

long time
no see



the
crash
course

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a short explanation of A Course in Miracles
excerpted from
Long Time No See: diaries of an unlikely messenger

***LONG TIME NO SEE'S
THE CRASH COURSE***

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Having said all that, this easy to understand synopsis of *A Course in Miracles* is meant to be shared as widely as possible. If you know people who are interested in the *Course* (or are currently studying the *Course*, or are struggling to understand the language of the *Course*) then by all means, make tons of copies with my blessing. The more the better.

For other information about *Long Time No See: diaries of an unlikely messenger*, or to read my blog, or see interviews, or buy a copy of the book, please go to www.unlikemessenger.com

Thanks.

A WORD ABOUT *LONG TIME NO SEE'S* **THE CRASH COURSE**

The Crash Course is my own short-form explanation of *A Course in Miracles*, a breakneck gallop through the 580 pages of the *Course's* teachings. Written in common everyday language, the tone of *The Crash Course* is purposely a little bit blunt and irreligious, in obvious contrast to the often biblical language of the *Course* itself.

Stylistic differences aside, students of the *Course* will notice immediately that *The Crash Course* isn't a strictly literal or chronological synopsis of *A Course in Miracles*. Concepts have been arranged here in the manner in which they flowed most naturally and logically for me, which is not necessarily similar to the way the information is structured within the *Course* itself.

Please note: Although I was scrupulously careful to present the *Course's* teachings as accurately as possible, I'm no scholar and can't guarantee that my work is free of mistakes. I can only assure you that I did my best.

It would not have been possible for me to write *The Crash Course* without the help of Gary Renard's books, *The Disappearance of the Universe* and *Your Immortal Reality*. I owe much of my understanding of the *Course's* material to the broader explanations set forth in those two books. The rest of my understanding is owed to the many patient *Course*-related lessons offered me in conversations with Spirit, as chronicled elsewhere within the pages of *Long Time No See*.

Oh, one more thing: There is no connection between this *Crash Course* and Philip Urso's very fine series of podcasts and videos titled *A Crash Course in Miracles*. I accidentally stole his title, but he has very generously allowed me to continue to use it. I am grateful and apologize for any confusion this duplication may cause.

THE CRASH COURSE

1. Everything you know is wrong.
2. The world we think we know is upside down from the way we suppose it to be: ugliness is beauty, good is evil, joy is sadness, profit is loss.
3. That's because each of us, without exception, is stark raving mad. And in our madness, we believe that love is hate and hate is love; that light is darkness, happiness is pain, lies are truth, death is life, attack is defense and fear is safety.

Perhaps a little explanation is in order.

The back-story

1. God is real.

First, the good news: Like everything else in this world, we have God all wrong. God, of course, is not Big Daddy In The Sky. God has no gender, no body, no long white beard. God is love and nothing else. And not our messed up, *I'll love you as long as you behave and do what I tell you*, kind of love. The infinite and perfect Mind of God is total love whether we think we deserve total love or not; this total love is wholly pure and impartial, unchanging, eternal and unconditional.

2. God is real, and nothing outside of God is real, because only God exists. Period. There's nothing else out there.

3. There's no "out there" out there. God is everywhere and everything at all times, eternally and limitlessly. And even that's not a strictly accurate description; "everywhere" implies space, and "at all times" implies temporality, yet time and space don't exist because, by definition, they don't meet the conditions of being real. (Only eternal, unchanging love is real.) So it's meaningless to say, "God is

everywhere at all times.” The closest thing to a true statement is this: God Is.

4. The Mind of God does not—*cannot*—judge, condemn, threaten, get angry, be disappointed, punish or take anything away from anybody. Ever.

The perfect and serene Mind of God does not do battle or choose sides. No country or religion or political group gets the extra special stamp of Heavenly approval; divine love is offered constantly and limitlessly no matter what we do or don't do in this world. And speaking of battle, there are no Satanic forces in opposition to God, because, seriously, what could oppose God? Only in our confused fantasy do we believe anything could exist separately from, or as a threat to, the infinite power of God.

5. The Mind of God did not create this world or any of the bizarre things we think we see in it; in fact, this world has nothing to do with the perfect, infinite Mind of God at all. Nothing truly exists except eternal, limitless love. Anything that doesn't fit that description is just part of the crazy dream we're having.

The back-story, Part II

The beginning of time

1. God created one Son of God.

2. And we're it.

The Son of God, of course, is not male, is not a body or even a lot of bodies. Somewhere along the way the Son of God was given this moniker in an attempt to describe its relationship to God—the Son being the creation of its Creator. The so-called Son of God can best be described as divine Thought, created perfect and held forever safe and eternally unchanged within the loving Mind of God.

3. True Creation, meaning the kind of thing created by a Creator, is powered by the engine of divine love. And the Creator creates more of Itself; that's what real Creation is. It's the reason that only love, and only God, exists. The Mind of God creates more of Itself, out of the raw material of Itself, exactly like Itself in every way. This

true Creation, this perfect Thought, is every bit as eternal, sublime and loving as the Mind that created it. Together the Mind and the Thought are one immortal spirit: Holy, pure and unchanging, joyous and peaceful, limitlessly strong, safe and free. This Creation exists forever within God (since there's no such thing as existing outside of God). Once created, no force exists that could alter true Creation in any way, or divide it from the Mind that created it. And there's no place where the Mind of God ends and the created Thought begins. The perfect Mind and the perfect Thought are inextricably one, sharing the divine Will of God. So, for all intents and purposes, the Creation *is* God.

4. With one very important exception: Although this Creation has all the attributes of God, *it did not, could not, create itself*. The Mind creates the Thought. The Thought is capable of creating in the same way that the Mind creates, yet only if it does so in perfect oneness with God, using divine love as its catalyst and its raw material.

5. And now, the other news: We, the one Son of God, the perfect Thought forever joined with the eternal Mind, started to entertain the idea that we didn't want to be one and the same anymore. We wanted to split up so we could each be special and unique and different. In other words, we wanted to create ourselves over again—just a little differently this time. Yet God's divine Thought has never had the power to change itself in any way, no matter how much it may have wanted to. So we did the next best thing. We started to pretend.

6. In our pretend fantasy of a separate will, we split our one mind, producing an ego mind seemingly separate from our own. And then we became afraid that we'd done something really bad, something completely against the rules. And the ego mind said, *Ooh. You broke the law; you stole something that belongs to God. You tore away a piece of God Itself! And now you want to kill off your own Creator so you can rewrite the laws of Heaven. That's disgusting. If God ever catches you, you're in for eternal damnation.*

Listen, I'm your friend. I'll help you. I can fix it so God will never find you. We'll make this new place, and it'll have walls so thick that God can

never come in. You'll be safe there, and you can split and subdivide as much as you want. You can rule your own kingdom and forget all about Heaven.

7. And poor old Son of God was so upset by now, so consumed by fear—which doesn't even exist, remember, since there can be no fear in perfect love—that it consented wholeheartedly to the ego mind's crazy plan.

And so, in a massive outpouring of energy, a universe was formed, powered by the engine of, and using the raw material of fear. Yet fear has no foundation in reality, so the things made from fear share none of the attributes of the things created from love. Things made from fear (besides being completely imaginary) are designed to be love's opposite. Stunted and flawed, unloved, unsafe and impermanent, they're designed to block all memory of God. Things made from fear are "born" for only one purpose: To suffer, wither and die, lifetime after lifetime. And surely that's what they deserve, isn't it? The little ingrates tried to destroy Heaven and murder their Creator, so they—*we*—deserve eternal misery in exile. So reasons the unreasoning ego mind.

8. Completely taken in by the ego's version of events, our grief and pain over what we thought we'd done to God (and its imagined consequences, should we ever be brought to justice) was too much for us to bear. We forgot we were only pretending. Driven insane by fear, we buried our intolerable guilt so deeply in our collective unconscious mind that to this day we don't even know it's there. And by forgetting that bottomless pit of unconscious guilt and fear, we also forgot it was we who made the ego mind in the first place, and not vice versa. We still think it's our master, our jailer, and we its many helpless slaves.

We think we're billions of separate bodies with separate minds, fragile lumps of mortal flesh moving around in time and space, each living and then inevitably dying. What we call "life" is a brief, cruel mockery of the real thing, which is holy, joyous and eternal. And what we call "death" can't possibly exist in any form, because real life has no opposite. We are not bodies. We are one perfect immortal

spirit, given limitless, unchanging life within the wholly loving Mind of God.

Yet willingly ruled by the ego mind, we cling tenaciously to life as we think we know it. Some of this precarious “life” existence seems to be wonderful and beautiful, and some of it terrible and horrifying. Yet all of it, everything we think of as “the real world” is no more than an elaborate 3-D hallucination, complete with imaginary walls that seem to stand between one separated mind and the next.

It’s a self-induced trick of light and shadow, smoke and mirrors. No walls exist in truth between our seemingly split-off minds. We only *believe* they do. And the limitless power of our belief—remember, we share the same attributes, the same unlimited creative power as our Creator—is enough to make it real for us.

A ray of light

1. Therein lies the way back home. The so-called “separation” never happened; we haven’t “sinned against” our Creator. (How could sin, or anything else, exist within perfect divine love? And how could we stand apart from our one infinite Self to sin against it?) We therefore can’t possibly carry even a speck of real guilt, unconscious or otherwise. We can only *believe* these things are true; yet if we learned to believe in the fantastical and the untrue, that means we can choose to re-learn the truth to take its place. And belief in the truth is all it takes to set us free and carry our awareness back to Heaven.

Because in truth, we, the one Son of God have been safe in Heaven this whole time. We never left—where could we possibly “go”? In reality we’ve been sleeping safely, eternally within the Mind of God. We’re just having a really epic bad dream.

2. It’s the eternal Will of God that Its Creation be safe, strong and joyous, infinitely peaceful and abundant, radiantly pure, holy and limitlessly free, at home and one within the Mind of God forever. And God’s Will most certainly be done. We, the Created, are endowed with free will, yet only in terms of what we choose to

do and think, what we choose to remember, and when we choose to remember it. What we *are* remains unchanged forever.

3. The choice is ours: We can delay the memory of Heaven as long as we want, yet sooner or later every single one of us without exception will freely choose to remember our own shared divinity, to remember the Mind of God and return to oneness. Because that's God's Will, and in truth, God's Will and our will are one and the same.

The memory of God, and of what we really are, may be buried beneath an unfathomably deep mountain of mud, but still that memory remains eternally in each of us, pure, unchanging and untouched by any part of this world. To let it come back fully into our awareness, all we need to do is willingly let go of all belief in the fantasy world we made to replace it.

Maybe we won't make the choice to withdraw our belief from this upside down world we made and return to the memory of God in this lifetime; maybe not even in the next hundred or thousand lifetimes. No harm done. Time isn't even the blink of an eye to Eternity Itself; we're free to mess around as long as we want to go on pretending we're stuck in dreams.

And make no mistake, we're only pretending we're stuck. We're the Son of God, the perfect Thought within the infinite Mind. We can wake up any time we feel like it.

The perfect vehicle

1. Remember Jesus of Nazareth, who fully realized that He is the Son of God, forever one with his Creator? This realization itself is Christ, making Him, yes, Jesus the Christ. Yet Jesus didn't corner the market—anybody who attains the same full memory of one Mind and Thought united is also Christ; the whole and complete Son of God in its unseparated glory *is* the Christ, the perfect undivided Thought that knows the Mind of God. So any small chunk of us who comes to remember the truth is one and the same.

2. *A Course in Miracles* (a course taught by the Christ Mind)

offers each one of us crazy Sons of God the opportunity to “undo” the ego mind, slowly restoring our sanity and our memory. Our primary goal: That buried toxic waste dump of unconscious guilt needs to be removed. Partly because it’s the power source that keeps the ego mind large and in charge; partly because it’s the barrier that stops us from being able to accept the holy truth about ourselves and each other; and partly because it’s the source of never-ending unconscious pain to us all.

That pain is unbearable, so we constantly try to rid ourselves of it by finding “others” guilty instead of us, compulsively hurling our own unconscious guilt at every target we see. There are two major things wrong with that strategy: One, the guilt stays exactly where it is no matter how hard we try to transfer it to somebody else. Two, there *is* nobody else; there’s only one of us in truth, and although we can lose ourselves in fragmented fantasy, we can’t rewrite the laws of Heaven. So every time we toss a bucket of toxic guilt at somebody or something “out there,” we’re really attacking ourselves.

3. We’re given the means to unmake our unconscious guilt while we unmake the ego mind: we’re taught to practice what the *Course* calls “forgiveness.” Yet this isn’t forgiveness in the usual sense. The world’s version of forgiveness says: *You’ve sinned. I will rise above my desire to blame you for that, and instead find compassion in my heart to forgive and forget what you did.*

The problem with this kind of forgiveness is that it assumes the fantasy of separation is true. It’s really saying: *You are different from me; I am innocent and I stand apart from you and judge you to be guilty. The bad thing you did really happened and has real consequences, but I will overlook it and show you my mercy.*

And so the world the ego made is preserved. And we can freely continue to splash our buckets of unconscious guilt onto “others,” because this form of forgiveness requires that we first find that other person guilty before choosing to absolve them of that guilt.

Forgiveness as practiced by the *Course*, on the other hand, is designed to gently undo the ego’s world by reminding the mind that

what it thinks it sees can't possibly be real. True forgiveness says:

Although I think I see you as separate from myself, and although I'm tempted to perceive you as guilty, in reality I'm completely mistaken; I'm not seeing you as you really are. In truth, you are holy and innocent, perfect and pure. You can't possibly have sinned, because sin doesn't really exist. You are divine love, immortal spirit, and you remain exactly as God created you. And you and I are one, eternally safe in Heaven.

4. Each miracle of silent forgiveness that is offered helps to heal our own seemingly split mind at the same time that it helps to heal the mind of its intended recipient. In truth it helps to heal the entire world, as the Son of God is one Self, and healing received by one is received by all.

That's because another of Heaven's immutable laws is this: Giving is receiving.

Which makes perfect sense when we consider that everything is one. The more we give in truth, the more we receive, because there's only one of us doing both the giving and receiving. This is the reason it's impossible to suffer from lack of abundance—we have and are everything, so how could we ever lose anything? When we give we simultaneously receive. Sacrifice or scarcity of any kind is impossible. When we're lost in fantasy, however, we need only *believe* in scarcity to make it real for us.

This immutable law of giving and receiving is also the reason we're only able to attack ourselves when we try to splash the unconscious guilt around; the more we give blame to "others" for our own unconscious guilt, the more we simultaneously receive the blame we send out.

Luckily for us, the flipside is also true: As we attempt to wake up to the truth, every bit of real forgiveness we offer to others is automatically received within our own minds.

5. And that's *A Course in Miracles'* vehicle for getting us back to the memory and the experience of Heaven. The *Course* tells us the only reliable way to heal our own unconscious guilt is to truly

forgive “others,” thereby automatically forgiving ourselves. It says there’s no other path to salvation than letting the world off the hook for its imaginary sins; only by making the choice to see others as they really are—perfect, immortal spirit—are we able to eventually undo the ego mind and remember that perfect, immortal spirit is what we are, too. And to help us along the way, the *Course* offers us an infallible Guide, a perfect partner to keep our vehicle pointed in the right direction.

The infallible Guide

1. We observe this world with its wars and poverty, its depravity, corruption and cruelty, and we find it hard to believe it deserves anything except our bitterest judgment and condemnation; we forgot it isn’t real and we made the whole thing up. We’d rather just toss our buckets of toxic guilt at the mirror and call it sinful.

And that’s just the way the ego mind likes it. The ego is only capable of lies. That’s the function we assigned it when we made it. And because we freely choose to live in this world—the world of lies that the ego made with our full consent—any attempt to disrupt the ego’s thought system by introducing the thought system of truth will be met by unconscious resistance on our part. We’re used to looking at everything upside down, so the prospect of eternal life seems like annihilation to us; to be faced with the immediate experience of God’s perfect, gentle love seems terrifyingly like damnation and suffering beyond all imagining.

2. When we chose to believe in the ego mind, we chose the worst possible friend and guide. The ego would much rather see us dead than delivered from pain; if we were to find peace and happiness, the ego would have no place to call home. We can’t be annihilated, but the ego can.

The *Course* offers us another Friend and Guide instead. Which is a very useful thing, because the road back to the memory of God can get twisty and confusing at times; the ego will do everything in its power to make sure of it. Without this steadfast and loving Help, it

could take a very long time to get anywhere at all. The *Course* calls this infallible Guide the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, of course, is not some sort of Casper the Heavenly Ghost. The Holy Spirit is that aforementioned spark of pure and radiant memory existing eternally in each of us; it calls out to us ceaselessly from beneath Mud Mountain, asking us to remember what we really are and what God Is. The Holy Spirit is our own highest Self.

3. The *Course* also refers to the Holy Spirit as the Voice for God. That's the Voice *for* God. God Itself doesn't speak to us. God is fully occupied with being perfect, eternal love and nothing else. The Mind of God can't communicate directly with anybody who believes they're living inside a body in a world made of fear. The thought system of fear and the thought system of love are mutually exclusive—we can't believe mostly in one, yet a little bit in the other. One is pure and eternal truth; the other simply doesn't exist. It's literally All or nothing.

The Voice for God, the Holy Spirit, acts as a bridge between Heaven and our shadow world made of fear. The Holy Spirit remembers the Mind of God—it knows with perfect certainty that the separation never happened. It knows we remain exactly as God created us. Yet it also sees our mountain of mud; it knows what we're going through here in Fear World at every moment. It understands the temptations and obstacles we think we face, it knows our hopes and worries and all our seeming weaknesses. Yet it will gently remind us also of our strengths as it guides us lovingly toward our own eternal happiness.

Each time we offer a silent miracle of forgiveness, it's the Holy Spirit's job to undo a bit of the ego and heal unconscious guilt within the seemingly split mind of the one Son of God. These are acts we're not capable of accomplishing on our own, as long as we still believe we're individual bodies with separate minds. When we practice forgiveness as described by the *Course*, we do so in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

Not one of us who believes in Fear World knows how to retrace our steps and get back home to the memory of God. The Holy Spirit, our highest Self, remembers the way. The *Course* asks us to step back and let this eternal Friend and Guide lead us; it assures us that the road home will be much shorter—and infinitely smoother—if we do.

The guiltless mind

A Course in Miracles tells us that a guiltless mind can't experience suffering of any kind. Consider what that means: For a mind to be entirely guiltless, every last bit of Mud Mountain has to have been swept away, every drop of toxic unconscious guilt has been dissolved and the mind is now fully healed and whole. Which is another way of saying we've chosen to wake up from our Very Bad Dream, fully remembering and accepting the truth: That we are not separate, we are not bodies, there's no such thing as guilt or sin, and we are all one Thought forever cherished within the Mind of God. We are eternal, perfect love and nothing else.

When our mind is healed and awake to the truth, it means our perception of this world has been completely purified, cleansed of all belief in fear. This enables the Mind of God to lift our awareness back to oneness in Heaven where it belongs. This state of limitless peace and infinite joy is the Christ Mind.

The guiltless state of Mind denies all reality of this world—it sees no death, no pain, no imperfection or unhappiness of any kind, because it knows none of it can be real. Only the eternal Mind of God is real. Although terrible or painful or fearful things may still appear to be happening in this dream world, the guiltless mind remains joyous and serene, responding to these seeming events only with divine love, for it knows that is what it is *and nothing else*.

It's hard for us to understand what that state of life would be like. We hear that if we succeed in becoming Christ we'd have to respond to the events of this world with unconditional love, and the idea sounds terrifying. Maybe it even angers us, as if we're being stripped of our defenses and lured to our own slaughter.

The *Course* assures us no such sacrifice is necessary in the attainment of the state of Christ; not only is it unnecessary, it isn't even possible. The events of this world are not real, and the infinitely joyous and serene Christ Mind knows it. Not as theoretical textbook knowledge; the Christ Mind knows it *and lives it* as its own undeniable experience of the truth.

And because the Christ Mind isn't fooled by any part of this dream world (if it was, it couldn't *be* the Christ Mind—All or nothing, remember?), it knows for certain it doesn't live in a body. And so the body that this particular Christ seems to inhabit has been forgiven by its Mind along with all the rest of the bodies in the dream of separation. And with forgiveness, this Christ's "body" is no longer capable of suffering because the Mind that dreamed it up is no longer capable of suffering. So the body is now pain free and perfectly at peace, because that is the state of the Mind that made it up.

Only infinite happiness, freedom, safety, strength and peace await the Mind that returns itself to God. And what becomes of the body walking around that's seemingly still attached to that Mind?

That's entirely up to the Mind Itself.

It might feel called to teach. It could choose to take its message on the road to the world at large—or it might be quietly content to live out its days in joyous obscurity, offering silent healing to the world without ever stepping forward to speak of what it knows. A Christ's true gift to the world is the silent healing it offers to all seemingly fragmented minds; anything else it chooses to "accomplish" here within the dream is cake.

And when the time finally comes to gently lay the body aside (for all bodies are born to die) the Christ does so with joy and tranquility, because it knows it's going home to perfect eternal oneness with God, and the cycle of birth and death is over at last.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carrie Triffet sports a dazzling array of flaws and vices, none of which seem to dampen her single-minded desire for spiritual enlightenment. When not engaged in this messengering gig, she works as a designer and marketing consultant.

For photos of people, places and things from *Long Time No See: diaries of an unlikely messenger*, and for more information about the book as well as reviews and interviews, and a complete list of the “homework” books mentioned in this story, visit www.unlikelymessenger.com

It’s a connected world we live in; follow Carrie on Twitter @unlikelymesngr
Read more of her ongoing adventures on her blog, <http://unlikelymessenger.com/blog>