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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2017

A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



The Holiest of All the Spots on Earth

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

"The holiest of all the spots on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love."
(T-26.IX.6)

This is one of the most beautiful phrases in *A Course in Miracles*. We can all agree that our hatreds are such a burden to carry, and they also seem nearly impossible to release. That is why, though, we study *A Course in Miracles*; we need a miracle to help us heal.

"This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt." (T-28.II.12)

A miracle becomes a shift from our focus on the suffering and sin of a hateful world to the reality of love that stands next to these mistaken dreams. What

"Many of us have seen the movie and remember not only the iconic chariot race, but also the movie's powerful message focusing on the release of hatred."



Charlton Heston as Judah Ben-Hur. MGM, 1959

could be more sought after in our contentious world today than this type of

experience? With dangerous threats of war by world leaders, hateful rhetoric toward those of different races and religions, and the loss of respect for each other and the values our founding fathers fought for, this has become a time when we need the birth of Christ, the sanity a miracle can bring, more than ever.

These seeming divides may appear deep, but they were deep during the time Jesus walked the world as well. There was great injustice inflicted by the ruling power of Rome and the religious zealots of the time, but one man's message of peace was heard and continues to be echoed today. This should give us faith and hope because that same help Jesus came to remind us of over

two thousand years ago is here now. This is the gift the Holy Spirit is holding out to us as we look at these ancient hatreds presented once again, and move past them to love. When this is our intent, healing is not only possible but inevitable.

"God's Word has promised that peace is possible here, and what He promises

A Campaign that Counts!

Your responses to our 2017 fundraising appeal have just begun arriving as we go to press on this issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. As always, we at the Center are grateful not just for your support during this annual appeal, but for those of you who generously and loyally support MDC's work all year.

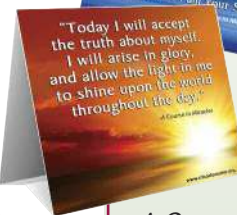
Our monthly *Holy Helpers*, along with all our consistent donors, keep the Center functioning year-round, serving Course students and reaching out around the globe. While we do our utmost to see that each and every individual donation is gratefully

acknowledged, it's important for us to remind you just how essential you and your support are to MDC's mission.

With that in mind, our recent letter included a "table tent" which displays a morning and evening prayer from

A Course in Miracles.

If you have yet to respond to this year's appeal, please consider joining the ranks of those who keep MDC's doors open and the Course's teachings going out into the world. You may use the special return envelope you received with this year's fundraiser, the envelope bound inside every issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**, or the donation link at www.miraclecenter.org. We are deeply grateful for your support. ✧



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

What's Happening...with the Course and 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 – Paul Hooper & Shawn Hooper*** from Paul, Bev & Jeffrey McNeff.

● **Retreat Experience Made Easy** - Now is the perfect time to reserve your place at our **2018 Holy Encounter Retreat**. 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. Our convenient payment plan allows you to make a deposit of \$99 now to reserve your room. Low monthly payments throughout the year will complete your registration.

● **Giving is Receiving** - The IRA Rollover has been permanently reauthorized by Congress. Donors age 70½ and older can make cash gifts of up to \$100,000 from an IRA to a qualified charity (such as our Center) without paying federal income tax on the transfer. IRA rollover gifts count towards your required minimum distribution amount (RMD). We hope you'll take this opportunity to support our work on behalf of *A Course in Miracles* by making a gift from your IRA.



For more information on these services and events go to www.miraclecenter.org or call 1-800-359-ACIM(2246)

● **Daily Lesson Email** - is a great way to keep your Workbook Lesson from the Course by your side. Each day this email service sends you your own personal Course lesson for the day, automatically. During the quick sign-up process, simply indicate the lesson on which you'd like to begin. On each succeeding day you will automatically receive the next lesson. The daily messages can be read on your smart-phone, tablet, or home computer. Each email includes the lesson title in an attractive graphic. Directly below it, a link will lead you to the entire lesson. You may start and stop at any time and even reset the number on which to begin.

● **Holy Encounter Weekend in Chicago**

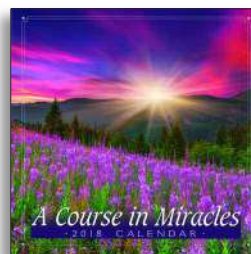
Our next **Holy Encounter Weekend** will take place on **April 6-7, 2018**. This popular weekend seminar is presented by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff and offers attendees a chance to go deeper into the Course's life-changing principles to truly experience miracles. If you have been stuck with your Course studies, or just need that boost to get going with those lessons again, this is the perfect weekend for you! As one attendee wrote, "...Beverly, you are an amazing teacher. You help the learning process for your students by making the message of the Course so much clearer and easier to understand. When you read the Course, it went right into my mind and heart! It made the greatest sense." A Friday evening lecture sets the stage for a day-long intensive

experience of *A Course in Miracles*. Watch our video about the weekends by visiting our website, and then make your reservation to join us!

● **FREE Holiday ACIM e-Cards** - Share a thought from the Course electronically with friends and family this holiday season! We have come up with a variety of beautiful, full color e-cards with poignant Course quotes for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years, so check it out. It's easy and **FREE** at our website!



● **Our 2018 A Course in Miracles Wall Calendar** is now available to give and receive as the perfect holiday gift! Featuring stunning full color photos along with inspiring quotes from the Course for each month, this calendar is sure to keep the Course's message of peace and healing forefront in your mind all year long. It's a meaningful gift you can give to all your family and friends—and the more calendars you purchase, the lower the price! See the back page for more details and visit our online store for all your holiday shopping!



● **"This Christmas give the Holy Spirit everything that would hurt you. Let yourself be healed completely that you may join with Him in healing, and let us celebrate our release together by releasing everyone with us. (T15.XI.3)** Let us celebrate this holiday season by the true extension of love: release! Let us join in healing for all our brothers and the world by lifting the veil of judgment and guilt we have placed upon it. The world can be born anew; we can be born anew as we allow ourselves to be healed

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Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Celestial Amnesia

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

We are so fortunate to have had Bill Thetford as a mentor. It was he and Helen Schucman who brought together *A Course in Miracles*. Bill had many accomplishments, one of which was being a wordsmith. He had an amazing ability to bring words together in an original way that always seemed to help us on our spiritual path.

One of the phrases Bill originated was, "Celestial Amnesia." To him, it meant that it is possible to learn to let go of all thoughts except those of our Creator. When we let go of all our thoughts, what remains is the love God created us with, and the unity we have with our Creator.

Our egos are constantly focused on chaos, tempting us to see value in holding onto grievances, feeling anger, and hurting one another. Our egos have a kind of memory superglue that encourages us to remember only the negative things in life, like the time someone didn't pay back the money they borrowed. Our egos make us believe that, if we continue to remember the hurtful past, we can protect ourselves from further injury.

Celestial Amnesia is another way of

letting go of the hurtful past through forgiveness, no longer seeing any value in the pain. Celestial Amnesia can remind us at any moment that the hurtful past is but an illusion we have invented. It allows us to tell ourselves, "I am not my hurtful past."

In our history of working with *A Course in Miracles*, we have been reminded over and over again that forgiveness is the key to happiness and a pathway to eternal peace. We never cease to be amazed by how quickly our egos can interrupt the thoughts in our minds, tempting us

"One of the phrases Bill originated was, 'Celestial Amnesia.' To him, it meant that it is possible to learn to let go of all thoughts except those of our Creator."

at any time to believe there is no God and that there are some terrible people in the world who should never be forgiven.

In our experience of being students of the Course, we continue to find it helpful

to remind ourselves every day that our judgments about others are just another way of separating ourselves from each other and from God. We find it useful to let go of the past and the belief it can predict the future, and to remember that

the presence of God exists only in the present moment. God's love knows no past or future, no physical form.

Celestial Amnesia helps us remember that our only reality is God's love; it helps us remember the interpretations we make about ourselves or others are just illusions.

Celestial Amnesia reminds us that heaven is not a physical place, but a state of mind. This state of mind of our Creator knows only love. It is a state of mind where there is no fear, no death, and no harm.

In the introduction to the Course there is a sentence that states: "Nothing real can be threatened, Nothing unreal exists, Herein lies the peace of God." Our egos put up a tremendous amount of resistance to believing that our true reality is formless, and our true reality is blameless. Our true reality is not a fault finder, but a love finder. When we practice Celestial Amnesia, we put all together as one.

When we struggle to experience innocence as our true reality, we find it's because our ego puts up a big fight, saying, "You're not spirit, you are a body born only to die."

Celestial Amnesia and forgiving the world and everything in it are one and the same. Oftentimes, we forget to ask ourselves the question, "What is it I want to remember? Love? Or fear?" Fear is a



Bill Thetford



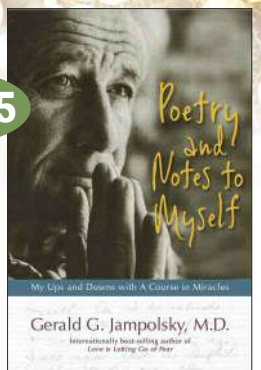
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Gerald Jampolsky, M.D. and Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky, Ph.D., international lecturers and bestselling authors, share their insights and experiences in applying the principles of *A Course in Miracles* in our world. Diane's therapeutic counseling practice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



Miracle Musings...

Am I Doing the Course Right?

by Paul McNeff

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him." (John 9:1-3)

"I am not a body. I am free."

"Freedom must be impossible as long as you perceive a body as yourself. The body is a limit. Who would seek for freedom in a body looks for it where it can not be found. The mind can be made free when it no longer sees itself as in a body, firmly tied to it and sheltered by its presence. If this were the truth, the mind were vulnerable indeed!" (Lesson 199)

Stephen Hawking, the English theoretical physicist and cosmologist, is often dubbed "the smartest man in the world." You may have seen the movie *The Theory of Everything* which documents his life and struggle. The title "smartest man in the world" may be debatable. IQ level seems to be our gold standard of measuring intelligence. Hawking's is 160, well above the genius benchmark of 140. But there are many other individuals alive today with higher IQ levels.

What isn't debatable, however, is that Hawking has a rare, early-onset, slow-progressing form of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS also known as Lou Gehrig's disease) that has gradually paralyzed him over the decades. Since 1985, he has communicated using a single cheek muscle attached to a speech-generating device. His disease seems to beg the same futile question that Jesus' disciples posed to him about the blind man: Who sinned? (to cause this illness). . . Stephen Hawking or his parents? And how about you and me? When we encounter illness or tragedy in our lives. . . who sinned?

Recently, I was talking to a friend, (a fellow Course student) about a chronic back pain she had been experiencing for a long period of time. She had sought relief from a wide array of medical professionals, from chiropractors to physical therapists to acupuncturists — all to no avail. Painfully, that similar nagging "disciple-Jesus" question kept surfacing: Am I doing the Course right? What am I doing wrong when I still continue to suffer pain and disease? Am I still suffering because of my sin or my parents'?

"Hawking, like most ALS sufferers, was given a life expectancy of only five years after his diagnosis. Yet Hawking still continues to live and even thrive fifty-some years since his diagnosis."



Stephen Hawking

Let's return to Stephen Hawking. He was diagnosed with ALS at age 21. Hawking, like most ALS sufferers, was given a life expectancy of only five years after his diagnosis. Yet Hawking still continues to live and even thrive fifty-some years since

his diagnosis. How does he do it? How does he live with the pain and disability? Many would say modern technology and round-the-clock care allows him to overcome his physical challenges.

I would venture to go a little further by suggesting that he has inculcated a personal attitude of:

"I am not defined by my body limitations." And this has greatly assisted him to continue to flourish in his greatly limited physical state.

I have not heard that Hawking is a student of *A Course in Miracles*, but it seems like he has, at least at some level, embraced Course principles as laid out in Lesson 199:

"I am not a body. I am free. Freedom must be impossible as long as you perceive a body as yourself. The body is a limit. Who would seek for freedom in a body looks for it where it can not be found. The mind can be made free when it no longer sees itself as in a body, firmly tied to it and sheltered by its presence. If this were the truth, the mind were vulnerable indeed!"

I think we will find the real answer to physical suffering, whether or not we are healed from that physical suffering, is in the journey to spiritual healing. In all Jesus' healing miracles and also his Course teachings, we are reminded that truth does not emanate from our body, but from our spirit. This is the most important thing to

I've asked myself that same question when encountering physical disabilities, and I've had my share of them. If we are honest, I think most of us have indulged in the same way of thinking by asking the same questions. The answers to our questions seem simple to solve, especially in our scientific age of miracle drugs, cures, and preventive medicine. Logic (or the ego voice) screams. . . if you have pain "A," you could have avoided it by practicing remedy "A." This makes sense, especially in some areas of immunization practice. A plethora of diseases, including smallpox and polio, have been nearly eradicated by inoculations developed through the years to prevent them. But, there are not inoculations for everything. So, where do we go from there with the stubborn pain that still persists?

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

remember. It seems this is what Jesus was trying to tell his disciples when he said, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Back to my friend with the back pain. I was moved to join in her struggle by recounting some of my own experiences with similar pain. We went on to discuss how it is never wrong to seek pain relief by consulting medical professionals. Exercising this route for healing may work. But when this doesn't seem to produce results, we tend to get impatient, and we all do what comes natural to our ego minds – we start to beat ourselves up. "I must be doing something wrong! Why isn't my spirituality working for me? Why do I still have my pain after I have sought the help of doctors, prayed, meditated and done so many other things to rid myself of this pain?"

Not far into our conversation, however, my friend and I experienced a moment of real discovery. Would we ever counsel someone suffering from pain to beat themselves up? No, of course not. Then why do it to ourselves? To start, we need to realize hearing the voice of the ego is a natural ego tool, as the Course reminds us, "the ego always speaks first." The important thing is to recognize the ego for what it is, an illusory state of mind, and at the same time, let go of those ego thoughts that would condemn us. If we ask for the Holy Spirit's help, we will find grace and acceptance.

"It is not a question of whether we are doing the Course correctly or incorrectly. It is a process of becoming our own best counselor, with the Holy Spirit's help, by integrating the truth of the Course principles into our lives."

It is not a question of whether we are doing the Course correctly or incorrectly. It is a process of becoming our own best counselor, with the Holy Spirit's help, by integrating the truth of the Course principles into our lives. A few weeks later, my

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For the past 39 years, **Miracle Distribution Center** has been an oasis of support and guidance for students of *A Course in Miracles*. Our life-affirming outreach, however, would not be possible without our **Holy Helpers**, our core group of donors whose support provides the Center with a constant source of funding that can be relied upon to guarantee that

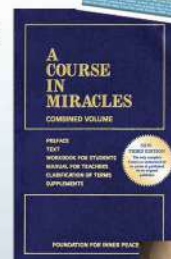


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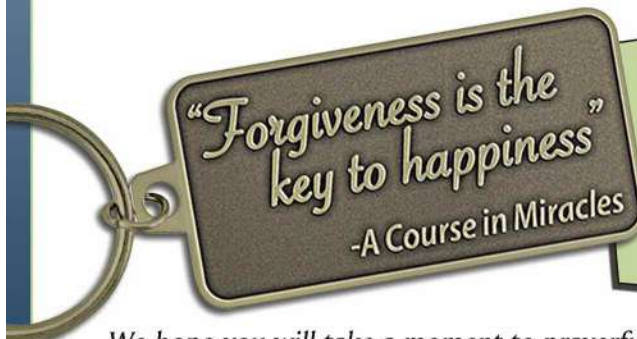


"I am happy to support MDC on a regular basis. You provide such a comprehensive and friendly resource for everyone who enters into the world of A Course in Miracles. It is wonderful to be part of such a blessed service."

Dawnelle, Spokane, WA

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Taking a Positive Approach

by Jacob Glass

I first moved to West Hollywood, California, in 1985 just as the first wave of AIDS was hitting the shore. It was quite like hitting town on the day a plague arrived. I had just come from two years in San Diego where I studied with Terry Cole-Whittaker who introduced me to the teachings of Science of Mind and a heavy three-volume set of books called *A Course in Miracles*. I took a ten-week class with her in which part of our homework was doing the Course workbook lessons every day, and the class was heavy on the Course material – particularly on the special relationship. Actually, I think she ended up breaking up with her husband and getting divorced during that ten-week class.

Now in my new home in West Hollywood, where I had come to chase my dream of being an actor, I was struggling to find a home and job. Thankfully, spiritual homes and support were plentiful. Though I didn't know it at the time, I was being prepared. My weeks usually looked something like this: Friday night at a Course study group in a West Hollywood apartment with about 20 to 30 people or so, Saturday mornings with Marianne Williamson and about 100 people in a chapel, Sunday morning at Science of Mind church in a

park auditorium, Sunday afternoon a six or seven-person prayer group with Marianne in the dark, ugly community room of an apartment complex, Tuesday nights with Marianne in a theater, Wednesday night in a park auditorium with Louise Hay and a few hundred people for the "Hay Ride" (mostly men who were HIV positive or who had full-blown AIDS), and Thursday night my Science of Mind practitioner class. All of this happened within a three-mile radius of where I lived.

Louise also used the Course a lot – mostly everything about forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness and letting go of guilt. Louise's main teaching about self-love is reflected throughout the Course over and over again in the teachings on being worthy of God's love and help. But what I really loved about Louise is that she started most of the Hay Rides by saying, "We aren't here to play 'ain't it awful' because that is not going to heal us. We are here to take a positive approach." If you've ever heard Louise, you know she has a deep soothing voice I call the "inner sanctum." But really, I was initially surprised and disappointed Louise did very little at



Louise Hay

that group. She spoke briefly at the beginning and then gave the floor to the audience where people shared with the group. She might have given some small advice or guidance, but not a lot. Then, we

"But what I really loved about Louise is that she started most of the Hay Rides by saying, 'We aren't here to play ain't it awful because that is not going to heal us.'"

would break into "healing triads" where one person would lie down, with a person holding their feet, and another holding their head. She would then do guided energy work we would switch off three times so everyone received and everyone gave.

"God is very quiet, for there is no conflict in him." (T-11.III.1:6)

Until Louise, I thought teaching and healing was about DOING SOMETHING DYNAMIC! I was used to teachers doing a lot of talking and story-telling. She hardly did anything at all, and yet the overwhelming love as you entered the room could hit you like a blast of air coming when you open a hot oven. It was palpable. She simply held a space for the Holy Spirit to enter so we could all give and receive the blessings and peace of God, just as the Course psychotherapy booklet details. She wasn't the doer. "Of myself, I can do nothing." (M-29.4:2)

From a Course perspective, the vast majority of people who went to those Hay Rides were healed because we were returned to peace and happiness. "To heal

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JACOB GLASS

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Jacob lectures in Southern California and has a global ministry of his recorded weekly talks. His new book, *The I Am Meditations* is available now from the Center. You can contact Jacob at www.jacobglass.com



Recognizing Spirit

The Power of Love, Gentleness, and Forgiveness (Part 2)

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

You have a precious opportunity to love and forgive in every second of every day, even when things are not going your way. This is the proper use of time. This approach of using time might not make sense to some people. They might say, “If the feeling of love is not there, it is just not there. You can’t make it up.” When it comes to romantic love this may be true, but loving deeply is different because it takes you straight into the truth of who you are. God’s love only needs your intentional choice in this moment to enter your awareness because it is already and forever present.

“— All of time is but the mad belief that what is over is still here and now— Cross the gap between the past and present, which is not a gap at all.” (T-26.V.13:4)

Higher learning of love is always occurring even when we don’t believe it is. Each moment in life, even the most difficult, is an essential part of your curriculum in recognizing the power of love and gentleness within and around you. The love that you can recognize in one instant can change your life in the next through a gentle response to what is occurring. This is how the world is healed as well.

The next time somebody says, “I don’t know how I made it through that,” see the power of love within that person that must have guided him or her in some mysterious way, and then smile as you see that same power within yourself.

The world would undoubtedly become a better and more peaceful place if we put a little more effort into trying to forgive one another, rather than being defensive, attacking, or trying to be right. Forgiveness is a very misunderstood concept and deserves some clarification. Within the Course, forgiveness is a process that frees us by lifting the veil that hides the aware-

ness of love. Forgiveness is the way to a more peaceful and happy life, finding purpose and meaning within a world that often makes no sense.

To understand forgiveness, it is helpful to first see what lack of forgiveness is, and the consequences. The unforgiving mind, or ego, is filled with fear, resentment, and repetitive stories of a painful past. As such, the unfor-

“Oprah was asked about the most meaningful guest to her personally. She replied ‘After 25 years and more than 30,000 guests... it was one man’s (Jerry Jampolsky) definition of forgiveness that changed my life.’”

giving mind always has a perception of the world that stems from a “me against the other person” / “us against them” mentality. At present, many countries are experiencing this on a political level. The ego mind, be it individual or collective, offers no space for love to be itself, no room for stillness to be experienced, no place where love can soar above our misunderstandings and conflicts in order to see wise solutions and actions. The consequence is the unforgiving mind is deeply isolated, sad, and with no reprieve or freedom from pain; it lives in misery with little hope.

Despite this hopeless state perpetuated by constant and continuous judgmental chatter, the ego mind has its version of forgiveness. To quickly see through the insanity, it is helpful to take a look at these insane ideas of forgiveness, such as, “The first step toward forgiveness is to see the other person as completely wrong—” or,

“Sure, just drag the S.O.B. over here and I will forgive him.” Note that all of the ego’s versions of forgiveness have the commonality of first you judge and condemn, then, through your superiority, you “forgive.”

This is not forgiveness at all, primarily because it solidifies and continues a negative past, rather than releasing and freeing you from it. Let’s look more closely at this.

When he was about the age I am now, my father, Jerry Jampolsky, was on Oprah. Decades later, shortly after Oprah retired from the show, she was asked about the most meaningful guests to her personally. She replied, “After 25 years and more than 30,000 guests... it was one man’s definition of forgiveness that changed my life.”

“If we hold onto grievances we will never be happy. Forgiveness is a willingness to see the person in the light of love— Forgiveness means letting go of the past that we thought we wanted and coming to the present moment. We can’t change the past, which means we need to change our negative perception of it.”

Oprah then said, “That was a transcendent moment for me — bigger even than an aha; he said (Oprah looked into the camera and spoke very slowly and deliberately) “forgiveness is giving up the hope that the past could be any different.

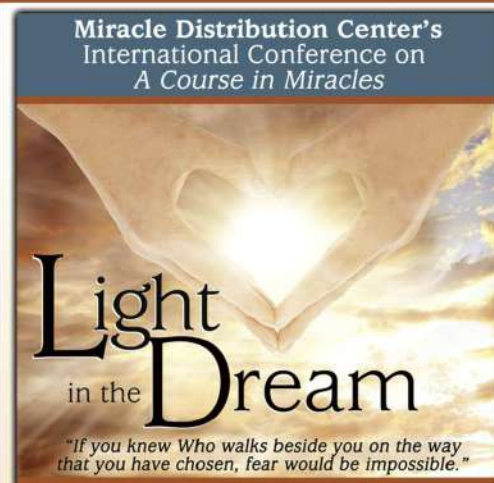
“Forgiveness is accepting that it *has* happened, not that it *is okay* for it to have happened — it is accepting that it *has* happened and now what do I do about it.” Then Oprah said something that is actually also central in the approach the Course takes to forgiveness: “When I got that



Jerry Jampolsky on Oprah

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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



"I don't really have the words to express what an amazing experience the conference was for me, and how grateful I am for being able to be there... It was such a pleasure to meet some of my MDC family at the Listener Lunch! Thank you for being so welcoming."

Lorraine in Washington



Paul, Beverly, Diane Cirincione, Jerry Jampolsky



Jacob Glass and Beverly



Beverly and Paul McNeff open the conference on Saturday morning

Conference Reflections by Bo Syrotiak

MDC's 2017 International Conference on *A Course in Miracles* was once again a huge success. It was my second conference, as I am a relatively new student. I am still processing the profound messages delivered by guest speakers: Karen Casey, Jon Mundy, Robert Rosenthal, Jacob Glass, Gerald Jampolsky and Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky. The folk music by talented acoustic Americana performers, Bettman and Halpin, brought both tears and laughter.

The conference is still swirling in my head, impacting how I see the world. My perception is shifting and changing in new ways. I can still hear the voice of MDC's founder Beverly Hutchinson McNeff, saying, "I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here." In her presentation she utilized video clips as excellent illustrations of ego, guilt, shame, trust, and enlightenment. The image of actor Ed Norton beating himself up in the movie

clip from *Fight Club* was a perfect depiction of us feeling pain stemming from guilt and shame. We allow darkness to hurt us without noticing that the resulting pain is self-inflicted. We blame others for causing the pain; but, in reality, the darkness is ours, and we project it onto others through attack and anger.

Jon Mundy stated in his lecture that if you attack error in another person, you are the one who will get hurt. Egos cannot be corrected, for they are not real. The ego thrives in strife. Interpreting and analyzing errors give them power; and, as a result, we suffer. Digging in the dirt, singing the dirge of sorrow,

and feeding sick thoughts lead to our unhappiness. Instead, surrender, take responsibility for the ego's existence, but do not defend the ego.

The weekend continued with Karen Casey intimately sharing that she pursued her Ph.D. degree to prove her worthiness after suffering a painful heartbreak. Jerry and Diane stated that desires are of the body; the spirit has none. If we judge our brothers, we make our body real. The core fear of abandonment is that God abandons us, but God will never leave us for we are part of God. They shared with the audience to tear up the scripts we wrote for others, which resonated with me. Bob Rosenthal's sharing of his "crush from hell" also

struck a tune with me. I think this was an example of having a script for a relationship that did not come to full fruition.

Saturday evening was the cap to an insightful day as Bettman and Halpin's folk music performance was stunning. I bought Bettman's CD *Get Close to Me* because I wanted to hear the song "I am love" again. That particular song brought me to tears, and I reached out to my two neighbors' hands and held them, feeling touched by the artists' performance. The next day I thanked the performers for their concert, and I asked Bettman about the source of her wisdom in her lyrics. She responded that it was not she who wrote the lyrics, which implied a different source of wisdom had come through her in the act of creation. I was touched by her answer, and asked her to sign the CD cover as a reminder of this wisdom which I now display in my office.

Jacob Glass's message to accept my worthiness brought a miracle into my life. The law of attraction is about what I am attracted to in my life. Can it be this simple? If I want love, all I need is to be drawn to love? It sounds to me like a recipe for happiness. Was the darkness I projected onto others all mine? Was I attracted to darkness and hence I saw darkness? I gladly hand it over to God, and rest in God's peace instead of going to hell feeling unworthy and projecting my guilt into the world. I appreciated Jacob's humor and depth of knowledge. It was a little easier to shift my perception, having received the serious message of worthiness wrapped in a blanket of his delightful humor.

I used to blame individual relationships for my unhappiness. Unknowingly, I projected my hidden guilt, feeling unworthy of love, and I found a lot of people who commiserated with me. This miraculous conference made me aware that I focused on my own projected darkness. I had it all scripted with my ego's fantasies. I understood that I was wrong-minded in my relationships. I was oblivious to the fact that I was a worthy Child of God whom God loves unconditionally. I was awestruck by the speakers and their revelation of truth. A student never graduates from *A Course in Miracles*, and the reward is simply a happy life.

"What a great conference! I am still on the conference 'high'! I love seeing the world in a different way! Beverly and Paul are a 'dynamic duo.'"

Karen in California



Karen Casey, Beverly and Robert Rosenthal

"Once again, I so enjoyed live-streaming your wonderful conference. Although I would prefer to be there in person, I find that this method of joining with you is also so comforting and uplifting. I enjoyed all the speakers and Beverly's presentations. She is such an incredible motivator."

Rachel in Virginia

It's not too late!

Presentations of all of this year's conference speakers are available on CD or Mp3!

See back page for details.



(L to R) Sandy Bartorillo, Karen O'Daniel, Bobby Furo, Daniella Danilov, Beverly and Bo Syrotiak



Stephanie Bettman, Beverly, Luke Halpin, Paul

"Wow! We loved the Conference! So thankful to MDC for holding these conferences for the last 40 years. The retreat in 2018 sounds wonderful...I'm sure it will fill up fast. Thanks to all at MDC who made this powerful event possible."

Rae Karen & Elliot in Florida



Jon Mundy greeting an attendee



Emotional Healing

Heal the Mind: Make a Movie

by Dick Gayton, Ph. D.

*"There is nothing my holiness cannot do."
(Lesson 38)*

My ego is a student of *A Course in Miracles* and read Lesson 38 as part of another go-through of the workbook as I was busy in Thailand at our house on the chili field, writing my screenplay, *Love in Country*. It is a story about two gay soldiers in love during the Vietnam War. My ego has its own interpretation of everything, including the peace-giving message and practice of the Course. In this case, my mind overlooked the "holiness" part of Lesson 38 and went directly for "There is nothing my ego cannot do." Suddenly my husband's visa was approved, my friend's estate needed to be settled in Thailand, we had to get a flight for America, then get married in California and find a million dollars to film the screenplay. The ego thinks it can do anything, or alternately, it can do nothing at all – depending on what makes you crazier. But, if you put the ego in charge, it always lines things up for a train wreck.

Do you hear the train coming? After the wedding, I had a stroke, did the ICU gig, and my ego was going to take charge of the recovery; as it instructed, if I did not do what it said, I would lie in bed, vegetate, and croak. I wheeled around the ward in my trusty chair, then tried to do exercises on my paralyzed leg, and fell out of the chair. This caused a major ruckus, from the attendants to the nursing-supervisors, and they installed an alarm belt around me when I was in the chair and plastered a sign above my bed: THIS PATIENT IS IMPULSIVE. If they only knew what my ego

had planned: I was going to the gym to ride the exercise bicycle. One-legged bike riding is one of my special gifts, after brain damage and paralysis.

Being a spiritual master (and having tried everything else,) I finally asked God to take charge of my recovery. I was fairly certain I would never walk again, and for sure never produce a feature film. My mind had turned to doomsday and worm eating. My Voice for God promptly told me all was

"Being a spiritual master (and having tried everything else.) I finally asked God to take charge of my recovery. I was fairly certain I would never walk again, and for sure never produce a feature film."



On location filming of *Love in Country*

well and that I would have a complete recovery. I knew that was impossible, being a well-read psychologist and general know-it-all. I would settle for sitting on the side of the bed without falling over. God smiled (if he had a face and was a "he") at my naiveté and

assured me again and again and again that I would recover completely. Since I was so focused on my body, it did not occur to me that God was referring to the healing of my mind.

Then I realized I'd better get to work. I began to push my physical therapist and my body to do more. The ever-patient Voice suggested I take it easier and slower and recovery would go much faster. This kind of talk just seems like so much mumbo jumbo to my ego who doesn't want to just "push the river;" it wants to dam it up, build a new channel, blow up

the dam, and drown everyone.

I began to tune in regularly to the Voice and continued with the Workbook lessons and turned moment to moment for guidance for my next indicated step. I went home and began the slow recovery of my left side: my arm, shoulder, and leg all began to strengthen, but really it was my thinking that was changing. Funny how it worked: when I exercised peacefully without making unreasonable demands on my body, my strength recovered. When I pushed and stressed, I made no progress.

Then a few months ago the Voice said it was time to get back to work on the film. I tried to explain to it that producing an independent feature in this day and age is well nigh impossible; besides, I feel like a tired, stroke-addled victim. The Voice again smiled with its holographic face and more or less patted me on my spiritual head: "You will get more energy, if you work on the film."

The problem with the ego's argument were the facts on the ground: I could walk well, all my upper body strength had returned, my brain seemed normal, whatever that is, and now *Love in Country* is placed firmly in the hands of God at all times. A three-time Emmy award winning Director of Photography is in love with the script, Francis Ford Coppola's Zoetrope.com rated it #1, a fundraising team has started work with loveincountrymovie.com and have created a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Veterans and gay veterans are supporting the effort. Indiegogo.com will host a crowdfunding drive in October. Americans seem to like the idea of honoring gay soldiers who have fought in all our wars.

Maybe the Voice for God wants the movie made – or more likely – working on it is another opportunity for Dick and others to heal their thinking.

Continued on page 14

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.

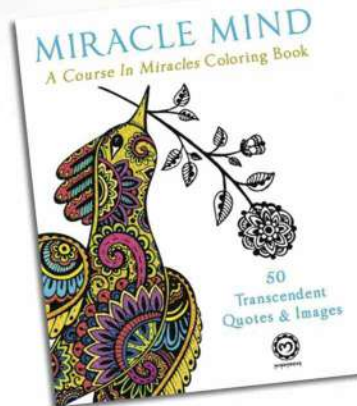
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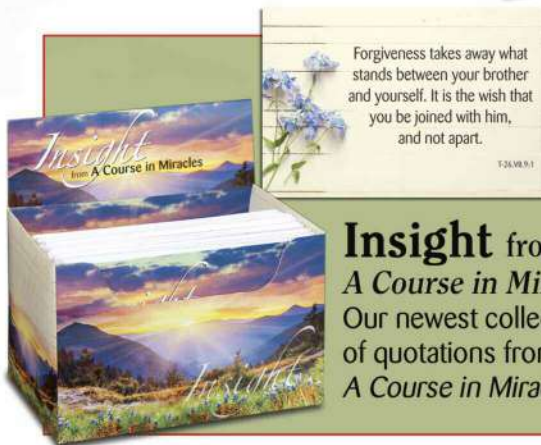


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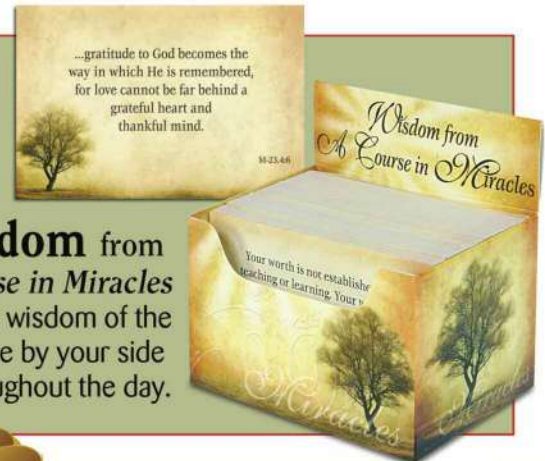


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can hardly be impossible. But it is true that the world must be looked at differently, if His promises are to be accepted. What the world is, is but a fact. You cannot choose what this should be. But you can choose how you would see it. Indeed, you must choose this.” (M-11.1)

“Lewis Wallace had served as a Union army general in the American Civil War, and in 1880 his novel, *Ben-Hur*... was published. It quickly became ‘the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century.’”

As the holiday season rolls around, I am reminded of one of my favorite movies, *Ben-Hur*. I know there have been remakes of this classic, but nothing will



General Lewis Wallace

replace for me the 1959 epic starring Charlton Heston. Many of us have seen the movie and remember not only the iconic chariot race, but also the movie’s powerful message focusing on the release of hatred. Even though the movie does not often use the word forgiveness, it is the pervasive theme. But, here’s a piece of trivia for you. Did you know the movie was based on a novel written by a Civil War general?

Lewis Wallace had served as a Union army general in the American Civil War, and in 1880 his novel, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, was published. It quickly became “the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century.” Upon its release, it became a bestseller and even surpassed in sales the current leader, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

Juxtapose these two notions: a general in one of the bloodiest and most divisive wars our country has fought writes one of the most influential novels about the transforming power of forgiveness. The movie’s culmination is not a worldly victory

over persecutors, but the hero’s victory over persecution as he awakens to the transforming power of forgiveness that takes away his hate and need for revenge. Perhaps *Ben-Hur* is so compelling and enduring because it was written by a warrior who could understand the critical need for the healing balm of forgiveness in the midst of such hatred.

In the movie, we see the charmed life of a Jewish prince (Judah Ben-Hur) destroyed in an instant by a childhood friend, Messala, a Roman who has come back from Rome to rule Jerusalem with an iron fist. Over a misunderstanding, Messala unjustly enslaves Judah and imprisons his mother and sister. Judah’s life as he knows it is destroyed, but these events also start him on a journey that will parallel the life of Christ. Judah has moments in which his life intersects with Jesus, but most of the time these miraculous moments are lost to Judah because his mind is filled with hate and revenge.

One of the powerful aspects of the movie is that we never really see or experience Jesus directly; we only get glimpses of him and his effects on Judah. In one scene, Judah is in chains marching with a group of slaves through the desert to an unknown fate. The slaves are brought to a small village where Jesus happens to live. As Jesus offers the thirsty and demoralized Judah a cup of water, the cup is kicked out of his hands by his Roman captor. Jesus’ life-giving act is denied Judah, which only makes him more hateful of his captors. The miracle standing in shining silence next to Judah’s hate is not recognized, and so the hate goes on.

Judah is told of this remarkable man (Jesus) as the movie continues, but in each of these encounters, Judah’s hate denies him the miracle that could heal him. Through a series of events, Judah rises to prominence again, as he has been embraced by Rome as a citizen and a successful charioteer. His worldly success, however, cannot extinguish his loathing for what Rome stands for, especially when he learns that his mother and sister, whom he thought were



dead, are still alive but living in the valley of lepers. Leprosy, at that time, was considered a fate worse than death.

Even though Messala, the man who started the circus of insanity is dead, Judah’s thirst for vengeance is not quenched. He wants “blood” and blames all of Rome for the inhumane treatment of his family. Here is where his life intersects with Jesus again, as Judah ends up at the foot of Christ at his crucifixion. It is here Judah experiences Jesus’ powerful message of forgiveness in the face of what the world would call an unjust act perpetrated on a man who had only taught peace. The irony is not lost on Judah, who in that moment experiences the miracle of forgiveness that releases him from his vengeance. As he recounts later, “I felt him (Jesus) take the sword out of my hand.” Forgiveness had won the day, not hate and a craving for what the world calls “justice.”

As you view the story of *Ben-Hur* and its message of the redemptive gift of forgiveness to heal a warrior, it makes sense that a Civil War general, who probably saw the need for a country and people to come together past their rights and wrongs, would want to bring forth this

“Judah has moments in which his life intersects with Jesus, but most of the time these miraculous moments are lost to Judah because his mind is filled with hate and revenge.”

healing message.

Wallace’s character Judah Ben-Hur becomes all of us as we journey through a world of hate and injustice. We are constantly having moments of connection with Christ, but perhaps are missing them because of preoccupation with our judgments and anger. Forgiveness does not just come at the foot of Christ, but in every moment we turn to love, seeking unity instead of separation – and experience a miracle instead of pain.

Forgiveness can heal our lives. Even if we cannot figure out how it is possible, forgiveness can miraculously take the

sword out of our hands. We are not asked to deny the feelings we are experiencing, but we must honestly look at them and decide if the perpetuation of hate, pain, and suffering is really what we want. If we are ready to allow our ancient hates to be healed, then it is time

“Here is when his life intersects with Jesus again, as Judah ends up at the foot of Christ at his crucifixion. It is here Judah experiences Jesus’ powerful message of forgiveness...”

to take the Hand of One Who will offer a healing answer to release us and show us the present love.

Isn't it time for a miracle? Are you willing to let God's Answer heal your mind? As the Course tells us, a miracle stands next to every thought of hate you are holding onto. Peace is possible here because peace is God's

Will for us, but for us to experience that peace we must change our minds about the purpose of the world. It is not a place to dominate, attack, and only win; it is a healing ground to teach us the holiest of all its spots is where ancient hatreds become present experiences of love and unity.

May you have a healed and holy holiday season.



Celestial Amnesia

Continued from page 3

combination of the illusions that make us feel it is real, rather than experiencing God's love as the only thing that is real.

We find it helpful to practice Celestial Amnesia throughout the day because there are so many illusions that originate from the ego. These illusions tempt us to believe there is no God, and that anyone who upsets us deserves our anger instead of our love.

We find it helpful to remember that when we experience God, we also experience a moment of eternal peace, happiness, joy, and a space where there's no separation between people. We are not our personalities; we are our spiritual identities.

As we navigate our day, remembering that we are spirit and not bodies is a great way of releasing the ego from our allegiance.

Let us remember that the past and future are concepts our ego invented. They are not real, because the ego always finds a way to put us in its special prison. Let us remember that joy, kindness, and certainty is part of what makes up our spiritual identity. Try as we may, we aren't able to experience a continuous sense of certainty when we are looking at the world through the eyes of the ego.

When we are looking through the eyes of the ego, we become fault finders; when we look through the eyes of God, we become love finders. It is when we focus only on love that the interpretations we make about ourselves or others begin to disappear.

When we embrace forgiveness through Celestial Amnesia, we become free, and we begin to experience Truth in a whole different way.

All the things that are generated within our ego mind continue to change. God's love never changes – it only expands upon itself. When we immerse ourselves in God's love, we become Co-creators with the God of love and eternal peace and joy.

When we practice Celestial Amnesia in the present and experience only God's love, all lack, pain, and suffering disappears.

Taking a Positive...

Continued from page 6

is to make happy.” (T-5.In.1:1) What happened to the bodies is not really relevant as far as the big picture is concerned. At the end of the sessions it was “hug time,” and that was yet another miracle because in those days people practically had to wear hazmat suits to visit AIDS patients in the hospital. It was a HUGE deal to have human physical contact for people with HIV and AIDS at that time. That's why it was such a big deal when Princess Diana did it. Things that are somewhat commonplace now were radical back in the 80s. You couldn't just walk into a bookstore and get the Course or a lot of metaphysical books. They were weird specialty items. The body-mind connection was just barely starting to be talked about. There was no internet or Google. We weren't just fringe then, we were super fringe. Louise was attacked quite a bit for her teachings at that time and still is to this day, but I never once saw her react or defend herself. *“In my defenselessness my safety lies.”* (W-p1.153) she just focused on doing her work and teaching love and she let people say whatever they wanted to say.

When I moved to Santa Barbara in 1990, I took all the things these wild

women of spirituality had taught me as I lectured on the Course at the Unity church there. I also started the first HIV and AIDS spiritual support groups in Santa Barbara because of what Louise had taught me. A lot of “dying” people came through my classes and groups during those early years in Santa Barbara; I reminded them birth is not a beginning, but a continuation. And death is not an ending, but a continuation.

“At 90, Louise Hay recently made her continuation into the non-physical realm.”

At 90, Louise Hay recently made her continuation into the non-physical realm. In the 1980's she started Hay House publishing and helped to usher all of this fabulous weirdness into the mainstream. She was a trailblazer at a time of great fear and separation, and I think we would do well at this time in history to remember that motto, “We aren't here to play ain't it awful – we are here to take a positive approach.” I think anyone reading any of my books can clearly see the influence Louise continues to have on me and for that I am forever grateful.

Am I Doing the...

Continued from page 5

friend reported to me the pain had lifted, and she felt relief. The real important awareness was the spiritual principle of practicing grace and forgiveness to ourselves.

Physical healing may not be the outcome in every instance. Nothing in this world ever assures that. And here is where we are presented with the opportunity to move to the level of reality where only

"I will bring fear into my heart. To meet the pain and the fear with openness, to embrace it, to allow it... I'm not trying to 'beat' my sickness; I'm allowing myself into it, forgiving it."

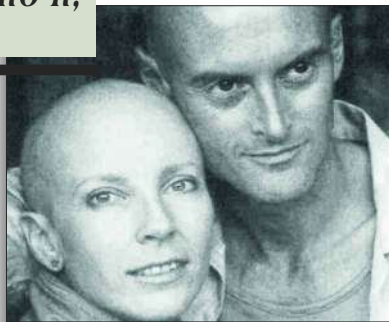
truth exists: our true identity does not lie within the body, but within the Spirit. We learn from the Course that God alone has established our true identity; we are all His Holy Children in Whom He is well pleased. To realize this, we must keep our focus on the truth. The Course strongly indicates it takes vigilance and a little willingness.

A beautiful accounting of how to deal with this type of outcome from a spiritual perspective is offered in noted contemporary author and Course student, Ken Wilber's book, *Grace and Grit*. In the book, Wilber recounts his wife Treya's insightful reflections as her five-year long journey of battling cancer was about to come to an end with the death of her physical body. "I will bring fear into my heart. To meet the pain and the fear with openness, to embrace it, to allow it. Realizing that brings wonderment at life. It gladdens my heart and nourishes my soul. I feel such joy. I'm not trying to 'beat' my sickness; I'm allowing myself into it, forgiving it. I will go on, not with anger and bitterness, but with determination and joy."

The big take-away from all of this is: Ultimate healing is not of the body, but of

the spirit. The body is only temporary, the spirit and mind are eternal. Physical healing or the absence of it, is never a result of our perfect execution of Course principles. Realize that fear is the primary motivating factor of the ego. Its vicious voice will never fail to condemn and convince you that if you do die from your illness, you will cease to exist. But as Treya so gracefully demonstrated, embrace the pain. Forgive it. And let the spiritual process take over.

When we are experiencing pain, it seems so real. I am not trying to discount that at all. What I am advocating, however, is my own experience of living with the Course some thirty years. When I am feeling out of sorts, I'm learning to be my best friend. I'm not hitting home runs every time, but my batting average is much better than it used to be. We need but apply, or at the very least, demonstrate our intention to apply the healing answers and



Treya and Ken Wilber

joyful perspective of the Course. Spirit will guarantee the improvement in your batting average, too!

"Be free today. And carry freedom as your gift to those who still believe they are enslaved within a body. Be you free, so that the Holy Spirit can make use of your escape from bondage, to set free the many who perceive themselves as bound and helpless and afraid. Let love replace their fears through you. Accept salvation now, and give your mind to Him... For He would give you perfect freedom, perfect joy, and hope that finds its full accomplishment in God."

(Lesson 199)

Make a Movie

Continued from page 10

My ego will need an entourage, my own trailer, paparazzi, and a concerted effort to ruin relationships. Jack, our new Cavalier King Charles puppy, just came charging in after my husband fed him in the kitchen and is now licking my bare toes, which is ticklish beyond description. I have told him over and over not to, so I tell him again. He looks at me, turns his head in that questioning look of his, grabs his blue squeaky chicken off the couch, and is making the most insulting personal racket while circling my chair. Doesn't he know I'm a big shot?

SEPTEMBER 2018

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See our Gift Offer on page 11

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What's Happening

Continued from page 2

by extending that healing. We invite you to join with us each day at 4:30pm (Pacific Time) for a moment of prayerful support through our prayer ministry to extend this healing. We invite you to join with us for yourself and your loved ones. If you have a prayer request, please send it to MDC.

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November: "God's peace and joy are mine." (L105)

December: "God goes with me wherever I go." (L41)

January: "I am spirit." (L97)



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The Power of Love

Continued from page 7

I think it took me to the next level of being a better person, because I don't hold grudges for anything or any situation... it [forgiveness] is letting go so the past does not hold you prisoner, does not hold you hostage."

"Forgiveness is accepting that it has happened, not that it is okay for it to have happened — it is accepting that it – happened and now what do I do about it."

What this is saying is that within the act of forgiveness, we are recognizing the insubstantiality of the past, rather than by continuing to hold onto it through negative attachment. Forgiveness is allowing the present moment to be simply as it is, and when we do we transform our lives, both within and without. Whereas an unforgiving mind is chaotic and thrives on judg-

mental thoughts that it refuses to raise to doubt, a forgiving mind is still, and quietly does nothing, judges not, letting love be itself, and making way for peace and joy.

"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future."

Paul Boese



Oprah Winfrey

Forgiveness is an act of a gentle heart that knows of love. One effective approach to use when you are consumed with anger or other negative emotion toward

another person or yourself is to forget about trying to forgive and just spend more time searching and finding your own love, including toward yourself, within you. When you see love within yourself, slowly your feelings of being upset – your anger, even your hate and rage – will begin to seem a long way off, and eventually they will feel totally unimportant.



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The HOLY ENCOUNTER

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2017

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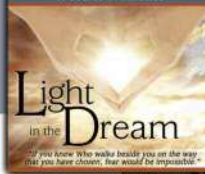
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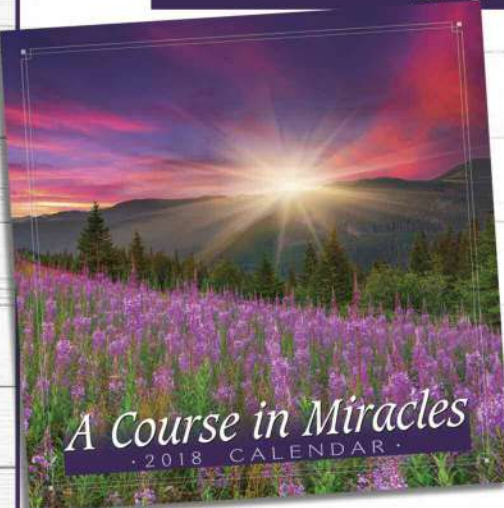
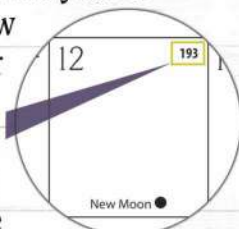
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