

Commentary

ACIM[®] Manual for Teachers

Chapter 6: Is Healing Certain?

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

Healing is always certain. ²It is impossible to let illusions be brought to truth and keep the illusions. ³Truth demonstrates illusions have no value. ⁴The teacher of God has seen the correction of his errors in the mind of the patient, recognizing it for what it is. ¹Having accepted Atonement for himself, he has also accepted it for the patient. ⁶Yet what if the patient uses sickness as a way of life, believing healing is the way to death? ⁷Where this is so, a sudden healing may precipitate intense depression, and a sense of loss so deep that the patient may even try to destroy himself. ⁸Having nothing to live for, he may ask for death. ⁹Healing must wait, for his protection.

The first sentence answers the first question: Healing never fails! (1:1) It seems to, of course. Symptoms continue. The rest of the section explains how he can say “Healing is always certain” when our experience tells us otherwise.

¹“It” probably refers to “the mind of the patient” (rather than to “correction”). The comment that “The teacher of God has seen” most likely refers to the previous subsection (“The Function of the Teacher of God”), which describes God’s teachers as healing by reaching out to “the truth in the minds of their brothers” (M-5.III.3:6) and seeing no one’s “will as separate from their own” (M-5.III.3:9). This is another way of saying that they heal by recognizing the patient’s mind for what it is. The logic in the above sentence would therefore mean that since the teacher of God no longer sees his own errors in the patient’s mind, he can now see that mind for what it really is.

The idea is that if you genuinely offer healing, the patient always receives it, no matter what the appearances tell us. If you bring the illusion of sickness to Truth, that illusion *must* be dispelled (1:2). As a teacher of God, if you have carried out your function as described in the preceding section, you have allowed your misperceptions to be brought to Truth and corrected. That correction has extended into the mind of the patient. The Truth eradicates illusions (1:3). The teacher of God has recognized the error and has seen the correction (1:4). As 1:5 puts it, “Having accepted the Atonement for himself, he has also accepted it for the patient.”

Even in such a case, the appearance of sickness may continue. An example from the Bible may prove helpful. You probably believe that if anyone could heal others, it was Jesus. Perhaps you have noticed that when Jesus performed healing, he often said, “*Your faith* has healed you.” He did not claim to have healed them by his supernatural powers; it was the patient's change of mind that brought about healing.

One time, however, Jesus offered healings, and—apparently—it didn't happen.

“And they took offense at him. . . . And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.” (Matthew 13:57–58 [NRSV])

When you offer healing, but symptoms persist, the problem seems to lie with the patient. Jesus goes on (in our section) to point out that some people use “sickness as a way of life.” To be healed would ruin their game (1:6). They are addicted to being sick. They have chosen the role in life of being a sick person. It seems to give them what they want. In the Text, Jesus has pointed out that sometimes we choose sickness as a way of guiltily another person:

“A sick and suffering you but represents your brother's guilt; the witness which you send lest he forget the injuries he gave, from which you swear he never will escape. This sick and sorry picture you accept, if only it can serve to punish him. The sick are merciless to everyone, and in contagion do they seek to kill. Death seems an easy price if they can say, 'Behold me, brother, at your hand I die.' For sickness is the witness to his guilt, and death would prove his errors must be sins.” (T-27.1.4:3–7 (CE))

In this case, Jesus says, “a sudden healing may precipitate intense depression” to the point of suicide (1:7–8). Therefore, *to protect the patient*, “healing must wait” (1:9).

Two quotes from the CE not found in other editions of the Course indicate the same idea:

“Before it is safe to let miracle workers loose in this world, it is essential that they understand fully the fear of release.” (T-2.VI.11:1 (CE))

“If they [who are afraid of miracles] are inappropriately exposed to a straight and undiluted miracle, they may be precipitated into panic.” (T-2.VI.9:3 (CE))

Why would a patient be so attached to his sickness? I can think of many reasons. For instance:

- It brings him attention and sympathy.
- It relieves him of responsibility.

- It gives him an excuse to feel like a victim.

Yet these are surface manifestations of the real, underlying reason, given in Section M-5.I. Based on that section, the real reason the patient is so attached to sickness is that he sees it as a way of stealing power from God (by giving himself the punishment he thinks God would give him). It is his way of winning his supposed war with God.

So, for the sake of the patient, sickness *appears* to continue even though healing has already occurred.

Paragraph 2

² Healing will always stand aside when it would be seen as threat. ²The instant it is welcome, it is there. ³Where healing has been given, it will be received. ⁴And what is time before the gifts of God? ⁵We have referred many times in the text to the storehouse of treasures laid up equally for the giver and receiver of God's gifts.² ⁶Not one is lost, for they can but increase. ⁷No teacher of God should feel disappointed if he has offered healing and it does not appear to have been received. ⁸It is not up to him to judge when his gift should be accepted. ⁹Let him be certain it has been received, and trust that it will be accepted when it is recognized as a blessing and not a curse.³

Whenever the patient's mind is still clouded enough to see healing as a threat (which occurs more often than not), healing will “always stand aside” (2:1). In other words the patient will continue to manifest symptoms of sickness. But in the instant their mind *welcomes* healing, “it is there” (2:2). This is when “instantaneous healing” occurs.

We might think it is a waste of time to give healing to someone who isn't ready to welcome it, but it is not a waste. Healing given is always received (2:3). The time between reception and manifestation is irrelevant (2:4). When you give healing to another person, it enters “the storehouse of treasures” that belongs equally to the givers and receivers of God's gifts (2:5). This is called the “storehouse of your mind” in W-159.2:5. Also called a “treasure house,” it is referred to elsewhere in this lesson as the “golden treasury” (6:5), “this new home” (7:4), “His storehouse” (9:1), and “the store of miracles” (10:1). (See also the footnote to 2:5 in the CE.) No gift you ever give or receive is ever lost (2:6)! They increase, and never decrease. It's a bit like putting money into a savings account with fixed interest. What you put in is always growing. What's more, when you

² For some of the more important references to the storehouse of treasures (also called the treasure house, treasury, store, and storehouse), see T-28.III.6-8, W-159.6-10, and W-316.1. The significance of the storehouse for the current discussion is that every time we give a gift (such as a gift of healing) to another, that gift is then securely stored in his storehouse (and ours), waiting for the time that he is ready to accept it.

³ The gift has definitely been “received” because it has been laid in the receiver's treasure house. It is like money sitting in his bank account. When it is then “accepted” into his conscious experience is determined by his choice.

make a “withdrawal” and give it away, it increases even more! (See W-159.2:5.) You receive miracles by giving them away!

So, if you offer healing to someone and “it does not appear to have been received,” don't feel disappointed (2:7). You are not the one who can judge *when* your gift should be accepted (2:8). Whatever the appearance, rest assured that your gift *has been received* and your “patient” *will* accept it when they recognize it “as a blessing and not a curse” (2:9).

Jesus makes a distinction between the gift's *reception* and its *acceptance*. He says that when a healing gift is given, the recipient's mind *always* receives it and stores it up, regardless of the resistance felt by the recipient. It sits there waiting for the right time, the moment that the recipient's fear of healing dissipates so that they become willing to *accept* the gift. The intervening time has no importance or effect on the efficacy of the healing.

Our mental storehouse is already stocked with treasures, miraculous treasures, just waiting for us to claim them. And we claim them as we begin to give them away!

Paragraph 3

3 It is not the function of God's teachers to evaluate the outcome of their gifts. 2It is merely their function to give them. 3Once they have done that they have also given the outcome, for that is part of the gift. 4No one can give if he is concerned with the result of the giving. 5That is a limitation on the giving itself, and neither the giver nor the receiver would have the gift. 6Trust is an essential part of giving; in fact, it is the part that makes sharing possible, the part that guarantees the giver will not lose but only gain. 7Who gives a gift and then remains with it, to be sure it is used as the giver deems appropriate? 8Such is not giving but imprisoning.

Next, we are told that evaluating the outcome of our gifts isn't our job (3:1). Our job is to give the gift and then let go (3:2). If we hold onto the gift, evaluating how well it has been received and how effective it was, we haven't truly given it. Until we let go of concern about the outcome we haven't truly given the gift! Why is that? Because “the outcome...is part of the gift” (3:3)!

What is a gift of healing? Isn't it absolute faith in wholeness? How could I possibly give you a healing gift if I *doubt* its effectiveness? As a healer, the gift I give is my certainty that the patient is *already* whole and well; that the sickness is nothing more than the projection of our minds. If I hang on, unsure of the outcome, I cannot give that certainty. If I don't have it, how can I give it? (3:4–5)

The Text says: “Healing is an act of thought by which two minds perceive their oneness and become glad” (T-5.I.5:1 (CE)). As teacher, my mind must accept healing first, in order to give it. I must know and believe that healing is certain. When the patient joins with me in that certainty, healing is there.

Trust, the first characteristic of God's teachers, crops up again in 5:6. It is essential. We have to trust that sickness is only illusion, and health is the truth. Trust is what makes sharing (healing) possible.

Picture a situation where you are ill and a Course student says they can offer you healing. You agree. The healer says their prayer or lays on hands or whatever ritual they associate with healing, and you thank them. But you are not sure you really believe they can heal you, and sure enough, your symptoms persist.

Now imagine that the healer keeps dropping in or calling you, asking, "How are you doing? Do you feel any better?" Wouldn't you get the feeling that the healer isn't sure his "healing powers" work? And what would that do to *your*

faith in the healing? As 3:8 says, "Such is not giving but imprisoning."

Paragraph 4

4 It is the relinquishing of all concern about the gift that makes it truly given. ²And it is trust that makes true giving possible.⁴ ³Healing is the change of mind that the Holy Spirit in the patient's mind is seeking for him. ⁴It is He Who accepts the gift for him, and it is the Holy Spirit in the mind of the giver Who gives the gift to him. ⁵How can it be lost? ⁶How can it be ineffectual? ⁷How can it be wasted? ⁸God's treasure house can never be empty. ⁹If one gift were missing, it would not be full. ¹⁰Yet is its fullness guaranteed by God. ¹¹What concern, then, can a teacher of God have about what becomes of his gifts? ¹²Given by God to God, who in this holy exchange can receive less than everything?

What causes a gift to be "truly given"? It's when the healer lets go of any concern about the outcome of their gift (4:1). They never doubt that healing has been given. And what makes such faith possible? Trust (4:2). Trust in God the Creator. Trust that God does not create sickness, and if God didn't create it, *nothing* created it. It is unreal. And also trust in the recipient of the gift, trust that the Holy Spirit is in them, seeking the very change of mind you have offered to them (4:3).

You have the Holy Spirit in your mind, and He is the one offering the gift. They have the Holy Spirit in their mind, and He is the one who accepts the gift for them (4:3–4)⁵. The Holy Spirit is the perfect Player on both teams, the teams of your two minds. How can the gift possibly go wrong? How could the healing possibly be ineffectual? How could the healing effect possibly be wasted? (4:4–7)

⁴ In this context, "trust" means trust that the gift "has been received, and trust that it will be accepted" when the receiver is ready (2:9). In essence, it means trusting that the receiver hasn't bungled the receiving of the gift. This trust is clearly connected to the foundational characteristic of God's teachers: trust that the world "is governed by a Power That is in them but not of them" (M-4.I.1:5).

⁵ The first part of sentence 4:4, up to the word "and," was omitted from the FIP edition.

Your mind, and your patient's mind, are treasure houses, stored with all of God's treasures. Among them is health. That treasure house is full, in you and in your patient. Nothing is missing (4:8–9). *God guarantees it!* (4:10).

How, then, could you ever be concerned about what happens to the gifts you offer? (4:11) These are God's gifts, “given by God to God” (4:12); God in you to God in them. This guarantees that the exchange of gifts will be perfect, and that both giver and receiver will gain by it (4:12; 4:6).

Is healing certain? Yes. If the patient is ready so that their mind joins with yours in perfect trust that God's creation *cannot* be sick, it manifests at once. If the patient is not ready to accept the gift, the Holy Spirit in them receives it and saves it in the storehouse of their mind, awaiting their acceptance.

What still must be explained in more detail is what to do when you find yourself thinking that your healing didn't “take”. That will be the subject of Chapter 7.

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.