

“A Special Curriculum”

(T-12.VII)

1. When it comes to learning how to love, we have major learning handicaps.

“You have learning handicaps in the very literal sense. There are areas in which your skill is so impaired that you can progress only under constant, clear-cut direction, provided by a Teacher Who can transcend your limited resources” (5:2-3).

2. Because of this handicap, our learning is characterized by this rule: “Try to learn but do not succeed.”

“We have emphasized that the ego’s rule for learning is ‘Seek and do *not* find.’ Translated into curricular terms, this is the same as saying, ‘Try to learn but do *not* succeed’” (8:3-4).

From “What is the Course? Will it exist in the 21st Century?” by Hugh Prather (July, 1999)

In 1978, Gayle and I met Bill Thetford, Judy and Bob Skutch, Jerry Jampolsky, and several other people associated with the Course, all of whom were living in Tiburon at the time....

A few years ago, I attended a gathering where I saw many of the people associated with the Course that Gayle and I had gotten to know in the 70’s. As I said earlier, I am aware of no teaching that emphasizes innocence and unity in more straightforward terms than *A Course in Miracles*....

What effect does the long-term study of such a teaching have on its students? I was surprised that after twenty years it was the opposite of what I expected. With two or three exceptions, everyone I saw at the gathering was far more separate and egocentric than they were when Gayle and I first met them. In fact, their egos were so large that many of them had lost the ability to carry on a simple conversation. They made pronouncements and listened deeply to no one. I was appalled, and when I returned home, I said to Gayle, “If this has happened to most of our Course friends, is there any chance it hasn’t happened to us?”

The answer was that indeed it had happened to us....

When Gayle and I finally looked at ourselves honestly, we discovered that although we had been ministers and spiritual teachers for many years and had written over a dozen books on spiritual themes, we personally had not become kinder or even more sane through our devotion. We, like most individuals, started a spiritual path with the intention of becoming better people and finding ways to be truly helpful, only to move in the opposite direction. The more time and thought we had put into teaching and writing about our path, the more self-absorbed we had become. We had ended up less flexible, less forgiving, and less generous than we were when we first started our path!

3. As long as we are our own teacher, guiding our process of learning to love, this situation will remain.

“You do not know the meaning of love, and this *is* your handicap. Do not attempt to teach yourself what you do not understand, and do not try to set up curriculum goals where yours have clearly failed. For your learning goal has been *not* to learn, and this cannot lead to successful learning” (7:1-3)

4. If we follow the Holy Spirit’s “special curriculum” (6:1), we will become excellent learners and teachers.

“Under the proper learning conditions, which you can neither provide nor understand, you will become an excellent learner *and* teacher” (12:4).

“You can teach the way to Him and learn it, if you will follow the Teacher Who knows it and the curriculum for learning it” (13:2).

Questions for reflection

Would the people who have known you the longest and best say you have become more loving?

Ask the Holy Spirit: “What can I do to make real progress in becoming more loving?”