

The HOLY ENCOUNTER



September / October 2014
A Miracle Distribution Center Publication

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



Meditation for Health

by Beverly Hutchinson McNeff

If you thought a good night's sleep and proper diet and exercise were all you needed to be healthy, a new study from Harvard Medical School shows that meditation (prayer) can also change us for the better on a cellular level. It has long been agreed by scientists that meditation reduces stress and illness, but they were never sure why. This study finds the reason for the benefits. Regular meditation causes cellular change by basically turning on clusters of "good" genes that make us healthier while turning off clusters of "bad" genes that lead to disease.

In a study reported in *Yoga Journal*, volunteers meditated for twenty minutes a day for eight weeks. The results showed an increase in "health-promoting genes that boost immune response, energy metabolism, and insulin secretion," and a decrease in "health-depleting genes linked to stress and inflammation."

Want to meditate but not sure how?

For many people the idea of a twenty minute meditation may seem reasonable until they start and find their spirit may be willing, but their dedication is weak. Perhaps these three basic steps to meditation according to *Yoga Journal* will help:

1. **Focus on your breath** – as you close your eyes, bring your attention to the quiet and calming act of breathing in and out through your nose.
2. **Choose a mantra** – find a word or short phrase to repeat and focus on during your meditation.
3. **Clear your mind** – if thoughts come up to distract you, simply allow them to pass by without judgment and come back to your breath or mantra.

These are wonderful, simple steps, so how can we incorporate them as students of *A Course in Miracles*? First off, meditation is a practice. Don't be upset with

yourself if you find it difficult to focus or stay with a twenty minute meditation. If you are doing the workbook lessons in the Course, you have seen that they gently move you into longer practice periods

of meditation, starting with a few minutes and then building up as you move through the lessons. The purpose is to always release any guilt you may feel if you miss a practice period or fall short of the amount of time recommended. As the lessons suggest, simply try again when you can. This process slowly builds our spiritual muscle so that when we need it, it's there.

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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.

May Miracles Be Seen in 2014!

by Beverly
Hutchinson McNeff

A Shout Out to the World

Throughout America, the month of October is Red Ribbon Week. The observance started in 1985 after a DEA agent was kidnapped and murdered by drug traffickers in Mexico. The purpose of the week is to educate people on the risks of alcohol and drugs and to encourage healthy, drug-free lives. Most of us are familiar with this, especially if we have children. During these weeks, most kids wear those familiar red wrist bands or ribbons.

I remember one particular red ribbon week. Our son Jeffrey was in elementary school, and on one day all the kids were asked to wear red. They had an outside assembly and a helicopter flew overhead and took an aerial photo of all the kids in red standing in rows to spell out the words "JUST SAY NO."

We live fairly close to the school and on many days from our open, upstairs bedroom window, I can hear the sound of children playing during the school's recess times. It is a distant hum of joy, and it always makes me smile. On this particular day, I could actually hear snippets of the outside assembly. I heard the police officer telling the kids some statistics about drugs... how you

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

● **Conference Recordings** – If you attended our Annual International Conference on *A Course in Miracles* in August, and especially if you didn't, we know you'll be interested in getting the conference recordings. They're available as CDs and mp3s. You may purchase individual sessions, or the entire weekend in an album, by visiting our online store at www.miraclecenter.org or by calling 1-800-359-2246.

● **"Actually this is a BIG thank you for your mobile site which includes the ACM Lookup. Now I can at least use my iPhone to do research. Again, many THANKS!!!"** This is just one of the many comments we have received about our redesigned website. We always enjoy hearing that it is easy and helpful to use, so please let us know. In response to the explosion of web browsing on mobile phones, we have made it easier to navigate our website when you're on-the-go. Our website automatically detects your mobile device and presents easy-to-read pages including *A Course in Miracles* study group map, ACM Lookup, **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** and more. Just point your mobile phone browser to www.miraclecenter.org to experience it!

● **Get your Course Lesson on Facebook** Just "Like" our Miracle Distribution Center page on **Facebook** and each day you will find the Course lesson in your News Feed. Here's a recent comment from Jackalene Orser: "Thank you for providing the daily lessons! I read them every day and do my best to put the lesson into practice. I find having the lessons handy wherever I am is very supportive. It gives me blessings of guidance all through the day!" Thank you, Jackalene, for letting us know how helpful this is. We are honored to be here for you. Find our Facebook page from the



Facebook icon on our home page at www.miraclecenter.org.

● **Giving a truly meaningful Gift** – Here's what many students of the Course have done: Given a tax-deductible donation to MDC in someone's honor or memory. If you would like to give in such a way, send your donation and request, and we will send him, her or their family a personalized letter acknowledging your appreciation and support. It's a wonderful honor for that dedicated someone or their family. And, what a blessing it will be to those the Center serves, for your donation will go to support its free services! **Gifts in memory of ... Lena & Larry Smith** with loving memory of both her parents who passed recently from Dr. Dawn Ahart of California.

● **Course E-card!** Have you ever wanted to send a friend an e-card from *A Course in Miracles*? Well, now there are full-color, beautifully designed e-cards with inspirational quotes from the Course ready to be sent to that special someone. You choose the card, fill in the e-mail address, your personal message, and hit send! Your e-card will automatically arrive with the link for your friend to view the card. It's that easy and it's all **FREE!** Just go to www.miraclecenter.org and click "Create and send an e-card." There's even a video tutorial to help you. We're excited to offer this service and have added new cards and will be continuing to add more cards, so check back often!



● **New Features Added** – Visit our website at www.miraclecenter.org to see all our Center has to offer. Not only do we have video clips on our services and our upcoming retreat in Lucerne Valley, California, but we are adding short 5-6 minute

video clips from our weekly meetings to inspire your day. Now that we live stream our meetings, we have been uploading short segments for you to enjoy – thanks to the masterful editing skills of Bill Kasal! While you're there, you can surf over to our very popular search for ACIM study groups around the world, read and search the entire Course on our Lookup page, peruse back issues of **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER** and browse through our catalog of 300 items based on the Course. You can also visit our Wall of Innocence and add your own photo to our gallery. Or take our Pledge for Peace and see your city represented with peace on our map of the world. We're adding new features all the time, so check in often.

● **In praying for others**, we are not asked to solve their problems or mediate between them and God. "But it [praying for others] does mean that another stands beside you and helps to raise you up to God." This quote from *The Song of Prayer* (SP) – one of the two supplements to *A Course in Miracles* – offers us a way to be truly helpful when we may feel powerless to help another. This quote helps us to see

the practical nature of prayer – to pray is to simply hold a loving, empowering thought for another. The added benefit is that you are blessed as well. Since "*prayer is always for yourself*," (SP) praying for others becomes a way of strengthening your own faith. As you reach out to others in loving support, you can't help but heal issues in your own life, for by offering love to others, you automatically receive! Now you realize there is no difference between the healing of your life and another's, for they are both the same. And this is the prayer we offer to all who join with us: "I cannot go without you, for you are a part of me." (SP). Join us through the **Miracle Prayer Ministry** each day at 4:30 PM

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FEBRUARY 13-15, 2015 ♦ LUCERNE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

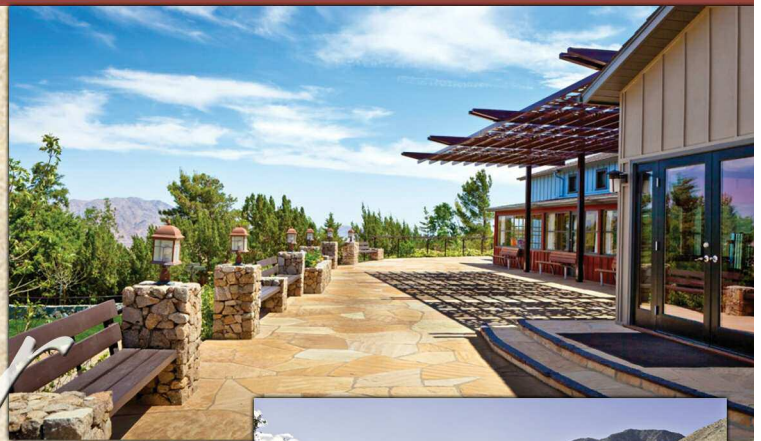
If you are ready for an experience of the peace and healing that *A Course in Miracles* promises... we invite you to Miracle Distributions Center's

Holy Encounter Retreat



International lecturer, author, and founder of the Center, Beverly Hutchinson McNeff, brings her 37 years of Course study to this weekend that will leave you with the tools and understanding you'll need to experience miracles in your life.

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



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

The Holy Encounter Retreat will be held at the spacious RW Ranch spiritual retreat center in Lucerne Valley, California. Sessions will be conducted in spacious meeting rooms and time for reflection and meditation may be experienced in various landscaped parks, intimate flower gardens, beside a



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

Everything is included, the weekend retreat activities, well-appointed lodging, and six organic, chef-prepared meals. Our caring and experienced staff, coupled with an oasis in the heart of Southern California, will provide you a safe and wonderful atmosphere for learning and sharing - a weekend where you can truly spend time on your own internal healing.

Please join us as we take a "journey without distance" to find that even in a world of chaos, our goal of peace and forgiveness has never changed.



Registration begins at \$495 and includes all retreat activities, six organic meals, and lodging.



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





This is a Required Course

by Connie Daley

During the years I have studied the Course I have heard these comments over and over from those who are new students, trying to read through the Course Text for the first time: “I just can’t read the Course.” “It’s too hard (long, abstract, confusing, etc).” “I try but I can’t continue.” “I don’t know where to begin.” “It’s too complicated for me, and I don’t understand it.” “I don’t have time.” “I’m not smart enough.” What follows here is an approach to reading the Course which I have recommended to many, with very positive feedback. Like you, I had my difficulties reading the Text in the beginning, so I developed this method to get myself past the stumbling blocks I had placed in my way. I would love to share these ideas with you.

There are surely as many ways to read the Course as there are people reading it. So, with the disclaimer that there are no “rules” about how it must be read, I think, based on feedback I have received, that many people need a few rules to provide structure for their first read. Soon they are off and running, and so proud of themselves. Even the Course has something to say about structure:

“Structure, then, is necessary for you at this time, planned to include frequent reminders of your goal and regular attempts to reach it. Regularity in terms of time is not the ideal requirement for the most beneficial form of practice in salvation. It is advantageous, however, for those whose motivation is inconsistent,

and who remain heavily defended against learning.” (W-95.6)

The task of reading through the Course is a big one. Though lengthy, it was written purposefully in a sequential fashion. Let’s break it down and try a few simple rules to provide structure as we begin . . .

First things first:

Commitment and Intention

- 1) Make a personal commitment to read the Course every day for a short period, like 15 minutes.
- 2) Set your intention to read the Workbook Lesson for each day and a bit of the Text every day.
- 3) If this is your first time through, I strongly recommend beginning January 1st.
- 4) Acknowledge that you are not always going to understand what you are reading. Sometimes you will; sometimes you won’t. That’s perfectly fine. Keep calm and read on!

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The Workbook Lessons:

Get out your calendar . . .

- 1) Print out a Julian date calendar (you can find this on the Internet) and use it as a bookmark in the Workbook so you can easily keep track of your progress and which lesson/day you are on. I personally use this for convenience, since it is kept in my book.
- 2) Another calendar option is the **perpetual Flip Calendar** available on MDC’s website, as each page displays the Lesson Title, Lesson Number and the Date. Place this near your favorite Course reading spot.

- 3) For first-time students it is very important to see your progress every day. Even the smallest bit. This is encouraging and guards against frustration. This is why I recommend using a Julian calendar as a visual guide and tool to ensure you are keeping a steady pace.
- 4) Acknowledge that you are going to miss some days. No worries. You have other things to do. Make up a missed day the very next time you sit down to read.
- 5) If you’ve missed a few days, don’t try to read everything you’ve missed in one sitting to catch up. Make up multiple missed lessons by reading two per day until you’re caught up. Be strict with yourself on this one though, or, you guessed it: frustration.
- 6) If it is helpful for you to hear the Workbook Lesson, read it aloud to yourself. I like to do this. Do what works for you.

The Text: By the numbers . . .

If you’re not good at math, relax. I’m going to do it for you.

- 1) To accomplish your first-time reading of the entire Text, break it down. Take heart! It is far more manageable than you think. The text is 669 pages. If you were to read it only on weekdays, five days a week (5 x 52 weeks = 260 reading days) you would only have to read 2.5 pages per day to finish the *entire text in less than a year!* Only 2.5 pages per day!
- 2) Realistically speaking though, stuff happens. We need to allow for vacations, holidays, sick time, etc. which can get us off track, discouraging us. So let’s make some adjustments: e.g. vacation: 2 weeks of the year, subtract 10 reading days. Let’s subtract the whole month of December (20 reading days) to allow for holiday interruptions and all kinds of stuff! This reduces your available read-

Connie Daley has been a student of spirituality since childhood. Degreed in Psychology and English Language and Literature, she wrote her Bachelor’s Thesis on Visual Perception and has studied the Course for over 20 years. Now retired, she is a wife, mother and sometimes writer and is grateful to be a part of the MDC’s weekly study group.

ing days to 230 per year (260 minus 30). Even with these allowances you need only read 2.9 – let's round up to three – pages per day, five days per week, to easily finish the entire text by December 1st. Three pages per day. Are you in?

- 3) With this breakdown in mind, forget the math, and firmly commit to reading 3 to 5 pages of the Text per day, five days per week. You have just made the task not only doable, but *easily doable*.
- 4) Begin reading the Text on January 1st along with the Workbook Lesson 1. (Sorry to repeat myself, but I am adamant about this one.)
- 5) A personal note about Text reading: some students prefer to read the Text from bold print to bold print (section to section). I can only say that my first time through, this did not work for me. Some sections were so long, I felt frustrated, pushing to get to the next bold print section. For me, on the first reading, just knowing that 3 pages were *always* enough per day, worked beautifully. No pressure. I would say that, on average, I actually read five or more pages per day comfortably. But some days, when you're just not feeling on your A game, three pages will be more than enough. That's okay. In subsequent readings of the Text in the future you can more easily use the section to section method.
- 6) You will find yourself reading certain paragraphs over and over again, because one of two things will happen: your mind will wander and you won't recall what you just read, or you will concentrate and try to understand, but it won't make any sense. This is a common occurrence for all Course students, new and seasoned. On my first reading, I tired of reading and re-reading and re-reading. I came close to giving up. So I made another happy little rule for myself. I allowed myself to read a sentence, paragraph, or section only three times max. If I didn't get it on the third try, I simply forgave myself, let it go and moved forward. Let it go! Let it go!

At the end of the year, when you have read the *entire Text* and all Workbook Lessons, congratulate yourself. Have a little

"I was a listener for many years; then hit some tough times and thought I couldn't afford to listen anymore."

At least, that's what Doris Marsh of Minnesota thought. See what happened...

"I was a listener for many years; then hit some tough times and thought I couldn't afford to listen anymore. Before long my life was horrible. My friend Lisa who, I met at MDC's conference years ago, called this summer and helped me to get back to the conference and back to being a listener. The Center started sending me the CD's as a gift before I thought I could afford to sign up again.

Well, instantly my life started turning around. Imagine that! I was seeing miracles happen in my life everyday! I was able to pay Lisa back for the conference help and sign up as a listener again! One of the miracles is my business is doing well. I really love the listener family and over the years they always seem to be doing the lesson I need. I am working the lessons every day, and again my life is full of holy encounters and miracles! Thanks to Beverly, Maria, and Tess for sending me love and support when I needed it!"

We are grateful to be of service to Doris when she needed help and to Lisa for being of service to another. The listeners are truly a family who supports each other. We invite you to join our worldwide family who tune in each week by CD, mp3, or live streaming video to experience the Center's study group meeting with founder Beverly Hutchinson McNeff.

Receive a FREE
CD or mp3 of our
meetings or go
online & listen to a
meeting.
Limited time offer

As an ongoing listener, you not only receive the weekly lessons, but you have access to an online listener message board so you can continue the conversation and develop a worldwide family of support.

When ordering monthly, each weekly meeting is only **\$6.50 on CD** or **\$5.00 on mp3**.

We can charge you credit card, or debit your checking account, automatically once a month



1-800-359-2246 or www.miraclecenter.org

personal party. Eat some ice cream. This is an accomplishment. Once you have achieved this goal, you may find that you want to repeat it year to year, or you may come up with another, more random method of reading it. Regardless, you have the confidence of knowing that you have read every page. Yes, you're smart enough. This Course was written for you. ✨

See back cover for information on how to order MDC's Perpetual Flip Calendar

— Got a Tip? —

We know that ideas increase only when they are shared. Would you like to share your ideas on how you study the Course? Or how to best go about taking notes on the Course or highlighting your book? Feel free to email the Center at info@miraclecenter.org and maybe we can share these ideas in a future article.

What's Happening

Continued from page 2

(Pacific Time). We invite you to pause for a moment of prayerful support for yourself, a loved one, and all those whose names and needs are in the prayer ministry and feel the blessing you will extend. If you have a prayer request, please send it to the Center by post or email. Also, request your free, full-color bookmark which lists all the thoughts in the prayer ministry for 2014.

Affirmations for:

September: *"I feel the Love of God within me now."* (L189)

October: *"I walk with God in perfect holiness."* (L156)

November: *"The peace of God is shining in me now."* (L188) ✨

Change Your Mind, Change Your Life

Thoughts on a Holy Relationship

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

Recently, I was cleaning out a filing cabinet in our storage area, and I came across some writing I did. It was a letter to Diane about some thoughts about my efforts to have a Holy Relationship with her.

Dear Diane~

I see in you the light of God as I have never seen it before, shining, luminescent, with a magnitude untold. I feel your eternal light dissolving all clouds of fear. Stars never seen before light up the sky as the darkness of the night disappears. And I know what I see and feel is but a reflection of myself.

When I am in your presence, there is a calmness and tranquility beyond my imagination, and a stillness and beauty beyond my comprehension. The morning sky glistens with a freshness and clarity, and the sun shines with a smiling rightness beyond anything I have ever witnessed. My heart sings out a song of an ancient melody and the hands of joy, peace and love join each other and are inseparable in a dance of that which never ends.

At this moment, I feel the presence of God in all living things, and I know that as love, I am everywhere. My gratitude to God and to you and to myself for this experience is beyond what any words can describe.

And I know that this could never have happened without you choosing to have your will join mine, and my choosing to have my will join yours, and both of us

choosing to offer and surrender our joint will to God.

We are joined as one — as God's Holy Child — the light of the world. And at long last I realize and know that God's



love for both of us is boundless and is one. For this Holy Relationship has revealed to me that there is no separation between you and me and God or anyone.

I thank you for teaching me that there is nothing I need or want from you, and that giving and receiving are the same. Heaven is the awareness I experience at this moment. I know without a doubt you experience this too, that there is no separation, that there is only love, that there is only light, that God Is.

And as God's beloved child we will never be left comfortless.

May our holy relationship continue to do our part in God's plan to bring light

to a darkened world, to bring love where there is fear, to bring happiness where there is sadness, and to bring oneness with God and our selves where there is the perception of separation.

With eternal timeless love, ~Jerry

It was about this time that Diane had written me a poem about some of her thoughts about love and about me. She wrote the following which also appears in her book, *Sounds of the Morning Sun*.

Thoughts on Love~

If I love you above all other, it is because you have awakened in me capabilities for that much more love. If I am to love all whom God has created as equal, then let me not love you less to lower you to their level, but let me love them more and use you as a guiding light for my potential.

As I love God, I will seek to love you, and as my capacity to love grows, so will my awareness of love in others. You are a luminescent catalyst for my love and for you I will be forever grateful.

~Diane

As students of *A Course in Miracles*, we have strived to have a holy relationship. We would like to say that we are always successful, but that is not true. We can say, however, that our intention is to make every relationship, including ours with each other, a holy relationship. It is also our intention to make every meeting with another person, a Holy Encounter. ✧

Did You Know??

Our caring staff is available to help you during our regular office hours of
Mon. – Fri. from 9am to 4pm.

Just call **800-359-2246** or
714-632-9005

We look forward to assisting you!

"If I am to love all whom God has created as equal, then let me not love you less to lower you to their level, but let me love them more and use you as a guiding light for my potential."



Love and Merging Traffic

by Bill Kasal

Quite often I find myself frustrated and saddened by my inability to control my thoughts and feelings. Sometimes I get discouraged.

I struggle daily with the words of the Course and those who speak of being in the world but not of it. I read books about the lives of Saints and their words sing in my heart. Then I sit in traffic and, as two lanes merge down to one, I watch some jerk stay on the bumper of the car ahead so he can feel some sort of moral victory at staying one measly car length ahead of someone else. After meditating and praying for a peaceful day, a day lived from my heart, I immediately envision extricating the guy from his car and smacking him.

Of course, I would never do it, so why do I keep envisioning scenarios like that, then let my stomach get into knots over it?

Having these thoughts and my agony over not being able to get a handle on them was recently vividly demonstrated to me.

Because of a local, long-term construction project, each morning I have to deal with idiots¹ as two lanes merge into one and people insist on cutting off other commuters. Then on the way home, there is a point at the freeway on-ramp, where the left turn lane actually becomes two. That should be better! Most people, upon the change of the signal, move to the left-most lane. This enables jerks² to bypass the long row of those waiting in that lane and, at the change of the signal, they race ahead and cut into the now-opening right-most turn lane. I get annoyed.

So, I have taken to driving straight ahead, not moving over to the left-most lane, thereby hoping to foil their attempt to bypass the line and cheat others who have patiently waited. As far as I can tell, I have probably only been successful at this once. Maybe.

I want to stop having these thoughts, but each time I find myself in that position, I have to struggle to override the urge to move my car straight ahead, hoping to foil their selfishness.

One Sunday evening, I found myself sitting in this same lane to turn onto the freeway. It wasn't a crowded weekday but there were several cars lined up behind me. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the

fender of a blue car come to a stop just to the right of me. I just knew this jerk was going to try and cut off the people behind me when I moved over to the left lane. Again, I took it upon myself to

teach them a lesson.

I didn't turn my head but I could see the car inch forward a bit. And every few seconds, an inch or two more. When the light changed, I accelerated. I didn't hit the gas hard; I didn't lurch ahead, making it obvious. But I drove forward and stayed in my lane to accomplish my little victory.

And I did it! The other car didn't accelerate as fast as I, and signaled to change lanes and get in behind me. I sure taught them a lesson! To that point, I hadn't even looked at the other car. I just sat, looking ahead, so I could go about my driving and act as if I didn't even know they were there or wanted to merge onto the freeway. But, as they pulled in behind me, I allowed myself a glance into my rear view mirror. The jerks were my daughter and granddaughter.

I shouldn't have been shocked. I had just joined them at the movies and we pulled out of the lot together! But my annoyance, my anger at, and focus on the behavior of others had so clouded my mind, I had allowed myself to embark upon my pitiful little path of revenge on them and I couldn't even think straight. It hadn't even dawned on me that the blue car could be my daughter's.

As they passed me on the two-lane on-ramp, I saw my granddaughter's little hand reach up and wave to me. As I saw this and sank deeper into the depths of my stupidity, I found it hard to breathe. I burned with the realization that my inability to control my thoughts had so clouded my vision, I couldn't see the love which sat a few feet away trying, as she later told me, to creep her car forward to get my attention so my granddaughter could wave to *Poppie*.

As I drove down the freeway, I imagined I'd run over a small rock or something. The car shimmied a bit and flipped, end over end. Imagining I was killed, I saw myself enveloped in white light and then standing before The Ascended Masters. I was swathed in pure Love and shown my life. Without judgment from them, I watched as my life flickered past. I felt the results of all the hurt I'd inflicted on others throughout my life by my egotistic and callous behavior.

I saw how clouded my mind could become from my inability to live with a peaceful heart. I thought, *the last thing I did in my life was to be so overwhelmed with... well, hate... when you get to the root, it is nothing less than hate. I was so overwhelmed with hate that I missed the Love right there in front of me.*

Getting off the freeway, I felt my daydream linger, feeling as if I was actually still surrounded by the loving light of Ascended Masters. Each of them was

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Bill Kasal has more than thirty years in radio and television production. A *Course in Miracles* found him in 1987 and he regularly attends the Center's study group. He has now turned to writing. His book *One Shining Moment, the Real-life Adventures of a Volunteer Police Officer*, and others, can be found at BillKasal.com.



Emotional Healing

Fall in Love and Go Crazy Test

by Richard Gayton, Ph.D.

We “fall in love” with a lover or spouse, or with a charming elderly person, or a child, or anyone or anything. I fell in love with a white leather L-shaped sofa as it rested in the dusty showroom on Pattaya Thai Boulevard. I allowed this romance, even knowing how everything white attracts everything dirty. Then again, I don’t so much fall in love as soar into love, and then “fall” into ego. I decided to not set myself up for unhappiness by not letting ego get involved with pure love for my couch.

I was going to defeat my mind with proper, prior planning and no expectations. I won’t look for faults, find them, become disappointed, develop resentments, share the resentments, require change, and then get more resentful when the change doesn’t fit my mind’s picture.

Two Thai guys lugged the leather sofa clothed in a gleaming clear plastic bag out of their truck and set it in my studio. It was soft, supple leather white, lengthy enough for a nap and with big stuffed pillows.

After a few weeks the sofa got dirty – so what? I have dogs, and worse, I drink chocolate protein shakes. I was prepared. I stroked my ego as it slept restlessly in my mind. After many months the armrest’s stuffing flattened where I lay my head for napping. My *pen rai*. That’s Thai for “Does not matter.” The ego opened one red eye. Last week the leather covering the armrest began to crack. Now wait a minute. Enough is enough! The couch is now only two years old; the leather should not be wearing out. The ego stretched and rose up. I will never be able to nap peacefully again because of the imperfection and gross irritation caused by that two-inch-by-two-

inch spot. The ego pounced. Leather cannot crack! The material on the whole couch must be naugahyde!! I have been cheated. Let’s create an unholy scene at the cheating, fake-leather naugahyde sofa joint and kick some holy ass!

Thankfully I smelled the foul stench of the ego. I paused and asked for help. My cleaning lady, on her own initiative the week before, had removed every bit of dirt and the white couch gleamed. I decided to look on that instead, and the cracked material seemed to fade into insignificance. That proved that I am an evolved spiritual

master. Look how well I handled the sofa love affair! I have the big blue book with gold letters on it (dog-eared paperback version, because I am cheap) that teaches me to choose peace, teach peace, and love without exception. I know the lingo, I meditate, I pray and I go to spiritual meetings.

All is well. I have tamed my ego. I locked the ego in a safe upstairs and bolted it to the wall; I put it out to pasture and told it in Thai: *kop kuhn, sawadeelacone* – thank you, but goodbye. I can turn white couches over to God.

Then there are relationships. This is where I have an opportunity to play big at special love and special hate. Unfortunately I got a “D” in Spiritual Master 1A: Relationships. I want to be Rocky Balboa and beat Apollo Creed in Madison Square Garden; I want to be Sandy Koufax pitching against Willy Mays. But unfortunately, I am more like Stu Miller trying to throw a fast ball. Couches are in the minor leagues. Let’s face it. When it comes to people, the ego is a suicidal, homicidal cannibal; it is dedicated to killing me, destroying my connection with the people around me and eating us all for dinner. It doesn’t know that

it will fail, but it creates havoc with me and those I love. I have been in love several times in my life, if you count the boy who sat next to me in sixth grade. The term “loved one” signifies that there are some people I love more or differently than others. I love my children more than other people’s children, and of course my grandchildren are much dearer than yours. The Course calls it special love and is mostly ego-driven, but not completely. The Course also says there is only one love.

I am “in love” with someone now and at its worst I am treating that person like I am starving and he is a juicy steak. At my best, I experience joy and an opportunity to give and receive love in a way that transcends everything in this world. This is what the Course describes as spirit using special love to give us a taste of heaven – real love. How many of us have touched heaven for a time with our children, grandchildren or partner? Special love contains a gift for us, and spirit wants us to experience it. Yet to whatever extent we believe this love will give us something we lack, we experience pain. When we deny our wholeness in total union with spirit, we enter the world of fear, loss, guilt and attack as we look outside ourselves for what we think we lack.

This can take the form of impossible beliefs: our lover or partner or spouse will finally make us feel loved when we have felt worthless. A child will bring love into a loveless marriage. A grandchild will make up for what our grown child did not do. This is the ego at work converting special love into special hate. The husband can never do enough, and he ends up feeling inadequate. The wife in the loveless marriage pours all her love into her son and the husband is now alone. The grandchild takes on the impossible task of being the perfect child for grandma.

“Special love contains a gift for us and spirit wants us to experience it. Yet to whatever extent we believe this love will give us something we lack, we experience pain.”



Worldly Chaos and Grace

by Teri Hooper

Lesson 157 in *A Course in Miracles* tells us: *Into His Presence would I enter now.* During meditation, this concept sounds easy to accomplish. However, during our day-to-day goings on, it is much harder to master. But by practicing the Course's Workbook lessons, it can become an attainable state of being. At least, it can be attainable most of the time.

I have been a student of the Course for many years. The last five years, however, have caused me to understand the power of surrendering my chaotic thoughts to the Holy Spirit to be corrected. I have also learned that my earthly son is NOT a cause of grief as I had previously thought, but a lesson of Love.

In this world, my son is diagnosed with bipolar disorder. He is twenty-eight years old and lives with me, my husband,

and my other son. As a child he struggled, not academically, but socially. He could never really fit in with his peers. This created a great deal of stress, not only for him, but also for our entire family.

Around the age of eighteen, his difficulties started to increase. I was reading the Course then, but not practicing the lessons, so I was fully into my ego and believing my son's behaviors along with the stress it was creating for the family. I worried ceaselessly about him and felt sorry for myself and was constantly upset about the life that I thought I was living due to his manic episodes. There was absolutely no joy or peace for anyone.

As he got into his twenties, his episodes became more chaotic. He would do erratic things, and often I worried about his safety. In time, it became necessary to call the police for help. He was admitted to the

county mental hospital for treatment. The experience of the 911 call followed by a handcuffed police escort to the county mental hospital became a frequent event.

At the beginning of these episodes, I was totally submerged in this world and my Course practice seldom happened. However, to cope with the stress, I returned to my regular meditation practices, diving back into the Course lessons. Through constant devotion, I began to make a shift. It was a shift that would affect not only me, but my entire family as well.

I began to see my son in a different

light. I stepped out of the mother role and into the Son of God role. I awoke to the idea that my son was part of the Oneness of the Sonship, not the worldly chaotic individual that I viewed as my personal son. During calm times at my house, I would ask the

Holy Spirit to purify my thoughts about my son and help me see the Truth of his being.

During each tumultuous manic episode, I sooner and sooner found myself returning from the terror of the moment to remembering the Truth about him. Even though I still had to take action in this world, I found I could stay in a state of Grace by not allowing myself to attach to the actions I needed to take for his safety. Simply stated, I could feel at peace and in a total state of Love as I was calling 911. I could feel at peace knowing the Truth about my son as he was being handcuffed and put into a police vehicle. I could feel at peace, knowing that the Truth of his being is not the apparent out-of-control adult I was watching with my earthly eyes. I could turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance, knowing that my actions were exactly the correct ones. Then I could let my attachment

to the outcome go, knowing all is well.

The miracle is still unfolding. In this world, I am still his mother, and he is still my son. In my mind however, there is no special relationship, and we are both part of the Sonship. We are both "the perfect Son of God in whom He is well pleased." I have let go of trying to control him and his behavior. I no longer believe I know what is best for him in this world. I have detached from needing to make sure he is on his medication or going to his appointments. I view the police officers, the mental clinic social worker, the hospital psychiatrist, or any other individual I come into contact with in conjunction with my son as part of the Sonship. They are all perfect Children of God in whom God is well pleased!

Are his episodes over? I don't know. What I do know is that I am at peace much more. I know my family is at peace much more in regards to this earthly situation. But what's most important is that my "bipolar" son seems at peace a bit more than he used to be. His trips to the hospital used to happen every two to four weeks. Since the shift in MY perception, his last hospital trip was four months ago. That's the longest period between visits he has experienced in a couple years. In him I have seen bouts of happiness I have not seen in over ten years. I see the sincerity of the little boy I knew years ago. It's his Essence I truly see, and it is wonderful!

Chaos in this earthly world happens. But I know I have a Guide I can turn to who will determine the appropriate action to take at any given moment. I can stay detached from the outcome and remember the Truth of every individual I see with my bodily eyes. We are NOT the silly, crazy behaviors that are the visions of this world. We can pull back the veil of illusion. We are ALL the Sons of God, in whom He is well pleased!

"I have been a student of the Course for many years. The last five years, however, have caused me to understand the power of surrendering my chaotic thoughts to the Holy Spirit to be corrected."



Recognizing Spirit

Be an Instrument of Peace: Inspirational Psychology on How to Teach

by Dr. Lee Jampolsky, Ph.D.

The approach of Inspirational Psychology is largely indebted to A Course in Miracles. It teaches to always speak to another person or group as though we have nothing to prove, no agenda to take them to, and as though they already know they are nothing other than the light of love. The results are so different than the ones we get when we do not really listen, or when we only want to prove a point or convince someone they are wrong.

When I was a kid, some of my favorite memories are of times when someone older than I, someone I respected, spoke to me as though I was his equal, as though I knew more than I did. It did not happen all that often, but when it did, I was inspired, and in these moments, these people instilled a confidence in me greater than could have been achieved by other means.

A common question I receive is how to teach Course principles to various audiences or individuals, or how to approach a person we are in relationship with whom we believe may not be seeing a situation accurately. The answer is never to believe you are superior, know that you also have something to learn, do not need them to “get it,” and don’t have something to prove. I like approaches to personal and spiritual growth that speak as though I have already attained its goal of peace, rather than with a judgmental, dogmatic, and fire and brimstone tone of all that I “should” do. There is no other agenda for Inspirational Psychology (or the Course) other than for us to wake up to who we are, and the more we teach this the more we learn this. In the process, we build our confidence in it as a method that brings peace and happiness to our life.

So many people tend to have quite different goals than this. I find it helpful to start my day with a lesson from the

Course, and also by consciously and confidently stating that I want serenity. Even if I happen to have concerns on my mind or am tempted to be preoccupied with matters that seem to be vying for my attention, I state to myself that I want peace. Today I begin by setting my mind in the direction of making each decision based on what I want — peace and serenity — and with each word I speak, desiring the same for the recipient of those words. To this end I contemplate the following:

Imagine that your heart and mind are washed clean with a gentle flow of light endlessly passing through, cleansed with care to be free of all past ideas that you are anything other than a beautiful being, wiped clean of every fearful idea or concept you ever accepted or made. Imagine starting this day disrobing yourself of

past pain in the same manner you would shed dirty clothes. Step freshly into each new moment with joyful anticipation, as though you do not yet know what you will find, what the world is for, or should look like. If you become upset today for any reason, or if your confidence in your loving heart fades to a hue too soft to see, let the light pass through again. Then, wait patiently and confidently for a beautiful moment to dawn over the new horizon.

At the ranch where we lived, there was a statue of St. Francis of Assisi under the tree outside the kitchen window. He was

there when we bought the ranch, and I enjoyed looking at him each morning, being reminded through him of both my sole goal of peace, and my intimate love for all beings. St. Francis lived the Course long before it was written.

One morning I noticed his statue had fallen down. I was not sure if he tipped over during a recent storm, or if an animal or visitor may have inadvertently knocked him over. I thought of his life, and what I have read about him. His path was not always easy. I thought of the storms of life that must have challenged him, and the people who, perhaps not understanding him or his ideas, may have wanted to challenge the very rocks upon which he stood. That morning, I looked out my window at my fallen friend, and smiled. Then I went out to set him upright again. I tried to lift him and realized just how heavy he was. It took a great deal of effort to get him back on his feet, and then even more to get him stable on the uneven ground. Returning inside, I thought of times in my life when I had fallen. When things brought me down, I too have needed someone to help lift me back up and return me to my foundations again, my Truth. It has not been easy for me to accept help. Some days over my lifetime I believed that the sheer weight of my life could topple me, the storms of my own life, the challenges or misunderstandings with others, the unevenness of situations — that there was much that could pull me down and little to lift me up. My first step was not to set out to get rid of every concern, worry, or problem. It was to trust that if I allow myself to be lifted up, by a Higher Power or with the aid of others, I would find firm footing again, just as I lifted my friend St. Francis up this morning. This prose comes:

I look through the dusty ranch window, the white statue under the old oak stands again upon fallen leaves of

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Can We Trust the Course?

by Hugh Magee

This will no doubt seem a pointless question to those who, like myself, have come to regard *A Course in Miracles* as our true Bible. In fact, the late Kenneth Wapnick referred to the Course as the most important book since the Bible. He put the Course on a par with such ancient texts as the Upanishads, the Vedas and the I-Ching.¹

No wonder Willis Harman, who served as president of the Institute of Noetic

Sciences for many years, called the Course "the most valuable book in the English language." The prominent Course teacher, Tara Singh, even went so far as to refer to the Course as "scripture."

Although I would certainly concur with such views, as a Christian priest I normally refrain from being quite so up front about the Course as "scripture" in my work for the Church. Such ideas are, of course, anathema to many Christians, especially among conservative Protestants, who invariably resist or attack the Course. For them, the source of the Course teachings is not Jesus, but 'Satan.' One self-appointed "authority" said the Course "has decidedly hellish origins."² Even one of my fellow Episcopalians, David Virtue, who has been described as a "virulent source of conservative Anglican polemic," has dismissed the Course as "hokum"!

In stark contrast, in my own ministry with the Course over the past thirty years, I have encountered numerous people who have found these teachings true, life-giving and totally transformative, as I have.

Yet one cannot blame these critics for their opposition to the Course. How could a transcript channeled by a self-professed

Jewish atheist, and a Professor of Medical Psychology at Columbia University at that, possibly be a source of a new scripture? After all, the 'canon' of scripture was effectively closed by the Church in the fourth century, C.E. Who would presume to reopen it in the 20th century, least of all under these circumstances??

What these critics may have forgotten, however, is that Christianity itself emerged from equally implausible origins. Leaving aside the question of the historical authen-

ticity of the birth narratives associated with Jesus in the New Testament (which many biblical scholars dispute), how could a world religion have sprung from such an unlikely beginning?

Perhaps questioning the academic milieu in which the Course was

received is lessened when we remember that, like Mary, Helen Schucman was rather freaked out by what she was being asked to do!

While these arguments may be interesting and even entertaining, they aren't really all that important. What makes the Course authentic is not its provenance, but the Truth it conveys.

There is a saying attributed to Jesus in the New Testament that uses the analogy of the produce of trees and plants to verify

authentic truth:

... you will know them by their fruits
(Matthew 7:16,20).

In the Course, Jesus refers to this verse and enhances it with the following addition: "... and they shall know themselves." The relevant passage is worth quoting in full as it upholds this saying by stressing its practicality:

This course offers a very direct and a very simple learning situation, and provides the Guide Who tells you what to do. If you do it, you will see that it works. Its results are more convincing than its words. They will convince you that the words are true. By following the right Guide, you will learn the simplest of all lessons:

By their fruits ye shall know them, and they shall know themselves. (T-9.V.9)

Likewise, in the Introduction to the Workbook, Jesus says the following:

Some of the ideas the workbook presents you will find hard to believe, and others may seem to be quite startling. This does not matter. You are merely asked to apply the ideas as you are directed to do. You are not asked to judge them at all. You are asked only to use them. It is their use that will give them meaning to you, and will show you that they are true.

"Even one of my fellow Episcopalians, David Virtue, who has been described as a 'virulent source of conservative Anglican polemic' has dismissed the Course as 'hokum'!"

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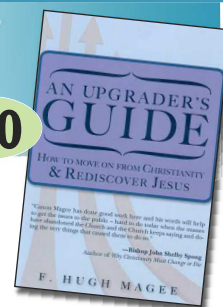
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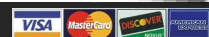
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Hugh Magee serves as a Canon in a major Scottish cathedral. He has been a student of *A Course in Miracles* for more than thirty years.



Science and A Course in Miracles

by John Kilian

Scientists are uncovering phenomena in many of their experiments demonstrating concepts we as students of *A Course in Miracles* already know. I believe that *A Course in Miracles* already defines from a spiritual perspective the “theory of everything” science is searching for. We are observing as science uncovers what we already know.

Many scientists consider time to be an illusion. In *Is Time an Illusion?* in *Scientific American*, June 2010, it states “time is derived from the need to track (understand) the movements

and the position of things we define as separate. If we determine we are separate from everything else, then we need the existence of

time for the separateness to be perceived.” The ego understands this observation and wants time included because it firmly establishes our separation. We frequently use time as a way to describe the pace of events such as the speed of a light wave, a heartbeat, or a planet’s rotation. These processes could be related directly to one another without making reference to time. Events and life cycles determine what happens to life, not clocks; for example, eating, sleeping, awakening, etc. Scientific mathematicians working the question of time find when they do their calculations, the time variable, in many instances, drops completely out of the equations. It vanishes. This result concludes our notions of time are illusory.

Information is a basic language of nature used to convey its messages. These messages are composed of discreet units, often hierarchically ordered (e.g. atoms to molecules to DNA to function) and are used by nature to construct our apparent reality. Vlatko Vedral in his book *Decoding*

Reality postulates that our world and our universe is ultimately made up of information that connects all phenomenon we see around us, as well as explaining their origin. Some physicists go so far as to suggest that information, not matter and energy, constitute the most basic unit of existence. Physicist Craig Hogan at the University of Chicago’s Fermi Particle Astrophysics Center believes he can prove in an experiment, currently underway, that the universe is composed of information (*Is Space Digital?*, *Scientific American*, February 2012). If the universe is digital

“I believe that A Course in Miracles already defines from a spiritual perspective the ‘theory of everything’ science is searching for.”

on the smallest scale, its background noise should show a fundamental jitter. His experiment consists of two interferometers where light is sent down two different paths by a beam splitter and reflected back. In the time it takes photons of light to retrace both paths, the beam splitter will have moved slightly in a random direction because of “jitter.” This output creates a signal that looks like noise, but if both interferometers detect the noise in the exact same pattern, the experiment will conclude that this noise is a “jitter” of the digital information comprising our spatial universe. On a personal note, this result could answer a long-held question of mine that dates back to my early Bible study. This question is centered on a Bible verse, John 1:1, in the New Testament’s King James Version. It reads, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” I was never able to get a satisfactory answer from any religious instructors as to what this passage really means. Now if this experimental result holds true, I have an exciting answer. In any translation of ancient Biblical texts, “Information” and “Word” are comparable. A hologram is produced when a single

laser light is split into two separate beams. The first beam is bounced off the object to be photographed. The second beam is allowed to collide with the reflected light of the first beam, and the resulting interference pattern of irregular ripples is recorded on film. When the film is illuminated with another laser, a three-dimensional image of the original object appears. An intriguing aspect of a hologram is that any piece reflects and can be used to reconstruct the entire image (*The Holographic Universe* by Michael Talbot). The holographic model of the universe came after many years of dissatisfaction with the inability of most theories to explain the entirety of quantum phenomena. Scientists quickly realized that the holographic model can account for a number of other mysteries as well, including select paranormal and mystical experiences, and many aspects of human physiology including our brain and our vision. As a related point of interest, in the Nag Hammadi Library of ancient Christian texts, the Gospel of Philip contains a paragraph where Jesus is praying with a gathering of friends. In the prayer, He refers to them as “images.” The word “images” of course suggests that our bodies are holographic projections (*Are You a Hologram?* *Scientific American*, August 2003). It is worth noting — as the Course indicates — we are all part of a large hologram called the Sonship, each piece of which reflects the whole.

Quantum mechanics has proven experimentally that, when studying subatomic particles, the observer is hopelessly entangled in that which he is attempting to observe and actually alters and determines what is perceived. Physical reality is not there with definite properties waiting to be discovered, but actually comes into being depending upon the actions of the observer. The consciousness

of the observer is decisive in determining what a particle does at any given moment. Entanglement is a phenomenon of quantum mechanics that shows how separate particles can influence each other instantaneously over great distances. Many experiments have been performed to confirm this instantaneous, faster than light, communication. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle shows that in his two hole experiment, "observed" particles behave like objects, while "unobserved" particles behave like waves and can go through more than one hole at the same time. Scientists have conveniently kept these phenomenon discussed above confined to subatomic particle realms. More recent experiments show quantum effects extending into the macroscopic world we live in as well (*Living in a Quantum World, Scientific American*, June 2011). What all of this says to me, particularly from a Course perspective, is that physical reality is created by our minds, and in fact that our minds and a group consciousness of all minds can instantly exchange information or communicate over any distance. Again, from a personal perspective, whenever I start talking or thinking about one of my twin sons, they will call within minutes at least 70% of the time. The ego would call this coincidence. I think not!

There is an exciting new scientific theory of everything called "Biocentrism" (life at the center). Robert Lanza proposed that Biocentrism brings the things discussed above – and many more – together into one theory. It basically builds on quantum physics by including life in the equation. Modern science is unable to explain why the laws of physics are exactly balanced for life to exist. There are more than two hundred physical parameters required for life within the solar system and the universe, so exact that they cannot possibly be random. Biocentrism says that life, our consciousness, creates the universe, not the other way around. Biocentrism is a radical departure from our current understanding, but the hints have appeared all around us for decades. The premises of this theory are built on established science, and demand a rethinking of our current theories of the physical

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Update: Prison Project

by Maria Zakich



The Prison Project of Miracle Distribution Center sends A Course in Miracles and other Course-based items to those in prison. Through your generous donations, we have been able to supply many newly-started spiritual libraries in prisons. In some cases we have been able to provide multiple copies of books so more inmates can read about the love that is their essence. These principles are truly making a difference and quenching a thirst for truth that many in prison have found no other place.

My Friend is Free

Free from the walls that surrounded him, my friend, Mickey Owens is finally, physically free. He finished his project of writing his memoirs, *Life Sentence, Life Purpose*, with his co-author, Kim Whiting, and then Mickey passed away on December 17th, 2013.

Having heard of his illness due to liver cancer in the months that preceded his death I wasn't shocked that he made his journey into eternal life. Somehow in my mind I knew and felt he wouldn't suffer long and that he truly had done what he wanted to do.

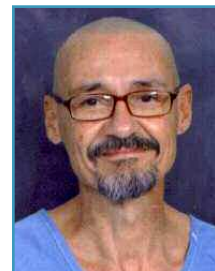
Known as the "monk" of the prison, Mickey started corresponding with me back in 2010 after he contacted the Prison Ministry requesting Course materials and **THE HOLY ENCOUNTER**. He'd changed his life dramatically over the years. He was a peaceful, loving, gentle man who had paid greatly for his actions and over time came to forgive and love himself fully.

As I have written in the past, I received his perfectly hand-written letters on yellow legal-size paper. He was a poet and a very deep and sensitive thinker. He would write to tell me what was going on around him, and though I would often cringe at what I was reading, he always, always had a way of turning the situation around and signing off with something positive to say. He regularly included a *Course Wisdom Card* in with his letter, which always seemed to be just what I needed to read. I would respond by sending him one, too.

I never got the privilege of meeting Mickey in person but have become very good friends with Kim. Kim continues to work with prisoners, helping to get their stories written. *Life Sentence, Life Purpose* is in its second edition with additional photos and more about Mickey's love of *A Course in Miracles*.

Miracle Distribution Center has sent over \$17,000 worth of materials into the prisons since we started this project back in 2004. Nobody has been turned down when asking for a book, publication, calendar, or support. Your donations are what keep us open and able to send the items requested and so needed. Your generosity is what made a difference in Mickey's life and in the lives of so many trying to heal their lives, their addictions, and their views of life.

I miss Mickey but I am so, so happy that he is finally free. His Spirit lives on with me, and his photo above my desk is a daily reminder to be gentle with myself.



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

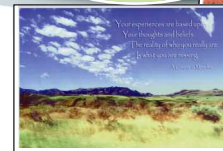
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Let's look at the above three steps again. First, focus on your breath. This is a wonderful way to begin. Even though the Course never really speaks of your breath as a focusing agent, over the years with my own personal meditations or when I lead a group in prayer, I have found that using our breath to calm us and bring us to a common point can be very helpful. Focusing on your breath is something personal and yet universal. It's one of the best examples of one-mindedness, if you will, because it's something we all do, it's automatic, and it's with us always. Bringing a group or individual to the awareness of the breath is a very centering and connecting activity.

"All through the workbook you will hear phrases such as this, because the Course is aware of what a strong hold our ego has on our mind."

Next, the idea of choosing a mantra is in perfect harmony with the Course's workbook. What better place to find a personal mantra or experience a different one everyday as you move through your daily workbook lessons (which I know you all are doing)?! Plus, the daily lessons not only give you the mantra, but also direct you as to how to apply the lesson (mantra) and the amount of time to give to it. The lessons are very directional, which is helpful to our mind's training process. We have learned quite well how to think apart from God; now we are learning how to think with God once again.

The last point is an essential one to our meditation success: When thoughts come up to distract you (and they will), simply allow them to pass by without judgment, and come back to your lesson or mantra. All through the workbook you will hear phrases such as this, because the Course is aware of what a strong hold our ego has on our mind. Remember, the ego is only the thought of separation/fear, and, as a thought, it can be replaced by a better thought — one of truth. The ego, therefore, will do anything to survive, even meditate

with you! It will meditate with you to prove you can't do it because: you can't keep your focus, you always get distracted, you can't remember your lesson, you can't meditate that long, you fall asleep, etc.

There will seem to be many reasons we think we can't join with God, but none of them matter. The fact is we can't help but join our minds with God because our minds are one with God. This final thought is terrifying to our ego because it knows its days are numbered. It will hold on as long as it can; don't give it the power it needs to survive. Allow distracting, angry, or frustrating thoughts to simply pass by without effect. This will take a lot of practice, but the benefits are well worth it!

"Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God." (Lesson 189)



Can We Trust the Course

Continued from page 11

In both of these passages, the emphasis is on the Course's self-authentication as its thought system is applied. It is by this means that we shall 'know its fruits.'

As for the fruits themselves, a good summary is found in a Workbook lesson (#122) that summarizes the 'fruits' of practicing the central teaching of the Course, forgiveness:

What could you want forgiveness cannot give? Do you want peace? Forgiveness offers it. Do you want happiness, a quiet mind, a certainty of purpose, and a sense of worth and beauty that transcends the world? Do you want care and safety, and the warmth of sure protection always? Do you want a quietness that cannot be disturbed, a gentleness that never can be hurt, a deep, abiding comfort, and a

rest so perfect it can never be upset?

All this forgiveness offers you, and more.

From the sound of it, then, the 'fruits' of the Course are best appreciated as we allow ourselves to be 'fed' through forgiveness.

When we do that we will realize the Course really does deliver inner peace. And when we make that discovery, we will realize that any question of "trusting" the Course becomes irrelevant. ✧

1 From an interview in *The Forgotten Song* (DVD); Mill Valley; Foundation for Inner Peace, 1987.

2 Texe Marrs, *New Age Cults & Religions* (Austin: Living Truth Ministries, 1990), page 87.

A Shout Out...

Continued from page 1

will be introduced to drugs by someone you know, how casual use can lead to more serious consequences, and how drugs lead to a nowhere life fast. She asked them, "What do you say to drugs?" I heard the roar of these children as they said, "NO!" And then she asked, "What do you say to life?" With even more intensity, the children shouted, "YES!"

It was inspiring! Tears of joy welled up inside of me. Those children were affirming life with so much gusto that I shouted YES, too! I was inspired by them to not only live a more healthy life for myself, but I wanted to help them! I felt empowered by their enthusiasm.

A Course in Miracles tells us, "Alone we are all lowly, but together we shine with brightness so intense that none of us alone can even think of it." I truly felt that statement through these children. I felt so connected to their shout out to the world — not to their bodies because I couldn't see that, but I could feel their intensity. It was a sensation beyond words. Now I need to remember that everyone I meet is shouting out the same thing whether they know it or not — Yes to life! Yes to the help and support to which we are entitled! Yes to love that is our healing power! I want to help them on their journey as much as I wanted to help those children.

All humanity is shouting out the same thing. We need to be willing to look through those acts of hate, anger, and frustration to see the calls for help. It not only heals humanity; it heals each of us. ✧

Instrument of Peace

Continued from page 10

the last storm. I imagine myself St. Francis of Assisi, saying aloud to the morning dawn the simple words he prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace."

As I say these words, I not only realize what they mean, I feel them. I go beyond the words and terminology, and see that being an instrument of, and for, peace is not some lofty religious goal or distant hope. To be an instrument of peace is something I can do now – that I am now – and that I can be in each moment, every day, no matter what. To be an instrument for peace is the way we both teach and learn who we are. Join me in this contemplation:

May I leave each person I meet with a little more brightness. Through my presence may their world appear less dark, may I be a spark of light in their day reminding them of love, and never a weight holding them down with judgments, expectations, and unforgiving thoughts. May my life today be clearing the path for love, which is here and now. Today let me be both like an excited child and an old wise woman – excited about the new adventure, and content with seeing deeply into every moment. In life if I fall, may I remember to allow myself to be lifted, and when I see another fall, may I extend a gentle hand and wait patiently. This is being an instrument of Love.

I once heard "how can you see a fly in your eye if you have a fly in your eye?" Perhaps I cannot awaken myself, but I can choose to allow myself to be awakened, and then to gently tap you on the shoulder, whispering sweet Truths about you to the universe until you hear.

This is being an instrument of peace. ✧

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Love and Merging Traffic

Continued from page 7

speaking to my mind, showing me how the slightest deviation from Peace and Love can cloud a person's outlook. Love is the only *reality* and everything else is just an illusion created by a clouded mind, my clouded mind, my ego that sees a world of injustice instead of Love.

Is that what I would have wanted my last act to be in this life? Did I want it to be treating someone else – *especially my daughter and granddaughter!* – with revenge and hatred in my heart?

It was such a profound demonstration of how coming from anywhere but my heart is keeping me from experiencing the real joy and love in my life. What a blessing to have this concept so vividly illustrated.

The next morning I sat in traffic, again getting angry (for passing on the shoulder!) at some child of God in whom He is well pleased. Deep breath. Let it go. Look for Love. ✧

1 By Idiots, I mean loving children of God in whom He is well pleased.

2 Jerks: See Idiots

Science and ACIM

Continued from page 13

universe. These theories don't work and can never be made to work until we account for life and consciousness.

Recently I spent several weeks watching my grandchildren playing their video games for hours at a time, completely immersed and oblivious to everything around them. I realized that information was being sent to an Xbox or DVD player, which created a new world for them to play in. I cannot help but conclude that we are all players in a giant video game. ✧

Fall in Love

Continued from page 8

If I can love a couch unconditionally, exactly the way it is and exactly the way it is not, I can love the person I am the same way. I will need to maintain contact with spirit and make no exceptions. My boyfriend just rested his muddy Adidas on my brilliant clean white leather. I might make an exception. ✧



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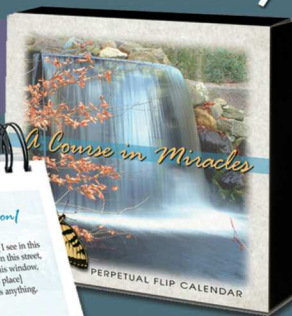


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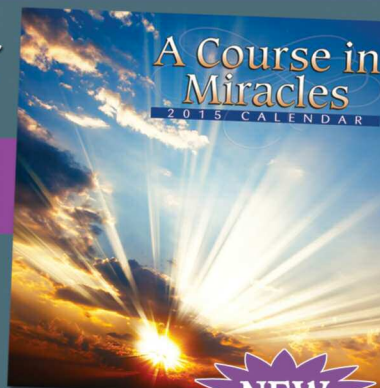
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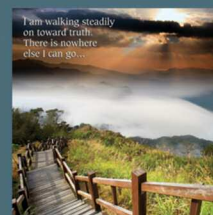
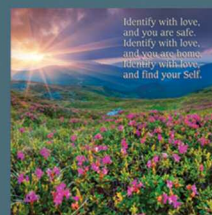
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