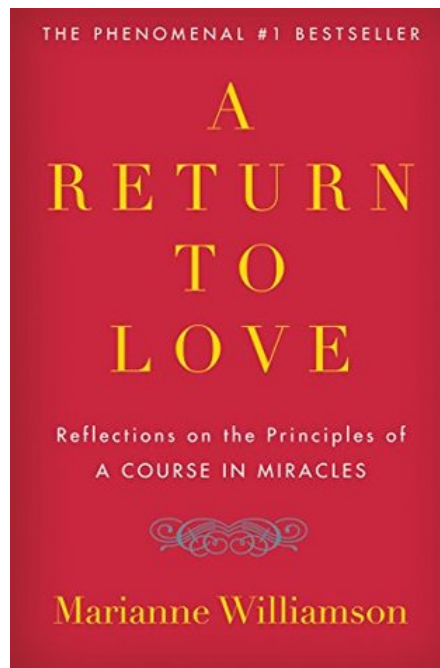




A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"

Marianne Williamson

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A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles" Marianne Williamson

Back by popular demand -- and newly updated by the author -- the mega-bestselling spiritual guide in which Marianne Williamson shares her reflections on *A Course in Miracles* and her insights on the application of love in the search for inner peace.

Williamson reveals how we each can become a miracle worker by accepting God and by the expression of love in our daily lives. Whether psychic pain is in the area of relationships, career, or health, she shows us how love is a potent force, the key to inner peace, and how by practicing love we can make our own lives more fulfilling while creating a more peaceful and loving world for our children.

A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles" Details

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From Reader Review A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles" for online ebook

Mysterium says

I have to admit that I didn't know too much about A Course In Miracles until just recently when I "inherited" a congregation of Science of Mind followers for my Interfaith Church that I pastor. Science of Mind (not to be confused with Christian Science & Scientology) is a way of approaching strength and struggle by framing ones mindset to see results. Like most theology and spiritual ways, it is subject to debate and validity depending on who is reading it and their own personal agenda and bias. I am very objective, and open minded, so I try to use spiritual helps as all positive things and glean wisdom from them and apply it to various groups and individuals. A Course in Miracles was bad mouthed by many Christian groups as "New Age" and heretical. It is really quite far from it if one applies it with common sense. I would dare say that this wonderful book, A Return To Love is filled with many Judeo /Christian principals and prayers. It is actually more "Christian" in it's opinions than many bold faced Christian books that I have read on self-help.

I feel A Return to Love can be used by all, regardless of creed and faith background. It offers some amazing perspectives on everyday struggles that we face as humans, and offers hope and advice that is easy to apply and doesn't insult your intelligence. Ms. Williamson is a wonderful writer who is very down to earth in her words while addressing some highly spiritual topics. She uses humour well, and shares many examples from her own life. No high horses are found in this guide for life.

Mine the wisdom out of it and apply it. I think you will see results and agree that much of her advice is sound and spiritually positive. I wish you deep peace and healing light.

Valerie says

As anyone who's seen my frequent updates on here could probably tell, *A Return to Love* was a gut check and affirmation of so many things I've been feeling, experiencing, and processing lately. It's been on my list for a while, but reading it now felt like divine timing given the other things occurring in my life at the moment. The book essentially stresses the importance of going into any and every situation with love at the forefront. Williamson does use Christian symbols and figures throughout the text, but because the foundation from which they're coming is so focused on love, it doesn't feel like a Christian conversion ploy like some other books may.

I connected the most with passages from the Relationships and Work chapters because those are places I was actively working on before and while reading this book. However, the whole book has gems on gems on gems. It's definitely for those with an open mind, but perhaps it can also be the text to open one's mind?

I initially borrowed this book from the library, but I'll definitely be adding this to my collection sooner rather than later. The subjects explored and tackled are things I know I'll be grappling with and addressing for the length of my life and I look forward to having this text to help me through it all.

Beth says

I normally don't rate books that I finish as one star but I simply had to with this nonsense. The author is clearly clueless about the real world. I did limp to the end of this but it was a truly painful experience and I was tempted to throw the book against the wall, and/or light it on fire several times.

Heather says

This is my "go-to" book for hope in life... If this quote from the book doesn't get you, then it isn't for you (Although I first read it 20-odd years ago, it still gives me a smile on a cloudy day)....

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Andrea says

There are a handful of good tidbits in here ~ learn to forgive people, for example. Always a useful tip. God is love ~ also useful, especially for people who have trouble with the concept of God.

The rest of the book is an egotistical tromp through Ms. Williamson's philosophies. This is not A Course in Miracles. This is her interpretation of ACIM, which is something completely different. She comes across as hugely impressed with her own "wit," without actually providing solid advice. She justifies anger and advocates using prayer in lieu of personal responsibility (particularly for one's health). Worst of all, she presents dozens of flighty concepts that seem lovely on the surface, but which provide no real, tangible results...of course, she doesn't follow up any of the stories *with* results, which only makes it easier to see that it's all conceptual and not tangible, anyway!

Here are some of the best examples I could find to explain the above.

Best example of trying to disguise her self-absorption as something witty(?):

"A girlfriend once told me she had broken up with her boyfriend.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because he didn't call me for five days."

I didn't say anything

"He knows I need verbal reassurance on a daily basis," she continued. "So I set my limits. Don't you think that's good?"

"No," I said. "I think it's childish." I paused. "Have you considered accepting him as he is?"

"Well, thanks for the support," she said.

I responded, "You're welcome."

[Ed. note: scene ends there. Follows on the heels of advice to be compassionate.]

Best example of horrible advice, or advice likeliest to go terribly awry:

A man mentioned to me recently that when he was a child, his father never gave him presents. I suggested that a healing would come from his sending his father lots of presents now.

[Ed. note: this section was not followed up with any results of the man's attempt to heal his relationship with his father by overcompensating for his own deprivation.]

Best example of not actually answering someone's question:

Once when I was lecturing in New York, a young man stood up and asked me about affirmations. At the time, "Hill Street Blues" was a popular TV show. He said, "I've been writing down fifty times before I go to sleep at night, 'I have a regular part on Hill Street Blues, I have a regular part on Hill Street Blues.' Are you telling me I shouldn't do that?"

I said, "You can write those affirmations fifty times before you go to bed at night, and chances are good you'll pull in a part on Hill Street Blues because the mind is very powerful. But for all you know, a year will pass, an important director will be wanting you for the lead in a major feature film, but they won't be able to get you because you're under contract for a little part in Hill Street Blues!"

[ed. note: cue audience laughter. Scene ends without follow-up.]

Best example of lovely New Age advice with no follow-up, therefore disallowing her readers to see any tangible results:

I told my [politician] friend that the key to a successful campaign would be to surrender the campaign to the Holy Spirit and ask that it be used as an instrument of His peace. My friend said that sounded great, but he needed to figure out how to do that. I told him he didn't have to figure out anything. "All you have to do is to be willing," I told him, "and the Holy Spirit will enter where He is invited. You'll be brilliant. You'll be charismatic. Don't try to figure out your message; just ask God what He would have you say. Step back and let Him lead the way."

[ed. note: that's it. No conclusion as to whether this guy's campaign was actually successful. Hm, I wonder why...]

IMO, she's just a another sham with a big picture of herself on the cover. And yes, I realize I'm about 15 years behind the times but every other yoga teacher I know seems to love her, so I had to check it out eventually.

Colleen Wainwright says

[Wherein I out myself as a believer] I picked up this book after attending one of Marianne Williamson's weekly lectures here in Los Angeles. I'd found the talk itself unfocused and difficult to track, but I'd been blown away by the Q&A period afterward: it's rare to witness a speaker that good at speaking off the cuff, especially to different (and thorny, and wide-ranging) personal issues; girlfriend was in the zone completely, channeling the bejangles out of some kind of benevolent spirit—and one with a delightful sense of humor to match its deep compassion.

I tore through the book, both because it's written simply and because so much of it made sense: that God (or

"God", if you're not there yet) is love; that you will always feel better living in love than in fear; that lying and obfuscation are the enemies of happiness, and so on. I must have been halfway through before I realized that the stories it contained seemed familiar because they were—I'd read them in this very book, back in December of 2011, just after a miracle you'd have thought would humble me, but a good two months away from finally giving in. I am my stubborn mother's willful daughter, to be sure.

I have not read *A Course in Miracles*, but if this book accurately translates its principles (and there's no reason to think it doesn't), ACIM is a mixture of Eastern (Hindu, Buddhist) and Western (Judeo-Christian) philosophies, heavy on the Western/Christian. (And a lot of the language she uses to translate is straight out of 12-step, which, again, leads right back to Christianity.) Which is to say that there's nothing in here that's particularly revelatory, and plenty that is sensible. I'm not sure that as a philosophy, ACIM would survive deep scrutiny—and there are plenty of skeptical and Christian sites on the web that state just that. But except for the last dozen pages or so, which get into some pretty trippy ACIM interpretations of Christian symbolism, it provides a sturdy enough framework for spiritual growth, with dozens of lovely prayers and metaphors for hewing to a path of love.

April says

This book changed my life, but I NEVER recommend it to anyone because it found me at a time that it could provide answers to my own personal questions. It has, of course, a huge following and the backing of its own sizeable foundation, so obviously I am not the only one who was able to gain from it. Anyhow, if it finds you, may it find you lost and leave you found, as it did for me.

Tim Britton says

I have yet to find a book or an Audio book that reaches as deep into you as this one does. A Return to Love is a great Book, but it is a truly incredible Audio book! The tone of her voice, and the way it's spoken is so perfect, that you hear every word, and feel she is talking directly to YOU! I have listened to 100's of Audio books over the years, and have not found anything close to this one. Deepak, Millman, Lucado, Dyers, and as much as I hate to say it, even Mariannes other audios don't hold the magic this one does. If someone has found an audio that gets as deep into your soul as this one does, PLEASE write me and let me know what it is. And Marianne, Please consider doing an Unabridged version of the audio. If you have not listened to this audio book yet, and are looking for some spiritual enlightenment, you have no idea what your missing out on here! Buy the Tape, even if you have read the book!!! Time and time again, I have gone back and listened to this tape, and it never loses a bit of the magic I felt the first time I heard it. This Audio will remind you of so much you have forgotten through the years. The best Audio book I have EVER listened too!

Chavalita says

Ok, this book is what every confused cristian needs to read! LOL This book is too amazing to write a short review so I will try to sum it up. We all are born into a certain religion but sometimes we don't know exactly what to believe. We follow certain rules our belief system has set up but not enough to be considered a good cristian, or a faithful catholic, etc. So I think that a lot of us end up giving up on religion and God. Big mistake! God is Love, that is what I learned through this book. Yes..you've heard that a million times before but after re-learning it through this book you will finally comprehend just what that means. We are not bad

people, no matter what we've done. We are made to the image of God who is Love. When life goes wrong and we are wounded some of us act in a wrongful way out of fear (the Ego) and separate further and further from our starting point (Love) but we can return to love whenever we'd like....by shifting our perception...by not giving in to the ego's illusions...by not allowing our mind to be controlled by fear. It is so much deeper than I could ever summarize but the lesson to be learned is one that will stick with you for the rest of your life...if you truly grasp this concept and put it into practice you will not see your world the same ever again...you will discover where it is that you have to go when you are at your worst, lowest, and weakest moments in life. Words could never explain how grateful I am to have read this book at my age...it avoided many years of wandering through life feeling confused, lost, and alone.

Cathy says

Wow. I really need to read it again. This book spun me on my head. The almighty EGO was more powerful than I had realized, and it's such a relationship spoiler!

Tina Wright says

This is, quite simply, one of the best books on spirituality and self-help ever written. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Charlton Lee says

I knew of this book for a long time, but never read it. However, after a difficult breakup with my fiancée, it was recommended that I read this. Actually, one of the main reasons why I never read it is because I thought it was for women (a chick book). Swallowing my pride and needing something profound to read, A Return To Love was exactly what I needed. Also, as a hardened military guy; I allowed myself to 'feel' her experience through me.

I'm happy that I allowed myself to loosen up and be healed by reading this great book. Overall, I think I'm a better man for it.

Norbert says

There is something peculiar and paradoxical about New Age spirituality and that is fully embodied and exemplified by the personality of Marianne Williamson. Who is this famous Marianne of www.marianne.com? Daughter of an immigration lawyer in Texas, she went to the Claremont colleges in California but apparently did not graduate with a degree. Instead, she experimented with sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll. Rather than getting a regular professional career in law or medicine, she became a single mother, a bookstore manager, and then a spiritual teacher. Eventually, she published A Return to Love around 1992, made it to Oprah, and skyrocketed to NY Times bestselling author status. Now she is one of Oprah's best friends and teaches her interpretation of New Age spirituality on cruise ships, very much like the character Elizabeth Costello in J.M. Coetzee's novel by that name. She hobnobs with the rich and famous and is very wealthy herself. She has founded charities but has also garnered tremendous criticism for her temper and

judgmental qualities. She is sexy for her age and dresses more than well when she goes in front of her rapt audiences. Her lectures, however, are all variations on the same material she published in her first book--A Return to Love. In fact, her jokes are canned, as in this one she told a couple of years ago, which in fact came from her first book published in the 1990's: "I studied with an Indian guru, but I wondered to myself: what does he know about life when he doesn't even date?"

As Marianne herself repeatedly states, A Return to Love is "Cliff Notes" to A Course in Miracles, which is often considered the scripture of the New Age. However, because the Course is a channeled text that sees Christ in everyone and forgiveness as the sole purpose of life, it can be hard to decipher for the average reader. This is where Marianne comes in: as the interpreter. She uses her own experiences to illustrate Course lessons and readers love her not only because they can better appreciate the Course after reading her but they must also share her foibles, as they are known to laugh at her jokes, despite them having been told countless times.

C.E. G says

I read this because I heard RuPaul say it had changed his life, and I'm pretty curious about the kind of self-help RuPaul reads. I thought this was just OK. The advice was solid, though it felt out of touch at times, like a few of Williamson's values don't align with mine. It was really interesting to see how often AIDS was brought up though, as it was written at the height of the American epidemic. There were some quotes that I copied down, finding resonance in them:

"You are a child of God. You were created in a blinding flash of creativity, a primal thought when God extended Himself in love. Everything you've added on since is useless."

"The perfect you is the love within you. Your job is to allow the Holy Spirit to remove the fearful thinking that surrounds your perfect self, just as excess marble surrounded Michelangelo's perfect statue."

"When we choose to love, then life is peaceful. When we turn away from love, the pain sets in."

"Faith isn't blind, it's visionary."

"Everyone we meet will either be our crucifier or our savior, depending on what we choose to be to them. Focusing on their guilt drives the nails of self-loathing more deeply into our own skin. Focusing on their innocence sets us free."

"Do you prefer to be right or happy?"

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Stacy Stosich says

This book is the source of the famous quote which is often misattributed to Nelson Mandela, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us'....." I mostly read the book because it was the source of this famous quote. Overall it was a good book--there were some interesting ideas and engaging anecdotes to illustrate them. However, I didn't give it five stars because I felt that it was somewhat repetitive and a tad wandering. I didn't feel that the organizational scheme was especially strong. Also, I was a little irritated by her continual shifting in the way that she referred to God. Sometimes she referred to him as a person, but sometimes she referred to him as this mystic love force that is in all of us. It's interesting that she is sometimes very aligned to LDS thought—such as in her idea that we have been alive and will be alive forever since life extends beyond the body; yet some of her other ideas are very unaligned. If you can overlook some of her new age mumbo jumbo (one part that is especially controversial is her suggestion for victims of aids/cancer to write letters to the disease) then you might enjoy the book.

Now that I've given you the caveat, let me share some of the interesting things about the book. Basically the whole book is based on her perspective on love and how we need to change the world by letting God's love shine through us. She calls this being a miracle worker. I would say her biggest premise is that we are not hurt by love that we are denied, but we are hurt by love that we deny others. I think it's often true—forgiveness brings healing. She also asserts that the opposite of love is fear, the only moment that matters is the present moment, what people say or do is not who they are (p. 96), and we need to surrender to God by giving up attachment to results (p. 56).

Actually one of my favorite quotes from the book isn't the famous one. She says, "The experience of love is a choice we make, a mental decision to see love as the only real purpose and value in any situation. Until we make that choice, we keep striving for results that we think would make us happy. But we've all gotten things that we thought would make us happy, only to find that they didn't. This external searching—looking to anything other than love to complete us and to be the source of our happiness—is the meaning of idolatry. Money, sex, power, or any other worldly satisfaction offers just temporary relief for minor existential pain" (57). This reminds me of Moroni 7:46. If we don't have charity—we have nothing. I think that scripture isn't just Heavenly Father chastising us and telling us that if we are not charitable we are bad people and we are cast out. He's saying that everything else of this world will fall away—as Marianne Williamson would say everything else is an illusion) but only charity is lasting and will bring true happiness.

One of my favorite anecdotes is a good way to sum up the book. She shares the story from another book "Quantum Healing" by Dr. Deepak Chopra. For a research experiment in the 1970's rabbits were fed a toxic diet to study the effects of high cholesterol. However, the researchers noticed that one group of rabbits was inconsistent and experienced fewer negative symptoms. It was discovered that the only difference was that the student feeding those rabbits liked to take them out of the cages and pet them. The point is that love can have effects unexplained by science which is something I believe. The idea sort of ties into the next book I am reading Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.