

Jan/Feb 2009

## ***Miracle Mindedness & The Power of Positive Addiction***

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*Miracles arise from a miraculous state of mind,  
or a state of miracle-readiness.*

Number 43 of the 50 Miracle Principles of ACIM

***Miracles are habits and should be involuntary.***  
*Consciously selected miracles can be misguided.*  
5 of the 50 Miracle Principles of ACIM

The more we come to know God, the happier we are -- the more we feel as though our life is going the way it should even when we must go through difficult times. Who among us feel as though we've achieved completion? Eckhart Tolle helped enlighten us when he said that there is nothing like living in the now. Certainly, there is not. If I'm content wherever I am; if I'm not beating myself up about past mistakes and I have no fear of the future; I am indeed fortunate. As long as we continue to live in time, however, time will keep clicking by. *A Course in Miracles* talks about our "wasting" time in 9 different instances.

***Time can waste as well as be wasted.***

*The miracle worker, therefore, accepts the time-control factor gladly.*

*He recognizes that **every collapse of time** brings everyone closer to the ultimate release from time, in which the Son and the Father are One.*

ACIM 1. V, 2:2

### **Basic Premises: Human Beings are Addictive.**

We are addicted to food, drink, drugs, sex, money, and each other. We are addicted to our attitudes, prejudicial thoughts, traditions, customs, morals and more. We are addicted to our "mind-set," to our ways of seeing and being in the world. Habits and addictions run our lives often without any awareness on our own part. We do things regularly, ritually, and routinely. We easily become slaves to addictions without even realizing that they snuck in the back door. Seeing how we're so addictive, why not get addicted to God. God is a good addiction. The healthy use of addiction can be a way of collapsing time rather than the continuing of time through dreaming. It is helpful to follow a path that frees us from the ego while simultaneously fulfilling the role God would have us fill. Such is the state of the miracle minded.

*Everything has been figured out, except how to live.*

Jean-Paul Sartre

The ego thinks it has everything figured out. The tragedy is that learning through tragedy is a tragic way to learn. A great deal has been figured out in science and technology; and yet, we have not figured out how to live free of the ego and the fear and the guilt which comes with it.

Though the *Course* provides the way, we still struggle in its application.

**I have enjoined you to behave as I behaved,**  
*but we must respond to the same Mind to do this.*  
***This Mind is the Holy Spirit, Whose Will is for God always.***  
*He teaches you how to keep me as the model for your thought,*  
***and to behave like me as a result.***

ACIM T-5. II 12:1-3

Letting go of unconsciously adopted, “negative” addictions, we can “consciously” pick up some *discipline* and *practices* which lead us home again. Our main addiction is the ego itself. The ego is that which defines, describes, projects, judges, and analyzes. It is that which is always making up the world and, we are always making up the world. What would it be like to be so captivated by God that the only thing we would “crave” would be God? Attaining miracle mindedness may sound like a tall order but it only sounds like it. Miracles are perfectly natural. When they don’t occur, something has gone wrong. There is a natural path already laid out for us. It is here within us, in our very nature, our genes, our culture, our religion, our mythology, our logic, our mind-sets, and more.

### **Do We Know Why We Do What We Do?**

The reason we think our mother’s cooking is the best is not because it is (or was) the best. We think it was the best because we kept putting her food in our mouths, day in and day out, year in and year out. We got addicted to mother’s cooking and what we get addicted to, we “crave.” With only a little training, it is just as easy to *crave* a salad as it is to *crave* a donut. It is a matter of a choice. If I pass a donut shop every morning on the way to work and I decide one day to stop for a cup of coffee; and while there, I’m am seduced by a donut, I may stop again the next day and then I may do it again and by and by this little ritual becomes an unhealthy addiction. Our bodies are part of the animal kingdom. Animals live by instinct – an inherent disposition toward a specific behavior. Animals can perform complex tasks like nest building without prior experience. Honey bees engage in message dances, birds fly south in the winter and much of what we do is based on detailed programming deep within the DNA molecule.

I was delighted to read Ramesh Balsekar’s book *Who Cares?* Ramesh is a teacher of Advaita, a non-dualistic philosophy. According to Ramesh, all life operates according to Divine Natural Laws whether we are aware of it or not. All that happens, happens within a greater cosmic plan – according to One source. In this world, we develop a false identity based on our fundamental predispositions and inherited customs. We, thus, live a life not based on choice or on highest reason. We live instead by impulse, convention, and routine reactions. We buy the game; we play the game, and the more we play the game; the more the game plays us. This is unnatural and deep inside we know it. There are two programs, the program of the world and the program of God. It’s called GPS – God’s Plan for Salvation. If I do not make a living connection with this divine process, I will unconsciously follow the program of the world. The Course speaks of two different kinds of laws, the laws of the world and the laws of God. The more clearly I pay attention to God’s Plan for Salvation; the more I “consciously” choose for God, the better it is going to be; the less I will experience myself as a victim of the world.

*There is no choice at all within the world.* (T-31, IV. 3:8) Eventually, everything returns to God. Though a thousand paths present themselves, they are all detours and distractions, save only one -- to follow the Voice for God. Jesus says in the gospels that it is a straight path and a narrow gate which lead into life and there are few that find it. In the end, we will choose once again and finally only for God. In order to get “Home,” we must make the decision once and for all to give up *all* the ego’s many distractions and addictions.

Animals fight for privilege places in courtship; and, young men and women of all cultures play any number of complex social-sexual games in response to a variety of physical hormones and social mores. We are all actually “hard-wired.” Young men “get crazed” over sex, and women during menopause experience “mood swings.” DNA tests can tell us where our bodies have come from (heritage) as well as our most likely pre-disposition for diseases like cancer and Alzheimer’s. Inside each of us is all the information required to create a body just like the one we have now. We resist being like our mothers and fathers only to notice as we get older that we are very much like them. How aware are any of us of the programming that came from our family, neighbors, school, the church, the greater society in which we live, the country of which we are apart, and more than anything in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – television is telling us its vision.

*Every child is a mystic. Every child is born mystical;  
then we drag him toward the school and education.  
The serpent is the civilization, the culture, the conditioning.*  
Osho (1931–1990, India)

### **The Thoughts Which Rule the Mind**

Look at how much information can be placed in a cell phone, an MP3 player, or a GPS system. In just the past couple of decades, a mere blip in time, man has figured out an incredible miniaturization process. There is more computer power in a cell phone than in the computer that went to the moon in 1969. Computers today are 1 billion times more powerful than they were 25 years ago and this is growing exponentially. Twelve years from now, computers will be another billion times more powerful than they are today. We’ve been able to figure this out in just the past few years. The Universe has had several billion years to work out a detailed, specified, and particularized system. We can either align the mind with God’s Plan for Salvation or come up with our own plan which will fail. Jesus frequently uses the analogy of gardening in his parables when he tells us, for example, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed.” Seeds are tiny information packets which contain all the information needed to turn an acorn into an oak and a pine nut into a mighty fir. We can use this tendency toward automatic responses. We can *grow* with nature.

Dig a little deeper and you’ll find inside you a “memory” of the collective consciousness of mankind. Inside you there is the memory of a soldier, a slave, an animal, a part of the whole. For this reason there is no reincarnation. Reincarnation is a time bound concept and time is a vast illusion. (W.-158. IV. 1) Souls do not jump from one body to another. We have *memories* of other times because everything is coded holographically and reflectively in every cell. You are a part of everything. It’s a *memory* not a previous incarnation in time. Some folks who live deep inner spiritual lives know more of these memories than others. It is simply a part of what makes us whole. It is a part of what make us One.

There is a holographic program of which we are all a part. Somewhere in you there is also Adam, and before Adam an animal, and before the animal an amoeba, and before the amoeba an atom, and on infinitum. According to the teachings of Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, the famous Jesuit Priest of the twentieth century, this detailed automated, mechanized, computerized system developed by God is being used to awaken each of us. If we go deep enough, we'll remember God and the remembrance of God is our coming home again. The remembrance of God is our final salvation. It's just a matter of choice. All we need do is to hook our wagon to a star and thereby remember who we are.

### **Philosophical Base**

**According to Aristotle** (384–322 b.c.e. Greece), moral excellence or virtue comes about via habit. “We are what we do,” said Aristotle. Excellence is *a habit we cultivate*. A “good habit” enables us to make “right” decisions. “Virtue”, said Aristotle “is a set of skills gradually developed over time through practice.” We condition ourselves through habits. We can condition ourselves to virtue and vice, which is why “it makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference.” (From *Nichomachean Ethics*) Habits become “second nature” and an integral part of character. By adopting positive addictions, the end result is that moral action is easier and more pleasurable than immoral action.

**William James** (1842–1910, USA) one of my heroes, was one of America's first true philosophers. He was fascinated with the study of unconscious habits of mankind and with mysticism. James once observed that “habit is second nature, or rather, ten times nature.” He was also a pragmatist. For James, something is true *only insofar as it works*. **According to Nietzsche**, (1844–1900, Germany), we created an “apparent world” with very little awareness of what produces the creation. We pick up behavior patterns from the society of which we are a part without the least “thought” about what we are doing. *Nietzsche believed we could use higher order habits to overcome lower order habits*. He wanted to combine the spontaneity and beauty of *instinct* with the *intentionality* and *self-mastery* of our actions. In *Twilight of the Idols* he writes, “I too speak of a ‘return to nature’ although it is not really a going-back but a going-up -- up into a high, freer naturalness.” Aristotle, James, and Nietzsche saw dispositions, habits, and instincts, as integral to the development of ethical life. For each, morality is a continuous *chain of actions* which arise out of inner nature and in turn, shape our character. Therefore, the habits we develop over the course of a lifetime are of paramount importance.

In 1976, psychologist William Glasser, Ph.D., wrote a best selling book titled *Positive Addiction*. Glaser's description of what he calls the positive addiction, “PA” state-of-mind is similar to the qualities of the mystical mind.

*Positive addiction is something anyone can try for.  
There is no risk. Since all positive addictions are simple activities that can be easily  
accomplished, there is no possibility of failure in what you attempt to do.  
What is hard is to do them long enough to become addicted,  
but if you quit you are no worse off.*

William Glasser

Some folks shy away from the word *addiction* because their first thought of addiction is negative -- overeating, drinking, spending, gambling, etc. The word addiction comes from the Latin *addictus* meaning something we *yield* to, something we are *devoted* to. It's a constant *over* indulgence in and use of the object of our desire that proves debilitating. The daily, repetitive use of any "mechanism" can *hurt* or *help*, *retard*, or *facilitate*. There are many positive addictions. Dropping negative addictions and adopting those which are positive can facilitate our spiritual and material well-being. Benjamin Franklin said that our net worth to the world is determined by what remains after our bad habits are subtracted from our good ones.

### **Characteristics of Positive Addiction**

According to Glasser a positive addiction has 6 characteristics.

1. **We choose to do it.** We devote time to it.
2. **We can do it alone.** It is non-competitive.
3. **We do not criticize ourselves when we do it**  
because we feel as though we are gaining something from it.
4. **We do it easily.** It does not take a great deal of effort to do it well.  
According to Aristotle, moral action is easier and more pleasurable than immoral action. It is effortless to be nice.  
It requires negative energy, force, and ego to be unpleasant.
5. **It has value for us.** It "enriches" and improves our life mentally, physically, financially, socially, (emotionally) and/or spiritually. We feel better for having done it.
6. **If we persist at it, we improve.** If we persist long enough we might master our art and become a specialist or virtuoso.

### **Creating New Habits: Think First.**

Stop reading for a moment and lace your fingers together. Look at which thumb is on top. We habitually do it the same way without thinking. Now redo it, and this time, *consciously* switch the thumbs. Doing so "nudges" us into a slightly different neurological pathway. Do anything repeatedly, and before long it will become reflexive. We do not think about where our fingers go when we type on a computer. Pianists do not think about where to place their fingers on the piano. To switch our thumbs, we have to "think" first. To switch thinking from the dominance of the ego to guidance of Spirit, we have to "think" first. It takes a little willingness (T-21. II. 1:1-5) and yet before long, following inner guidance and developing miracle mindedness becomes as natural as breathing because it is the most natural thing of all.

### **Relinquishing and Developing Addictions**

It is easy to get addicted. It doesn't take too many days. I've read 4 suggestions as to how long it takes to make or break an addiction, 21 days, 30 days, 40 days and "just about forever." In just one month, we can *either discontinue* any particular behavior or *sustain* a particular behavior to the point where it can become a healthful habit. With substance abuse addictions like alcohol, smoking, or drugs, the craving may be there for a long time after the usage has stopped. It can also dissipate to the point where it no longer carries any energy. If we *persevere*, we become progressively free. Stick with it and we *either succumb to* or *obtain freedom from* an addiction.

## Undoing Ego Addictions

*Miracles represent freedom from fear.  
“Atoning” means “undoing.” The undoing of fear is an essential  
part of the Atonement value of miracles.  
Principle Number 26 for the 50 Miracles Principles of ACIM*

**Awakening is a process of deprogramming, or undoing.** A great deal has been written in this field and help is available to anyone willing to look for it. Alcoholic Anonymous is the most successful program in helping folks recover from alcoholism. These principles, according to Dr. Bob, one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, can be expressed in 6 words, *Trust God. Clean house. Help others.* All other 12 step programs are based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. These include: *Substance Abuse Programs:* smokers, overeaters, narcotics, cocaine, crystal-meth, marijuana, and pills anonymous. *Behavioral Issues Including:* emotions, co-dependents, gamblers, sexual compulsives, clutters, shoplifters, spenders, debtors, computer users, and workaholics anonymous. Regardless of what is being released, the process is the same. Two things are required.

*The world is full of miracles.  
They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering,  
of sin and guilt. **They are the dream’s alternative**, the choice to be the dreamer, rather than  
deny the active role in making up the dream.  
ACIM, 28. II. 12:3*

### 1. Increased Awareness and Honesty

To overcome an addiction, we must recognize “truly” that we are addicted; that the addiction has taken control over our life and it is detrimental to us. The first line of defense of the ego is denial. Don’t look! Hide! The first thing that happens to Adam after he bites into the fruit of duality (good and evil) is that he runs and “hides” in the bushes. There can be no change until we are willing to “look” and “then admit” that things are out of control. The first step is coming to the knowledge that “there must be a better way.” Once that happens, a better way can then be found.

### 2. Undoing, Purification, and Purging.

*Miracles are everyone’s right but purification is necessary first.  
Principle No. 7 of the 50 Miracle Principles of ACIM*

Finding freedom from a negative addiction is an “undoing.” We begin by relinquishing, that is, letting go of the negative so the positive can come to the fore. There really is nothing more refreshing than telling the truth.

*The body is released because the mind acknowledges  
“this is not done to me, but I am doing this.”  
And thus the mind is free to make another choice instead.  
ACIM 28, II. 12, 5*

The following are “ideas” only. No one can tell anyone else what to do. It is, however, possible to make suggestions.

### **Suggested Health Addictions**

**Some form of spiritual study like the workbook lessons from the Course.** If we’re going to take the *Course* seriously, it’s necessary to do the lessons at least once. You may want to do it again. Or, just read one section per day. Every time we go through it -- it becomes progressively more powerful. It is a pleasant experience in the pursuit of happiness. They say that the more times someone “tries” to quit smoking the greater the chance that one day they really will quit. In the same way, the more we “try” to remember God, the closer we come to the day when we really will remember God. If it’s not the *Course*, find some kind of “daily” spiritual study.

### **Get Addicted to an Inner Alchemy - *Meditation and Contemplation***

How about developing an addiction to inner alchemy? *Inner Alchemy* includes any of a vast array of introspective art and crafts, such as: *painting, sculpting, sewing, knitting, weaving, crocheting, needlepoint, quilting, working with stained glass, and many more*. The symbol for alchemy is the athanor, the furnace of the alchemists. A furnace is where things are transformed. The athanor of the body is the stomach, the place where digestion occurs. Inner alchemy involves turning things over, buffing, burnishing, rubbing, polishing, perfecting, improving, changing, and developing up to the point of ripeness, and then harvest—the book is written, the house built, the concert performed, the painting completed, the Self realized.

Ram Dass was once telling a group of people about the holographic dimensions of a psychedelic experience. An older woman in the front row kept nodding her head as though she understood what he was describing. After the talk, he said, “You seem to understand everything I’m saying.” And she said, “Yes, I crochet.” Gandhi’s alchemy was spinning. Your alchemy may be *music, gardening, or working with wood*. Then it is that the wood speaks to the carpenter; the garden converses with the gardener; and the piano plays with the pianist. Inner alchemy involves the discovery and unfolding of a progressively wonderful and fulfilling insight. *Reading* can be a kind of inner alchemy.

*The greatest gift is a passion for reading. It is cheap. It consoles.  
It distracts. It excites. It gives knowledge. It is a moral illumination.*  
Elizabeth Hardwick (1916-2007, American Novelist and Critic)

### **Journal or Poetry Writing as a Practice**

**Soren Kierkegaard** (1813-855, Denmark) the first existentialist philosopher, said that his journal was his *most trusted confidant*. Take an idea, jot it down, work it over, add to it, and work it over again. Set it aside. Go away. Come back and approach the work with a fresh perspective. Edit; cut out the chaff; leave the gold; feed it with new ideas; sift through; synthesize—feed again; sift through again. **Dainin Katagiri** (1928–1990, Japan) the first abbot of the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, in Natalie Goldberg’s *Long Quiet Highway* says, “If you commit to it, writing can take you as deep as Zen.”

## Gardening and Cooking

*Without a rose we cannot have garbage.*

*Without garbage we cannot have a rose.*

Tich Nhat Hahn

*Gardening is alchemy.* Planting seeds is mystical. You place little “gems” into the soil, water them, and then watch as they come forth from the dark earth, turning into fruit and flower. It takes sensitivity to the seasons and weather to know what plants need and when they need it. *Cooking is alchemy.* You take raw food matter, combine it with other foods, mix it, beat it, heat it, and cool it until you turn it into something that tastes good and nourishes the body. It is possible to develop a positive, contemplative relationship with God working in the garden, driving the car, riding on the bus, standing in line at the bank, while doing the dishes, making the bed, and playing with a child.

**Saving Money can be a positive addiction.** If every one of us put from 1 to 10% of what we earn in a savings account, each time we made a bank deposit, we would all be wealthy and there would be no financial crisis.

## Physical Exercise, Solo Sports, Suggested Addictions

The body is a machine, a mechanism, a tool, a means of communication and a vehicle we move around in. It is not who we are. The body is the ego’s chosen home and it is easy to slip into thinking that we are a body. What we are is the Mind which controls the body. Because we are the Mind, we can change the mind. Are we the Master or the machine? Sometimes we forget and it looks as though we are the body. The best thing we can do with this machine is to keep it working well until its usefulness is over. It is, therefore, helpful to *have some kind of aerobic addiction* that improves oxygen consumption by the body, which can be performed daily at a moderate intensity for several minutes. I’ve arranged the following list of possible positive addictions from the easiest to the more difficult or expensive. Most anyone should be able to do the easiest, regardless of age. The easiest, do not require special equipment and can be done in one’s own home.

## Stretching -- Hatha and Raja Yoga

Flexibility is essential, especially as we get older. Hatha yoga is a preparation for Raja Yoga (meditation), the *focusing of the mind* and surrendering to God. Raja means “king” and the Mind is the king. The mind is in charge. Yoga helps the body do the bidding of the Mind. Negative obsessions preclude tranquil meditation. Yoga helps tame the body and it opens the mind. Include some breath work. At the end of the yoga practice, try repeating the workbook lesson from *A Course in Miracles* as a mantra. Then just be quiet. We might also pick an addiction to a meditative exercise like Tai Chi, perhaps the best known of the “soft Chinese martial arts.” All over China and in many places in the US today, people come together in local parks to practice Tai Chi together. It is a wonderful positive addiction.

## Walking – Hiking -- Running

Perhaps the easiest positive addiction is *walking*. Anyone who is ambulatory can do it, almost any time. Walk in nature; walk with friends; just walk. *Hiking* and moderate climbing in nature is an extension of walking, with or without companions, and it costs nothing. *Running* is highly



addictive and good for those fit enough for it. *Swimming* is possibly the best all around exercise. A *treadmill*, *stepper*, or *glider* is a good alternative, if it is not possible to be outside. Walk on a treadmill and watch a pre-recorded TV show. *Weight Training*: It is good to have some form of daily muscle exercise, even if it's just a few minutes with weights.

### **Addictive, Outdoor, Solos Sports, Requiring Equipment**

The following possible addictions are fun and can be done alone or with a companion. *In-line skating* can be done by many adults. *Bicycling* can be an adventure and it can be shared. With *surfing* and *windsurfing* the adrenalin rush is obvious. *Skiing can easily become an addiction* and it is easy to see why. It is literally exhilarating. There is nothing like being outdoors in the fresh invigorating air. *Bird Watching* costs little and is educational. *Camping, fishing, and hunting*: I grew up hunting and while I could not now kill anything, I understand the importance of being alone in the woods. My father was a fisherman. On Sunday morning, my sister Ann, my mother Milly and I went to church. Daddy went fishing. As Thoreau once expressed it, "Many men go fishing all their lives without realizing it's not fish they are after." Daddy couldn't say, "I'm going to go meditate by the pond on the back of the farm." He had to have a reason so he took a fishing pole. We did not need fish. Our freezer was full of fish.

### **Possible Addictions "Usually" Requiring at Least One Other Person**

*Dancing* can be done solo but it's more fun with a partner. We know couples addicted to dancing once a week. It's also good for one's relationship. Whatever the form, it's all good fun and health and helps take care of the need for aerobics. *Tennis* and *golf* are good aerobics, can be done with friends, and are in nature. *Board* and *Card Games*: Chess is the royal game of the mind, also checkers, Chinese checkers, mahjongg, monopoly, and crossword puzzles, etc. *Caring for Pets*: dogs, cats, fish, birds, and more. Sharing life and sharing love is always a high.

Look around. Think about anything you do repeatedly – daily. Drop everything that is not healthy and/or a waste of time. Pick up a few positive addictions. I've mentioned only a few. You're probably already working on "playing with" some positive addictions. I decided a while back to try out a few positive addictions. It required some persistence. The result has been wonderful. It means feeling better physically, mental, socially, and spiritually. Do enough of it with enough awareness and it can facilitate our way home again to God. I'm writing a book about this. The main thing is changing our mind-set and the way we look at things. We want to drop our judgments, our fear, our anger etc. Dropping these addictions is another chapter unto itself. Other chapters include, *The Power of Decision*, *Strengthening Motivation to Change*, *Discipline and the Mind*, *Watching*, *Witness and Willingness*, *Focus and Effortless Effort*, *Goal Setting* and more. I'm curious about other folk's experiences. Let me know about what negatives you've dropped or what positive addictions work for you.

Peace,

Jon

