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A BETTER WAY

Happy Fiction

A Course Perspective on the Stories We Tell

by Greg Mackie

I have always enjoyed good fiction, be it books, movies, or television. But recently I had an experience that took me aback. I was watching a favorite television drama. It's a show that always grabs me, and I found myself riveted by the action. But then something odd happened. I found myself thinking, "Why am I so riveted by this? None of this is really happening. That girl didn't really die. That guy didn't really lose his girl. These are just actors on a sound stage. The whole thing is made up. Why do I care?"

Then I began to expand this line of thinking to my own life: "Why am I so riveted by my own life? *A Course in Miracles* says this life is a fiction too. It's not really happening either. All of the dramas that I'm so concerned about are just a television show on the 'sound stage' of the world. Why do I care about *that*?"

Ever since, I've been thinking a lot about the nature of fiction, especially the fiction we call life in this world. I wrote a blog entry on the topic for the Circle Course Community, and have continued to reflect on it since. Why do we create fiction? What do we aim to accomplish with it? Is fiction exclusively the domain of the ego, or is it something the Holy Spirit can use too? If this world is indeed fiction, as the Course says it is, how should we regard the story we are living in, and what if anything should we do to change it? In this article, I share my thoughts on these questions.

The ego's use of fiction

Why do we human beings tell fictional stories? Great minds have contemplated this question for thousands of years. Fiction entertains, stimulates the imagination, touches our emotions, gives us catharsis, and so much more. But here, I want to focus on one function that fiction serves: It *teaches*. In fact, psychologists have found that teaching in story form is far more powerful and effective than instructing in the usual manner. Of course, when we think about fiction as teaching, we often think of overtly moralistic tales like *Aesop's Fables* or *Pilgrim's Progress*. But even when fiction is not overtly moralistic—and most of it isn't—it is teaching nonetheless. It has a message, whether overt or implied; it makes a statement about life.

What does fiction teach? Of course, it can teach just about anything. But whatever it specifically teaches, in a more general sense I think most of the time it teaches a message firmly rooted in the ego: a version of what Jesus scholar Marcus Borg calls *conventional wisdom*. Conventional wisdom is the cultural consensus about the nature of things, our map of reality. It teaches us what the world is, what human beings are, and most importantly, how to live a good life—a life that, because it is in accord with the way things are, brings us happiness. Even when fiction tells us that life is meaningless and there is no lasting happiness (as in some of the existentialist novels I've read), that in itself is a teaching that offers the cold satisfaction of an "authentic" life in which we don't shrink from the depressing truth.

A prominent example of fiction as teaching is the traditional Judeo-Christian story. (Set aside for the moment the differing versions and the question of how much of it is factually accurate. The point here is to illustrate its power as a story.) This story says that the world is a real physical place created by God, and that human beings were originally created pure but disobeyed God and fell into sin. God punished us for that, and ever since, we have had to reproduce

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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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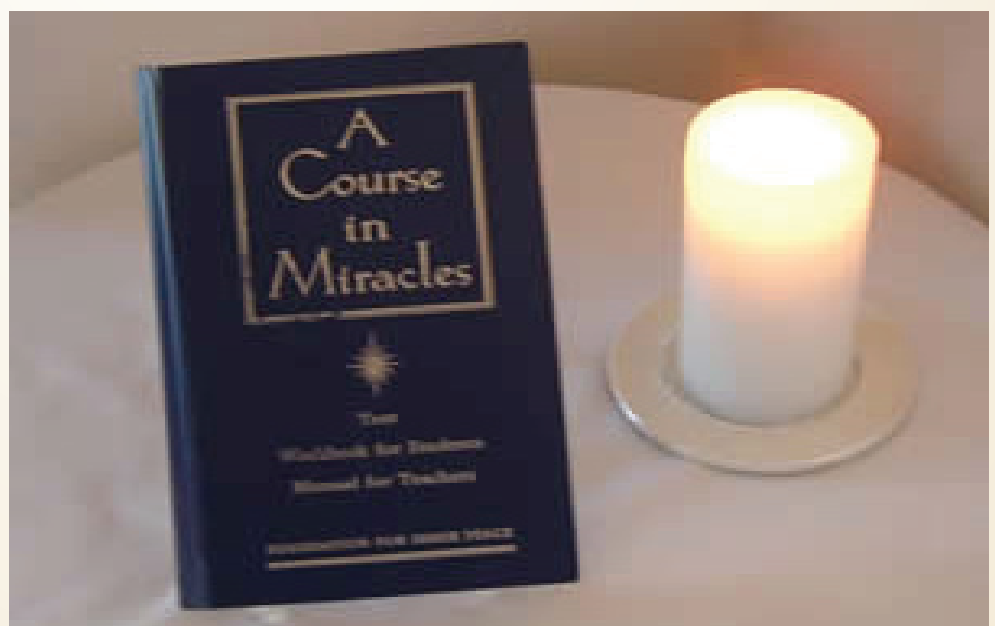
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through painful childbirth and live by the sweat of our brow. In order to help us get back to Him, God gave us (a chosen group of us anyway) a set of laws to follow, and we tried mightily to do so. But we couldn't do it; we kept falling short, and no matter how much God punished us for our transgressions to get us back in line, we simply couldn't stop misbehaving. So, He came up with a new plan—or maybe it was the plan He had all along. He sent His Son to take the punishment for us by dying on the cross. Now, what we must do is believe that Jesus died for our sins and accept him as our Lord and Savior. If we do that, we'll be saved from hell and have the reward of eternal life.

Stories like this have tremendous power. Think of how much power that Judeo-Christian story has had over Western culture. It has defined us. Countless people have lived for it, died for it, loved for it, and killed for it. Even those who don't believe in it are under its sway. And this is just one of the stories that form our worldview. There are the Greco-Roman myths. There are the classics of literature, like Shakespeare. Today, of course, we are barraged with an endless supply of stories in books, movies, and TV shows. And we have countless stories that, like the Judeo-Christian story, have some factual elements but have also become meta-narratives that define us, or at least try to define us. Some have emerged only very recently, such as this one: "9/11 changed everything; our fundamental mission now is the quest to rid the world of evil terrorists. If we do that, then we'll be safe and happy." Stories like this become the conventional wisdom that guides our lives. They teach us what is real and important and worth striving for and what is not; they become the lenses through which we view the world.

A Course in Miracles, I think, agrees with the basic idea that stories shape our worldview. But as is so characteristic of the Course, it takes this idea to an extreme we never would have gone to on our own. In the Course's view, stories don't simply shape our worldview; stories literally shape our *world*. The entire physical universe is a story we, the Sons of God, have told ourselves. Human fiction and the conventional wisdom it usually teaches is simply one of many tools the ego uses to support the larger fiction that is very world of time and space we appear to live in.

And this larger fiction, like the human fiction that supports it, has a message for us, a lesson it aims to teach. What is that lesson? The Course tells us in a Text section called "The 'Hero' of the Dream" (T-27.VIII). First, this section tells a story that it regards as the template for every story the ego tells. It is the ultimate in conventional wisdom, for it is what virtually everyone in the world believes. Though this passage is long, it is worth quoting in full because of the crucial importance of the story it tells. As you read, ask yourself if this is not indeed *your* story:

The body is the central figure in the dreaming of the world. There is no dream without it, nor does it exist without the dream in which it acts as if it were a person to be seen and be believed. It takes the central place in every dream, which tells the story of how it was made by other bodies, born into the world outside the body, lives a little while and dies, to be united in the dust with other bodies dying like itself. In the brief time allotted it to live, it seeks for other bodies as its friends and enemies. Its safety is its main concern. Its comfort is its guiding rule. It tries to look for pleasure, and avoid the things that would be hurtful. Above all, it tries to teach itself its pains and joys are different and can be told apart.

The dreaming of the world takes many forms, because the body seeks in many ways to prove it is autonomous and real. It puts things on itself that it has bought with little metal discs or paper strips the world proclaims as valuable and real. It works to get them, doing senseless things, and tosses them away for senseless things it does not need and does not even want. It hires other bodies, that they may protect it and collect more senseless things that it can call its own. It looks about for special bodies that can share its dream. Sometimes it dreams it is a conqueror of bodies weaker than itself. But in some phases of the dream, it is the slave of bodies that would hurt and torture it.

The body's serial adventures, from the time of birth to dying are the theme of every dream the world has ever had. The "hero" of this dream will never change. (T-27.VIII.1:1-3:2)

Is this not your story? Is this not *everyone's* story? I once read that there are seven basic plots in fiction, but the Course boils it all down to one plot. Behind all the myriad differences in form, this is the basic storyline of both the human fiction we read and watch and the worldly fiction we live day to day. It all really comes down to a bunch of bodies being born, running around and doing things for a while, and dying in the end, doesn't it?

What does this fiction aim to teach us? We can already see in the passage a couple of things: It aims to teach "that [the body's] pains and joys are different, and can be told apart" (1:8), and it aims "to prove it [the body] is autonomous and real" (2:1). But these lessons serve the larger goal of teaching an even more central lesson, as the section goes on to tell us:

Though the dream itself takes many forms, and seems to show a great variety of places and events wherein its “hero” finds itself, the dream has but one purpose, taught in many ways. This single lesson does it try to teach again, and still again, and yet once more; that it is cause and not effect. And you are its effect, and cannot be its cause.

Thus are you not the dreamer, but the dream. And so you wander idly in and out of places and events that it contrives. (T-27.VIII.3:3-4:2)

This, then, is the lesson the fiction of the world aims to teach: You are a body. And your body lives in a world quite apart from it, a world you had nothing to do with making and have very little power over. So, the story of your life is the story of your body being born, and from then on being buffeted about in countless ways by a cruel world that cares nothing for it. Your life is a meaningless puppet show in which the world is pulling the strings, a Kafkaesque nightmare in which you “wander idly in and out of places and events that [the world] contrives.”

Oh, you try your best to gain some modicum of control. You do what you can to keep your body safe and comfortable. You try to bring it pleasure and ward off pain. You try to earn money, collect material things, and enlist other bodies to ensure that your body is well taken care of. You look for friendly companion bodies to lighten the load, provide some extra special pleasure, and keep those not-so-friendly bodies at bay. If you’re lucky, your body might be king of the hill and actually live the high life for a while; if you’re not so lucky, it’s at the bottom of the heap and it’s in for quite a beating. But no matter how well or poorly your body fares, in the final act it dies, “to be united in the dust with other bodies dying like itself.” The end.

Thus the ego’s fiction is the ultimate tragedy. It is captured perfectly by these famous words from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*:

Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Or in the Course’s words, which describe the plight of Everyman (and Everywoman) in language that I think intentionally echoes that passage from *Macbeth*:

Helpless he stands, a victim to a dream conceived and cherished by a separate mind. Careless indeed of him this mind must be, as thoughtless of his peace and happiness as is the weather or the time of day. It loves him not, but casts him as it will in any role that satisfies its dream. So little is his worth that he is but a dancing shadow, leaping up and down according to a senseless plot conceived within the idle dreaming of the world.
(T-27.VII.8:4-7)

Is this really what we want to learn?

The Holy Spirit’s use of fiction

The above discussion may make it sound like fiction is irredeemably ego-ridden. But like everything else we made, our ability to tell stories can be used by the Holy Spirit for His purposes. I think even human fiction can serve this purpose: It can be used to teach what Borg calls *subversive* or *alternative wisdom*, teaching that overturns conventional wisdom. From the Course’s standpoint, this would be wisdom that leads us back to God.

True, much of what might be called “subversive” or “alternative” wisdom in fiction is really just another form of what the Course would regard as conventional wisdom. Even fiction that subverts our usual conventional standards often remains firmly rooted in the larger conventional wisdom that we are bodies at the mercy of a world we can’t really control. And I think there are very few works of human fiction that overturn conventional wisdom to the degree the Course does; even the best of them need a bit of reinterpretation by the Holy Spirit to be transformed into His teaching tools. But I do think there are examples of fiction that, especially if we look at them through His eyes, point the way to a truly alternative wisdom.

I’m sure you can think of favorite examples of this; here are a few of my own. I see this alternative wisdom in the beautiful example of the forgiving bishop in Hugo’s *Les Miserables*. I see it in Scrooge’s transformation from angry

miser to joyous giver in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. I see it in George Bailey's realization of how many lives he's touched in *It's a Wonderful Life*. I even see it in movies like *The Matrix*, the story of an illusory world maintained by dark forces that are trying to keep human beings from seeing it is an illusion, so they won't realize they actually have the power to awaken from it. Sounds a lot like our actual situation according to the Course, doesn't it?

We also see alternative wisdom in the best of the stories our great spiritual teachers have told us. (Though all too many spiritual stories are just spiritualized versions of conventional wisdom.) Think of the parables of the historical Jesus, for example. There is the story of the good Samaritan, in which a person regarded as untouchable by the conventional wisdom of Jesus' time was far more helpful to his neighbor in need than the conventional "good guys." There is the story of the dinner party, in which the people regarded as the dregs of society by conventional wisdom were invited to partake of the feast when the conventionally respectable guests refused.

One parable was such a shining example of alternative wisdom that Jesus actually retells it in the Course. I'm speaking, of course, of the story of the prodigal son:

Listen to the story of the prodigal son, and learn what God's treasure is and yours: This son of a loving father left his home and thought he had squandered everything for nothing of any value, although he had not understood its worthlessness at the time. He was ashamed to return to his father, because he thought he had hurt him. Yet when he came home the father welcomed him with joy, because the son himself *was* his father's treasure. He [the father] wanted nothing else. (T-8.VI.4:1-4)

Think of how drastically this parable overturns conventional wisdom. The father here represents God, and the son represents us. Conventional religious wisdom of the sort we saw in the traditional Judeo-Christian story says that God punishes those who disobey Him (or punishes Jesus in their place). He *might* take them back after they've gotten what's coming to them, but only if they do something for Him: repent, beg for forgiveness, accept His Son's death on the cross as Atonement, etc. But here in this story, that entire system is undone by an alternative wisdom. The father doesn't punish his disobedient son at all, and doesn't need anything from the son to welcome him back. He just loves his son, period. When the son returns, the father simply embraces him with joy. He doesn't care that the son squandered his treasure. In fact, the son did no such thing, because "the son *was* his father's treasure. He wanted nothing else."

So, human fiction really can teach alternative wisdom that leads us back to God. Sometimes it does so directly in the form of a brilliant parable like this one. More often, as I said, I think it needs some reinterpretation by the Holy Spirit to weed out unhelpful elements, much as He reinterprets even the most fearful biblical teachings (like "Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord") in the Course. But He *can* use human fiction as a means to serve His plan. Therefore, I would suggest that we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us when choosing the human fiction we partake in, and help us see the lesson He has embedded in it, whether that lesson is in full accord with the human author's original intention or not.

As an aside, I don't think this means that we must only partake of "feel good" fiction. Much fiction of this sort simply makes the ego feel good, so we shouldn't just assume that if something gives us the warm fuzzies, it must be Holy Spirit-inspired. Moreover, I've personally found that darker fiction can be a powerful teacher. It can serve to remind us of the darkness and persistence of the ego, as we see in the example of *The Matrix*. Even tragedies like *Macbeth*, a testament to the folly of unbridled ambition, can teach us the bitter consequences of following the ego. They can teach us, as the Course says, that delaying our awakening "is tragic in time" (T-5.VI.1:3). This can give us the motivation we need to go beyond the ego. So, I don't think the Holy Spirit limits us to stories with happy endings. He can teach His alternative wisdom through just about any form of human fiction, if we look at it through His Course-based lenses.

Let's move now to the larger fiction discussed in the previous section: the fiction of the world we made. How does the Holy Spirit address this fiction and lead us beyond it to truth? I see two major components. First, He constantly reminds us that it *is* fiction composed by us (though ultimately He ends up using our story material for *His* script—see W-p1.169.9:3). He teaches us that the lesson we've taught ourselves through the story of "the body's serial adventures" is false. We've used that story to teach ourselves that we are bodies at the mercy of a cruel world we are powerless to change. But the Holy Spirit reminds us that we aren't bodies, and the cruel world is *our* dream, which we can undo any time we wish.

Because this world is fiction, we needn't be distressed by it. In fact, that "Hero' of the Dream" section goes on to give us that famous line about how we forgot to laugh at the tiny, mad idea (see T-26.VIII.6:2). The import is this: Once we see that the tragic saga of bodies in the clutches of a merciless world is a trivial and absurd fairy tale we made up, it becomes laughable. "A timelessness in which is time made real; a part of God that can attack itself; a separate brother as an enemy; a mind within a body" (T-27.VIII.7:1)—from the perspective of God, the elements of this story are utterly ridiculous. If we can see it from His perspective, it is transformed from tragedy to farce. Since it is our own ridiculous

dream, we can look at it without getting hooked in at all, as we see in the following passage from later in the same section:

You would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream. (T-27.VIII.10:5-6)

What a stunning idea! Imagine the peace that would come from recognizing that even the most “hateful and... vicious” attacks we see around us, even those directed *at* us, are nothing but a bad dream with no effect on our eternal, loving reality. In the experience I described at the beginning of this article, I asked, “Why do I care about *that*”—why do I care about the drama of my life and the world around me? Here we have an answer: There’s no real reason I should care at all, at least not in the sense of being distressed about it.

But we can’t just leave the matter there. Unfortunately, an all too common conclusion to such thoughts, especially in the Course community, is something along these lines: That’s right, it’s all a dream. It’s just puppets on a stage. There’s no one out there. So don’t care about any of it, lest you make the error real. However, that’s not where the Course itself goes at all, not even close. While the Course does want us not to care in the sense of not *having* cares—our goal is to be carefree, undismayed by the ups and downs of this worldly drama—it is very big on caring in the sense of caring *for* others. Indeed, it is precisely because *God* cares for everyone here, including you and me, that we need not have any cares here: “You need merely cast your cares upon Him for He careth for you” (T-5.VII.1:4).

This leads me to the second component of how the Holy Spirit addresses the fiction of the world. Not only does He want us to see that this world is fiction, but He also wants us to make it “happy fiction” (C-3.2:1) (a term which refers specifically to forgiveness). He wants our minds to be so transformed that this fictional world is blessed by the vision of Christ streaming forth from us, by our extension of true love and forgiveness to all our brothers who are living this crazy story with us. Jesus obviously wants us to care deeply about the welfare of our brothers; as he calls us to awaken, he tells each of us to “bring with you all those whom He has sent to you to care for as I care for you” (C-5.6:12)

Given that the world is an illusory fiction, why should we care for those whom He sends us? Because even though the world is an illusion, we and our brothers who seem to live here are real Sons of God, wracked with suffering because we’ve convinced ourselves that the world is real. And the way out of this suffering is to truly care for each other, which brings a reflection of the truth of God’s Love into this made-up story. Our fictional story must get a lot happier before we are ready to close the book.

A great teaching aid to help us live in this caring way is the stories of those who have embodied this way. There are many people whose love has made this fictional world much happier. These are the “witnesses” that Section 23 of the Manual speaks of when it says, “It is to them that wisdom should appeal” (M-23.6:3). We’re all living fictional lives, but people like Buddha, Gandhi, St. Francis, Mother Teresa, and Peace Pilgrim (and many not-so-famous people as well) have lived out fictional lives which have brought so much happiness to this story. Given this, all of us would do well to emulate them in thought, word, and deed. And of course, the greatest example of happy fiction the Course itself puts forth is its author, Jesus himself, our “model for learning” (T-6.In.2:1). His beautiful story—especially his extreme example of egoless love in the face of crucifixion, and his subsequent resurrection which provided “the final demonstration that all the other lesson I taught are true” (T-3.I.7:9)—is a happy fiction indeed.

I believe, then, that the way to take full advantage of the Holy Spirit’s use of the fiction of the world is to constantly keep both components I’ve discussed in mind. On the one hand, we need to realize (with the Course’s help) that this world is a fictional story with no real effect on us, and embrace the peace and joy that realization brings. But on the other hand, we need to do everything in our power to make this fictional story a happy one through our love and forgiveness. We need to care for one another. We need to bring new, loving plot lines into this story, plot lines that reflect the truth beyond the story. Of course, to be effective, these outer changes must be the product of a truly changed mind. So, we need to walk the path the Course lays out for us so we can develop the mindset and acquire the tools we need to bring genuine change. Transforming our story into happy fiction will lead us back to truth, for as the Course says about the happy dream, “Happy dreams come true, not because they are dreams, but only because they are happy” (T-18.V.4:1).

A wonderful passage in Lesson 153 speaks of both of these components: the joy of recognizing that the story isn’t real, and the importance of doing what we can to make this story happier and thus bring it closer to its end. The passage begins with a slightly different metaphor, the metaphor of salvation as “a game that happy children play” (W-pI.153.12:1). But then it segues to the metaphor of a story:

We pause but for a moment more, to play our final, happy game upon this earth. And then we go to take our rightful place where truth abides and games are meaningless. So is the story ended. Let this day bring the last chapter closer to the world, that everyone may learn the tale he reads of terrifying destiny, defeat of all his hopes, his pitiful defense against a vengeance he can not escape, is but his own deluded fantasy. God’s ministers have come to waken him from the dark dreams this story has evoked in his confused, bewildered memory of this distorted tale. God’s Son can smile at last, on learning that it is not true. (W-pI.153.14:1-6)

We, as God’s ministers, are called to transform the tragic story of the ego into a “final, happy game”—in other words, happy fiction. This happy new story teaches our brothers that the ego’s “distorted tale” is not true. As we fulfill this ministry through our practice and our extension to the world—let it be today!—we “bring the last chapter closer to the world,” until at last we all awaken to the truth of our eternal home in Heaven. “So is the story ended.”

So, to end where I began: Yes, my life is fiction just like that television show I watched, and as such, I needn’t get upset about it. But at the same time, I want my life to be *happy* fiction, both for me and for everyone I touch. I want to bring some of those loving plot lines into this story. I don’t know what twists and turns and cliffhangers are waiting down the road, but fortunately, as we saw in that last passage, the Course promises that the story ends very well for all of us: “A happy outcome to all things is sure” (W-pII.292.Heading). Who doesn’t love a happy ending?



E-mail your comments to the author at: greg@circleofa.org

Greg Mackie. *He has been a student of A Course in Miracles since 1991, and a teacher for the Circle of Atonement since 1999. He writes Course Q & A's and the "Course Meets World" feature on the Circle of Atonement's website. He sees his primary function as helping to develop a tradition of Course scholarship.*

CIRCLE MAILBOX

Here is some of the feedback we’ve received about Greg’s article in A Better Way #94: “‘I Will There Be Light’: Reflections on Approaches to Mental Healing, Based on a Transformative Healing Experience.”

Thanks, Greg, for sharing so openly and honestly about your journey into and through dark moods and emotions. I found your sharing to be very helpful, having gone through similar moments and longer periods of “spiritual dryness,” overall sadness, boredom, etc. I really feel that going through our many illusions and opening ourselves up to the truth about us, and the larger Truth that we really are, stirs up a lot of nonlinear stuff for us that simply is deeper and more complex than we can understand or control. The Course’s focus on Light and darkness is very helpful! I wish I could remember to use its practices even more. This week I began leaving the ACIM book right on top of my desk rather than putting it back on my credenza shelf. Being right in front of me is a constant reminder as I go through my day of the need for practice and remembering to “let go and let Him lead.”

Thanks again for your transparency that is a gift to us as you share with us!

— David Wine

• • •

I wanted to thank you for posting your recent essay “I Will There Be Light.” It is very valuable to me and I intend to share it with some of my analysands....Your openness and clarity is itself a healing gift to many. Thanks again.

— Ken James

I have just now read your excellent article in the current issue of *A Better Way* and want to thank you *so very much* for your candid sharing. As a Truth student whose studies have embraced most all the approaches and resources you addressed in your article, plus many more, I still sometimes find myself becoming very discouraged when I am dealing with challenges similar to those you described and are working through. During those times, it seems like I am the only one with “flaws” such as those you described, and that I alone am experiencing the feeling that “there is something wrong with me.” (I.e., it seems at such times that all the voluminous study materials, the various resources, the teachers are making the statement and sending the same message that they’ve got it all together and are right on target at all times while I alone am missing the boat when I find myself working through the type of difficulties you’ve described.)

I’ve spent several years with the Course and am still trying to absorb and apply the depth of its message. I continue to ask Holy Spirit to assist me with my understanding and application. I really appreciate your sharing the personal information in your article. It really meant a lot to me. I appreciate that you, with such extensive exposure as both a student and teacher of the Course, are willing to be so honest and direct in sharing your personal challenges, the working through, and the overcoming.

I think perhaps you might have had to first experience what you have described in order that you could share the healing words with those of us who needed to hear them.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Greg! You have blessed me greatly. You can be sure that I will reread the article many times.

And thank you Wonderful Holy Spirit, for inspiring the writing of Greg’s article and giving us the gift contained in his message.

“I will there be Light!”

I send you much Love, Light, and Gratitude.

— Skye

CIRCLE NEWS

The Illuminated Text

We are very excited to announce the publication of our latest book! *The Illuminated Text* by Robert Perry and Greg Mackie is a multi-volume series drawn from our extremely popular online Text Reading Program. With numerous requests to publish in book form we have finally done so, and Volume I is available to [buy now!](#)

The Text is the foundation of *A Course in Miracles*. Doing the Course is simply a process of learning and internalizing its thought system, and the Text is where that thought system is laid out. It is an unparalleled spiritual *tour de force*. Careful study of it will change your outlook in ways that perhaps nothing else can.

Many students, however, find the Text to be very hard going, and wish they had a deeper grasp of what they were reading. *The Illuminated Text* will guide you, in detail, through the Text, enabling you to get a deep understanding of this spiritual masterpiece. Each Course paragraph is first presented, and this is followed by detailed commentary. Material that was edited out of the Course is included where it is relevant and clarifying, and there are exercises, from Robert and Greg, for practical application.

The Illuminated Text Volume I covers the first 4 chapters of *A Course in Miracles* and is available to [buy now](#) for just \$16.95!