



## CONTENTS

The Importance of Relationships in <i>A Course in Miracles</i> by Robert Perry	1
The Answer I Had Been Looking For by Dee Doyle	7
Recent Web Site Postings	9
What We're Reading	10
Circle Mailbox	10
Circle News	11

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# A BETTER WAY

## The Importance of Relationships in *A Course in Miracles*

**by Robert Perry**

I recently read an article on the research being done on near-death experiences ("Altered States: Scientists Analyze the Near-Death Experience," by Lee Graves, The University of Virginia Magazine, Summer 2007). While I was impressed by the evidence being compiled that these experiences are not just the misfirings of a dying brain, I was especially struck by a particular message that emerged again and again.

This message was embedded in the article's opening story. The story was about Rocky, a bagman for the Mafia, who was shot in the chest one day and left for dead. He had a profound near-death experience and, as Bruce Greyson described it, "came back with typical near-death aftereffects. He felt that cooperation and love were the important things, and that

competition and material goods were irrelevant." As a result, he actually changed careers and "started helping delinquent children and victims of spousal abuse."

After that, this same basic message was voiced repeatedly, by experiencers as well as by researchers summarizing the reports of experiencers. Here are some of the ways that message was put:

How we spend our time on earth, the kind of relationships we build, is vastly more important than we can know. (George Ritchie, NDE experiencer and author of *Return from Tomorrow*)

They [NDE experiencers] seem to know that the love they create while living will be reflected and radiated back to them when they die. (Melvin Morse, M.D., author of *Closer to the Light: Learning from the Near-Death Experiences of Children*)

We're all in this together. If I hurt you, I'm hurting myself. (Bruce Greyson, prominent NDE researcher)

It sort of wakes you up to the importance of other people and relationships. (Raymond Moody, author of *Life After Life*)

How strange that when someone apparently passes beyond the veil and glimpses the other side, the message that person receives is about the incomparable importance of our relationships on earth.

Part of why I was so struck by this was that this is the very message that I have taken away from *A Course in Miracles*. Please read the following twelve quotes and try to catch their vision of the importance of our relationships:

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## 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.

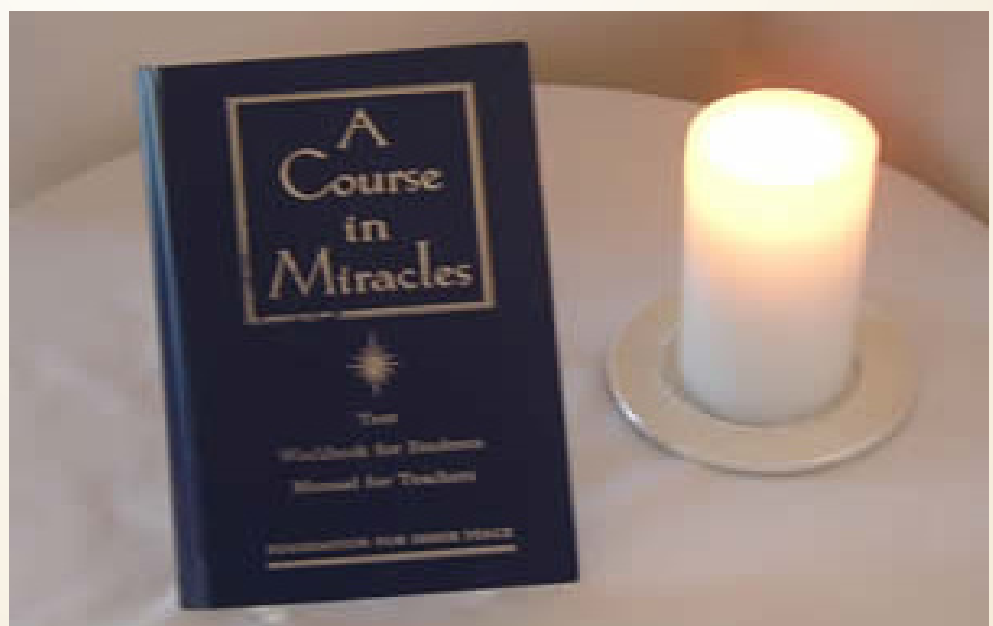
The Course's message is that the source of our suffering is not the world's mistreatment of us, but rather our egocentric attack on the world. This attack convinces us that we have defiled our nature beyond repair, that we are irredeemably guilty. Yet the Course says true reality cannot be defiled; it 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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It is only in relationships that salvation can be found. (P-2.In.4:3)

You have found each other, and will light each other's way. (T-18.III.8:6; Urtext version)

One instant spent together with your brother restores the universe to both of you. (T-18.VII.5:3)

You have assumed your part in [your brother's] redemption, and you are now fully responsible to him. (T-17.VIII.5:5)

All therapy should do is try to place *everyone* involved in the right frame of mind to help one another. (Urtext)

One asks for help; another hears and tries to answer in the form of help. This is the formula for salvation. (P-2.III.3:4-5)

Nothing in the world is holier than helping one who asks for help. And two come very close to God in this attempt, however limited, however lacking in sincerity. (P-2.V.4:2-3)

If their relationship is to be holy, whatever one needs is given by the other; whatever one lacks the other supplies. (P-3.III.4:4)

No one is sent by accident to anyone. (P-3.III.6:2)

When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. (T-8.III.4:1)

Even at the level of the most casual encounter, it is possible for two people to lose sight of separate interests, if only for a moment. That moment will be enough. Salvation has come. (M-3.2:6-8)

All who meet will someday meet again, for it is the destiny of all relationships to become holy. (M-3.4:6)

When we read these quotes, we can be astonished at just how much importance they grant our relationships. Yet this theme is not confined to these few passages. The entire path of the Course is one of realizing that other people are not the annoying nuisances we thought, but instead are literally shining with divine worth and significance. This realization is what frees us from our chains: "And each one is released as he beholds his savior in place of the attacker who he thought was there" (T-22.VI.8:1). The author of the Course says that when someone seeks to open his mind to true reality, "it is always some change in his perception of interpersonal relationships that enables him to do so" (P-In.1:6).

Yet the Course is about more than a strictly internal change in our perception of others. It is also about *joining* with others in a common goal. "Each one must share one goal with someone else, and in so doing, lose all sense of separate interests" (P-2.II.8:4). This, of course, is a holy relationship, and the Course says that holy relationships are literally "the source of your salvation" (T-20.VIII.6:9).

We could even take this one step further. In the Course, relationships are not only the source of our salvation, they are also meant to be the focus of our lives. The Course says that our whole "function on earth is healing" (T-12.VII.4:7)—meaning, extending healing to others. To say that this is our "function" is to say that this is what we are suited for, what we are here for. Just as a toaster's function is to toast bread, so our function is to heal people. This function is meant to encompass all of our behavior: "The Holy Spirit teaches you to use your body only to reach your brothers, so He can teach His message through you" (T-8.VIII.9:1). And it is meant to be full time, to go on "every moment of the day" and even to continue "into sleeping thoughts as well" (M-In.1:6). The Course even promises that we will be given a special form of this function, designed around our particular strengths (see W-pl.154.2:2), so that the people we serve get the very best in us.

This focus on the importance of our relationships extends into every nook and cranny of our day. We are meant to wake up saying, "Help me to perform whatever miracles you want of me today" (Urtext). We are supposed to take a moment each morning to let ourselves be born again to each one of our relationships. "Use no relationship to hold you to the past, but with each one each day be born again. A minute, even less, will

be enough” (T-13.X.5:2-3). Then we are supposed to walk out into our day and be constantly on the lookout for situations that need a miracle from us (W-pI.77.7:4-5). We are asked to bless literally everyone we meet (W-pI.37.6:2). We are supposed to regard each chance encounter as a potential holy encounter, not really chance at all, but arranged by the Holy Spirit for the sake of a holy potential.

Thus, if we land on an elevator with a stranger, we are meant to treat it as an arranged meeting with a long-lost friend (M-3.2:2-5). If a child bumps into us by accident, we are supposed to treat this as a God-given opportunity to let this child know that she’s worthy anyway, even when she doesn’t look where she’s going (M-3.2:2-5). If we feel a pang of regret at running into someone at the store (W-pI.121.10:1), we are meant to realize that this pang is actually anger, and then try to see the light in this person and let this light awaken us (W-pI.121.10-13). We are supposed to be so focused on holy encounters that we even regard the holy encounters of others as somehow our own: “A brother smiles upon another, and my heart is gladdened. Someone speaks a word of gratitude or mercy, and my mind receives this gift and takes it as its own” (W-pII.315.1:3-4).

When we put all of these passages together, it can be quite surprising. Is how we relate to others really this important? Does the Course really see our every interaction as suffused with this kind of divine meaning? Yet this shouldn’t actually surprise us. After all, the Course came in order to help Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford live out Bill’s “better way,” and listen to how Helen described that way:

[Bill] was not going to get angry and was determined not to attack. He was going to look for a constructive side in what the people there said and did, and was not going to focus on mistakes and point up errors. He was going to cooperate rather than compete. (*Absence from Felicity*, by Ken Wapnick, p. 94)

This notion of the importance of relationships, then, takes us back to the very origins of the Course. For the Course’s original purpose was to help Helen and Bill learn how to “cooperate rather than compete.” It came, in other words, to teach them—and us—how to *get along*.

### **How does this fit with the Course’s metaphysics?**

Despite what I’ve said, there is actually a very good reason that this theme of the importance of our relationships may surprise us. That reason is the Course’s metaphysics. The Course openly and repeatedly teaches that this world is an illusion. And that seems to drain the importance from our earthly relationships—as well as from everything else in this world. Think about it. If everything in the world is an illusion, then our relationships here are an illusion, too. And how can an illusion be important? Why all this fanfare around something that is not real?

I think most students of the Course struggle with this issue, even if unconsciously. As Course students, we constantly get these two messages: 1) Our relationships in this world are incredibly important; 2) everything in this world is illusory. How can one escape the friction between these? They just don’t seem to fit together. Surely we need to tone one down so that it can harmonize with the other.

And this, in fact, is what I see happen. If we emphasize theme 1—the importance of our relationships—we generally get a Marianne Williamson or Jerry Jampolsky interpretation of the Course. In this interpretation, there is a wonderful emphasis on giving and receiving, lots of stress on helping others and joining with others, but little or no mention of the fact that this world is a dream. Indeed, there are some interpretations of the Course in which the world is actually real and God-created; only the world *as we see it* is an illusion.

If, on the other hand, we emphasize theme 2—the Course’s metaphysics—we tend to get a Ken Wapnick interpretation of the Course. Here, the illusory nature of the world is admirably emphasized, yet our relationships seem to be downgraded. They are important, but only as an opportunity to get in touch with our own projections. Indeed, in this interpretation, you often get the impression that other people are *no more* than our projections, an impression reinforced by statements like “There’s no one out there.” If there’s no one out there, what does that do to the very concept of “relationship”? It seems to do away with it.

This can easily seem like an unsolvable dilemma, as if we will always be forced to compromise one side of the Course for the sake of the other. There is, however, a way out. That way out is an accurate understanding



of the Course's metaphysics.

Many Course students assume that the Course's transcendental reality (also called Heaven) is basically an undifferentiated soup of pure consciousness. In this soup, there are no beings (in the plural); there is only oneness. God and the Son are really the same thing called by different names. Not only is the Son not different from God, but there are no individual Sons. The appearance of multiple Sons is an illusion caused by the separation. Finally, the Holy Spirit is really just a metaphor. Thus, rather than beings (Father, Sons, Holy Spirit), there is a single field of pure beingness. In such a realm, it would clearly make no sense to speak of relationship, for a relationship, of course, takes *two*. And that means that this thing we do on earth, where different beings enter into relationship with each other, has absolutely no counterpart in reality. And having no counterpart in reality, it must be pure illusion.

But this is not the Course's metaphysics. You can't find the support for the statements I just made in the Course itself. You have to read those statements into the Course. You have to assume, "Well, surely this is what the Course really *means*," because nowhere is this what it actually *says*.

Instead, the Course presents us with a deeply *relational* Heaven. In this Heaven, all is one, yes, but somehow within this oneness, Heaven is brimming with relationship. Even though there is perfect oneness, there are also *beings* in *relationship*. That may sound startling, but it really is how the Course always talks. In fact, it often uses the word "relationship" to speak of Heaven. Thirty-eight times, by my count, it explicitly speaks of "relationship" in Heaven—with God, with our creations, and with our brothers. I will quote some of these passages below.

This relational Heaven begins with a God Who "did not will to be alone" (T-11.I.1:6, 5:7, 6:3, 11:2; T-11.III.2:4). Therefore, He creates a Son. This Son is one with God and shares His attributes, but there is a key difference: The Son is the *Effect* and God is the *Cause*, and that difference will never be erased (W-pI.326.1:2). Because of that difference, it makes sense to speak of "the *relationship* of God and His Son" (T-16.VI.1:4; italics mine).

Further, within this one Son are countless *Sons*. They are "the sum of all God's Thoughts, in number infinite" (W-pII.11.1:1). These Sons are not an illusory product of the separation, but were created by God Himself in the beginning. "God...created beings who have everything individually, but who want to share it to increase their joy" (T-4.VII.5:1). And these Sons, too, are in relationship. Referring to your heavenly condition as one of these Sons, the Course speaks of "the beautiful relationship you have with all your brothers" (T-28.VII.2:1).

The idea of relationship in Heaven also allows us to understand the Holy Spirit, Who was created after the separation. For the separation was a *breaking* of our relationship with God. It was a tear in the fabric of Heaven's relationships. This is why God created the Holy Spirit. Through our relationship with the Holy Spirit, we retain *some* of our original relationship with God, and this means that that original relationship is still unbroken. All of this is said in the following passage:

And the truth is that the Holy Spirit is in close relationship with you, because in Him is your relationship with God restored to you. The relationship with Him [God] has never been broken, because the Holy Spirit has not been separate from anyone since the separation. (T-17.IV.4:5-6)

Heaven, then, is not just perfect oneness. It can just as accurately be described as perfect *relationship*. In Heaven, there are *beings*—God, the Son, the Sons, our creations, the Holy Spirit—and these beings are joined in *relationship*. And not just any sort of relationship; their "relationship is one of perfect union and unbroken continuity" (T-20.VI.1:5). Their relationship is so intimate that it crosses the line into oneness.

So somehow, in Heaven there is both *multiplicity* (beings in relationship) and *oneness*. This is admittedly very hard to comprehend. The Course, in fact, says that it is impossible for us now. It says that our current minds cannot truly understand that "one brother is all brothers," that "every mind contains all minds" (W-pI.161.4:1-2). We can't grasp how *multiple* beings can be perfectly *one*. But that is all right. We don't need to grasp it right now.

Now for the punch line. The fact that the Course's Heaven is so thoroughly relational has absolutely massive implications for life on earth. The implications are obvious: *By building relationship into the very fabric*

*of Heaven, the Course provides a metaphysical basis for the importance of relationship on earth.* This resolves that entire dilemma we saw before, where we felt forced to water down either the Course's metaphysics or the importance it places on relationship, so that the two can fit together. Now we don't need to water down either one, for they are no longer in conflict. They can stand up together, right next to each other, because they fit hand in glove.

Now our loving, kind, united relationships on earth are a *reflection* of Heaven's perfect relationships. This reflection isn't real, but it's the closest approximation of reality that can exist on this earth. This idea of earthly relationship reflecting heavenly relationship is not my speculation. The Course itself makes this point again and again. The following quotes state it just as clearly as can be:

The holy relationship reflects the true relationship the Son of God has with his Father in reality. (T-20.VI.10:1)

Your relationship is a reflection of the union of the Creator and His Son. (T-22.VI.14:5)

For the therapeutic relationship must become like the relationship of the Father and the Son. (P-3.II.5:4)

The whole reality of your relationship with [God] lies in our relationship to one another. (T-17.IV.16:7)

You have a *real* relationship, and it has meaning. It is as like your real relationship with God as equal things are like unto each other. (T-20.VI.12:5-6)

## **The means of return**

We have now seen three points amply attested throughout the Course. First, our relationships on earth are supremely important. Second, Heaven is a realm of perfect relationship. Third, the first is a reflection of the second. Our loving relationships on earth are reflections of Heaven's condition of perfect relationship.

To make the picture complete, we need to add one final point: The reflection awakens us to that which it reflects. By acting out an earthly reflection of heavenly relationship, however limited it may be, we awaken to Heaven itself. By gazing upon the reflected light, we are lifted up to the Source of light. Jesus makes this point quite plainly. He says,

A one-to-one relationship is not One Relationship. Yet it is the means of return. (P-3.II.4:6-7)

According to this passage, a relationship with another human is not the same as our "One Relationship" with God. The first is merely a "one-to-one relationship," suggesting two separate ones coming together. The second is "One Relationship," suggesting a joining so complete that instead of one-to-one, there is just "One." This kind of total union is not something we can achieve on earth, where bodies and egos draw lines between us. Therefore, the first (one-to-one relationship) is *not* the second (One Relationship). "Yet," Jesus says, "it is the means of return." The first is the *way back* to the second. This is the entire plan of the Course for getting us home. "This holy interaction is the plan of God Himself, by which His Son is saved" (P-2.V.5:8).

Seeing this gives us a basis for a whole different way of standing in the world as students of *A Course in Miracles*. We can stop shying away from the importance of our relationships because such importance seems to violate Course metaphysics. We can stop undermining the vital significance of relationships by saying, "There's no one out there." We can stop apologizing for the help that we give others by saying, "I know that's not really part of the Course."

Instead, we can acknowledge that this message of the importance of our relationships not only comes from the lips of those who have seen the light in near-death experiences; it also comes from the pages of *A Course in Miracles*. And then we can make this what our lives are about. We can practice seeing people differently all day long. We can join with others in common goals, "and in so doing, lose all sense of separate interests" (P-2.II.8:4). We can live as if healing other people really is our function. We can actually embody those lines the Workbook has us practice: "*I am the light of the world. That is my only function. That is why I am here*"

(W-pI.61.5:3-5). And we can approach every encounter, no matter how small, as arranged by the Holy Spirit because of its potential to become a holy encounter. We can turn our lives into a spotless mirror which reflects nothing but the pure, seamless relationship of Heaven.

Imagine if thousands of us did just this, if we had thousands of *Course in Miracles* versions of Rocky, the Mafia bagman who learned that “cooperation and love were the important things,” and so began helping delinquent children and victims of spousal abuse. Imagine us out there helping and joining not as a *departure* from Course metaphysics, but as a *fulfillment*. Then we would be achieving the purpose for which the Course originally came into being. We would be living out Bill Thetford’s “better way.”

True, one-to-one relationship on earth can never become the perfect relationship that is found only in Heaven. Yet when it comes to our lives within the illusion, this is the plan of God Himself. It is the means of return.



E-mail your comments to the author at: [robert@circleofa.org](mailto:robert@circleofa.org)

**Robert Perry.** He is the author or co-author of twenty books and booklets, including *Path of Light: Stepping into Peace with ‘A Course in Miracles’*.

## The Answer I Had Been Looking For

by Dee Doyle

*We thought it was about time we introduced you to our webmaster, Dee Doyle. Dee took over from Allen Watson when he retired a year ago. In her role as webmaster, Dee is nothing short of amazing. She is constantly improving the website—adding content to it (usually several articles a week), sending out announcements, fine-tuning this or completely overhauling that. She carries out the tasks we give her—often instantly—as well as the ones she devises on her own. The result is that the website is continually growing richer and more functional. On top of that, Dee is an extremely dedicated and level-headed student of the Course. When we asked her to say something about how she found the Course and the Circle, so that you could get to know her a bit, what came out was the following story. We hope you enjoy it.*

My first experience with Jesus came in early childhood when I read a story about him. I emerged from the reading with several key ideas: Jesus was a kind, compassionate person who liked helping people, had a penchant for children, and, importantly, could work *miracles*! I had finally found the answer I had been looking for—I had a very abusive home life and I needed a miracle.

I carefully explained the whole situation to Jesus and then waited for the miracle. And waited, and waited, and finally concluded that he wasn’t going to help me. In hindsight, I did receive help, and comfort. I emerged from this hard childhood relatively unscarred. At the time, I didn’t get why Jesus had not come through for me, and in time, my budding habit of discussing everything with him languished.

Years later, at fourteen, with the intervention of my seventh-grade science teacher, I was removed from my home and placed in a state-run facility where I lived until I was eighteen. During those years, I did several risky things to bring about changes (in the facility) that I felt strongly about. At the time, I just thought I was doing the “right thing” but, in hindsight, I think I was receiving guidance. I also was the house “safe” person. All the really “weird” kids were roomed with me. My word for them was “interesting.” I was willing to listen, accept, and be their friend. Again, in hindsight, I am guessing I was guided in this kindness.

In my late teens/early twenties, I had several burning questions: If I behave differently in different situations, how can I know who I am? How can I trust a God who has favorites and behaves erratically as well? How could I reconcile the world with a loving God? How could I love a God I could not trust? I spoke about these things to anyone who would listen. No one had answers, and most didn’t find the questions interesting.

By my mid-thirties, all those silly imponderable questions about God and who I was were long behind me. I was busy living and building the good life. I was a software engineer in the Silicon Valley in the middle of

the software explosion, working for one of the premiere companies. I drove a very cool black car, met the man of my dreams (attracted by the cool black car), lived in a nice house in a good neighborhood, had an adorable house rabbit. Life was good, I was a contented, happy person.

By my late forties I was approaching complete burnout. The pace of my work had become frenzied. I likened it to a hospital operating the OR and the ER from the same room, asking doctors in the middle of delicate surgeries to stop what they were doing and attend to emergencies as they came in, and then return to their surgeries. My father, dying of brain cancer, came to live with us. Eight months after he died, my job went to India. Frankly, I was relieved. I needed time to think, to figure out what went wrong with my life and fix it. I fled the Silicon Valley for a small island off the coast of Washington.

A few months before my dad came, a coworker loaned me her copy of *Awakening the Buddha Within*. At that point, I was not consciously on a spiritual path of any sort. I was a logical, rational engineer, who believed in those things which could be scientifically proven. This book was the turning point for both of those things.

For the first time, I did not discount an entire book because I could not accept all of it. I gave myself permission to set aside the reincarnation thing and consider the other material. Some months later, I attended a silent meditation retreat conducted by Lama Surya Das, Lama John Makransky and Roger Walsh. That week, I was introduced to the concept of watching your mind. This was a wholly new idea to me. I was fascinated with the talks at the retreat. Here were rational, smart, intelligent people talking about spiritual lives. I returned, armed with Roger's book on the essential spiritual practices and his promise that, if I was mindful and meditated, my life would change. I practiced being mindful as often as I could. What I discovered was not pretty.

In time, I began to believe that my thinking was the cause of my unhappiness. The more I listened to what I was thinking, the more I didn't like it. This led me to Bill Harris's workshop on understanding how the mind works and bringing it under conscious control.

During this time I seriously started looking for a spiritual practice, Buddhism was interesting, but it didn't call to me. I liked the ideas in Roger Walsh's book, *Essential Spirituality*, but the practice was too impersonal. Sometime during this period, I purchased the Course, because I encountered so many references to it (starting with Roger's book). Even setting aside the channeled thing, I couldn't accept what I was reading.

Some months and many books later, a friend asked if I'd ever heard of *A Course in Miracles*. She was thinking of studying it; would I be interested? So, I picked up the Course again, and we started the Workbook together. I struggled with each lesson—rebellious against them almost. The references to God and the Sonship were like fingernails on a blackboard. The effort fizzled after a few months.

That same friend gave me a copy of a David Hawkins book. Setting aside the arm thing (his use of muscle-testing to read the truths of the universe), his descriptions of God as a God of love called to me. I started to allow that I had been wrong about God. Wrong about his nature. Perhaps he could be trusted. For the first time in decades, I found myself praying. Praying prayers in which I asked to be taught how to think like God thinks, see like God sees, hear like God hears, love like God loves; to see God everywhere I looked and to reflect him back to everything I see. I had no idea where these prayers were coming from; they just seemed to come. Hawkins mentioned the Course in his book, so once more I looked at it. The text was incomprehensible; again I put it aside.

A bit later, I was at the tail end of Bill's workshop (it was an eighteen-month program). He was discussing his version of how to manifest the "good life." This did not ring true to me—I'd been there, done that, didn't work, doubted it ever would. However, part of that exercise was to identify the person who best represents what you want to be/do and find out everything you can about how that person thinks, what his or her values and beliefs are, etc. The idea being, if you align your thinking with that person, you are more likely to have the same results as that person. As I did the exercise, I realized the person I'd most like to be like is Jesus—and didn't I own a book that purported to be written by him that was a course on being like him?

So, I picked up the Course for the nth time. However, like before, I couldn't make sense of what I was reading; again, I wandered off. Sometime later, I was invited to do the lessons in the Workbook with a group. I decided I was ready to embrace it, to approach it as a sacred practice. I began looking for help understanding it. That led me to the Circle. The group lost interest in the Workbook shortly after Review 1, but by then, the articles on the Circle's website, not the group, were sustaining me.



The Circle's website became increasingly important to my budding practice. I looked to the articles there to help me understand what the Course was saying, to guide the way I practiced, and to answer practical questions about the Course and my daily life.

One day the thought popped into my head to contact the Circle and offer to help in any way I could. The idea seemed a bit preposterous, but I could not shake it. Eventually I wrote a short e-mail summarizing my skills and offering to help. A bit later, Allen Watson, the Circles webmaster, contacted me with a project. Once that was finished, there was another, and another (a pattern soon to become familiar to me). There was no end to the work that needed doing!

When Allen decided to retire, he asked me to post a job notice on the website for his replacement. Rather than posting it, I asked him if I could be his replacement. Much to my delight the Circle said yes. How wonderful it is to be part of the Circle and help build the resource that has become so indispensable to my journey with the Course.

Dee in Friday Harbor, on the phone with Alexandra, our Office Manager in Sedona.



## RECENT WEB SITE POSTINGS

Many of you know this, but for those who don't, we post new material on the web site every week. Here are some of the articles we have recently posted:

**Dialogs:** Roger Walsh and Robert Perry concluded their dialog about meditation and *A Course in Miracles*. Jim Marion and Robert Perry also concluded their dialog about *A Course in Miracles* and the perennial wisdom. [Read more.](#)

**The Movie Projector Analogy Revisited** by Greg Mackie. [Read more.](#)

**The Doorway to Reality** by Allen Watson. [Read more.](#)

**Blog:** Greg Mackie's most recent blog entry is "I will recognize in everyone my dearest Friend." [Read more.](#)

**Course Meets World Commentary** by Greg Mackie. This month Greg has posted the following commentaries relating *A Course in Miracles* to a topic "in the news": "Near-Death Experiences and *A Course in Miracles*"; "Global Warming and *A Course in Miracles*"; and "Forgetting In Order to Remember Better." [Read more.](#)

**Questions and Answers** by Robert Perry and Greg Mackie. Robert and Greg posted answers to several questions this month: "Will we all awaken once a critical number of individual question their ego?"; "When I see other people's mistakes of any kind, am I judging them? Do I have to accept everybody's wrongdoings? In the last year my experience was that they even took advantage of my acceptance!!"; and "Is wanting a new romantic relationship okay?" [Read more.](#)

## WHAT WE'RE READING

### Greg Mackie:

*Parapsychology: The Controversial Science* by **Richard S. Broughton, Ph.D.**

This is a critically acclaimed introduction to parapsychology, the scientific discipline that investigates psychic phenomena like extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, and clairvoyance. I'm only about a quarter of the way through it, but I'm loving it so far. The author is a former director of the Institute for Parapsychology at Duke University (now called the Rhine Research Center), and what I like best about the book is its tone. So many books on this topic are written either by breathless advocates or scornful skeptics. This book, however, is a sober (but not dull) work by a real scientist, presenting solid research on unusual phenomena that call into question our conventional view of reality. A fascinating read.

### Robert Perry:

*The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle* by **Karen L. King**

This is a terrific book about a second-century gospel, purportedly written by Mary Magdalene. In it, she shares with the disciples, after the resurrection, the secret teachings that Jesus revealed to her. The commentary by Karen King is brilliant and a joy to read. This gospel is unfortunately not among the earliest layers of the Jesus tradition—unfortunately, because its teachings are remarkably Course-like in a number of ways.

## CIRCLE MAILBOX

I thank you so much for your latest article, “Seek Not to Change the World?” [*A Better Way* #65]. I so wish that more Course students could get this idea instead of using this passage and others from the Course as a reason/excuse to remain passive in such trying times in our world. To me what you so beautifully stated in your article just plain makes sense. I feel that some of the teachings the Course has to offer us are so simple in reality...that perhaps many students just can't accept this and try to intellectualize it in a way that it becomes impossible to make these beautiful teachings easier to grasp.

Thank you for your wonderful teachings.  
— Marcella Morris

...

I'd like to comment firstly that the “Course lore” you describe about action in the world doesn't represent Ken Wapnick's position on the subject. It seems that people misunderstand many things, including Ken's teachings. I don't think Ken would actually differ very much from the “alternative interpretation” you offer on page 5. I won't attempt to speak for Ken, but would myself phrase the point about extension thus: “Healed perception will be extended by the Holy Spirit in many ways, and this extension may well include behavior guided by Him. In any situation guided by Him everyone would be healed.” (See T-9.V.8).

It needs to be remembered that extension is a vast thing accomplished by the Holy Spirit through healed minds, going well beyond the conscious ideas or intentions of any individual. Moreover we are often reminded not to *interfere*. Has anyone paid attention to this very important concept? The Course makes it quite clear we know very little about anything in the world, hence the importance of relinquishing our own “judgment” and accepting the Holy Spirit's (See M-10). What we think needs fixing mightn't need fixing at all, and likewise for every situation we perceive.

I would see a much bigger gap than you do between the desire to make a positive difference in the world

(whatever that might mean) and the extension of healed perception. The former might be on the right track, totally ego based, or somewhere in between. The change of mind the Course is asking for is radical. The world we would see if we had really changed our minds would be very different from the one we see now. Healed perception would put us on the brink of the real world. Food for thought? To be quite frank I don't think many of us have even reached first base, and talk about healed perception is simply that.

— Mary Benton

## CIRCLE NEWS

### Take Advantage of Our Three-Day “Inspire Your Summer” Sale!

**40% OFF all books, booklets, electronic text commentaries,  
e-books, and CDs published by Circle Publishing**

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Is there a Circle of Atonement book you've thought about reading, but have not gotten around to? Have you wondered about treating yourself—or maybe a friend—to one of our CDs?

If so, why not take advantage of our Summer Sale? For three days—June 22-24—you'll enjoy 40% off the full price of all Circle Publishing books, booklets, electronic Text commentaries, e-books or CDs. This sale also includes the new Original Edition of A Course in Miracles (read below to find out what makes this edition unique). Plus, for any order of \$50 or more, you'll receive a free CD ('Visualizations for the Journey' - list price \$14.95).

You can check out our bookstore at [www.circlepublishing.org](http://www.circlepublishing.org). Highlights include Return to the Heart of God (normal price \$21.95, sale price \$13.17), Path of Light (normal price \$16.95, sale price \$10.17), and Meditations for Resting in God (normal price \$12.95, sale price \$7.77)

### Summer Blessings,

#### The Circle Staff

**Robert, Nicola, Greg, Allen, Andre, Dee, and Alexandra**

The Original Edition contains the Text as edited by Schucman and Thetford for what they called “the Hugh Lynn (Cayce) Version.” It also contains the Workbook for Students and the Manual for Teachers, which have been taken from the original typescript (often called the “Urtext,” a German term meaning “original version”). This edition also includes a glossary and an analysis of the early versions and editing of ACIM contributed by Robert Perry.