

Commentary

ACIM[®] Manual for Teachers

Chapter 7

Should Healing Work Be Repeated?

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary. See also the note there on the effects of switching from the FIP edition to the Complete and Annotated Edition.

Please note that the FIP and CE versions may differ in where paragraph breaks occur.

Overview

Sections 6 and 7 address a situation that seems to happen frequently: What if I attempt to bring healing to someone and it fails? The disease continues, or the relationship is still broken. What then?

There are two possible false conclusions: 1) The healing failed; 2) You must repeat the healing to reinforce it. These two sections address those false conclusions.

Paragraph 1

This question really answers itself. ²Healing cannot be repeated. ³If the patient is healed, as has already been said,¹ what remains to heal him from? ⁴And if the healing is certain, as we have already said it is,² what is there to repeat? ⁵For a teacher of God to remain concerned about the result of healing is to limit the healing. ⁶It is now the teacher of God himself whose mind needs to be healed, and it is this he must facilitate. ⁷He is now the patient, and he must so regard himself. ⁸He has made a mistake and must be willing to change his mind about it. ⁹He lacks the trust that makes for giving truly, and so he has not received the benefit of his gift.

In the first sentence Jesus says that the question answers itself: “Healing cannot be repeated” (1:1–2). Despite that he goes on for six paragraphs giving an in-depth answer. First, he shows how pointless the question really is. The patient has been healed; nothing is left to heal (1:3). We've established that healing is certain; “what is there to repeat?” (1:4).

¹ M-6.2:3: “Where healing has been given, it will be received.”

² M-6.1:1: “Healing is always certain.”

What he is dealing with here is our *continued concern* with the outcome of our healing; it limits the healing (1:5). Maybe we've stopped worrying about outcome long enough to actually offer a gift of healing, but we've allowed our concern to creep back in when the symptoms don't immediately vanish. You begin to think it might be good to repeat the healing.

The real need is to allow *your mind* to be healed (1:6). The problem is not the patient's lack of faith (as real as that may be), the problem is *your* lack of faith. You must realize that you have become the patient in need of healing (1:7–8). Why? You've made a mistake, and must be willing to change your mind about it (1:9). You “lacked the trust that makes for giving truly” (1:10). You have not trusted that healing is certain, that when you give it, the patient receives it even if they don't accept it as yet. You cannot yet enjoy the gift you should receive in return.

Paragraph 2

2 Whenever a teacher of God has tried to be a channel for healing, he has succeeded. ²Should he be tempted to doubt this, he should not repeat his previous effort. ³That was already maximal, because the Holy Spirit so accepted it and so used it. ⁴Now the teacher of God has only one course of action to follow: He must use his reason to tell himself that he has given the problem to One Who cannot fail, and recognize that his own uncertainty is not love but fear, and therefore hate. ⁵His position has thus become untenable, for he is offering hate to one to whom he offered love. ⁶This is impossible. ⁷Having offered love, only love can be received.

You will succeed *every time you try* to offer a give of healing (2:1). I love that Jesus uses the word “try” here. It addresses our uncertainty. We succeed even when we are not certain of the result! But if that is the case, we now need to allow our minds to be healed of that doubt. Never think you need to repeat the healing (2:2). The involvement of the Holy Spirit, Who accepted your effort and used it, guarantees its effectiveness (2:3).

What should we do in such a situation? *Reason* with ourselves. Tell yourself that you've given the problem (sickness or other forms of disorder) to “One Who cannot fail” (the Holy Spirit). The uncertainty you are feeling is fear, not love, and that fear amounts to hate. You need to recognize that (2:4). Your doubt is now offering hate to the one to whom you offered love. It's an untenable position (2:5). You cannot maintain such duplicity; it's impossible (2:6). You must attain trust that your gift has been received because you trust the Holy Spirit in your patient to receive it. You offered love; the patient *must* have received love (2:7).

Paragraph 3

3 It is in this that the teacher of God must trust. ²This is what is really meant by the statement that the one responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself.³ ³The teacher of God is a miracle worker because he gives the gifts he has received. ⁴Yet he must first accept them. ⁵He need do no more, nor is there more that he could do. ⁶By accepting healing he can give it. ⁷If he doubts this, let him remember Who gave the gift and Who received it.⁴ ⁸Thus is his doubt corrected. ⁹He thought the gifts of God could be withdrawn. ¹⁰That was a mistake, but hardly one to stay with. ¹¹And so the teacher of God can only recognize it for what it is and let it be corrected for him.

The teacher of God must trust the when love is offered, love is received. Always (3:1). Remember the statement made back in Chapter 2 of the Text?

“The sole responsibility of the miracle worked is to accept Atonement himself”
(T-2.VIII.5:1 (CE))

That thought is repeated in T-5.VI.13:4 (CE). Here, Jesus explains what he meant: He was talking about trusting that when we offer love, love is always received (3:2). To be an effective miracle worker we must trust in the success of every effort at giving love. Our mind must be healed.

We must receive the gift before we can give it 3:3–4). The Course tells us that “To give is how you recognize you have received” (W-159.1:7). We may not even know we have received healing, but we recognize its presence by giving it, and we cannot give it till we receive it. To accept the Atonement seems to mean trusting that, as God's creations, we all are whole. Wholly lovable and wholly loving (T-1.III.2:3–4 (FIP), T-1.27.5:1–2 (CE)).

That is all we must do: accept the Atonement, accept our wholeness. That is all we *can* do (3:5)! Nothing else remains to be done. We are simply recognizing the gift God gave us all when He created us. Accepting the gift for ourselves enables us to give it to others (3:6).

When we are tempted to repeat a healing, we should recall that it was the Holy Spirit Who gave the gift to us both and received it in our minds (3:7). *We* did not give the gift of healing; *He* did. (Notice in 3:7 that the word “Who” is capitalized, referring to the Holy Spirit.) Recalling the dual function of the Holy Spirit is what corrects our doubt about the efficacy of the healing (3:8). When we doubt, we think God's gifts, once given by the Holy Spirit, could be withdrawn (3:9). “That was a mistake” (God never retracts His gifts.⁵) (3:10), but not one we need to hold onto.

³ T-2.VIII.5:1: “The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept Atonement himself.” As interpreted above, this means that the miracle worker need do no more than accept the Atonement because once he accepts it, he can give it, and once he gives it, it will be received.

⁴ The One Who gave and received the gift is God: “Given by God to God, who in this holy exchange can receive less than everything?” (M-6.4:12). It is also the Holy Spirit: “It is He [the Holy Spirit] Who accepts the gift for him, and it is the Holy Spirit in the mind of the giver Who gives the gift *to* him” (M-6.4:4). The full picture, then, is that it is God *via* the Holy Spirit.

⁵ “for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Romans 11:29, NRSV)

Instead, we can recognize the mistake we've made and allow the Holy Spirit to correct it for us (3:11).

Paragraph 4

4 One of the more difficult temptations to recognize is that to doubt a healing because of the appearance of continuing symptoms is a mistake in the form of lack of trust. ²As such, it is an attack.⁶ ³Usually it seems to be just the opposite. ⁴It does appear unreasonable at first to be told that continued concern is attack. ⁵It has all the appearance of love. ⁶Yet love without trust is impossible, and doubt and trust cannot coexist. ⁷And hate must be the opposite of love regardless of the form it takes. ⁸Doubt not the gift, and it is impossible to doubt its result. ⁹This is the certainty that gives God's teachers the power to be miracle workers, for they have put their trust in Him.

The object of trust seems to shift from God to the patient. Our lack of trust in God's gift to the patient is also a lack of trust in the patient. If we were sure that the patient has the Holy Spirit in their mind just as we do, we wouldn't doubt the effectiveness of the healing.

Our egos will attempt to mask our lack of trust in God's gift of healing by causing us to think of it as “loving concern” for the patient (see 4:5). The patient's illness has not disappeared; symptoms continue. We doubt the healing “took,” but we tell ourselves we only feel sincere concern for the patient. We tell ourselves it would be callous to insist the healing did happen when symptoms appear to disprove it. We have difficulty recognizing our “concern” as a lack of trust (4:1).

The truth of the situation is that we are not expressing love for the patient; we are *attacking* them (4:2)! It does not seem that way to us (4:3); it has the appearance of love. We feel it would be unreasonable to think it is an attack (4:4–5).

However, “love without trust is impossible” (4:6). No trust means no love. The opposite of love is hate, no matter what form it takes (4:7).

Loving concern is not always suspect. It becomes unloving concern because you doubt the patient's capacity to accept the gift of healing. That's what is going on when we think we need to repeat the healing.

If we do not doubt that the Holy Spirit gave healing, we cannot doubt the result of that healing (4:8). Our trust in God, then, is what empowers us to work miracles (4:9). Once again, we see the foundational role of trust in all of the characteristics of God's teachers.

⁶ The rest of the above paragraph offers the following logical argument for why doubt is an attack: To love there must also be trust. Doubt is lack of trust. Doubt, therefore, excludes love. With love excluded, its opposite is present. The opposite of love is hate, and hate is an attack. Doubt, therefore, is an attack. To put this in more normal terms: If I don't trust you to properly receive the gift I am giving you, isn't that an attack?

Paragraph 5

5 The real basis for doubt about the outcome of any problem that has been given to God's Teacher for resolution is always self-doubt.⁷ ²And that necessarily implies that trust has been placed in an illusory self, for only such a "self" can be doubted. ³This illusion can take many forms. ⁴Perhaps there is a fear of weakness and vulnerability. ⁵Perhaps there is fear of failure, and shame associated with a sense of inadequacy. ⁶Perhaps there is a guilty embarrassment stemming from false humility. ⁷The form of the mistake is not important. ⁸What is important is only the recognition of a mistake as a mistake.

There is another layer to this self-deception. When we doubt the other person's ability to receive and accept God's gift, the fundamental basis for that doubt is *always* self-doubt (5:1). We doubt our ability to *give* the gift. We have forgotten Who gives the gift! It's not us; it is God in us and through us. We have misplaced our trust in our individual, ego-self, and we can doubt *that* illusory self. If we knew and accepted that we are One with God, we could never doubt the gift (5:2).

Jesus then lists several forms this illusion may take (5:3–7):

1. A fear of weakness and vulnerability. Maybe I'm not strong enough to perform healing. Maybe people will criticize me.
2. A fear of failure. Maybe I can't do this; I'll be a failure.
3. Shame associated with a sense of inadequacy. My healing didn't take; I'm ashamed. My healing power wasn't enough.
4. Guilty embarrassment stemming from false humility. I must look like a fool!

Notice how all of these have to do with concern with yourself and how you appear to others. You are being self-conscious instead of Self-conscious. "Let me not forget my self is nothing, but my Self is all" (W-358.2:7). The particular form the mistake takes is unimportant. We don't need to combat the particular form with things like affirmations, for instance, "I am a strong healer. I am enough to do this." That is no more than a vain attempt to establish trust in our little-s self. All that is needed is to recognize that such feelings are, indeed, a mistake (5:7–8). Trust in the ego-self is *always* a mistake. "If you are trusting in your own strength, you have every reason to be apprehensive, anxious and fearful" (W-47.1:1). Our confidence must be in the Holy Spirit.

⁷ The self-doubt here, based on the context, comes from seeing yourself as weak, vulnerable, and inadequate. You therefore doubt yourself and your ability to give a true gift.

Paragraph 6

6 The mistake is always some form of concern with the self to the exclusion of the patient. ²It is a failure to recognize him as part of the self, and thus represents a confusion in identity. ³Conflict about what you are has entered your mind, and you have become deceived about yourself. ⁴And you are deceived about yourself because you have denied the Source of your creation. ⁵If you are offering only healing, you cannot doubt. ⁶If you really want the problem solved, you cannot doubt. ⁷If you are certain what the problem is, you cannot doubt. ⁸Doubt is the result of conflicting wishes. ⁹Be sure of what you want, and doubt becomes impossible.

Whatever form we give to our doubt in the effectiveness of healing stems from our concern with our little self, not a concern for the patient (6:1). We have failed to recognize the One Self we share; we see the patient as a self separate from ourselves (6:2). That's a tremendous insight! When I react to another person as if they were truly a person separate from me, it should signal that I perceive *myself* as separate from the One Self. To recognize someone as a part of the One Self (and therefore whole and healed), I *must* simultaneously see *myself* in the same way. If I see anyone as apart from the One, I see *everyone* that way. The following sentence makes this point even more clearly: Doubting the effectiveness of healing someone indicates that “Conflict about what you are has entered your mind, and you have become deceived about yourself” (6:3). To see yourself as “self” instead of “Self” means that you have denied God as the Source of your creation (6:4).

The Course keeps hammering home the concept that to see myself or anyone as something separate from God is to attack God as Creator. It affirms that we have successfully created ourselves. When Jesus summed up the origin of our apparent separation from God back in Chapter 2 of the Text, he gave four steps:

7 First, the assumption is implicit that what God has created can be changed by your own mind.

8 Second, the concept has intruded that what is perfect can be rendered imperfect or wanting.

9 Third, the belief has arisen, and is tolerated, that you can distort the creations of God, including yourself.

10 Fourth, the idea has entered that since you can create yourself, the direction of your own creation is up to you.

11 These related distortions represent a picture of what actually occurred in the separation. ²None of this existed before, nor does it actually exist now. (T-2.II.6:7-11:3 (CE), T-2.I.1:9-2:1 (FIP))

I bring in this quotation here because we must realize that what seems to be an innocent doubt about whether or not to repeat a healing process is a symptom of a much deeper problem. “You have denied the Source of your creation.” No small thing! Doubt must go!

If you are genuinely offering a healing, “you cannot doubt.” Reverse that: If you doubt, you are not offering healing.

“If you really want the problem solved, you cannot doubt.” Doubt proves you don't want the problem solved! The problem, we must know by now, is separation. Doubt proves you want to maintain the separation.

“If you are certain what the problem is, you cannot doubt.” If you realize that seeing yourself as separate from the patient is the problem, doubting the healing will be impossible. Doubt proves you are still making that mistake.

In sum, “Doubt is the result of conflicting wishes” (6:8). You have a wish to heal the patient, but it conflicts with your wish to maintain a separate self.

“Be sure of what you want, and doubt becomes impossible”(6:9). Healing comes from ending all thoughts of separation. If you are sure you want separation gone, and thus you want the problem solved, if you are willing to let go of your illusion of a separate self and see the patient as part of your true Self, then doubt becomes impossible.

It comes back to what was said earlier: If you want to be sure when you offer healing, *your mind* must be healed.

Summary of Chapters 6 and 7

I want to sum things up here. Doubting the certainty of healing and thinking a healing must be repeated are really the same mistake. Why repeat something if it is certain in the first place?

In reality, when we enact a healing ceremony of some kind, perhaps a prayer, all we are doing is affirming that healing is *already* accomplished, that wholeness is our eternal state and the appearance of sickness is an illusion. The manifestation of wholeness is up to the patient at that point. Their mind must change.

Paradoxically, if I somehow were able to impose healing on a person whose mind had not yet accepted it, I would be disproving the very thing the Manual is trying to get across: Nothing external to mind is the cause of anything.

If, however, when symptoms persist, I begin to wonder if I need to repeat the healing because the patient has not accepted it, it is my mind, not theirs, that needs to be healed. I need to stop thinking as a separate self and realize that the Holy Spirit never fails to give healing when it is offered.

Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes. The Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely different in the CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition itself.

Effects of Differing Editions of the Course

There were significant changes made in the CE, although for the most part there was no alteration in the meaning of the text, and the *Manual for Teachers* had far fewer changes. There are some changes in section and paragraph breaks and sentence structure that result in different numbering in references to the same text in the two editions. When there is a major difference I will indicate it with a footnote.

I have attempted for all references to add a separate FIP reference if it differs from the CE reference, but I may have missed some. If so, I apologize. Please let me know of any referencing problems you find.

I have also tried to edit my commentary so as to reflect any wording changes in the CE. For instance, the CE Text restored the plural use of "you" where the FIP had substituted the phrase "you and your brother." One such instance will illustrate the kind of change, significant in actual words but nearly identical in overall meaning:

FIP: Thus you and your brother but shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point you both agreed to keep intact.

CE: You shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point which you had both agreed to keep intact.