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A BETTER WAY

It's For Real: Finding and Fulfilling Your Special Function

by Robert Perry

In the last issue of *A Better Way*, I wrote an article titled "What on Earth Is Our Special Function?" I argued that our special function is a case of us expressing our

special abilities in the form of a particular active role, through which we heal the specific people sent to us, and thereby make our own unique contribution to the salvation of the world. I made a lengthy case for this idea, drawing from the Course, the Urtext, and the experiences of Helen Schucman.

At the end, I promised I would tackle the same topic in the next issue from a more down-to-earth perspective. Specifically, I said that I would draw on my own experience with this topic in an attempt to answer practical questions such as "How do I find my special function?" and "How do I make myself fit for it?"

The special function has been a major focus in my personal life ever since I felt that I was being called to teach *A Course in Miracles* about twenty-five years ago. Since then, each day has been in part an education in how to carry out my special function. I may not be the fastest learner, but I have logged a lot of hours in class.

I have also had the privilege of helping a number of people I know in their search for their special function. I have found this to be an extremely rewarding process. Through this, I have learned that, although every case is different, there do seem to be certain general principles at work here.

These same general principles were at work in Helen Schucman's case. In her story, we get to see an "official" Course example of someone discovering and fulfilling her special function. What strikes me about her story is that it so closely echoes the themes I've observed in my own experience.

Drawing, then, on my personal experience—with myself and others—and on Helen's experience, I will present the general principles I have gleaned.

It's for real

Perhaps the main thing I have learned is that the special function is for real. It is not just a concept on the pages of *A Course in Miracles*. It is a real phenomenon in this world (as real, that is, as anything in this illusory world), one that just happens to match what we find in the pages of the Course.

What I have observed is that, in each person's life, there is a function that is waiting to unfold, if the person is willing. This function is like a star floating in space, with its own powerful gravitational field, pulling events in its direction, trying to draw one's life into its orbit. Unfortunately, I think most lives never get close enough to this star to actually get drawn into its orbit. But when a life is actively trying to head in its direction, things start to happen. Circumstances conspire. Guidance comes (the special function, in fact, seems to be a major preoccupation of guidance). That star begins exerting its pull, and certain key things give way and get sucked in its direction. If you are willing to follow those things where they lead, you will find not just a particular job waiting for you, you will find the life you were meant to have. You will find the purpose you were born to fulfill.

PUBLISHED BY

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

A Better Way is published monthly by e-mail. If you wish to subscribe, please visit our website.

CIRCLE OF ATONEMENT

is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to *A Course in Miracles*. It was founded in 1993. Its publishing division, Circle Publishing, was founded in 2003.

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- ◆ 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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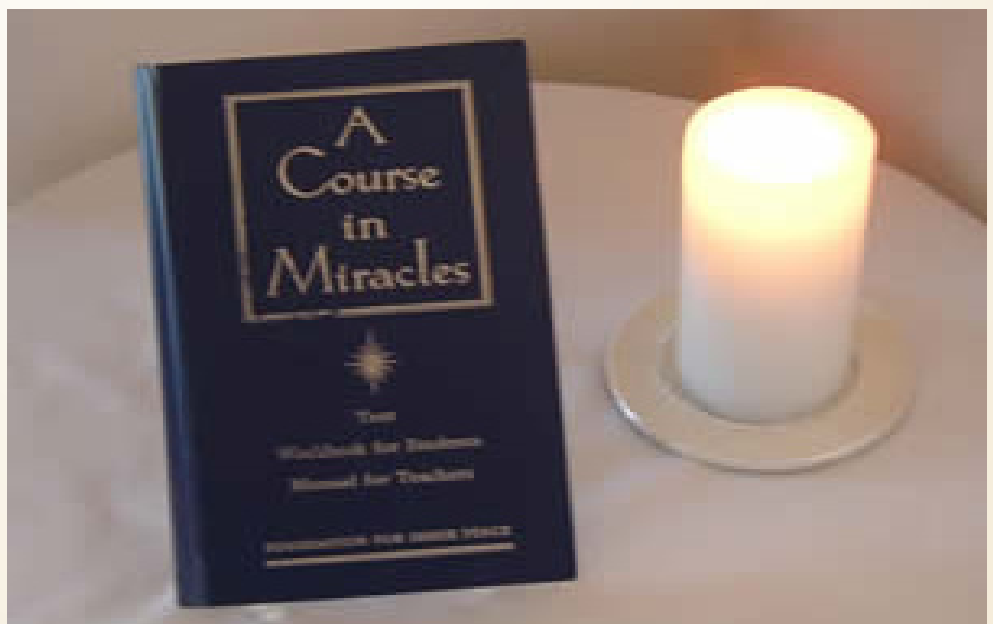
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What is it?

As I said in the previous article, the special function is a particular role in the world's salvation that is suited perfectly to you. It tends to be built on some core strength of yours. This strength may be, as with Helen's ability to hear Jesus' voice, something you never even knew you had. It may be an unusual, even paranormal ability, and such abilities are often dormant until they awaken at some crucial turning point in one's life. This, of course, is what Helen experienced.

However, from what I can see, the special function is usually based on a more conventional ability. Indeed, this ability is usually a strong right arm you have relied on heavily throughout much or all of your life. In such cases, it is not the ability as such that will be different, but rather the use to which it is put. That use is what will make the special function a surprise, for usually it is not the sort of use you would come up with on your own.

For example, in my own case, my special function was designed around my intellectual abilities. I had relied on these abilities since I was small. I had even planned to make a career out of them, using them to design a system that would attempt to explain the nature and workings of consciousness. The use of my intellect now as a Course interpreter is not so different than it would have been as the philosopher I had planned on being. What is different is what I am using my intellect *for*.

This difference comes from the fact that I wasn't the one who designed my special function. If you had asked me to make a list of options for what my special function might be, the last one I would have come up with would be devoting my life to interpreting some channeled spiritual book. Your special function is designed *for* you, not *by* you.

There is, however, an extremely positive side to this. When you find out what your special function is, you will almost certainly be amazed at the insight into you that it displays. It's as if Someone saw inside you with unerring clarity, seeing the very best in you with amazing accuracy. It's as if Someone actually knows you better than you know yourself.

It's more than just being helpful day to day

Course students often assume that our special function is just us being helpful each day, following our guidance about where to go and what to say, responding to the needs we encounter along the way. Doing this is, of course, vitally important, yet I think it is no more than the early stages of moving into our special function.

In the special function, the Holy Spirit wants to use you to the fullest. He wants to take the best in you and aim it at the world's salvation. He wants to give you a job, fashioned from your unique strengths, and then eventually build your life around this job, so that you can give your all to it. In the end, He wants to design your life Himself, not fit into the cracks of the life you designed. Think of Him as an employer. What employer wants to say to his workforce, "Just show up whenever you feel guided, and when you do, just wander around the building and do whatever you feel led to do"? There are good reasons why employers give workers a particular job.

Finding out what it is

If our function is as specific as I am saying, then it is obviously crucial that we find out what exactly this specific function is. In my experience, however, this is usually a long process. This process typically seems to combine several factors: divine guidance, life circumstances, discovering your strengths, and getting in touch with how you really feel impelled to help out. These factors seem to usually interweave with each other over a period of years to gradually reveal one's special function. My advice, then, would be to let the discovery of it unfold in an organic way. Let it unfold over years if need be. Try not to rely exclusively on one particular datum (unless it is a spectacularly authoritative one). Avoid the temptation of thinking that you have to know right this second.

Thankfully, you can start doing it before you know what it is. Indeed, you may well do it for a long time before realizing that, in fact, that thing you've been doing *is* your special function. That was certainly my experience. For years I taught the Course while fully aware that it wasn't my real purpose in life. It took a while for my awareness to catch up with my life.

Becoming ready for it

Even more important than finding out what it is, is becoming fit to carry it out. This means gaining the knowledge and skills, and most of all, the willingness and maturity. After all, the special function is a specific form through which we express the content of salvation. Without that content, we are just acting out a hollow form. We are a hypodermic needle that isn't delivering any actual medicine. We have got the robes and the beads, but not the soul. We are faking it.

In this respect, I think Helen's function is slightly misleading as an example. Her special function appeared on the scene so quickly, literally over a matter of months in the summer and early fall of 1965, that it seemed to require very

little preparation. True, she did have to get over a major hurdle of willingness. Yet she *didn't* have to go through a lengthy process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and maturity (at least in this life; Jesus implied that she had developed her ability to hear his voice in past lives).

This makes sense, though, given what her special function was. It was simply allowing Jesus to dictate to her. *He* was the one, therefore, with the requisite knowledge, skills, and maturity. However, comparatively few special functions are like this, where a higher presence acts so directly through us.

Actually, there is a strong possibility that Helen had a kind of further, deeper calling. Ken Wapnick believes that she was called to take a leadership role in guiding the Course's public life (see *Absence from Felicity*, pp. 376-381). I believe this almost certainly has to be true. Jesus even told Helen in a special message, "You have a function....*You have been given charge of one way to God.*" This is a more typical kind of special function, in that it would require more from her as a person than simply taking dictation. A scribe and a leader are two very different things. And while she *did* develop the readiness to be the former, she clearly did *not* develop the readiness to be the latter. Ken reports that she was "adamant" that, with the publication of the Course and the supplements, she had fulfilled her assignment and that there was nothing more for her to do (*Absence from Felicity*, p. 381).

Being truly fit to do your special function, then, is crucial. You can know what it is, you can have the office rented and the shingle hung, but if you don't have the requisite knowledge, skill, willingness, and maturity, forget it. Either you will act out a hollow imitation of it or, like Helen, you will simply refuse to do it.

The good news, though, is that a great deal of our readiness will necessarily come on the job. I was twenty-five when I began teaching the Course, and if my twenty-five year-old self showed up at the Circle asking for work today, we would be polite, but there is no way that we could hire him.

The inevitable resistance

Resistance to one's special function is a central theme in the journeys I have observed. For some reason, as soon as we feel the gravitational pull of that star, we almost instinctively pull the other way. This pulling away can be expressed in a number of ways:

"Who, me? I'm not worthy."

"I'm not up to this. This task is too big for me."

"This will never work. Who are we kidding here?"

"This takes me out of my comfort zone. I feel too stretched and too exposed."

"This is too unconventional. I don't want to lose my place in respectable circles and take up residence on the fringe."

"This will cause me to go broke."

"This asks for so much work and preparation from me. If it's of God, shouldn't it just happen?"

"The changes this asks for in my life are too drastic and too scary."

"I feel like Someone Else is in charge of my life, and I don't like what He's doing."

I think the essence of these objections is that I want to do with my life what I want to do. I want to be in charge. I want to use my strengths to get the place in life *I* want, including whatever money, status, lifestyle, friends, and peers go along with that place.

The problem with the special function is that it means that we are no longer in charge. And it means that our strengths are to some degree diverted from getting us that juicy piece of the pie we wanted to serving a much higher and larger purpose. It really amounts to assuming an alternative place in life, one not of our own design.

All of this can feel terrifying. It's as if we had been driving our car, going wherever we pleased, but now we were asked to get in the back seat, with no one visible replacing us in the driver's seat. At times, we get the feeling that Someone is actually driving it, though we don't trust His driving skills, or His destination. At other times, we are convinced that no one is driving it, and we are simply waiting, with white knuckles, for the car to go over the cliff. But one thing we are sure of: The car is not going where we want it to go. We are no longer in control.

People's special function can be put on hold for years while they work through this issue. People also can just say no, as Helen did. It is a genuine possibility that our resistance will win the day. Indeed, I think most people's resistance is such that they never even come close to their special function. However, since the resistance is our own, it is always within our power to relax it.

Making it happen, letting it happen

To really move into our special function, I believe that we have to both make it happen and let it happen. What I mean by making it happen is that we have to actually do what it takes. We have to do the required work. We will almost certainly have to put some “sweat equity” into it. The old adage about one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration will probably apply. I find that, for some reason, many are not willing to put as much time and effort into their special function as they would put into a more conventional career. And yet, like a conventional career, your special function can’t happen while you just sit there and wait for it.

Yet, while working to make it happen, you also have to assume that if this really is your special function, it “wants” to happen. If you do your part, events will conspire in its favor. They are just waiting for you to step toward your role, at which point they will rally around it and carry it forward. You, therefore, have to be motivated enough to do your part, but sensitive enough to work in harmony with a larger force that will carry you along if you let it.

For example, a lot of why I ended being a Course teacher is that events just seemed to conspire to put me in that role. My best friend happened to become a central part of a local Course center. Then they started asking me to do projects for them. Then my first wife started to work there. Then they asked me to teach, and then write. Then I started to receive invitations to speak elsewhere and write for Course newsletters. My function had a life of its own, and that fact powerfully supplemented my own uncertainty about it. Don’t get me wrong—I did my part. I studied extensively, I worked hard on constructing an interpretive framework, I prepared for my talks, I spent a year writing and rewriting my first booklet. But there was more going on than just that.

Once you are actually doing it

Alas, the challenges do not end once you are finally doing your special function. Instead, I think they actually multiply.

You will have to deal with issues of form. You will have to make decisions about an endless parade of details. To make these decisions wisely, you should be constantly seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. The Manual for Teachers talks a great deal about guidance, proportionately far more than the other two volumes. This is because the Manual is about our function, and the answer to so many questions about how to carry out our function is “Ask the Holy Spirit.”

You will almost certainly have to deal with money issues, especially if your special function becomes your day job (which it may or may not be meant to do). Should I charge money? Do I have enough money? How do I get enough money? Why isn’t there enough money? Why on earth do I think I can afford to do this given how scarce the money is?

That money is involved doesn’t mean that you’ve departed from the path of holiness. Even Jesus needed money for his ministry (the gospels say that women of means supported him and his band). Money is really just material support for the function itself and for the one or ones doing it, and that support has to be there or the function eventually dries up. My belief is that you need to have a basic trust that, if you are doing the right thing, the support will be there. There is Someone Who wants you to succeed, and He is ultimately the One Who arranges for your support.

Because there are so many form issues to deal with, it is very easy to lose sight of the content. This is one of the biggest issues in any kind of work devoted to higher ideals. And what is the content? The content is helping and healing the people sent to you. It all comes down to that. If you forget that, you forget everything. I’ve always believed that as we become truly one-pointed in our efforts to help those people, then the support we need will be there, effortlessly. It will fall from the trees. Yet that is a very advanced state.

The reason, I believe, it is so easy to lose sight of the content is because of what the Course calls “concern with the self to the exclusion of the patient” (M-7.6:1). We secretly see this function as being primarily about *us*—our work, our support, our recognition, our ego. The ego will always try to sneak in and steal the limelight away from the people you are serving. Unless you are constantly looking out for this, catching it in the act, and turning the dial the other way, then your special function is prone to becoming just a means for enhancing your own specialness. It can easily become, as the *Psychotherapy* supplement puts it, just a way to collect bodies to worship at your shrine (P-3.II.9:8). We have all seen this happen far too often to dismiss the possibility lightly.

The key is to consciously stay focused on the real content. Thus, while you manage issues of form—while you deepen in your ability to hear guidance that speaks outside the box, while you mature in your handling of money issues—you most of all want to keep growing in the content. You want to keep moving forward spiritually. You want to take into yourself more and more of the salvation you are trying to give. And you want to become more single-minded and adept in the giving of it.

Then, as you grow in your function, *it* will grow. It will evolve. Perhaps it will change in shape, allowing you to give salvation more directly, rather than wrapped in socially acceptable disguises. Or perhaps it will grow new channels, new

avenues through which you can serve people. Or perhaps it will simply grow, allowing you to reach greater numbers of people with your particular gift. Whatever happens, it will evolve as you evolve.

Even though there are great challenges and difficulties involved in the special function, it is more than worth it. Despite the superficialities that ensnare our daily attention, we all yearn to live for a purpose. We have a deep need to make a contribution, to be used for something important, to live for something larger than ourselves. As much as we settle for living just for survival, spending all our time storing our acorns and grooming our fur, there is an unquenchable urge to transcend this brutish condition and live a life that *means* something. This is the priceless gift our special function holds out to us.

The further reaches of the special function

In the end, we should not think of the special function as just one particular role. To begin with, it is almost certainly a cluster of roles, a compound role. That, after all, is true of virtually any function, even strictly conventional ones. Further, as I said above, it is a role that evolves as we evolve. As such, it isn't finished until we have finished evolving. In an important statement, the Course says that Jesus "was the first to complete his own part perfectly" (C-6.2:2). Think about that. No one fully completed their "part"—their special function—before Jesus. To put it differently, to truly complete your special function requires reaching the spiritual heights that Jesus did.

Our special function, then, does not end with this lifetime. Although it takes the shape of a particular role we assume for a few years in this life, it is ultimately far more than that. It is our total and final contribution to the overall plan for salvation. As such, it evolves as we evolve, and it keeps evolving until we reach total perfection, and can make the perfect contribution.

Yet it doesn't even end there. Jesus says that he is in charge of the Atonement "because I completed my part in it as a man, and can now complete it through others" (T-4.VI.6:5-6). Elsewhere, the Course says that "joined with you he [Jesus] is the shining Savior of the world, Whose part in its redemption you have made complete" (C-6.5:4). Both passages seem to say that Jesus' part is now completed through others. So, his part *still* isn't done. He is carrying out the rest of it through us. The implication is that his special function will not be complete until salvation *itself* is complete, for everyone everywhere.

Such considerations, of course, are far beyond where we are now. But we can still gain a lesson from them. That lesson is that we should think of the special function in far larger terms than we normally do. It's not just forgiving our special forgiveness challenges. It's not just being helpful day to day. It is a job that will eventually become the focus of our existence, stretch till the end of time, and encompass the salvation of literally everyone.

Coming back to the present, what can we do about our special function right now? We can begin with simply being aware that something wants to be born into the world through us, something of untold value. Perhaps it has already been born, and we are busy raising it. If it hasn't yet, let's just be open to this possibility, and willing to take our next step toward it. And let's try to realize that once it is born, it will take on a life of its own, and carry us to places we never dreamed of. Let's try to conceive that its ministry will continue far beyond this lifetime, and will keep evolving and growing "till every hand is joined, and every heart made ready to arise" (T-30.V.3:6). Let's open our minds to the sublime possibility that the Course is actually right when it says, "What is here begun will grow in life and strength and hope, until the world is still an instant and forgets all that the dream of sin had made of it" (C-Ep.4:7).



E-mail your comments to the author at: 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'.*

CIRCLE MAILBOX

I have to say that your article “What on Earth Is Our Special Function?” is just incredible! It conforms exactly to my experience, my guidance, and the written words of ACIM. It is difficult to see how another interpretation is possible without denying what is written. I have forwarded it to ACIM students here. I look forward to your follow-up article.

— Harry McDonald

• • •

Thanks so much for your article on the special function. I had recently read that section in Chapter 25 as part of the one-year Course Text Reading Program, and your article gave me clarity and understanding.

I also recently worked with Lesson 286 in the Workbook, in which I am taught “there is no need that I do anything.” In the *Workbook Companion* I am also reminded that I am “already in Heaven,” “the story is already over,” “We’re living a rerun,” “We all continue to make the error that we have to accomplish something.”

How does one reconcile the idea “I need do nothing” with the idea I have a special function in this world?

— Robin Frierson

Response from Robert:

Good question. The best reconciliation of “I need do nothing” and having a special function in this world is found in the section “I Need Do Nothing” (T-18.VII). That section sketches a process in which we start out with doing that is focused on our separate needs, especially physical needs like comfort, pleasure, and safety. After a lifetime of this, we feel terribly selfish and guilty, so then we go about trying, through our actions, to turn ourselves from sinful to holy. Our real need, though, is to have a moment in which we stop all our doing, forget about past and future, and experience a holy instant. This will allow us to realize that we are inherently holy—we don’t have to make ourselves holy. And this will also allow the Holy Spirit to establish Himself in our minds as our own personal eye of the storm. And from this eye, this quiet center, He will guide us into a new, holy kind of doing. He will direct you “how to use the body sinlessly” (8:4). Specifically, He will send us on busy doings (8:3) in which we serve not the needs of our body, but the healing of our brothers. Yet even in the midst of these busy doings, there will be that quiet center within us “in which you do nothing” (8:3).

So what we find in “I Need Do Nothing” is a seamless integration of “doing nothing” and having a Spirit-inspired function in the world.

• • •

This writing about special function is an important contribution. I have participated recently in a CIM group that has been meeting for over twenty years. When I asked them to discuss the subject I received blank stares. It is one reason I have not been much involved in the various communities studying the Course.

— John Holum

• • •

My response to this article is much the same as the response I gave in our dialogue on the subject in 2004:

<http://www.circleofa.org/dialogs/SpecialFunction.php>

This time I would add the suggestion that every student read carefully Chapters 25 and 26 of the Text. These contain the essential material for understanding this subject. Having done that they can better evaluate what we have both written.

I won’t repeat everything I said in the dialogue now, but will give a brief summary of my position. I believe the Course’s teaching about the special function is clear and straightforward. We each have our special tasks of forgiveness

which will extend in various ways under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This extension would include our thoughts and actions as well as things beyond our individual scope. This is a very big picture.

On page ten of your article you quote this passage from Chapter 25:

Here, where the laws of God do not prevail in perfect form, can he yet do *one* perfect thing and make *one* perfect choice. And by this act of special faithfulness to one perceived as other than himself, he learns the gift was given to himself, and so they must be one. Forgiveness is the only function meaningful in time. It is the means the Holy Spirit uses to translate specialness from sin into salvation. Forgiveness is for all. But when it rests on all it is complete, and every function of this world completed with it. Then is time no more. Yet while in time, there is still much to do. And each must do what is allotted him, for on his part [special function] does all the plan depend. He *has* a special part [special function] in time for so he chose, and choosing it, he made it for himself. (T-25.VI.5:1-10)

This passage tells us that when all our individual (special) tasks of forgiveness have been completed then forgiveness will rest on all. Our special function is very precisely our special tasks of forgiveness. When all of these are accomplished and the Oneness of the Sonship is realized “then is time no more.” Salvation has been accomplished. This is the seamless plan of the Atonement.

— Mary Benton

...

The following feedback is from a discussion of the article in our Circle Course Community

I really appreciate this article, Robert. The idea of the special function has been especially interesting to me since the first time I came across it in the Course. Thanks for clarifying it so beautifully here. This makes much more sense than my original interpretation that my special function has to do only with my forgiveness of one person. That always seemed like a valuable concept to me, but as a beginning or a means, not an end in itself. Whereas the conclusions you’ve come to here offer me a whole new practical outline for living a life of meaning and purpose—a purpose I’m perfectly suited for. That’s so comforting. Inspiring, too.

I’ve personalized the points you make in your last paragraphs:

- There is a particular role awaiting me, one fashioned from a God’s-eye view of the very best in me.
- I am here on earth to fulfill that role. Doing so may eventually occupy me full time.
- There’s no need to ever feel lonely, because I have a place I am needed, and an aim only I can fulfill.
- Certain people are waiting for me and for the miracles I’ve been assigned to give them.
- I have a contribution to make to the healing of the world that only I can make, and it is essential to the entire plan. (If I don’t do it, it won’t get done.)
- The Course is not just about my private realization of oneness, but about the Holy Spirit using my special talents to reach out to particular people who need exactly what I have to offer.

With these principles in hand, I feel like I can move into my day and my future with a sense of confidence, self-worth, openness, and willingness. (Goodbye cruel dog-eat-dog world!)

I’m especially interested in the idea that I don’t know how to recognize my own strengths, and that what I think of as my weaknesses (things I thought I needed to overcome to be “successful”) may very well contribute to my ability to do the role assigned to me. If I misjudge my abilities, or think I have to fix something in myself before I can make a worthwhile contribution, I’ll waste time going off in the wrong direction and delay the healing work that awaits me. (So long, image-enhancing seminars!)

I was also really moved by the idea that certain people are sent to me who need the kind of healing I offer through my unique strengths—that healing them (not some anonymous them, but specific individuals) is my part in the world’s salvation. My job is to heal my “tiny portion” of everyone—my “particular flock”—those who have been entrusted to me. That’s so amazingly personal and beautiful. But also so practical.

From a less personal perspective, I think this discussion and the practical application of these ideas has real potential for the Course community. As more and more of us begin making the contributions our special functions ask of us, we

will also serve as ambassadors (PR reps) for the Course—living demonstrations of happy, fulfilled, successful people who are doing real good in the world. That has to go a long way toward our goal of anchoring a tradition that carries the Course’s light to the world.

I look forward to next month’s down-to-earth perspective on the topic. (Tune in next month for resume, interviewing, and networking tips, and to find out what the Holy Spirit has to say about quitting your day job!)

Thanks again for this, Robert.

— Amy Speech

Response from Robert:

Thank you so very much for these extremely thoughtful comments. You have obviously given this a great deal of thought and serious consideration. I only wish all students could approach this topic in that manner. Given the seriousness with which you are treating this, you probably aren’t far from your own special function.

I thought it was great that the idea allows you to approach your day with greater confidence, sense of self-worth, openness, and willingness. I think that is what the Course wants. It sees this as a case of the Holy Spirit meeting a deep human need of ours.

I think there is a case on both sides of the “I have misjudged my strengths and weaknesses” idea. Helen was clearly a case in point. Her special function was built around an ability that she didn’t even know she had. On the other hand, my experience has been that someone’s special function will usually be built around strengths that they already recognize as such, just applied in a different way than they had previously done.

You’re right that this is a way in which Course students could do real good in the world. That, of course, is the whole plan of the Course—to send miracle workers out into the world, each using their unique strengths to give miracles to their assigned flocks.

Anyway, thank you again for all the thought and care you put into this. I hope we will hear from others, too. This is one of those topics that is literally life-changing.

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This was a great article, well researched, and very well written. It not only clarified, for me, what the Course says about our special function, but the article is so good and on such an important topic, I’ll be sharing it with my study group on Monday.

— Ken Obermeyer

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Thank you so much, Robert, for this article. I’m one of those who have puzzled over whether my function is a special one, or only the general function to “just forgive.” I find it really exciting to think I might have a special function assigned to me by God.

A question occurs to me: Is it possible for everyone to know in this life what their special function is? Is it more likely that I may perform my function, if I manage to listen to the Holy Spirit’s guidance regarding where to go, who to speak to, etc., without ever realizing how this fits into my special function?

— Martha Fitzgerald

Response from Robert:

I see the special function as something we gradually move into as we become more ready, as we become more mature (spiritually, mentally, emotionally). I think the early stages will probably be more piecemeal—we feel guided to give to this person or that, to accept this assignment or that. But I think that eventually it coalesces into a specific role (or cluster of roles) that we are fully conscious of.

This last thing is much less common, I believe, but you can see its practical necessity. How can you give yourself—your time, your effort, your life—to a function that is not clearly defined in your mind? When that function is not

defined, it's like knowing you have a job somewhere in the city, you just don't know which office in which building on which street. At that point, if there is a particular office waiting for you, it's not going to see you very often.

So in the end, it is ideal for you to know exactly what your role is, and where and when and how to do it. That's just practicality. Yet unfortunately, I don't think that we will always reach this place. We might, therefore, have to content ourselves with the more piecemeal version, in which we are directed to serve this person or take on that assignment. Obviously, someone can still do a huge amount of good in this mode, perhaps even more than many who have really settled into that concrete role. But I think still more good could be done if that person were able to move to the next level and identify and embrace the particular role they are called to assume.

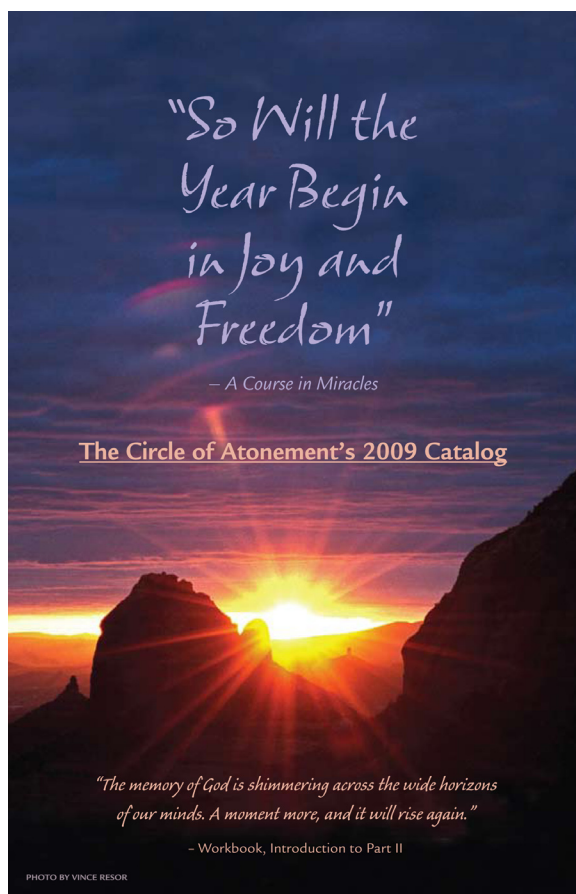
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Here are some of the articles we have recently posted on our website:

Why Does the Course Model Itself After Education Rather Than Religion? by Robert Perry. [Read more.](#)

Course Meets World Commentary by Greg Mackie. This month Greg has posted the following commentary relating *A Course in Miracles* to a topic "in the news": "Vote for Christ!" [Read more.](#)

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Our 2009 catalog is out! It is working its way across the country as we speak. Its focus is starting the year with the Course as a way of devoting the year to God. For that reason, we are offering a huge discount on our year-long programs: the Circle Course Community, the Text Reading Program, and the Daily Workbook Program. If you haven't yet received yours in the mail, click [here](#) to view the catalog online.

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