's honor or memory. If you would like to give in such a way, send your donation and request, and we will send him, her or the family a personalized letter acknowledging your appreciation and support.



It's a wonderful honor for that dedicated someone or their family. And, what a blessing it will be to those the Center serves, for your donation will go to support its free services!

Gifts in memory of... Jerry Jampolsky from Edith Aissen in CA, Sandy Bartorillo in WA, Peter Caroff in CA, Jonelle Reynolds in UT, Lois Thompson in NV, and Sarah Tooley in CA. Thank you all for your love and support of this wonderful miracle worker!

● **“Week in and week out Beverly wows me with the Course.** I have learned so much in the past few years. It has changed my life. Thank you.” We want to thank Edward in Brentwood, NY, for sharing his enthusiasm for MDC's weekly live streaming ACIM meeting with our founder Beverly McNeff. Beverly has a knack for unlocking the Course's truths in a practical, understandable manner. We encourage you to watch live for free every Wednesday at 7PM (Pacific Time) or become a subscriber to watch meetings at your convenience and partici-

pate in our online meeting board for further connection.

● **ACIM Online Edition with Search** – Have you ever tried to find a quote in the Course?

Perhaps you had an idea of its location, but couldn't quite pinpoint it? Then our ACIM Online Edition with Search is just the tool for you! Type any word or words into the box and click “Search.” You'll find any and all references contained in the Course, highlighted in yellow to make their 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. Find it under “Services” on the menu bar at our website.

“We wanted to find a quote source in the Course so we immediately went to MDC's website. We found it instantly! Then, out of curiosity, moved to the workbook lesson & found them all FREE!! Not only titles, but the full text! What a gift!!! Thank you for offering the Course so generously for all these years! You are such a blessing to the planet!”

Jack & Eulalia Luckett in HI

● **“Love cannot be far behind a grateful heart and a thankful mind.”** This powerful thought from the Course reminds us that love is our natural state and comes quickly to our awareness as our minds are focused on gratitude and thankfulness. Let us start to cultivate this awareness that will produce the experience of love that we are entitled to by taking time each day to join our minds with God in prayer. Every day at 4:30pm (Pacific Time), we invite you to stop and join us for a moment of prayerful support for yourself, your loved ones, and everyone in the prayer ministry. The gift you give is the gift you will receive! Thoughts for:

May: Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world. (Lesson 62)

June: I walk with God in perfect holiness. (Lesson 156)

July: God's peace and joy are mine. (Lesson 105)

Our 2021 Bookmark is Now Available!

Thoughts in the Miracle Prayer Ministry 2021

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

January: I rest in God. (108)
February: I feel the Love of God within me now. (108)
March: I could see peace instead of this. (94)
April: I am the light of the world. (81)
May: Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world. (82)
June: I walk with God in perfect holiness. (156)

July: God's peace and joy are mine. (105)
August: God is the Mind with which I think. (45)
September: I am as God created me. (110)
October: I am one Self, united with my Creator. (95)
November: God goes with me wherever I go. (41)
December: I rest in God. (108)

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

Request your **FREE** full-color bookmark today which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2021.

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SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2021

Holy Encounter Retreat



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



Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

is an international lecturer, author, and founder of the Center. She brings over forty years of Course study to this weekend that will leave you with the tools and understanding you'll need to experience miracles in your life.

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

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



**Register Today!
Space is
Limited**



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

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.



Register now, space is limited. Price includes all retreat activities, six organic meals, and lodging.



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





Miracle Musings...

Jail Break

by Paul McNeff

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" John 8: 31-32

"Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated, weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness they remember not the light, do not leap up in joy the instant they are made free. It takes a while for them to understand what freedom is." (T-20.III.9)

The other day I was watching the movie, *The Shawshank Redemption*, which presents us with universal themes of imprisonment, freedom, and finally redemption. The story illustrates how the character of Andy, who was falsely imprisoned, kept his mind focused beyond the bars that imprisoned him. Red, a character who was guilty as the world judges, can still experience redemption. Finally, we see how the character of Brooks could get so used to prison confinement that upon his release, he couldn't make it in the outside world.

About halfway through the movie, the scene is set as Red says to his friend Andy, "These walls are funny. First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on 'em. That's institutionalized."

As the movie continues, we are given a graphic example of this statement. Brooks, now in his late 70s, has done his 50 years in lock-up and is about to get released. With his parole imminent, the thought of leaving prison terrifies him, causing him to attempt to take the life of a fellow inmate so he won't have to leave. Brooks didn't

want to hurt anyone, but he knows that doing this would be the only way he could stay in prison. As tough as life was in Shawshank, he wanted to stay in the misery he knew, rather than take a chance on freedom.

Sometimes I feel like my ego has institutionalized me. Not that I would be willing to commit murder, but I have become entirely too comfortable with the false sense of security my ego dispenses on a regular basis. Just as Brooks was secure in his prison confinement, I have gotten used to the great con of the ego by seeking security in its institutional ways.

Since becoming a student of *A Course in Miracles* however, I've become more capable of detecting the great ego-con and aware of its suspicious leadings. This is a giant step toward healing. Workbook lesson 79 says, "Let me recognize the problem so it

can be solved." The more we develop our awareness of the ego, the quicker we arrive at a solution. The Course goes on to say:

"A problem cannot be solved if you do not know what it is. Even if it is really solved already you will still have the problem, be-

cause you will not recognize that it has been solved. This is the situation of the world. The problem of separation, which is really the only problem, has already been solved. Yet the solution is not recognized because the problem is not recognized." (W-79)

Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre described freedom as an ongoing project that requires attention and resilience, without which a person begins to be defined by others or institutions. As we are influenced by our ego institutionalism, we meander to-and-fro, and don't even realize that what we think is freedom is actually imprisonment. Even if we become aware of a way out, our ego is learn-



"The other day I was watching the movie, The Shawshank Redemption, which presents us with universal themes of imprisonment, freedom, and finally redemption."



ing the Course right along with us, and it can be quick to steer us onto a fearful path.

As was foreshadowed in the movie, days after Brooks attempted to take another inmate's life, he is paroled. He, however, finds himself a victim of self-fulfilled prophecy. He could no longer depend on the familiar walls in which he was confined. His 50 years in the institution had made him comfortable with his imprisonment. Now out of the institution, he is afraid and purposeless, and he takes his own life. The Course aptly describes Brooks' (and our) dilemma this way:

"Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated, weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness they remember not the light, do

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: kidsingers.org

not leap up in joy the instant they are made free.” (T-20.III.9)

It takes vigilance to focus on the truth as opposed to getting lost in the insecure ways of the ego. We have become comfortable in its chaos, attached to its disharmony instead of embracing our oneness.

“It takes a while for them [prisoners, which are us] to understand what freedom is. You groped but feebly in the dust and found your brother’s hand, uncertain whether to let it go or to take hold on life so long forgotten.” (ibid)

So how do we break out from the ego institutionalization? First, we must recognize how dependent we have become at tuning in the ego’s voice. The Course reminds us the ego is wily and cunning.

“We said before that the ego vacillates between suspiciousness and viciousness. It remains suspicious as long as you despair of yourself. It shifts to viciousness when you decide not to tolerate self-abasement and seek relief. Then it offers you the illusion of attack as a ‘solution’.” (T-9.VIII.2:7)

Second, we must tune our minds to the frequency of truth. The Course’s method is to do this through our relationships – rather than staying alone and isolated, we join in heart and mind.

“Strengthen your hold [on your brother’s hand] and raise your eyes unto your strong companion, in whom the meaning of your freedom lies. He seemed to be crucified beside you. And yet his holiness remained untouched and perfect, and with him beside you, you shall this day enter with him to Paradise, and know the peace of God.” (T-20.III.9:4)

We see this point vividly demonstrated in the film. It is an example of redemption through joining. Andy escapes from Shawshank, but the real victory in the movie is what Red experiences. He finally earns his parole, but now he is in the uncertain place of freedom beyond his bars. Life is not easy, and he too questions whether he can survive the freedom of the outside world. However, he remembers what his friend said before his

escape. Andy had asked Red if he would be willing to do something for him if Red ever got out. Red followed Andy’s guidance showing his willingness to break out of his institutionalized thinking to embrace freedom.

The Holy



“We see this point vividly demonstrated in the film. It is an example of redemption through joining. Andy escapes from Shawshank, but the real victory in the movie is what Red experiences.”

spirit needs the same thing from us. He needs our willingness so He can break us free of the ego’s institutionalized thinking. We must want peace more than the problem. And, “If you want peace you

must abandon the teacher of attack.” (T-14.XI.14) This means we must free our minds of the chains of hate and fear that we use to hold ourselves in prison. From our limited thinking, we can’t imagine how to accomplish this.

Thank God, we are not alone. Once we are willing to be free, God’s Answer will quickly offer the help we need.

The next time you hear the ego’s clanging voice of imprisonment, instead of yielding to it, yield to that still, small voice of truth within you as it says:

“Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God.” (W-189.7)

Are you ready to break out? Let’s do it together. In truth, it’s the only way.

FREE Livestream Wednesdays

Wednesday Evenings @ 7pm PT / 10pm ET

View our weekly meetings with Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

These free livestreams tackle real world challenges and view them through the healing power of *A Course in Miracles*. Bev brings knowledge, humor, and down-to-earth practicality to the Course’s principles. Watch free or become a subscriber (see website for details).

LESSON 125
In quiet I receive God’s Word today
1. Let this day be a day of stillness and of quiet listening. Your Father will you hear His Word today. And so He calls from deep within your mind where He abides. Hear Him today. No peace is possible until His Word is heard around the world, and your mind, in quiet listening, accepts the message that the world must hear to enter in the quiet time of peace.

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Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Our Greatest Teachers

by Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D.



Recently I saw a photo of Pope Francis with President Barham Salih of Iraq in Baghdad on the front page of *The New York Times*, and it moved me deeply. He is the first Pope to ever travel to Iraq with a gesture “to help heal a nation uniquely wounded by violent sectarianism, foreign adventurism, and the persecution of minority populations.”

Pope Francis spoke of the country’s “disastrous effects of wars, the scourge of terrorism and sectarian conflicts often grounded in a fundamentalism incapable of accepting the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups.”

What does this say to us who are also living in a world too often divided by religious and political and racial beliefs? What relevance does this religious leader’s action have for us? I am moved to contemplate my own thoughts when it comes to thinking about the “other” – people or religions or those opposite me on the political spectrum.

In his book, *How to be an Anti-Racist*, Ibram X. Kendi says, “when we truly appreciate and love ourselves, we can truly appreciate how others feel. We also have a

better understanding of others because we can appreciate where they and we are coming from.”

Whether we feel separate from others because of race or religion or politics, the reality is that the belief in separation begins inside of us, not out there. How we hold other’s beliefs and actions is distinctly a personal choice, even though we often think

not of them, but of ourselves and the pain we have caused ourselves because of those judgments.

“He who would not forgive must judge, for he must justify his failure to forgive... But he who would forgive himself must learn to welcome truth exactly as it is.” (W-pil.1. 4:4)

If your ego is anything like mine, the thought of “wait a minute” jumps up when contemplating these ideas. I consider myself neither a racist nor one who holds thoughts of separation about those whose religious or political beliefs differ from mine. And yet, I know I have in my lifetime felt negatively towards an “other” that holds diametrically oppositional views.

So how do we “love one another” when such feelings arise either in our close relations or at a distance with strangers? What has been helpful to me is remembering that we are all students and teachers to each other. By seeing everyone as a teacher of something, I feel more open to learning from all those I meet, as well as all of my experiences. *A Course in Miracles* teaches us that everything is a positive lesson God would have us learn. Every person or event offers learning if we choose to remember to be open to the lessons.

I recall His Holiness the Dalai Lama discussing the “gift” others’ challenges present to us. He said to imagine the most beautifully wrapped present presented to you by the person or experience that has caused you great harm, pain, loss or grief. Then slowly unwrap the present and look inside to see the gift they have given you. Is it the gift of learning patience, or tolerance, or the gift of forgiveness or acceptance? None of which implies agreement. Some of the greatest gifts of learning we receive are from our strongest adversaries if we choose to accept them.

While interviewing His Holiness for a documentary, I asked him who he considered his

“Whether we feel separate from others because of race or religion or politics, the reality is that the belief in separation begins inside of us, not out there.”



we have no choice based on our own imbedded belief system.

The gift of faith that we are all part of

One Self, Holy Spirit, The Divine, offers a way beyond the separation we experience in the world. It calls for us to heal the illusion of separation within our own consciousness where all separation begins... and ends.

We know that feelings of separation come from our judgments against others, and that joining comes from our own forgiveness,

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Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D., is the Founder and Executive Director of Attitudinal Healing International. She is also a therapist in private practice, a businesswoman, author, and international lecturer.

greatest teacher. He smiled a quiet smile and said, "You may be surprised at my answer. My greatest teacher in this life was Mao Zedong" (The former Chairman of the Chinese Com-



"So how do we 'love one another' when such feelings arise either in our close relations or at a distance with strangers?"

munist Party). I asked how this could be since Mao was responsible for the mass long suffering of the people of Tibet and for his own personal exile out of his homeland. He replied simply, "Mao was my most important teacher because he gave me the gift of the opportunity to learn the most about forgiveness."

When I find myself resisting that there is any gift at all to be learned from the painful actions of another, I am often reminded of His Holiness' wisdom. It helps me remember that this person is my teacher and that this, once again, is a positive lesson God would have me learn. ❖

Morning & Evening Miracles

Our beautiful table tents are available for Free. Quantities limited.

"Today I will accept the truth about myself. I will arise in glory, and allow the light in me to shine upon the world throughout the day."

"Be in my mind, my Father... Let every minute be a time in which I dwell with You. You have remained with me, and always will be there to hear my call to You and answer me. As evening comes, let all my thoughts be still of You and of Your Love. And let me sleep sure of my safety, certain of Your care, and happily assure I am Your Son."

Go to our website or call
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I Am Safe

by Jacob Glass

"Money is not evil. It is nothing. But no one here can live with no illusions, for he must yet strive to have the last illusion be accepted by everyone everywhere. He has a mighty part in this one purpose, for which he came. He stays here but for this. And while he stays he will be given what he needs to stay." (P-3.III.1:5)

I want to tell you, or remind you, that Earth is a temporary assignment, not a permanent gig. No one is staying – no one. Therefore, there is nothing "here"

that you can ever truly own or that is yours. Even your body will be turned in at the end of your assignment here. EVERYTHING is temporarily yours to use – as it would be if you worked for an earthly temp agency and were sent to an office to work for two weeks. The company would supply all your needs – computer, desk, phone, paper clips, break room, vending machines, etc. Whatever is necessary for you to comfortably get the job done is there for you to use.

And since it is a temp job, you don't get all caught up in the CHEAP DRAMA of "titles," business cards, prestige, ambition, inner-office politics and gossip. You show up, prepared, on time, doing what you agreed to do, with a good attitude. All the rest is none of your business and out of your control. Well, that IS what the Earth Assignment is like too if you would only realize it. It's not YOUR job to figure out where the money, resources, or other workers are going to come from. That is above your pay grade and is left to the Higher Ups to handle FOR you. The current

state of the economy or the world has nothing to do with you, for you have an Infinite Source of supply. The illusion is that you must compete and struggle in a world of separate beings who can take your good away from you.

This is the extreme opposite of Truth.

So, RELAX. ENJOY your time here. Fear not. Be not afraid. You are on a need-to-know basis, and all that you need is yours to requisition from Head Office. Your REAL job is JOYOUS EXPANSION as part of the "Mystic Protection Program." Everything else is just a cover. What-

ever you want or need will be provided in perfect timing and ways for you to do what you came here to do – joyously expand so that others may see your Light which glorifies the Source which you are a part of. Loosen up, baby! It's the best gig in the Cosmos! God never loses your file so there is really nothing to fear. Therefore, you can "place the future in the Hands of God" (W-194) and know that nothing can stop or impede your good. ❖



"I want to tell you, or remind you, that Earth is a temporary assignment, not a permanent gig."

Affirmation:
I always have whatever I want and need to joyously expand.
How is not my part.

(This is an excerpt from my forthcoming book on prosperity)

Jacob lectures in Southern California and has a global ministry of his recorded weekly talks. His eight books are available from the Center. You can contact Jacob at www.jacobglass.com

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Miracle Distribution Center's Website Celebrates 25 Years!

by Darin Zakich, MDC's Administrator

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the birth of our website. At the time, the World Wide Web was in its infancy. Even large organizations such as BBC News didn't have a website until the following year, 1997. Facebook would come along eight years later and YouTube, nine years.

Our longtime colleague Steve Doolittle was instrumental in establishing our Internet presence. He began hand-coding our original site in 1995, and miraclecenter.org debuted in April 1996.

Over the years we've added many new features. Some of the major milestones are noted below. Each improvement was in keeping with our mission to serve students of *A Course in Miracles* in as many ways as we can. Our site now offers our Online Store, *The Holy Encounter* magazine, Prayer Ministry, worldwide Study Group map, ACIM Online Edition with Search, E-cards, Daily Lesson Email service, Prison Project, free weekly live-stream ACIM meetings, Pledge for Peace, Wall of Innocence and more. We look forward to the next twenty-five years of new endeavors!



◁ Our site in 1996

(L to R) - Darin Zakich, Beverly Hutchinson McNeff and Steve Doolittle reviewing the Center's website.



▽ Our site in 2000



Timeline

- 1996 - MDC's Website debuts on AOL
- 1997 - Worldwide study group listing searchable by telephone area code (at the time, everyone had landlines!)
- 1998 - First international conference live-blogged, along with audio clips, to 20,000 people (all over a dial-up connection!)
- 2010 - ACIM Online Edition with Search. The entire Course online with instant search of words and passages
- 2011 - Study group database converted to Google Maps to allow searches by city
- 2011 - New mobile website debuts
- 2012 - The Wall of Innocence debuts
- 2012 - Pledge for Peace world map introduced
- 2013 - ACIM e-Cards made available
- 2014 - Choose-a-Quote inspiration on demand service begins
- 2015 - Livestream of MDC's weekly meetings
- 2016 - ACIM Online Edition with Search feature improved
- 2018 - Inspirational e-articles posted weekly to the Blog
- 2019 - Livestream of MDC's seminars introduced including live chat



Our site today



Recognizing Spirit Celebrating Life

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

As many of you know from the last issue of this magazine, my father, Jerry, made his transition in December 2020. I am deeply moved by the writers in that issue who reflected on the lessons my father offered to so many. As I began writing this article, I asked if I were to choose just five lessons about relationships that Dad demonstrated through how he lived, what would they be. They are:

- Commit never to use your words as weapons.
- Choose peaceful silence over useless arguing.
- See the best in those you love.
- Practice patience and responsibility rather than attack and defense.
- Forgive those you love wholly and quickly.

During COVID times, we cannot gather together in person to celebrate Dad, and I am aware of the many people who have lost friends and loved ones during the last year who are in similar circumstances. Creating a practice of remembrance and celebration during these unique times is something we can do. In celebration of my father, based on the five lessons above, I developed the following method of continuing the momentum of grieving, healing, and remembering. I invite you to join me in this two-week practice of consciously celebrating Dad's life in ways that open our hearts to love and feeling his continued gentle presence. For those who may want to honor other loved ones who have passed, please feel free to use this practice to celebrate them as well. You can do so by inserting their name where Dad's is.

Two Weeks of Celebrating the Life of Jerry Jampolsky

Day 1: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I offer gentle acceptance of myself and

kindness to each person I meet. I feel Jerry with me as I do.

Day 2: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I take responsibility for my life and choose peace of mind as my single goal. I feel Jerry encourage me as I do.

Day 3: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I practice forgiveness and see the bigger picture of my interconnection with all beings. His presence in my heart inspires me to do so.



“Creating a practice of remembrance and celebration during these unique times is something we can do.”

Day 4: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I think of all I am grateful for. I smile in knowing Jerry helps me do so.

Day 5: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I take time to be quiet, still, and find gentleness within my solitude. Here I find Jerry with me always.

Day 6: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I listen and offer compassion and empathy. Jerry will forever make my heart more tender in this way.

Day 7: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I am willing to release the past and become present and focused on love that is forever in the here and now. In doing so, I realize this is where the essence of Jerry resides, and I feel him with me.

Day 8: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I look for commonalities and shared humanity with all. In doing so, I feel an ever-evolving closeness with Jerry.

Day 9: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I listen to my intuition and practice simplicity. In doing so, I sense his voice guiding me to what is most important in life.

Day 10: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I cease any worrying or preoccupation with the future, and I trust in the unfolding of life and Divine wisdom. In doing so, I know Jerry is safe and surrounds me in love.

Day 11: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I focus on my constant connection with his essence. Jerry fills me with love.

Day 12: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I find purpose and meaning through service to others and good work. I know Jerry is with us all.

Day 13: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I know that I am enough, I am whole, and I can overcome any obstacle through love. Jerry wants this for me; thank you, Jerry.

Day 14: To celebrate Jerry's life today, I practice the wisdom of giving and receiving as one in truth. I find many opportunities to give love and open my heart to receive, and in doing so, I am happier. Jerry inspires this in me; thank you, Jerry.

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 drleejampolsky.com. He is a retired psychologist and currently offers online spiritual mentoring and coaching. He can be reached at lee@drleejampolsky.com

In closing, I'd like to share brief excerpts edited from the powerful and moving video Dad completed with Michael Stillwater. Dad devoted his life to the practice of *A Course in Miracles* and helping countless adults and children through their own transition. The following words reflect the depth of Truth he knew toward the end of his life, and one we can all embrace:

"I look at life as if it were energy, a vibration. I'm here to be a messenger of light and Love – to heal the illusion that we are separate from each other. It's the song of love, the song of peace, the song of joy, the song of



"I look for commonalities and shared humanity with all. In doing so, I feel an ever-evolving closeness with Jerry."

not taking ourselves so seriously here while we spend this little time on earth. It's the song that's always been here. When we wipe away the past, we see everything with new eyes; we don't think a weed is less beautiful than a rose. We don't think an overweight person is less than someone who is slim. We don't think of an angry person as less loveable than someone who seems more loveable by their actions.

Joining is a song, a way of celebrating life. When you feel that Love surrounds you, and that there's a Creator that loves us and is with us all the time, you cease asking questions, you cease being angry, you cease doing anything except expanding Love, expanding peace, and expanding joy." ❖

My gratitude to
Michael Stillwater:
His beautiful five-minute
video can be seen at:
<https://vimeo.com/496208352>



Judgment

by Joseph Miller

I feel an examination of "judgment" deserves some nuance. We readily identify the toxicity of condemnation, dismissal, and exclusion. In the New Testament Jesus states simply, "Judge not lest ye be judged." *A Course in Miracles* regards this as a psychological truth: what would have effect *through* you must have effect *on* you. As we regard our brother, so must we regard our self; for our brother is our Self.

But the word "judgment" does not only mean condemnation. It also means discernment. I think we can regard *A Course in Miracles* as a training in discernment. "The first step toward freedom involves a sorting out of the false from the true." (T-2.VIII.4)

There are passages on the Last Judgment that point towards a collective perfection of spiritual discernment. "The Last Judgment might be called a process of right evaluation. It simply means that everyone will finally come to understand what is worthy and what is not." (T-2.VIII.3:5) Put in these terms that otherwise dreaded word "judgment" seems to have a good side. In our spiritually ignorant or unregenerate condition, we are confused about what really matters and what does not. The Course tells us we cannot tell the difference between pain and joy, or between freedom and imprisonment. "Can you ask the part of your mind that taught you to believe they are the same, to teach

you how they are different?" (T-8.II.5:5) This is a good restatement of the well-known Einstein quotation, that we cannot solve a problem through the same thinking that made it in the first place. The Course is clear that we cannot find our way out of the confusion unaided. We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially in the form of the inspired Word, written or

transmitted through a living teacher. The teaching necessarily challenges our prejudices and habits. "To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold." (T-24.in.2) We are to give all judgment to the Holy Spirit Who alone can judge rightly.

Another way the Course characterizes training in right judgment is in



"We foolishly repeat different forms of the same thing hoping to affect a different outcome."

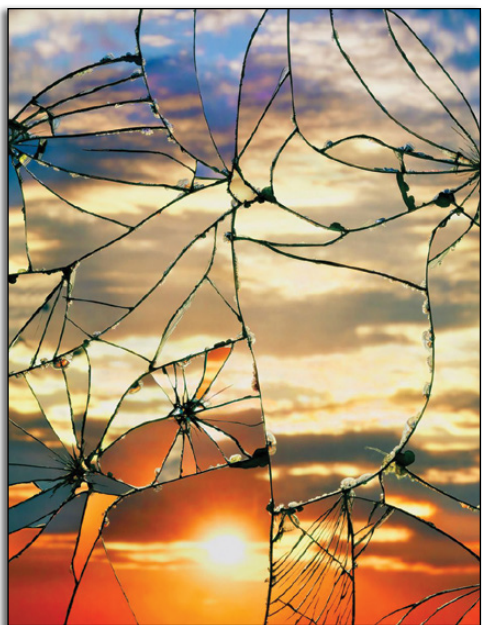
terms of "the same and the different." We foolishly repeat different forms of the same thing hoping to affect a different outcome. We are confused about what lasting change is and the means for getting there. We confuse "form" (how something appears) with "content" (what it is). The ego enjoys leading us on with false promises. As one disappointment falls upon us, a new glittering hope catches our eye. We dare not face up to the emptiness of the errand. All of this amounts to little more than rearranging chairs on the Titanic, a turning of the wheel of samsara. The real intent of the ego, we are told, is "Seek but do not find." (W-71.4:2)

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Joseph Miller is a writer, broadcaster and drapery tradesman. He has practiced the Course for twenty-five years, and participates in a weekly study group at Unity Church, Santa Barbara. He is also an associate of United Lodge of Theosophists. He lives in Goleta, CA, with his wife, Kim.

I have heard students on occasion venture into speculations that all judgment must be given up. Since all is One, any distinctions we make are false, and trap us in self-made prisons. After all, "Salvation can be seen as nothing more than the escape from concepts." (T-31.V.14.3) Are we not victims of dual appearances? And doesn't non-dualism mean giving up bifurcation in all its expressions? So, black and white, good and bad, male and female, dog and cat, chocolate and strawberry must be thrown out. This may be fun armchair metaphysics, but is it practical? If I am in line at the ice cream counter, I have to choose a flavor, or I get no ice cream (and people behind will get impatient). I have most often heard this reasoning when some poor student dares to suggest we may have duties towards others, and is answered, "There are no others!" It is true the Course does not use the word "duty," but it does speak of debts: "In learning to escape from illusions, your debt to your brother is something you must never forget." (T-4.VI.2) And what about the distinction between the ego and God? Are we ready to throw that out, too, before we have really learned it and lived it?

During a recent discussion in our Course circle, one student suggested the myth in Genesis may be interpreted in terms of judgment. Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Prior to that they made no such distinction. This distinguishing mind constituted their fall from paradise, which is only a prior spiritual awareness of wholeness. This is very interesting to me. If paradise is like a perfect mirror, judgment is a crack that spreads and fragments the single image into a million segments. It reminds me of a passage on over-learning, "The Simplicity of Salvation." Salvation is simple. "How hard is it to see that what is false can not be true, and what is true can not be false?" (T-31.I.1:7) Yet we are defended against this recognition, and we get tangled in complex cogitations instead.



We over-learn forms and miss the simple contents underneath. We seek not first the Kingdom.

The insight about Genesis reminded me of lines from Seng-Tsan, the third Zen Patriarch, in a discourse entitled *Verses on the Faith Mind*.

"The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences.

When love and hate are both absent, everything becomes clear and undisguised.

Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.

If you wish to see the truth, then hold no opinions for or against anything.

To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind."

Lesson 347 identifies judgment as "the weapon I would use against myself, to keep

"If paradise is like a perfect mirror, judgment is a crack that spreads and fragments the single image into a million segments."

the miracle away from me." And, in total agreement with the Zen teacher, the lesson appeals in prayer, "Straighten my mind, my Father. It is sick." And yet, again, only five lessons later, we are told, "Judgment and love are opposites. From one come all the sorrows of the world. But from the

other comes the peace of God Himself." (W-352) Shouldn't I make *that* distinction and judge against judgment? And if I do, are heaven and earth set infinitely apart? Have I merely polished one more apple from Eden's fateful tree?

The answer came to me practically this week. My brother (I mean an actual biological brother) and I got into a political and cultural disagreement on Facebook (surprise, right?). The energy escalated and temperatures rose. Soon there was posturing, baiting, and ridicule. I rationalized my behavior, that I was, after all, just standing my ground, and

if he takes it personally, well, that's his own fault. The bad feeling of the encounter hung about me for days. I became preoccupied. I would furtively check Facebook to see if my latest volley had landed well or badly. I became worried that maybe, after all, the relationship was being damaged, leading even to estrangement. Over what? To what end? I guessed he was feeling badly about it too, and worried about the same thing. Finally, when he despaired of wasting words over a numbskull like me, I decided to send a volley of love. I said, "Come on, Bro! Don't play coy with me! You know you LOVE this lively and brilliant debate. You're not getting off that easily!" It worked. He responded with an expression of vulnerability, that he might enjoy it more if he could sleep more than 4

hours per night. I then expressed sympathy and asked what was up. The tone changed, and the door of brotherhood reopened.

Forgiveness streamed in. The content of the conflict suddenly seemed

entirely meaningless. It was *true*, I realized practically, judgment and love are opposites, and it is important to learn to tell the difference between them. That sort of judgment is essential. But what about the judgments that separate us, and confine us to our quarters? What about "good" and "evil" relative to my positions, which I so arrogantly take to be absolute? This is the fruit that I too willingly, even impulsively, pluck and eat, and which always ripens into pain. Am I so willing to sacrifice peace of mind? Am I so willing to sacrifice love for my brother at the altar of my own self-righteousness? Peace of mind is not a little thing. "Do you prefer that you be right or happy?" (T-29.VII.1:9) Now there's a distinction I had better learn to make!

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If you are like me, you have no idea how recycling works. Oh yes, we understand the basic idea: Take our garbage and make it into something we can use, but how that process is carried out might be beyond our comprehension or even our desire to know. What we really care about is that we have the product to use, and we got it in such a way that was healthy for us and the planet. We can feel good about the process and even the result, but we don't have to know all the little details.

Well, this is what God wants us to do with our lives. He wants us to understand that He can take any polluting, stinking, and overwhelming problem in our lives and recycle it into something productive for us and the world. We don't have to figure out the "hows, whats and whys" of His healing process for it to work. As a matter of fact, it is probably beyond our understanding, because we look with such a limited vision at our problems. The point is, He can heal our issues, because He cannot fail. No problem in this world is stronger than God. There is no issue He cannot recycle into a miracle. But, and this is a big "BUT," we must want His healing. We must want our healing and release more than we want the problem — we must value our natural resource as a child of God more than the separate, fearful, manipulating "garbage" we have made of ourselves.

Let the recycling begin!

"You have learning handicaps in a very literal sense. There are areas in your learning skills that are so impaired that you can progress only under constant, clear-cut direction, provided by a Teacher Who can transcend your limited resources. He becomes your Resource because of yourself you cannot learn." (T-12.V.5)

This passage may seem personally insulting, but if you honestly think about it, we all are pretty handicapped in our spiritual thinking. The world and its problems are constantly bombarding us with seeming "proof" of our separation, limitations, and suffering. There is no doubt that we need help, and Help (the

Holy Spirit) is exactly what God has given us. The Course contains a wealth of help and a clear-cut path for teaching us how to experience this help for ourselves. It gives us the tools we need to step back and allow God to heal our lives. I have never found another material that provides the spiritual insight of the Course's



"The world and its problems are constantly bombarding us with seeming 'proof' of our separation, limitations, and suffering."

text or the practical application of those spiritual insights through the Course's workbook.

With that in mind, let's look at some of

those insights from the Course to help us allow God's Answer to recycle our thinking and show us His miracle instead.

"Do not attempt to give the Holy Spirit what He does not ask It is your realization that you need do so little that enables Him to give so much."

(T-18.IV.1:6)

As I have mentioned before, we do not have to understand how God works to know He does work. Our understanding is not necessary for His miracle to take place. He does not need us to try and help Him, He only needs our willingness to join with Him and let His Answer work through us.

When our daughter-in-law received her master's degree, the only thing she wanted was for everyone to come to a graduation party at her and our son's house. On the way down to the party, it dawned on my husband Paul and me that his ex-wife Susan would probably be there too. At the time of this

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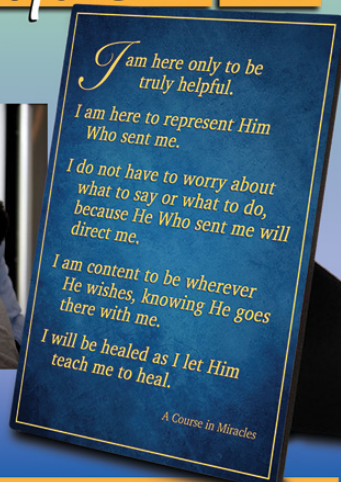
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party, Paul and I had been married for over eleven years and for many of those years Susan's presence had served as a great lesson in forgiveness for both of us. We hadn't seen her for years, but that had not stopped us from continually asking for help in healing our perception of her.

We had stopped trying to change her and make her understand we were not going down the path to hell, or that we were not spiritually or morally corrupting the kids

because of our beliefs, which was how she viewed us for years. We had decided it was not up to us to change her, but for us to heal our minds and the way we viewed her. And, even that, we finally realized we could not do, but we

could allow it to be done through us by the Holy Spirit. Had it worked? Was the Holy Spirit really able to transform this relationship into a miracle without our help? Was our willingness really enough?

When we got to the party, sure enough Susan was there with her husband. We

greeted everyone, and as the party progressed, we couples seemed to gravitate to each other. It did not seem contrived, but instead quite natural. We were actually enjoying

each other's company. She was so different or was it we who were so different? Of the many people at the party, the music, and celebration, our daughter-in-law and son were happiest of all at the sight of us together. They were taking pictures of us as they said, "Oh, let's get a picture of the parents together — this is great!"

When did this transformation happen? That night? Of course not, it had been happening the moment we were willing to get our judgments out of the way and allow the

Holy Spirit to give us "so much more." Not only did He give us so much more, but He blessed our kids who were so happy to see the joining. He can create miracles out of the little we give Him, and He does not need our "help" — only our *little* willingness.

The recycling of our image of Susan, gave us a healed mind, a new friend, and gave our kids the joy of seeing their parents



"Of the many people at the party, the music, and celebration, our daughter-in-law and son were happiest of all at the sight of us together."

together. Susan and her husband, a week later, even sent in a donation to support Paul's work with

inner-city kids. The Holy Spirit's recycling of our minds truly gave us a shift in our perception that we could have never imagined.

"Do not attempt to understand any event or anything or anyone in its [the past's] 'light'. . ." (T-14.XI.3:8)

The Course constantly reminds us we cannot understand anything as it truly is from our past perceptions.



Viewing life from our past prevents us from understanding the present and the miracle God is offering us. One of my favorite prayers from the Course says:

"I do not know what anything, including this, means. And so I do not know how to respond to it. And I will not use my own past learning as the light to guide me now."

(T-14.XI.6:7)

It then continues with its explanation

of what this prayer will give to us: "By this refusal to attempt to teach yourself what you do not know, the Guide Whom God has given you will speak to you. He will take His rightful place in your awareness the instant you abandon it, and offer it to Him." (ibid) We are instructed once again that so little is asked of us, only to get out of God's way so His Teacher, the Holy Spirit, can recycle our past thinking into a present miracle.

After a personal crisis, Paul was inspired to start **KidSingers**, a non-profit organization that works with at-risk kids in our community. Out of a seeming tragedy, Paul allowed God to recycle his pain and hurt into a miracle that has, for nearly a quarter of a century, helped thousands of youths. In the early years of **KidSingers**, we would recruit kids by taking a 16-member adult ensemble into elementary schools to perform music education shows. This was a big hit! Kids loved the music and wanted to join in the fun and inspiration.

We must have done hundreds of programs, and I served as the MC (mistress of ceremonies). One particular performance stands out to me. It was at a school that had a number of deaf students. These children sat in the front rows and were signed the words to each of the songs performed by our ensemble. When we asked for volunteers to help us with a part of our program, one of these children raised her hand.

Since I was choosing the volunteers, my first inclination was to not choose her because of her "handicap" — I didn't want to embarrass her (or myself!) if she could

not understand, but something greater than myself took over, and I chose her and brought her up to the front. I realized I could not communicate my words to her, but the interpreter could, and she did. Each of the four children we select-

ed, were asked to sing a note, but how could I help this child I perceived as challenged?

My panic set in for only a second, and then again, I felt as if something greater than myself erased my panic and past perceptions of deaf children; I saw only an enthusiastic child who wanted to be a part of the perfor-

mance. The interpreter signed to her to sing a note, without hesitation this little girl sang a note with more ease than some hearing children! I could not believe what she did! It was wonderful for everyone: the child, the other students, the teachers, the other singers in our group, and me. It proved to me that my own past learning was very faulty, and if I had followed it, I would have missed the miracle. I did not know the gift this child would be for all of us, but God did.

I was taught a valuable lesson that day. I realized this child was not the one with a handicap, but I nearly was! My handicapped thinking and lack of understanding nearly caused me to miss the miracle. Thank goodness God's Resource was with me, and I was willing to let my past thinking be recycled, with His Help.

“...do not attempt to make yourself holy to be ready to receive it [the holy instant]. That is but to confuse your role with God's. Atonement cannot come to those who think that they must first atone, but only to those who offer it nothing more than simple willingness to make way for it.” (T-18.IV.5:4)

This is one of my favorite quotes from the Course because it reinforces how simple this course is. God's help is available *right now*. We don't have to be able to quote chapter and verse from the Course, to have completed the workbook perfectly, or understand every line in the text for Him to help us. We don't need to find an “expert” teacher in this world in order to learn how to understand or study the Course. We don't even have to release our anger over a specific situation or release our judgment about a particular person. We are asked to come to God in our suffering, our confusion, and our feelings of inadequacy and ask for help. The Course continues by telling us this:

“You prepare your mind for it [the holy instant – God's answer for our lives] only to the extent of recognizing that you want it above all else. It is not necessary that you do more; indeed, it is necessary that you realize that you cannot do more.” (T-18.IV.1:4)

I am in no way suggesting that it does not take a great deal of study, prayer, and vigilance to the Course's message in order

to understand or do what the above passage is asking of us. First, we must want God's Answer for our lives, above all else. Next, we need to realize that it is not only necessary we do not do more, but vital to recognize we *cannot* do more. Both processes take a great deal of practice.

I have been a student of the Course for 44 years, and I am still learning. I have been asked many times, “Do you



still get angry. Do you judge? Have you forgiven all your relationships?” My answer is always “I am in the process of

healing.” I still get angry, judge, and withhold my forgiveness, but it doesn't last as long as it used to. Peace is becoming more important to me than anything else, even if I still have an attachment to the “anything else” at times.

Bill Thetford, co-scribe of *A Course in Miracles*, was once asked, “How do you know when you are really understanding the

Course's message?” His answer was, “How long do you hold a grievance?”

It is not that we have figured out how to heal the issues of our lives – as we have read, that is not even our task. We must want God's Answer for our lives; we must want the peace He is holding out to us more than we want to stay in our problems. That is our task, and thankfully we have His Holy Spirit to help us even with this. We don't have to feel guilty if we get angry or experience a challenging situation in our lives – as if we have done something bad to make them appear. We are simply asked to come to God with all of our pain and hurt and confusion and leave it with Him. We must want His Answer more than our problems.

God's Recycling Process

God can recycle anything. He will never judge your “garbage” as worse or better than another's. To Him, all of our “garbage” is the same: merely a shadow, a puff of smoke that God's Son has placed before the Resource God has given Him. Don't let those shadows or illusions keep you from recognizing the miracle that He can create out of your illusions.

The following little poem, by that great author “anonymous,” has a clever way of expressing God's recycling process...



Two Boxes

I have in my hands two boxes
Which God gave me to hold
He said, “Put all your sorrow in the black,
And all your joys in the gold.

I heeded His words, and in the two boxes

Both my joys and sorrow
I store
But though the gold
became heavier
each day
The black was as light
as before.

With curiosity, I opened
the black
I wanted to find out why



And I saw, in the base of the box, a hole
Which my sorrows had fallen out by.

I showed the hole to God, and mused
aloud,
“I wonder where my sorrows could be.”
He smiled a gentle smile at me.
“My child, they're all here with me.”

I asked, “God, why give me the boxes,
Why the gold, and the black with
a hole?”
“My child, the gold is for you to count
your blessings,
the black is for you to let go.”

Hallelujah!

Let go and let the recycling begin!

The HOLY ENCOUNTER

MAY / JUNE 2021

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- Jail Break
- Our Greatest Teachers
- I Am Safe
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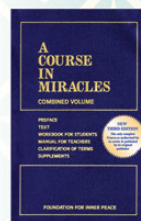


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