

On Kenneth Wapnick

Helping Remove the Blinders

by Rosemarie LoSasso, Loral Reeves, and Jeffrey Seibert



Kenneth Wapnick taught and wrote about *A Course in Miracles* for more than 35 years, publishing more than 30 books and over 200 audio and video recordings of his classes and lectures, some works authored with his wife, Gloria. He is widely regarded as the world's foremost teacher of the Course, which he has said is the most important spiritual document for our age. Kenneth, with a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, was an associate of Dr. Helen Schucman, scribe of the Course, and Dr. William Thetford, Helen's close friend, colleague, and collaborator in the scribing. Kenneth worked with Helen for over a year preparing the Course for publication. In 1983, Kenneth and Gloria began the Foundation for *A Course in Miracles* in Ardsley NY, which moved to Crompond NY, then Roscoe NY, and is now located in Temecula CA.

The Foundation's principal purpose over the years has been to assist students in understanding the Course through classes, discussion groups, and written, audio, video, and digital publications. The depth of Kenneth's understanding of the Course's thought system, his clarity and humor, and his constant demonstration of the Course's gentle message of forgiveness and oneness continue to attract large numbers of people to his writings and recordings. It is the Foundation's mission since Kenneth's death in December of 2013 to assure that his truly remarkable legacy of teachings continues to be available, now and for future generations. Website: www.facim.org

In this article, we'd like to discuss briefly the importance of reading the Course as a mind and not a body, one of many themes that Kenneth has emphasized over the years in his teaching. These themes have been central for us, in our various roles as students, staff members, and teachers at the Foundation, in developing a deeper appreciation of the Course, helping us to recognize our many blinders and blocks to understanding, accepting, and integrating its profound and radical message into our lives.

Kenneth has often said that we will never truly understand the Course if we read it only as a body, trying to relate its message to the self we really think we are, living here in the world. Much of what it says will either make no sense or will go completely past us if we don't realize at some level that the "you" Jesus is addressing throughout the Course is the decision-

making mind. (See e.g., *From The Lighthouse*, pp. 126-27.) But just what is Kenneth talking about when he says we must recognize ourselves as a decision-making mind? The Course does not use this specific wording, although the idea is implicit on almost every page, as Jesus constantly reminds us that we can make a different choice. What

is this choice or decision that Jesus is asking us to recognize, so we can make a different one, and who is it that makes that decision?

Identified as bodies, we cannot help but experience ourselves as victims, unfairly

treated by people and forces outside ourselves. And so when we attempt to forgive another, it will always be for something we believe has really happened and has been done to us that we now need to learn to look at differently. Certainly we do not appear to have a choice about much of what seems to happen to us, and it is not at this level that Jesus is asking us

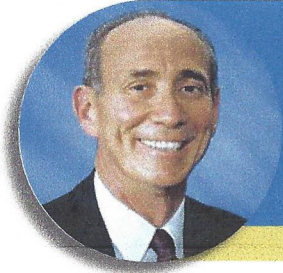
"And so the situation in the world, with my brother, is not what needs to change. It is the choice in my mind for guilt and separation that needs to be changed."

to make a different choice.

Kenneth has often emphasized in his teaching that the world and our brother can seem to affect us only because we have first decided *in our mind* to identify with the ego, that thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, which insists we are separate and have attacked our loving Source to establish our separate identity. We are not being asked to choose to deny that we experience ourselves as separate from God and our brothers, but we are being asked, as Kenneth has repeatedly pointed out, to recognize the *purpose* we have given the world and our brother as a defense against this guilt in our mind. The guilt over the belief we have separated from God, which the ego tells us is an outrageous assault on our Father Who only loves us, is so intense that we need to find someone or something else to blame for it. And so, at a level that remains unconscious to all of us for a long time (as does that choice for separation) we look to hold others responsible for our upset, whatever form it may take, so that we can insist that they are the guilty ones. And from the perspective of ourselves and our brothers as bodies, that conclusion certainly feels justified.

Now we don't easily remember that we have first *as a mind* chosen the ego, and then chosen to defend against the guilt that comes with that choice by projecting it outside our mind. So Kenneth calls our attention to the Course's teaching that we can turn the tables on the ego and use our upset at our brother as a clear indication that we have made this concealed choice in the mind for the ego and guilt, but that a different choice can be made. If we are not willing to consider that the cause of our upset is not our brother and the world, but that it is coming from a decision in our own mind, we will not recognize that there is a different choice to be made at that level, a choice that involves first recognizing that

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we don't like the outcome that has followed from the choice we have made for our ego. (See e.g., *From The Lighthouse*, pp. 305-307, 332, 335.)

And so the situation in the world, with my brother, is not what needs to change. It is the choice in my mind for guilt and separation that needs to be changed. I can decide to pull back the projection of my own guilt that I have placed on my brother's body and ask for help in looking at that guilt, which seems so real to me or I would not have tried to get rid of it by projecting it. But I must not look at the guilt on my own, or I will only frighten myself. However, as Kenneth repeatedly reminds us, we can look at our guilt with Jesus' or the Holy Spirit's gentle presence beside us in our mind, which will dissolve the guilt

and leave only an experience of innocence and peace, if we're willing to let go of the guilt. And then we can look back at the situation in the world, with our brother, that had seemed to be the cause of our upset, and we will now see it differently, for we will no longer have a need to project our vanished guilt onto him, no matter what his body may have seemed to do. (See *Form versus Content: Sex and Money*, pp. 14-15.) In principle, at least, that is how it can work, although there are many reasons we may resist accepting responsibility for all of our feelings, as Kenneth has also helped us see. As we are willing to put this process into practice, we will begin to understand that we are not forgiving our brother for what he has done, but we are learning to forgive ourselves for the choice we have

made, as a decision-making mind, for the ego and its guilt. And as that shift in perspective from body to mind becomes clearer, the meaning of many previously unclear, even obtuse passages in the Course, will begin to jump out at us.

We will be exploring related themes, through video presentations of Kenneth's teaching, at Miracle Distribution Center's International Conference in August. ✧