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A BETTER WAY

“This Course Is a Guide to Behavior”**Part I: The Presence and Role of Behavior in *A Course in Miracles*****by Robert Perry**

I recently picked up the November/December 2008 issue of *Miracle Worker*, the magazine of the UK Miracle Network. What caught my eye was the editorial written by my friend Ian Patrick. It opened with these lines:

One of the most common pitfalls amongst *A Course in Miracles* students is to think the Course means less than it actually does. The more usual way this manifests is to succumb to the idea that the Course is a guide to behaviour, a kind of moral code for living in the world.

The Course is only interested in our thoughts, particularly whether we are coming from the thought of fear or love. It is not interested in our behaviour.

I have heard Ian make this point before, which would usually spark a vigorous discussion between us. So it is not news to me that he thinks this, nor is it news to *him* that I see it differently. However, I have heard this viewpoint in one form or another so many times, from so many people, that seeing it one more time in print prompted me to make a clear and thorough statement about it. The purpose of this two-part article (Part II will be in next month's *A Better Way*) is to show that behavior occupies an extremely important place in *A Course in Miracles* and to explain what that place is.

To begin with, I am not sure those who claim behavior doesn't matter in the Course fully appreciate the ramifications of that position. Behavior, quite simply, is the primary way we affect other people. If the mechanism through which I affect you doesn't matter, that implies that *how* I affect you (positively or negatively) also doesn't matter, which leads to the inescapable conclusion that *you* don't matter. Is this really what the Course is saying? This is the stance of a sociopath or a psychopath. Only a truly monstrous spiritual path would adopt such a position. Surely *A Course in Miracles* is not a “psycho-path.”

To be fair, those who claim that behavior doesn't matter in the Course tend to soften that by saying that what matters is, as Ian says, “whether we are coming from the thought of fear or love.” In other words, although the particular form of the behavior doesn't matter, the state of mind behind it *does* matter. Our actions ought to be motivated by love. This stance, however, takes us back to the same place as before, for even if I have love in my heart, different ways of expressing my love to you will inevitably affect *you* differently. Love has been expressed through all sorts of behaviors, from a slug in the arm, to a proposal of marriage, to mercy killing. If I don't take into account how very differently each of these would affect you, then I am obviously not taking *you* into account. When it's all about me—whether *I* am coming from love or fear—then the clear implication is that you don't matter. And can any state of mind based on that thought actually be called *loving*?

Jesus in the Course is fully aware of this. In an important passage early in the Text, he makes it clear we need to gear the form of our giving to the needs of the other, to what the other person can take in without fear:

In fact, if it [the Atonement] is used truly, it will inevitably be expressed in whatever way is most helpful to the receiver. This means that a miracle, to attain its full efficacy, must be expressed in a language that the recipient can understand without fear. (T-2.IV.5:2-3)

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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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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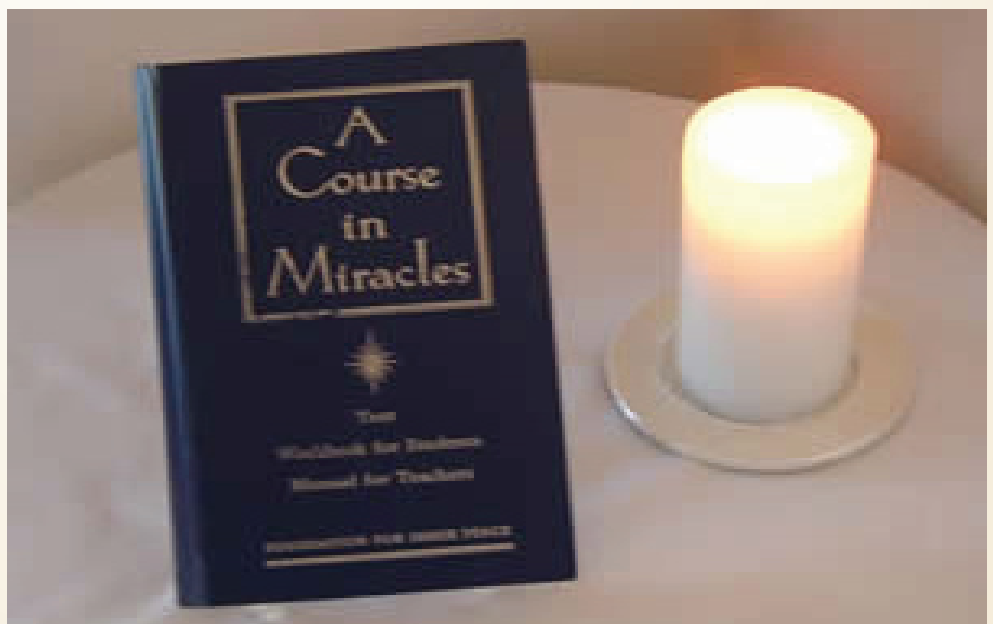
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In the original dictation, this point was made even more explicitly. It said, “in whatever way is most helpful to the receiver, *not the giver*” (my italics). It is not enough to have love in my heart. I need to express that love in a way that is most helpful to the *other*, not to me.

In Part I of this article, I want to first show that the Course speaks openly and repeatedly of the importance of behavior. After that, I will describe the role of behavior in the salvation process. Then in Part II, I will cover what I see as the really interesting topic: the Course’s thought system around behavior, including what has gone wrong with our current behavior and attempts to correct it, and what right-minded behavior really looks and feels like.

Quotes about the importance of behavior

One thing that is odd about the “behavior doesn’t matter” position is that there is no shortage of quotes in the Course about the importance of behavior. That is what I hope to show through the following series of Course passages. They say in the clearest terms that behavior matters in the Course. They also contain many of the points I will make in Part II about how the Course sees the whole topic of behavior. Please read them carefully. I have put in boldface the words that speak of behavior (behave, action, active, do, expression, etc.). These quotes will answer far better than I can the position that we must refuse “to succumb to the idea that the Course is a guide to behaviour.” (Please note the first sentence of the first quote.)

This course is a guide to **behavior**. Being a very direct and very simple learning situation, it provides the guide [the Holy Spirit] who tells you what to **do**. (Urtext version of T-9.V.9:1)

Miracles are the essential course of **action** for both of you. (Urtext)

The distinction has also been made here between “miracle-mindedness” as a *state*, and “miracle-**doing**” as its **expression**. (Urtext)

Revelation induces only experience. Miracles, on the other hand, induce **action**. They are more useful now because of their interpersonal nature. (T-1.II.2:3-5)

The slogan for this Crusade is “Listen, Learn, and **Do**.” This means Listen to My Voice, Learn to undo the error, and **Do** something to correct it. The first two are not enough. The real members of *My* party are **active** workers. (Urtext version of T-1.III.1:6)

The **action** aspect of the miracle should be controlled by me because of my complete awareness of the whole plan. (T-1.III.8:4)

Simply by never using weakness to direct your **actions**, you have given it no power. And the Light of Christ in you is given charge of everything you **do**. (T-31.VIII.2:5-6)

His purpose folds the body in His light, and fills it with the holiness that shines from Him. And nothing that the body says or **does** but makes Him manifest. (T-25.In.3:4-5)

I have enjoined you to **behave** as I **behaved**....[The Holy Spirit] teaches you how to keep me as the model for your thought, and to **behave** like me as a result. (T-5.II.12:1, 3)

There are ways of **treating** others in which *only* consistent courtesy, even in very little things, is offered. This is a *very healing* habit to acquire. (Urtext)

Consider the Golden Rule again. You are asked to **behave** towards others as you would have them **behave** toward you....The Golden Rule is the Order for appropriate **behavior**. (Urtext version of T-1.III.6:2, 4)

You cannot **behave** appropriately unless you perceive correctly. (T-1.III.6:5)

You cannot **behave** effectively while you function on different levels. (T-1.VI.3:2)

These errors inevitably introduce inefficiency into the miracle worker's **behavior**. (Urtext)

It is absolutely essential that you understand completely that **behavior** is erratic until a firm commitment to one or the other [light or darkness] is made. (Urtext version of T-3.II.1:4)

You are perfectly stable as God created you. In this sense, when your **behavior** is unstable, you are disagreeing with God's Idea of your creation. (T-3.V.3:4-5)

Only after the Separation was it necessary to direct the creative force to learning, because changed **behavior** had become mandatory. (Urtext)

Human beings can learn to improve their **behavior**, and can also learn to become better and better learners. This increase serves...to bring them in closer and closer accord with the Sonship. (Urtext version of T-2.II.5:6-7)

Everything I think or say or **do** teaches all the universe. A Son of God cannot think or speak or **act** in vain. (W-pI.rI.54.4:3-4)

Today we let no ego thoughts direct our words or **actions**. (W-pII.254.2:1)

There is not a moment in which His Voice fails to direct my thoughts, guide my **actions**, and lead my feet. (W-pI.rI.60.4:3)

He is my home, wherein I live and move; the Spirit Which directs my **actions**. (W-pII.222.1:3)

*Father, I give you all my thoughts today....I give You all my **acts** as well, that I may **do** Your Will instead of seeking goals which cannot be obtained.* (W-pII.233.1:1, 4)

I honestly do not know how to maintain, in the face of this series of quotes, that the Course is not interested in behavior. And this is just a small sampling of an immensely larger body of quotes.

You may have noticed that several of the above quotes are only found only in the Urtext (the Course's original typescript), and that with several others I have used the Urtext's wording. The reason is that the editing of the Course had the effect of downplaying the theme of behavior. First, the editing (as per Jesus' instructions) removed the many stories from Helen and Bill's lives, stories that described behavior and thus sometimes mentioned the word ("This...weakened your own ability to behave healingly toward Bill at the time"). Second, the editing displayed an apparent bias against the word "behavior." This is the only theoretical bias I have been able to see in the editing, but it is there. For example, the Urtext line "Human beings can learn to improve their behavior" became "You can learn to improve your perceptions." Between these two factors (removal of personal stories and editing bias against "behavior") the number of references to cognates of "behavior" (behave, behavior, behaviorally, etc.) in the first five chapters of the Text was reduced from 73 in the Urtext to 20 in the FIP Course.

Some students, no doubt, will be tempted to assume the editors were guided to remove those references to behavior because they are inconsistent with Jesus' real emphasis on thought. Yet for a number of reasons this simply does not hold up. First, the editors removed the emphasis on behavior only sporadically. They left in some very heavy emphasis on behavior. You can't get more emphatic than Jesus saying "I have enjoined you to behave as I behaved" (T-5.II.12:1). Second, even though the editors often took care to remove the word "behavior," they seemingly took no care to remove the concept. When the concept was expressed in other words (like "do" or "action"), they left it alone. For instance, they never once changed the word "action," even though an action is obviously the same thing as a behavior.

Third, these early references to behavior in the Urtext are entirely consistent with what the Course says in other language throughout all three volumes. Later on, for instance, the Course speaks frequently of how we should "use the body" only for communication. We all understand that "use the body" is a reference to behavior. Similarly, when the Course talks about our relationships, do we really think it is excluding from those relationships our physical interaction? Or when it talks about giving to others, teaching them, setting an example for them, and speaking the words of the Holy Spirit to them, surely we realize that these, too, are mainly references to our behavior. So the same emphasis on behavior

is there throughout the Course, just in different words.

In the end, then, all the editors succeeded in doing was sporadically removing the word “behavior” from the early chapters of the Text. They didn’t remove the *concept*, either from those early chapters or from the Course as a whole. The concept is still there, all the way through. Given that, their bias against the word “behavior” is revealed to be just that—a bias. If Jesus had wanted behavior either removed or toned down, surely he would have wanted the *concept* to be removed or toned down *consistently* throughout the Course. Thankfully, however, this bias of the editors is one that had no real effect on the big picture.

The role of behavior in the salvation process

Behavior ends up playing a hugely significant role in the Course’s thought system. Yes, the Course is all about changing our thoughts and realizing who we really are, yet from the Course’s standpoint, we literally cannot achieve those goals without right behavior.

Let me explain why this is so. Our goal is to fully embrace the idea of love and fully realize our nature *as* love. This begins as an internal choice to change our minds from fear to love. It has to start there, on the inside. But it cannot end there. The process is completed only as we see love express through us and actually have an effect on others. And we *do* affect others. The Course makes no bones about this:

The power of the Sons of God is present all the time, because they were created as creators. Their influence on each other is without limit, and must be used for their joint salvation. (T-6.I.18:1-2)

How do we exercise this limitless influence on each other? Part of how we do so is purely on a mind level. Since minds are joined, a thought of love in my mind does affect other minds. But we cannot restrict it to that level. The reason is that at this time we are all such poor mind readers. If I want a thought of mine to affect you, I might sit there and think it at you for years without any noticeable effect. Many of us know this from experience! Often, we see a thought of ours only really have an effect once we sit down and share it verbally, or once we demonstrate it through some outward gesture. In the current state of humanity, the main way people find out about things is through their physical senses. Thus, if others are going to know about our love for them, chances are it will need to get acted out for their senses. The Course openly acknowledges this:

They [the teachers of God] need a medium through which communication becomes possible to those who do not realize that they are spirit. A body they [those who do not realize they are spirit] can see. A voice they understand and listen to....So do God’s teachers need a body. (M-12.3:4-6, 8)

Using our bodies to communicate love, in fact, is so important that the Course tells us repeatedly that it is the only thing our bodies are supposed to do:

The Holy Spirit sees the body only as a means of communication, and because communicating is sharing it becomes communion. (T-6.V(A).5:5)

Remember that the Holy Spirit interprets the body only as a means of communication. (T-8.VII.2:1)

Healing is the result of using the body solely for communication. (T-8.VII.10:1)

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)

The body’s function is but to let God’s Voice speak through it to human ears. (M-12.4:1-2)

Notice that every one of these passages include some version of “only”: “**only** as a means of communication,” “**solely** for communication,” “**only** to reach your brothers,” “**but** to let God’s Voice speak through it.” Indeed, I count *twenty-two times* in which Jesus tells us to use the body *only* to communicate love (and I am sure there are many more). Clearly, in Jesus’ mind, this is meant to constitute all of our behavior. This is a far cry from “the Course is not interested in our behavior.” Rather than leaving our behavior alone, the Course wants all of it!

Behaviorally communicating love is so important because it is what actually completes the process of thought

change. Once we actively give a thought to another person, three extremely important things happen. First, by sharing an idea with another it becomes strengthened in us. “The idea gains as it is shared” (T-5.III.2:2). We have all experienced this strengthening effect of sharing. This is the key principle that “what you share you strengthen” (T-5.III.3:5).

Second, we become convinced that the idea is genuinely ours. “An idea that you share you must have” (T-6.III.4:6). If it came forth from us, we reason, it must have been within us. This is the key principle that “giving is proof of having” (W-pl.187.1:2).

Third, we become convinced that this idea is part of our nature. The Course says we know a cause by the effects it produces. “By what it does, you learn what it is” (T-12.VII.2:5). Thus, by what *we* do, we learn what *we* are. This is the key principle that “from *what* [the mind] extends it knows itself” (T-6.III.1:2).

To apply all of this to the realization of love in our minds, when we give another a thought of love, that thought is a) strengthened, b) proven to be ours, and c) shown to be part of who we are. We can see the second and third of these in this one beautiful quote: “Teach only love, and learn that love is yours and you are love” (T-6.III.4:9).

When I talk about giving a thought of love, however, that is really shorthand for a whole process set in motion by giving. The giving by itself is not sufficient. We need two other things that are sparked by the giving. Both of these are mentioned in the following passage:

How can you become increasingly aware of the Holy Spirit in you except by His effects? You cannot see Him with your eyes nor hear Him with your ears. How, then, can you perceive Him at all? If you inspire joy and others react to you with joy, even though you are not experiencing joy yourself there must be something in you that is capable of producing it. (T-9.VI.1:1-4)

Becoming aware of the Holy Spirit in us is another way of talking about the goal of learning “that love is yours and you are love.” How do we become aware of His presence in us? According to this passage, in two ways: We *inspire* joy in others and others *react* to us with joy. These two things convince us there must be Something in us that produced that joy. Our act of giving, then, is only the start. We then witness its positive effect on others—we see it inspire joy in them. And finally they return that positive effect to us—they react to us with joy. All of this involves behavior. Through our behavior we give the joy. Through their behavior (even just their facial expression) they show us they have been inspired with joy. And then through their behavior they return the joy to us. The process is so behavioral, so physical, because to truly believe that the Holy Spirit is *in* us, we need to actually witness Him having effects *through* us. The Course tells us this in the clearest of terms:

You cannot see the Holy Spirit, but you can see His manifestations. And unless you do, you will not realize He is there. Miracles are His witnesses, and speak for His Presence. What you cannot see becomes real to you only through the witnesses that speak for it. For you can be aware of what you cannot see, and it can become compellingly real to you as its presence becomes manifest through you. (T-12.VII.4:1-5)

Most of us are accustomed to an inner realization model of spiritual awakening, in which everything leads up to a profound inner experience or series of such experiences. And then we are done; we get it (and then usually laugh uproariously). The Course’s model is actually quite different. This model starts at the same place the other one does, where a great deal of spiritual effort (in the form of study and practice) leads to inner awakenings, to shifts away from fear and toward love. But then this model keeps going. In order for these shifts to be completed, they need to get expressed through our behavior. We need to actually see them inspire joy in others and then get returned to us as joy *from* others. Only this will strengthen the idea of love in us and finally convince us that we are that idea. Even though this sounds like a puzzling alternative to the dominant inner realization model, Jesus repeatedly tells us this is actually the *only* model, the only way to reach full enlightenment:

There is one way alone by which we come to where all dreams began. And it is there that we will lay them down, to come away in peace forever. Hear a brother call for help and answer him. It will be God to Whom you answer, for you called on Him. There is no other way to hear His Voice. There is no other way to seek His Son. There is no other way to find your Self. (P-2.V.8:2-8)

This model of enlightenment, with its heavy focus on our behavioral interaction with others, may sound like so much more than we thought the Course was asking for. But it *is* what the Course teaches. I could show you hundreds of passages that speak of this process. Yet rather than doing that, let me just leave you with a series of questions. If the goal is to know that you are love, not just accept it intellectually, but *know* it beyond a shadow of a doubt, do you really think

you will reach this knowing without seeing overwhelming evidence for it? Without watching yourself being genuinely loving, seeing your love truly uplift the lives of others, and then receiving that love back from them, as their heartfelt statement that love is the only thing you deserve? Do you really think an inner experience alone will convince you that you are love, while you continue to watch lovelessness constantly issue forth from you, leaving others cold and wounded, and then being returned to you as their icy statement that you are *not* love?

Is it possible, then, that truly helpful behavior toward others is not something separate from our inner awakening, not some goodie-two-shoes sidelight that distracts us from the crucial focus on the inner? Could it be that you literally cannot have total awakening without loving behavior? The Course's answer to that question is unequivocal:

The only way to have peace is to teach peace. By teaching peace you must learn it yourself, because you cannot teach what you still dissociate. Only thus can you win back the knowledge that you threw away. An idea that you share you must have. It awakens in your mind through the conviction of teaching it. Everything you teach you are learning. Teach only love, and learn that love is yours and you are love. (T-6.III.5:3-9)



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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

In the previous issue (A Better Way #86), I wrote an article titled "Is Reading Signs Compatible with A Course in Miracles?" I had just released my first non-Course book ([Signs: A New Approach to Coincidence, Synchronicity, Guidance, Life Purpose, and God's Plan](#)) and basically wanted to reassure my Course readership that I was not going off into some weird phenomenon that is incompatible with the Course. The following responses are from our discussion of the article in the Circle Course Community. If you have a further interest in this phenomenon, please go to www.semeionpress.com, where we have posted a new [article](#) and a new [sample](#) sign.

From Dee Doyle:

I read a draft of Robert's book early 2007. At the time, I thought, "these things don't happen to me!" However, a few months later I had a series of events that clearly matched Robert's model. Since then, I've had signs on a fairly regular basis. My best guess is that they have been occurring all along. I either didn't notice them because I didn't know what to look for, or I did notice and chalked it off to an interesting coincidence, forgotten a few days later.

I am also working on cultivating hearing an inner voice. I find it difficult to distinguish genuine guidance from ego thought. So I hesitate to take any big steps based on it. The great thing about signs is that more than one person can look at the events and draw similar conclusions. They can be remarkably free of ego influence. As I have worked with both, sometimes I have signs confirming my inner guidance. When this happens, I feel much more confident about following the inner guidance.

...

From Barb Hembling:

I consider it very important to learn to hear guidance, not just for the obvious reason of wanting to learn to follow Jesus but also because Jesus says it is the way out of hell, removing me from ego domination. It also seems to be a powerful way to experience that this is a dream. I take my cue from the voice within and therefore diminish the reality of my 'outer' experience. Up till then, I am diminishing the value of my inner experience.

In learning to hear guidance I have concentrated on trying to hear an inner voice (or at least, answer) and I have never noticed a set of coincidences such as you have described. I think I would rather simply hear Jesus' voice with some clarity, than analyze co-incidental events, but my ability to hear is small. I have never even wanted to be psychic, so reason says I am getting in my own way.

While I have not given faith to easily hearing the voice, utilizing a more objective tool would help me see that Jesus or Holy Spirit really is communicating with me so I CAN receive guidance, and that strength is available to usher me past my tempting self doubt. So, I look forward to reading your book as a help in claiming my right to hear the voice which assures me I am never separate from, or without the help of, God.

I am curious if you also are cultivating a relationship with the voice, and if you use signs as a more reliable tool.

Barb,

You raise a really important question about cultivating a relationship with the inner voice as well. As you might imagine, that is a major focus for me. I try to ask all through the day, especially on the hour about what I should be doing in the coming hour. I don't hear words, though occasionally I get an impression of words. It's usually just a sense, a feeling. But it's definitely wiser and more pragmatic than my normal thinking, though it is also quite fallible. It's been wrong many times, though it's also been spectacularly right many times.

The connection with inner guidance is basic, because we are not just supposed to be making the occasional decision through inner guidance. We are supposed to be thinking, moving, feeling, doing everything through inner guidance. So in my experience, the benefits of asking within extend beyond anything I get in that exact moment. It grounds in me a habit of more and more turning to and moving from the right place within. And in the end, that is really what it's all about.

Consulting signs for me fills an overlapping but also somewhat distinct place in the guidance spectrum. These signs come much more infrequently. They certainly don't come on the hour, telling me what to do in the next hour. They are not on tap. But when they do come, experience has taught me to put more stock in them than most of the things I hear within. They simply see farther beyond what I personally know. They see farther into the future. They seem more free to adopt perspectives outside of my current perspectives. They seem more objective, less influenced by my desires. They often get more specific, and we are all dying for specifics. And they tend to express a whole vision of the situation they speak to, much more so than inner guidance usually does.

So I see inner guidance as the constant, the daily, hourly, or even more frequent, act of turning to the right place inside of us and living from that. Signs (in the special sense in which I use the word) are the occasional meteorite from the heavens that speaks more authoritatively because it comes from outside all the stuff in my head, the very stuff that inner guidance wades through and often gets covered in.

...

From Amy Speech:

I first read a draft of it (as a proofreader) in October, just before traveling to Sedona to meet everyone at the Circle. Reading it was a powerful experience in itself. I went from being interested in the material only in a very general, non-invested way (more out of respect for Robert's writing about the Course than an interest in the topic itself) to feeling the book had a very personal message for me. And not long after that, I experienced three signs that fit exactly the model laid out in the book and offered guidance about my special function—the coming together of my professional and personal life with my spiritual life.

One of the signs occurred on my flight out of Syracuse on my way to Sedona. I struck up a conversation with the woman sitting next to me (Marty) and learned we had a lot in common in terms of our work history, current jobs, and reasons for traveling that day. Marty was amused and amazed by the coincidences we discovered: She said it was like meeting her long lost twin! I was thinking, too, that it was pretty unusual and kind of cool to discover so many similarities about our journeys. But then, having just read Robert's book, it suddenly occurred to me it might be more than just coincidence, that it might be one of the signs he calls CMPEs.

So right away, with Marty's help, I began scribbling a list of the parallels between Marty's trip and my own so I could explore the possibility once I was in Sedona. Which I did. Robert did think it had the components of a CMPE. Working from my list, he came up with 11 parallels that fit with the model's guidelines, including that Marty and I had both built a professional life out of a love of words and books, currently worked at universities in Central New York, and were both traveling West that day to visit spiritual teachers we respect. Most unlikely of all (it seemed to me) was the fact that both of those spiritual teachers had a link to Sedona and to teaching the concept of synchronicity. (Marty was going to California to see Deepak Chopra, a trip she had decided to make the previous spring while attending a synchronicity workshop with him in Sedona!)

In his interpretation of the CMPE, Robert saw my journey to Sedona as symbolic of my larger life's journey. Here's some of what he wrote: "In the imagery of this sign, that journey began with her job at Syracuse University. But as her spiritual interests entered in and grew, her journey has catapulted her towards Sedona...There is even the suggestion that her Sedona connection will provide a new work opportunity. (This is based on the fact that the arc of her journey is from her work at Syracuse towards her spiritual interests based in Sedona, and the fact that the third parallel in the list shows her spirituality providing a new work opportunity.) If we carry this arc all the way forward...it would result in the conventional life in Syracuse transferring to a life based on her spirituality in Sedona."

For me (sensible, practical, ordinary me, with my up-till-now conventional and predictable life), it was pretty wild to be on the receiving end of this. It felt a bit like I got a glimpse of a page out of God's plan, and, much to my surprise, the page had my name on it!

In practical terms, this guidance hasn't meant any big external changes for me, not yet anyway. I didn't quit my day job and pack my bags or anything like that. But I do feel a greater sense of purpose and calm about the future, like God has something very specific in mind for me. Like I have an important contribution to make and He's going to give me whatever I need to make it, when the time is right. And I'm open to that. Willing. Ready to follow the signs!

What is harder to put into words is this new sense these signs have contributed to in me, of being not only guided, but also accompanied. And deeply understood: seen, known, recognized...from the inside out. I mean, I really think that to have the depth of insight these signs pay witness to, into my past and present circumstances, and into my inner life, you would have to have been inside my head and heart all along. All my life. You'd know what I've been through, what I'm afraid of, what breaks my heart, what I'm good at, what I'm insecure about, what I hope for, what I pray for.

And I've got to wonder, who else but God would know such things, or even want to? How amazing it is (and kind of fun, actually) to now have this new way to recognize and tap into that Source of care and wisdom, to connect my will with His.

CIRCLE NEWS

Staffing Changes

In response to the challenging economic times we've had to find ways to reduce our budget. Thankfully, we have received extremely helpful guidance throughout this process. Our first change was to significantly reduce Greg's hours for the time being, focusing on preserving his writing, live teaching, and participation in the CCC and on the board. After much praying, soul searching and local economy assessment, Greg was led to temporarily relocate to Atlanta, Georgia where he is training to become a Certified Nurse's Aide. Through his hospice work here in Sedona, Greg discovered he really enjoyed working with the elderly and he felt guided to search for full time work in hospice care. We greatly miss his gentle presence and companionship here at the office, and look forward to the day when he can return to work full time with us again. Meanwhile, we wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors.

We've also reduced our office manager position to part time. Fortunately, Alexandra, after months of looking, has been able to find a new job here in Sedona. We are very happy she has been taken care of, and extremely grateful for all the contributions she made in her two years (plus one day!) here. In that time, she reorganized our office from top to bottom, helped to establish a more efficient accounting system, helped launch the Circle Course Community, managed our fundraising efforts and catalog, along with countless other office projects. We will especially miss having her here to answer our phone. She was amazing in the many ways she blessed, helped, and comforted all who called. Our thoughts and prayers go with her.

Nicola, who has been on maternity leave, has graciously agreed to take on the duties of part-time office manager—along with publications director, and shipping person! (Each of us is wearing many hats these days.) The

office is fairly quiet at present, but in one sense that is good, as Nicola is busy overseeing the production of a number of books. We are in the process of publishing the Text Reading Program (in response to a great many suggestions)—which will be approximately seven volumes—the Manual Reading Program, and Robert’s Program Material.