

David Hoffmeister - BATGAP Interview #242

July 29, 2014

{BATGAP theme music plays}

Rick: Welcome to Buddha at the Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer and my guest today is David Hoffmeister. I'm going to read a sort of an official bio of David and then an unofficial one that he sent me, which I think is interesting and amusing.

David began his journey into spiritual enlightenment in 1986 when he encountered *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)* and recognized it as the tool he had been seeking for a radical transformation of his mind and perception. In the early years David studied the Course with passionate intensity, often reading it for 8 or more hours a day. After two years of this study, David began to seek the company of other students of *ACIM*, attending as many as 5 groups a week. He was startled to find that a voice was speaking through him with great authority, so that many began referring their questions to him.

Among family members, friends and teachers, David was always known for questioning everything rather than accepting conventional answers. Thus, he was delighted to find in the Course support and encouragement from the voice of Jesus for his careful examination of every idea, belief, concept, and assumption in his mind.

Jesus became David's internal teacher, answering his every question, guiding him to hand over the day-to-day management of all relationships, circumstances, and events in his life, and providing inner discernment. So there's more to that, but that's on David's website.

Now here is the unofficial bio... somebody sent me this: "A unique mystic who teaches *ACIM*. He says he has taken part in miracles including the raising of the dead. He'll be interesting because he's not coming from the pop-Advaita world of truisms, and he addresses such questions. A very sincere teacher, I believe. Yeah, I heard David Hoffmeister mention raising the dead in a podcast on one of his recent videos, he's got plenty of far-out stories to tell, and I guess from a pure *ACIM* perspective, it's not beyond the realm of possibility. The Course states: "Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God." Which sounds just like the Bhagavad Gita which says, "The unreal has no being, the real never ceases to be.""

"I think David is the type of person who will level with you no matter what you ask him about. I'm no expert on the Course but I've read and watched many purported teachers of the Course, and of all of them I think David embodies most fully the innocence and joy the Course points to. He also spent years studying all kinds of spiritual traditions and academic fields, so he can match wits with the best of them.

He seems to have embraced the notion of living without compromising with the world of duality. How much he is actually able to pull it off, I leave to others to decide for themselves. It seems to me that he sticks to his guns better than most.” So that’s the unofficial bio.

David: Oh, that’s very interesting. That’s a good one to start with.

Rick: Yeah, obviously people are going to be curious about this ‘raising the dead’ business, but I think maybe it would make more sense first, to start with some really fundamental questions. And I hope that in the course of this interview we cover all the bases, so that somebody who knows relatively nothing about *ACIM*, like myself, will find something in it of value, and *teachers* in *ACIM* who are well-versed in it will find something of value. So hopefully we will cover the whole gamut, but let’s start with a really simple, basic question: what is *ACIM*?

David: Well, it’s a book that was scribed from a woman named Helen Schucman with her boss from Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center of New York City, starting from 1965 to 1972. And the voice that is dictating it identifies himself as Jesus, or Itself, because from a nondual perspective Christ is not male or female; it’s just love, unconditional love, agape love.

So it came in the form of a text and workbook and a Manual for Teachers. These were research psychologists, actually, who were taking this down, shorthand, and then typing it out from that. So it basically uses terminology from Christianity and from psychology and from education, but clearly it’s a nondual teaching; it really doesn’t resemble a lot of traditional Christianity, you know, the heaven and hell and the typical things many of us were raised with in the Judeo-Christian world.

I found it intriguing, fascinating, and I think that it’s also very practical. Because I know that in Advaita-Vedanta, these beautiful nondual teachings, they’re very deep and penetrating and take you into this vastness that the scientists call the ‘quantum field,’ but this actually has a text which kind of sets you up with the theory or the theology, then it’s got a workbook that you practice day by day, to actually have that transformation of consciousness.

And then once you really get in touch with it, people will inevitably be drawn to you when you’re happy and clear and joyful, like with a lot of teachers. And then it actually has some questions that teachers face - a lot of teachers face, that are nondual teachers - so I found it very, very helpful in my journey.

Rick: Yeah, so these folks who channeled or cognized it, or whatever we would say, this is pretty outside their comfort zone, right? I mean, they were professional psychologists and weren’t really into esoteric things or religious things so much.

David: Yes, very much so. Helen Schucman was a very brilliant psychologist. Also, her partner in doing this was William Thetford, he was a graduate assistant of Carl Rogers, so a little bit of humanistic tendencies, whereas she was more of atheistic. So you can imagine channeling something that’s talking about God and Christ and Holy Spirit from an atheist.

They both had a little touch of Christian Science come into their background a little bit, so it probably wasn't completely foreign, but it was very threatening and actually, during the dictation – that's why it took 7 years – she was so anxious about it that oftentimes the voice would say, "What I said was this ..., what you wrote was that ...," so the voice had to keep going back and redoing sentences. And she had a lot of resistance, so that's why I think it took 7 years to do the whole thing.

Rick: Interesting. And so you said that [it was] supposedly Jesus, but then that sort of implies a kind of individuated form, and really we're talking about agape or love, which is more of a universal field. Let's dwell on that for a little bit. I could ask more of a question, but go ahead and respond to that bit.

David: Yeah, the voice identified itself as Jesus, and of course there are so many channeled writings. I mean, my gosh, I've come across so many channelings of Jesus and Saint Germain and just an enormous number of characters throughout history, Moses and so forth, I have read quite a lot and I was just amazed at this. But it actually started referring to, it would say, "The apostle," and it would refer to things not so much in the historical context, but it would refer to miracles and it would really give a huge clarification of things that a lot of Christians and nondual teachers would want to know.

And actually at some point it started using Shakespearean blank verse and it's like, I don't know, over half or maybe two-thirds of the book just came through in Shakespearean blank verse.

Rick: Which is a certain rhythm or like iambic pentameter or something?

David: Yes, yes, exactly. And Helen Schucman was a big Shakespeare fan, so it seems like Jesus, in this sense, was using things that she could relate to, like psychology and educational terms and some Christian terms. And then it also had poetry in it and amazing things that seemed to be using what she was interested in, but the content was just amazing and it basically referred to the parable of the prodigal son and so forth, so that kind of gave it the flavor of Jesus.

Rick: Yeah, so it sounds like you're saying that you're not sort of dead-set on the idea that it was the historical Jesus, whoever that was, that was actually conveying this information; you're not hanging your whole thing on that, but that whatever this source was, it was some kind of fundamental cosmic intelligence and it spoke to her in a language that she could understand.

It also seems like, you know, someone might say, "Well, if she was really into Shakespeare then she had that kind of verse wired into her brain, and so she might have just been a filter through which it was expressed in *that* terminology." And obviously if she had been Japanese, it wouldn't have been coming through in English; she would have been writing it down in Japanese. And you get that a lot with the whole channeling world: to what extent is the channeler coloring what's coming through, or are they really a pure vessel and it's whatever they're supposed to be channeling that you're actually hearing when you listen to them?

David: Yeah exactly. I have listened and read and followed a lot of different channelings, and so I do feel like this essence that's coming through, it's Jesus alright, except that as with nondual teachers, as you go through a transformation in consciousness you start to realize that you aren't the personality self, you aren't the body and you really never were, but that was something that is a tool, a vehicle that was part of your training - training consciousness and open up.

So I think that it speaks in first person and identifies itself as Jesus, so I don't have any doubt about that in my mind; it was more of an internal confirmation, I could really feel it. But also, if people don't believe it's Jesus, it's such an effective tool for people that don't even believe in Jesus as the messiah or whatever. If they do, it may help them undo some biases and ego distortions, if they don't, I've heard Buddhists and a lot of nondual teachers and students say that they get a lot of value out of the Course, and they don't even believe in the historical Jesus, so it speaks for itself.

Rick: Yeah, not necessary. What do you think about other channeled or cognized works? I mean, you're smack dab in the middle of Mormon country. What do you think about *The Book of Mormon* and some of the other things that were supposedly conveyed from angels or deeper sources in the universe? Do you pretty much have an open mind to the veracity of all of them, or what?

David: Yeah, I've come across a lot of them, like The Mormon's mystic was Joseph Smith, and I've read quite a lot of these different avatars and scribes and really important people, in terms of spiritual terms. And I think I do get resonance and value out of a lot of things, although when I came across the Course I have to say that ... like with the Mormons, they talk about there's a planet where God lives, and they've got a name for it, and a lot of things have come through. And for most spiritualities and nondual perspectives these things can be even a little distractive, like well, "How do we know it's this planet, or this or that," you know? People can start to laugh actually at some of those things.

Not with the Course. I think when people have a sincere openness with this, the presence I first felt when I read it I went, "Whoever wrote this book is not in this world, they have completely transcended. They've been here but they went through it so they can use the language, but they are not located in time and space." It was such a strong feeling and I don't get that with all channeled writings, but I did get that extremely strongly with the Course.

Rick: Yeah, it's a little bit of a confusing field for people, because as you said earlier, there are thousands of people out there who are channeling, and I've spoken to people who have said they're channeling Merlin, and who knows whether Merlin was anything that actually ever existed. There are a lot of people who say they're channeling Mary Magdalene.

And I interviewed a guy a few weeks ago who is very popular, Daryl Anka, who channels someone named Bashar, who is some kind of extraterrestrial that he claims is himself, three-thousand years from now.

David: A future self!

Rick: A future self, yeah! So wow, it's this huge field of stuff and it must be a little perplexing for people, but we don't need to spend too much time on that, but any comments on that little point before we go on?

David: No, I think there's value in many things and I've been blessed by doing a lot of reading in many areas. But then again, you have to find what really resonates and lights your heart up, and I think that's the same for all of us. I do believe there are just thousands of forms of the universal curriculum and the Course is just one of them. So in no way is it exclusive, and I like a book that says that, that comes right out and doesn't say that it's the only way. That - right away that resonates in my heart.

Rick: Yeah, me too, I mean I wouldn't be doing this show if I didn't. And every week I talk to a different person and it sort of gives, in some cases it gives them quite a bit of a boost, in terms of their popularity, and I'm happy to do that. And it's funny, I'll do an interview and I'll get emails from some people saying, "That was your worst one ever, I hated that person," and emails from other people on the very same interview - "That was your best interview ever, I loved that!" So obviously, different strokes for different folks, you know?

David: Yeah, yeah, I know.

Rick: Which to me sits well with the notion of an omniscient God who is not a one-trick pony, who can adapt Himself, as it were, to everyone, regardless of their orientation, they can find a niche that works for them.

David: Yeah, I really like that too. I really feel like whatever works, whatever really brings you peace of mind and takes you into that presence and stillness, by all means use it. And you should have some fun with it too. I think a lot of times I see spiritual seekers, and maybe sometimes teachers, that are very, very serious. And I feel there should be a lightness and laughter; I don't feel spirit is serious. I feel there is more of a cosmic humor behind this whole maya thing.

Rick: There's a saying in the Upanishads: "Contact with Brahman is infinite joy," and so if you see a person of is dour and grumpy, you wonder whether they're really contacting Brahman. I heard you quoting John Lennon's song in one of your talks, you know, "Whatever gets you through the nights" - that kind of relates to what we're saying.

Okay, so the first question was what is the *ACIM*? Now the next obvious question is: what does the *ACIM* teach? Let's go through some of the main points.

David: Okay, well it's basically summarized in the introduction by saying: "Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God." It also says that freewill does not mean that you can establish the curriculum; it just means that you can decide what to take at a given time. It also has some very interesting things to say in the *Manual*, in the sense that

it's basically saying that the *form* of the curriculum is not even your choice, which is very offensive to the ego.

The ego likes to think, "Well I'll decide what I'll study. I'm going to take this path or that path, or I'll decide my path. The Course is hinting that it's all part of a pre-arranged plan and that something deep down inside, when we're really ready to forgive and open our hearts up and love, the form will just be what it was. It goes into destiny, that's it's part of a pre-arranged plan and that only the time we take it - when we're really tired of duality, when we're tired of conflict and we really feel that there has to be a better way - then we're ready to embark on this awakening curriculum.

Rick: Yeah that's an interesting point, and you see that so much. It's like, as long as a person feels like they can do for themselves, then there's not an openness or a readiness. And when you get to your wits end, so to speak - in my case there was a real bottoming out period in my life - then you're open to some kind of guidance and bingo, the guidance comes!

David: Yeah, and actually the two that brought the Course - I'll say the first two *ACIM* students on the planet, Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford - the way it happened was Bill was kind of frustrated. He was the head of the department, this research psychology department, and he was quite frustrated one day and he was kind of giving a little speech to Helen. And he was saying, "There really has to be another way to live. We're living in such conflict here." And he was kind of surprised that she turned to him and said, "You're right Bill, and I'll help you find it."

So there was a little joining, there was a willingness that preceded the coming of the book. So it actually was very practical; it was an answer to their call for help. And I like that, I like practical spirituality, I don't like just a bunch of theology; I like practicality.

Rick: Yeah, me too. There's a verse in the Vedas someplace which says, "The riches seek out him who is awake," and the riches are said to be the impulses of intelligence which govern the universe. I've seen this so many times and in my own life I see it, where as soon as you have this willingness or this openness, then it's like the powers that be say, "Okay boys, we've got a live one here, let's give him some juice," you know?

David: Yeah, yeah, I love that.

Rick: Let's pick apart the first part of what you just said a minute ago which was, "Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists." So what's real and what's unreal?

David: Well it implies that there is a spiritual realm, and I guess in terms of common day language we would call it 'eternity' or 'changelessness,' this vast experience of - some just call it 'spirit' - and it doesn't begin, it doesn't end, it just is, it is the 'I am,' or like Byron Katie - love what is, or know what is. The present moment is the gateway to eternity. It just implies that as we approach the present moment and the Presence, then we're coming closer to this eternal Being, and that's really what can't be threatened, it's that eternal Being.

Rick: Yeah, that verse I quoted from the Gita earlier continues on and says, “None can work the destruction of this immutable Being.” And so then what’s unreal?

David: Unreal would be anything that changes. And I love to study quantum physics and really look at the whole realm of what seems to be temporary, and so I would just say a good synonym for unreality is ‘the temporal.’ That’s the closest thing that comes to mind, because everything we perceive is always in flux and even all the best maps of the universe, with the Big Bang, they just say it’s really in flux.

And it seems to be expanding, they think it might reach a point of equilibrium and start to implode on itself, but that movement and that change is what I would say is the unreality.

Rick: Okay, so by that definition everything we see or perceive through our senses, including you and I talking to each other, is unreal?

David: Yeah, maya is a term from the East, and so the Course is just coming right out and saying illusion.

Rick: And you know the word maya actually comes from Sanskrit roots which mean ‘which not;’ it means ‘that which is not.’

David: Yeah, that’s exactly it. Which is really good because then when you get into things like judgements or preferences or levels, all those things that we deal with, we have in practicality, you can see that they would be part of the ‘not,’ and then the changelessness, that which is just eternal Being, would be what is real, what is reality.

So it is quite a high goal, it’s not like something of trying to reach a worldly goal or anything like that; it’s just saying that you wake up from this dream and you’ll know who you are, and *that* reality will be eternal.

Rick: One problem I run into, if you want to call it a problem, is that there is a certain niche in the nondual field or in the spiritual field, which is sometimes referred to as ‘neoadvaita.’ I see them committing what I consider a fallacy in the confusion of levels, to a great extent.

In other words, what you and I were just saying that the world isn’t real - ultimately, that that which changes cannot be real, I think we agree on that and understand that and can elaborate on it more if we wish, but sometimes people kind of extrapolate from that and apply that level of understanding to relative levels of concern, whereas actually you have to make a concession on with reality in order to function in the world, in order to live properly and treat others properly, and so on.

So I’ve heard people actually say, “Starvation in Africa? Poof, it’s just an illusion.” And my response is usually, “Alright, well, by the same logic gravity is an illusion, so go up on a tall building and prove it! Jump off and see if the illusory nature of gravity has any effect on you.”

As illusory as these more expressed manifest levels of reality may ultimately be, you have to give them their due, do you not, and kind of acknowledge or cooperate with laws of nature or principles of the universe which function on various levels, even though you may understand and even experience that ultimately nothing ever happened and they never actually arose from the unmanifest?

David: Yeah, glad you're bringing that up because to me, that is practical spirituality. Spirituality has to meet consciousness where it believes it is, and so the Course actually says that "You can't bring the truth into the illusion; you bring the illusion to the truth." And so you bring the darkness, the unconscious mind, all the false beliefs, you keep bringing them to the light and you keep practicing doing everything very practically in your day to day life, but continually offering up your beliefs and your thoughts to this Presence, or this light.

So I think what you're talking about is very, very important. In fact, I've visited hundreds of *ACIM* groups all over the world in these thirty-some countries, and I would say the biggest mistake that I hear in *ACIM* study groups is this catch-phrase, "it's all an illusion." And I point back to Jesus, because they all have a devotion to Jesus, and I'll say, "Look at Jesus' life. When you look at his teachings in the New Testament, you don't see him teaching this; he corrects from the bottom-up."

He meets people, he is friendly, he sits with them, he does his teaching when they're eating at the end of their workday. He was a practical mystic, very public during those last few years, but very practical. And I do the same way. I teach, I go around, I meet with people in restaurants and in their living rooms and go to barbeques. And we'll have these really friendly conversations about what their issues are, and their issues ... they're not telling me, "I've got an issue with reality." We talk from financial issues, relationship issues, sickness-health issues, and everything [in between].

And that's what I like about *ACIM*, it does reach the mind and say, "Here, take my hand and we're going to go, but we're not going to dismiss the body, we're not going to deny the body outright." That's a big problem, I agree with you.

There's kind of a joke in *ACIM* circles where two *ACIM* students are having an argument and one of the students says, "Listen, you're not real and I'm not real and we're not even having this conversation." To me, I use that as an example that, listen, that's not exactly going to get you in an awakened state if you are denying the world and denying the body. You have to actually go and really face what you're perception is and what's going on in your awareness.

Rick: Yeah. Two *ACIM* students walk into a bar. You have to make up the rest of the joke! Yeah, so I'm really glad we're on the same page with this, because it gets a little tedious when you're talking to somebody who isn't and they keep harping on [it].

It's like, if I had to define 'enlightenment' these days, the best way I can come up with is not sort of taking refuge in the absolute; but having the capacity to incorporate absolute and relative

within a larger totality. It's like an expert diver who could dive to any level of the ocean where his attention was needed, and who is comfortable at the very foundation of the ocean and comfortable on the waves, and comfortable everywhere in-between. So someone who can function across the whole range of creation, the whole range of reality, as is appropriate to any particular circumstance, while at the same time continually grounded in that foundation.

David: That's beautiful. That is the ultimate, I think, in spirituality, is to be in that connectedness, that quantum field, that unified awareness field, and still seem to have a body and still seem to act, and yet there's a love and a presence that radiates there, that is so felt. I do feel what you are describing as really [being] the ultimate experience of spirituality, in relation to the dream.

Rick: Yeah, and Christ is a good example. You were talking about Christ, he didn't say to the leper, "You're an illusion, you're leprosy is an illusion, I'm moving on," he dealt with the situation, or all the other various situations that he dealt with. He didn't brush them off as illusory; he dealt with them compassionately, on the level that the person in question was experiencing it.

David: And also, a lot of times, the malady or the symptom would disappear or go away, because I think he was in such a state of presence of truth that even the symptoms ... it was just symbolic that truth doesn't have exceptions. It's not the truth is true in some situations and not in others.

I think of it as more [about] how willing the people were. If they really were willing to open up to what he was talking about, then their symptoms disappeared. And there were some cases where they didn't, and we all can relate to that, where we would rather be right than happy! The ego would rather be sick than healthy, and so I think it comes down to a deep decision in mind.

Rick: I've heard an analogy of someone like Jesus being like a vast reservoir, and you get from the reservoir according to what kind of pipe you put up to it. So if you put a little sipping straw, you're not going to get very much, but if you put a big pipe, then the reservoir can really flow. So somebody who is totally closed off isn't going to get much, but if you have that openness, you will.

And also there is that story of the woman who touched his cloak from behind or something, and then he realized and recognized that some kind of power had been transferred by virtue of her doing that. I've been around some people like that, and they're like a blast-furnace of consciousness or something, and you feel kind of permeated in their presence, and transformed without any actual need for words or anything.

And so you could see how if that's the source which ultimately sustains us, and if someone can radiate it that powerfully, then you can see how healings and so on would take place, because you can be more suffused with that essence – either in the presence of someone or by somehow enlivening it within yourself in some way.

David: Even remotely, like John of God, remote healings and so forth, just that tapping in, just being willing to tap into the presence. I heard Wayne Dyer recently, in a way, he went through a

beautiful healing and he was kind of closed at first, but the friend said, "Listen, John of God is God is going to do psychic surgery on you on such-and-such a day," and he did. And it was kind of a shock initially, but Wayne had to be willing to open his mind to such a remote healing, and it seemed to remove the symptoms.

Rick: Yep, a surgeon can't operate unless the patient lies still. You know that story in the Bible where the Roman centurion, who was played by Ernest Borgnine in Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth*, I think he comes to Jesus and he asks – who was it? One of his family members or someone was sick – and Jesus says, "Oh, I'll come and see him." And the Roman centurion says, "No, you don't need to come, you command all the laws of nature. I'm a general, if I say to my soldiers, "Go do such and such," it's done, I don't have to go there. So just my asking you this should be sufficient to make this happen." Remember that story?

David: I do, I do, and Jesus even made a comment of noting the faith of this Roman centurion, because for many people, they think, "Well he's not even a Jew! He's not even religious and my gosh....," and Jesus used him as an example, like, "This is the kind of faith I'm talking about."

Rick: Yeah, so what do you think of the actual mechanics of this kind of thing? They must be explainable in terms of some kind of mechanics, subtle mechanics of nature's functioning. How does this stuff actually work?

David: Yeah, for me it's been fun to read in ten years of university, and really be well-versed in a lot of different disciplines of the world because then I could really appreciate what this was talking about. It's basically what Carl Jung talked about - "the shadow," a lot of psychologists and philosophies talk about "the unconscious mind."

And at one point, Jesus says that the unconscious mind is the unwatched mind. So what does that mean, unwatched? There are all these assumptions, we live on conditioning and assumptions. As human beings, we're sitting on this vast, dark, system of beliefs that we have not even raised up into awareness, we've not even questioned them! We just go about our daily life.

And so the mechanics, it is really like Ramana Maharishi talks about inquiry, ultimately: who am I? I love that. I love inquiry. I love a devotional pathway to God where you just give yourself over to Spirit like Mother Teresa did, and say, "I want to see the Christ in everyone." I think that the mechanics are when you have a strong desire to know who you are, like the Greeks said, "Know thyself," it's a passion, it's a desire.

And you begin to understand that you have things that are still unconscious that you're not even aware of. You notice that you get triggered as you move through time and space, and I think that's just giving you the tip of the iceberg. It is actually that every single time that tip is exposed is an opportunity for forgiveness.

So the mechanics that Jesus teaches in the Course is a different kind of forgiveness than most of us were raised with. We're used to thinking you forgive your brother or your sister, your mother, father, for what they did to you. You know, they wronged you, or maybe you didn't do something that you should have and there was an error or a sin, or whatever you want to call it.

In *ACIM* Jesus is saying, "No, you forgive your brother for what he has *not* done." And at first it's like, "Wait a minute, what does that even mean? He did it, I've got the evidence. I have a video recording of it!" And Jesus is saying, "No, linear time is part of that maya, it's made up by this ego," - Gnostics call it the demiurge.

It's part of the maya to think that your behaviors are right or wrong. And he's got a whole system of dynamics saying that when you are in alignment with Source, you're in your right mind and you are forgiving, when you're not, you're in egoic perception and that needs to be raised up to awareness and released.

So he's not saying to fight the ego or to try and kill anything, he's just saying it's running you while you're giving your powerful mind over to this puff of nothingness. And this whole projection of time and space is part of the puff of nothingness. So if I use a football or baseball analogy, you're on a road game - while we're here in time and space facing all the conflicts and pain and suffering and hurt - we're in the ego's territory trying to come back to eternity.

Rick: So in terms of mechanics, somebody like Jesus or John of God or somebody who can heal someone from afar, that's kind of what I was referring to about mechanics. Let's say somebody has cancer or something, and someone like this is able to facilitate a healing without even laying hands on them. That means that in their body, little cancer cells are disappearing and physiological changes are taking place and so on, because of some guy a thousand miles away doing something. What are the actual mechanics through which that is happening?

David: Well the mechanics of that is that really there is only one of us. I've heard you say on your show, "Really, there's one of us here," and the mechanics of that are that if there is one mind, we'll say, or one consciousness, or even one soul – one soul that's asleep and dreaming and it's forgotten its reality – the people that seem to exist, we'll say the 7 billion people on planet earth, are part of the projections of this demiurge, of this ego. And then when you heal, we'll say at the mind level... there's actually a *Workbook* lesson where Jesus says, "When I am healed, I'm not healed alone" – so what seems to be remote healing, symptom removal at a great distance is very quantum, in the sense that once you start to heal your mind, then your whole perception of the world is healed.

So for example, we think of human beings and animals and plants getting sick and dying, what this is saying is, no, your perception is distorted. You might remember in *Corinthians* in the Bible, it said, "We look through a darkened glass." And really what Jesus is saying in the Course is, he's saying, "When you have a darkened glass, your lens is very dark, you are like Plato's cave analogy – you're just seeing shadows on the wall. You're not really seeing with spiritual vision; you're seeing through distorted vision."

So it took me years of really following this and practicing this to [be able] to start to say, “Okay, if I am experiencing symptoms in the body, or if I’m perceiving symptoms in my brother or sister, either remotely on Skype or seeing it through my 5 senses, then that’s part of this distorted perception that I need healing.”

So it’s really healing in mind - that one of the books that I wrote, it is called *Healing in Mind* - and then the mechanics are that when I am healed, I’m not healed alone. And I’ve had those kinds of healing where people’s physical symptoms, through prayer and praying together, have disappeared instantaneously, and then as you mentioned earlier, even a raising-the-dead experience, like Jesus had [with] some of those reported in the Gospels. That was all I saw [and it was] perfectly in line with what my lesson was, because the day that I had my raising-the-dead experience I was reading a lesson in the Workbook, and that was my lesson from Jesus: “There is no death, the son of God is free.” And so it didn’t even shock me or surprise me when it seemed to happen, because I could see that that was perfectly synchronized with what I was supposed to be learning for the day.

Rick: You better tell us about your raising-the-dead experience now because I’m sure everybody is curious.

David: Well, I was really working with the Course and doing my lessons, really each lesson – not like looking forward to 365 lessons, but waiting for my wakeup lesson, because he says it just takes one instant. It’s not a matter of quantity; it’s a shift in your whole awareness is what this enlightenment is about.

And I remember I woke up in the morning and I could hear Jesus and he would give me guidance, but he said, “Take a plate of salad to your grandmother.” My grandmother is probably in her 80s and I would frequently take food to her for lunch - she was legally blind with macular degeneration.

So I was going to go to the same grocery store where I go with the salad bar, and Jesus said, “No, not today. You’re going to another grocery store.” It was a store that I very rarely ever went by. I went in there and I went back, and I started to go back towards the salad bar area to make the salad for my grandmother. And I saw that there was a woman laying there on the tile floor of the grocery store, and I noticed that the paramedics were doing CPR, trying to revive her with no success.

And then it just struck me, I just watched this scene. And then the paramedics backed off and people kind of backed away, and there was just a body laying there, completely no motion, no movement in the area, no breath or anything; just completely seemingly dead.

And I remember being near the frozen foods section and then I felt all this energy up near the third eye and all this energy coming in *really* strong around the heart chakra, like just an intense surge of energy. As I mentioned to you, my lesson that day was: “There is no death, the son of God is free,” and that particular line was in my mind going through like a mantra, like a rolodex,

that day. I was just so focused, even though I was getting lunch for my grandmother I was focused on my lesson.

And then as it came in stronger and stronger I witnessed the breath come back in this woman, literally saw her diaphragm start moving again. But it seemed so natural, it seemed like I was just practicing my lesson for the day. And there is the part at the beginning of *ACIM* where Jesus has 50 principles of miracles, and I believe it's number 23 where Jesus says, "You can heal the sick and raise the dead because you made sickness and death and can abolish them both."

So it was literally like a Workbook lesson and I was very well-versed in what his teachings were, where he was calling me to be a miracle worker. Not anything that I had planned doing in this lifetime, nothing that my parents ever aspired for me, but actually working within a very practical way, it seemed very, very natural.

I went back after that and I got the salad. I went and paid for it and it wasn't like *Bruce Almighty* where he's got the little tomato soup bowl and he parts the soup, and he goes, "Ahhhh!" – it was none of that. It just felt really like, "Of course, this was what I was supposed to perceive." And it wasn't like David was doing anything either; it was more like I was witnessing a miracle in action, and it just coincided with my daily lessons. So it was very natural.

Rick: So that will be easy for skeptics to brush off as just some kind of medical thing that happened, but I find it interesting that you got these prompts to go to that particular store and you know, something you wouldn't ordinarily do, and then you begin having this experience and the woman revived. And I've never had any prompts so dramatic as those, but I get them all the time. I always feel that in retrospect, the course of my life has gone remarkably well despite my intentions!

David: Yeah, you feel the gratitude of that, I feel that too.

Rick: Yeah, you want a particular thing and you want that thing and it's not working out, and then something else happens and you think, "Of course it didn't work out, this is better. And if I had had bigger vision, this is what I would have wanted but I didn't see it."

David: Exactly, I feel that. It's like those grace moments – "Thank you, thank you for helping me see that I would really rather be happy."

Rick: Yeah, interesting. So the word 'miracles' obviously is one of the four words in *ACIM*, so let's talk about miracles a little bit - what they are, why it has this in the title and stuff like that.

David: Yeah, that's a rather curious title because I think a lot of people just think of miracles as you know, parting the Red Sea or raising the dead and turning water into wine – the kind of more flashy stuff. And I think in the *ACIM* it's more about training your mind into miraculous thinking.

We'll say there's this thing in your mind and we'll call it love or spirit or happiness or joy, and it is a presence that's in you. It's really who you are. It is there to remind you who you are, and

when you align with that, that's a miracle. It kind of lifts your mind beyond the celestial realm of this world and you feel so vast, even if it's just for a moment. And the Course would say that's a miracle and we need to get you to be habitually miracle-minded, instead of habitually ego-minded.

So often times *ACIM* teachers will define the miracle as a shift in perception and that's not flashy at all. I mean, you may be having a bad day and then you pause and take a few deep breaths and go, "This is ridiculous. I just need to change my tune here," and then you do. That would be a miracle.

There's a definition in the Course where Jesus is asked, "What is a miracle?" A miracle is a correction, it looks and waits and watches and judges not. It merely looks upon devastation and reminds the mind that what it sees is false. So it is one of those moments where you just kind of tune into Spirit and you have one of those glorious moments, where you're reminded of the maya and you obviously don't have a negative reaction to that; it's this glorious, expansive feeling. And that's what, in simple terms, that's what a miracle is.

Rick: Okay, well that's a good explanation. Personally, I wouldn't have chosen the word, just because 150 years ago jet planes and computers would have seemed like miracles to everybody alive; these days we take them for granted. And jet planes and computers just take advantage of certain laws of nature that weren't understood 150 years ago, but there's really nothing miraculous about them; they just applied certain aspects of nature's functioning that we hadn't really understood before they were invented.

So to my mind, Jesus walking on water or something like that, you could say it's a miracle from the perspective of someone who doesn't understand the mechanics through which he could do such a thing. But if he actually did do such things and all the other things he was said to have done, or anybody else besides Jesus, and many traditions have miracles, then these people were just utilizing certain laws of nature - which are as intrinsic to the creation as gravity, or propagation of light, or anything else - that the average person just doesn't have a handle on, but they have somehow mastered them.

David: Yeah, I think there's a really good aspect to that in the sense that in the Course Jesus says, "Miracles are natural. When they do not occur, something has gone wrong." He is basically saying that to be happy and joyful and light – that's our natural condition as God created us, and when they don't occur, then something has gone wrong. He would say, egoic thinking – he calls it wrong-mindedness – right-mindedness and wrong-mindedness.

So this kind of ties in with what you were saying earlier about how do we work with levels and level confusion, when there's this thing called 'absolute oneness,' which really doesn't even have to really be in our conversation that much, because it is just there. We can intellectually go, "Yeah, it feels good that there is an eternal reality," but practically speaking, that's where I think the mechanics come in, where he's saying that the right-minded way of looking is that your mind is causative and you are not the victim, not at the mercy of a world outside yourself.

And then he says, “You need training in miracles” – he calls them miracles but we can just call them right-mindedness or alignment with Source - to become more habitually right-minded. So I agree that if you looked at miracles and defined them from a perceptual point, it would seem like skyscrapers are miraculous, the Golden Gate Bridge is miraculous, and putting a man on the moon is pretty miraculous, but [that’s] probably more from a human sense of the relative world.

I think this (*ACIM*) is just saying, “I’m going to work with your thoughts and become more tuned in with Source,” and I’d say that’s what the greatest nondual teachers are; they’re just more habitually right-minded. They’re really good examples of that presence and love.

Rick: Yeah, and you’ve alluded to flashes of insight or flashes of cognition of the nondual reality and so on, but I think we both know, and maybe you are one, that there are people for whom this is not a flash but an all-time living reality.

David: Yes, I think there are people ... I think of Eckhart Tolle’s park bench experience, which seemed to change his whole perception in a flash, and in a real significant way. And people always come to me and they say, “I want one of those. I want one of those Eckhart Tolle park bench experiences.” But in the Course Jesus says, “Most are given a slowly evolving curriculum.” They have so much fear that they would be terrified, and he says, “Don’t be concerned that you’ll get hurled into reality; it’s not gonna happen.”

So I feel like that’s beautiful in the sense that, for me it’s been more of the slow and steady. If it was the tortoise and the hare story, I was more the tortoise – meditating, practicing, watching my emotions, watching my reactions, and paying attention to this belief system that was trying to tell me I was a victim of the world. And in this new insertion of love that was saying, “You’re not; this is a Course in empowerment so that you train your mind, train your consciousness to be peaceful.”

Rick: Yeah, in the waking-down group they call them – people like us – “oozers.” And there’s that verse in the Bible isn’t there – “The Kingdom of heaven comes like a thief in the night?” – it sneaks up slowly, for most people. There are a few Eckhart Tolles out there, but for most people it’s this incremental thing where you hardly notice that anything is changing. But if you could somehow just to where you were ten years ago, it would be a dramatic contrast.

David: Yeah, and I think it’s a call to witness, it’s like, I’ve done this slowly and steadily for 25 years or so. But now I find I get invitations all over the world and I will go to Communist China, where a lot of my writings and teachings have proliferated ... you know how they take and copy and multiply things ... pirating!

Rick: China is good at that.

David: China seems to be good at that, but what happened was my teachings have been online for so many years for free, and a gentleman over there translated them all into Mandarin, and then they got pirated and sent all over China. And then what happens is, China has a very deep

nondual tradition, traditions that are very nondual, unlike a lot of Western countries and so forth, so these nondual teachings proliferated all over China.

So when I finally went over there, people came from hundreds of kilometers away to Beijing or Shanghai, bringing me flowers and roses, it was almost like the Beatles had landed or something. For the first time I think I had instant groupies showing up and wanting to come up to my hotel room, and people lined up and thousands of photographs. And it was kind of fun for me because I'm not used to that at all! You can imagine if you went over there and something like that happened; it would kind of get your attention. But it was because they really resonated with the nondual teachings that were in Mandarin and they could relate to it.

Rick: That's neat. Is there a sort of official hierarchy in *ACIM*, like the Catholic Church or something? And if so, are you the pope, or how does that all work? Or are there different autonomous branches of it, or what?

David: No, there's no official hierarchy and actually, the Course is known pretty much around the world - in all the languages it has been translated into ... 17 languages I think - as the self-study book. Which is kind of nice in the sense that people can sit down in the comfort of their own home, or now take their Kindle along or their little iPhone and listen or read it, but there have been teachers.

I would say there were the original four that really were like stewarding the Course - Helen and Bill, the first two students, and then a man named Ken Wapnick who just recently passed away last December, and Judy Skutch who was a publisher of the Course - she's still alive, she lives in California. They were more like the stewards.

Rick: And the name Gary Renard comes to mind.

David: Yeah, Gary has helped popularize it. He did a book called *Disappearance of the Universe*, and really was using the context of two ascended masters coming to sit on his couch periodically, and visualizing [them] there and talking to him about the Course.

Rick: That was his experience, or this is a sort of a poetic fabric[ation]?

David: No, he says that was his actual experience, and so that book got popularized. Started off with a small publisher, D. Patrick Miller out in California, but then when Hayhouse picked it up it spread around. So I think a lot of people who were Course students were energized by that book, and others who had never heard of the Course, they were introduced to its nonduality teachings that way.

Rick: Yeah, I had some guy get in touch with me and he said, "I just read Gary Renard's book, *The Disappearance of the Universe*, and I'm so inspired, I want you to interview me!" And I thought, well maybe I should interview Gary, and I'll do that one of these days.

I've listened to a lot of your recordings and a couple of questions here: one is, when I first started listening or thinking about this I thought, "O-oh, this is going to be one of those things where there's a lot of people who kind of psyche themselves into an intellectual understanding of something, without a commensurate experience," and I see that happening a lot.

There are people in the nondual community, for instance, who read a bunch of Ramana Maharishi books, or way Wu Wei or one of these things, and just get saturated with that understanding and then mistake the understanding for actual realization, and then they get on the chat groups and start pontificating and driving everybody crazy.

But as I listened to various people and so on, I really got the feeling that somehow the Course, or at least the people that I was listening to, had really transformed people experientially. That it wasn't just a head thing but that it was sinking into the heart, or sinking into the level of an actual living experience. Is that true? I imagine you're going to say yes. And for what percentage of people is that true? And what are the mechanics through which the concepts presented in the book become experiential?

David: Yeah, I sense the same thing. But I think it's the percentage that actually have a deep transformation, and I would say a very mystical transformation, is very small, like it is probably for Veda-Vedanta and so forth. You know, everyone knows of Ramana Maharishi but there's a whole lineage there of ... it's just like with Jesus, there are Christians that say that they would love to live like Jesus, but their lives don't really seem to be anything like it at all.

And so I would say that self-realization is a very, very, very high, high state of mind, and we have to be practical but also there are very few people that seem to go all the way into that. It's not judging anybody because everybody's got to take their steps and open as best they can. But I feel like even with *ACIM*, there's a lot of teaching of it and workshops and seminars and so forth, but as far as actually having a consistent state of mind with it, I would say that's quite rare.

And even Helen Schucman, they asked her one time and she said, "The Course is for 5 or 6 people." What did that mean? I think what she meant by that was [that] during the first generation of people who worked with the Course, 5 or 6 would be elevated into that frame of mind, that state of mind that the Course is pointing to, which isn't a lot considering that the Course has sold millions of copies worldwide.

Rick: Yeah, I think that's true of many traditions. Even in the Gita it says something like that where, "Of all the people who hear about this, only a small section are going to understand it, and of those who understand it, only a small amount of those are actually going to experience it." And it actually breaks it down a few more times and the sampling gets smaller and smaller, and you can see that with anything, I suppose.

Are people realistic about that in the Course, generally? Do they understand that they may have a long way to go in terms of fully living what is being discussed in the book, or is there a tendency to mood-make? Do you know what I mean by mood-making? Where people just kind

of psyche themselves up into a “feeling” of what’s being referred to, but it’s actually a far cry from what the real experience would be.

David: Yeah, I think you’re going to find that among people who work with the Course, that there are some that try to be very positive and would love to act loving, because they know that the Course is aiming at forgiveness and love, but they also, I would say most, are seeing it as very much of a lifelong journey and process.

I think if you go fully into it, you see the promise of that it can be an instant, like the park bench experience that Eckhart had. It doesn’t exclude that; it’s in there, but you have to let go - almost empty the mind, as the Buddhists talk about – of everything you think you think and think you know, and come to such humbleness and such trust and faith.

So that’s been my journey, where it wasn’t just going to conferences or doing groups or working with students. I actually felt that I needed to understand this thing called ‘Divine Providence,’ where I would be provided for in any circumstance. And I think that’s why I appreciated these guidances and prompts that would take me out to all these travels, because you’re a little bit out of your comfort zone and safety zone of a house and a bedroom.

And for me, I liked being out there. Kind of like the Indian mystic Maher Baba, who was a wandering mystic. I love that.

Rick: Or Peace Pilgrim, remember Peace Pilgrim?

David: Peace Pilgrim, yes. Oh she inspired me so much. And my life has gone more that way, where I’ve just been out and about and people would say, “Oh come here,” offer me things, and it was very simple. But it was a simple provision while I was watching my mind and doing my inner practice, I found that I could be friendly, joyful, and go and speak, and then move on and loosen my preferences – my ego preferences.

Rick: I don’t know much about your tradition in *ACIM* in terms of how open you are about discussing your own degree of realization. I know that for instance the Dalai Lama won’t talk about it, but in your own experience, to what degree do you feel you have attained self-realization, to put it in simple terms?

David: Well it feels very, very full to me. I actually was in Mexico recently and I’m always so open-minded that they take me to different healers and modalities. Somebody told me there was a quantum machine that would read everything about you, and I’m very open-minded and ...

Rick: You broke the machine, right?

David: Well I didn’t know what was going to happen, because the machine was telling me certain foods that were agreeable with me and it was a very detailed 2-hour thing. But one of the things that the machine was answering was the question of: what percentage of your life’s purpose have you accomplished? Which I thought was kind of fascinating, to have that.

And the woman who was administering the machine, she began bursting into laughter when the machine said, "100 percent." And I know with all my travels and my years of doing this, I have felt such a consistent joy and happiness that I could relate to that, although they were laughing because they said, "We've seen hundreds of people hooked up to this machine and nobody has ever got that answer." So I don't really like to try to talk about it myself, but I laughed at that answer. I said, "It feels like there is a fulfillment and a contentedness," and to me that's what spiritual attainment is really about, it's about being content in the moment, not distracted by the past or the future at all.

Rick: And would you say that that's how you would define your life's purpose, in terms of a subjective condition as opposed to accomplishing this, that or the other thing in the outer world?

David: Yes, to me it's a state of mind, that's my measure of success, if you had to use that term, or attainment - it's consistent peace of mind, it's not getting buttons pushed, it's not having those reactions.

I would notice that over the years, like one time I was with a friend and we were on a ferry at the front of the boat, like Leonardo and Kate, on a ferry up in the Pacific Northwest, and we didn't know it but there was a giant foghorn behind us. And it blew off and my friend who was standing right next to me jumped, probably like two feet in the air - it's just that it was so startling, and I just noticed that I didn't move at all. I wasn't startled.

And it's the same thing when I would go on rollercoaster rides when I was a kid, as a thrill-seeker. Then maybe 10 or 15 years ago I got invited to go on of these really wild rollercoaster rides and I wasn't affected whatsoever. I didn't feel dizzy or turned around. Or those IMAX things where they show you the firetruck and you're on the back, people were groping and falling all over and grabbing on the steel bars, and I was standing there. So I thought, "Well this *ACIM* is really working on my perception," because those were little symbols to me that some kind of training was happening, because I wasn't reacting and responding to the world the way I used to.

Rick: I think those were all actually really significant examples, apt examples. In fact, there's been research done on meditators testing spontaneous galvanic skin response or something, where they present them with unexpected startle responses, like loud noises or something, and they can measure how the galvanic skin response reacts to that, which is a measure of stress. And people who are more established meditators tend not to have much reaction; they just kind of take it in stride.

David: Yeah, beautiful.

Rick: And there's all kinds of verses in various scriptures about equanimity and balance, and success and failure and all that kind of stuff. So those are really good, if we can think in terms of measurements or markers of degrees of realization, which there really should be. I mean, if it's just a matter of subjective reporting, and if a person reports that they are in some marvelous

state but then you find them freaking out about this, and acting like a jerk, then it doesn't really ... you know, "You shall know them by their fruits."

David: I think those are all good examples. And for me the other thing, like I mentioned the Divine Providence, I think when we think of the term Divine Providence, maybe we think of Saint Francis or Mother Teresa or something like that; I've always felt spirituality had to be practical.

So years ago when I started off this journey spirituality, Jesus told me, he said, "You won't have a career." And I said, "Oh, okay, that's interesting," because for me, most people that I knew had careers - and even career as defining monetary success or attainment of different statuses, or however you define it, it was kind of striking to me.

And then as it played out, Jesus had said, "Freely you have received, now freely give," so my ministry started out, you might say [my] public ministry - just travelling around and going to peoples' living rooms and houses and backyards and whatever - very, very simple. And then when I would travel around they'd say, "Do you have any books or products or resources?" and I would say, "Oh, heavens no! It's just here, it's just me," presence or whatever, you know?

Rick: Give them a lock of your hair but you don't have any.

David: That's exactly it; there's not much else physically to give. So what happened was that I followed that along. So what I've done is I've really felt called to make it accessible on the Internet and however I could, so people would have more free access to it, like the China thing, where they translated it to Mandarin.

And then eventually people did say, "Well it would be helpful to have some books, or YouTubes, or DVDs," and so I said, "Okay, we'll do that too." But to me, it takes the commerce aspect out of it, because I think that's very seductive in this world, when you have something and then all of a sudden you try to make a production out of it, and then suddenly you're into a *career* again! And I've always felt that's not my way.

Rick: So you just basically get along through donations and one thing leads to the next? Maybe some book royalties, now that you've written some books?

David: Yeah, it's pretty much donations and even the books are more just people transcribing my talks; I'm more of a storyteller - parables like Jesus and very verbal. I never have sat down to write a book; people transcribe the talks and then it turns it into a book.

Rick: Yeah, you probably find that you're much more eloquent when you are just on your feet talking than you are if you sat down at a desk and had to start writing something, right?

David: Exactly.

Rick: Yeah, it turns on all the cylinders when you're up in front of a group.

David: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Rick: So when you get these messages from Jesus – Jesus told me this, Jesus told me that – is it actually like a voice in your head or is it just a subtle, intuitive impulse, or what?

David: It's like a train of thought. Impulse is a good word, and it will come as very striking prompt and there will be a train of thought. But for me it was very specific, it wasn't like, "You are love," and "Love ye one another."

Rick: It was like, "Go to this grocery store and get a salad for your grandmother!"

David: Exactly, or, "You forgot your keys, turn right, your other right," "your other left" - like in *The Matrix*, you know? It was very specific guidance and it does remind me of that part in *The Matrix* where Neo first gets the little phone message from Morpheus and Morpheus says, "I can guide you but you must do exactly as I say." I get these very specific prompts, and it's made my life so fun and easy! I wouldn't have followed it, I don't think, if it didn't have any practical day-to-day benefits, but it actually seems to be very wise and it helps me handle things even before I run into problems – it precedes the possibility of problems.

Rick: Yeah, I have some friends that have what we might call subtle perception or celestial perception or whatever, in fact, the whole thing fascinated me so much that I actually did a group forum about it a couple of months ago.

One in particular that I'm thinking of, sees subtle beings all the time and they're always around, just as when you go to a mall you see people all around, well that's the way it is with subtle beings. If he is at a mall, he sees the people and he also sees subtle beings kind of "attending" to the people and kind of doing this and doing that. And he's not nuts, I mean this guy is very clear.

They don't usually communicate with him, but once in a while they will; they'll correct him on something or give him a thought to do this or that. And so when you describe your experience of Jesus saying things to you, I wonder whether it's Jesus or whether it's actually these subtle angels or beings that are everywhere, and they're like our guardian angels or something, and they are kind of putting little messages in our ears, if we're able to hear them

David: Yeah, I really feel that. I feel like whether it's Jesus, Holy Spirit, angels or guides – spiritual guides, I mean there are so many ways to talk about it. And I think it's really whatever anybody feels comfortable with.

At the beginning I had been raised Christian but I got into so many explorations of so many different spiritualities that I kind of threw the baby out with the bath water, a bit, at one point. And I was in university for 10 years so when this *ACIM* came I thought, "Wow, whoever is the author of this they really know who I am – it's got some Christian language in there, I've been studying psychology and I'd been in education for 10 years and these are the three fields of study that the words are picked from!" It's almost like it was tailored for me! And I felt really grateful about that but I do agree with you that it is Spirit helping us in whatever symbols we can really open up to, that's what will get used.

Rick: Yeah. So with regard to practice, I think I've heard you say you meditate in some way, and there's a *Workbook* with *ACIM* so people are practicing stuff. If a person is really an ardent *ACIM* student, what might their daily routine be like in terms of practice?

David: Well if they're going through the *Text*, they may be reading sections of the *Text* – a chapter or some sections in there, depending on how fast they're going with it. If they're going through the *Workbook*, some groups or people will start on January first, and there's 365 lessons so they'll do one lesson a day.

Rick: So is that for all the days of the year?

David: Yeah, all the days of the year, although Jesus does say that if you feel a particular lesson is really helpful for you, you can stay with it. There's only 2 instructions that come with the *Workbook* and that's: don't do more than one lesson a day. So don't do Evelyn Woods speed-reading and try to get through it in one day or something.

And then: as best you can, try to not to make exceptions to the lesson. So for example, if you're on Lesson number 48, which is: "There is nothing to fear," wow! If you're a human being moving through time and space and that's your lesson for the day, Jesus is just calmly reminding you that there is nothing to fear. And whenever you have fear or some derivative of fear coming up, you would come back to your lesson ... "Oh yeah, remember my lesson, what's my purpose here?"

I'll give you a practical example of how that worked for me because that might give you an idea. One day I was coming home and I was doing Lesson number 136: "Sickness is a defense against the truth." So I come home and I put a plate of food in the microwave, and while it's cooking I start to get this nauseous feeling, very nauseous, stronger and stronger nauseous feeling, and then diarrhea feeling coming in very strong.

And I was watching my thoughts like you're supposed to do, as a meditator would do, I was watching my thoughts, open-eyed meditation – watching the microwave and watching my thoughts and, "...Oh, I might be catching the flu, wonder if it's 24-hour bug or the 48-hour bug? Oh my God, I'm not going to be able to eat the food because of the nauseousness, diarrhea feeling."

Then the diarrhea was so strong, I rushed into the bathroom, got on the toilet seat, and then my lesson for the day came back into my mind: "Sickness is a defense against the truth." This is not something we are commonly thinking about; we're commonly thinking about what caused it, in the world, and what remedy can we do to it.

And then more thoughts came from the lesson like, "Sickness is a decision." When you're afraid of love and you want to prove that you're little and tiny and frail, and not Christ-like or Buddha-like, you actually decide in your mind for a symptom and for something. Everything in this world of experience is a decision.

So I actually had a very deep meditation in there, on the toilet, and calling on Jesus and going very deep in my mind. And the symptoms did disappear, everything just vanished in an instant, had an instant remission. That was a practical example and that's how it went for me with the *ACIM Workbook* lessons. They weren't random; I felt like everything that was happening to me throughout the day was my opportunity to apply the lesson, when I could think of it. You know, I got distracted like most people.

Rick: So in that example, was there some particular truth against which you were defending yourself and that was making you sick? Were you pushing against something?

David: It's always Divine love. There's a lot of singers that will sing songs about "I won't fear love," and sometimes in relationship workshops they talk about fear of intimacy, I don't think it's really always a sexual intimacy that there's a fear of; there's a deeper intimacy of dropping the mask of our personas and "what if they see underneath the mask?" But underneath that [is] the fear of our power, the fear of our spiritual reality, that's the basis of what the Course is helping us heal, is that fear.

Rick: So in that example you were somehow pushing against or blocking that, and that was making you sick.

David: Yes, that was making me sick. And then I followed it down in my mind to the point of decision and very deeply to where I could see that and I said, "Okay, I just loved and adored Jesus but I basically had to follow what he was teaching me in that lesson." And I basically had to come down to: do I really think Jesus is telling me the truth here, or is Jesus lying to me? And when I was finally able to open my heart to the truth of it in that moment, then the symptoms disappeared. And it was a very powerful, as you can imagine, it was a very powerful experience for me.

Rick: Yeah, some would argue that eating microwave food will make you sick, but that's another issue.

David: That's right!

Rick: So that was a case-in-point. So basically what I've gleaned from what you just said is that there's a lesson a day, and each lesson has a core point, and you dwell on that as much as you can throughout the day on that particular day, if you're studying that lesson.

So is that kind of the way it goes? It's like you dwell on a core point throughout the day, when you're studying *ACIM*, or is it the kind of thing where you sit down for half an hour and close your eyes and engage in some kind of meditation practice every day, regardless of whatever the lesson may be?

David: Yes, some of the lessons are actually guided meditations and it takes you deeper and deeper inward. It is highly individualized, but I would say the lesson gives a structure and it's like ... you start off with a little more structure. Just like if you were an addict - an alcoholic or something -

and needed *Twelve Steps*. You would go there for some structure, for some help that actually involves some structure.

The Course lessons start off with some structure and then it starts to fall away. It gets more and more spontaneous, more and more abstract as you go through the *Workbook* lessons. And also, some of them are short, some of them are review lessons that come back and review earlier lessons, and then there are some lessons - I think Lesson 135 I believe is the longest lesson in the book – and then it's getting into real practical things. Like it says, "A healed mind is relieved of the belief that it must plan," it says in that lesson.

And for most of us, we know we need training in that because we can get all the best laid plans of mice and men, sometimes our plans go awry. But this is saying that if you become more intuitive to those inner prompts, and you just take it moment by moment, and you're really in the present moment, then you are relieved of the belief that you must plan. And that kind of unwinds you out of this linear human perception; takes you more into the celestial perception.

Rick: Yeah, which doesn't mean you can just show up at the airport without having made a reservation and say, "Here I am, let me on the plane;" you have to book your ticket in advance. But I know what you mean in terms of there's a balance. Some people plan obsessively and they're working things out from a very limited perspective which doesn't jive very well with the way things are actually unfolding in the world.

David: Yeah it's very practical, and in the same lesson, 135, Jesus says, "If there are plans to be made, you will be told of them by One who knows your good," so it covers just what you said. It's not [about] trying to be obsessive where you just sit in your bed all day and say, "I'm not going to plan;" it's really practical.

[What] I like the best about the *Workbook* is you still have internal things to do but they don't take that much time. And he says in the *Workbook*, "It is possible to go about your regular activities all through the day listening to the voice of God," without interrupting your regular activities. So it's more of a reminder practice – it's shifting your perception again, and not trying to change the world as much as change your way of looking at the world.

Rick: Yeah, who was it, Gandhi, that said, "It's a lot easier to wear shoes than to cover the Earth in leather?"

David: Yeah, I know and that's practical. He always said, "Hate the sin, love the sinner," you know, there's still facing the purification that is necessary but it's always emphasizing love.

Rick: There was one of your talks I was listening to, I think it might have been in Australia, and there was some Oriental girl with an Oriental name speaking with you. And you guys were talking about, and I can't remember *exactly* what you guys were talking about, but I kind of had the reaction of, "...Yeah, but if a person wants to be a tennis pro or a doctor, they've got to really work at it. They have to practice, they have to train, they have to study."

And there was something in the nature of what you guys were saying that made it sound like you were taking the air out of that, that somehow individual striving was counter-indicated. Comment on that?

David: Yeah, I do feel like attention, practice, and striving are a phase of the spiritual journey that you can't dismiss. Like we said, you can't dismiss aspects of what's there.

Rick: And not only the spiritual journey but life's journey.

David: Yeah, and life's journey.

Rick: If you want to be a brain surgeon, you've got to study, and that is not in conflict with spiritual progress, right?

David: Well I would say that spiritual progress is more of taking that same tenacity and persistence and using it in your meditations, and using it in your – we'll say – mental processes as well. So we're not saying that anybody should or shouldn't do any of those kinds of studies; it's more putting it and directing it.

Like I, after ten years of university I felt and I said, "Okay, now how can I use all these skills and abilities, and this attention and focus that I have from being a good student, how can I turn that towards peace of mind as my goal?" So instead of personal attainment, like trying to attain a higher status in the world or those kinds of things, just aim it at peace of mind. But I think that's a very good point.

And then I would say when you get more towards those advanced states... like I know I enjoyed watching you and Lisa Cairns because you are really practical and she would be giggling and laughing and smiling. I think that the deeper you go, miracles are involuntary. There's this involuntary presence, it's a Divine ease that comes in. And at that sense, the striving starts to fall away - the vigilance, the intensity and the practice, that all naturally fades away. But you can't skip it, you know, you can't just go with words and say, "Oh, la-di-da-di-da," it doesn't work that way.

Rick: Yeah, that's a really good point. And I think various professional sports or music are good metaphors for that, because concert violinists, Jascha Heifetz or something, *really* had to work. But that after having done all that work, they get to a point where it's very effortless and spontaneous. Or a great basketball player or a downhill skier or something, they really have to work at it.

And I'm not saying that spiritual practice, necessarily, should be hard work in the sense of blood sweat and tears, but what you just said, that a kind of determination, a focus, a dedication, a seriousness about it can really bear fruit. And you do reach a point at which you can kind of relax and you're there, more or less. Although some spiritual teachers talk about internal vigilance, but there's [also that], you know, lukewarm approach yields lukewarm results.

David: Yeah, I totally agree. And I see Yogananda's picture behind you, it reminds me of my early years with the Course. A friend of mine, Don, was a kriya yoga, Yogananda follower and I was practicing the Course. And we would meet at the tennis court and we would say, "Okay, let's see if we can do an open-eyed Zen movement meditation with the tennis."

So we were guided to let go of keeping score and competing and trying to beat each other and everything, to use it as more like the whirling dervishes with their movements. And so lo and behold, we would do that and we would be out there sometimes for 2 or 3 hours and it was excellent mind training! It was like that was our Tai Chi, that was our yog0 - using tennis to raise our level.

What happened was, it was like we became less judgmental in trying to even control and direct the ball, our rallies got longer and longer, and after a period of many months, it looked a little bit like Jimmy Connors and Bjorn Borg playing out there. We were so relaxed that we were hitting all kinds of top-spin, lobs, and running each other all over the court, like these long rallies in Wimbledon. And it just showed that our skill level went up, but really it was because we were using it for a discipline of mind, like Tai Chi is.

So I did that with many things in my life. I actually thought, "This is a practical application where the Spirit uses something that's fun for me, like tennis or basketball, and then I train my mind to be more in a zone," as they call it in sports, or "present moment."

Rick: That's cool. Yeah, there's a verse in the Gita which is, "Yogah karmasu kaushalam," which means yoga is skill in action. And by yoga it is meant union with the Divine. And it's not just that union, but it actually results in skillful, spontaneous, effortless action.

David: Yeah, I like that. I like the practicality of that.

Rick: There's something that we were talking about like 45 minutes ago, and for some reason the thought keeps coming to my mind to loop back to this and throw it in. Which is, we were talking about the ability to affect healings and so on at a distance, and you were talking about how ultimately there is no distance and everything is contained within the One mind.

And I've actually talked to a number of people who upon awakening have had that experience. Like there was this girl, Kiran – her name is, who I interviewed last November or so, and she said that what she experiences these days is that she'll be sitting in meditation or something, and the conflict in Syria is within her, or Ukraine, or whatever.

And she feels like a washing machine, where she's processing all this intense stuff that's going on in the world, and she feels like she's actually having some beneficial influence on it, and so that's an interesting concept. We've heard of the idea of yogis in the Himalayas sitting in a cave, uplifting the world or keeping it from blowing itself up. Comment on that.

David: Yeah, I think that is right on, I mean, I enjoy movies about the Butterfly Effect. I see a lot of quantum physics movies coming out. I saw a movie recently called *Mr. Nobody*, which is an

amazing quantum movie, but the Spirit had to ... it took me 2 or 3 days for the Spirit to decipher that for me, because I said, "What is that about?!" And the Spirit gave me a huge download, like a two-hour download of teachings on this one movie.

Some of us know more movies, like *Next*, which was a movie that stars Nicholas Cage. It starts to bring in superposition and starts to bring in this whole idea of hypotheticals, because half of the movie is hypothetical! As [in the scene where it is a] scenario in his mind where a bomb goes off, a nuclear weapon in Los Angeles, and he goes all the way back to the point where he is in the bed with this girlfriend, and that's just a scenario in his mind.

So I use movies. I have a book called *The Movie watcher's Guide to Enlightenment* and I have an online site – www.mwge.org – where people actually work through their emotions and their difficulties in their daily life by watching movies, because they enjoy watching movies. But I feel it all leads into this Butterfly Effect kind of thing, where if we heal our mind – like Joel Goldsmith, a famous healer, Christian mystic - he actually seemed to pray and help resolve a subway strike in a major city.

I enjoy those examples because they're rare, but now they're becoming more prevalent with the movies. This movie *Lucy* that just came out, just opened a couple of days ago, with Scarlett Johansson, that's a mind experience where she has these powers that are all related to her perception and her own consciousness.

Rick: Do you know Jean-Marc Stroud?

David: Yes, I started the first *ACIM* Monastery in the world, but it's not like a typical monastery, but he came to one of my week-long sessions, and he just laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed. And I've seen him doing wonderful things around the world, just very, very healing.

Rick: Yeah, I did an interview with him and Francis Bennett, in person in North Carolina, about a year and a half ago. And he said that he'd began to cognize Jesus, or have these messages from Jesus. And that it kind of became this movie-night thing, where he and Jesus would kind of like enjoy movies together and comment on their spiritual implications and so on.

David: Yeah, it's true, it's true. He participated in some of our movie gatherings there too. Because you know, Jesus taught so much in parables, and I think movies are like our modern day parables. I think *Groundhog Day* and *Truman Show* and *Matrix*...

Rick: Oh sure, so many things, *Close Encounters [of the Third Kind]*, *Star Wars*, all those.

David: Yeah, absolutely amazing. So I would just ask, "Jesus, take me to the movies," when I would have a block. And he would take me into a video store and rent movies. Again, it was so prompted, like one time I was having a conflict in my mind and he said, "Now go to the video store and pick out this movie, and pick out this movie," and he said, "Now watch them back to back. And I thought, "That's really unusual." Those movies, one was called *The Game*, with

Michael Douglas, and one was called *The Man Who Knew Too Little*, with Bill Murray, and the similarities were amazing!

Both of them had two brothers offering a gift, and the first one was like a recreational mind-trip where they do all this testing and then you go through experiences, and the second one was the theater improv – the theater comes to you. And both of those were the gifts.

And then Jesus, at the end of watching those movies he said, “Now, what the difference was is that the Michael Douglas character was fighting against the guidance the whole time, and he found himself buried in a coffin in Mexico, and Bill Murray was so clueless and so unattached to outcomes that he laughed all the way through it, as they tried to poison him, thought he was an American spy, they tried to strangle him, do all these things to him, and he laughed all the way through.” Even when they tried to rob him, because he thought it was all improv, you know, that was the mindset he was in.

So this is how the Spirit works with me. I get these strong prompts I go follow, and I go, “Really?! Two movies in one day?!” And then the Spirit gives me a big download afterwards and says, “Here’s the point: be lighthearted. Be a passerby, don’t take this seriously.”

Rick: This is great. I’m actually writing all these down because I haven’t seen most of these movies. And once a month I go over and watch a movie with a friend who is paralyzed with M.S. and we’re always wondering what we want to watch, but this gives us some good material here.

But this point you’re making about movies, I’ve always found it thrilling, since I kind of got to the point in life where I realized that there was a higher intelligence that was helping to orchestrate the course of events on Earth, I always find it thrilling when a movie like *Star Wars* or *Close Encounters* would come out because I would feel like, “Wow, Spielberg or Lucas, they’re like channels.” We were talking about channeling earlier, where some kind of higher purpose or higher intelligence that wants to awaken something in mass consciousness has used these guys as conduits through which to introduce these ideas. So I always saw it as more than just entertainment, but as some kind of an inspiration for humanity that was being brought about by these genius producers.

David: Mmm, I feel the same way. In fact, one of the biggest complaints I hear from students and spiritual seekers is that they say the journey is so difficult, it’s so tumultuous and it’s tedious and it’s time consuming, and this and that and it’s not fun. So I said, “Well what if ...”

Rick: Not my experience.

David: So I said, “Well what if you could use movies in a way that would be, not entertainment but would really be insightful, like *major* insightful?” So what I did was I took this *Movie Watcher’s Guide to Enlightenment* that the Spirit gave me and I put it online. And then there’s an emotional index, so if you’re dealing with jealousy or competition or guilt or shame or whatever, you go to the emotional index and then it points you to the movies that you can go and watch –

stream or download, and it helps pop through your issues. So it is kind of an advanced form of spiritual psychotherapy.

You've probably heard of *Spiritual Cinema Circle* with Steven Simon and so forth, but this is more advanced where you actually work precisely, going in there with ... "What is the emotion? Abandonment? Okay, here's your index of movies to watch to help you release your abandonment." Because we know it works; we get a movie and we feel so much lighter and we go, "What just happened? How do I feel so much better at the end of this movie?" and it's Spirit working with us.

Rick: That's great, and this is on your website, right? People can download this *Movie Watcher's Guide to Enlightenment*?

David: Yeah, it's on the website, it can be purchased at a bookstore like Amazon or whatever, and then the online site is www.mwge.org – *Movie Watcher's Guide to Enlightenment*, and that's where the emotional index is. We don't show the movies, they're all copyrighted, but we just do the setups and we give all the "what you're looking for" and "how to heal" and all that kind of stuff.

Rick: Cool. Well I'll link to that on your BATGAP page also so people can go check it out. Somebody sent in some very interesting questions, I'd like to get to those here. It's a person who is obviously quite experienced with *ACIM* and was actually one of the people who recommended that I interview you. And it will take us maybe 15 minutes but I'd like to read through these questions, it'll end the interview on a really high metaphysical note.

Let me start with the first one, this is regarding people-pleasing. "David often talks about discouraging people-pleasing but *ACIM* says, "Whatever your brother asks, give it. Because if he asks for it, he believes his salvation depends upon it, and if you refuse, you're believing your salvation depends on *not* giving it." How does that statement fit with David's idea of not people-pleasing.

David: Yeah, there are a couple of statements earlier on in the *Text* where Jesus says, "If a brother asks you to do something outrageous, do it to show its nothingness." And then he qualifies it 100 pages later, he puts it as: "As long as it would not bring harm to you or someone else," because this is where Course students, when they're reading *that* ...

Rick: Yeah, let's go jump off a bridge or something.

David: Yeah, jump off a bridge or "Let's go rob a bank." "Oh yeah, okay, I'll do it." So it's all very practical but basically those are the early stages of starting to get out of such intense egocentrism, you know, "my way," like the Frank Sinatra song – *I Did it My Way*. The mind can be so egocentric that it has to start to open up. And so if somebody says, "Come on, come out and dance with me on the dancefloor," and you think, "That's outrageous, I'm not a dancer," do it, to start to break you out of your comfort zones, your patterns and so forth.

But I find [that in] the communities I work with I talk about ‘no people-pleasing, no private thoughts,’ is that there are so many unconscious assumptions that are deeply engrained, that the deeper you go into spirituality, where people act one way and then you see them with their mom and their dad and they suddenly turn into a little child – a little boy or a little girl again, because they’re so thick, these assumptions around “mom and dad” or around certain places. But actually I work with people, I would say more in the advanced stages, [where] ‘no people-pleasing’ means “Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay,” as the Bible taught.

Learn to become very intuitive and first of all, you need to be open-minded, which is what the question was about, and that helps to do that. But then when you get further on, I’m sure people talking to Ramana Maharishi or Yogananda may make all kinds of suggestions [to them] and they just smile. They’re not inspired at all, you know, because they’re radiating that presence, so it helps you get into the deeper realms.

Rick: Yes, so maybe another way of putting it is: be true to yourself, don’t do stuff that compromises your deepest principles or values just to make yourself liked or happy, or [to] make other people happy.

David: Yeah, and also look for automatic responses, like some people [when asked by someone], “How are you feeling?” “Oh, fine, fine, fine, fine.” I find that “fine” word is a tip that there’s some people-pleasing going on. If you’re always fine and you’re not really in touch with those emotions underneath, which are blocking you from the light; you need to speak up and even sometimes *express* whatever it is, like, “Okay! I’m feeling” whatever it is, down or whatever, and that opens up the healing.

Rick: Yeah, although there’s a flipside to that. I was in India some years ago and for the first couple of months that I was there I had this chronic bronchitis. And every time somebody asked me how I was doing I would go into this whole sob story about my lungs and the way I felt, and fever and this and that. And finally at one point I thought to myself, “I’m tired of complaining about this.”

And so from that day, whenever anybody asked me, I would say, “I feel great! I feel fantastic!” And within about three days the bronchitis cleared up. Now it could have been coincidental, but there was this sort of, I don’t know.

David: I like that, I like that. That’s the side of how powerful the mind is, and then the flipside I find is people getting into these patterns where they aren’t even aware, but they just try to put on a happy face, and there’s so much repression and denial going on.

So when I say no people-pleasing, it’s more getting underneath all those unconscious beliefs. Because as long as we’re just trying to glide through the day and react and respond and play it safe, then a lot of times we never get in touch what’s underneath.

Rick: Yeah. Okay, enough about people-pleasing. The next question revolves around what is creation: “The following paragraphs refer to statements in the Course and questions that pertain to the

theme of creation and expression. Is creation possible without perspective? Page 319 in the *Workbook* says: "The opposite of life can only be another form of life." The word 'form' is used here, suggesting that form and creation are connected, but on that same page it also says: "It cannot make the physical." Well, physical is not really physical anyway, according to quantum physics it is nothing appearing as something. What would creation be if not some sort of form? Because it can sound like there's a suggestion to not express; to just flat line it."

So the key question here is: is creation possible without perspective? And there's something that will follow on after this, but let's let you answer that part.

David: Yeah, the way that the Course is using the word 'creation' most of the time, is talking about pure Spirit. So it relates back to our question about 'what is reality?' which we talked about at the very beginning – eternal, changeless, Spirit.

So just like in this world we get apples from apple trees and oranges from orange trees and bananas from banana trees, I would say spirit comes from Spirit. And the Bible also has all this form stuff: "So and so beget...beget...beget" - all the begets. That's all projection. And if God is pure Spirit and Christ or Buddha nature is pure Spirit, the Course even takes it one step further and says that you as the Christ – not Jesus but the living, abstract light of Christ – you have creations, but you're unaware of them because you're sleeping and dreaming. But you actually have eternal creations.

So God creates in Spirit, Christ creates in Spirit. And we have this word 'co-creator,' which comes up a lot in spirituality, but what Jesus is saying in the Course is, he's saying, "Co-creator means that God gave you creative ability, but not ability to *make* or to *make form*; that's all part of projection." So everything of this world, you could say of the cosmos, time-space cosmos, and everything of it is a projection of the ego.

That's very different than Genesis. I know I was raised as a Christian and I go back to Genesis, you know, "God created the *heavens* and the Earth," so we think of God as a creator that's covering the abstract realm of heaven, not the sky but beyond that, and also the form. And in *ACIM* Jesus is saying, "No, you need to learn to forgive the projection and come back to that creative state of mind, which is pure Spirit.

So really there is no perspective to creation; every time Jesus is using that word in the Course, whether it's "God creates" or "Christ creates" or "co-creator" or even "You, Christ, have creations," he's always talking purely abstract, pure Spirit, he's not talking form at all.

Rick: Okay, let me dwell on this a little bit more because I don't completely understand what you said, and maybe listeners won't either. Let's look at Cosmology for a minute. We have the idea of the Big Bang, supposedly the universe started in a Big Bang 14.7 billion years ago, or 13.7. And presumably it went on for quite some billions of years before enough stars had been formed, and it exploded again until there were enough heavy elements to form bodies, to form living life

forms and so on. So there were no real perceivers or egos or anything else floating around until quite some billions of years into the process of creation.

So when you speak of ego bringing about form, if that's what you said, are you talking about some kind of cosmic ego that arises somehow out of nothingness, that gives rise to the forms of stars and galaxies and so on, and eventually gives rise to human bodies and all the rest, or are you referring to individual egos, which haven't yet been able to be embodied because there were no bodies around in those days, or what?

David: Yeah, this is going way past, way beyond our typical psychology talks, but the ego in a very personal way is 'his ego,' 'her ego'...

Rick: Yeah, and in Sanskrit they call it *ahamkara*, which means 'the I-maker.'

David: Yes, yes. What we're saying with this, and if we go back to the Bible Jesus would say interesting sentences, he would say things like, "I and the Father are one," and he would say things like, "Before Abraham was, I am." So we'll say that prior to time, Abraham being a creature of time – "Before Abraham was, I am," before Jesus was, the historical Jesus – I am.

So there's an I am-ness that we'll call 'Spirit' or 'Reality,' and then I would say that the ego ... the Big Bang was an explosion, right, seemingly a hurling out. And even some of the greatest physicists have talked about how if they could map it out, it's already over and done. Like the Akashic records, this is what time and space looks like' they can draw out a map. It's kind of static but it depends on where you are inside the map that you will perceive yourself located in time and space.

So it is more like a cosmic ego, the belief that you can separate from oneness, from love, from I am-ness, is what projected out the entire cosmos. So it's going beyond the historical sense like, "Oh, it was just natural, it just happened," you know, like Stephen Hawking might say, "It just happened! We don't know how it happened."

In the Course Jesus is saying, "Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh." So this whole thing of distortion is forgetting to laugh, which is where the comedy comes back in. He's saying that creation is pure abstraction, and what we consider life in the world, you know, biological life and life on other planets, that's all part of a projection. It's pretty vast, you know, pretty deep Cosmology there.

Rick: Yeah, speaking of Cosmology, well one phrase I've heard is something called 'pragya aparadh,' which means 'mistake of the intellect.' And it is said that at some fundamental level we make a mistake in which duality begins to creep in, and then it bifurcates and multiplies until we have the whole catastrophe, as Zorba the Greek put it. And there have been saints like Ramana Maharishi and Papaji who actually wrote a book called *Nothing Ever Happened*, which from their perspective means the whole universe actually never did arise, it just *appears* to have done.

David: Yeah, that's beautiful, that fits in completely what the Course is teaching. One time there was a very famous *ACIM* teacher and they were asking him, "What does the *ACIM* say about life on other planets?" And he said, "Well the Course says there's no life on this planet." And it's the same kind of thing, nothing really happened, but to experientially go into that, it takes this forgiveness process of really raising up the unconscious beliefs. Because if it's appearing to be real, you can't deny the appearance; you have to go much deeper than that.

Rick: Yeah, reminds me of a Jimi Hendrix line from *Third Stone from the Sun*: "Ah, there ain't no life nowhere."

David: Yeah, I'm a fan too of Carol King, remember Carol King in the 60s and 70s? She did a song: "Only love is real, everything else illusion," and I thought, "Wow, I've always liked that song and years later it's teaching the same thing.

Rick: Yeah, but it's interesting, I mean, you can talk to a physicist and they would say something similar, I think, at least some of the more advanced ones, they'd say, "Yeah, even though we see cameras and computers and walls and all the physical forms, if you look closely enough at what's actually there, nothing is there. It just *looks* like there's something there. Somehow it all assumes forms and there's all kinds of intricate, brilliant laws of nature governing it all, on every level, from gross to subtle, but when you get right down to the essence of it, nothing there."

David: Yeah, I feel that. I feel like the quantum field that quantum physicists talk about and the forgiven world that Jesus talks about, where it's all unified awareness, where it's not an inner and an outer, not an observer and observed, it all is one; I think they're all saying the same thing, and all the mystics and saints have talked about it, so it's very encouraging.

Rick: Yeah, now there was something I was listening to or maybe reading in your stuff, where you were talking about consciousness is actually less fundamental than pure existence or something. And it reminds me of something that I had understood over the years, which is that pure existence somehow has a self-referral nature, where[by] consciousness arises, becomes conscious of itself because it's conscious. And in the process of becoming conscious of itself, a kind of three-fold structure emerges – of observer, observed and process of observation, and then that continues to proliferate into greater and greater complexity. Is there something along those lines in *ACIM*?

David: Yes, exactly. In fact, Jesus says that consciousness is the domain of the ego, so when we talk about 'pure' consciousness, I think we're talking about unified awareness or approaching this pure Oneness. But I love your interviews because you *will* address with your interviewees this idea of levels and the relative world, and I do feel that the relative *is* part of the domain of the ego, because it has levels and it can be trained.

Rick: "In my Father's house are many mansions."

David: Yeah, exactly, and I think that's practical. We reach higher and higher levels of consciousness, that's just the way it seems to be; we can't deny that that's the way it seems to go. But the pure existence that we're talking about, would be just in line with what you said, it's really a transcendence, not a three-fold or having different levels at all.

Rick: Yeah, a state prior to the emergence of all that.

David: Yes, yes.

Rick: Okay, good, I'm sure we could go on on that one but here's something - the person continues along the same lines: "ACIM says" - oh this is good, this is right what we were talking about - "consciousness is the first split. That would mean that the only way to be *truly* unified with absolute truth" - and this is what I was thinking of when I said that a moment ago - "is to be beyond consciousness. I assume that would be different from unconsciousness?" she asks. "But we don't really have direct experience of what is beyond consciousness, so how does this play out in experience? Does it mean that we cannot experience consciousness *and* truth, absolute unity, together? Again then, how does this relate to, as the Course puts it, "God's real creations?" If consciousness is a split from absolute truth, is a split from absolute truth necessary for any kind of creation? Even God's creations? Can we be creators and also be in absolute truth? If we aren't in absolute truth, how we can we create as God would create? But, if we are in absolute truth, which is apparently beyond perspective, beyond consciousness, does any creation, even seemingly, occur?" These are great questions, aren't they?

David: Yeah, they really are. And she's right on line with this in the sense that the I am-ness that's prior to history is just is what is, so there's no need to focus on it or anything other than just desiring and letting the Spirit bring it into full awareness.

But I always tell people we're here to train our consciousness and become fully conscious. So even if it's the ego's domain and we've got an unconscious and a conscious, we want to *raise* up what is out of awareness so we can be fully aware. And to me, that's the stepping stone back into that I am-ness. And none of that has anything to do with creation, like I talked about earlier.

So you could say the I am-ness, God creates, Christ creates - not Jesus, but the essence of what truly is - is a creative state of mind. It's extending and radiating but not in a quantitative sense. It's hard to even describe, our words fall way short when we come into that realm.

Rick: I heard you say something in one of your recordings that relates to this, in which you seem to be saying, if I remember correctly, that it's nonsense the notion of God "needing" creation or creating creation in order to experience Himself, or enjoy, or something like that, is nonsense - correct me if I'm wrong.

But I would counter that to say that there is something more, in a way, to an apparently manifest creation in which beings such as ourselves can attain God-consciousness and know ourselves as God, and have living experience as a human being yet in the consciousness of God,

than there is to unmanifest creation never having emerged prior to the Big Bang, if that's the way things worked.

So it almost seems as though the creation is not some kind of mistake or accident or anything else; it's actually something with which God enjoys or entertains – in fact in Sanskrit it's called 'Lila,' there's a play, it means 'play.' And so there is a kind of a greater richness to the whole show than there would be to mere unboundedness, and so I wouldn't say it's bologna or nonsense that God is enjoying this; this is how He enjoys, this is His play.

David: Yeah, I know, I've read about Lila and a lot of the different responses that come through Veda-Vedanta and Nonduality teachers, but that's where the Course is a little bit unique in that way. Because here it is coming through and describing the illusion and the "puff of nothingness," and so on and so forth, "Into eternity where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea," it's really implying that distortions of linear time and separate bodies and human beings, and stars and planets and the whole thing that evolved with the Big Bang, that somehow God has something to do with that or that it had a reason to come into existence.

But if we go back to what Ramana Maharishi and Papaji were saying, the Course is saying, what I'm saying, you know, it never happened. What never happened doesn't need a reason, in fact, I would say it's more of an explanation for the mind when it's waking up, if it helps. I always like Lila because there's a playfulness to it and I think Spirit is playful, but I'm talking about all the nondual metaphysics, like why Spirit would need the appearance of finality or the appearance of temporality - I still think that's anthropomorphizing it. It's almost like coming from a human perspective and saying, "Oh, there's gotta be a reason."

There's some pretty strong language from Jesus in the *Workbook* which is basically saying that, "The world was made as an attack upon God, a place where God could enter not." Now a lot of people who actually read the Course, they don't want to touch that one with a ten foot pole. I'm one who wants to wake up and be in bliss eternally, so I'm going to take everything that is said, I want to look at that.

That fits a little bit more with the "it never happened" in the sense that he is saying, "No, the world wasn't made by God as an enjoyable place for Lila and play; it is actually a place of idols - "Hold no graven images before the Lord thy God."" I don't think he's talking about totem poles and statues in there; I think the entire cosmic projection of the Big Bang is those graven images.

You know how they talk about the veil that's drawn over the truth? I really want to question everything about the veil and see, is this veil really attractive? Pleasure, pain? Is there something called bliss that's beyond pleasure and pain? I want to know that, I'm going to follow these words that he's saying. And there's even a *Workbook* lesson which is 128: "The world I see holds nothing that I want" - most *ACIM* teachers don't emphasize that lesson. In fact, I talk about that lesson when I'm travelling.

One time I had a concert violinist who invited me and he raised his hand and said, "Listen, I was doing the *Workbook* but when I got to Lesson 128, "The world I see holds nothing that I want," I closed the book. I said no, I can't be authentic, I can't actually practice that lesson." And I said, "Well Lesson 129 is so beautiful." He said, "Well what's that?" I said, "Well that's right, you closed the book on 128 and Lesson 129 is: "Beyond this world" – dualistic world – "Beyond this world is the world that I want" - it's talking about a unified world.

So I don't think there's anything wrong with the world at all, actually I feel like from a place of 'judge not,' which is the teachings of the Beatitudes, we can behold a unified world in which it is pure love, pure love reflected. So I'm not one of these negative ones, I'm not into aestheticism, I'm not into flagellating the body, I don't strike the body down or think that it's evil.

Even the Gnostics, I think, knew that the world was an illusion, but then psychologically they still started coming up with practices that made it seem like it was evil, you know, like 'the demiurge made it so it must be evil.' But I'm teaching 'don't judge it;' it's beautiful when you don't judge it.

Rick: There's a lot in what you just said. I think there's a perspective in which all these apparent contradictions can be reconciled. I agree with your statement about we shouldn't anthropomorphize God and use words like "reason" and "desire" and this and that, but I also would disagree that the world is some kind of accident or mistake or whatever word you use there. Because if it is, then how can we truly say the God is omniscient and omnipresent?

The world is in God and God is in the world, in fact we can even say that there is nothing *but* God, period. And therefore what we see is God playing, within Himself – I use the word 'Him,' obviously it's not a masculine thing, but that Divine intelligence churning within Itself, and there's nothing other than that. It's the ocean and little currents going around within the ocean, it's all just water but we see this current here and that current there, and there's an iceberg, but the ice is really only water.

The whole thing just seems to me to be all is well and wisely put, it's all a Divine play, there's no mistake, nothing wrong with it. And the thing you said about graven images was really good too, I mean, it's a graven image only if you don't see the Divine in it, if you don't see what it essentially is: Divinity appearing as form. But I think the perspective can be predominantly the Divinity, secondarily the form.

And I think there are people living with that perspective, who just see God everywhere – God appearing as computer, God appearing as rock, God appearing as dog. But if God is really omnipresent then that's the way it's got to be; God's not living off on some planet like you said the Mormons say, you know, what kind of God is that? Like Napoleon on that island where they banished him to; He's just the One and All.

David: Yeah, I found that those are very, very subtle points and very important. And when I was doing the Workbook lesson, I got to Lessons 29 and 30 I believe, Lesson 29 from Jesus, right, from Jesus: "God is in everything I see."

Rick: Yeah, there you go.

David: And then Lesson 30 he goes to explain it, but it's a little bit different from what you're talking about. And this is why I'm fascinated, because I'd say the same thing: God's all knowing, all powerful, all loving, you know, that's what we were told. But he says, "God is in everything I see" – Lesson 29 is true, "God is in everything I see" – number 30 – "because God is in my Mind."

Rick: Not *only* in your mind.

David: Well, not mind in a personal sense.

Rick: Oh, cosmic Mind.

David: Cosmic Mind, yeah – mass Mind.

Rick: Oh yeah, okay.

David: So he goes in to that and he's saying that there is a purpose that's in our mind that's like a unifying purpose. You can call it the Holy Spirit, you can call it a cosmic purpose or intention that's within us - it's still there, and he's saying that that's what unifies perception. So he is just saying that fragmented perception is the problem and unified perception is the answer.

So he'll use exactly what you're saying, he's training the mind to see everything as unified, and so he'll say, "God is in that wastepaper basket, God is in that curtain, God is in that chair." He has you actually go through and practice with everything that you're perceiving, to take you more in to that unified experience, where it's just that you are love and everything you're perceiving is filled with love.

So I do feel like it's going in the same place, and I don't think that we're trying to ascribe any kind of ill meaning or evil to anything, just saying that there's distortion and there's unified correction, and that's really where it's all focused. And to me really, that's what 'God is omniscient' means; it's unified awareness.

Rick: And God is in the distortion, if it really is distortion. Because again, if He's not, if He doesn't permeate the garbage dump as much as He permeates the beautiful mountaintop, then He's not omnipresent. And yet if you look at the garbage dump closely and get down microscopically into some little bit of garbage, there you see the same marvelous intelligence governing the atoms and the molecules and the microorganisms that are living in the garbage dump, as you see in some beautiful scene in the Wasatch Mountains.

David: Yeah, I think it's like what the quantum physicists tell us, that the universe is mostly space. And even if you go down into an atom, we always thought atoms were the building blocks, you know, we were raised with Newtonian physics - we thought they were the building blocks, they were the smallest little thing.

Rick: They're mostly space.

David: And they're mostly space. So in the end I like that feeling that it's all energy, and then what appears to be separate and solid might be a distortion, and maybe God isn't involved with the distortion. Maybe the very name of distortion, you know, "Looking through a darkened glass," doesn't have anything to do with God. I just have to be open to the possibility that even my *definition* of omniscience may be ... you know; I just stay open.

Rick: It's true, it's true. Yeah, me too, I'm just playing with you. If God isn't involved in the distortion, then that would imply that there is something other than God that is involved in the distortion.

David: That it actually happened, right, and maybe Ramana had it right, that it didn't happen. The Course has this thing called 'atonement,' which is just the awareness that the separation never happened. So to me, that's like taking Ramana's teaching and Papaji's and it's saying, "Yeah, exactly right, now let's have an experience that shows us that for real; not an intellectual concept."

So that's been my whole life, is I've aimed at an experience, I've been aimed at that.

Rick: Yeah, me too, but I think that this deep understanding that we're trying to clarify here helps facilitate that experience. It's not just an intellectual thing; it stirs up the intuitive experience of it, to delve deep within your understanding.

David: Oh, I agree, these are very meaningful dialogues, it's like the Socratic Method. I just made a book over the last 20 years and just released it, and it's called *Unwind Your Mind Back to God*. Actually it's got an unwinding symbol on here (pointing to the book cover) - I don't know if you can see that.

Rick: Oh yeah.

David: But it is basically using Socratic dialogue, where back in the 1990s I just got into this joyful consistent state, and then people started showing up and saying, "I am your student," and all this and that - you know, when the teacher is ready the students will appear, or whatever.

And our dialogues we recorded, which are very much like Socratic dialogue of just doing what we're doing - coming together in the spirit of openness, the spirit of curiosity, the spirit of 'let's discover together,' because it's there to be discovered, so let's discover it. And I really love that, that's why I enjoy that all the books are dialogues; I'm not trying to preach or teach, it's more like 'let's discover together,' because we have it inside of us.

Rick: Yeah, if it's not inside of us, it's not anywhere. [Now] one or two more questions from this lady, shorter ones.

"Relative to creation, from the part of the text called *Manual for Teachers*, ACIM states, "And then the voice is gone, no longer to take form but to return to the eternal formlessness of God." So then what, (she asks) is creation finished then? In another place the text says, "Creation continues unabated." So which is it? What about extension? Even extension is an idea of some sort, or movement of some sort, a touching of some sort, or reaching of some sort, a shining of some sort, or an expression of some sort." That's her question.

David: Oh yeah, these are good, these are getting down to the core of things! Well, I have always appreciated the metaphor of a dream because I like what these movies like *Inception* are coming out and showing, that there's even *layers* of dreaming and you're really unaware that you're dreaming. You need a big kick to wake you up from the dream.

And so for me, when we talk about creation and I say it's abstract, there is nothing in this entire cosmos that would even be a close metaphor, because even black holes or anything I've ever discovered, nothing comes close to abstraction. So when we think of 'shining,' 'radiating,' we always are thinking of something.

Rick: Photons or something.

David: It's something, yeah, or even like Peace Pilgrim going out and shining her light, radiating, walking thousands of miles to demonstrate. What I like is the analogy of the child is asleep and dreaming but has forgotten that it's dreaming. So it's just like when we go to a movie theater, we don't sit there and go, "Yeah, images, images, images." We don't pay \$14 to sit there for two hours and say that, you know, we get drawn in. We're like there, as if it's actually happening right then. It's a trick. We can intellectually say, "It's not really happening," but we're escaping into it.

I would say that if a child is dreaming and the child has forgotten it's dreaming, if a wise parent is going to wake that child up, if it's too direct, if the parent starts shaking the child, for example, the child might perceive the shaking as a monster in the dream, because it's so caught up in the dream.

So what we're doing is we're being asked to practice raising the darkness to the light, and we just continue on even if [we're still] perceiving what's happening as if it's really happening, and coming more to that place where we wake up. Now when we wake up, just like when we wake up from a dream, we seem to wake up into another dream - I call it daytime. We're daydreaming or we're nighttime dreaming, but Jesus says "All your time is spend in dreaming, nobody has woken up."

And Jesus says, "When I awoke, you were with me," meaning that there is a state of bliss that we can call creation, that is really there – this I am-ness – but you're not going to have a glimmer

of what it's like even when you're sleeping and dreaming. The most you can have is a happy dream.

So to me, that's what I focus on, is letting everything be used for happiness, you know, true happiness - not judging things, being loving, being accepting. And I can't even comment on the am-ness that's outside of the dream because I'm still watching the dream like everyone else.

Rick: But haven't you woken up from the dream to a significant degree? I mean, if I shake you now, do you think it's a monster or are you ... well, like you said, when you were on that boat and the horn went off, you didn't react. So that's analogous to the parent shaking the child, and you were already enough awake from the dream that you just took it in stride.

David: I'm having a lucid dream. It's a lucid dream, and so that's what makes it happy, because I'm aware that I'm dreaming. But I wouldn't presume that ... even the Course says, "God will take the final step." I think God doesn't really take steps but that's a metaphor too, that once we wake up it's going to be completely unlike anything we've ever known, so to speak, in this world. And so I just stay focused on the happy dream, I stay focused on being lucid, but other than that, I can't speak of those things.

Rick: True about it being unlike anything we've ever known, and yet at the same time, many people who have a profound, radical awakening say, "Wow, I always knew this and yet I didn't recognize it; it was right in front of my nose, so to speak, but I just overlooked it."

David: Yeah, along with getting asked about the 'raising the dead,' I think the thing I get asked about the most is I had three - what the Course would call 'revelatory' experiences. And it's not like a near-death experience where you go through a tunnel and you see this light; it's like I punctured through the veil in deep mediation. And it was *so* deep that it was like Gary Renard's book, *The Disappearance of the Universe*, that literally everything disappeared, that was perceptual, and all that was was this blazing light, and the Course calls it the 'Great rays.'

So I had three different experiences where I seem to just puncture through the veil entirely, and it was unspeakable, I couldn't even come back and try to put human words to that ecstasy or whatever, you know; that's just a human word, and the Course says, "Words are but symbols of symbols, twice removed from reality." So we're doing a pretty good job I think here, today, considering our tools are twice removed from reality, we're giving it a good go here.

Rick: Yeah, giving it our best shot. With all this talk of dreams and sleep and what not as metaphor, have you ever had it in your experience, or do you now, that pure awareness is maintained during sleep? And I ask that because that's kind of a traditional "acid-test" of awakening and I've had glimpses of it myself, but it's not consistent. But I have friends who say that it's clear as a bell all the time and has been for years now, so I'm just curious, have you had any tastes of that?

David: Yeah, it seems to be strikingly different from what we call REM sleep, where we are generating these scenarios and believing in them. Again, it feels very lucid. I think of it like if what we were

doing right now is a daytime dream, and then at nighttime when the body is in bed and [there's] Rapid Eye Movement and so forth - yeah, it does feel so much so that I would say, seemingly in my life, it used to be where I had a lot of dreams or even night terrors and nightmares and so forth, I don't have those anymore, and it's this sense of evenness with it.

So I don't wake up remembering these things and tossing and turning; that was all there before but [as I've] gone through this purification process, it seems like it stabilized out into a kind of stable, lucid state.

Rick: Yeah, but that's not quite exactly what I'm referring to; that would have to do with how much turbulence there is during sleep or how many dreams you're having, or how intense the dreams are. But you know that experience you described a minute ago of those three instances where you had that deep inner light during meditation, I think what I'm referring to is something of that nature, 24-7, including throughout the night. It's just something to consider.

I actually have assembled a whole page full of quotes from Ramana Maharishi and various other saints and seers who describe that experience. It seems to be one of the symptoms, so to speak, of awakening, that it's not just a "waking state" phenomena; it's that the ground of *Being* has woken up to itself, and then remains awake as the other three states of consciousness – waking, dreaming and sleeping – cycle along.

David: That's beautiful. That sounds like an awareness of dreaming, being fully aware of that, very much like that lucid state, even when there seems to be a shift from the body being animated to inanimate; it stays on.

Rick: Yeah, there's this thing in the *Song of Solomon* – "I sleep though my heart waketh" – it might* refer to that, I don't know.

David: Yeah, yeah.

Rick: Okay, here's the final question from this woman who sent in these nice questions, she said: "If the world is an illusion that is essentially a "mistake"" – I think we've talked about this – "as *ACIM* seems to suggest, the Course says, "Even the real world isn't real," then should not all the folks who wake up from the mistake help by removing themselves, i.e. their form perspective," – sounds like they're supposed to do a "Heaven's gate" kind of a job on themselves – "since a point of perspective which can't be absolute truth is there for a kind of error, it can only be solved by getting rid of each perspective/form one at a time. If each perspective sticks around to supposedly get rid of other pieces of perspective, the pile will never disappear. The "voice" referred to in the previous paragraph will never be gone, then we're back to flat line – nothing happening. Would this be no creation? That is, is no creation the ultimate goal of the Course and perhaps other scriptures' teachings?"

David: Another brilliant question, in the sense it's very deep and very subtle. There's one line that kind of hints at the answer and I just got a big smile on my face when I first read it, but it was Jesus

saying, "There are those who have laid aside the body to increase their helpfulness." And it gets right at her question because from the perspective of inside the dream, we look at avatars and saints like Yogananda, and we're just *amazed* at these beings, that they've dedicated and devoted their lives to emanating and radiating this Presence - that's why they're saints. And yet, this quote that I said, "There are those who have laid aside the body in order to increase their helpfulness" ...

Rick: Reminds me of Yoda, remember? He said, "I'll be much more powerful after I die."

David: Yes, exactly. And Jesus said things like, "I must go away now, but I shall bring a Comforter," and he was implying that the body of Jesus must go for the Comforter to come in stronger for everyone, because they were getting a little bit idolatized with Jesus, you know? The Christians believed that Jesus was God, but actually he said, "I and the Father are one," which implied we're of the same spirit, but he didn't say, "I am God;" he never was quoted as saying, "I am God."

So I think that's very important that ... like Yogananda, I liked at the very end when he had dinner with his disciples how he just said, "Goodbye," but the body remained in a state of non-decay as a beautiful symbol of that. And I love the quote at the end of Ramana Maharishi's life, "Why are you sad? Where could I go?" Wow! What a perfect nondual expression to end [with]?

And I've even enjoyed those photos of him at the end - where the body with the tumor looks like it's going down fast, and then there's these glowing, sparkling eyes, shooting and radiating this love and light. To me, that touches my heart. It teaches me that we're being used in a helpful way here, but if we actually lay aside, not only the body and the world but all judgements, then that seems to be the most helpful thing we can do.

Rick: Yeah, that's beautiful. Some spiritual teachings hold that when one is enlightened and the body drops, it's like a drop of water going into the ocean; there's no distinguishing the drop from the ocean anymore. As far as that being is concerned, it is finished. And others hold that you kind of stick around on some level, like we were just suggesting, and help to do things, help people on Earth or whatever.

In fact, I've interviewed numerous people who had experiences of Ramana Maharishi coming to them before they even knew who Ramana Maharishi was; they'd never heard of him. And then, you know, years later they'll see a book in a bookstore and say, "That's the guy who showed up!" Does *ACIM* address that point?

David: Yeah, it even uses some of the same metaphors of a drop of water and the ocean - Jesus uses that one. And it is a beautiful thing, but it tends to lead towards this idea of a state of mind. He says, "When you have learned to decide with God, all decisions become as easy and as right as breathing, and it will be as if you are carried down a quiet path in summer." It's like ... ahhh, it melts you, you know?

To me, it's pointing to a state of mind. He says, "Can you imagine what it would be like to be quiet, silent, perfectly still all the time? That is what time is for, to learn just that and nothing more."

Rick: That's beautiful.

David: They're beautiful quotes that are just pointing towards that stillness and that sense of the ocean. There's no difference; the drop has been absorbed in the ocean and you're just aware of the ocean and all its fullness.

Rick: Yeah, that's a whole nice area – that effortless, right action - and how spontaneity and how effortlessly life flows once one is no longer swimming against the current.

David: And this thing with enlightenment, I had somebody say to me, "Well if you're enlightened, then shouldn't you transmit or extend that in some way? Shouldn't it appear in this world in some way?" Like, "Shouldn't you have some enlightened students or enlightened disciples if you're enlightened?"

And what I find is that I did have this experience appearing in the spirit - not hearing it in a voice like we talked about, but just these inner prompts and these thoughts. But I do find that the ones that have kind of lived with me, worked with me and moved around the globe with me, and this and that, that for us, hearing the Spirit, so to speak, or following these prompts, is our daily lives. It's not something that's just kind of an intellectual thing, but it actually is *extremely* practical.

And if you talk to anyone that I know or work with very closely, we call them the "messengers of peace," that's exactly what they're experience is of going through this world. So we're not trying to dismiss this whole idea of guidance, we are saying that there's a state of mind that even goes beyond the guidance, but the guidance is helpful, very helpful.

Rick: Yeah, *and*, I don't think I've ever heard you proclaim that you are enlightened. I mean, I might have said to that person, "Hey, what do you mean if I'm enlightened? Did I ever say I was?" Do you, have you said that?

David: All I do is I speak from what is the presence within me.

Rick: Right, and people can call that whatever they want.

David: They can call it whatever they want. In fact, to me, teaching is really an attitude - like the beatitudes, it's not so much the words. It's good if our words and our actions are the embodiment or the expression of our attitude, but to me the attitude is the most important thing, and you can give that any name you want: peaceful, love.

And when they say, "You too," I would not say that "David" is enlightened, because you know, dream figures are dream figures, but I want to share an attitude.

Rick: And more than an attitude; perhaps the reality underlying that attitude, of which the attitude is but a symptom.

David: Yes, exactly.

Rick: Cool. Well, I'll bet you [that] you and I can do a 2-month interview. We just sit there and go through *ACIM* and go on for an hour about every sentence.

David: I know! It's been a good time. We're just engaged in it and it's wonderful to be engaged in this kind of deep way. This has been my life. Sometime they made a movie called *My Dinner with Andre*. It takes place at a restaurant and I thought, "My God, that's kind of the way my life has gone."

I enjoy open-flowing dialogues in a joyful presence, where we're discovering together, so I really appreciate this Rick. I really have enjoyed your show and I really appreciate being asked to come onto your *Buddha at the Gas Pump*.

Rick: Well yeah, I really appreciate your having come on and I also really [would] love this moving in the direction of being able to do it as fully as you do. Some people – it may have been something I read of yours – where the guy said, "Just jump off the cliff and build an airplane on the way down!"

It's like people say, "Do what you love and the money will follow," and all kinds of sayings like that, so I've done that at times in my life and I'm kind of moving back to doing that but I'm kind of inching my way off the cliff, as it were, and as the support for BATGAP grows and the day job can diminish.

David: Yes, I see that, I follow that. I see and I like that you've got your 'Donation' button and you're so transparent! You say, "Oh, I want to go out to the Nonduality conference out there in California and this is all supported by donations," and that's the way I've done it. I just put it out there and say, "This is the way it is for me," and I love that you do that. I do feel like the Spirit moving, it's so helpful what you're doing here with this show, and I feel like that the support will just grow and grow and grow.

Rick: Yeah, thanks. And I might as well mention in this context that like your organization, BATGAP is registered as a 501-C-3, which Americans will understand what that means – it has a nonprofit, tax-exempt status.

Alright, great, well let me make some wrap up points. I've been speaking with David Hoffmeister. It's hard to *stop* speaking with David Hoffmeister because it's so enjoyable, but I guess all things must come to an end.

This is an ongoing series of interviews, as you probably realize, and there are about 242 of them now, or something. You'll find them all on www.BATGAP.com, B-A-T-G-A-P, and there are several different ways in which they're indexed. There's an alphabetical index, a chronological

index, a categorical index – that another friend named David has been putting a lot of time into and really doing a great job. So it's indexed in several different ways and you'll find that under the 'Past Interviews' menu.

Under the 'Future Interviews' menu you'll find a list of upcoming guests, a place to suggest a guest and some other things – anyway, explore the site. Each interview on the site has its own page, so David Hoffmeister – there'll be a page for him. And on that page I'll have links to any websites he wants me to link to, to his books, there will also be a link to a discussion Group on BATGAP about this particular interview – a thread about this particular interview.

There is a link to an audio 'Podcast' on every page, so you can subscribe to this on iTunes and not have to sit in front of your computer for 2-and-a-half hours. There's a button to click to sign up to be notified by email each time a new interview is posted. And I think that's just about all the important things, just go to www.BATGAP.com, check it all out, follow links from there to David's website, he has a lot to offer there. And I hope that this has been a good introduction to *ACIM* for those who were unfamiliar with it, and a good little taste of some more advanced topics for those who are experts at it.

David: Beautiful.

Rick: So great, thanks David.

David: Thank you, it's been such a blessing.

Rick: Yeah, and thanks to those who have been listening or watching and we'll see you next week.

{BATGAP theme music playing}