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The HOLY ENCOUNTER



NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2019
A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



The Awareness of Love

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Author Karen Casey once told a story about the Dalai Lama that really stuck with me. It seems he had been invited to speak at a high-priced fundraiser. After dinner, it was time for the main event. The Dalai Lama walked to the microphone and slowly looked around the room, and then said, "Love one another." Those important words hung in the air, and then he turned

around and sat down.

An uncomfortable hum filled the room as people



wondered if they had paid all this money for three words! All of a sudden, the Dalai Lama rose again from his chair, appearing as if he had forgotten something. As he made his way back to the podium, the crowd sounded a collective sigh of relief as they anticipated his next words. He leaned into the microphone, again slowly gazing around the room, and said, "And, if you can't love one another, at least don't hurt anyone." With that, he was done and sat down for the

final time.

Truth is profound and simple. If it is not, then it probably isn't the truth. For many students of *A Course in Miracles*, its message seems profound, but it also seems to be anything but simple. And yet, while it is very simple, that doesn't mean it is always easy for "complicated" minds to understand.

What the Course is asking us to do is simple... it is asking us to love one another. That is simple enough, right? After all, the people at that high-priced fundraiser knew that and expected more for their money. But how many of us are really practicing that simple truth?

When I first came across *A Course*

in *Miracles* in 1977, I was not planning to dedicate my life to it. My goal at that time was to pursue an acting career. I had achieved some success in Oregon with my acting and broadcasting skills, so I thought Los Angeles would be the natural next step. Of

course, the Course became my constant companion as I ventured out of my comfort zone. I took it on casting calls, interviews, meetings, and jobs. I was always discreet about showing the cover, but

"...the Dalai Lama rose again from his chair, appearing as if he had forgotten something. As he made his way back to the podium, the crowd sounded a collective sigh of relief as they anticipated his next words."

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.

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Let's Keep It Going!

Your responses to our 2019 fundraising appeal have just begun arriving as we go to press on this issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. We at the Center are grateful, not just for your support during this annual appeal, but also your generous and loyal support of MDC's work all year long.

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 donation is gratefully acknowledged, it's important for us to remind you how essential you and your support are to MDC's mission. With that in mind, our recent letter included a "table tent" which displays two poignant quotations from *A Course in Miracles*. We hope you have already placed it on your desk or kitchen countertop.

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 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.

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

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

● **"The Fundamentals of Forgiveness"** on January 18, 2020 - is the next in our series of seminars



on the Course with Beverly McNeff. You may attend in person or via live stream. Either way, you will be able to interact live during the seminar and have access to all materials and recorded sessions after the event. As one attendee of our last seminar said, "What an awesome workshop seminar! Thank you so much for Beverly's amazing Course teaching!" You can find all the details on the page 3. In-person attendance is limited, so make your reservations now. Live stream is limitless!

● **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!

● **Retreat Experience Made Easy** - Now is the perfect time to reserve your place at our next **Holy Encounter Retreat** on **September 18-20, 2020**. These retreats give students time to go deeper into the experience of *A Course in Miracles* while enjoying the



peaceful setting of the incredible ranch property. If you are ready for a transforming experience, we encourage you to join us. See page 8 for photos and experiences from our past retreat. 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 pay-

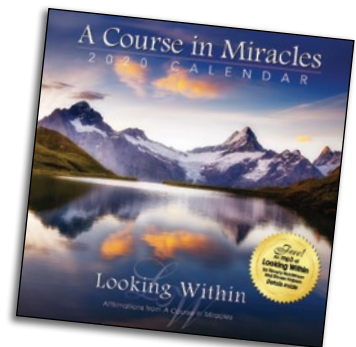
ments throughout the year will complete your registration.

● **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 smartphone, 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.

● **Our 2020 A Course in Miracles Wall Calendar** is now available to give and receive as the perfect holiday gift! It features stunning full color photos along with inspiring quotes from the Course, taken from the recording *You are Entitled to Miracles*, for each month. This calendar is sure to keep the Course's message of peace and healing forefront in your mind all year long. Plus each calendar



contains a **free mp3 download** of the recording by Beverly Hutchinson and Steven Halpern. It's a meaningful gift you can give to all your family and friends... and the more calendars you purchase, the lower the price!

A Holiday Blessing

from Your Friends at Miracle Distribution Center

"Each little gift you offer to your brother lights up the world." (T-22.VI.9)

It all begins with you! Please join with us as together we nurture and extend the light of love that is within us this holiday season. Remember, that "light" is the translation of this world into Heaven.

"I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here." (W-61)



*"If there is light in the soul,
There will be beauty in the person;
If there is beauty in the person,
There will be harmony in the home;
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation;
If there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world."*

Chinese proverb

Continued on page 15



Next in our Series of Seminars to Deepen Your Understanding of **A Course in Miracles**

with

**Beverly
Hutchinson McNeff**

Beverly brings her 42 years of Course study to this seminar to explore the powerful and practical steps to forgiveness that the Course offers all of us.



Saturday, January 18, 2020

2 WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

in Person

"I'm so glad I came. Beverly's always - understandable explanations are invaluable. I had wandered from the Course and this first seminar brought me back!"



via Live Stream



"I loved every bit of this first Live Stream seminar. I will incorporate the powerful messages into my daily life. Beverly, thank you for your insights, grace, and peace."

Either way you participate, you will be able to interact during the seminar and have access to all materials and recorded sessions after the event.

9am - 4:30pm • Cost \$59

To attend in person, the seminar will be held at:
Miracle Distribution Center 3947 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim

for reservations call **800-359-ACIM** (2246)

or online: **www.miraclecenter.org**

A *Course in Miracles* advises us in the text section which ushers in the New Year that it is now time for us to take our place in the Great Awakening. It counsels us to "make this year different by making it all the same." I think we all yearn to be more consistent with our choices for peace, but we all know the feeling of not being very successful in our attempts. We finish a workbook lesson, feel the peace of God, and then the phone rings or we get behind the wheel, and all the success of a moment before seems to disappear in rage and anger.

But, it doesn't have to be that way. Nothing is lost by our moments of forgetting, if we are willing to start again. I know this thought resonates with your heart, as it does mine, for we all want to strive toward a more consistent way to live instead of one minute at peace and the next in conflict.

So, if you are ready, let's start again to awaken to the lasting peace that is within us now. I hope you will join me for this day-long seminar as we delve into the Answer that God has given us through the power of forgiveness. For many, forgiveness seems almost impossible in this world, yet we are assured that forgiveness is not only possible, but it is the only way to heal this impossible world. As the Course tells us, "Forgiveness is the end of dreams, because it is a dream of waking." Let's wake up together!

Let's take these steps together so you may "let all your relationships be made holy for you. This is our will. Amen."



Miracle Musings...

How's Your Day Been?

by Paul McNeff

"Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

"Let every voice but God's be still in me." (Lesson 254)

Today we let no ego thoughts direct our words or actions. When such thoughts occur, we quietly step back and look at them, and then we let them go. We do not want what they would bring with them. And so we do not choose to keep them. They are silent now. And in the stillness,



hallowed by His Love, God speaks to us and tells us of our will, as we have chosen to remember Him."

How's your day been? As I embarked on the first rehearsal of *KidSingers'* twenty-third season, I was filled with excitement knowing how profoundly this music program impacts these kids' lives. And, I was also a little nervous about getting back into the rehearsal mode after being on summer break for some months.

Along with the large amount of new music to rehearse, there were myriad other housekeeping tasks that needed to be implemented in this first rehearsal to fully get the program successfully launched. Handing out *KidSingers'* rehearsal and performance attire, measuring kids for their performance vests, and taking their pictures for our photo board; all required detailed attention. Even though I had a lot of staff assistance, I could not help but feel a little anxiety that everything was going

to fall into place and get accomplished.

As I left the house for the rehearsal, adeptly aware of my apprehension, Beverly encouragingly chirped, "Just have fun." Falteringly I countered, "Thank you, I'm sure it will all be good."

But, as I arrived at our rehearsal venue, plans quickly began to unravel. All my organizational intentions seemed to go "poof" and disappear. I forgot the curtain backdrop

for the kid's photos. I also forgot some of the crucial music for my support staff. In the middle of the rehearsal, I somehow misplaced my list for monitor assignments, which we give out to select kids at the end of each session. The seating charts were missing kids' names.

We didn't have enough singing star ribbons so we could not award those prizes at the end of practice. By the end of the two-and-a-half-hour session, my ego was running amok. Viciously it accused me, "You've been *KidSingers'* artistic director for how many years now, Paul? Twenty-three! And this is the best you can do?!"

Just before this volcanic emotion could erupt and cause a real scene, somewhere in the deep, still recesses of my mind, I was brought back to a remembrance of sanity as I recalled the words Beverly had said to me upon my departure from home, "Just have fun." Little had I known then that those three

small words would later make such a big difference.

In a split second, a calmer, more peaceful voice emerged, "Just remember, if you draw attention to all the condemning thoughts about your perceived administrative missteps, you will make the problem real." My *A Course in Miracles'* lesson that day must have also been rumbling around in my consciousness too... "Let every voice but God's be still in me." (Lesson 254) In this case, I heard the voice of God miraculously filter through the voice of my loving wife. The amazing brilliance about this stuff is that it really works.

In an instant, I returned to a more peaceful state of mind and was able to complete what was now to be a very successful rehearsal. Sure, we had problems, but they were miniscule, were I to but keep them in the right perspective.

I love the wit, wisdom, and insights our friend and author Hugh Prather has handed down to us. In the entry of his September 11th flip calendar, he poses a little riddle, "Is



"Just before this volcanic emotion could erupt and cause a real scene... I recalled the words Beverly had said to me upon my departure from home, 'Just have fun.'"

it possible to say, 'Nothing will go right today?' and still be happy?... Is there really any hope of eliminating forever all annoying noises, smells, poor workmanship, overpriced products, traffic snarls, and rude-

ness in stores?" Thought provoking, right?!

We try so hard to conform the world to our concept of what we need to do or

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

possess to achieve happiness. We feel we have to go to the right schools, get the right job, find the right “one” as our significant other, go to the right places, wear the right clothes, ad nauseam. Not that any of these are bad goals in the world, but I believe we will not find life’s deepest meaning or happiness in material form, or any set of circumstances that must go right. Rarely does this happen and it certainly is not the primary message of the Course.

“I remember the black comedy, Wag the Dog. The movie’s title is derived from the adage that a dog is smarter than it’s tail, thus the dog should wag the tail.”



As Hugh summarizes, “Because this is the basic nature of the world, we have little chance of being happy if we are waiting for something in the world to go right.” So, can we still be happy when nothing in our day goes right? A Course in Miracles offers an alternative, but let’s read on.

I remember the black comedy, *Wag the Dog*. The movie’s title is derived from the adage that a dog is smarter than its tail, thus the dog should wag the tail. But, if the tail is wagging the dog, then he is probably out of control! Many times when we feel we are victims of the world, we are out of control and try to make change by manipulating the form. In this case, the tail is wagging the dog. Real change, however, occurs when we stop reacting to the effects of the world and take back control of our choices and experiences. We may not always be able to change the circumstances, but we can determine how we will react to them. Therefore, we will be the dog wagging the tail instead of the tail wagging the dog.

In the movie, a sidesplitting sequence of events takes place when the president of the United States is about to get caught in a sex scandal fourteen days before the election. It’s time for damage control. One of his advisers contacts a top Hollywood producer for help.

He decides the best way to handle it is to distract, distract, distract. So, he manufactures a war in Albania that the president can heroically end, all through mass media. After the fake war is about to be exposed and focus potentially turns back to the president’s

scandal, the Hollywood producer downplays the development and spins the situation exclaiming, “This is nothing!” This running joke gets increasingly hilarious as it is invoked each time a new untruth is exposed in the fabricated war and focus again returns to

the presidential scandal.

How do we handle circumstances in our life that would seem to trip us up? Like the president in *Wag the Dog*, do we fabricate fake stories and manipulate the form to distract us from taking responsibility for our actions, or do we insert into our story that sage mantra, “This is nothing”?

The Course says it another way, “Today we let no ego thoughts direct our words or actions... And so we choose not to keep them.” Even if I’m not always consistent at this lesson, is it my intention, at least, to practice this lesson during my “nothing will go right today” day.

It has been my experience that the Course’s lessons, if practiced, can consistently restore us to truth, and we will reap the

benefit of healing and happiness. We just need to recall the fundamentals of this lesson. When we hear that vicious voice of the ego launch into its rant of attack, we have the choice to go to that place in our mind and listen to that still, small voice as it says to us, “They [the ego thoughts] are silent now. And in the stillness, hallowed by His Love, God speaks to us and tells us of our will, as we have chosen to remember Him.”

So how’s your day been? Has everything gone right today? Has everything gone the way you wanted it to go? If not, perhaps it’s time we start to “wag the tail” instead of vice



“If we play the victim of life and let the tail ‘wag the dog,’ then get ready for a wild ego ride that will end in disaster and grief.”

versa. The power of choice is our own. If we play the victim of life and let the tail “wag the dog,” then get ready for a wild ego ride that will end in disaster and grief. However, if our

choice is to assertively “wag the tail,” then we allow Spirit to still our minds, listen for the Voice for God that is embedded within us, and let the hallowed memory of God miraculously bring forth healing and happiness. And, what a day that will be!

The Envelope Please...

In this issue of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**, you should have found an envelope addressed to Miracle Distribution Center. If you appreciate this magazine and our many projects and services, we hope you will take a moment and return the envelope to us with a contribution enclosed.

Your gift supports all of Miracle Distribution Center’s services for *A Course in Miracles* students... **and it’s tax-deductible**



Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Change Your Mind Change Your Life

Living as a Messenger of Love

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



When we were brought together by Holy Spirit in 1981, we decided that we wanted to commit to have a joint purpose in our lives. We chose to have a Holy Relationship where God came first in the relationship. To keep this commitment, we decided that we would strive to be “messengers of love” wherever we went.

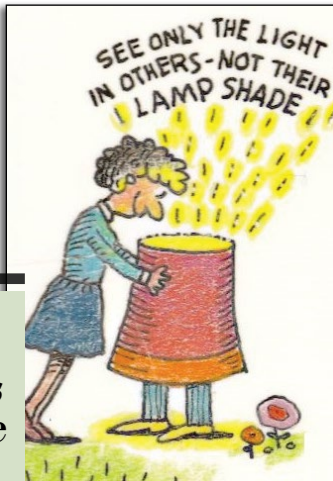
What does that mean? It means we choose daily to hold no grudges or attack thoughts. It means to be kind and to talk with integrity. It means choosing each day to make it the best and happiest day of our lives, regardless what is put on our plate or regardless of the state of our bodies. It means seeing the light of love in everyone, no matter what their behavior.

To be a messenger of love means to give up trying to change anyone. If there is something to be changed, it is the thoughts in our own minds. A *Course in Miracles* says, forgiveness will make us free. So at the beginning of each day, we make sure our thoughts will be forgiving no matter what we hear on the radio or TV. When we decide to listen to the TV, we remind ourselves that regardless of the behavior of the candidates or politicians, we will make no judgments. When we see them attacking each other, we see them as fearful and giving a call of help for love. When we are free from attacking them, we can love them and love ourselves.

We know that unconditional love is the essence of our being. What does that mean? When we give up attack thoughts and make inner peace our only goal, we wind up being peaceful and happy. It's so easy in this world

of ego and fear to interpret people by what we see and hear. We are challenged each day to not interpret other's behaviors. We realize that whenever we judge others, all judgments originate within us and are projected outward. Thus we think it is the other person and not ourselves. A messenger of love remembers who we *all* are... part of God and all that is. We totally believe that everyone is forgivable. We choose to have no enemies and make love the way we walk in gratitude.

The ego world says some people are bad and some people



are good, some people deserve our love and others deserve our wrath. Through *A Course in Miracles*, we see it differently.

If you find yourself making a judgment, ask yourself if this thought is really bringing you peace of mind. If the answer is “no,” then you can choose once again to see the person's light instead of their lampshade.

We do our best *not* to take ourselves too seriously. We have found children to be great teachers of love. Children are much more able to forgive others and not to hold onto grudges. Some people hold grudges for a long time and even die holding tightly. It seems impossible to have a peaceful death when we are holding on to grudges and grievances. Forgiveness paves the road to a

peaceful death.

We are careful to use words that create joining instead of separation... and NEVER to use words as weapons. We let the Holy Spirit tell us what to think, say, and do rather than allowing our egos to make our decisions. We hear the voice of Holy Spirit guiding us to make every contact with others a holy encounter. The ego will do everything in its power to create separation by making judgments all the time. As messengers of love, we will not make judgments but will look on everyone with kindness and love and see them as part of ourselves.

Sometimes we forget about generosity being an important part of our relationship with our Creator. We believe in the reality of Holy Spirit being always present, loving us, and allowing us to see our mistakes and to correct our errors with love instead of punishment.

“There is no cruelty in God and none in me.” (W-170) We practice this every day. Always taking full responsibility for our thoughts and actions in our relationship with each other, we experience each other as honest, kind, and compassionate. We trust

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Nightingale
Conant

The ULTIMATE Gerald Jampolsky and Diane Cirincione-Jampolsky LIBRARY

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



Recognizing Spirit Maximal Expressions of Love

by Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

There is only one task for you to complete. It is to completely forgive yourself and others so that you will remember who you are.

Many people have a fear of being seen and known. Even by those they love, they fear judgment. Ironically, the path to freedom is found in becoming increasingly vulnerable and transparent and allowing others to see us. In this way, intimacy is “in-to-me-see.”

Forgiveness is the means of becoming willing to hide nothing and to understand peace and joy. It is the way we release ourselves from the darkness of the past. Passing judgments on other people, the guilt we see in them — that is our judgment and guilt reflecting back at us. In other words, we fear our darkness, and then we see it in others.

I may not know you, but I can say this: Much of the upset in your life is due to two reasons — either someone did not live up to your expectations, or some event did not go how you think you wanted it to go. Most reasons for being upset fit into one of the two. It is not easy to admit, but when you are angry, it is likely you feel that way because someone has fallen short of fulfilling the functions that you decided they would or should fill. If you are like most people, you then go about making arguments that your “reason” for attack or upset is justified. I know of no person who has not fallen into this pattern at one time or another.

Every moment that you hold an attacking thought and argue for its reality is a wasted moment for love. May we each cease to allow such folly to sidetrack us from what is most important. Do not be taken in by your attacking or defensive thoughts, held captive, and brainwashed. Instead, observe such thoughts, dispassionately, and impartially as though they are nothing of importance. Slip silently by them knowing they have no power to hold you back from seeing yourself as you indeed

are, from seeing other people as they are, from understanding the core of who we are is the same and beautiful.

Trust in love is easy when you are feeling it and not so easy when you are not. The task is not only to act from love when you are feeling it, but also to act from faith that there is a strength higher than your own, even when you are not feeling it. This faith stems from trusting that love is there, even if you are not experiencing it.



“Every moment that you hold an attacking thought and argue for its reality is a wasted moment for love.”

I have come to see that if I am only trusting in the strength of my mind, then I have every reason to be

hesitant, worried, and afraid. This hits home more fully each year I practice the *A Course in Miracles*, and I recognize within myself a deep sense of relief rather than a skeptical reaction. To really “get” where real strength comes from, let me offer you a few questions to contemplate.

The first question is, “what can you predict or control?” For me, the answer is — despite my best efforts in the past — not much. My ego may wish I had an equivalent of a weather satellite to orbit my world and give me a ten-day forecast for the future, but I don’t have such a device. The second question is, “what is there that can be counted on more than the wisdom arising from stillness and peace from the guidance of the Holy Spirit?”

Reach deep within, below the constant meaningless meandering and chatter of your mind. Rest in the place kept safe within you now, calm, still, and where nothing can divert you from listening to the gentle voice within.

All you are being asked is to realize that

you have disassociated yourself from love, and you are gently invited to decide to return to love. When you are afraid or mistrusting, it is because you have forgotten your real strength and placed faith instead in the flimsiness of your independence — trading everything for nothing, blindly exchanging love for fear.

When fear arises, may I remember the source of my true Strength, and remind myself not to trust in weakness, but rather in the strength of love that is

forever available to me.

There is a place in you where there is perfect peace.

There is a place in you where nothing is impossible.

There is a place in you where the strength of God [Love] abides. (W-47.7:4)

Awaken to Love Exercise: One Minute Maximal Expression of Love

Choosing to love someone maximally in a single moment is trust and forgiveness in action. A maximal expression of love is, by definition, without fear, hatred, resentment, need for reciprocation, or limits of any kind.

In today’s world, maximal expressions of love are not talked about much, but we speak freely about what makes us upset, tasks to be done, or wrong that has been done to us. Today, break this habit and enthusiastically, for one minute, be free to have a maximal expression of love — you will benefit, and the person you are extending it to will be positively affected. There is a miraculous nature about maximal expressions of love: when you take one minute to do this, there is the possibility that your whole day — maybe even your entire life — can become peaceful and happy.

Continued on page 14

Holy Encounter Retreat

with Beverly McNeff

A Recap of MDC's 2019 Retreat

These powerful retreats allow attendees to deeply soak in the words, inspiration, and practical application of *A Course in Miracles* within an atmosphere of love, support, and beauty.

We hope you enjoy the photos and comments from those who attended and will plan to join us next year.



"Once again, thank you for providing the 'field' for opening hearts and instructing minds. The retreat was a feast of ideas and fellowship."



"Beverly's ability to present this material in a fun and engaging way is simply incredible, and a sheer joy to behold. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"When my co-workers asked why I looked so happy today, I told them we went to *A Course in Miracles* spiritual retreat this weekend. It was exactly what I needed. I am recharged and full of love. Thank you for helping me to find my joy!!"



Small group interactions helped us to go deeper

"Thank you never seems adequate to express my deep appreciation for this AMAZING retreat!"



Our Military Veterans gathered with Bev for a photo



Meditation in nature!



"Thank you for the most incredible, sublime time we spent together. I'm carrying the messages in my heart. The music accompanying the messages helps to keep the messages strong!!"



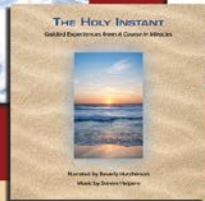
"Words cannot express my gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of such a loving, courageous, fearless and devoted group of individuals. Because of the safe and loving environment that was created, we felt so free to go deep, and express our true selves."



Chef-prepared, organic meals were abundant!

For information on next year's Retreat (Sept. 18-20, 2020) visit our website: www.miraclecenter.org

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Give the Gift of Understanding

Seminar Series presented by
Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

Fundamentals of Forgiveness

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18th, 2020

Attend in Person or via Live Stream Seminar \$59
(See page 3 for full details)

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The “Don’t Know” Mind

by Jacob Glass

“Yet the essential thing is learning that you do not know.” (T-14.XI.1)

If you do a word search in *A Course in Miracles*, it is almost shocking how many times “do not know” comes up. This is quite insulting to the ego, but so very soothing to my soul and mind when I embrace it. The ego is obsessed with reasoning things out and trying to make sense of them. It is always trying to figure things out and “fix” them. For me, that is completely hopeless, frustrating, and depressing. Even if I think I have figured some problem out, it rarely brings me more than fleeting joy, followed by a crash when I find out that no one wants to get on board with my new plan for “fixing” everything and everybody, including myself.

I began studying the Course 35 years ago, and I am not one bit smarter than I was on day one. When I read books that describe all the ego workings of Helen and Bill and the ins and outs of what drove their ego to do this or that, it gives me a pounding headache and fills me with more confusion and feelings of separation. It feels complicated and heavy when I am thinking I need TO UNDERSTAND anything. I guess I’m just not that smart. I don’t really know much at all in fact. I only know one or two things, but those things rule the entire Cosmos, as far as I can tell.

I know that mind is the creative level. I know that there are only two thought systems – one feels good and one feels bad, so choose the one that feels good. I know that of myself, I can do nothing, but the Christ within can do all things if I will surrender and get out of the way. I know letting go (forgiveness) is the path to peace and the only way to really forgive is to admit that I don’t even know or understand what the heck happened or is happening anyhow... The end.

So, the older I get, the less I actually seem

to know, and that is totally cool with me. The reasoning mind is NOT the miraculous mind. Miracles make no sense to that mind, and I am in the business of miracles, so I leave “understanding things” to the Higher Authority. Apparently, understanding things is way above my pay-grade. NO PLAN that I have EVER had has worked – at all – on any level. Faith and belief has always been my wheelhouse, not strategizing.

As far as I’m concerned, I work for Jesus as His semi-retired



I say, “Here I am Jesus, make joyful use of me today! You know where to find me and how to best use me, because I have NO idea how to be truly helpful, nor what needs doing. I assume You’re in control here. Thanks!” And then I may ask Him a question or two, I listen for Guidance, and go on with my day. It’s amazing to me how much of my Holy Function gets fulfilled, while I am sitting in my pajamas in my apartment in West Hollywood.

I’ve been teaching a series called “Mastery in Faith” for a while now and one of our mantras in this symposium is, “I don’t know what anything, including this means.” It is amazing how that can really cut the ego off at the pass as it is preparing to jump in with fear, panic, rage, defensiveness, attack, and all its greatest hits.

Sometimes I hear Course teachers saying, “spiritual people should be doing this or that in the world” and it used to disturb me that someone would be telling others what to do. Now, I just release them to Jesus and say, “Above my pay grade, so I’m giving them to You as I go back to weeding my own yard.”

It feels so dangerous to me when I hear teachers talking about “morality” since I know it is a man-made concept. Every religion and culture has a different “morality” – even

if some of them are using the same “holy” book to come to different conclusions. One religious morality says it is right and just to execute gay people,

or women who drive, while another one uses the same book to say the opposite. I heard a woman minister talking the other day about how the Bible is 100 percent true from start to finish and is the ONLY word of God, even though she was ignoring that the very Bible she was waving around says women should not speak in church and should sit down and ask their husbands for all their answers.

And preaching that “love” can save the country or world is insane because that human love cannot be counted on for anything. Think of all the people and things you “used” to love, for instance. Human love is undependable and unstable, and it certainly cannot be legislated. Only learning to love as God loves revitalizes anything, because it is the ONLY love that is stable and dependable. “God does not change His Mind about you, for He is not uncertain of Himself” (T-10.in.3) the Course reminds us. We are unstable. We change our minds and our hearts. The Course says we cannot begin to understand the love of God because it is so totally unlike what we call love. But we can experience it if we let go of NEEEEEDING to understand and know.

“The ego is obsessed with reasoning things out and trying to make sense of them.”

executive secretary, following orders on a “need-to-know” basis.

When I wake up in the morning,

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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



My Holiness

by Joseph Miller

*My mind is part of God's. I am very holy.
My holiness envelops everything I see.
My holiness blesses the world.
There is nothing my holiness cannot do.
My holiness is my salvation.* (Lessons 35 - 39)

I'd like to offer a few reflections on the theme of "my holiness" that threads these five lessons, because I think it is a good facet for approaching the heart of *A Course in Miracles*. After all, as Lesson 39 tells us: "Your holiness is the answer to every question that was ever asked, is being asked now, or will be asked in the future." That is a very sweeping assertion!

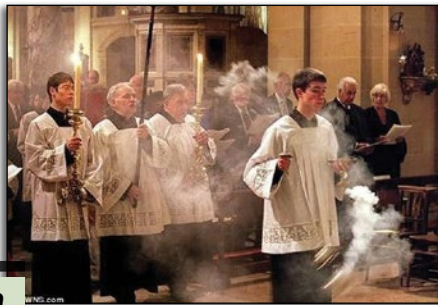
One student in class reminded us of the etymological link between "holiness" and "wholeness." Another student noted, significantly, the spelling of "holistic." The Course frequently takes up words from the Christian traditions that carry a lot of

baggage. The Course has chosen not to abandon these words, but invites us to re-think and therefore, re-feel them. The training guides us to cut free the baggage and forge new mental associations. The words are resurrected with fresh and living usefulness, scrubbed clean of stale and fearful associations. In other words, this language alchemy is merely an aspect of the overall task of attaining right perception. The word "holiness" can be a tough nut to crack. It easily conjures fearful images of high mass, incense, ornate robes, and overwhelming cathedrals; or maybe simply a superhuman (and therefore accusatory by comparison) purity.

There is a third Course term which should be brought into this conversation: healing. This nifty trinity of concepts – holiness, wholeness, healing – all share the same

etymological root: the Germanic *hal*. The derivative root for "heal", *hælan*, is literally "to make whole or sound." It is my opinion, too, that the Course's frequent use of the word "insane" is related. It should not be regarded merely from a popular connotation of "crazy," but by etymology: that which is "un-sound," or not whole. These language considerations alone begin to provide latitude for forging fresh and rational associations.

Consider also the stag-



gering fact that Helen and Bill recorded the Course at the Columbia School of Physicians and Surgeons – the very face of the building etched with Ecclesiasticus 38.2,

"For of the most High cometh Healing."

What might we say about "my holiness?" Here are a few points I've garnered.

1. My holiness is not personal. Look at the title of the first lesson in the sequence. The initial premise is, *My mind is part of God's*. So, "my holiness" is not my holiness; it is God's holiness, "of the most High." Not "my" in the exclusive personal sense; but the "my" of membership, as in "my world" or "my galaxy."

2. My holiness is not achieved. It is an inherent holiness. It is my umbilical to God; my root; the headwaters of the stream of my being. It is unchanging, unchangeable, inviolable, undefiled. My holiness is my original innocence. This is a biggie, because it affronts the very deep and pervasive idea

of original sin. Don't slip into the mistake that just because a secular culture seems to have outgrown a dogmatic Christianity, it is free of original sin. Not so. If only it were so easy. The belief in separation from the divine is very deep, and dresses sacred or secular, as pleases the fashion of the times. A single day spent noticing the power of the psychology of guilt in personal life and the media is all that is required to satisfy the point.

"If guilt is hell, what is its opposite?" asks Lesson 39, repeatedly and persistently. The opposite is holiness. The opposite of brokenness is wholeness. The opposite of sickness is healing. All three are ways to express the logic of unity and fragmen-

tation. The ego invests a lot of stock in your conviction that you are originally broken or defective. That assumption alone guarantees the ego's continued employment. For a false problem, it offers false solutions. And since false solutions don't work, it knows you will keep coming back. The ego is like the "unhealed healer" or the false teacher. The Course says that such a person misuses their role by nurturing dependency. In other words, the ego needs to be needed. The Holy Spirit on the other hand, like the true teacher, releases the well of liberty within you, so that you become Self-centered in the true sense. Like training wheels or the stake holding up a sapling, the true teacher's role is necessary, but temporary.

Why is the thought of "my holiness" so threatening to the ego? Why does the ego crucify the Lord who proclaims my holiness? It is not so mysterious. You know this well as a student of human life. I'm remembering Bernard Shaw's quip: "It is easy – terribly easy – to shake a man's faith in himself. To take advantage of that to break a man's spirit is devil's work." Well, the Course tells us the

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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 was constantly working those principles behind every line I delivered or meeting I took.

It was interesting that my first year in Los Angeles was quite successful. I appeared in a number of national commercials, became a member of the Screen Actors Guild (a pretty big deal), and had two agents. I was told that now I needed a personal manager. I wasn't so sure about that, but I didn't think there was any harm in talking to someone.

I set a meeting with a personal manager at a very busy restaurant in Hollywood. I got there early so I could get a booth, but the place was already packed. I decided I would sit at the counter and wait for a booth to open.

As a young actress in Hollywood, it was not uncommon for men to flirt with you. I was not up for that on this day, so sitting at the counter was not high on my list. But, the counter was pretty empty, so I situated myself at a seat that would allow any courteous person space to leave a seat between us. Well, as you can imagine, someone walked in and sat right next to me. And so began my list of grievances with this person.

Grievance #1: He sat next to me.

Grievance #2: He lit a cigarette. This was when smoking was still allowed in sections of the restaurant and certainly permitted at the counter, so he was not doing anything unheard of or rude. But, I cannot stand the smell of cigarette smoke!

To me, it was a total insult. Plus, have you ever noticed that smoke from a smoker's cigarette will always go directly to the nose of a non-smoker? So Grievance #2 was really on fire!

The next thing I noticed was this guy smelled of body odor. It was so bad that even the smell of smoke didn't do much to mask it. So, that "scent" **Grievance #3** on its way.

Grievance #4: He spoke to me. I used every body-language position possible to show him I did not want to be interrupted, but he did not or chose not to "get it." He said his name was Timothy and asked what mine was.

I begrudgingly answered. Then he asked me what I did. I thought, Oh, great, now I'll say I'm an actress and then this guy will start flirting. But, to my surprise, he glossed over what I did and told me he worked with children.

As my mood began to soften, **Grievance #5** stepped up to the plate: He did not speak well. But, somewhere between a mispronounced word and dangling participle,

"Grievance #2: He lit a cigarette. I cannot stand the smell of cigarette smoke!"

I was touched by his tone. I turned to him and asked what kind of

work he did with kids. He said he helped kids who were having a lot of trouble fitting in. I can't remember his exact words, but it went something like this, "People sometimes judge us by what we look like on the outside and never take the time to find out what is going on inside. I try to help kids know that and help them to focus on what is real. I think we are all connected to this same light no matter how we look or appear. That's what we need to remember."

Well, his words hit me between the eyes.

I had been one of those "judging people," and I wanted a reprieve.

As he



spoke, something happened inside of me. Those grievances that had stood as immovable blocks began to fall away.

I didn't seem to mind he was sitting next to me, and I didn't even notice the smoke or his body odor. The fact he was speaking to me, with his mismatched verbs and nouns, was no longer a distraction. I became fully present with him. I wanted to find out more, but at that moment, the

personal manager

I was waiting to meet showed up and pointed to a booth we could sit in a few feet away. I told Timothy I would be right back, after I set my things at the booth.

When I came back to the counter, after only a few seconds, he was gone. I quickly looked around the restaurant, but there was no sign of him. The ashtray where his cigarette had laid was gone and so was the coffee cup he had been using. The waitresses at this restaurant don't move that fast, so it was as if it all had disappeared.

I went back to my meeting, but in the back of my mind was the thought of what had happened to Timothy. It wasn't until later that night that the thought came to me that Timothy was an angel.

Some 40 years ago, the idea that Timothy was an actual angel was more interesting to me than it is today, but he certainly was an angel to me in the sense that the Course refers to angels. The Course indicates that angels are the thoughts of God, which to me means anything that reminds me of my oneness with my Source and the truth of who I am.

Timothy gave me an opportunity to find myself by not reflecting back to me my grievances, but rather the truth. His defenselessness shined into my mind and allowed me to be willing to let the blocks be lifted from my awareness. Did the form of the blocks really matter? No, because they were easily passed by. What mattered was the willingness to pass them by and that willingness is always a potential in us because of who we are and Who our Father is.

I think of the story of Timothy often because it reminds me of a couple of things.

First, it reminds me that everyone is my angel and has the potential of helping me to be aware of the presence of God in me. Secondly, it reminds me that when my grievances start to arise, I have a choice: to find myself or lose myself. When I find

the Christ in another, I am found. If I pass the opportunity by, well, I will be given another chance. But, do we really want to continue waiting?

As we enter this season of "peace on earth, good will toward men," may we hold

"Grievance #4: He spoke to me. I used every body-language position possible to show him I did not want to be interrupted, but he did not or chose not to 'get it.'"

fast to the potential that is within us to heal this world. As the Course tells us,

"Each little gift you offer to your brother lights up the world. Be not concerned with darkness; look away from it and toward your brother. And let the darkness be dispelled by Him Who knows the light, and lays it gently in each quiet smile of faith and confidence with which you bless your brother. On your learning depends the welfare of the world."

(T-22.VI.9)



"The words of the Dalai Lama echo in my mind, 'Love one another. And, if you can't love one another, at least don't hurt anyone.'"

The words of the Dalai Lama echo in my mind, "Love one another. And, if you can't love one another, at least don't hurt anyone." That really isn't much to ask, is it?

Let us remember this when we turn on the television, read our news feeds, or get out of bed in the morning. Our habit may be to judge and condemn, but it is now time to practice the awareness of love.

We may not be very good at this awareness yet. We may feel very justified in our judgments, but there is a better way to live in this world, and we can find that way as we practice love, compassion, and willingness. We are given Help every step of the way as we start again on our journey to salvation. As the Course lovingly assures us...

"The infancy of salvation is carefully guarded by love, preserved from every thought that would attack it, and quietly made ready to fulfill the mighty task for which it was given you. Your newborn purpose is nursed by angels, cherished by the Holy Spirit and protected by God Himself." (T-19.IV.C.9)

May your holiday be filled with the awareness of love and the angels that always hover ever so near.



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Maximal Expressions

Continued from page 7

Here is what to do. Begin by choosing someone to actively love today. Don't edit or question the person you think of; whoever comes to you first will do. Next, remind yourself that your happiness will increase when you love this person maximally over the next 60 seconds. Don't



worry if you agree or not, or if they deserve your Love or not – it is only 60 seconds so don't over-think the task.

Take a few deep, full breaths with your eyes closed. Think of the person, and place

“...maximal expressions of love are not talked about much, but we speak freely about what makes us upset,... Today, break this habit and enthusiastically, for one minute, be free to have a maximal expression of love...”

your hands over your heart, and say aloud or silently, with compassion and the greatest sincerity: “may you feel loved this moment, may you be happy, may good things happen for you.” If you find resistance, don't fight

it. Simply note: “I am resisting, but it means nothing,” and then return to repeating the phrase with loving kindness.

After you spend a week or so practicing this process, move to the next level, and practice this toward people you are having difficulties with now or in the past. Repeat the same process as before. Don't fight any negative thoughts or memories about this person; allow them to be there, but again remind yourself they mean nothing: for 60 seconds you can rise above them.

“Unconditional love really exists in each of us. It is part of our deep inner being. It is not so much an active emotion as a state of being. It's not 'love you' for this or that reason, not 'love you if you love me.' It's love for no reason, love without an object.” Ram Dass ❖

My Holiness

Continued from page 11

devil is only a symbol for the ego. The ego poses in this fearful costume to distract traditional believers from its real puniness. “Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain! I am the great and powerful Oz!” Traditional Christianity holds dear the tenet of your original brokenness. The Church will not love and include you until you piously consent to your weakness and corruption.

Once you are willing to admit, “Man, I'm really effed-up!”, then all kinds of pseudo solutions come in. Here is the ego's salvation in five forms.

1. Distract yourself. Take your mind off it. Go to Vegas.
2. Anesthetize yourself. Keen awareness only sharpens your experience of being inadequate and unlovable. Dull the blade.
3. Embrace your brokenness in the company of others. For example:

- (a) The society of the saved. Yes, we are all guilty and deserving of punishment. But the slaughter of the Holy One will pay our ransom. We submit to this revealed truth, and therefore we feel superior to . . .
 - (b) The society of the damned. Yes, we are all guilty. So let's be leather-clad and pierced bad-boys, drag on our cigarettes of cynicism, and defiantly parade the highway to hell. There are no answers. But we don't give a shit.
4. Self-improvement. Work hard to gain your worth. Sweat equity in self-esteem. Crucify yourself to pay your own ransom, and gain a perch from which to smugly contrast yourself with the fat and lazy.
 5. And when none of these work, tumble down the spiral stair of despair and depression.

Can you see, then, the power of “my holiness”? “Your holiness is the salvation of the world, and your own.” No wonder the Course

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makes us practice, in so many variations, the thought of our abiding and inviolable innocence. “I am as God created me.” If your worth is inherent, not as a personality but as spirit, then you “need do nothing” to earn love, inclusion and Self-esteem. You need do nothing to repair a separation from God which never occurred. You have not been banished from the country club; there is no penalty re-entry fee. But you do need to repair your awareness of this fact, if you want to experience peace and happiness. You must accept this at-one-ment for yourself, and as yourself.

If we can learn to preserve an awareness of what God preserves within us, we can move lightly through the illusions that come and go. And then there is nothing our holiness cannot do. ❖

Living as a Messenger

Continued from page 6

each other implicitly, and we trust in God. We trust in peace. We trust in joy. We trust that we are both loveable and loved.

What has happened in the world is that we have forgotten that it is God's Will for us to be happy and connected with each other. Love means walking in gratitude with everyone. The Course says

"When we don't laugh often enough or love often enough, it is because we are seeing the world through the eyes of ego."



that the essence of our being is love, and that love is formless and can't be measured or defined. It can be found only in the present because that is where God is.

When we don't laugh often enough or love often enough, it is because we are seeing the world through the eyes of the ego. To be free of the ties of the ego and the fear that goes along with it, we need to move past feelings of guilt and fear. When we talk about seeing everyone as our brother or sister, we mean seeing each one as the light of the world, regardless of their behavior. To experience ourselves as the light of the world, all we have

to do is share that light with others and it will reflect back to us as our own.

One of the important lessons we often learn the hard way is how to be consistent in our relationship with God. Being consistent means remembering who and what we are... part of God. This means understanding the

power in allowing the Holy Spirit to direct our lives, rather than the ego.

When we became students of the Course, we started to see everything differently. We

could see that attacking others is attacking ourselves, forgiving others is forgiving ourselves, and loving others is loving ourselves. When we are consistent in our belief that everyone is forgivable, regardless of their behavior, and when we let go of interpreting other's actions, we are able to see the light and love within them and within ourselves.

Let us continue to remind each other that the Light of God is in everyone. Let go, let God, and lighten up! ❖

The "Don't Know" Mind

Continued from page 10

Put ALL your FAITH in the love of God within you; eternal, changeless and forever unailing. This is the answer to whatever confronts you today. (W-50.4:3)

So yeah, these days I'm hanging out in the peace and love that passes all understanding, while running errands for Jesus. ❖

What's Happening

Continued from page 2

See the back page for more details and visit our online store for all your holiday shopping!

Are you seeing the emails you value?

Email has woven itself into the fabric of our modern lives. But some students tell us they are not seeing all the emails they value. Are the ones we send you being kept out of sight? We often hear from readers who are searching for an email we sent them, only to find that message tucked away in their spam or junk mail folder. We encourage you to check your spam/junk mail folders regularly. If you happen to find one of our emails there, you can "train" your email program to automatically deliver our messages to your inbox. Whether you receive your daily Course lesson from us, or enjoy our weekly inspirational messages, we want to make sure you don't miss any of them!

"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. (T-15.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 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.

Affirmations for:

November: I thank my Father for His gifts to me. (L123)

December: I am as God created me. (L162) ❖

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NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2019

In This Issue...

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- How's Your Day Been?
- Living as a Messenger of Love
- The "Don't Know" Mind
- Maximal Expressions of Love
- My Holiness

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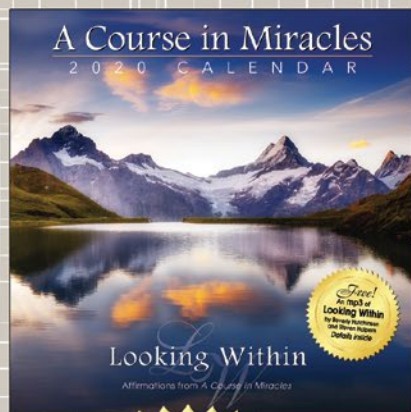
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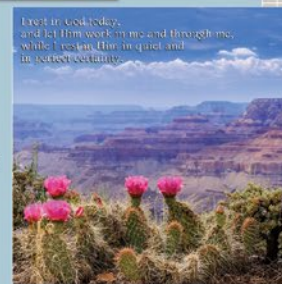
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