

Waking From The Dream **The Process And Practice Of Reclaiming Our Spiritual Identity** **“A Course In Miracles” Perspective**

**“Yet the Bible says that a deep sleep fell upon Adam,
And nowhere is there reference to his waking up.”
(ACIM T.C2.I.3.6)**

Older Souls

An older soul, who understands the real purpose of our time here is to awaken or reclaim our Spiritual Identity as soon as possible, will often choose more difficult, painful and challenging life circumstances, relationships and lessons. The more supportive the environment **in the world**, parents, partners, careers, finances, etc., the greater will be the belief, trust and attachment to the material world for support and security. Under these circumstances, it would take much longer to awaken spiritually, which, for a wiser or older soul, would be a tragic and unnecessary waste of time. If starting with your parental relationship, you have experienced trauma and a lack of support, you can be fairly certain you are an older soul on a **fast track** to experiencing the Divine Within. Follow your life path further. Have you experienced disappointment and very painful loss in your relationships, been or felt like an outcast or stranger here? Have you had your security pulled out from under you in other areas of your life, job, friends, home etc.? If so, this will be further affirmation that you have chosen relationships and life circumstances with the specific goal of shattering your trust and attachment to the material world, a world of disappointment and illusion. These choices have all been made from the **unconscious** level of your Soul Self. **“All things are gently planned by One (Soul-Self) whose only purpose is your good.” (L-135 ACIM)** That is why your ego becomes so fearful and feels, in many ways, like a victim when its control has been lost. No circumstance or situation we face in our lives, however painful, happen to us without our conscious or **unconscious** choice, through the projected manifestation of a wish, dream, painful, fearful or loving thought.

“I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience. I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked.” (ACIM Ch.21-II) (Appendix “B”)

The gift of these shattering and painful situations is that they force us to let go of our belief, trust and attachment to the illusion that we can find any lasting peace or security in this world. Thus we gain the opportunity to rediscover the eternal security, support and peace of our Inner Spirit, our Real Identity. This is the Identity we forgot so long ago when we separated from Source or connection with God Presence.

Projection Makes Perception

Every loss we experience in this world recreates the terror we experienced when we separated from God and forgot our true identity as Spirit. The moment we forgot our identity, we became terrified, **fell asleep** and, out of our fear, began to dream or **project** this world of form, with the illusion of good and evil and that we are separate from each other and from God. While here, we attempt, **without success**, to find our security and support through relationships, success, money, power, doing and things. This whole detour we took into this dream or **nightmare** of separation and fear probably began with the evolution of our left-brain consciousness and the illusion of gaining stronger security in and from the material world through separation, thinking, analyzing, future planning

and controlling, etc. This emphasis slowly robbed us of our intuitive or Soul Security and brought with it the birth of worry and fear. All the problems, pain and fear we now face in the world are still happening within this **dream matrix** of our individual consciousness, strongly influenced, supported and affirmed through the collective dream consciousness of all of those wandering lost with us, strangers in the foreign land of this earthly dream, far from home. **“You dwell not here, but in Eternity. You travel but in dreams while safe at home.”** (ACIM, T, c.10-1) Anything we do within the dream to try and change our situation will ultimately reinforce the illusion of the dream, anchoring us deeper in the nightmare of separation, which was responsible for our fear in the first place. Thus, the only way to heal all the pain and problems we face in this dream world is to **wake up** and find out, much like waking from a night dream, that all the pain and fear we felt and faced in the dream **was not real**. We start this process by asking Spirit to help us wake up from this dream of separation and fear. Then, we must **be present**, accept without resistance and overlook with compassion any part of ourselves, projected onto others, **not of love** triggered and reflected back to us in our dream of separation here. This is **“authentic forgiveness,”** an essential key to waking from our dream. Whenever we react, resist or war against any illusions of pain and fear bombarding us from within the matrix of our dream, **(feeling very real and frightening to our ego at the time)** we affirm and strengthen the illusion of the dream and thus chain ourselves more strongly to the pain and fear within the dream. **“Seek not to change the world. (since it is a dream or illusion within your own consciousness) Change your mind about the world and the world will change.”** **“We are at Home in God dreaming we are in exile, capable of awakening any time we (sincerely) want to.”** (ACIM)

“A Course In Miracles” emphasizes that we will return again and again to this dream of a material world until we finally learn the simple lesson that **“there is no world outside our own consciousness.”** Everything that seems to happen to us in relationships or through any circumstance of the outer world has been projected, from within our own mind, onto this outside material screen, much like a movie. We mistake the result of our projections as **cause** and forget they are only the **effect we caused or projected** from within our own consciousness by our fearful thoughts. By forgetting and disowning our responsibility for projecting or creating the situation we are confronted by, we feel like we are being attacked from a separate and threatening outside source. This is the underlying foundation of the ego’s fear-based dream of separation, a projected world with the illusion of good and evil that we dwell within. What results then is fear that seemingly justifies our criticism, judgment, anger and attack. When we give or send this kind of fear-based energy out, we give it back to ourselves, since, at the level of spirit, we are all one, even though, within the dream, we have convinced or hypnotized ourselves that we are separate. (Karma) In truth, nothing lies outside our own consciousness. In the end, our attacks result in more pain and fear **within us** that strengthens the dream of separation and fear we wish to escape. **“If I attack I suffer. If I forgive, salvation will be given to me.”**(ACIM) **“Whatever I resist persists and strengthens”** (The Law of Attraction) We create or project the waking dream of this world the same way we project our sleeping dreams, from the smoke and mirrors of our wishes, fears and wounds played out on the **fantasy stage** of a future and past **within our own consciousness**. Our waking dream can exist only within the fantasy or illusion of a future and past within our mind, never in the present. **Being present** therefore is another important key to waking up and getting free from the illusions of pain and fear within the dream-matrix of this world. This will result in what Gary Renard calls, “The Disappearance Of The Universe,” the dissolving of the ego’s dream of a

universe separate from God, built upon the panic-based wishes and fears of children, lost on an island far from home. We, like fearful children, have created for ourselves a nightmare here, similar to the one created on the island by the shipwrecked children in Golding's novel, "Lord Of The Flies."

Waking Up From Our Dream Of Separation And Fear

1. Pray:

"Spirit, bless, heal, teach and guide me. Help me awaken from my dream of separation and fear and reconnect me with my Inner Spirit, my True Identity"

2. Be Present:

Be present. See, hear, touch, taste, smell in the **Here and Now** of your inner body and outer world. Our projected ego dream can only exist in the illusion of a past and future within our minds. No matter how great the seemingly real illusion of our pain and fear is to the ego, it will eventually lose its power and dissolve in the light of **present focus**, awareness, and surrender.

3. Meditate (Be Still, Listen and Receive):

Begin your meditation with this straightforward introduction to keep you focused on task:

"I am present. Peace be to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still."^(L-ACIM) **I seek to know and do God's will. "This Holy Instant I give to You. Be You in charge. For I would follow You, certain your direction brings me peace."**^(L-365, ACIM) **Through the stillness of my Soul Self, I witness. I watch. I wait. I listen, with infinite patience, patient expectancy and calm certainty for "The Thunder of Silence,"^Ψ the Mystical Experience of God Presence, and my Inner Voice"**

Then still your thoughts by focusing on your breath. Physically experience each in and out breathe as it expands and contracts within your physical body. Let go and sink deeper and deeper, at the end of every out breath. Allow yourself to move deeply into your own consciousness and into a feeling of heaviness within you physical body. **(Grounding)** Wait longer and longer and let go more fully at the end of every out breath. Continue to **let go** and sink more fully into the silence and stillness within. Begin to experience, deep within, the subtle flow of energy, vibration or life force, perhaps as a feeling of light, or even a flow of subtle peacefulness. Continue to wait with infinite patience for the **Inner Voice** and **Mystical Experience** of the Spirit within you. Underneath the layers of the mind, body, emotion, or ego self, you will find, through **stillness and surrender**, the Peace, Power, Joy and Love of the Spirit within. This is the eternal source of our creative energy, our **Real Identity**. Here we are safe eternally, in the **Mind of God**.

4. Practice Ongoing Authentic Forgiveness:

"Authentic forgiveness" means to forget the past and experience everything and everyone now, free from all thoughts and judgments, pain and fear based on our past learning and experience. It also means to accept without resistance and overlook with compassion the parts of our consciousness not of love, first projected, and then reflected or triggered in our dream of separation here. If we can respond to the

^Ψ Joel Goldsmith, "The Thunder Of Silence"

seemingly real illusions of painful and fearful situations we face in this way, without resistance, attack or attention, we remove the fear-based energy, resistance and support that has kept the dream of separation and fear alive in our consciousness for so long. **“Whatever we resist persists and strengthens.”** (The Law Of Attraction) When we can give up our resistance, attack and defense to the illusions of pain and fear that seem to confront us from within this dream of separation, it will be like stepping into a mirage of water in the desert that dissolves into nothingness. Next, we awaken to a **Forgiven Dream** of light, love, joy and peace, still within this dream world, yet free from fear. Very quickly after this middle step, the energies of God will bring us **Home** to awaken fully in our Spiritual Identity. (ACIM) This topic will be more fully dealt with beginning on page 6.

Issues That Block Our Ability To Heal, Forgive And Awaken

1. Projecting the cause and responsibility for our pain and fear outside ourselves with any form of criticism, judgment, anger and blame robs us of our need and willingness to feel and heal the illusion of our pain and fear **within us**. This resistance, defense or attack also serves to support and strengthen the dream of separation, our belief in it, and our attachment to it. Remember, the source of this pain originated from within our own consciousness and was then projected onto a screen we, like a child in a scary movie, now believe is real. Learning to see, feel, accept and overlook with compassion our projected pain and fear when it is being triggered or reflected back to us in a relationship is extremely difficult and appears impossible. The reason is that first, we have forgotten and are unaware that it (**the pain and fear**) exists within us and that we have projected it from within our own consciousness and second, our ego sees a separate other who clearly said something or did something that seemingly caused us to feel this pain and fear we now experience. The ego has no memory or awareness of the **unconscious** fear, feeling or thought we housed within us and then projected that caused the **effect** of pain and fear we now face. To move beyond this seemingly insurmountable barrier, we need first to ask for help from Spirit and second to learn and gain the courage to ignore the false information being sent to us through the faulty perceptions of our ego. Whatever our ego thinks it sees must be taken as false and not responded to. Remember that the ego authored this dream/world of separation in the first place and can only exist by perpetuating its illusion. At first this is very difficult but with much practice, forgiveness, like all learned skills, becomes easier in time, especially when the healing rewards are great and begin to bring us peace. The great gift of our relationships in this world is that we gain the opportunity and enough necessary practice to eventually achieve “authentic forgiveness” and release from the nightmare of separation and fear we experience while we remain asleep within this dream. It is only through the mirror or projection screen of another that we are able to **discover and heal** those parts of ourselves not of love (our pain and fear) that we are **unaware of**. These clouds of pain and fear, along with the ego defenses that protect them, are carried within our **unconscious mind** and block the light, (**energy**) joy and peace of our Inner Spirit. It is through our ability to “**authentically forgive**” another, reflecting or triggering our projected pain and fear, that **we gain** the necessary awareness, and opportunity to feel and heal our pain and fear, forgive authentically, and awaken to the light of Spirit within us. This is the fastest way to awaken spiritually. It is also the fastest way to find inner joy and peace. **“All that we give we give to ourselves.”** (ACIM) For this reason, ACIM says, **“Forgiveness is our only function here.”**

2. Sedating our pain and fear with drugs, alcohol, food and sleep. We can only heal our pain and fear if we are willing to experience it at the level of our emotions within our physical body. We need only suffer through the emotional and physical experience of the pain and fear to accomplish this. When we sedate, we lose the ability to feel and therefore heal our pain and fear, a real tragic waste of precious time here. Instead we need to breathe and let go into the physical experience of our emotional pain and fear. At such a time, it is helpful to ask Spirit to heal this pain and fear we hold on the alter of our consciousness. Releasing our emotions through tears, if we can, will speed this process. We cannot heal ourselves. Our role is only to reveal (feel) our pain and fear. The role of the Holy Spirit within us is to do the healing at our sincere and surrendered request. We are not to mix up our roles according to the voice of Spirit in ACIM. See page 6 for a full coverage of this topic, “**Healing Pain and Fear.**”

3. Distracting ourselves from our fear and pain with endless mental and physical activity like thinking, worrying, planning, controlling, hobbies, work etc. also keeps us from feeling and healing our pain and fear. Some activities, however, that support here and now focus, contact and surrender like Yoga, Ti Chi, archery, golf, tennis, gardening, painting, swimming, running, etc. can be especially helpful in creating mental focus, muscle relaxation and stillness.

4. Holding onto people, places and things for security and **holding back** our pain and fear with chronic muscle tension and worry will eventually create a depletion of energy, compromise our immunity system and lead to some form of illness, accident, infection, or disease. Exercise, massage and relaxation training can help to release this kind of chronic muscle tension.

5. Avoiding by running away and hiding from the issues of pain and fear when they surface within us. In this case, a great deal of chronic tension and anxiety is created within us as we continually stand **on guard** in every situation, alert and ready to run at a moments notice while, waiting for the “other shoe to drop,” so to speak. Once again this chronic tension and adrenalin or fear response will lead to an “**energy drain and crisis**” and the break down of our immunity system. At the time, we need to develop the courage to **stay, not run**, breathe, let go and fully experience the pain and fear within us. The Holy Spirit can then gain the necessary opportunity It needs to dissolve or heal this illusion of the pain or fear we face. “**I am protected by the Love of God**” is a useful prayer to help break this destructive cycle whenever fear arises to deal with.

Finally, as soon as we do gain some ability to become present, relax, and still our thoughts and activity, the emotional pain and fear we have repressed over time and even lifetimes, stored within the muscles of our physical body and consciousness, called our “**pain body**”[‡] by Eckhart Tolle, **will begins to surface**, much like it does through relationships. Often, yet not always, it will surface less dramatically. This is not likely to be possible, however, until we have done some work to constructively clear a good proportion of our inner pain and fear. Without this work, it would be impossible to create the surrender and stillness necessary for our pain body to surface. Until we learn

[‡] Eckhart Tolle, “The Power Of Now.”

how to deal with this stored emotional pain and fear in a **constructive way**, this fear we encounter, from within our “pain body,” will most likely drive us back into one of the destructive patterns above, leaving it impossible for us to awaken from our dream through any form of stillness, forgiveness and surrender. See beginning on page 6 for ways to deal with this “pain body” constructively.

Stages And Strategies For Healing Pain And Fear And Learning “Authentic Forgiveness”

Introduction

Make no mistake concerning the importance of learning “Authentic Forgiveness.” “Authentic Forgiveness” will **awaken** us from this dream of separation and fear, the chaotic world we now experience. When we do wake up, we discover what we dreamed **was not real**, that in truth, we remain at peace eternally within the Mind of God. This awareness is our salvation.

“How willing are you to forgive your brother? How much do you desire peace instead of endless strife and misery and pain? ... Forgiveness is your peace, for herein lies the end of separation and the dream of danger and destruction...” (ACIM, C.29.VI.1)

“Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world.” (ACIM.L.62)

“Let me not forget my function... Let me forgive and be happy”. (ACIM.L.64)

“My only function is the one God gave me.” (To Forgive) (ACIM.L.65)

The purpose for Learning “Authentic Forgiveness” then, is to awaken from our dream of separation and fear, which is ultimately our only real reason for traveling within this dream. “A Course In Miracles” is entirely devoted to teaching the purpose, process and practice of accomplishing “Authentic Forgiveness,” to achieve this end. Forgiveness accomplishes our final journey through fear to the Love, which is our truth.

What Is “Authentic Forgiveness?”

Before we enter more fully into our discussion concerning the stages and strategies of learning “Authentic Forgiveness,” let us review the clearest definition I have been able to present, after working with ACIM for over 30 years. I think it will prove helpful here. It should also be noted that “A Course In Miracles” does not use the term “authentic forgiveness.” Most often it merely uses the word “forgiveness,” and sometimes uses the term “forgiveness to condemn” when referring to ordinary forgiveness in the way it is commonly practiced within the world. In Lesson 134, “**Let me perceive forgiveness as it is,**” of the Workbook, it uses the expression “**genuine forgiveness**” to make a distinction between its definition of forgiveness and the one more commonly understood and used in the world. I prefer, however, to use the term, “Authentic Forgiveness” for clarity.

“Authentic Forgiveness” means to forget the past and experience everything and everyone now, free from all thoughts, judgments, pain and fear based on our past learning and experience. It also means to accept without resistance or judgment and overlook with compassion the parts of our consciousness not of love, (fear-based) first projected from us, and then reflected back to us, or triggered within us, in our dream of separation here.

Stage 1: The Surfacing Of Pain And Fear Within US

Origin Of our Pain And Fear:

Personal Pain And Fear

Some of the pain and fear within our “pain body” originates from experiences we have had in this lifetime or others where we were confronted with people and situations too threatening, overwhelming and traumatizing to deal with at the time. When this happened, we buried the experience deep in our unconscious in a part of our mind that establishes itself as our mental, physical and emotional body, or “ego self.” ACIM describes our whole ego consciousness as a fear-based illusion or dream that originated when we first separated from God and lost our true Identity as Spirit. It was this loss of our Spiritual Identity resulting from our separation from God that first birthed fear into our consciousness. In the final analysis, any fear we experience in this material world originates still from this continued “**Separation.**” These traumatizing experiences we have repressed usually revolve around issues like rejection, loss, failure, separation and abandonment. Often they resulted from anger, conflict and disappointment with people we became attached to for our emotional and physical support, as well as from situations where we felt extreme helplessness, pain and fear of injury, loss or death. They can occur anytime during our lives, although more likely as children. Whenever these fears and wounds are reawakened within our consciousness, they bring forth an **extreme** fear and defensive response. This fear and defensive response is usually much stronger than the fear, pain and defensive response awakened from the “collective pain body,” especially when the two combine, which is often the case.

Collective Pain And Fear

Along with our personal pain and fear, our repressed “pain body” also includes pain and fear-based issues from what I call our ego’s “collective consciousness.” These “collective” issues include fear of sickness, despair, emptiness, sadness, pain, change, death, abandonment, loss, and separation to name a few. We seem to absorb these collective fears through some kind of universal and hypnotic osmosis during our human experience in this material world where we lack connection with our Spiritual Self. Joel Goldsmith speaks much about the “impersonal (**collective**) nature” of our “human or carnal mind” (**not our real or Spiritual Self**) as the source of our pain, fear and destructive or defensive behaviour. He reminds us continually to realize and accept that this is not who we are in truth.^ψ I prefer to call this, our “ego self,” which is how ACIM refers to it. Unlike Goldsmith, I also prefer to see the pain, fear and defensiveness or destructiveness it houses as both **personal** as well as **collective** in nature.

The Healing Journey

The healing journey through this “**ego pain body,**” be it personal, collective or a combination, must be a process where we come to **know through experience** that the pain and fear we encounter is not real and does not have any power to harm or destroy us. This is the healing journey we encounter and accomplish along our path to achieving “Authentic Forgiveness.”

^ψ Joel Goldsmith, “The Infinite Way”

How Our Pain, Fear And Defensiveness Surfaces

The “Law Of Attraction”

As pointed out by Michael Losier and Esther Hicks, both teachers of, “**The Law Of Attraction**,” we attract what we vibrate at the level of our emotional bodies, not necessarily what we think or want. Although our thoughts have energy, the strongest energy vibration of our **emotional body**, whether it is of pain, fear or love, will always manifest. The “Law of Attraction” responds only to our energy vibration and is unable to distinguish between what we want or don’t want. When we cry out painfully, “I can’t stand this abuse,” we vibrate, the pain and fear of abuse and receive just that, more pain, fear and abuse. Whenever we attack or resist any experience, this same principle or law operates to strengthen and bring to us more of that same experience. Unfortunately, our pain and fear-based cries for what we don’t want are usually stronger than what we do want, until the pain and fear within us is brought to the surface, experienced fully and released. The process and practice of this healing is what I hope to accomplish here.

This means that as long as we have repressed pain and fear vibrating within us, we will attract situations and relationships of like vibration that will bring this pain or fear into our experience and conscious awareness. For example, if we house a strong fear of abandonment, we will draw a relationship into our experience where we will be abandoned. If we have an obsessive fear of losing our home, we will draw to ourselves a situation where we will lose our home. The stronger our fear-based vibration and attachment is to the people and things of this world, built upon our ego’s dreams, to that degree will they be taken from us. Everything in this world is built and destroyed through the vibration of our wishes and fears. Our Soul Self, operating with or through these inner vibrations, seems to know **unerringly** and draws to us, when we are ready, the relationships and situations that can best serve our need to heal our pain and fear and return us to the peace of our Spiritual Home. To assist in this process, our intimate relationships become important mirrors and triggers that bring to the surface the pain and fear we project from within us that need to be healed. In all these situations, it is very difficult to appreciate or accept that the pain and fear we experience has been called forth from within us through our vibrations. It is equally difficult for us to appreciate or use these opportunities for the healing gifts that they provide us. **“All things are gently planned by One, (Soul Self) whose only purpose is our good.”** (ACIM, L135)

Like it or not, the world we see and experience is a reflection of our own consciousness, a consciousness we vibrate and project onto the screen of our relationships and the situations we encounter here, much like a movie. As such, it becomes an opportunity to heal any part of our consciousness, not of love, **(the pain & fear)** that is being reflected back to us from the mirror of these relationships and experiences in the world. It is as impossible to see and heal our consciousness without some kind of reflection, as it is to comb our hair properly without a mirror. This is why we can never heal alone. This healing is accomplished through learning and applying the process of “Authentic Forgiveness.” **“Seek not to change the world, but to change your mind about the world, and the world will then change.”** (ACIM)

Stage 2: Our Reflex Reaction To This Experience

Whenever our “pain body” is brought into our conscious experience or awareness, our first response is one of fear-based defense, attack or avoidance. Most often we project the responsibility for the pain and fear we experience onto someone outside us with some form of criticism, judgment, blame or anger. We can also sedate and distract ourselves in any number of ways. In addition to this, we can hold on tight or hold back creating chronic muscle tension and armor. Sometimes we just run away. None of these strategies will release or heal the pain and fear within us. The pain and fear will, in fact, persist and strengthen whenever we defend against or attack it. Our “pain body” feeds, grows and survives on the degree to which we resist, attack or defend against it. **“If I attack I suffer. If I forgive, salvation will be given me.”** (ACIM.) It is a tragedy how long it seems to take us to change these choices that do nothing but drain our energy and cause various forms of illness, disease and great unhappiness. Whatever we fight against grows in strength. For example, the war on drugs and terrorism in the U.S. has strengthened both the drug trade and the terrorist movement.

Stage 3: Gaining Readiness

There will come a time of readiness through suffering where we will turn and face our pain and fear without defense. Through this trembling and courageous act, we find our freedom and inner Peace.

Before we can begin to practice “authentic forgiveness,” we need to learn better ways to handle the emotional pain and fear that arises within our consciousness, projected onto and played out through the dramas of our relationships, life situations and during times of stillness and surrender. Remember, until we give up our **resistance and defensive reaction** to the pain and fear we encounter within this dream of separation, it will remain unhealed within us and strengthen. Until we allow ourselves to **fully experience** our pain and fear and find out it does not destroy us and that it **“can have no power over us,”**^Ψ we will be unable to release it and practice “authentic forgiveness.” The steps for healing or releasing our pain and fear and practicing “authentic forgiveness” are relatively straightforward and simple. The difficulty arises in developing the awareness of our defenses or destructive reaction **at the time** and the courage and willingness to give up our reflex, well learned, defensive resistance, attack or retreat. This means becoming **defenseless** at a time when our well-trained ego response is to defend, attack or retreat while holding in repressed anger. **“In my defenseless my safety lies.”** (ACIM.W. L.153)

Stage 4: Gaining Skills To Experience Pain And Fear

1. Begin to pay attention to your inner physical body, especially in the area of your stomach, chest and abdomen in an **ongoing way**. Emotional pain and fear are always felt in the body, usually in these areas.
2. At the same time, and when you go to sleep at night as well, begin to train yourself to relax on your out breath; let go and practice breathing abdominally, more slowly and fully. Place your hands on your abdomen and feel them rise

^Ψ Joel Goldsmith, “The Infinite Way.”

and fall as you breathe in and out. Let go and let yourself sink downward and deeper with every out breath. This is called grounding and it will reduce the fear you experience because it places you fully in the present where all healing energy is.

3. Then, as soon as you begin to feel any kind of pain, fear, upset, or tension within your mind or body, begin to practice this more relaxed and full abdominal breathing. Be sure you let go and sink deeper and deeper on every out breath, into the area of your body where you are experiencing your pain and fear. Learning to breathe abdominally in a relaxed and full way under stress, will take almost a year to learn, but it is a sure gateway to reducing the amount of pain fear and panic you experience. It will also allow you to achieve “authentic forgiveness” more quickly.
4. It is very important that you **give into** the pain and fear you experience, without resistance. Whatever you resist will always persist and strengthen. Letting go physically into the pain and fear you experience, on every out breath, is the way you accomplish this very difficult task and lessen the pain and fear you feel.
5. The willingness to experience your fears and pains and suffer through them more fully, will release the unconscious, catastrophic fear you hold that feeling this pain and fear will somehow destroy or hurt you beyond repair. Free from this “**false fear factor**,” You can then face them with less panic, resistance and defensiveness the next time they arise. This also allows you some time to think and decide how you want to deal more constructively with every fear-based situation you encounter.

Stage 5: Releasing and Healing Pain And Fear

Important Preparation

“You do not know the meaning of anything you perceive, not one thought you hold is wholly true. The recognition of this is your firm beginning.” (ACIM.T.C.11.VIII.3)

1. Although from your ego’s perspective, when the pain and fear within you becomes activated, it will seem like you are being attacked from without and need to defend or attack back, you must begin to appreciate **at a very deep level** that this is a triggered reflection of the pain and fear **within you** that cries out to be healed. You must also understand and accept that what your ego perceives at this moment **is not real, is not the truth**. You are facing a “mirage in the desert.” There is no need to respond in any way. Also, be very clear that if you attack or defend, you will strengthen this pain and fear within you, the hold it has over you, and lose any chance to release or heal it. By keeping these ideas in mind **at all times**, you will have the understanding, motivation and determination necessary to set aside your reflex defenses and deal with your activated “pain body” in a more constructive way. Just “**accept what is**,”^Ψ without resistance.

2. Your pain and fear will be caused as much by your past and future fear-based **thoughts** as by current situations and relationship issues. Use the same strategy for dealing with all cases when they arise. All are misperceptions of your fear-based ego.

^Ψ Eckhart Tolle, “The Power Of Now”

3. Anger is always a defensive strategy used to cover, control and protect you in situations where you are feeling vulnerable and threatened. Remember also that anger is always a **“cry for love.”** This will make it less threatening for you to deal with when it arises in yourself and others. When we are feeling anger, it becomes necessary to release it and get beneath it in some constructive way. Through this awareness and acceptance, you will be able to discover feelings like helplessness, sadness, despair, loss, etc, beneath your anger. These are the emotions that need to be experienced and healed. Remember, anger is an ego defense, not an emotion. Try releasing it constructively by screaming into a pillow or taking a tennis racquet to a mattress or going for a long walk or run. Remember that your anger is just the projected cover-up for your own fear and pain, being reflected back to you for your healing.

Steps In Releasing Pain And Fear

1. If you are feeling anger and blame, identify and **express** the anger, blame and judgment long enough to find the **pain or fear that lies beneath**, feelings like sadness, worthlessness, emptiness, aloneness, loss, and separation. To achieve this, imagine the person who upset you in an empty chair and express **out loud**, **“I’m hurt and angry that you When you did this, I felt...!”**
2. Then apply the suggestions of #3, Stage 4. Relax, breathe and surrender into and through **any painful feeling** as deeply as you can. Experience this pain and fear in your physical body letting go into it as fully as you can on each out breath. Remember, you will usually find the pain and fear located somewhere in your stomach, abdomen, or heart area.
3. If you can, allow yourself to release this pain and fear through tears. The relief will come sooner and the peace you gain as a result will be great.
4. A steady, full, breath of relaxed surrender must flow continually beneath the process of all these steps. There must be a determined willingness and ability to let go and relax into any fear-based tension on **every out breath**, without defense.

“Whatever is given to the Holy Spirit that is not of God is gone. Yet you must look at it (first) in perfect willingness (without resistance) for otherwise his knowledge remains useless to you.” (ACIM.T.C.12.II.4)

Summary:

1. Keeping this quote in mind, respond to any fear or pain, initiated through thought or circumstance, with a willingness to breathe and relax fully, on every out breath, into the physical experience, without defense or resistance.
2. While you continue to let go fully into the physical experience of your pain and fear **without resistance**, holding it on the altar of you consciousness, begin to address it with these words:

“There is only ONE POWER, a power of Good or God. I am an expression of this ONE POWER. You are appearance only; you are not real, without power. You can have no power over me.”[‡] Holy Spirit I give this appearance of pain and fear to You to dissolve into the nothingness from which it was born.”

Then, let it go, for it is gone! With much practice, your ego’s fear-based hold over your mind will dissolve and the peace of your Eternal Self will awaken fully.

[‡] Joel Goldsmith, “Infinite Way”

What We Achieve Through This Process

The rewards we achieve through this process are monumental. By experiencing the pain and fear of our emotional body and surviving, we eliminate the catastrophic fear we hold concerning its unknown depths, that somehow, by experiencing this part of ourselves, we will be swept away and permanently hurt or even destroyed. Much of the fear and pain we have experienced around our emotions and “pain body,” has come from this catastrophic “fear of the unknown.” Without this fear, we travel through the world with far less defensive armament, much lighter and brighter. Giving up our resistance to feeling our pain and fear reduces chronic muscle tension (armor) and this releases trapped healing energy. It also further dissolves this pain and fear within us that feeds on our resistance and fear to survive. “What we resist persists and strengthens.” With the continued practice of feeling our emotions, we will dissolve all fear around them. Then we can deal with them without this **fear factor** as a natural and non-threatening part of our human experience. This gives us the readiness to begin the practice of “**Authentic Forgiveness.**” Next, we begin this practice immediately when any pain or fear surfaces.



Stage 6: Offering “Authentic Forgiveness”

“Forgiveness recognizes that what you thought your brother did to you is not real.”
(ACIM.W.II.1)

Important Preparation

We begin with the recognition and acceptance that all our human experiences are ego or fear-based, **not of God**, therefore not real and without power. The world our ego experiences through the **misperceptions** of its mental, physical and emotional body, blocks the real world, created by God. This is the infinite and eternal world of Spirit, filled with peace, power, joy and love. At the level of truth, wakened from the ego dream of separation, we are all one with this Divine Consciousness. This is not an easy

understanding to accept. It takes time and readiness. The foundation for this understanding grows from the increased understanding and belief that the ego does not perceive the truth. From the strength of this growing belief, we gain the motivation and determination necessary to start overlooking what is not real to find the truth. **“The world I see holds nothing that I want. Beyond this world is a world I want.”** (ACIM.W.L.) Our painful life experiences then become trials and opportunities for us to practice overlooking **what is not real** to find this Eternal Truth. Once we have turned this corner in our spiritual development, this whole world becomes our practice field for learning “authentic forgiveness,” to overlook with compassion what is not real and find the real world of Spirit beyond. **“The ego effects can be dispelled merely by denying their reality.”** (ACIM.C.11.V.2.4)

Steps In The Practice of Authentic Forgiveness

1. When you meet any form of pain, fear, upset or discomfort, your first response must be to take a deep breath. Then let go into it and recognize that what looks and feels real to your ego self is not real. It is an appearance and has no power to harm your Eternal Self. Respond with, **“This is only an experience. This is not real. This can have no power over me.”**^Ψ You can once again offer this experience to the Holy Spirit with the full affirmation found in the **“Summary” on p.10**, if you wish.
2. Your next step will be to accept, **without resistance**, and overlook, **with compassion**, this aspect of yourself that is not of Love (God) that is being reflected or triggered within your dream of separation. Keep looking beyond what your ego perceives, waiting with, **patient expectance**, to see the world of Spirit beyond, the real world that God created, the world of Spirit.
3. Continue to reaffirm in your mind that this fear-based experience is not real, is an appearance only, so in truth, there is nothing to forgive. There is no guilt.
4. If you need to, call upon Spirit to help you forgive with an expression like: **“Spirit, teach me to forgive here. Help to see (this person, this situation) NOW, without thought, judgment or pain based on my past experience and learning. Help me accept without resistance and overlook with compassion this part of me, not of love, not real, being reflected or triggered here.”** Then let go and watch patiently for the light to rise and your peace to surface.
5. Finally, if there is a person you feel wronged by, place them before you, **in your mind** and say to him or her, **“What you did to me is not real. I called this forth from you. I give you my blessing holy (son / daughter) of God. I would behold you through the eyes of Christ and see my perfect God-Self in you.** This is “authentic forgiveness.” When you give “authentic forgiveness,” you receive it and **awaken**.

Conclusion:

It is important to keep in mind that all our life dramas, with all their pain and fear, come from **within our own consciousness** and were projected **by us** onto the screen of our relationship or life circumstance for healing. If we can accept and overlook with compassion these wounds and fears as they are being reflected back to us, in other words, offer “authentic forgiveness” to the person or situation that triggered or reflected them for us, we will find freedom from them and peace for ourselves. **“If you forgive, salvation will be given to you.”** (ACIM) The person who hurt or frightened us has thus

^Ψ Joel Goldsmith, “The Infinite Way”

brought salvation to us. The people, who play these very difficult roles in our learning dramas, here in this world, are always courageous members of our Soul Family, Soul Mates, who chose the difficult roles to play for us. They are worthy of much gratitude.

Finally, forgiveness strategy needs to be applied to **every situation** where we feel upset, threatened, hurt or fearful. These situations can be caused by past, present or future fear-based thoughts, relationships, life situations, pain and disease. We apply the same forgiveness strategy to all. **“This is only appearance. It has no real power. I hold my faith firm in God and His Kingdom as the only power and truth.”**^Ψ Eventually we will come to the point where we realize and accept that every ego perception, whether it is one of **pain or pleasure**, is not real and needs to be forgiven, in other words, overlooked with compassion. This is the final, mystical part of our healing journey in this world. Here we walk in the world but remain apart from it. During this part of our journey, we hold our faith firm in the knowing that **there is only one power**, a power of good or God that expresses itself as **Spirit**. Because we experience our oneness with this power and remain so fully anchored in this experience or knowing, we can heal others by raising their consciousness to this same level. When the strength of this knowing awakens in the consciousness of those seeking healing, all illness, sickness and disease disappears into the nothingness of the ego illusion where they were born. This was the healing demonstration of mystics like Jesus, Buddha and more recently, Joel Goldsmith. Rather than becoming overwhelmed with the magnitude of such a journey, it is important and necessary to ask for help from the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide the way. All things have been perfectly planned for us. (ACIM.L.135) Then we can begin to travel more lightly and brightly on our healing journey, **one forgiveness step at a time**, trusting that **“the crooked way will be made straight before us.”** **“This holy instant would I give to You. (Holy Spirit) Be You in charge. For I would follow You, certain Your direction gives me peace.”** (ACIM, L.361-365, the final lessons)

The Pain Body, Energy And Disease

Energy And My Eagle:

Back in the days when I lived in Invermere, British Columbia, a small town in the East Kootenays, I remember one evening driving in my 1989 White, Eagle, Vista through the Kootenay National Park, heading back home. It was raining, just after dusk and near the Kootenay Park Lodge when I noticed my wipers were beginning to slow down. In a short time, my dash light began to dim. Soon, my headlights followed suite. Finally, at the top of the last mountain, just before Radium Hot Springs on highway 93, which leads right into Radium Village, the engine failed and I was left to coast the rest of the way down the mountain, through the park, without lights, engine, power breaks or power steering. Fortunately my transmission was a manual one and I was able to coast into the Esso station in Radium without mishap. The mechanic explained to me later that my alternator, the ongoing source of energy needed to keep my battery charged, had failed. This resulted in my battery wearing down and eventually, without its sustaining energy, all the rest of the electrical systems needed to run the car and its equipment began to fail as well. This is what happens to us when we become cut off from our Energy Source through our fear and defensive resistance. Without this ongoing supply of Life Force Energy, the systems within our mind and body that rely on this energy for

^Ψ Joel Goldsmith, “The Infinite Way”

their power begin to shut down one by one and we are left tired and stranded with various forms of illness and disease, rarely on a mountain that will coast us home.

The Pain Body:

The deep and heavy vale of our “pain body,”^ψ a term found within the works of Eckhart Tolle, drains, clouds, hides and makes unavailable our Spiritual Light, the Energy from God that sustains us. The defenses we use to hide from our fear and pain like repression, denial, avoiding through running away, distraction through compulsive activity, sedation through food, alcohol and drugs, projection through criticism, judgment, anger and blame, defending through worry, planning and control, resisting and creating chronic muscle tension through stubbornly holding onto and holding back the pain and fear within, all serve to **drain or block** our energy resources. The pain and fear within us, along with these defenses, all act together, very much like a dark and heavy cloud, to cast a dense vale over our Inner Light and Energy, making it unavailable and lost to us.

Energy And Disease

The end result of this energy drain and loss is an **energy crisis** that results in our immunity system being compromised. This also results in the faltering or full break down of various other important systems within our body. Our chronic muscles tension, developed from our resistance to the pain and fear within us, becomes a kind of armor that begins to make movement difficult and painful, sometimes resulting in fibromyalgia. We become unable to break down and digest various food groups because the necessary enzymes, hormones and chemicals needed are either blocked or not being produced. This will then result in weight gain and an inability to fully extract the energy from the food we eat. Often we develop environmental allergies as well and an overall feeling of chronic fatigue. This will result in less activity, more weight gain, even less energy and eventually, depression. Under these circumstances, our protection from illness and disease will also become compromised resulting in our increased vulnerability to any number of illnesses infections and diseases, a vulnerability, which may already be genetically programmed into our physical makeup. We literally become imprisoned by our lack of energy, food and environmental intolerances, illness, infection and disease.

Traditional and alternative medical practitioners then try to deal with the various symptoms of our energy crisis, attempting, with varying degrees of success, to heal the allergies, illnesses, infections, low energy and diseases we have contracted. These will include bacterial, viral and fungal infections, food and environmental allergies, yeast and parasite invasion, A.I.D.S., cancer, sleep disorders, heart conditions and depression to name just a few.

Underlying Cause:

The real and underlying causal factor, however, for all these symptoms that result from our “**energy crisis**” remains the dense and heavy clouds of pain and fear we have habitually and compulsively avoided facing and dissolving throughout this lifetime and others. Whenever we are confronted with our pain and fear, we seem, habitually and compulsively, to use the same strategies again and again, strategies that help us to avoid and protect us from effectively feeling and healing this pain and fear within us.

^ψ Eckhart Tolle, “The Power Of Now”

Using the same reaction again and again expecting a different result is a definition of insanity, is it not?

Curing Symptoms?

Even if our medical practitioner is successful in curing our infection, illness, or allergy, unless we are willing to do the difficult and painful work necessary to heal and dissolve the body of pain and fear we carry within us, then another illness, infection or disease will soon emerge from this inner pain and fear and need to be dealt with. **“Unless there is a change of consciousness, there will be a reoccurrence of the disorder. We must be reborn into spiritual awareness.”**[‡] Joel Goldsmith points out that as soon as we cure one disease, another will always emerge as long as we remain attached to this hypnotic dream of separation and fear here. As soon as we cured tuberculosis and polio, cancer and more recently A.I.D.S. have arisen to take their place. As long as we keep hidden and unhealed the pain and fear within us, and maintain the steadfast belief in the dream of their reality and power over us, they will eventually express themselves through some form of accident, infection, allergy or illness.

Curing The Cause:

We will free ourselves from disease when we become willing to constructively feel and heal the pain and fear we house within our consciousness. Every cloud of pain and every cloud of fear we bring from the darkness of our unconscious denial into the light of our conscious awareness and **experience fully**, will dissolve like mist in the summer sun. Each and every one of these clouds, dissolved within our consciousness, allows the healing energy of our Inner Spirit to shine more brightly and the energy we need to navigate successfully through our lessons in this world will become, once again, available to us. This is how we awaken from our dream of separation and fear and remove the illusion of all disease from our minds forever. Our Spiritual Identity is our only truth and at that level, we live in eternal and perfect health. Our thinking mind-body-emotion, or ego self is part of the projected dream that does not exist at the level of truth. The degree to which we dissolve the illusion of pain and fear within us, is the degree to which we awaken from our dream of separation and fear and reclaim our Eternal Energy Self, our Spiritual Identity, where we are finally at peace, free from all pain fear and disease.



[‡] Joel Goldsmith, "Consciousness Transformed" Hawaii Hotel Talks, page 13

Wisdom Of The Healing Mystics

Mystics like the Buddha, Jesus and more recently Joel Goldsmith, were able to anchor themselves so fully in their Spiritual Identity, the knowing of their oneness with God in Spirit, they could radiate this sure knowing into the minds of others to be instruments of miraculous healings for those who came to them with a sincere desire to be cured. The sure knowing of these mystics that the ego's belief in a disease was part of a dream, not a creation of God, not real, **with no power**, raised the consciousness of those seeking healing to the same knowing and so they awakened from their dream of separation, and the illusion of their disease disappeared. The instruction from Jesus then was, "Go forth and sin no more." In those days, "to sin" was an archery term that meant, "to miss the mark." Our original and **only sin**, where we completely "missed the mark," was, and still is, to **mistakenly** identify with our mind, body, emotion or ego self instead of our real identity as Spirit. In this context, Jesus was saying to the seekers, **"Go forth and do not make the same mistake again of identifying with your ego, your belief in the dream of a separate self, apart from God. Keep your knowing firm that your true identity is Eternal Spirit where you are fully healed, at one with God and at Peace."** As Joel Goldsmith points out, to hold this level of consciousness would demand a high degree of enlightenment or child-like faith that would be difficult for many to accomplish. As a result, the healing miracles accomplished through Jesus, although a powerful demonstration that in truth we are divine Spirit, not bodies and under God's law, not under a human belief in good and evil, a belief in two powers, probably did not last for many in the long term. Joel points out Lazarus did eventually die. This is just another way of stating that unless we are prepared to do the work necessary to dissolve out pain and fear, forgive and awaken more fully into our Spiritual Identity, curing symptoms, whether through the miracle work of a mystic or through the healing work of a medical practitioner, will bring us only temporary relief at the best, for another disease will soon manifest from the illusions of pain and fear we still carry within us.

**"Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.
Herein lies the peace of God."** (Intro, T-ACIM)

Relationships And The Process Of Awakening

Relationships, especially from "A Course In Miracles" perspective, hold a central role in the healing of pain and fear and in the practice of "authentic forgiveness." Because of this, they greatly shorten the process of "Spiritual Awakening" and become very attractive to any older soul on a fast track to enlightenment.

Relationship Choice:

Ego Choice

In its relationships, the ego searches for approval, love, trust, value, protection, support, security, special attention, as well as freedom from pain, fear and disappointment. Like all aspects of the ego, its goals are always driven by fear and an endless search for defense, security and support from the outer world. Although it promises us we can fulfill these goals within our special relationships in the world and find love and peace, we eventually learn that this promise is a false one. **"Nothing in the world can help you."** (ACIM) Disappointment, sadness, pain, loss and fear emerge sooner or later in all our relationships, much sooner for fast tracking souls. Any form of security we think we find

in this world will eventually abandon us. This is the nature of any relationship, support or security we think we find within the dream of separation here.

The Law of Attraction and Vibration

Michael Losier point out that we attract what we vibrate. When our “pain body,” the level of pain and fear we hold within our consciousness, is heavy and dense, then our light vibration, the level of our Inner Spirit or Love we are able to radiate or vibrate, will be low and we will be attracted to and attract individuals of a very close vibration to our own. Individuals who vibrate at a higher or lower level of Light or Love vibration will feel uncomfortable to us to varying degrees. Our ego may be able to find many visible reasons for our discomfort. Ultimately, however, our choice of partners or friends will **initially** be one based on vibration. When our vibration rises, certain friends will become uncomfortable for us to hang out with and we will become attracted to others, closer to our new level of vibration. Others, of a similar vibration level, will become attracted to us as well. Then we must meet courageously the challenge of letting go, to some degree, the old friends so we can allow our new energies and vibration to be supported and nourished more fully. Relationship choices become, therefore, another tool to assist us awaken from our dream of separation here.

Our Soul’s Choice

In addition to our vibration based relationship choices, often pushing us beyond these arbitrary and limiting boundaries, our Soul Self draws us into those relationships and situations that can best help us heal and awaken Spiritually. Our ego seeks security in a world that cannot provide it. Our Soul, however, chooses those partners and life situation that can best bring us home to our Eternal Self, often overriding, the comfort of our ego and our vibration-based choices. If we house within us clouds of pain and fear that needs to be cleared before we can find our inner light, then we will be led into the perfect relationship and situation to bring these wounds and fears to the surface to be healed through awareness, surrender, prayer and forgiveness. The partners we meet on our journey here are all members of our “Soul Family” who have agreed to meet us at the appropriate time to play the roles we need to learn our lessons and heal within our dramas here. Remember, at times of change and accelerated Soul growth that “Absolutely nothing happens by chance in God’s Kingdom.” (ACIM) “What God brings us to, He leads us through,” that “All things are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is our good.” (L.135.ACIM) Relax then; be present; be still and allow the will of God to be done through you, holding your faith firm in the perfection of the Divine Plan for your Soul’s growth. “We do without doing and everything gets done.” (Rune Interpretation)

How Our Relationships Can Guide Us Into Love And Peace

“Your task is not to seek for love, (that is your identity) but merely to seek and find all the **barriers** within yourself that you have built against it.” (C.I.M. Text P. 315)

Relationships bring into our awareness “**these barriers**,” the unconscious pain and fear we have stored within our mind and body, along with all the destructive defenses and strategies we use to hide them. In all our relationships, especially in our intimate ones, when we are **ready** to heal, we will begin to project our stored pain and fear onto the mirror or screen of our partner. He or she will then begin, **unconsciously**, to trigger or reflect this pain and fear we have stored within us and bring it, **painfully**, into our awareness. Without a relationship mirror or projection screen, these barriers of pain and fear we have stored within us for years and even lifetimes, would remain hidden

and along with our ego defenses, block us from experiencing the light (energy), love and peace of our Real Identity. Bringing these barriers of pain and fear and our defenses into our awareness is, however, only the first step in the process. Learning how to let go our defenses and deal with our pain and fear constructively is the much more difficult second step. The methods of the second step have already been covered beginning on page 6 with, **“Stages And Strategies For Healing Pain And Fear.”**

All Things Are Lessons

All things are lessons God would have you learn. 2 He would not leave an unforgiving thought without correction, nor one thorn or nail to hurt His holy Son in any way. ... 4 And He would have all tears be wiped away, with none remaining yet unshed, and none but waiting their appointed time to fall. 5 For God has willed that laughter should replace each one, and that His Son be free again. (ACIM. W-193.9)

These “Lessons” that help us remove **“the thorns, nails and unforgiving thoughts”** within us, can best be learned within the framework of a committed relationship, one where the goals of healing and forgiveness have been agreed to, one where there is a mutual, committed and voiced desire to help each other stay on this difficult path.

The path of “Awakening Through Forgiveness” is a steep and slippery one. A partner who shares our goal can help us get back on the path when we falter, fall, or lose our way. As we grow even closer to the light of God in us, our ego’s greatest fear, its fear of God and death, become especially intense and its defensive resistance ruthless, so much so that it becomes necessary, according to ACIM, to enter Heaven **“two by two.”** By sharing the final part of this “Awakening Journey,” we are able to move through the intense fear encountered, as well as the ruthless resistance of the ego and maintain the focus and faith necessary to awaken fully into Spirit.

How We Awaken Through Forgiveness

Text: C-31.VII.3 ACIM

“By focusing upon the good in him, (your brother) the body grows decreasingly persistent in your sight, and will at length be seen as little more than a shadow circling round the good. And this will be the concept of yourself, when you have reached the world beyond the sight your eyes alone can offer you to see. (Spiritual Vision)...For your forgiveness offered unto him, has been accepted now for both of you. ...Have faith in him who walks with you, so your fearful concept of yourself may change.” This reaffirms the principle of projection that “all we give, we give to ourselves.” When we heal our fear and can forgive another, we gain forgiveness and salvation for ourselves.

Our Healing Angels

There is this beautiful parable or story about two little angels talking in Heaven about how best to return fully to God’s Kingdom, in other words, how best to awaken fully into Spirit. They were overheard by their Guardian Angel or Guide and he shared with them that to awaken fully into Spirit, they would need to learn forgiveness. As soon as this information was delivered, the one little angel turned to the other one and said, “How do you learn forgiveness?” The other replied, “I can teach it to you the next time we journey back for a lifetime on earth together. Just remember, when I hurt you deeply and you are feeling much pain and fear, you asked for this lesson from me. In the end, be very grateful to me and your lesson in forgiveness will be learned.”

It is important to review the concept once again that the person we see in a relationship with us, is one we project from within our own mind. We meet only ourselves, in various ways and in various forms, in all our relationships. This means that in every relationship we encounter, we gain another opportunity to meet and heal those parts of ourselves not of love, through awareness, acceptance, surrender and “authentic forgiveness.” We must, however, be prepared, ready, willing and courageous enough to meet these difficult healing challenges when they arise.

Navigating The Hill Into Cedar Crest

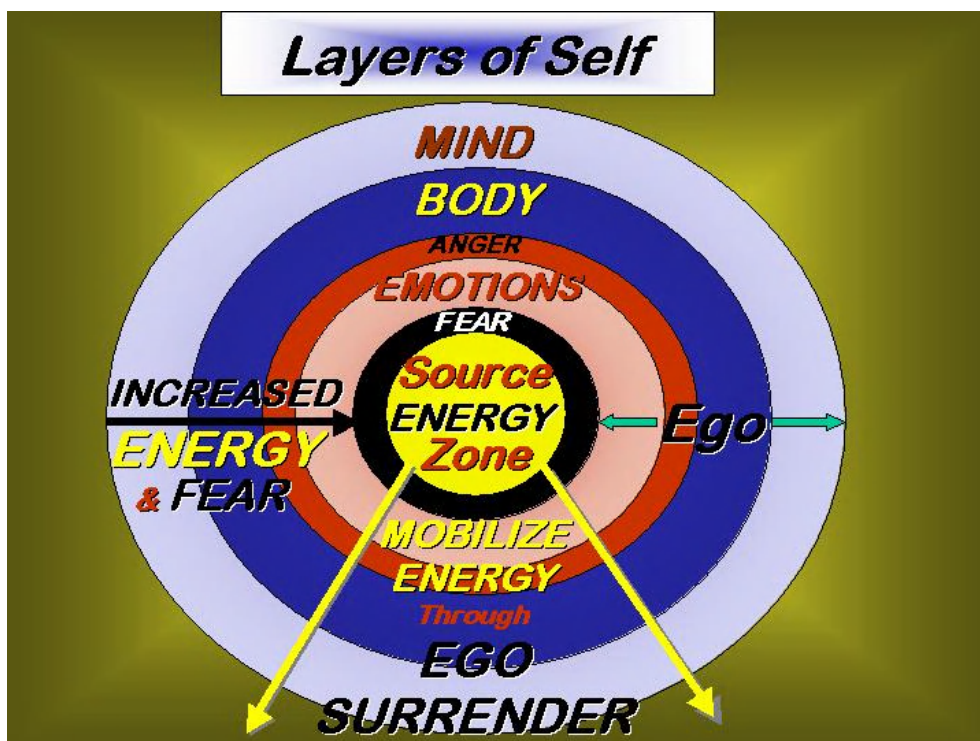
When I was a child back in Ontario, we lived outside of town and needed to navigate a curve and steep hill in order to get to our home in Cedar Crest, on the shores of Lake Erie. Getting up this hill in the winter, when it was snowing and slippery, was a real challenge. I can remember very clearly my Father often taking two or three runs to get around the curve and up the hill. Each try he would back up a little further to gain more speed and finally, we would get to the top and make it home. So it is, I think, with learning “authentic forgiveness” within our relationships. This hill too is very steep and slippery and we will probably need to take many runs at it, gaining more confidence and speed each time, before we get to the top and make it Home.

“When you meet anyone, remember, it is a Holy Encounter. As you see him, you will see yourself. As you treat him, you will treat yourself. As you think of him, you will think of yourself. Never forget this. For in him you will find yourself or lose yourself.”

(ACIM.T.C.8.III.4)

Awakening Prayer

Holy Spirit, bless me; heal me; teach me; guide me. Help me awaken from my dream of separation and fear and reconnect with my Eternal Self, at one with God in Spirit, at Peace. Amen



Appendix "A"

A.C.I.M. Chapter 17

V. The Healed Relationship

T-17.V.1. T-17.V.2. The holy relationship, a major step toward the perception of the real world, is learned. 2 It is the old, unholy relationship, transformed and seen anew. 3 The holy relationship is a phenomenal teaching accomplishment. 4 In all its aspects, as it begins, develops and becomes accomplished, it represents the reversal of the unholy relationship. 5 Be comforted in this; **the only difficult phase is the beginning.** 6 For here, the goal of the relationship is abruptly shifted to the exact opposite of what it was. 7 This is the first result of offering the relationship to the Holy Spirit, to use for His purposes.

T-17.V.3. This invitation is accepted immediately, and the Holy Spirit wastes no time in introducing the practical results of asking Him to enter. 2 At once His goal replaces yours. 3 This is accomplished very rapidly, but it makes the relationship seem disturbed, disjunctive and even quite distressing. 8 **Many relationships have been broken off at this point, and the pursuit of the old goal re-established in another relationship.** 9 For once the unholy relationship has accepted the goal of holiness, it can never again be what it was.

T-17.V.4. **The temptation of the ego becomes extremely intense with this shift in goals.** 4 Yet now the goal will not be changed. p362 5 Set firmly in the unholy relationship, there is no course except **to change the relationship to fit the goal.** 6 Until this happy solution is seen and accepted as the only way out of the conflict, the relationship may seem to be severely strained.

T-17.V.7. **Now the ego counsels thus; substitute for this another relationship to which your former goal was quite appropriate.** 2 **You can escape from your distress only by getting rid of your brother.** 3 You need not part entirely if you choose not to do so. 4 **But you must exclude major areas of fantasy from your brother, to save your sanity.** 5 **Hear not this now!** 6 **Have faith in Him (the Holy Spirit) Who answered you.** ...11 **Now He asks for faith a little longer, even in bewilderment.** 12 For this will go, and you will see the justification for your faith emerge, to bring you shining conviction. 13 **Abandon Him not now, nor your brother.** 14 **This relationship has been reborn as Holy.**

T-17.V.8. Accept with gladness what you do not understand, and let it be explained to you as you perceive its purpose work in it to make it holy. **2 You will find many opportunities to blame your brother for the "failure" of your relationship, for it will seem at times to have no purpose.** 3 **A sense of aimlessness will come to haunt you, and to remind you of all the ways you once sought for satisfaction and thought you found it.** **4 Forget not now the misery you really found, and do not breathe life into your failing ego.** **5 For your relationship has not been disrupted.** **6 It has been saved.**

T-17.V.9. You are very new in the ways of salvation, and think you have lost your way. p363 2 Your way is lost, but think not this is loss. 3 **In your newness, remember that you and your brother have started again, together.** 4 **And take his hand, to walk together along a road far more familiar than you now believe.** 5 **Is it not certain that you will remember a goal unchanged throughout eternity?** 6 **For you have chosen but the goal of God, from which your true intent was never absent.**

A Course In Miracles, Text: Chapter 21. II.1

II. The Responsibility for Sight

T-21.II.1. We have repeated how little is asked of you to learn this course. 2 It is the same small willingness you need **to have your whole relationship transformed to joy**; the little gift you offer to the Holy Spirit for which He gives you everything; the very little on which salvation rests; the tiny change of mind by which the crucifixion is changed to resurrection. 3 And being true, it is so simple that it cannot fail to be completely understood. 4 Rejected yes, but not ambiguous. 5 And if you choose against it now it will not be because it is obscure, but rather that this little cost seemed, in your judgment, to be too much to pay for peace.

T-21.II.2. This is the only thing that you need do for vision, happiness, release from pain and the complete escape from sin, all to be given you. 2 Say only this, but mean it with no reservations, for here the power of salvation lies:

**I am responsible for what I see.
I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve.
And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked.**

6 Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you. 7 Acknowledge but that you have been mistaken, and all effects of your mistakes will disappear.

T-21.II.3. **It is impossible the Son of God be merely driven by events outside of him. 2 It is impossible that happenings that come to him were not his choice. 3 His power of decision is the determiner of every situation in which he seems to find himself by chance or accident. 4 No accident nor chance is possible within the universe as God created it, outside of which is nothing.** 5 Suffer, and you decided sin was your goal. 6 Be happy, and you gave the power of decision to Him Who must decide for God for you. 7 This is the little gift you offer to the Holy Spirit, and even this He gives to you to give yourself. 8 For by this gift is given you the power to release your savior, that he may give salvation unto you.

T-21.II.4. Begudge not then this little offering. 2 Withhold it, and you keep the world as now you see it. 3 Give it away, and everything you see goes with it. 4 Never was so much given for so little. 5 In the holy instant is this exchange effected and maintained. 6 Here is the world you do not want brought to the one you do. p448 7 And here the one you do is given you because you want it. 8 Yet for this, the power of your wanting must first be recognized. 9 You must accept its strength, and not its weakness. 10 You must perceive that what is strong enough to make a world can let it go, and can accept correction, if it is willing to see that it was wrong

HOW? Through FORGIVENESS, the ability and willingness to see, feel, accept and overlook with compassion the part of us not of love, triggered or reflected through the illusion that a separate other has acted outside our chosen desire. Please remember this seeming separate other acts only at the request of our Higher Self for a perfect opportunity to reveal and heal the pain and fear that blocks our Inner Peace.