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***This Is It!***  
***The Radically Simple Message of***  
***A Course in Miracles***

*by Jon Mundy Ph.D.*

**This is it!**

A general noticed one of his soldiers behaving oddly. The soldier would pick up any piece of paper he found, frown and say, "This is not it" and put it down again. This went on for some time, so the general sent him off to the army psychologist for an examination. The psychologist concluded that indeed the soldier was deranged, and wrote out a letter of discharge from the army. The soldier took the letter, looked at it and said, "This is it!"

**The Truth is Simple**

The more I've *hung out* with the Course the more I've found that some of the most outlandish (and seemingly on the surface) most unbelievable statements in the Course are actually amazingly true. The Course is often said to be complex. The Course is actually amazingly simple. Five different times in the Course it says that it is simple. In Chapter 11, VIII, 1:1 it says plainly.

*This is a very simple course.*

Three chapters later in Chapter 14 it says,

*Simplicity, is very difficult for twisted minds.*  
-- ACIM -T14 II. 2:3

Why don't we get this simple Course? It's not because the Course is not simple. It's because *we* are not simple. The ego is very complex. The ego is often portrayed in mythology as a *trickster*. The *trickster* plays cunning tricks and is therefore convoluted, constantly looking for ways to gain the upper hand -- to trick the whole world if possible.

I like simple things -- a simple life. One of my heroes, Henry David Thoreau said his whole philosophy was *simplicity*. The truth is simple. Love is simple. The ego is complicated.

Depth psychology talks about *complexes*, as complicated *fantasies* or *ideas* around which our personalities are built. The mystics say that *paradoxically* if you want to know anything, first give up the *complex*. Stop trying to figure out the ego. The truth is going to come to you in the long run. Actually, it already has. Further analysis of the ego is only going to make things more complicated.

Modern psychology is based on the pathology of the ego. Freud understood the ego very well. He did not however, think it was possible to be free of it. Mystics say there is a way to be free. J. Krishnamurti said that what he taught was freedom. One of my favorite mystics, Susan Segal says, in her outstanding book, *Collisions with the Infinite*.

*My goal for everyone is freedom -- total freedom.  
I don't want them to change how they feel,  
work through childhood trauma, or get symptoms to stop.  
I want them to be free by seeing that things are just what they are.*

My favorite line in the Course is,

*Let him be what he is and seek not to make of love an enemy.*

Let her be who she is. Let "it," the situation, be what it is. Don't try to fix the world. Don't try to fix other people. Wanting to *fix things* means you are a judge. You do not want to judge anybody or any thing for any reason. Judgment is the error.

At one point Helen Schucman, the scribe for the Course, said of the Course, "I know it's true. I just don't believe it." That thought of Helen's reminds me of the story about an American scientist who once visited the offices of the great Nobel Prize-winning physicist, Neils Bohr, in Copenhagen. The tourist was amazed to find that over Dr. Bohr's desk a horseshoe was nailed to the wall. The American said, "Surely Professor Bohr, you don't believe that horseshoe will bring you good luck, do you?" Bohr chuckled. "Nay, I don't believe that, but it works whether you believe in it or not!"

Whether you believe the Course or not, it's still works. Once you see how the silly ego plays its games you realize *you don't have to play*. It's that easy. As the Course says, "Refuse to be a part of fearful dreams whatever form they take." It is that simple. Refuse to be a part of fearful dreams. You don't have to have hurt feelings. You don't need to be defensive and you need never attack.

This is very simple. The Course is not complex. We don't want to understand this simple Course because it will mean the *undoing* of the ego. Paradoxically, when you lose the ego you discover you've lost nothing except something which literally "didn't become you" in the first place.

According to the Course the essential relationship we have with God is that we say, "Thank you very much God. I would rather do it myself." We have freedom. We can do what we want. We can get into as much trouble as we want -- if we want to. It doesn't matter how far we wander away from home -- we're destined to return once again. Simple is that which is not complicated. Simple is straight forward, humble, sincere and lacking in deceit.

### **The Silly Ego**

At one point the Course says the ego is a *silly dream*. At another point it says the ego plays *silly games*. Consider, for example, the story of the four zen students who decide to go into meditation for a week of silence together. They sit down, an hour goes by and one of them says,

"I wonder if I remembered to turn off the stove." To which the second one says, "You fool you have spoken and we had agreed not to speak." To which the third one say, "Now what are you thinking about? You too have spoken!" To which the fourth one say, "I am the only one who has not spoken."

You see it is just a foolish thought -- -- a silly dream. Give it up and you'll lose nothing but an illusion.

I enjoy passages in the Course that use words like *all*, *only*, *always*, *wholly*, *forever*, *eternally*, *nothing*, and *never*. Words like *always*, *only*, *never* and *no* are categorically clear. They give a definite direction. There is nothing ambiguous about them.

*Always*, means *all ways* — forever and eternal.  
*Never* means *not ever*.

Here are some passages which may on the surface appear complex. They are actually quite simple and profound.

*Never forget that the ego is not sane.* -- ACIM, T- 5. 3:8

*Never underestimate the insanity of the ego.*

As I watched the two airplanes flying into The World Trade Center the above sentence kept going through my mind.

### **Projection Makes Perception**

One of the teachers I've come to respect is Byron Katie. She is saying something very similar to the Course. One of the things she emphasizes is that "Projection make Perception."

*Projection makes perception.*  
*The world you see is what you gave it, nothing more than that. . .*  
*It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inner condition.*  
-- ACIM, T- 21, Intro. 1:1-5

We not only project the world, we also think that the way we see the world is correct. After all, you see the world correctly don't you? I mean if the idiots out there saw things the way you do, everything would work wouldn't it?

### **Complaining**

I have often said that if you could really just get one idea in the Course, you would get the whole Course.

If you really get  
*I am not a victim of the world I see.*  
You get the Course.

This idea is so simple so revolutionary, so seemingly backward in it's thinking, it's hard to believe it is true. It is still true whether you believe it or not. Let's be honest and admit that we enjoy being victims. If we are victims we can moan and groan and complain and say "look at what the world did to me." The ego is always on the lookout for ways to be hurt.

Mr. Johnson goes to a psychiatrist. He says, "Doc, I have this terrible feeling that everybody's trying to take advantage of me." The psychiatrist says, "Relax, Mr. Johnson. It's a common thing. Everybody thinks that people are trying to take advantage of them." Johnson says, "Is that true Doc? It is such a relief to know that. How much do I owe you?" The psychiatrist says: "How much have you got?"

We're on the lookout for ways in which we might be taken advantage of and things about which we might complain. The Course only uses the word *beware* once and that in the sentence:

*Beware of the temptation to perceive yourself as being unfairly treated.*  
--ACIM, T-26. X. 4:1

Goldstein is chairman of the board at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital. He has to have an operation. A couple of days after surgery he checks out and checks in to a shabby little hospital down in Santa Monica. The chief of the medical staff hears about the move and goes to see him and says; "Mr. Goldstein why did you check out of Cedars of Lebanon? I'll bet it was the doctors. Those doctors are so arrogant." "No," says Goldstein "the doctors were fine. I have no complaints there." "Well" says the administrator, "I bet it was the nurses. Our nursing staff is just not quite what we would like for it to be." "No," says Goldstein. "The nurses were terrific. I have no complaints there." "Well," says the administrator "then I bet it was the food. It's just not up to par." "No," says Goldstein "The food was great. I have no complaints there." "Well then," says the Administrator "What was it?" "Here," says Goldstein, "Here I can complain!"

Suffering, the Course says, is the emphasis we place upon what we claim the world has done to us. Here is another simple statement.

*Anger is never justified.*

The word here is "never." It does not say "sometimes." The ego would love it if the statement said *sometimes* because then we could have debates about when it was and when it wasn't justified. The word is *never*. This doesn't mean we should never get angry. It just means that if we do, we need to realize that something went wrong in our thinking somewhere otherwise we would not be angry.

*If you attack error in another, you will hurt yourself.*  
*You cannot know your brother when you attack him.*

*Attack is always made upon a stranger.*

-- ACIM, T-3. III. 7:1-3

Attack is “always” a mistake in perception. When we attack another we make them a stranger.

*Only appreciation is an appropriate response to your brother.*

*Gratitude is due him for both his loving thoughts and his appeals for help, for both are capable of bringing love into your awareness if you perceive them truly.*

-- ACIM, T- 12. 6:1-2

Only appreciation is an appropriate response. If I have any thought about you which does not involve my most profound appreciation both for your loving thoughts and your appeals to help -- I am misperceiving who you are. I am then making you up.

To see someone's ego is not to see them truly for seeing through our own egos is not seeing -- it's prejudice. In the vision of Christ, there is no ego. Only that which is of God is true. Only loving thoughts are true.

*Good teachers never terrorize their students.*

-- ACIM, T-3.I.4:5.

I teach a course at Marist college on *The History of Mysticism*. I have my students read through the descriptions of 33 different mystics. Each of the mystics we study describe themselves as being free and happy -- What are they free of? They are free of a tyrant called the ego.

### **Defenselessness**

Another simple statement”

*In defenselessness my safety lies.*

There is a wonderful story about Casey Stingle who once was manager of the Yankees. When Casey Stingle was a rookie, the fans in New York disliked him and every time he came on to the field they would boo him. One day he walked onto the field. They began to boo him and as they did he tipped his cap and out flew a sparrow. Everybody in the ball park laughed and cheered. And, they never booed him again. He just did this one little alchemical thing and it changed everything. What a miracles! In just one second he opened the heart of 20,000 New Yorkers.

If you build a castle, you must defend your castle. If you build an ego, you have to defend your ego. Jesus is standing in front of Pontious Pilate, Pilate says to him, "Don't you hear all the charges which have been made against you? Don't you have anything to say for yourself?" And he doesn't. He doesn't have a defense because there is nothing to defend. There is no ego. There is no personal self.

When the Bible says "Judge not that ye be not judged." It means that if we judge the reality of others we will be unable to avoid judging ourselves. It also says that,

*The choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace.*  
-- ACIM, T- VI. 2:1

A bit of fresh air comes when we drop our defense -- laugh at our silly ego games and the foolishness of the ego.

My message is very simple.  
The Course is very simple.  
To get the Course -- get simple.

Love and Peace Now and Forever,

*Jon*