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## *The Classroom Called Cancer*

*Sometimes the greatest miracles come in the ugliest packages.*

by Jon Mundy Ph.D.

(\*\*an excerpt from Jon's Book, *Missouri Mystic*)

Dolores has been after me to have a colonoscopy and I finally got one. They find cancer. On May 7, 2001, a tumor the size of a lemon and eighteen inches of colon are removed along with eight lymph nodes. Five are cancerous. The doctors are concerned. They feel sure that there is cancer in other lymph nodes, and possibly other organs. I'm still convinced that everything is part of a divine plan even when it doesn't look that way. I'm not saying that things like war and disease are part of God's plan. I'm sure they are part of the ego's plan, and the ego's plan has a built-in self-destruction mechanism. At some point it will implode. When it fails, God's plan automatically takes over.

When cancer comes up, it's inevitable that we ask, "Why me?" My friend, Rabbi Hershel Jaffey wrote a book after his experience with cancer entitled, *Why Me? Why Anyone?* When Rabbi Gelberman called the first thing he said was: "This doesn't sound like you." I had to agree with him. It doesn't "sound" like me. No one wants to hear that they have cancer. I've never been afraid of cancer. I never thought it would happen to me. Daddy was terrified of cancer because he watched both his parents die from it.

How can a student of *A Course in Miracles* get cancer? As much as I understand the Course, I've never claimed to be enlightened. Until we are enlightened, none of us can be sure how much *stuff* is buried inside us, how much is "eating" us. Even "enlightened" beings die. Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharishi both died from cancer. My most invaluable guide in life, Dr. Robert Weltman, upon hearing the news asked, "What's been eating you?" According to Louise Hay, colon cancer comes from difficulties in letting go. In the past year-and-a-half, I've had lots of letting go to do. There is almost no income now. Due to the bad stock market, this year, the annual \$10,000 from Aunt Sue does not come through. Things are very bleak. There is a lot of sadness and now, now cancer!

### **An Awakening Experience – The Day Seeking Stopped**

*If you know you're going to be hung in the morning, it helps to concentrate the mind.*

I awake at four a.m. the morning after the doctor gave me the news that the cancer had spread. I am wide-awake! The doctors want to do another colonoscopy, and start chemotherapy. The only

light in the room comes from the hallway. My roommate is fast asleep. The curtains are drawn between us. To my left, the window curtains are open and it is dark out. There is a pine tree next to my window, and out past the pines is the hospital parking lot with its lights all-ablaze. A light fog hangs in the night sky making the lights look misty. I lie there in the dark, staring at the night sky thinking about what the doctors said, and think: "You know you could die. You could actually die!" Tears come to my eyes, and I am overwhelmed for a moment.

Maybe the story has played out? Maybe it's over. I had a good friend, George O'Kelley, who was the lawyer for Interfaith, a graduate of the New Seminary, a student of *A Course in Miracles*, and a spiritual healer. He was diagnosed with cancer in November of 1998, and the next November, he died. I lie there thinking, "Maybe I'm going to leave. If so – so what?" Dolores once said, "I'm not afraid of dying. It just means I don't have to get up in the morning." I'm not afraid of dying – by thinking that's the end of things – I know better. I have accumulated, in the course of this life, far too much evidence to the contrary.

*When your body and your ego and your dreams are gone, you will know that you will last forever.*

*Perhaps you think this is accomplished through death, but nothing is accomplished through death, because death is nothing. Everything is accomplished through life, and life is of the mind and in the min. The body neither lives nor dies, because it cannot contain you who are life. – ACIM, T-6.V.A.1: 1-4*

### **What Does Dying Mean?**

I imagine that loss of the body is going to be an interesting adventure. In some ways I'm ready to go. The ringing in my ears will stop. I'll be so grateful for that! A lot of wonderful things have happened. This life has also been a bit of a struggle. Right now I'm broke, sick and tired. Maybe it's time to go.

Dying means letting go of everything of this world – all hopes and dreams. I begin to let go of all of what you might call "good" things and "bad" things. Maybe whatever it was I thought I'm supposed to do with my life, I'm not going to get to do. Maybe I've already done it. I decide to take a good look at death – to give up completely as there might be no other choice. I'm not going to "fight" for my body as people sometimes do in a "panicky" way when they hear that they have cancer. I'm not going to "beg" God to spare my body. That's not real prayer. That is not saying "Thy will be done." Prayer is a shift in perception, and a changing of one's mind about a situation, rather than changing the situation. I understand that what is needed now is a change of mind. Either I am going to survive or I am not. If it's my time to go – I'm going. I still think I have unfinished business to fulfill. Maybe I'm wrong. God knows best.

### **Interfaith and Inspiration**

Lying there in the hospital, looking out the window at the lights in the parking lot, I decide it doesn't make any difference what happens with Interfaith Fellowship. I let it all go. I drop all expectations. The difficulties we've gone through over the course of the past year pale and fade away. Interfaith is out of my hands now. I let go of *Inspiration* magazine as well. It's a dream, which is more than thirty years old and has manifested itself in four different magazines – *Seeker*, *The Mustard Seed*, *On Course* and *Inspiration*. The magazine is just something of this

world. It doesn't have to happen. I open *A Course in Miracles* and read lesson 189 – *I Feel the Love of God Within Me Now*. And Jesus tells me:

*Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything you think is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you have ever learned before from anything. Forget this world. Forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God. –*  
ACIM - W-pI.189. 7:1-5

### **I Don't Give a Damn**

I keep letting go. I let go of entanglements, hang-ups, regrets and remorse – all the nostalgia about what might have been – relationships that did not turn out better – the Methodist Church – the belief that anything "had" to happen – even everything I've been ashamed of. I go deeper and deeper. I take a look at my secret sins and hidden hates. And then comes, the last thing, the biggest thing of all. I even, forgive myself for not having done a better job.

Lying there in the dark, I become *empty* in a way I've not been *empty* before. I don't mean to sound crude but I take a deep breath, sigh and then say, "I don't give a damn!" Whatever will be will be. It's clearly out of my hands now. I enter a place of no will, no energy, no feeling, no experience – nothing. I am so nothing. I wonder what is it that thinks, talks, walks? I become empty of desire and anger and I understand, in a way in which I had previously only understood "intellectually," what Buddha meant when he said that the loss of desire is the key to enlightenment. I achieve by this profound "letting go" some sort of objectivity. How incredibly manipulative I've been. I tried to make things work out – my way. The theme song of the ego is *I'll Do It My Way*.

*When a man surrenders all desires that come to the heart, and by the grace of God finds the joy of God in himself, then his soul has indeed found peace. – Bhagavada Gita 3:30*

When there's nothing to lose, we see who we are behind who *we thought* we were. A deep peace comes when you give everything away – when you take a good look at Friend death. I am now transported out of my body. Unlike the experience in 1976, this time it's perfectly peaceful. In fact, I'm still aware of my body. I simply lose my attachment to it. I just leave it lying there in the hospital. This time, I am not "hurled" into Reality. Whatever happens is okay. Dying is a perfectly acceptable. I say okay to death. I say, "Okay, come get me" and then an amazing thing happens **once you have totally surrendered you see -- you don't die**. You just keep on going on.

I know that I don't "really" exist in an individual way. There is no subject and object. There is just oneness. The Mind that is thinking everything is one mind completely outside of time. Realization requires no effort! Seeking is unnecessary! No path is the right path. Finding can only happen without interference. **There are no worries because all worries are concerned with life. When you know you are going to die, why worry?** We are born enlightened. To try

to achieve something which already is, is absurd. There is nothing to achieve. There is nowhere to go. There is nothing to be done. We are already divine just the way we are. Problems are all just so much nonsense. Problems do not “actually” exist. We are everything and nothing. I am that I am! What is needed is to be deeply involved in life while unattached to the “drama.” I’m happy with what I have. I love my Mother, Ann, Dolores, Sarah, Kristian, and my many friends. I love my work and I love you!

The acceptance of death brings an incredible awareness. And now something I never would have guessed, an unexpected manifestation of intense compassion. Tears come to my eyes and *LOVE* in all its glory intoxicates my heart. I think of those who closed the Center and stopped *Inspiration*. I feel the greatest love for them and I thank them for giving me the opportunity of loving them so much. Everyone did exactly what he or she was supposed to do. I cannot be mad at anyone. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “I cannot at heart be the enemy of any man.” I love the Course and believe in the Course. Anger “is” never justified. Everyone did what he or she did thinking that it was best. It was what was best! Then I begin to laugh, and laugh, and laugh, and laugh. I laugh a really uproarious laugh. Ken is right. I am a bliss ninny.

*To know yourself as the Being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, The love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, and enlightenment. – Eckhart Tolle*

### **What I Learned from Cancer**

Truth is always simple. We always learn really simple things.

1. Love is all there is – it’s all that matters. The end result of realization is love, compassion and humility, and the love of everything is the love of Self.
2. We take, so much for granted. The day I come home from the hospital – just watching our cat, Pockets, walk across the deck, listening to our neighbor mow his lawn, and saying grace together around the dinner table brings tears to my eyes.

*Sometimes when you are feeling jaded or blasé, you can revive your sense of wonder by merely saying to yourself: suppose this were the only time. Suppose this sunset, this moonrise, this symphony, this buttered toast, this sleeping child, this flag against the sky. . . Suppose you would never experience these things again! Few things are commonplace in themselves. It's our reaction to them that grows dull. – Arthur Gordon*

Happiness is one more walk with Dolores. It's one more driving lesson with Sarah, one more lunch with Kristian or one more chat on the phone with one of you.

3. Your Life is none of your business. Life is God's business. The sooner we turn it over the better.

After I come home from the hospital I do a two-week vegetable juice cleansing fast and I begin a daily diet of detox tea, along with a long list of vitamins, minerals and herbs. I also begin a

thirty-week session of chemo. I now know that I got cancer just so I could have that experience in the hospital. I needed to engage in a deep, total let go. The only way to do it was to look at death. **Something in me died that day never to be born again. I am clean. I am free.** You can never lose an experience of the eternal. It may fade but it is never forgotten. My lectures take on a different, dimension. I can feel it. The words come easier than ever. Others can feel it as well – or so they say.

Love and Peace Now and Forever,

*Jon*