## The Story Behind A Course In Miracles For Dummies By Tom Wakechild

## How It Came About

I was an unlikely candidate or transmission vehicle for writing A Course In Miracles for Dummies. This is because I would be looked upon as a relatively new student with no formal training in ACIM. I drew no information from secondhand sources or previous publications about the course. People are often surprised to discover that prior to 2004 I had never even heard of A Course In Miracles. Being unfamiliar with the work, it is surprising that by 2007, A Course in Miracles for Dummies had been completed. This is why I would say that I was chosen and that ACIM for Dummies came through me and was not of me. It was something that I was chosen and guided to do through the Holy Spirit.

The reason that I was an unlikely candidate has nothing to do with my background. Instead, it was because I was no longer seeking to find anything new on the spiritual level. For me, my spiritual seeking years seemed to be over. I felt that I had already found what I had been looking for. For many years I had been on a mission of self-discovery with the goal of not having to return to this time-space continuum. I did not want to come back to earth. I had utilized the first 50 years of my life to move towards that goal. I felt that I had found what I was looking for and that the goal was within my reach. I knew I was the creator of my experiences. I thought I had already moved out of fear-based thinking and that I had found the inner peace that comes from trusting my Higher Self. Thus, I felt I had moved from being a seeker to someone who had found their path. It had been a convoluted path up the mountain but I was satisfied with my progress and felt that it was unnecessary to go off on some other path. Therefore, it is more appropriate to say that A Course in Miracles found me to be its instrument for I certainly was not looking for ACIM to enter my life at that time.

The path that I had chosen was a blend of the Eastern mystical traditions and the self-improvement concepts of Western thought. This strange combination had helped me become what I would call a practical mystic. Meditating daily, I was able to move quite successfully in the world of business and finance and yet maintain a high level of spirituality and inner peace. I was someone who was in the world but no longer attached to it. Hinduism has the concept of different stages of life that people should naturally pass through during their lifetime. According to Hinduism, around the age of 50, we should be looking at leaving the business world and focusing our attention on our spiritual growth on a full-time basis. This was my intent. I had already sold my business and was transitioning out of the business world. My wife longed to escape from the cold sunless, gray winters of Michigan and spend her winters in the sun. Unlike most Midwesterners, we felt that out destiny laid west of the Mississippi. We wished to explore the Southwest as a possible future home site.

Originally, we had just planned to visit the southwest and try to narrow down the list of possible communities that we might like to live in. Yet, upon this initial visit, we felt that we had found what we were looking for and we purchased a home in Arizona. This early purchase could allow my wife, Nancy, to spend her first winter out of the cold if she so desired. But unfortunately for me, I had a prior commitment that required my return to Michigan for the winter. Thus, if she where to stay, she would have to spend the winter alone. We decided to go for it. We set up housekeeping in our new winter home in the late fall. Nancy would remain throughout the winter while I would return to Michigan in early January to fulfill my commitment. Once completed, I was to rejoin my wife in Arizona. When the weather broke in the late spring, we would return to our Michigan home. Since she would be alone for about three months, I wanted her to develop a social support network of friends and neighbors that could help her pass her time while we were apart. It was during this initial stay in Arizona that Nancy decided to attend a weekly class that was beginning on A Course in Miracles. When I returned to Arizona that spring, I discovered that Nancy was still involved with ACIM.

In the spring of 2004, we returned to our Michigan home. Nancy would now have to be on her own if she were to continue studying the course. She continued her independent studies by reading the text, doing her workbook lessons and sometimes asking me questions about what she had read. When she referenced the text, it became apparent that the text was not the most clearly written document in the world. It was complex and mystifying. Each paragraph would often use pronouns that were difficult to determine what they originally referenced. You need to carefully go back to earlier paragraphs or sentences to be able to trace the antecedent for that unclear reference or pronoun. Once this was done however, the passage might become clearer but too often they seemed to remain nonsensical to the everyday reader. The text was not easy to decipher and often used terminology that had specific unique definitions that were different from common everyday usage. The text required a comprehensive systematic study plan since a casual reading of the material would not release ACIM's secrets for retraining the mind. This mind training entails the reprogramming of our own egoic fear-based thought system. If the reader is unwilling to examine the textual context outside of their own fear-based thinking, the reader will encounter a great deal of stress and the Course will seem insane and counter intuitive. This is because the ego always resists any attempt to change its old programming. This old programming supports the belief that you are the body. It tells you that you are a victim and not the creator of your world. It takes a great deal of fortitude and will power to change this mind set and go through this process of retraining your mind. This is why the workbook lessons have been provided. The workbook moves the intellectual concepts of the text from the head to the heart. Since many students fail to do the daily workbook lessons, the change they claim they seek is not forthcoming. ACIM requires effort, not just good intentions. Since most of us are entrenched in our fear-based programming, the peace of God that is our destiny remains an elusive mystery to our minds. The ego has no desire to change. As the course says, our tolerance for pain is great, but it is not unlimited and until you say, “There must be a better way,” you will continue to follow the advice of the fear-based thought system of the ego.

Since I wanted to encourage Nancy to continue her work with ACIM, I thought it would be helpful and most appropriate to actually read the text. I was fascinated by its claims of authorship. Since ACIM claimed to be a work dictated by Jesus to Helen Schucman, I was interested in seeing what it actually said. The book seemed to call to me. When I read the introduction, “Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.” I knew that this was not a book of this world. Although the main ideas were not new to me, they were presented in a systematic way that included a complete philosophical argument that revelation had taught me, but that revelation could not explain. What was more fascinating was the idea that it was not just a theoretical text. It actually had a workbook that was included. This workbook could allow anyone to actively participate in the process of their own self-enlightenment without the need of some outside guru. If this was the case, this would be truly helpful and liberating for human consciousness. I tried ACIM out. I did the work. After one year I had completed the 365 workbook lessons. I realized that ACIM was a complete independent self-study class that was available to anyone who was really serious about their own spiritual growth. What had taken me years of study could be achieved inexpensively by thoroughly studying and practicing one book. It was self-contained. Not only that, if properly understood, ACIM could move the student beyond simply managing or coping with their fear. It could actually provide a new paradigm that would overcome fear. This new paradigm was based on forgiveness and love. I realized that over the course of my studies, I had become excellent at coping with fear but still had not completely removed fear from my life. Intellectually, I have never been able to fully reconcile the contradictory concepts of a God of unconditional love with free will. This apparent contradiction had always left a fear-based grain of doubt in my mind. I had always wanted to intellectually understand what revelation had taught me. That there is just the One Self and we are That One.

Both the Buddha and Jesus came from the mystical traditions. Both taught from their own insights which came from their personal revelation. They quieted their egoic mind and went within. Buddha's teachings came more from the seventh chakra, which is associated with the mind or the intellect. Jesus' teachings came from the fourth chakra which is associated with the heart. Two thousand years ago when Jesus walked the earth, mankind did not have the scientific knowledge or the language to explain the psychology behind his teachings. His teachings were to be understood through the heart, not the mind. After Jesus' death and the death of his direct disciples, the meaning of his esoteric message became even murkier than when he had originally pronounced them. Personal revelation has never been a practical means for the masses to obtain an understanding of someone else's teachings. If what was later to be called Christianity was to have a wide appeal to the masses, all its teachings needed to be codified. This codification would allow the new message to be taught in a uniform way rather than through individual personal revelation. Thus, the church leaders attempted to explain Jesus' teachings on the egoic level of the body-mind. Unfortunately, any attempt to explain Jesus' teachings like “I and the Father are One,' is difficult. It is impossible to explain this concept of Oneness at the egoic level that perceives the separation to be real. Some church leaders, believing themselves to be separate ego-bodies, could not help but interpret Jesus' message on a fear based level. Thus, Jesus, who claimed to be just like us, was made into God's only begotten Son and thus, different from you and I. This clearly implies that the separation is real. When you attempt to explain Jesus' esoteric teachings on the level of the egoic mind, they became shrouded in mystery because they are unexplainable on the egoic level.

ACIM is Jesus' attempt to bridge the gap between personal revelation and our ego's need to intellectually understand. Jesus is trying to correct the multiple mistakes about his teachings that continue to perpetuate the fear-based thought system that we see so prevalent in the western religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Two thousand years ago, the concept of a Oneness Of All That Is could only be understood through the mystical tradition of personal revelation. By the 20th century, however, mankind had started to unlock the psychological secrets of our own mind's ability to project its internal beliefs upon the world that we perceive. Later in the 20th century, with the arrival of quantum physics and string theory, the idea that this world could be created through individuated consciousness is not the crazy idea that it would have been two thousand years ago. String theorists now tell us that whole galaxies exist merely because there is some astronomer, somewhere, that wants to observe them. If an astronomer's conscious desire can create a galaxy, the idea that we can create our own world of private individuated perception does not seem so far-fetched. In ACIM, Jesus utilizes the text to explain his teachings on the intellectual level to satisfy our need to understand things egoically. He couples the text with the workbook lessons that are aimed at transporting these ideas from the mind to the heart. Thus, in A Course in Miracles, Jesus has provided the reader a complete system of self-study that can achieve the desired results of reawakening our One Self to the truth of what we truly are. This can be done either through the mind or the heart. Coupled together, the workbook and text provide a student with the ability to move from the egoic fear-based thought system to a new paradigm based on forgiveness, love and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A mystic does not rely on the intellectual study of someone else's teachings. A mystic learns through personal revelation. Revelation is inspired through direct insight. Although a mystic may have difficulty explaining to another why and what he knows, the mystic will know that he knows. The mystical experience, being personal, requires no explanation. Revelation just is. Yogi Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of the Self Realization Fellowship, teaches that the best way to understand the written word is to read a few words, a sentence or passage. Next, you seek guidance and finally, you meditate on those words. Through this three-step process, one gains the wisdom that the passage seeks to inspire within you. This is what I did with the ACIM text material that became ACIM for Dummies. Because I was already free from most egoic fear-based thinking, my mind could act as a clearer channel for inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Yogananda's three step study method reduces the egoic mind chatter and quiets the mind, thus allowing the practitioner to hear the truth.

When I first began studying ACIM, I would make notes on what the passages said. I would sit at the dining room table for hours reading and studying the material. Most people would consider this a waste of time and not worth the effort. But I pressed on because that is what guidance told me I should do. Perhaps, more importantly, I pressed on because I was getting something out of it. It was all making sense. I realized that the material was synthesizing all the assorted parts of the puzzle that I had gleaned from my previous studies. Over the past years, I had found many pieces to the puzzle. Yet, no one system seemed to have the whole answer. Each system often was only a partial solution. But through the past amalgamation of these various programs, I had developed a working concept of the whole. Yet, there were still many missing parts or gaps that remained beyond the reach of my previous studies. Everything fit loosely together but the reasoning behind it still remained a mystery in my mind. The ACIM text was solving the whole puzzle on an intellectual, or should I be as bold to say, on the egoic level of understanding. The text did not move the information to the heart that, of course, was left to the workbook lessons. But the text did provide practical solutions to everyday problems. It was not just an esoteric document that sounded nice but was impossible or impractical to implement in your everyday world of individuated perception. After one year dedicated to the Course, I had a good working knowledge of what the Course taught and more importantly what it could do when you choose to silence the ego and listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout this period, I had many serendipitous events that mysteriously moved me forward in this work. When we returned to Arizona the next fall, I attended Nancy's ACIM class which consisted of reading from the text and some discussion. When the class was having a difficult time understanding a paragraph, I would often read the paragraph out loud while replacing the pronouns with their antecedents. This simple exercise helped clarify the passage. One day someone gave me a complete electronic version of ACIM on a computer CD. Since I was computer illiterate, I was unable to access this CD. Yet, once again an unsolicited volunteer showed up at my home and got this CD functional and then proceeded to show me how to work the word-processing program on my computer. People kept showing up in my life to secretly assist me with this undisclosed mission. Numerous people arrived on my doorstep offering materials that they felt guided to give me. My guidance indicated that I should not read or study any material that was not directly channeled from Jesus. I was not to read any ACIM material that came from any secondhand sources. My study was to be limited to direct source content only. This was fine with me since I preferred to keep my mind clear from any second party observations. Direct source material is always preferable over secondhand thinking that can contaminate the reception process.

The actual material for A Course in Miracles for Dummies was generated without the intent of it ever being made public. It was to be a private document that I was drawn to work on because that is what spirit advised me to do. No one was advised as to what I was doing and I had no idea why I was directed to do it. I just followed my inner guidance and trusted. In hindsight, I believe that I was given the task simply because I would do it. Each night at approximately 2:00 to 3:00 AM, I would be awakened by spirit to continue the writing process. I would normally cover one subsection a day. I would read the prior, current and next subsection of the text that I was working on. Next, I would meditate on it. Finally I was directed to go to the computer and transcribe what was forthcoming. I would ask for guidance then replace the text pronouns and references with their antecedents. I would then write the explanatory notes that came into my awareness for that ACIM paragraph. I completed one paragraph before moving to the next paragraph. After it was completed, I would normally go back to bed. That was the daily process.

The materials stayed on my computer with seemingly no other purpose other than for my own personal insight and as an exercise in following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Eventually, this body of work caught up with the same chapter we were studying in our class. I showed the material to Nancy and asked what she thought. Since she found it helpful, I decide to take my annotated version of the material to the class so that I could use it as a reference tool. Some of the other students wanted their own copies since they found it helpful in their comprehension of the teachings. One of the class members suggested that I eventually publish the material. I told her that would be impossible since the material pivoted off of previously copyrighted materials. I thought that that would be the end of the matter. Instead, she informed me that the copyright that been broken and that she had been involved in the case. She also told me that she had received a letter to that effect and she would give me a copy. Within an hour she was at my doorstep with the letter. I still didn't see any likelihood of the material that I was working on extending beyond this class. It was too voluminous for any publisher to pick up for such a small niche market. So I just continued with the daily processes thankful that someone had found the information useful.

Later someone suggested since this was the computer age that I should get a website and he would help me develop it. He also suggested that I should create an e-book and make it available to the public. This ultimately led to the website acourseinmiraclesfordummies.com. This website is now part of my current endingfear.org. website. When we got the website up and running, I felt that my tasks had been completed. To my surprise, people throughout the world discovered this website and found it aided them in their effort to rediscover who they truly are.

Note: acourseinmiraclesfordummies.com. website is no longer functional. This old website has been updated and rename as understandingACIM.org. It is a part of my current updated parent website endingfear.org. Endingfear.org’s goal is the elimination of fear without requiring any understanding or background in A Course In Miracles. It uses cutting edge science and practical how to steps to manage, control and eliminate fear in your life. It is geared toward the general public and avoids references to ACIM.

 Understanding ACIM.org’s focus is still the study of ACIM and how to use it to eliminate fear in your life. Therefore, it is both a spiritual and practical path to managing your fears. Thus, both share the same ultimate goal of eliminating fear, but the approach is different. One emphasizing the scientific, the other the spiritual to gain the inner peace and freedom from fear that we all seek. Both are designed to provide practical tools that you can use today to live a happier, fuller life.

I trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide whomever this material is meant for.

All my life, I have felt like I was preparing myself for something. Preparing for what? I did not know but if and when it arose, I wanted to be ready. With ACIM for Dummies completed, I feel that I have fulfilled my life's purpose. Throughout this process I have felt guided and directed by spirit. I am grateful for all the help that I have received and continue to receive on this project from both people like you and the Holy Spirit.

Create a great day

Love and peace,

Tom Wakechild