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JOEL BRASS AND ASSOCIATES LTD.

The Growing Edge



"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."
-Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*

I Used To Be Different but Now I'm the Same: Taking the Spiritual Path vs. the Path of the World

(With deep appreciation to the teachings and practices of A Course In Miracles)

For most of my life I have wanted to be different. Different than everybody. Unique, special, exceptional. A separated being with my own mind, my own feelings, my own body, my own personality and my own ways by which to navigate and shape my life. It has been my unexamined belief and hope that this path of being my own individual, standing out from the masses, distancing myself from my relationship with God and creating a personal identity that would distinguish me from all others would provide me with the security and safety that being the same as everybody else would not. Clearly I needed to create and hone this "self-made man" view of myself as I went more deeply into the world for my identity, validation and success. There is nothing at all wrong with this. On the contrary. This really is *the project* we all must undertake in the so-called "first half of life", where a strong, resilient and capable ego, operational and effective in navigating the outside world, is the major developmental task to be achieved.

But I am now firmly settled into the "second half of life". The major developmental task of the second half of life is markedly different than the first. The project for the second half of life must include leaving the world behind as my one and only home; discovering who I am beyond the body as it declines in energy, strength and conventional attractiveness; absorbing and overcoming change and losses of many kinds; and, perhaps most significant of all, seeking a permanent and

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lasting inner peace and happiness that is not determined *by anything outside of me*. This is what I now want more than anything - a deep, abiding inner peace that nothing and no one outside of me can give me, but at the same time, that nothing and no one outside of me can take away either.

What I have come to realize is that to find the bedrock sense of security and safety that has eluded me in the first half of life, I must give up the separated, unique, different ego that I have so painstakingly groomed and accessorized until now. I have come to know that seeing myself as separate – separate from God and from every last one of my brothers and sisters on planet Earth – generates and maintains a fear-based consciousness that forever excludes real and durable inner peace and happiness.

If I choose separation rather than union as my world view I am destined to experience that the world is big and I am small, that the world is powerful and I am not. I cannot help but see myself as alone, small, weak, frightened, brittle, and easily hurt – always and forever an isolated fragment of consciousness drifting through space, incredibly and endlessly vulnerable and fragile in regards to what befalls me. The moment I see myself as a separated being – separate from God, separate from all other human beings, I am prone to fear, guilt, anxiety and worry as my constant state, as it is my belief that it is up to me to get myself out of every bind.

Personally I have had enough of inhabiting this Universe of Fear. I no longer choose to incarcerate myself in self-chosen, self-imposed solitary confinement. I have to rely on God to show me a better way. That way is to willingly and truly hand over my entrenched, ages-old perceptions of who I am to an Inner Guide that can help me see through the eyes of love and not fear. The fear-based ego consciousness that I have come to identify as myself must be voluntarily surrendered. With that I must relinquish my propensity to constantly evaluate and judge. I must cease from endlessly comparing myself to other human beings, separating myself again and again from them by compulsively seeing myself as either “better than”, “less than” or “different than” them.

If I am to be released from the Universe of Fear I have inhabited, I must see myself as the same as everybody, not different. I must discipline myself to see the commonalities, the oneness of our human pain and suffering, hopes and aspirations, and our shared, mutual need for forgiveness. If another and better way is to open up to me, it will require that I first being willing, then perceive, and ever more frequently experience myself to be the sun and not a solitary, splintered ray. To be the ocean and not a defiant, self-directed ripple of a wave. To be the entire galaxy and not a self-contained, ferociously independent star.

Unitary consciousness, the awareness of my oneness with all living things, and not the consciousness of separation is the only way to the unshakeable inner peace and freedom that I seek. It is, I believe, simultaneously the only way to a world of sane, respectful human relations that does not propel us, out of narrow, personal self-interests and the obsessive pursuit of individual wealth and safety, into catastrophic outcomes for us all.

Healing Through A Course In Miracles

A One Year Program In Remembering Inner Peace

It cannot be seen, only felt. It cannot be heard, yet it speaks to us gently, softly, imploringly, invitingly. It cannot be spoken, yet there is a hunger inside us for something that our words can never describe. It is the mystical longing for God, for Home, for Love; for a steadfast, unshakeable inner peace that nothing in the world can give us, but nothing in the world can take away. Like the eternal, persistent pull of the tides to the shore, we are relentlessly drawn to a homecoming and (re)union with the deep spiritual presence within and all around us.

How badly do you long to know this reality? How can you grow in your ability to connect with it? What do you believe your current values, priorities and obsessions will give you that inner peace will not? Are there still ways you are living in which you “gain the whole world, but lose your soul”?

In my lifelong study of psychology and over 30 year practice of psychotherapy, and having been a student of A Course In Miracles for over two decades, I have found no thought system with the psychological depth and power of the Course to address the emotional and spiritual confusion and malaise of our inner worlds. The most central practice and discipline which lies at the heart of its teachings is that I will never be able to know the experience of real peace, love and happiness from within the fear-based (ego) thought system that is my perpetual way of seeing. Yet I can turn to a non-ego presence (Holy Spirit) for correction of my perceptions that also lives in my mind, replacing fear with Love, illusion with truth and anxiety with peace. This is the miracle. Whenever I lose my peace for any reason, I can remember to ask for help and turn to this Source to see things and people differently.

Among the most paradigm-shifting teachings of A Course In Miracles, ones that the participants of this One Year Program will no doubt grapple with, are:

- It is my false belief that I have separated from God and my Heavenly Home that has catapulted me into a Universe of Fear.
- This sense of having rejected and turned my back on God produces (a largely unconscious) guilt that is based on the belief that God is angry with me and I will be punished for what I have done.
- This unconscious guilt and self-hatred lie behind my experience of pain, suffering, scarcity, adversity, sickness and even death.
- When I perceive myself to be attacked by another person, a situation, my body or the past, it is really my own ego self-attack that is orchestrating all of this.
- Instead of my perception telling me that the world is coming “at me”, the world is actually coming “from me” – that is, all of my experience originates **in my mind**.
- Every one of my thoughts, words, feelings and actions emanates from the fear-based, ego consciousness or the spiritual, Love-based consciousness and produces perceptions, experiences and results directly indicative of its origin. At every instant, and regardless of other people or circumstances, I have this choice.
- God is Love. Only Love is real. Only Love heals.
- Forgiveness returns me to the Divine Presence in my mind which underlies and peers through the lattice work of the events of time and space in my individual life.
- There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not bigger or harder than any other.
- The body is in the mind. The mind is not in the body.

MATERIALS: All participants will be asked to purchase and read *A Course In Miracles* text and proceed, at an individualized pace, with the 365 daily lessons of the Course workbook.

FORMAT: 6 experientially-based weekend workshops spaced approximately 2 months apart beginning in April, 2015; buddy system; weekly support group meetings (highly recommended)

COST: \$1650 + G.S.T. (payable over the course of the year). Bursaries available for people in financial need.

To register: Contact Reena Taank, seminar coordinator, at (604) 689-4532 or seminarsjoelbrass@gmail.com

UPCOMING SEMINARS

HEALING THE ORIGINAL PAIN OF YOUR LIFE: THE INNER CHILD SEMINAR

Many of us are aware that we are stuck emotionally or spiritually somewhere in our journey through life. These stuck places may show up as unwanted and self-defeating behaviors or symptoms such as:

- unhealthy relationships
- relationship breakdowns
- an excessive need for money, position or power
- constantly seeking the approval of others and fearing rejection
- constant, unstoppable busyness
- workaholic tendencies
- loneliness
- explosive emotional outbursts with loved ones
- dependency on alcohol, drugs, sex or shopping as a mood-enhancer
- family strife
- low self-esteem
- depression
- eating and sleep disorders
- internet addictions

All of these conditions are expressions of a soul in too much emotional pain and fear, recycling it over and over again in the present day, often onto people and in situations that have nothing to do with the original wounds which produced it.

This seminar will gently and powerfully escort you into some of the most formative moments, relationships and events of your early life so that you can identify the original source of your emotional pain and fear and learn how to heal and release it at its roots. It is my personal and professional experience that doing so can free you up in the present day to live a qualitatively new and fresh life and not just some re-enactment of your past.

DATE: SAT / SUN, MAR. 28 & 29, 2015

RELATIONSHIPS: THE WORK OF LOVE

In this seminar we examine ourselves as the perpetrators of pain. We examine the myriad flight and fight responses that we have employed to keep from our hearts and souls the very people we say we want to love, the very people who have committed the "crime" of loving us. This most certainly could include our love interest but we will also examine our relationship with our father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter and past loves to discover the ego patterns that have run us and our relationships into the ground. We begin to move from being baffled, righteous, or victimized by our love lives to taking 100% responsibility for the state that our most significant relationships are in. All of our dynamics and imposed barriers to real intimacy, committed love and monogamy are faced.

Only then can we discover and examine the components of a healthy, loving and mutually beneficial relationship. Only then can we discover that with courage, vulnerability, honesty and humility, we can begin to experiment with laying down our survival-oriented, fear based ego patterns and establish an entirely new base from which to interact with the people of our lives.

DATE: SAT / SUN, MAY 23 & 24, 2015

**COST - \$275.00 + GST per person (deferred payment plan available)
bursaries available to those in financial need**

If you have further questions or would like to register contact:

Reena (seminar coordinator) at (604) 689-4532 or

email: seminarsjoelbrass@gmail.com

