

A Better Way

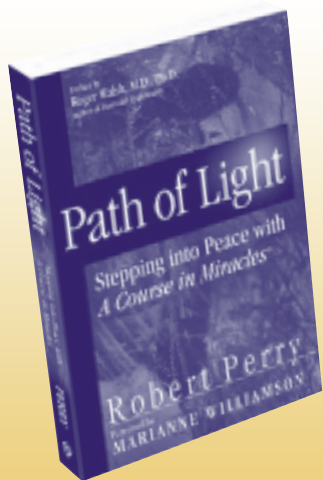
A NEWSLETTER FOR STUDENTS OF A COURSE IN MIRACLES / THE CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT / SPRING 2004 / ISSUE 45

Study

Ten Character Traits of the Spiritually Advanced

BY ROBERT PERRY

We are delighted to be able to print an excerpt from Robert Perry's brand new book, Path of Light: Stepping into Peace with A Course in Miracles. You can pre-order the book online at www.circlepublishing.com, where we have some introductory special offers, or use the order form printed in this newsletter. Copies will be shipped May 1st. This section is taken from the final chapter, and answers the question: What kind of person are we trying to become on this path?



At one point, the Course itself (in Section 4 of the Manual, “What Are the Characteristics of God’s Teachers?”) provides an extended discussion of the gifts that come to those who become truly advanced on this path—or any path, for that matter. It calls these individuals advanced teachers of God, and says about them: “God gives special gifts to His teachers, because they have a special role in His plan for Atonement.”²¹ When we think of those who are highly spiritually advanced, two kinds of gifts generally come to mind: paranormal

powers and powerful inner experiences. We think of the saint as someone who can heal the sick or read minds or perhaps levitate, someone who slips easily into rapturous visions and ecstatic mystical states. Significantly, however, neither supernatural powers nor blissful inner states are included in the gifts the Course speaks of here. The gifts we normally think of seem to have been intentionally left off the list. What, then, are the gifts the Course speaks of? They are *character traits*. The special gifts God gives to those who come near to Him are gifts of character.

I find something exquisitely appropriate in this. Who of us has not heard of the spiritual master who can drop into *samadhi* at will, yet who in his worldly dealings displays the kind of character traits we have come to expect from dirty politicians? I think we all assume that something is really amiss there. True, we all long for mystical experiences. Yet just as fundamental is the longing to be *good*, to be a person of true and uncommon goodness. In a culture in which so many people feel they have suppressed their real feelings in the attempt to be good, I almost feel as if I’m speaking blasphemy. But the yearning is there, and it’s so powerful that we’ll do almost anything under its pressure—even twisted things like suppressing our feelings. We want to be good, and that desire is unquenchable. As I have said many times in this book, the

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“Everyone eventually begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way.”

A Better Way

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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Our financial policy is based on a line from *Psychotherapy* (a Course supplement): "One rule should always be observed: No one should be turned away because he cannot pay" (P-3.III.6:1). Therefore, if you would like any of our materials or services and cannot afford them, simply let us know, and give what you are able to.

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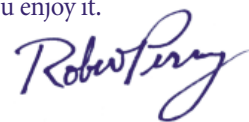
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From the Editor

The last few months have been a whirlwind of activity here at the Circle, and at last we have something to show for it! First of all, we are delighted to announce the imminent publication of my new book *Path of Light: Stepping into Peace with A Course in Miracles*. It is being printed right now and will be available to ship starting May 1st. You can order it online now at our brand new website, www.circlepublishing.com (the website of our new publishing division), where you can take advantage of some special offers, or use the form printed in this newsletter.

Another long-awaited development has been the production of a much smarter-looking newsletter. It has been professionally redesigned to be easier on the eye. We have also made other changes, notably the inclusion of a number of smaller articles rather than a few lengthy ones, and have grouped them under the headings of Study, Practice, Extension, and Walking the Path. We felt this would be more informative for readers as well as being perhaps more inviting. We will still retain one lengthy article for an in-depth study of a topic, but the remaining articles are aimed at supporting and inspiring our readers in walking the path of the Course.

Our lead article in this issue is an excerpt from *Path of Light*. It is actually the last few pages of the book. It uses the ten characteristics of the teacher of God (from the Manual for Teachers) to paint a vivid portrait of the person the Course is leading us to become. If you've ever wondered how the Course wants you to turn out, this may just provide the answer. I hope you enjoy it.



WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT SAYS

A Course in Miracles is a spiritual path. Its purpose is to train us to work miracles—to accept and extend to others the shifts in perception that awaken us to God. It consists of three volumes, which signify the three aspects of its program:

- ◆ *Text*: Through studying the teaching, the Course's thought system first enters our minds.
- ◆ *Workbook for Students*: Through doing the practice, the Course's thought system penetrates more and more deeply into our minds.
- ◆ *Manual for Teachers*: Through extending our healed perception to others, the Course's thought system receives its final reinforcement and becomes the only thing in our minds.

The Course's message is that the source of our suffering is not the world's mistreatment of us, but rather our egocentric attack on the world. This attack convinces us that we have defiled our nature beyond repair, that we are irredeemably guilty. Yet the Course says true reality cannot be defiled; it is a realm of pure, changeless, unified spirit. This realization allows us to forgive the world's apparent mistreatment of us by recognizing that it did not actually occur. And as we see this forgiveness come forth from us—see that we are capable of something genuinely loving and egoless—we gradually realize that we never defiled ourselves. Thus we awaken to the untouched innocence of our true nature.

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Course claims that all of our pain comes from our deep-seated belief that we have permanently stained our original goodness, that we have corrupted ourselves beyond all repair. A moment's ecstasy is wonderful, but if afterwards we are faced with the same person we de-test—ourselves—then that belief in our corruption has not been undone, and that overpowering urge to be good has not been satisfied.

The following ten characteristics—drawn from “What Are the Characteristics of God’s Teachers?”—paint a portrait of a person who is pure goodness, a person who in any land, at any time, would be considered a saint, a person whom any tradition would be honored to call its own. This is the person the Course is leading us to become.

1. Trust

We look out and see a world that can't be trusted. People are scurrying about focused on their needs and heedless of ours. Random winds are blowing that swirl about us, thoughtlessly disrupting our affairs as though we don't exist. In this general chaos, if we want to survive, it seems we have to exercise some sort of control. We can turn our patch of wilderness into a garden, but only if we can tame all those wild forces: put fences up to keep out the rabbits, post signs to keep out all those trampling feet, and—just in case—keep our shotgun loaded and ready.

In contrast, the advanced teacher of God looks on the world with total trust. He has learned that “all things, events, encounters and circumstances are helpful.”² He knows that there is no such thing as randomness, that even the wild winds blow with his best interests in mind. For he trusts that, despite appearances, the world is governed by an unseen Power, a Power that is in love with him.

Thus, he has no need to push the flow. He does act; he decides to go right instead of left, he decides to do this instead of that. But his actions flow from his connection with that unseen Power. Thus, if this Power so directs him, he too will plant a garden, but once he does, he will make sure that he invites everyone into it, because he trusts them.

2. Honesty

Because we don't trust the world, we all, to one degree or another, become career magicians. We present to our audience a carefully constructed illusion. A little misdirection, a little sleight of hand, and we have them believing in something that's not actually real. Our signature trick, however, is not making

Our signature trick, however, is not making tigers appear; it's conjuring an illusion of ourselves.

tigers appear; it's conjuring an illusion of ourselves—as wonderful, attractive, intelligent, caring, and sincere. If we're really skilled, we have our audiences believing in an image of ourselves that is no more than a bit of stage magic. Who would love us, we wonder, if we showed them the truth?

Because the advanced teacher of God implicitly trusts the world, he can afford to be completely honest. He is not afraid of what will ensue, for he is not protecting a false image of himself. He's not trying to be something that he's not. His honesty, in fact, is rooted in self-honesty. He has admitted to himself what he knows, deep down, to be the truth about himself: that he is the holy Son of God. On the foundation of this inner honesty, he is able to demonstrate an outer honesty that vastly exceeds conventional notions. Not only are his words honest, but his actions are as well. He follows

through with what he says. He keeps his word. He practices what he preaches. He embodies, in other words, a kind of ultra-integrity, to the point where all of his thoughts, words, and actions are completely in harmony with one another. There is a trueness that runs all the way through him, through his private thoughts and his public expression. At no level is he in conflict with himself,³ and this gives him a peace of mind that we crafty magicians can only dream of.

3. Tolerance

In our efforts to tame the wilderness of life, we believe it is crucial to have high standards. They tell us what belongs inside our garden and what must be kept out. If we relax our standards and let

anything in—rabbits, birds, substandard seed, cheap fertilizers, and those careless people—we'll not only lose control, but we'll also lose self-respect. At that point, we are no better than anyone else.

The advanced teacher, however, sees something we've missed: that this constant process of managing our world through judgment—judging what to let in and what to exclude—takes a heavy emotional toll. For one thing, it establishes a very narrow range of acceptability. It says things have to be just right or we lose our peace. For another, it makes us a rejecter, an excluder, one who cannot tolerate people unless *they* are just right. As a result, we sour on ourselves. We frown while we pound that “no trespassing” sign into the ground, because we are inwardly frowning on ourselves.

The teacher of God is unwilling to pay this price. Hence, he throws judgment away. He refuses to distinguish between

pleasant and unpleasant situations, or between desirable and undesirable people. True, he makes decisions, based on his guidance. But in his heart, everything is just fine with him, and everyone is welcome. “Without judgment are all things equally acceptable....Without judgment are all men brothers.”⁴ This is how he looks on the world. He has found a tolerance as wide as the ocean, and thus, like the depths of the ocean, his peace knows no bounds.

4. Gentleness

Can we afford gentleness? We’ve all had the experience of trying politely to be heard while no one listened, only to finally get some action when we started shouting. The world is so set in its ways that railing against the injustices is, at times, the only force that can push the wheels out of their ruts. If we gently request that those wheels change direction, chances are that the only thing we’ll accomplish is to get run over. In this view, maybe the meek shall inherit the earth, but first they’ll need to be raised from the dead.

The advanced teacher, however, thinks this whole picture is completely backwards. He actually considers harsh tactics too *weak* to effect real change. In his eyes, gentleness is the strongest force there is, and he sees the evidence of this on a daily basis. He sees that one gentle touch can

amiable behavior. It is a state of mind that mirrors the nature of God, and so taps into His infinite power. That is why the truly gentle have been known to perform miracles. And that is why the meek *shall* inherit the earth. According to the Course, “They will literally take it over because of their strength.”⁵

5. Joy

Who of us does not want to feel joy? The problem, however, is that we believe it’s not appropriate to feel joy unless something really wonderful happens. Consequently, in our eyes, anything more than occasional joy amounts to a state of being out of touch with reality. Given the condition of things down here, to be in joy all the time, you’d have to be mentally deficient.

The teacher of God, however, does not see joy as an isolated response to specific events. Instead, it is his response to the nature of reality, a radiant reality that lies just behind the drab appearances he sees. It is his “yes” to a God of boundless generosity, a God Who goes with him wherever he goes and Who covers him with kindness and with care.⁶ His joy, therefore, has a limitless foundation. Hence, there is no need to scale it down to fit within the limits of caution and proportion. Further, being based on the nature of reality, it is no pipe dream; it is perfectly sane and

with perfect sincerity, “I am safe, untroubled and serene, in endless joy, because it is Your Will that it be so.”⁷

6. Defenselessness

Life in this world appears to require a massive amount of defense. We need medicine to defend against disease. We buy coats to protect ourselves from the cold. We build roofs to defend against sun and rain. We make endless plans, which are nothing but defenses against future threats. We even drive defensively. All things considered, our personal defense budget takes up the greater part of our income. In addition to guarding against physical threats, we also defend against an equally long list of interpersonal threats. If people disagree with us, insult our dignity, dispute our intelligence, or challenge our character, what do we do? We get defensive. We do everything in our power to stop them from pinning that label onto us.

The truly advanced teacher is free of the need for defenses. Instead of seeing defenses as staving off dangers, he sees the defenses *themselves* as the danger. For each defense contains a crippling message: that he is “vulnerable, frail and easily destroyed, and at the mercy of countless attackers”⁸—a hapless fly caught in a raging torrent. Given this belief, no defense, however impregnable, could save him from chronic insecurity and fear.

His only defense, therefore, is his supreme confidence that Who he really is can never be harmed or injured in any way, that his reality was “created unassailable.”⁹ Given this confidence, what possible reason would there be to armor himself with layer upon layer of defense? And so he walks in simplicity, having no need for all the complicated structures we look to for safety. He laughs in the face of danger, because, quite simply, he sees no danger.

Gentleness is a state of mind that mirrors the nature of God, and so taps into His infinite power.

reach someone when nothing else will, that one gentle word can be more effective than all the shouting. Experience has taught him that the power of gentleness is the power of love, and is, indeed, the power of God. For love is gentle, and God is Love. Gentleness is thus more than just

rational. And since it is also based on that which never changes, it is not a fleeting emotion. Rather, his joy has become a fundamental character trait. He is able to look upon any circumstance, no matter how dark and threatening it may appear, and say to his God

7. Generosity

Everyone feels the impulse to give, but there are costs involved. If we give too much, there will be nothing left for ourselves. Our giving is therefore constricted by a sense of caution, and overseen by a careful gauging of what we can afford. Granted, our idea of what we can afford often translates as what will not cut into our ability to accumulate at the rate we prefer. In this mindset, our gifts become investments, loans that we intend to call in at the appropriate time.

The teacher of God has left this mindset completely behind. His generosity has an extravagance to it, a lack of caution that we onlookers find both inspiring and unsettling. He might offer the shirt off his back to a complete stranger, or even an attacker. The reason is that he instinctively perceives giving as the way in which he himself gains, and sees keeping things for himself as a sure road to loss. As a result, his criterion for acquiring something is: “Can I give it away?” If not, he has no use for it. He can no longer even understand how something that is for him alone could have value. After all, every visible gift he gives—whether it be of his time or money or skills or possessions—is really just the wrapping for the gift of love. And the more he gives *this* gift, the more its radiance simply grows brighter within him. It is no wonder that he associates giving with gain.

8. Patience

So much of life amounts to standing in line. At any given moment, we are probably standing in about twenty lines, waiting for money to come through, for people to change, for our ship to come in, for our food to arrive. While standing in these lines, we try to wait patiently, yet doing so can feel like reining in wild horses. We silently wonder if our patience is too passive and wimpy, if we should just speak up in order to get the line moving.

Clearly, we are just putting a lid of

patience over a cauldron of impatience. In contrast, the advanced teacher is *truly* patient, serenely patient, no matter how long the line is. What is his secret? “All he sees is certain outcome.”¹⁰ While his eyes gaze on uncertainty, his mind rests in the inevitability of a happy outcome. And so he can relax and “wait without anxiety.”¹¹ His trust is so great that he knows that even the timing of this outcome will be perfect.

His patience, in other words, rests on his trust, the very first of his character traits. And this trust has a curious effect on the people he’s waiting for. They actually move faster. For his patience sends them a message: “I am willing to wait for you without anxiety because I trust you completely.” This loving message softens their hearts and kindles their motivation. Where before they would have dug in their heels, now they are drawn forward by the power of his love. Perhaps the Course is right when it says, “Now you must learn that only infinite patience produces immediate effects.”¹²

9. Faithfulness

Most of us believe in some very high ideals, and we really intend to follow them, maybe even all the time. Yet we have a great many things to juggle, and while juggling those axes and chainsaws, we often drop the ball of our high ideals. Of course, that doesn’t always happen. If we are spiritually inclined, for instance, we do turn some of our problems over to God. Yet we probably also believe there are certain problems that, if we gave Him the opportunity, He might solve in the *wrong way*. We decide we better keep those to ourselves. Who knows what bizarre and radical things He might do if we held nothing back and gave Him our whole life? In one of its exercises, the Course asks us to “think about all things

we saved to settle by ourselves, and kept apart from healing.”¹³ It expects us to find quite a few, for it knows that we are not yet wholly faithful to our higher convictions.

That, says the Course, is the only difference between us and the advanced teacher of God. He *is* wholly faithful. If he did that exercise, there would be nothing on his list. He brings all of his resentments to the healing power of forgiveness, without exception. He gives every single problem into the hands of the Holy Spirit. That is why we look up to him. He actually follows through on his high ideals. For he has learned the priceless lesson that we are still learning: that he can “trust in the Word of God to set all things right; not some, but all.”¹⁴

10. Open-mindedness

We probably consider open-mindedness to be a virtue. We value being open to new ideas and opinions. We respect those who will admit that they may not see the whole picture. But how far would we be willing to go with this? Would we open our minds wide enough to let go of every meaning we ever put on the world? That is what the advanced teachers of God have done. Not only have they forsaken trying to control their outer world, but they have also renounced an even deeper control: the control over the meanings they see in the world. As a result, they have left the world as they know it and stepped into the no man’s land of total open-mindedness. They are not left hanging for long:

They have in truth abandoned the world, and let it be restored to them in newness and in joy so glorious they could never have conceived of such a change. Noth-

*While juggling those axes and chainsaws,
we often drop the ball of our high ideals.*

ing is now as it was formerly. Nothing but sparkles now which seemed so dull and lifeless before. And above all are all things welcoming, for threat is gone.¹⁵

The advanced teacher did not reach this profound openness overnight. It came, in fact, at the very end of his journey. The Course says that open-mindedness is “perhaps the last of the attributes the teacher of God acquires.”¹⁶ The reason is that through it, he was able to once and for all let go of the glue that held all his perceptions together: the perception that sin lurked within those bodies and forms out there. Open-mindedness, in other words, is the gateway to true forgiveness, and true forgiveness is the end of the road. The teacher has been forgiving up until now; by our standards, he has been phenomenally forgiving. Yet only here at the end does his forgiveness become real, because only here does it become perfect. Now it is the kind that can raise the dead. Now it gives him the power to “heal the world without a word, merely by being there.”¹⁷ And now he is ready to step off the wheel of time altogether, for having at last dropped his sword, he is ready to face God without fear and disappear forever into His embrace.

Conclusion

What strikes me about this portrait of the advanced teacher is just how qualitatively different his existence is from yours and mine. He has opted out of the game that we are all so busy playing, the game of managing our world for the sake of our separate self. We are constantly pushing and pulling, including and excluding, defending and attacking, tapping our foot when forced to wait, shouting when it will move things along, and lying as need be—all to make sure that we surround ourselves with the conditions that suit the self we think we are. As the Course points out, we spend our lives on the battleground.

In contrast, what we see in the ad-

vanced teacher is a shocking refusal to engineer his own security. He simply declines to manage his world for the sake of his separate self. He blithely opts out of this universal game; he walks off the battleground, for he doesn't need its rewards. His happiness is not dependent on the things of this world. He has found another reality, one which he rests on as trustingly as a boat rests on the water. And while we rush around trying to push our reality into the proper shape, he simply basks in his, happy, at peace, and without a care in the world. Of such people, the Course says:

They want for nothing. Sorrow of any kind is inconceivable. Only the light they love is in awareness, and only love shines upon them forever.¹⁸

Resigning from the battle allows the teacher to be amazingly kind. Imagine what it would be like to be around such a person. He trusts you. He always tells you the truth, for he has no image to protect. He is supremely tolerant of you; no matter how you behave, he considers you his dear friend. He is always gentle, never harsh. He simply doesn't get defensive, regardless of what you say. He is uncommonly generous; he notices your needs and gives freely, even lavishly, to meet them. Even when you are impatient with yourself, his patience with you knows no bounds. And whatever mistakes you make, he forgives you, for he realizes that any perception of his that you are not perfectly holy must be his own mistake, which he gladly gives over to the Holy Spirit.

Who wouldn't want to be such a person? Who wouldn't give anything to have his sense of joy, his freedom from care, his trust in his Father? Who of us does not secretly ache to have that feeling of wholeness that comes from knowing that we are truly *good*? The Course assures us that all these can be ours. It is simply a matter of transferring

our investment from the battleground to “the quiet sphere above the battleground.”¹⁹ As the Course points out, when we look honestly at the alternatives, the choice between them is no choice at all:

Perhaps you think the battleground can offer something you can win. Can it be anything that offers you a perfect calmness, and a sense of love so deep and quiet that no touch of doubt can ever mar your certainty? And that will last forever?²⁰

It is a long road from where we are now to the “perfect calmness” of the advanced teacher. Yet we will get there, if we can just keep from losing our way in the dark. What we need is “an easy path, so clearly marked it is impossible to lose the way.”²¹ What we need is a path of light. If we will just place ourselves on this path and keep putting one foot in front of the other, we will make it. This is the promise of *A Course in Miracles*. ♦



Robert Perry has authored, or co-authored with Allen Watson, 19 books on A Course in Miracles. He is an internationally recognized authority on the Course, and has traveled extensively.

FOOTNOTES

1. M-4.1:4.
2. M-4.I(A).4:5.
3. M-4.II.1:8.
4. M-4.III.1:8-9.
5. T-2.II.7:5.
6. W-pI.41.Heading, W-pII.222.1:4.
7. W-pII.329.1:9.
8. T-22.VI.10:6.
9. W-pI.153.9:1.
10. M-4.VIII.1:3.
11. M-4.VIII.1:1.
12. T-5.VI.12:1.
13. W-pI.193.11:4.
14. M-4.IX.1:4.
15. M-4.X.2:3-6.
16. M-4.X.1:1.
17. P-2.III.3:7.
18. T-23.IV.8:2-4.
19. T-23.IV.9:5.
20. T-23.IV.8:7-9.
21. T-29.II.1:3.



When Should You Take Your Morning Quiet Time?

BY ROBERT PERRY

Morning quiet time is essential for a student of *A Course in Miracles*. That is when we establish our mental set for the day, so that the day becomes about God rather than just survival. Having this time in the morning is an essential part of doing the Workbook. That is when you read your lesson and do your first practice period. Yet even after the Workbook is over, the Course expects you to continue taking this time, as we are told in Section 16 of the Manual, “How Should the Teacher of God Spend His Day?”

The question I want to discuss here is *when*. When should you take this time? If you have not yet established such a time in your life, the question of when is obviously relevant. Yet even if you have regular morning quiet time, you might have nagging questions at the back of your mind: How important is it to take my quiet time the instant I get up? Is it all right to wait until later? How do I know when the ideal time is?

As with so many such questions, the answers are right there in the Course. I am aware of eleven passages that give an answer to this question, and they mention the same three things over and over again:

1. “As soon as possible after you wake” (W–pI.42.3:1)

Ideally, the Course wants us to take this time right as we get up. We will receive more benefits, it tells us, if we do our practice first thing in the morning (W–pI.rIII.8:1). Why? I think it is because when we first awake our mind is a relatively blank canvas. It is not yet cluttered with all the minutiae of the day. At this point, we can paint on it whatever we want. And if we take this opportunity to paint a scene of Heaven on it, that is what will remain for a good part of the day, maybe the entire day. On the other hand, if we wait too long, then our canvas will begin getting crowded with scenes of tasks and worries and plans. And then, by the time we do sit down for our quiet time, we might not succeed in erasing what is already painted there. We might very well spend our quiet time mulling over tasks and worries and plans.

But is this some kind of law that we must have our quiet time the instant we awake? The Course says no:

This course is always practical. It may be that the teacher of God is not in a situation that fosters quiet thought as he awakes. (M–16.4:1–2)

What is important is not the *form* of taking your quiet time the instant you wake up, but the *content* of taking it at a time most conducive to its real purpose. That is why the Course says not “when you wake,” but “as soon as possible after you wake” (it mentions this three times). How we gauge what defines “as soon as possible” leads us to the second and third points.

2. “When few distractions are anticipated” (W–pI.32.4:3)

This is so obvious that it hardly needs mentioning. If taking your quiet time the minute you awake would mean children knocking on the door and asking “When’s breakfast?” then that is not a suitable time. Instead, find a time with fewer distractions. This means two things in the Workbook:

1. You are by yourself (mentioned twice)
2. You have quiet (mentioned four times)

3. “When you yourself feel reasonably ready” (W–pI.32.4:3)

The previous point is about externals—are you in a noisy room with other people in it? This point is about internals—do you feel ready inside to focus on God? This issue of readiness is mentioned four times and, I think, is primarily a code for “are you fully awake yet?” Let’s face it, there are some of us who are not human when we first get up. There are some of us who, when the alarm clock goes off, still can’t figure out what that noise is. For us, trying to take our quiet time the instant we get up makes no sense whatsoever.

Summary

When should you take your morning quiet time? The Course provides a simple formula: as soon as possible after you wake, as soon as you feel ready (fully awake) and can get yourself alone in a quiet place. ♦

EXTENSION

Is Energizing

BY GREG MACKIE

I am not a morning person. The sunrise holds no charms for me. My natural inclination is to burn the midnight oil and drag myself out of bed sometime around ten the next morning. So, when Mary Anne asked me to lead the morning Workbook group while she was away last summer, my first response was “Eek!” The class started at 8:30 each weekday, which, given my normal morning routine, meant that I needed to get up at seven or even earlier. Now, I’m sure all the morning people reading this are laughing now, but for someone like me, getting up at seven feels like a real burden. I agreed to lead the group, but inwardly I dreaded the “sacrifice” of my precious morning sleep time.

Once I got into the daily routine, though, I was surprised to discover that while getting up early was indeed a struggle, working with the group was incredibly energizing. By the end of the group session each day, I had none of the grumpy grogginess that normally characterizes my mornings. Instead, I felt truly inspired, happy, and eager to go out into the new day. Now that Mary Anne has returned, I only lead the group on Mondays, but my experience is the same. I still struggle with arising initially, but once I do and get things rolling with the group, I feel energized. Monday is consistently the best day of my week.

What’s going on here? I’ve been wondering about that for some time now. I think a clue lies in the following passage from the Course:

Devotion to a brother cannot set you back....It can lead only to mutual progress. The result of genuine devotion is inspiration, a word which properly understood is the opposite of fatigue. To be fatigued is to be dis-spirited, but to be inspired is to be in the spirit. To be egocentric is to be dis-spirited, but to be Self-centered in the right sense is to be inspired or in spirit.

(T-4.In.1:3-7)

This passage presents a contrast between two states of mind: *fatigue and inspiration*. We normally think that fatigue is just a normal and inevitable part of life in this world. It sure feels that way to me when I’m rudely awakened by my alarm in the morning. But here, the Course says that fatigue actually comes from our incessant devotion to the ego. We wear ourselves out all day wrestling with the world to scrape together what we can to feed our separate self. This constant self-serving makes us feel “dis-spirited” and thus fatigued; it cuts us off from awareness of our true spiritual Self, the real source of the energy that moves us. Conversely, tap-

ping into that source leads out of dis-spirited fatigue and into inspiration—a state in which we are immersed in our true spiritual Self, drawing all the energy and sustenance we need from the inexhaustible font at the heart of our being.

What specifically pulls us out of fatigue and into inspiration? This passage offers a striking answer: *devotion to our brothers*. The movement from fatigue to inspiration is a movement from the self-centeredness of looking out for number one to the Self-centeredness of serving the brothers who share our true Self. And this, I think, is the clue to what happens for me during the morning Workbook group. I may be groggy when my alarm goes off in the morning, but once I’m leading the group, I’m devoting my time and energy to my brothers. I’m making a real effort to help them find peace and happiness in their



lives. I'm sure the results of my effort are mixed, but I know of numerous instances when I've been truly helpful to someone in our group. Those instances have never failed to lift my spirits. Every lift I've given to someone else has lifted me as well—progress truly has been mutual. To the degree that I've devoted myself to serving the group, I have truly felt inspired.

This has led to an exciting insight for me: *extension is energizing*. Extending help to other people is what truly fuels my life and powers my journey to God. This insight is a dramatic reversal of the way I normally think. I'm a bit of a loner; socializing normally tends to drain me. But if the Course is right—and I'm sure it is—then the reason for this is simply that my socializing is all too often ego-directed. My experiences with the Workbook group, though, have given me a little taste of how it feels to interact with others in a spirit of true devotion. This, I'm beginning to find, is not draining, but exhilarating.

I certainly haven't fully internalized the idea that extension is energizing. All too often, I still let my ego drag me down into a tiring, self-serving life. Fortunately, the Course promises that “when you have given up this voluntary dis-spiriting, you will see how your mind can focus and rise above fatigue and heal” (T-4.IV.6:3). I've seen this happen in my own experience, and for that I am grateful. I look forward to the day when I will fully recognize that extending healing love to others is the golden road from the weariness of life in this world to the joy of life in the spirit. ♦



Greg Mackie is a gifted Course writer and scholar. He is the author of *How Can We Forgive Murderers?* and of the Q&A feature on the Circle's website.

Practice Tip

EARLY EVENING QUIET TIME

BY GREG MACKIE

Evening quiet time is one of the staples of daily Course practice. Unfortunately, though, I've found it difficult to make it a regular part of my practice. After a long and tiring day, it's so tempting for me to just flop into bed, instead of taking the time to focus my mind and enter into quiet communion with my Father. Many Course students I've talked to have struggled with the same issue: “I'm too tired to do evening quiet time.” What can we do to overcome our lethargy, and make our evening quiet time the rewarding experience Jesus intends it to be?

Whenever we're having problems with our Course practice, the first place to look for solutions is the Course itself. Section 16 of the Manual suggests a simple solution to our difficulty with evening quiet time. It says, “Perhaps your quiet time should be fairly early in the evening, if it is not feasible for you to take it just before going to sleep” (M-16.5:2). The section doesn't elaborate on why our quiet time might not be “feasible” right before bedtime, but one reason suggests itself: we may be too tired at that point to make it worthwhile. I know I've sometimes fallen asleep while meditating before going to bed—hardly the peaceful but *alert* meditation Jesus wants me to have. So, if bedtime drowsiness is a problem for us, we may find it helpful to do our quiet time earlier, when we're more alert. When bedtime comes, we can then take just a brief moment to connect with God immediately before going to sleep (see M-16.5:8).

I've adapted this advice to my unconventional personal schedule, and it has worked wonders for me. I'm a night owl. After a quiet evening relaxing with my wife, Margery, I'll usually put in another work session at my computer before retiring at one or two in the morning. My old pattern was to try to do my quiet time right before going to bed, and this didn't work as well as I would have liked. I skipped my quiet time too many times, and fell asleep too often when I did do it. But now, I'm doing it *after* my evening with Margery but *before* my late-night work session. (I know this isn't actually early in the evening, but relatively speaking, it's early for me.) This has worked a lot better. Since implementing this plan, I've done my evening quiet time much more frequently than before, and I've felt much more alert while doing it. As a result, my meditations have been more focused, more peaceful, and more rewarding.

It's amazing what a simple adjustment like this can do. If you find that you're often too tired to do your evening quiet time, you may want to try doing it earlier in the evening. You may discover, as I have, that this aspect of your practice will really take off as a result. May you find in your evening quiet time the deep peace and communion with God that Jesus wants all of us to have. ♦

The Holy Spirit Will Provide

I want to share a wonderful story of something that happened to me last year. It gave me a definitive experience of the teaching in the Course that the Holy Spirit will provide all things that we truly have need of.

My work in the publishing “wing” of the Circle means that I am very dependent on a computer. In addition, because I do quite a lot of traveling, it needs to be a laptop computer. That way, whether I am in America or England, I can continue, uninterrupted, with my work schedule.

Two years ago, when the urgent need for a laptop initially arose, I was very generously donated one by a friend of the Circle, and although it was an old one, it had everything I needed. Last October, however, I bought a new computer program for a new aspect of my publishing work. This program required quite a sophisticated computer, and after having someone check my laptop over, I was told that there was virtually no way it would be able to handle the new software.

Within days of this bad news, the laptop suddenly started to behave very oddly, and very soon it finally “died” on me. Disaster! Now I had no computer at all! And with the Circle’s finances being so tight, I wasn’t sure how I was going to get a new one.

I mentioned on our staff conference call that day that my computer had died. An hour later, Greg Mackie called me to say that his wife, Margery, had been listening to the local classical radio station, and they were announcing a one-day contest which was part of their fundraising pledge drive. They

BY NICOLA HARVEY



would be putting all the entrants into a draw, and the following day they would select a winner. The prize was to be a brand new laptop computer. It seemed worth a try at least, so I followed Greg’s suggestion and entered the competition.

The next day, Robert Perry decided that the Circle would just have to bite the bullet and borrow money for a new laptop for me. We went on the Internet and found one that suited the specifications I needed, and ordered it by phone. We just needed to sign the paperwork that the salesperson said he would fax through to our office. The one downside was that it would take about a week until it was with me, which was work time I couldn’t really afford to lose.

Mid afternoon, there was a phone call for me. It was the local radio station. I thought, “I couldn’t have won the contest. They’re probably just calling me with some other promotion.” To my amazement, however, they told me I had won the laptop! What an incredible moment that was! It seemed that all my unspoken prayers had been answered—a brand new laptop computer, one that was more than sophisticated enough to

run the new software I needed to run. I was told I could go and collect it as soon as I wanted to, and so I arranged to go first thing in the morning. No having to wait around for a week!

Luckily, the papers for the other computer I’d nearly bought were faxed through later, so that I hadn’t signed the papers and been locked in to buying it. Possibly the most amazing aspect of this story, though, is that the one-day competition was held on the very day my old computer died. The timing couldn’t have been more perfect!

To me this was an incredible example of what the Course teaches about the Holy Spirit supplying all the things that we truly need. I did truly need a laptop, and I did need a new one. I also needed it as soon as possible, and the Circle did truly need the thirteen hundred dollars it would have had to borrow to get me one. My understanding is that the Holy Spirit will not fulfill our endless desires for material goodies, but that He *will* supply us with anything that we truly need in order to fulfill the reason we are here.

Leave, then, your needs to Him. He will supply them with no emphasis at all upon them.... Under His guidance you will travel light and journey lightly, for His sight is ever on the journey’s end, which is His goal.

(T-13.VII.13:1-2, 4) ♦

Nicola Harvey is the Circle’s Course-based healer. She has facilitated workshops on the Course in both America and England, and has written for several Course newsletters.

MAKING ERROR REAL

BY ALLEN WATSON

When we ask the Holy Spirit for specific guidance about what job to take or where to live, are we “making the error real” by presuming that the things in this world are somehow real? Or does “to make error real” mean something else altogether?

Many people think that the Course teaches us “not to make the error real,” supposing that the error in question is “*the error*,” the central error of separation. Although the Course strongly emphasizes the importance of not making error real, it never uses the phrase “make *the error real*”; it always omits “*the*.” It uses the phrase in the context of error, or sin, that we are seeing in another person. “Error” refers to the other person’s error, not to the separation. To make error real means to believe that our interpretation of something as bad or sinful is not simply an interpretation, but a fact.

When we judge someone’s actions as “bad,” our mind has made a choice to see the ego’s world rather than God’s. When we experience guilt, we have an unconscious need to project our guilt onto someone else. We choose to blame someone else for our discomfort.

Based on that choice, the mind then interprets what we have seen. We label what our brother did as attack, or abandonment, or neglect, or some other “sin.” We then freeze that interpretation. We “make it real”; we convince ourselves that *our interpretation is fact*. We then have an emotional response to that “fact” and base our actions on that response.

Here’s how the Course defines making error real: “To perceive errors in anyone,

and to react to them as if they were real, is to make them real to you” (T-9.III.6:7).

To make error real means to interpret a brother’s actions as sin, and to view that interpretation as fact. We then (1) attack the “sinner,” (2) erect defenses (the victim), (3) “forgive” it by abstaining from counter-attack (false forgiveness or the martyr), or (4) try to “fix” it (the unhealed healer).

The Course tells us not to make error real in any of these ways because it makes forgiveness impossible:

The ego’s plan is to have you see error clearly first, and then overlook it. Yet how can you overlook what you have made real?

(T-9.IV.4:4-5)

Once you make that false interpretation and believe it to represent reality, you cannot help reacting emotionally and behaviorally to it. You cannot forgive it until your perception is changed by a miracle. In the Holy Spirit’s brand of forgiveness, however, you overlook the error from the start (T-9.IV.5:3). He heals your mind of its false perception of “a real sin.” Forgiving then becomes a “natural reaction,” “the only sane response” (T-30.VI.2:1-8).

When you see a person’s ego as if it were real, you have already chosen to perceive through your own ego (T-9.III.3:1). If you see anyone—yourself or another person—as guilty in any way, you are making error real, because all guilt is unreal (T-13.X.6:5; T-13.X.7:3).

To put this another way: When you believe someone is attacking you, treating

you unfairly, or causing you pain, that is only your *perception* or *interpretation* of what they are doing. You are making it real by believing it is the truth. There is another way to see it.

Such a drastic change of perception is not simply difficult, *it is impossible* from our usual mental starting point. But this is a course in *miracles*! This change of mind is very, very real. It isn’t a simple change in our behavior. A miracle does *not* mean:

- ◆ *Pretending* you don’t feel attacked, or unfairly treated, or hurt. That is just denial.
- ◆ *Trying* to see it differently, trying to figure out how to forgive truly.
- ◆ *Feeling guilty* because you still see attack or sin as real.

The miracle is about *really seeing things differently*! Really perceiving, at the gut level, that attack isn’t real attack, unfair treatment isn’t real unfair treatment, and pain isn’t real pain. It is about experiencing this so that you *know* it, not just getting the concepts. Instead of seeing the other person as guilty in any way, you see them as the innocent, holy Son of God. You *cannot* do this by yourself. You can’t work this up on your own; you *must* call upon the help of the Holy Spirit.

And yet Jesus says, “The way to do this is very simple” (T-12.I.1:1). It’s simple because you don’t have to *do* anything; rather, you just *stop doing* something. Let me explain what I mean.

For a moment, presume that the Course is absolutely true, and that sin and attack simply do not exist. None of it

is real. You, along with everyone else, are still as sinless as the day God created you, and everything that looks like sin is an illusion. Just presume for a moment that you fully accept this as fact.

Now, if error is not real, imagine what you need to do to come to believe that error *is* real. You would have to *do something* to make it real to you (T-12.I.1:2). On the other hand, you don't have to *do anything* to believe in truth (T-12.I.1:3). What's real is real, and believing in it takes no effort.

Therefore, to experience truth and not make error real—to forgive as the Course teaches it, which means to see there is no sin to forgive—all you have to do is...*nothing*.

What's easier than nothing?

You are currently making error real all the time. By definition, all errors are not real; therefore, you must be doing something to *make* them real in your thinking. So all you need is to *stop* doing that. You don't have to do anything more, just cease doing what you are now doing. This is why you need to look at your ego honestly. You have to see what you are always doing in order to know you are doing it, and to stop it.

“You do not respond to anything directly, but to your interpretation of it” (T-12.I.1:4). It is not what your brother or sister *does* that makes you experience attack, or blame, or pain, or loss. It is your interpretation of what they do. You don't get angry at a fact; you get angry at your interpretation of the facts (M-17:4:1-2). Negative emotions arise from negative interpretations.

Therefore, in simple terms: *Stop paying attention to your interpretation of things*, and let the Holy Spirit give you another interpretation.

When you think that you understand what things mean, you are making a big mistake (T-11.VIII.2:3). Jesus says that believing you've properly analyzed someone's ego motivation is more than a mistake—it's *dangerous* (T-12.I.1:6). It

not only wrongs the other person, it hurts you as well.

It hurts you to trust your analysis of another's ego because it causes you to lose touch with reality! (T-12.I.1:8). You are reacting to something that isn't there; you are delusional. Think about this the next time you believe someone is attacking you or betraying you. Judging others sets you up for disaster and exhausts your energy defending yourself against imagined threats. When someone around you “makes a mistake” and listens to his or her own ego, it need not have power over you unless you give it power. You give it power by trying to interpret it. You set up your interpretation and think it is real, and the interpretation blocks the truth from your sight. The truth is what the Holy Spirit sees; it is the reality of the person as God's creation: their innocence and loveliness. Your interpretations, in which error is real, keep you from seeing that truth. So all you need to do to see the truth is to *stop paying attention to your own interpretations* and to ask the Holy

Spirit to give you His interpretation.

Admittedly, we find it hard to do that. We've become so used to accepting our interpretations as facts that it seldom occurs to us to challenge them. That, however, is exactly what we must do if we are to break free from our imprisoning patterns of thought.

When we notice that we are perceiving error in someone, let us remind ourselves that our perceptions are not the truth, and that we do not know what anyone's actions mean, nor why they do them. And let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us see the situation differently. Gradually, that kind of practice will help us to see people increasingly as God's holy creations. ♦



Allen Watson is the author of many books on the Course, including the hugely popular Workbook Companion series. He is an internationally recognized speaker and teacher.

Walking the Path

Circle Workbook Practice

BY MARY ANNE BUCHOWSKI

2003: “Walking with the Holy Spirit”

Our year of “Walking with the Holy Spirit in Post-Workbook Practice” (*A Better Way*, Spring 2003) ended with encouraging, albeit mixed, results.

It was a year in which we turned inward asking the Holy Spirit for our daily lesson and trying to let our practice be guided by Him. As we kept asking each morning, His direction did come, sometimes in an initial morning quiet

time, sometimes as we shared in class. One student found that, even if she was given a lesson that she didn't particularly like, she would do it nevertheless, and would often have a breakthrough that day. I found that, when I was faithful in asking and open to receiving, the answers were there, whether it was about the lesson to practice that day or about a matter of importance in my life.

My most remarkable experience came one day when I was feeling very powerless and down on myself. I quietened my

mind and asked what lesson I should practice. Then I opened the book, and found myself reading from Lesson 110, “*I am as God created me. His Son can suffer nothing, and I am His Son.*” My instant reaction was, “Oh, no, not this again!” So, hoping to get something more palatable and exciting, I asked again, opened the book to the last section of the Text, and read, “Learn, then, the happy habit of response to all temptation to perceive yourself as weak and miserable with these words: *I am as God created me. His Son can suffer nothing. And I am His Son*” (T-31.VIII.5:1-4)! If the Holy Spirit couldn’t get through to me in one way, He’d do it in another!

Through our year of Holy Spirit practice, our trust and confidence in the Holy Spirit grew immeasurably, and we came away with a more personal relationship with Him and a deeper desire to live our lives under His tutelage and direction. At the same time, I think that we weren’t all ready for the lack of structure of this form of practice, as we sometimes lost sight of practicing the lessons as the Workbook teaches. This led to a different focus for this year.

2004: “Awake and Share”

On New Year’s Day we launched our year of practice together here at the Circle House. We enjoy starting off the year in this way as it gives us a stronger sense of solidarity and community as we journey with the Course.

Our theme arose out of our desire to integrate the Course’s teachings and lessons into our daily lives more fully, to begin to really awaken, and “take [our] place, so long left unfulfilled, in the Great Awakening” (T-15.XI.10:10).

This year determine not to deny what has been given you by God. Awake and share it, for that is the only reason He has called to you.

(T-16.II.8:2-3)

Our theme is “Awake and Share,” but the focus of our daily classes is on practicing our lessons faithfully as instructed. Most of us admit that we haven’t gone through the Workbook exactly according to Jesus’ practice instructions, even though he tells us to do them “with great specificity” (W-pI.In.4:1), and that, “It is doing the exercises that will make the goal of the course possible” (W-In.1:2). We are approaching our classes as a “practice lab,” and instead of spending the bulk of our time sharing our experiences, we discuss the teaching in the lesson and do the practice together exactly as instructed in the lesson. Then we discuss how the practice went and what feelings it brought up. We close with a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication, offering our willingness to practice our lesson faithfully throughout the day.

Greg Mackie—who now teaches Monday’s class—and I try to think of creative ways to enliven the classroom practice; for instance, we may add related practice ideas or prepare questions and ask students to write down their responses. The day we did Lesson 7, “I see only the past” (the “cup” lesson), I brought in a tray full of cups. We all chose a cup, spent a bit of time with it, and then talked about how we related the lesson to our particular cup. We had a lot of fun, especially when we talked about how some people had staked out the cup they wanted and jumped to get it before anyone else did!



Mary Anne Buchowski is a popular teacher of our daily Workbook classes in Sedona, and she also supports Course students one-on-one in teacher-pupil relationships.

If students have already been through the Workbook, we suggest that they add related thoughts or other Course quotes to their practice. I have actually been enjoying, and even getting excited about, going through the chronological lessons from the vantage point of an experienced student. I am writing this on January 15, and to yesterday’s “good news” lesson (#14, “God did not create a meaningless world”) I am adding, “What God did not create can only be in [my] own mind apart from His’ (6:5). But ‘my mind is part of God’s; it cannot be apart from His.’ I have found that my experience of the practice has been greatly enriched by my adding this post-Workbook component.

As you might expect, there is occasional resistance among us to being told how to practice, even if in this case, the one telling us is Jesus! We are trying to keep in mind that he only gives us these instructions to set us free, not to imprison us. We are trying to see them as prescriptions to be taken as directed for nothing less than the healing of our minds, our awakening, and our sharing in the awakening of all mankind. ♦

For Your Consideration

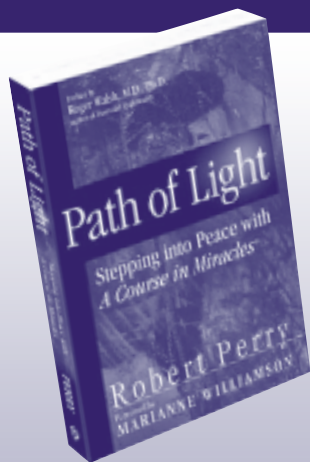
In recent years, we have been blessed with bequests from people remembering us in their wills, and this has benefited us tremendously. We had no idea how helpful it could be until we started receiving those bequests.

As you plan for your estate, we invite you to consider naming the Circle of Atonement as a beneficiary. If you decide to do this, please know that you have our deepest gratitude. If you have questions, don’t hesitate to contact us (see our contact details on page 3). Thank you.

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Thank you for your letters to the Circle. We enjoy reading them and sharing them with our readers. These letters are on a variety of topics, and include your letters to the editor of *A Better Way*, and your comments on our services, programs, publications, and website. Write to us at P.O. Box 4238, W.

Sedona, AZ 86340, or send us an e-mail at info@circleofa.com.

Letters may be edited for space or clarity.

A Christian's View

I have been looking for spiritual guidance for a few months now and came across *A Course in Miracles*. I checked the reviews on ACIM on the UK and US Amazon websites and was intrigued. After extensive research online I came across your website. Like most people raised as Christians (I am Anglican), I must admit that the references to Jesus and God scared me. At first it seemed that ACIM was everything we had been taught not to get involved with. But I was still drawn to ACIM and continued to look into it. The quantity and quality of articles on your website reassured and excited me, especially the articles on "The Spiritual Program of ACIM." I read the first chapter of ACIM last night and immediately felt at peace.

Thank you for your wonderfully informative website. I shall continue to be a frequent visitor as your articles help me to make sense of ACIM.

Sylvia Giraud (by e-mail)



Three Responses to "Life Is but a Dream"

I just finished reading your article and am feeling overwhelmed and ambivalent about it. It all makes terribly good sense

the way you have so clearly chunked it down and analyzed it. However, I find it difficult to relate to it for two reasons: 1) My fears have fortunately not manifested. I've never had anything really important stolen from me; I've never been physically attacked although both are fears in my mind. However, if anything like that did happen, I would have a hard time owning the cause as originating in my mind. 2) I know I am judgmental about little things, but I don't feel guilty about them or think I deserve punishment for them in the form of "a world full of disease and accidents..." and unloving people who betray us. Actually I feel my relationships with people are steadily improving. I feel loved and cared for by my friends and also by acquaintances and strangers.

However, I do feel the need to awaken from the dream and release all judgments so that I can feel truly joyous and fearless all the time and clearly understand everything that happens in my life. I am very grateful to you and your colleagues for your wonderful articles and all that you are doing to help people see the value of the Course and all it offers to make our lives more wonderfully loving.

*Joan Lorenz
Portland, Oregon*

Robert Perry replies:

I think the key to answering your two points is realizing that the conscious mind is such a tiny part of the total mind. Unless you include in your picture of your mind a massive unconscious in between the conscious mind and the Mind of Christ, then the Course's thought system really falls apart. In this unconscious, you do feel terrible guilt over all of your judgments, and out of this unconscious, you do manifest a world that is betraying you, both in little ways and in big ways. A little way might be a car that breaks down. A big way might be a body that breaks down.



I certainly appreciated "Life Is but a Dream." This touches on an issue of ACIM which is among the most sensitive and difficult for me to deal with. We must acknowledge that ultimately, only Heaven (the realm of Spirit, our reality) is real, while we still must reach in (to the Spirit) and reach out (to our brothers on the planet, however illusory it is) in a manner which is healing in all ways. I believe that this is where Ken Wapnick goes too far. His approach might lead one to a (possibly selfish) mistaken withdrawal from the social and economic forces and pain in the world. The Course reminds us that there *are* decisions to be made in this world—decisions which have consequences, at least in a temporal sense. It also states that we must not deny our experience in our physical body. Even though the body is ultimately illusory, the Spirit can use it/us for communication and the redemption process.

*Robert S. Riley
Albuquerque, New Mexico*



I just loved the article "Life Is but a Dream." I've been struggling for years with this concept and now I'm finally getting it. Your article helped me put some

pieces together that have been drifting around, helter-skelter in my mind.

I spent six years in Jungian analysis after dropping out of theological school. I've been dismayed during the last number of years about how little impact all those years of studying dreams has had on my daily life. I dismissed a lot of that analysis as having little practical import. But lo and behold, dream analysis did indirectly help me in relating to and using the concept of life as a dream.

I do believe that dreams are an unconscious statement of what is going on in my conscious life. For example, the "hatchet woman" who used to wake me up in sheer terror as she ran after me in a nightmare suddenly takes on an interest-

ing new dimension. I could always see the symbolism of this horrible figure but its application seemed far off.

Now I can see how little difference there is between my night and my life as a dream. And the way of looking at both as a therapist (with the Holy Spirit) isn't all that different. Life examined as a dream gives us, I think, the necessary distance to own our part without getting strangled by guilt.

Anyway there is a lot I have yet to digest in your article. But as always I love having your material to chew on. Many thanks.

*Judy Robb
Calgary, Canada*

CIRCLE SERVICES

Circle Website Our website is a wonderful resource for accessing Circle writings, and finding out about our events and services. You will find a huge variety of articles by Circle teachers, and new ones are added regularly. Other highly popular features well worth exploring are Robert Perry's Course Glossary, Allen Watson's Daily Workbook Commentaries and Greg Mackie's Course Q&A page. We have also just started publishing a small number of e-books, which are unavailable in print form. To ensure easy ordering of our books and tapes, we now have a shopping cart facility online. **Visit our website at www.circleofa.com.**

We are dedicated to making this a rich and informative site that provides a wealth of materials in support of your journey with the Course.

Path of Light Workshops Robert Perry is available to run workshops based on his new book, *Path of Light*. If you would like to host a workshop in your area, please contact our office.

Support for Students and Study Groups Mary Anne Buchowski is available to work with individual Course students in a teacher-pupil relationship designed to help them along the path of the Course. We are also pleased to offer informal support, through correspondence or by phone, to both individuals or study groups. Contact Mary Anne at maryanne@circleofa.com.

Course-Based Spiritual Healing If you would like a healing session with Nicola, please contact her at nicola@circleofa.com.

Service to People in Prison The Circle provides complimentary materials, as well as support through correspondence, to Course students in prison.

CIRCLE EVENTS

REGULAR CLASSES / SEDONA, AZ

Daily Morning Workbook Class

With Mary Anne Buchowski
and Greg Mackie

Focus for 2004: "Awake and Share:
Bringing the Lessons to Life"
Weekdays, 8:30 - 9:30am

Weekly Evening Class

With Robert Perry

Deepen your understanding
of a variety of Course topics
Tuesdays, 7:00 - 8:30pm
Call our office for details

REGULAR CLASSES / PORTLAND, OR

Weekly Evening Class

With Allen Watson

In-depth study of the Text of

A Course in Miracles

Tuesdays, 7:00 - 9:00pm

Contact Allen Watson

allen@circleofa.com; (503) 284-3619

OTHER EVENTS

Unity of the Southwest, Phoenix

"The Irresistible Attraction"

An evening talk with Robert Perry

Tuesday May 4, 7:00 - 8:30pm

"Path of Light"

A one-day workshop with Robert Perry

Saturday, June 5, 10:30am - 4:30pm

*For more details, and booking information,
call Rev. Julianne Lewis at (480) 946-9481*

Path of Light: UK Tour

with Robert Perry

2 - 8 July, 2004

A series of evening talks and one-day
workshops in the UK, based on Robert

Perry's latest book, *Path of Light*.

*Contact the Miracle Network for details:
(020) 7262-0209, or admin@miracles.org.uk.*

FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

Walking the Path of Light

With Robert Perry and Circle staff

Labor Day Weekend, Friday 3 to

Monday 6 September, 2004

Further details to be announced

The Circle of Atonement Mission Statement

To discern the author's vision of *A Course in Miracles* and manifest that in our lives, in the lives of students, and in the world.

- 1. To faithfully discern the author's vision of *A Course in Miracles*.** In interpreting the Course we strive for total fidelity to its words and the meanings they express. We thereby seek to discover the Course as the author saw it.
- 2. To be an instrument in Jesus' plan to manifest his vision of the Course in the lives of students and in the world.** We consider this to be Jesus' organization and therefore we attempt to follow his guidance in all we do. Our goal is to help students understand, as well as discern for themselves, the Course's thought system as he intended—as a literal program in spiritual awakening. Through doing so we hope to help ground in the world the intended way of doing the Course, here at the beginning of its history.
- 3. To help spark an enduring tradition based entirely on students joining together in doing the Course as the author envisioned.** We have a vision of local Course support systems composed of teachers, students, healers, and groups, all there to support one another in making full use of the Course. These support systems, as they continue and multiply, will together comprise an enduring spiritual tradition, dedicated solely to doing the Course as the author intended. Our goal is to help spark this tradition, and to assist others in doing the same.
- 4. To become an embodiment, a birthplace of this enduring spiritual tradition.** To help spark this tradition we must first become a model for it ourselves. This requires that we at the Circle follow the Course as our individual path; that we ourselves learn forgiveness through its program. It requires that we join each other in a group holy relationship dedicated to the common goal of awakening through the Course. It also requires that we cultivate a local support system here in Sedona, and that we have a facility where others could join with us in learning this approach to the Course. Through all of this we hope to become a seed for an ongoing spiritual tradition based on *A Course in Miracles*.

Friends of the Circle

An Invitation to Join with Us

If you have benefited from the materials, programs, and services of the Circle of Atonement, and would like to help us fulfil our role with *A Course in Miracles*, we invite you to consider joining the Friends of the Circle. Over the years, the Friends' financial assistance, spiritual support, words of appreciation and encouragement, as well as the relationships we have developed, have brought us many blessings and much joy, and have been instrumental in our fulfilling our vision (see our mission statement opposite).

BENEFITS

In addition to offering you the opportunity to join with us in our vision, contribute to our work, and experience being an active part of our Circle family, your annual membership of \$180 includes:

- ◆ Four issues of our quarterly newsletter, *A Better Way*;
- ◆ 20% off Circle books, tapes, workshops and retreats;
- ◆ \$90 tax-deductible donation;
- ◆ Friends of the Circle updates, keeping you up to date with the life of the Circle;
- ◆ Support in your study, practice, and extension of the Course's teachings;
- ◆ Special materials from workshops and classes;
- ◆ Feedback forms for sharing your ideas and concerns.

TO JOIN

- ◆ Tell us about yourself and why you want to join the Friends;
- ◆ Take a few moments to silently join with us in purpose;
- ◆ Send us your initial contribution for a year (\$180) or for the first quarter (\$45).

You may join:

- 1. through our website** (www.circleofa.com—"About the Circle")
- 2. via e-mail** to info@circleofa.com (please include your credit card type, number, and expiry date)
- 3. by regular mail**; write us a letter and send it, with payment, to our office (address on page 3).

Donations above the annual membership fee are gratefully received, both for our general operating fund, as well as for special projects as they arise.