

Turning
Inner Guidance
Into Outer Influence

MIRACLES AT WORK



EMILY BENNINGTON



sounds true
BOULDER, COLORADO

CONTENTS

FOREWORD by Marianne Williamson . . . ix

INTRODUCTION Is Business Spiritual? . . . xiii

A Note on the Philosophy
and Structure of This Book . . . xix

PART ONE FIRE YOUR SELF

1 Perfection Is Not a Matter of Degree . . . 3

2 The Detour into Fear . . . 13

3 Spiritual Intelligence Block #1:
Projection Makes Perception . . . 27

4 Spiritual Intelligence Block #2:
Specialness: The Great Dictator of the Wrong
Decisions . . . 37

5 Spiritual Intelligence Block #3:
The Need to Self-Sabotage . . . 49

PART TWO HIRE YOUR Self

6 What Is a Miracle? . . . 63

7 Meet Your New Mentor . . . 75

8 The Holy Instant . . . 89

9	Your Primary Function . . .	103
10	The Defenseless Defense . . .	117
11	The Gift of Joy . . .	129
EPILOGUE	A New Depth of Being . . .	141
	How Do I Handle This? Your <i>Miracles at Work</i> Questions Answered . . .	145
	About <i>A Course in Miracles</i> Frequently Asked Questions . . .	153
	Acknowledgments . . .	161
	Notes . . .	163
	About the Author . . .	165



PERFECTION IS NOT A MATTER OF DEGREE

When my first son was eighteen months old we had him tested for autism. He was slow on motor skills, had troubling sensory issues, and despite the fact that his playmates were already stringing together basic sentences, the only word he could muster was “Hi.” It was literally all he would say, over and over again, all day long.

“Hi.”

“Hi.”

“Hi.”

Out of answers, eventually our pediatrician sent us to a psychologist who ran a number of tests.

Does he accept help solving puzzles?

Can he transition to new activities without clinging to the old ones?

Does he get overly upset if his toys are taken away?

There are few things more distressing than waiting helplessly on the sidelines for a diagnosis of your child. And yet, after weeks of worrying, we were told that our son was going to be fine.

“He appears interested in developing relationships,” said the psychologist. “Children with autism struggle with interpersonal skills, and in extreme cases they fail to see the difference between a person and an object like a chair.”

As a career coach, this struck me as somewhat ironic since it rather fittingly described the majority of my clients’ issues at work. While I was obviously relieved that the appointment went well, I admit I left that day thinking about what a fascinating experiment it would be to give professionals the same kind of test in the workplace that my son had just received in this doctor’s office.

How do we collaborate on puzzles?

How do we transition to new experiences without clinging to old ones?

How do we react when our “toys” are taken away?

It’s strange that the absence of meaningful interaction is considered a medical condition in children but often viewed as a strength in adults. If you’ve ever been treated by a boss or coworker with no more consideration than the average office chair, then you know exactly what I’m talking about here. To succeed in business requires the kind of “thick skin” and “resolve” that can often come across as emotionally neutered and yet anything less, we are told, is “soft.”

What’s worse is that we actually believe it.

This has led to work cultures where colleagues have a tendency to view each other less as human beings and more as objects along the path to a goal. Thankfully, there has been a valiant effort to right the ship with the relatively new field of emotional intelligence—an awareness of when feelings are driving behavior versus reason—and yet EQ (as it’s often called) isn’t the whole story. While there’s no question that EQ is required to form long-term harmonious relationships in all aspects of life including work, there *is* another form of intelligence that is just as valuable and yet not nearly as well-known, namely *spiritual* intelligence or SQ.

If the idea of spiritual intelligence is new to you, SQ pioneer Cindy Wigglesworth describes it fittingly as “*the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the situation.*”¹ Throughout this book we will be exploring what it means to bring SQ to work via the extraordinary lessons of *A Course in Miracles*, but first I’d like to zoom out and offer some context for why spiritual intelligence matters within a business setting at all.

Enter Stephen Covey

Like millions of professionals around the world, you may be familiar with author Stephen Covey as a result of his most popular book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. While Covey was obviously not

the first or the only person to develop a structured path to career success or emotional maturity, his work is uniquely important for our purposes because he succinctly describes it as leading from *dependence* (relying on others to meet our needs) to *independence* (taking responsibility for meeting our own needs) to *interdependence* (collaborating to resolve mutual needs). Because Covey and many others have written much on these subjects, I won't go into more detail here except to say that EQ is precisely what lays the groundwork for SQ.

In other words, the *emotionally intelligent* journey from dependence to interdependence is needed to begin the *spiritually intelligent* journey from interdependence to *interbeing*.

What this means is that the ability to understand the complex role of emotion within yourself and others is the *first* step, but the ultimate foundation of sacred Love is the ability to see no separation between yourself and others. As you'd expect, this is where traditional career advice forks and we find ourselves off-roading into an area where most business books refuse to go.

Spirituality. Religion. Metaphysics.

Call it what you want, but since we're here, let's begin with a basic question.

What is God?

Clearly that question is not so basic, but since it forms the ground of our journey through the *Course*, it seems like a worthy starting point.

In the Bible, when God was asked, "Who are you?" the response was said to be, "I AM."

You shall say to the sons of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."

(EXODUS 3:14)

But what does *I AM* mean, anyway?

Does it mean that God is outside of us looking down (a spiritual tenet known as dualism), or does it mean that God is neither inside nor outside but everywhere (a.k.a. *nondualism*)?

To be clear, *A Course in Miracles* is very much a nondualistic text. In other words, a core part of its theology is that God doesn't perceive *anything* separate from Himself because *there is no "Himself."* As I mention in the *Course* FAQs located at the end of this book, God is genderless and beyond human form, so to say "Himself" isn't accurate anyway. But more than that, for God to "perceive Himself" *in relation* to something else is impossible if God is everything.

God is not partial.

(T-1.V.3:2)

Therefore, from a *Course* perspective it's not about whether God is outside or inside because there's no "you" reading this while "God" hovers in the ethers. There's just *God*—period—and you are in the mind of God.

This is the literal meaning of "I AM" and it's also what the introduction to the *Course* is referring to when it says, ". . . *what is all-encompassing can have no opposite.*"

How can something be opposite of all there is?

To take this a step further, if you look around the room right now, you may be wondering how it's possible for God to be both *everywhere* and *absolutely nowhere* at the same time. This, of course, brings us back to the original question: What is God? Is God an energy? A person? A force? All of the above?

The New Testament of the Bible provides an answer that simply says: "God is love" (John 4:8). The *Course* says the same thing, albeit with one glaring caveat. The *Course* describes God as *unconditional* love and goes on to say that *nothing else exists*. As the introduction to the *Course* states:

This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way:

Nothing real can be threatened.

Nothing unreal exists.

Herein lies the peace of God.

(*COURSE* INTRODUCTION)

So to recap:

God *is*.

The *is* is Love.

Love is *all* there is.

Let's stop here for a moment and consider how this relates to your career. Essentially, if you shift your definition of God from "a divine being looking down in judgment from the sky" to "the universal, formless energy of Love found in all life," *then this should shift how you define yourself as well*. "All life" includes you too, right? Accordingly, the journey of *A Course in Miracles* is the journey of recognizing that you not only *share* perfect Love, but that you **ARE** perfect Love along with everyone else.

Spirit is in a state of grace forever.

Your reality is only spirit.

Therefore you are in a state of grace forever.

(T-1.III.5:4-6)

Once you fully understand this, it becomes impossible to approach your job the same way ever again. As an example, "Russell from operations" is no longer just that guy down the hall with the personality that triggers you to no end. The shift from interdependence to interbeing is the shift from knowing that Russell *works* with you to knowing that he *is* you, which means you no longer view his welfare as separate from your own. This isn't something you do to be kind or altruistic, by the way. It's a perspective that naturally arises when your SQ grows to the point where you *know* that Love is present in both of you beyond what your eyes can see. Moreover, until you see this Love in him, the *Course* says, *you will not be able to see it in yourself*.

This is what makes spiritual intelligence such a superpower in the office. Just imagine the sense of calm and composure you could bring to your job, and the influence you would garner as a result, if you had the ability rise above all levels of human difference and disagreement

simply by acknowledging the “reality of spirit” we share—*before* taking action.

Clearly, you don’t need to voice this perception with anyone else at work and, again, you don’t even need to call the Spirit we’re describing here “God.” You can call it “love,” “light,” or “human dignity,” or you could use the Buddha’s language: “inner luminosity.” From a *Course* perspective, what matters isn’t the language you use, but that you see this Spirit in all and that you know it is perfectly whole in all. As it says in the text:

. . . perfection is not a matter of degree.

(T-2.II.5:7)

This is the first principle you must understand if you want to get the most out of what the *Course* has to teach you: perfect in *one* means perfect in *all*. In other words, the Love in you and everyone else—the spiritual state of grace—cannot be flawed in some while flawless in others. Hence, Love cannot be earned through any specific religious practice or affiliation, nor does it shrink or expand based on what you do or don’t do. Perfect doesn’t mean *kind of* perfect. Perfect means perfect.

The problem, of course, is that spiritual perfection is totally invisible to us without our SQ superpowers. What this means is that, unless we intentionally sharpen up these skills, we’ll continually go through life seeing only what our eyes tell us is true and missing the *truer* truth underneath. Worse, we won’t even know we should be looking for it. Accordingly, this is what the *Course* means when it says, “*Let me recognize the problem so it can be solved.*” (W-pI.79) If we don’t know what the problem is, how would we ever know to solve it?

At work, the idea here is that our *real* problem isn’t the myriad of challenges we currently find on the job. Our *real* problem—and in fact the *Course* would say our *only* problem—is that we haven’t cultivated the spiritual intelligence needed to see the Love in ourselves and everyone else around us. As a result, *because* we don’t know who we are or who they are, the *effect* is that we don’t know how to tap into our SQ in moments when we really need it—like, say, when a relationship

with a colleague is threatening to rupture. Consequently, this creates a ripple effect of drama in our work lives, and we view the drama itself as the problem, *not* our own thinking that caused it.

In the next chapter, we'll explore the *Course's* view on what's behind our most troublesome thinking, as well as how to turn the volume down on it for good. In the meantime, however, here is an exercise that will help you find the Grace the *Course* says is our true home . . . right here and now.

COURSE WORK You're not who you think you are

A while back I attended a Unity church where the guest speaker, a woman who had been a student of the *Course* for more than two decades, walked us through the following meditation. I'm sharing it here because I found it particularly valuable in transcending from the physical self we experience in our bodies to the spiritual Self we've been discussing in this chapter.

To get started, please sit in a comfortable position, either cross-legged on the floor or in a chair, with your spine tall. If it's convenient, I recommend that you dim the lights, play your favorite instrumental music, and sit quietly for a few minutes, as a way to prepare the mind for a more reflective and indwelling state.

While keeping your eyes closed, take your pointer finger and thumb from one hand and use them to pinch any finger on your other hand with enough pressure to feel a strong sting. You should squeeze to the point where your fingernails leave indents that look like tiny crescent moons, but not to the point where you break the skin (obviously).

As you let go, notice how the pain you feel is in your finger, while your experience of pain is being filtered through your mind. Now think about which one is "you" in this scenario. Are "you" the finger, the pain, or the thoughts?

The benefit of this experiment is that it demonstrates the fact that "you" aren't any of them. You're not your finger

because you could lose all ten and still be alive. You're not your pain because pain is just a sensation caused by nerves and receptors of the body. And, finally, you're not your thoughts because those are just bubbles of the mind; one moment you're thinking about the pain in your finger and then—pop—that thought is gone forever.

So who are you then? From a *Course* perspective you are the perfect state of Grace beyond the thinking mind. In other words, “you” are consciousness itself, and your body is something that is happening *within you* versus “you” happening within your body.

Now, the reason any of this matters at work is because when you understand that what “you” are is so much bigger, greater, and more expansive *than* your job, it tends to bring a deep sense of peace and purpose that you can carry *to* your job. This is the SQ perspective because when you know what is eternal and true about yourself and everyone else—*interbeing*—you're not as easily yanked around by what is fleeting and false (like, for instance, the emotions that surge in you when a project goes haywire).

Along that line, the space you are accessing when you do this experiment *is* the proverbial “space between stimulus and response” where our power of decision lives. After all, what is it you're supposed to be choosing in those moments where there is a decision to be made? *The Higher Self*.

Therefore, the space you tapped into when you recognized that “you” are not your body, “you” are not your pain, and “you” are not your thoughts is the space of wisdom and compassion. This is the whole point of meditation: pulling down the Grace the *Course* says is our “natural inheritance” to the level of our direct experience. When you do this well and consistently, you cannot help but be viewed by your colleagues as growing in both maturity and leadership.

You, however, will experience this growth by its true name: Love.

KEY QUOTES

- The Self that God created needs nothing. It is forever complete, safe, loved, and loving. (From the *Course* preface, What it Says)
- You can wait, delay, paralyze yourself, or reduce your creativity to almost nothing. But you cannot abolish it. (T-1.V.1:5–6)
- Your Self does not need salvation, but your mind needs to learn what salvation is. (T-11.IV.1:3)
- The universe of love does not stop because you do not see it, nor have your closed eyes lost the ability to see. (T-11.I.5:10)

What is the ego?
Nothingness, but in
a form that seems
like something.

(C-2.2:1-2)