

## The Miracle of Love

Happy Valentine's Day.

Bill and Mary Pat are out of town enjoying a well deserved get away. Bill asked me to give the talk today. I'm going to talk to you about True Love, or as I like to think about it, The Miracle of Love. But before I start, I'm going to digress for a moment and share the last time I was asked to speak to a congregation. Twelve years ago, one of the patients that I had operated upon was pastor of a Baptist church in south Raleigh. When I saw him for his post operative visit, he asked if I would say a few words to his congregation. I said sure and we agreed upon a date. My partner, Cheri Elliott received a confirmation call from the pastor 5 days before the event. He said he wanted to make sure that Dr. McClure was going to give 'the message' on Sunday. Cheri repeated 'the message'? Yes, he repeated, 'the message'. She then asked, who else would be preaching that day. He replied, "just Dr. McClure". She said, " I'll have to get back with you on that one". Well, I had attended enough church services to know the difference between 'a few words' and 'the message'. At any rate, I agreed. I gave a talk about Dr. Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. The highlight of the day, though, was when the minister introduced Cheri as the lady that removed his catheter.

Cheri and I first started attending Journeys several years ago. We wanted to join a community of like minded individuals. Bill was pretty well behaved the first day we attended so we decided to come back. Truth be known, we felt at home the moment we arrived at Journeys.

One of the things that I like best about Journeys is that there isn't a dogma. Actually, that's not exactly true. We had only been attending Journeys for about nine months or so when our dog, Sophie, who was locked in our car in the back parking lot, snuck out of our open sun roof and wandered into the church sanctuary. We were teaching Sunday school at the time. Someone came to get us and said that our dog was in the sanctuary. We said it couldn't be our dog because she was locked up in our car. They said, "is your dog's name Sophie?" Oops. Sophie still comes to church with us, but we don't leave the car sun roof open. Other than that episode, I'm not aware of another instance when there was a 'dogma' at Journeys.

For the past month and a half Bill has been talking about the ultimate prescription for happiness. Since I first became a physician 34 years ago, I've know that I have written more than a hundred thousand prescriptions. My favorite prescription, though, is one that I inherited from a friend and colleague, Jim Dykes. Jim was my physician for more than a decade. He had a wonderful holisitc medicine practice in Durham, NC. He has since retired to his 'hundred acre farm', which is located between Durham and Roxboro. One day, we

were talking about patient's expectations and how most patients are not happy unless they walk out of a doctor's office with a prescription. We both agreed that they often feel like they've been cheated. At the checkout counter, they gripe about paying their bill, complaining, 'after all, all he did was talk to me'! I was surprised when Jim told me that he usually sent his patients home with a prescription. He said that his prescription was covered by every health plan and it was free of side effects. Furthermore, he told his patients that if they followed his prescription, they could achieve peace and contentment. He reached over, and scribbled his prescription on a sheet of paper, folded it in half, and handed it to me. I unfolded the prescription and about fell out of my chair laughing. He had written two words: 'Do nothing'.

God has a similar prescription for us. It's called, 'Accept what is'. We think that there are many problems, but there is only one – our separation from God. You see, any time there is a problem, God has the perfect answer. God can see around corners. A miracle occurs when we are able to accept what is and then agree to see things differently. Said another way, it's not my will, it's thy will. As Bill has taught us, we are all Divine. There is no separation between us and God.

I started on "The Path" in 1991. I was a voracious reader. I read books about the Vedas, Buddhism, Jewish mysticism and the Kabala, American Indian

lore, Astrology, Numerology, and many many more. As a lark, I used to walk into book stores and libraries and books will almost jump into my hand. That is how I learned about Prmahansa Yoganada. The book, Autobiography of a Yogi, almost jumped into my hands. In 1993, I encountered another book that really caught my eye. It was a blue bound book with gold lettering. The title really intrigued me. It was a book that was destined to change my life. The name of the book was "A Course in Miracles". I opened the book to the introduction and started reading. The opening stanza really got my attention. It begins thusly:

This is a course in miracles. It is a required course. Only the time you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time. The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance. The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way:

Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God.

Said another way, the world as we know it, the world we experience through our five senses, is a world of

illusions. It isn't real. The real world is our connection with God and that's a reality that can't be threatened.

I also read that the Course in Miracles was about all religions and no religions. Intrigued, I flipped the page and started reading about the principal of miracles. A total of 50 principles were listed. Many of the principles dealt with the miracle of love. Let me share with you some of my favorites.

1. The first principle of Miracles is this: There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not harder or bigger than another. They are all the same. All expressions of love are maximal.
2. It continues, miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. The real miracle is the love that inspires them. In this sense everything that comes from love is a miracle.
3. Miracles are a kind of exchange. Like all expressions of love, which are always miraculous in the true sense, the exchange reverses the physical laws. They bring more love both to the giver **and** the receiver. Using spiritual arithmetic, this means that  $2 + 2$  equals 40, not 4.
4. Or how about this one: Prayer is the medium of miracles. It is a means of communication of the created with the Creator. Through prayer love is received, and through miracles love is expressed.

5. Here's another great one: "Miracles are teaching devices for demonstrating it is as blessed to give as to receive. They simultaneously increase the strength of the giver and supply strength to the receiver." Or as the New Testament says, "as ye give so shall ye receive" and also, "cast your bread upon the water and it will come back tenfold, " and so forth. Bill is much better versed in the biblical references than I am, but you get the message. I see that Edwene Gaines is going to speak again on March 21<sup>st</sup> at Journeys about the four spiritual laws of prosperity. I don't know how many of you hear her speak last year, but you don't want to miss her talk. She is a hoot. She also has a great formula for achieving incredible abundance.
6. The Course in Miracles also talks about the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The same basic message is repeated in all of the great spiritual teaching and religions of the world. The Course in Miracles says it this way: a miracle is a service. It is the maximal service you can render to another. It is a way of loving your neighbor as yourself. You recognize your own and your neighbor's worth simultaneously.
7. The Course in Miracles goes on to say, Miracles reawaken the awareness that the spirit, not the body, is the altar of truth. This is the recognition that leads to the healing power of the miracle.

The Course in Miracles also talks about forgiveness. In fact, forgiveness is the major theme of the Course in Miracles. It says, Miracles are natural signs of forgiveness. Through miracles you accept God's forgiveness by extending it to others. There is a saying: Forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves. Truer words were never spoken. I experienced the healing power of forgiveness in my life. I had a rough childhood. I know that I'm not alone. At any rate, I nursed a grudge against my father for years. I read books, went to therapists and did everything I could do to find peace. Meanwhile, I kept repeating the story of how I had been abused.

Every day we wake up, we only have a certain amount of energy in our batteries. During those years, my battery was already partially spent before I climbed out of bed. That's not to say that I thought about the situation all of the time, but it doesn't matter. My heart knew the truth, even if my mind had gone on a sabbatical. The truth was I had not forgiven him and I was holding a grudge.

Although I had estranged myself from my family of origin, one time I took a chance and spoke with my dad on the phone. I told him how upset I was. He replied that he had forgiven himself years ago and he was sure that we could work it out. In fact, he told me that we could clear it up over a beer. Oh man did that make me mad. So I added that little tid bit to my story line and vowed that I would not speak with him again.

Four years later, at an American Holistic Medical Association conference in Tucson Arizona, I met a wise woman and medical intuitive named Nina Zimbelman. Cheri had attended one of her workshops at the conference and told me how great she was. I was excited to see what she would have to tell me. I arranged for an appointment with her later that day. She began our session by asking me to tell her a little bit about myself. She said that she wanted to know who I was.

When I got to the part about my childhood trauma, I repeated my story and then I told her that I had forgiven him in my heart, but can you believe that he told me that we would clear it up over a beer?! I expected her to agree that I had every right to be upset. Therefore, I was surprised when she paused, looked me in the eye, and then told me that we could have cleared it up over a beer if I had truly forgiven him. Ouch. How's that for tough love. But you know what, she was right.

It took me a while to chew on that one – three months to be exact – but I did forgive my father in my heart, and when I did, I experienced a miracle. Instantaneously, the burden of grief that had been weighing me down for years was lifted from my heart and I experienced a feeling of total bliss. I finally understood that I was the one who was responsible for denying myself this gift. I also understood that we can pay the gift of forgiveness

forward. Shortly thereafter, I called my dad and told him that I forgave him and asked him to forgive me.

8. Another principle of Miracles is that miracles are an interlocking chain of forgiveness which, when completed, is the Atonement. Atonement, according to the Course in Miracles, works all the time and in all the dimensions of time. In other words, it's never too late to forgive someone, even if they're no longer around. Cheri and I often talk to our patients about forgiveness, especially those that are suffering from chronic disease. We talk about the gift of pain. Pain is a message that our bodies send us to get our attention. Instead of masking pain with medication, we encourage patients that are receptive to the idea, to explore the deeper meaning of pain.

Here's a good example. A lady complained that she had been experiencing a burning pain in her urethra every time she urinated. The problem started about a year ago. I asked her what was going on in her life around that time. She replied, "nothing". I asked her if she had any stress in her life. She replied, "nope". Intuitively, I suspected that something more was going on here. Acting on a hunch, I asked her again what was going on in her life when this problem started and I specifically asked her if something had happened that really pissed her off. She looked like I had slapped her. A few seconds later, she proceeded to tell me her story. She said that a business partner had ripped her

off and ruined her business. She said that she was determined to get even. Once she had finished telling me her story, I talked to her about the seven energy centers in our bodies, called chakras . I told her that each of the chakras are associated with a different set of energies, which can either be positive or negative. For instance, urology deals with issues in the sacral chakra. Among other things, the sacral chakra deals with emotional, monetary, and sexual energies. Her body was reacting to her anger and desire for revenge. She was pissed off about the whole situation and it was burning her up. These energies were being vented through her urethra. I asked her how it would feel if she could let go of those feeling. I told her that she could transmute the negative energies of hatred and revenge to positive energies of compassion and forgiveness. We discussed a meditation called the altar of forgiveness. She admitted that the connection between her symptoms and the anger that was raging inside her was an epiphany for her. Although at first she balked at the idea of forgiveness, to her credit, she surrendered and was able to forgive her partner and herself. As you might expect, her symptoms went away for good. Of course, I had done my homework as well, and before I went down this path, I made sure that she didn't have a physical problem that was causing her symptoms.

We see the same problem in men who suffer from prostatitis. Deep seated resentments, power struggles, and monetary issues can often initiate

prostate problems. The same forgiveness meditation can produce miraculous results.

Forgiveness is not holding someone or something else responsible for our experience. If you want a miracle, ask the Holy Spirit for a miracle and then be willing to accept what is and be willing to see things differently. In other words, don't change the experience, change the perception. Remember, there is no limit on the number of miracles and there difference in the order of magnitude of miracles. We don't ask God for too much. We ask him for too little.

9. According to the Course in Miracles, our principal task this lifetime is to forgive. There is a lot of talk in the book about the 'holy instant'. The holy instant is not an instant of creation; it's an instant of recognition. For recognition comes of vision and suspended judgment. There is a great saying that has gotten me through many trials and tribulations in my lifetime. It goes like this: This too shall pass. Sound familiar? The course in miracles says it this way, I will forgive and this will disappear.

I should explain that the Course in Miracles is organized in three sections – the text, the workbook for students, and the manual for teachers. There are 365 lessons in the workbook – one for every day of the year. Each lesson starts with a saying that you repeat at different intervals throughout the day. One of my favorite saying is this: Today I see all things through Christ Vision and judge them not, but gift them instead

with the miracle of love. In the context of the Course, Christ and God are familiar terms, but if they cause a problem for someone, they can be interchanged for other terms that are more meaningful, such as Divine Presence, Universal energy, Allah, Buddah, Krishna and so forth. The name isn't what's important. It's the content that matters.

As I prepare for the day, I invite the Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts, my words, and my actions. The course suggests asking God the following questions at the beginning of every day: God, what would you have me do, where would you have me go, to whom would you have me speak, and what would you have me say? Before I climb out of bed, I repeat and ponder the mantra of the lesson that I read from the Course in Miracles the previous night. Periodically throughout the day, I mentally repeat the mantra.

10. Miracles are expressions of love, but they may not always have observable effects. [Remember, though] A miracle is never lost. It may touch many people that you have not even met, and produce undreamed of changes in situations of which you are not even aware. Think of people that have made a difference in your life in a way that you couldn't have predicted. I can think of a lot of miracles in my life. Getting into medical school was one of those. I was a good student, but I didn't make straight A's. When I was in high school I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my life. My dad suggested going into premed. He reasoned that I liked to help people and I liked science, so it should be a

good fit. I was like an energizer bunny. Once I was wound up and pointed in the right direction, I keep on ticking. I had a tough time in my second semester of college, though. I had been elected vice president of the freshman class. I did really well the first semester, however the next semester, my attention was directed elsewhere than on my studies. As a result, I received a C average that semester.

My dad was disappointed. He said I might as well forget medical school. To me, those were fighting words. So I put my nose to the grind stone and aced my courses for the next two years. The cards were still stacked against me, though and I knew it. I was trying to get into Indiana University School of Medicine after just three years of college.

The day came for my interview with a group of men that would determine whether I got into medical school or not. The back of the room as in shadows. I was seated in a chair in front of a long table. My inquisitors set on the other side of the table.

As I sat there, I thought about two miracles that I had experienced thanks to a doctor who, forty years earlier, had sat where I was setting. His name was Jim Hill. He was our family doctor. Back in those days, family doctors still made house calls. I remembered a time I was nine years old. I was at a family reunion. I started to feel hot and before I knew it, I felt like I was going to die. My face was beet red and I had a 105 degree

temperature. My dad piled the family into the car and straight to the home of our family physician.

This was decades before the invention of cell phones, and I might add, it was even before the advent of Medicare. Dr. Hill felt my forehead, looked in my throat and listened to my chest. He smiled, patted me on the back, and said that I was going to make it. He gave me an envelope that was filled with tiny capsules and told me to take one when I got home and then to take one four times daily until they were gone. I followed his instructions and the next day I felt like a new person. It was a miracle. Many years later, during my third year in medical school, I deduced that he had treated me with penicillin for acute pneumonia. Nevertheless, to me, it was still a miracle.

I remembered another time he pulled a rabbit out of his hat. Fast forward five years. I was in eighth grade. I credited him with saving me from going deaf. I had lost the hearing in one of my ears. I was afraid to tell anybody, but I finally screwed up my courage during a school physical and told him that I was going deaf. There, I'd said it. I had shared a deep dark secret with him. He didn't seem concerned. He reached into his black bag, pulled out an otoscope, and peered into my ear. He laughed and said that he could make a wax candle out of the wax that was packed into my ear. He flushed out the wax plug with a syringe full of warm water and viola, I was cured.

My attention was directed back to the room as the doctors sitting across from me began asking me questions. One of the questions was why did I want to be a doctor. I smiled as I thought about Dr. Hill. I told them that I may not be straight A student, but I knew that I would make a good physician. I told them that I believed with all my heart that medicine was my calling.

I also talked about my next door neighbor, Dale Habegger, who was a gifted surgeon. He had stitched me up a number of times. He had also saved my butt one time when he removed a fish hook from my next door neighbor's lip. I had snagged him when we were fishing in a nearby creek. It's also pertinent that my fishing buddy was his son. I thought the world of Dr. Habegger. I told them that he too had graduated from IU Med School. Then a miracle happened. Out of the darkness in the back of the room, I hear a familiar voice saying, "Mark is a good boy. He will make a wonderful physician". It turns out that my next door neighbor had been silently sitting there the whole time. He had come to do his part to help me get it into medical school. Fortunately, they believed him and admitted me to Med School.

So what does it mean to be on the spiritual path? Does it mean that you have to be perfect, or you'll go to hell? No; that is, unless you want to. Being on the spiritual path doesn't mean that you don't have unloving thoughts. It just means that you try not to act on them. The goal this lifetime is to be the best

you can be. God will respond maximally to the slightest effort on our part. He will reach down and lift us up the rest of the way.

Even so, some people would rather die than change their minds. If you change your thinking, you change the world. According to Edgar Tolle, author of the Power of Now and The New Earth, our entire personal history is ultimately no more than a story, a bundle of thoughts and emotions. We can change our stories.

We are 100% responsible for our experience. According to my friend Nina Zimbelman, the only thing standing in the way of our joy are the thoughts and judgments in our heads. The course puts it this way; you can have a grievance or a miracle, but you can't have both.

There is no right or wrong. There is only right and left. The journey, not the destination is what's important. A lot of people are worried about what is going to happen in the year 2012. They are concerned that the world will end. I've got a secret for you. You don't have to wait until 2012 for the world as we know it to end. Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven lies within and I believe him. You have the power to change your world. To me, the saying, Heaven and Earth shall pass away, simply means that they will not continue to exist as separate states. Being born again means letting go of the past and not worrying about the future and being born again into the now. According to the Course in Miracles, the power of

decision is the one remaining freedom we have as a prisoner of this world of illusions.

Let me leave you with one parting prescription. The prescription, for the way home, is this: To every apprehension, every care, and every form of suffering, repeat, “ I will forgive, and this will disappear.” You now hold the key that will open Heaven’s gate and bring the love of God the Father down to earth at last to raise it up to heaven.

In conclusion, let me introduce you to my wife, my partner, and my best friend, Cheri Elliott, who will lead us through the altar of forgiveness meditation. This meditation is from the book by Gloria Karpinsk, which is entitled, Where Two Worlds Touch.

Blessings to you all. Happy Valentine’s Day. May you celebrate this day and everyday by performing miracles of love.

Jerome, can we have some music.

1. Sit comfortably, preferably with your spine straight, uncrossing your arms and legs to help create a free flow of energy. Relax your neck and shoulders. Breathe away the tension as you exhale and breathe in golden light as you inhale.
2. Move your attention to your heart and begin breathing through your heart. Breathe in love...

- and breathe out love. Then mentally direct the next breaths to any part of your body that needs balancing. Next direct breaths of love to your emotional body, feeling them like cool, soothing breezes. Then to your mental self, sensing added clarity with each new breath.
3. Surround yourself with pure light and tell yourself that all that follows is blessed by the Universal Christ and is for your highest good.
  4. In your mind's eye create an altar made of light. Design the altar any way you like, knowing that it is made of the highest, purest substance in the universe. Your subconscious mind knows that an altar means sacrifice and release. The symbol is quickly communicated to your inner mind.
  5. Place the person you have chosen to forgive on the altar of light. Visualize light moving into every cell in his or her form. Direct light from your heart to surround the person as you say: "I forgive you for all transgressions, real or imagined, remembered or unremembered, from this lifetime or any other". Now dissolve the total image in light.
  6. Place yourself on the altar of light, seeing yourself bathed in light that you direct from your heart center. And say to your self: "I forgive myself for any negative energy I have held against (name of the person you are in the process of forgiving), real or imagined, remembered or unremembered,

from this lifetime or any other". Now dissolve the image of yourself in light.

7. The last step is very important, for it is here that you express gratitude– the energy of empowerment. Say aloud or to yourself. Thank you Mother–Father–God.
8. And it is done. Gently bring your attention back to an alert state.