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## *A Course in Miracles Made Simple*

by Jon Mundy

A scholar visited a Zen master and asked him,  
“What is the teaching of Zen?”  
The master recited a verse from the Dhammapada,  
“Do no wrong. Do only good.”  
This is the teaching of all the Buddha's.  
“But” said the Scholar,  
“A 3 year old child knows that.”  
“A 3 year old may know it,”  
the master said,  
“but an 80 year old may find  
it difficult to practice.”

For many years now people have been telling me they like the way in which I make A Course in Miracles simple. I hope so.

I like being simple. I like a simple life. I like simple pleasures. There is almost nothing in which I take more joy than the simple pleasure of sitting outside on our deck with my wife Dolores on a summer evening listening to the katydids, tree frogs and crickets, waiting and watching evening fall and then the stars and fireflies.

Physicists, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein and David Hawkins are all said to have discovered basic truths of physics by reducing everything to its most essential element, by asking incredibly simple questions.

Einstein once said that  
Everything should be made  
as simple as possible.  
Any fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius to move in the opposite direction.

Einstein's own insight into the nature of relativity came when he asked the simple question, “What would it be like if I could travel at the speed of light?” As mathematician Josiah Gibbs once expressed it: The principal object of research in mathematics is to find the point from which the subject appears in its greatest simplicity.

One of my favorite contemporary mystics Jed Mc Kenna writes in his wonderful book *Spiritual Enlightenment: The Damnedest Thing*: Enlightenment is truth-realization. Not only is truth simple, it's that which cannot be simpler—cannot be further reduced.  
I've been hanging out with the Course since 1975, the more I've studied it, the more I have found that some of the most outlandish (and seemingly on the surface) most unbelievable statements in

the Course are both amazingly simple and amazingly true. The Course is sometimes said to be complex. The text is 669 pages long. All total there are over 1,300 pages. There are 365 lessons. It takes a year to work through the Course and when you get to the end it says you are at the beginning.

### **The Course is very simple.**

It says so several times. The Course talks about the simple truth, simple concepts, simple statements, simple logic, simple knowledge, simple courtesy, simple honesty, simple willingness, simple justice and simple being. The simplest of all lessons the Course says is, "By their fruits ye shall know them, and they shall know themselves." (T-9.V.9:5-6) The Course says of itself that it is "very simple and direct" and then it adds,

### **Simplicity is very difficult for twisted minds. (T-14.II.2:3)**

One of the earliest of the Christian Mystics Bernard of Clairvaux, from the last half of the 11th Century said, the primary characteristic of the soul is that it is simple, immortal and free. German mystic Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) said the soul simply is and God simply is. It's in innocence and simplicity he said that the soul is connected with God. In the early fifteenth century Nicholas of Cusa, another German mystic, reported a profound, revelatory experience in which he said he was shown that God Is Simplicity Itself. God he said, can only be seen with an intellect that is completely simple. Man's mind he said, has over the eons become way too complex. Our minds are, he said, so full of religious suppressions and erroneous thoughts that we know of nothing except our own wheels spinning in a dream within a dream. He said that 700 years ago when life was arguably much simpler than it is now.

Nineteenth century Americana transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau said that his whole philosophy could be explained as simplicity. You can only get to the truth he said as you simplify, simplify, simplify. He knew all kinds of things, he said, because his philosophy could be expressed in one word - Simplicity. He said he could keep his accounts on the nail of his thumb.

*I am convinced that to maintain ourselves on this earth is not hardship, but a pastime,  
if we may live simply and wisely.  
I went to the woods because  
I wished to live deliberately to confront only the essential facts  
of life and to see if  
I could not learn what it had to teach and not when I came to die to discover that I had not lived.*

Thoreau's friend and mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson thought Thoreau was sitting out there by Walden pond going to pot watching fire flies. Thoreau could spend the whole morning sitting in his doorway just looking -- and seeing, that is finding himself, his spirit, the most valuable thing of all.

Dolores and I watched the PBS, DVD series "I Claudius" about the Roman emperors of the first century, Caesar Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. This story, the opening chapter of which might be called, "All about Lydia" is a story about a complex web of lies, intrigue and murder woven initially by Caesar Augustus' wife Lydia. With complete self absorption and

unbridled ambition she saw to the poisoning of anyone she wanted, including all of her step-children and even it seems, Caesar himself. Caesar's last words were, by the way, Have I played my part well in this comedy of errors?

The stories of the succeeding emperors, Tiberius, (Lydia's son), Caligula, Claudius, and Nero is a complex drama of intrigue, scheming, and murder. Nero even killed his mother because she tried to tell him what to do. There was such righteousness and such unhappiness. Throughout the whole drama, only the simpleton Claudius, though in fact he was not a simpleton, seemed to understand the whole tragedy. Likewise in the novel "Moby Dick" it was only the first mate Stub who understood the drama and how is Stub described? As a "happy go lucky -- simpleton."

The word simple comes from the Latin word *simplic* meaning the same or not divide. It means free from guile and complication, innocent, modest, fundamental, unconditional and easy. Simple is straight forward and honest, Simple is humble and sincere,

*Lift up your eyes and look  
on your brother in innocence  
born of complete forgiveness  
of his illusions.*

ACIM T-19. IV.D. 8:7

### **Innocence**

Jesus in the gospels asks that little children be brought to him for as such he said are those in the Kingdom of Heaven (Luke 18:16). It is only through eyes of innocence that we can see truth. Innocence does not judge. It does not project. It contains no machinations of the mind. It just is. Infants can look you straight in the eye for a long time without looking away. They can look because they have nothing to hide.

During the early 80's when I was working as a Methodist minister I had to deal with a church board chairman who was a bit of a tyrant. A moralistic conservative, he preferred righteousness over happiness. One of the most daunting things you can run into in life is a "good" person with a mean mind — someone who is convinced that they are right and you are wrong and they are going to "fix" you.

After one particularly uproarious and disbursing board meeting I asked him if he could just sit and look at me "eyeball to eyeball without talking." He tried but he couldn't do it and he quit the church. After he left a feeling of levity developed in the church and the other member told me how happy they were to be free of his despotism. The solution was so simply. It did not even require words, or any attempt to "reason" with this "unreasonable" man.

### **Innocence is simplicity.**

The Course says that strength is innocence and that innocence is wisdom because it is unaware of evil. There is nothing "complicated," nothing "twisted," nothing convoluted about innocence. One of my favorite contemporary mystics A.H. Almaas says that truth can only come to a mind which is "unfettered," "uncomplicated," or, if you will, "simple."

Mystical experiences are simple, clear, unfettered. The truth is simple. Love is simple. The ego is convoluted, complicated and complex. Depth psychology talks about "coexes" or "complexes" as complicated "ideas" concerning such things as guilt, abuse and unworthiness that create quirks in our personalities. We get confused because we literally "have too much going on." If you want

to know anything - give up “complexity.”

Stop trying to figure out the ego. The truth is going to come to you. It already has. Further analysis of the ego only makes things more complicated.

### **Simple statements from A Course in Miracles**

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. They are simple and unambiguous. *Always*, means *all ways* — forever and eternal. *Never* means *not ever*. Here are some passages which may appear complex. They are quite simple.

*Never underestimate the insanity of the ego.* (T. 14-2:6)

*Never underestimate the intensity of the ego's drive for vengeance.* (T-16.VII.3:1)

As I watched the two airplanes flying into The World Trade Center the above sentences kept going through my mind. Here are a few incredibly simple statements. If we just “really” lived by them, things would be fine.

### **Do Only This!**

The Course says that when it comes to teaching it is best to teach from the perspective of “Do only that.” That is, it is better to teach from a positive perspective than a negative one. Consider the following from ACIM.

*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. I. 6:1-2*

### **Not Doing**

Only appreciation is an appropriate response both for loving thoughts and appeals for help. Of course we are all grateful for loving thoughts. We also need to be grateful for appeals for help which come our way for through them we discover who we are in truth. The Course is also about “not doing.” “Doing” after all is the thing which gets us into trouble. Giving in to temptations we “over do.” This is why simplicity is so important. So we are to “Do only good.” How do you do that — by not doing “bad.”

### **I Need to Nothing**

*When peace comes at last to those who wrestle with temptation and fight against the giving in to sin;  
when the light comes at last into the mind given to contemplation;  
or when the goal is finally achieved by anyone,  
it always comes with just one happy realization  
“I need do nothing.”*

You need do nothing because once you turn it over to the Holy Spirit you find you are guided in all things. Decision making is not difficult. “Do only This!” Here are a few incredibly simple statements.

### **1. Do Not Judge**

This is one of the hardest things for us to do because the ego mind is “automatically set to judge.” The Course says, “The ego analyses, the Holy Spirit accepted.” According to the Course God’s teachers do not judge because they cannot judge. To judge is to assume a position you do not have. (M-4.III.1:2) And, the choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace.

My favorite quote in the Course is Let him be what he is and seek not to make of love an enemy. Let other people be who they are. Don’t try to fix the world. Your job is to love the world not to fix it. Thinking you can fix it means you think you know “how” to fix it. What needs fixing isn’t the world. What needs fixing is our “vision.”

### **2. Do Not Attack**

*Anger* the Course says *is never justified*. The word is “never” — not ever. The ego would love it if it said “sometimes.” Then we could have debates about when it was and when it wasn’t justified. This doesn’t mean we should never get angry. It just means that if we do, we need to realize that something has gone wrong in our thinking 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.

### **3. Do Not Defend**

I’m not saying don’t defend your body if it is attacked. Do defend it because you still think you’re a body. Proof of that fact is that you are hanging out (hiding out) in one and you would not want your body to be hurt. When I say do not defend I mean do not defend your silly ego because that is all it is “a silly ego.” It actually has no reality.

### **4. Don’t Play Games**

Once you see how the silly ego plays its games you realize -- “You don’t have to play.” The Course say, “Refuse to be a part of fearful dreams, whatever form they take.” It’s that simple. If you see fearful dreaming going on don’t play the game. Don’t get caught in it.

### **5. Do Not Hide**

Most of us are not aware of what a large part “denial” plays in our psychic systems. Like a lot of people I became aware of denial “the hard way.” We’ve all been engaging in denial for so long we don’t even know we are doing it. The insidious nature of denial is the denial of being in denial.

**Do not Judge.**  
**Do not Attack.**  
**Do not Defend.**  
**Do not Hide.**  
**Do not play ego games.**

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

*What is the teaching of Zen?  
Do no wrong. Do only good.  
A 3 year old may know it,  
but a 80 year old may find  
it difficult to practice.*

How simple is salvation?

Love Always,

*Jon*