Forgiving Subjectivity with A Course in Miracles: From Personality to Genes to Cognitive Bias

By A Course in Miracles Alex

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Introduction

The first thing I want to do is ask a question. Are you a student of *A Course in Miracles*—or at least thoroughly familiar with the Course? The answer needs to be yes. This book is written for an audience already familiar with the Course. If you’ve at least read *The Universe Is a Dream*, then that should be sufficient. But unless you have some sort of *A Course in Miracles* background, this book is not yet for you. Unlike my other books, which were made as introductions for more general audiences, this book is explicitly for *A Course in Miracles* students. That’s why I’m writing this book under the pen name “A Course in Miracles Alex.”
With that out of the way, we can begin. Welcome to the first of what “may” eventually become a few compact, informal single-subject *A Course in Miracles* themed e-books. I emphasize the word “may” because I’m not going to force anything; either the inspiration is there to make a book or it isn’t. There is little economic incentive to write for such a small niche, which is why this book is free to email newsletter subscribers. My preference is to just practice *A Course in Miracles* privately and that’s it, nothing public, nothing guru-ish. Consequently, I’m quite a reluctant author when it comes to *A Course in Miracles*. I’m a less reluctant artist, which is why I was able to muster up the trust to write and draw *The Universe Is a Dream*. Yet, I’m constantly guided to “play my role,” because, in the big picture, that’s the most win/win option. And so that’s why I made this book.

I’ve been practicing *A Course in Miracles* since I did the Workbook in 2005. *A Course in Miracles* isn’t for everyone—at least not at this point in time. And that is perfectly fine with me. I’m not a fan of people who smear the Course and attack it with their own subjective, faulty interpretations. But I certainly have no problem with those who choose a different path. I chose *A Course in Miracles* as my path after sampling lots of other options ranging from conventional religions to materialist atheism. *A Course in Miracles* was the only thing I found that satisfied my desire for logical consistency. Nothing else I found was anywhere near as
satisfying to me as the Course. But that logical consistency of the Course came by way of the pure non-dualism of Ken Wapnick, not necessarily the Course itself. If I was first exposed to *A Course in Miracles* by way of a less logically consistent interpretation, there is a good chance I would have dismissed it. And if I was first exposed to *A Course in Miracles* without any interpretations, just the raw book, I probably would have just dismissed it as typical channeled gibberish. A good summarized explanation of the Course beats the Course itself in terms of clarity. In that sense, I’m not a fundamentalist about the Course at all. Instead, I’m more of an *A Course in Miracles* realist.

A realist is someone who accepts a situation as it is and is prepared to deal with it accordingly. Reality according to the Course is oneness. Therefore, an *A Course in Miracles* realist accepts that reality is oneness. By accepting reality as oneness, an *A Course in Miracles* realist doesn’t take the reality of anything else too seriously—that includes the book known as *A Course in Miracles*. To an *A Course in Miracles* realist, the task at hand today is most likely not raising the dead, moving mountains, or vibrating off the planet. The task at hand today is simply learning to faithfully practice true forgiveness, since that is the path to oneness. An *A Course in Miracles* realist embraces and focuses upon the system of true forgiveness rather than goals.

One thing about the Course I often find annoying, and perhaps you do to, is that the ideals of the Course often
are a far cry from what I deal with in day-to-day life. For example, the Course says in many different ways that, “sickness is a defense against the truth.” When I feel healthy, such statements seem fine. When I am over a toilet bowl vomiting from the flu, such statements seem annoying, idealistic, and sometimes even like a fraud.

From my late teens to late twenties, I never came down with anything resembling a cold or the flu. For awhile, I thought perhaps I just had a great immune system. But then something changed. My sister began to have kids. Young kids had been mostly gone from my life since my late teens. But then young kids were in my life again.

For years, when leaving the house, good hygiene kept me from catching germs and bringing them home. But when young kids started regularly bringing germs directly into my home, I started getting sick. I started getting sick with some kind of flu or cold pretty much annually. The illnesses usually ended up annoying for a day or two and then mildly annoying for several days. Perhaps the pain was milder from having a more guiltless mind, but the illnesses weren’t painless. Eventually, I bought Lysol and started spraying down my home every time my sister’s kids came over. That seemed to cut down the illnesses to more like once every two years. But to this day the germs still find a way to me from time to time.

Within several years, young kids will be out of my life again for awhile. And I wouldn’t be surprised if at that
time I go back to rarely ever getting sick from germs. No cause means no effect, even in the illusion. The ultimate cause is mind. Seemingly physical causes and effects are what the Course calls magic. Germs are magic. Lysol to kill germs is magic. Although magic doesn’t work in the sense that it heals the mind, which is the ultimate cause, magic does work in the illusion. Just as you should avoid walking off of tall cliffs, you should also avoid nasty germs. Most germs are like a two foot cliff, nothing worth avoiding and good exercise. But there are also tall cliff germs. And I personally don’t like to tempt my unconscious guilt.

Early, when I first started getting into A Course in Miracles, I started to look at most forms of magic with a bit of contempt. That was back during my healthy streak. But that attitude wasn’t helping me forgive. And the fact was that my life, just like the lives of everyone else, was and still is all about magic. I don’t will my facial hair to not grow; I get out the electric razor and trim it daily. I don’t will myself to change my geographical location; I get in a car or use my legs and walk. I don’t will the rain to not make me wet; I cover myself with a defense against the rain. Nothing real can be threatened—but since day-to-day life is full of illusion, it is full of things that can be threatened—even if those things don’t really exist. So magic is not bad; it is just that it is meaningless. As the Course says, “If a magic thought arouses anger in any form, God's teacher can be sure that he is
strengthening his own belief in sin and has condemned himself.” (M-17.1.6)

With help from Spirit, over time my view of magic has changed to a view of acceptance and forgiveness. My current view of magic is summed up in this little story:

A man moved near a river and wanted to find a way to travel across the water. The man spent ten years developing the ability to levitate using his mind so he could float across the river. The Buddha, who was preaching in town, was confronted by this man, who said, “Look master, look what I have achieved. I can levitate across the water.” And the Buddha said, “Yeah, but the ferry only costs a nickel!”

The reality is that *A Course in Miracles* is itself a form of magic. Rather than receiving the voice of the Holy Spirit or Jesus directly, the Course puts the voice in word form. The Course is magic designed to subvert magic. But like all magic, the Course isn’t perfect; the Course comes with undesired side effects. I’ve read through *A Course in Miracles* many times and, although I greatly appreciate the book, I certainly cannot honestly say that I consider it a perfect book. A perfect book would be one written in a way I completely understand without any room for misinterpretation. And a perfect book would also include some sort of worldly proof of its accuracy. For instance, if *A Course in Miracles* included detailed blue-prints for a working free-energy device, I’d have little reason to doubt the accuracy of the rest of what it has to say. But the reality is that the Course
leaves plenty of room for doubt and plenty of room for multiple potential interpretations.

In college, I got accustomed to reading dense, pretentious academic writing, including writings by contemporary philosophers such as Derrida and Baudrillard (both have since died). Academic writing is often quite incomprehensible since it is mostly just academics trying to impress other academics with how smart they are. I do enjoy a good riddle and some mild vocabulary expansion. But most of the time I’m a fan of brevity and simplicity. So when I first got into A Course in Miracles, it was fairly readable compared to a lot of stuff I had been reading at the time. But nonetheless, the Course still too often felt too much like a Rorschach inkblot test open to multiple interpretations. And realistically, the Course still too often feels that way to me. Some may argue that the inkblot quality of the Course is a feature rather than a defect. But I can’t say I always buy such arguments.

The Course came into the world the best way the collective mind could handle it coming into the world at the time. And realistically, it is clear to me that the Course was unable to come into the world in a completely perfect form—at least not a perfect form for me. Helen Schucman did her part as scribe of the Course with help from Bill Thetford. But Ken Wapnick also played an integral part. And Wapnick was able to add another layer of clarity to the Course that Schucman and Thetford otherwise wouldn’t have done alone.
The mental model of *A Course in Miracles* that exists in my mind, thanks in part to Wapnick, is much more coherent than anything I’m able to reliably tease directly from the text. In that sense, I often wonder if I am a student of the Course anymore or more just a student of the Holy Spirit. And I say Holy Spirit rather than Jesus because, as a symbol, a Holy Ghost seems more impressive and authoritative to me than a young ancient bearded dude.

In my day to day life, I practice the Course in its simplest form: I just remember it’s my dream and I forgive. I have an inner teacher to guide me, which most often not only precludes direct reference to the Course but also helps make sense of the Course.

For example, one day I was thinking about how the Course says, “They have not moved mountains by their faith because their faith was not whole.” But the Course also says things like, “Only by tricks of magic are special powers demonstrated,” and “The use of miracles as spectacles to induce belief is a misunderstanding of their purpose.” Plus, the Course says, “the script is written,” meaning I could only perform a scripted miracle anyway. So I began to wonder, “How can I move mountains with faith without at least demonstrating the spectacle to myself?” and, “Why would I want to move mountains even if doing so is in the script? It seems like a good way to destroy a lot of things.”

Soon, an answer came to me. And it was a good, satisfying answer. The answer went something like this:
“Don’t think of moving mountains as literal, it is something that happens as the script of the universe changes; true forgiveness collapses the past and future closer to the present which can cause the locations of mountains to change. In other words, if you shift to a different variation of the universal script, things can change—like the locations of mountains. But those changes aren’t necessarily perceptible since such shifts make the history change along with the future.”

Now, the problem with those kinds of insights is that I’m never quite sure if they are Holy Spirit insights or just ego insights. The way I differentiate is by assessing if such insights encourage forgiveness or discourage it. Fortunately, that has been a reliable metric. Therefore, relying on my inner guide has become my preference rather than paging through the Course. Often I encounter things in my day-to-day life that the Course doesn’t cover, dismisses, or confuses more than clarifies.

For instance, economics is one of my hobbies. I find the subject really interesting and helpful. When I ask the Course what I should think about economics, it just gives this smart-ass answer: “You think you must obey the laws of medicine, of economics and of health. Protect the body, and you will be saved. These are not laws, but madness. The body is endangered by the mind that hurts itself. The body suffers just in order that the mind will fail to see it is the victim of itself.” (WB-76)

Conversely, when I directly ask the Holy Spirit what I should think about economics, it gives me answers like
The Golden Rule is the correct law of economics. Value is subjective. Exchange must be voluntary.” That helps me forgive economics more than dismissing economic laws as “madness” does. Furthermore, when I ask Spirit what I should think about politics I get similar answers to economics. I get answers like, “Politics are what you get when people refuse the Golden Rule.” Things having to do with the world, such as economics or politics, cannot be true in any real sense. Nonetheless, there are many concepts that can be helpful if used by the Holy Spirit.

I don’t know how to teleport. I don’t know how to consistently heal the sick with just my mind. By and large, I really am not good at anything resembling miracles with physical manifestations. Nor am I even very good at putting on shows that make me appear as some great spiritual person. I’m kind but not particularly friendly. I’m considerate but not particularly polite. The only thing I will say I’m relatively good at is practicing true forgiveness. And yet, even with that, I’m well aware that I still have a ways to go.

Forgiveness is my primary interest. Forgiveness is the mind power I want to master. I really don’t care about things beyond the power of true forgiveness. I remain open-minded to the infinite power of the mind, but I’ll only really believe what I experience and I don’t expect you to believe anything other than your own experience either. Sure, I’ve had personal experiences that have convincingly shown me that the world is not real. But
those were personal experiences, nothing I could convincingly prove to anyone else. Therefore, they are nothing I wish to emphasize. My own standard for what I find believable is my own experience combined with what seems logical. Without a standard, there is little limit on where to draw the line on belief. Without a standard, I might instead be interested in making contact with blue space chickens, finding Sasquatch, or securing an eternity of heaven on earth in a glorified body.

I mention all this to set up the topic of this book: subjectivity. We all see the world through our own unique lenses. The world was made for separation after all, not oneness. And our lenses also color the ways we interpret, practice, and teach *A Course in Miracles*. When you read a book by Ken Wapnick, one by me, or one by anyone else, you are trying to make your lens a little less subjective by letting in another point of view. Points of view are vast but only a limited number are objective enough to be workable and thus accurate. I aim to provide points of view as close to objectivity as I can get. The ego deals in subjectivity. Therefore, a more objective mind is better primed for forgiveness.

All perception of guilt is a misinterpretation. If you understood everything, you’d forgive everything. But none of us have the intellectual capability of understanding everything—since everything includes illusion. Illusion by its nature is ultimately nonsense. However, we do have the intellectual capability of
understanding illusion as illusion and understanding that truth is beyond the intellect. And that is what *A Course in Miracles* teaches. The Course points to truth and away from illusion by using the concept of oneness and the choice between the ego and the Holy Spirit.

Although you and I may share an affinity for *A Course in Miracles*, we are still all trapped in our own subjective bubbles seeing things through our own unique lenses. Those subjective bubbles are our unique forgiveness classrooms and also the subject of this book. While reading, you may notice that I purposefully saturated this book with subjects I commonly see Course students and teachers refusing to forgive. This book is about forgiving subjectivity after all. So, for a lot of people, this book will not be a comforting lullaby. It will instead be a chance to look at areas in need of forgiveness.

**Subjectivity**

Have you ever been stuck and frustrated trying to solve some perceived problem? Have you ever had someone then come along and solve your problem for you in a few seconds? In other words, have you ever been upset or mad about something only to eventually find out that you were merely upset and mad about your faulty interpretation and not something real? The answer is of course, YES. We are prisoners of our subjectivity. In the world, we can become less subjective by learning more and gaining more experience. Learning and experience is practical and useful in the world.
However, there is always something more to learn and experience; it never ends.

Fortunately, you can skip the never-ending part of learning by simply learning to forgive in the way taught by *A Course in Miracles*. True forgiveness as taught by *A Course in Miracles* requires letting go of all that is illusory. And a hallmark of the illusory is specialness. Specialness is born of division and makes for differences.

We all know that on the surface all humans are different. We all look a bit different, talk a bit different, and have different thoughts, preferences, and so on. Even when we try to be the same we are still different. Yet, according to *A Course in Miracles*, all our differences are ultimately illusory since we are all ultimately the same one mind.

However, we are seemingly here trapped in human bodies living on planet Earth precisely because we decided to indulge in differences rather than oneness. Keeping up the ruse of differences is only as appealing as the level of our fear of reality: fear of oneness. Differences are nonsense. However, differences seem to make sense in illusion. And in the logic of illusion, if differences are real, oneness is not oneness. Therefore, as seemingly splintered off fragments of the one mind dreaming the universe, we carry with us a false belief that by entertaining difference and thus duality we destroyed oneness.

This universe is our hiding place where we try to blame fragments of our one mind for the destruction of
oneness. That’s the ego’s doomed plan for salvation. Conversely, the Holy Spirit’s plan for salvation simply requires accepting that difference is illusion and thus has no consequence in reality—except in our own deluded hallucinations.

That’s where true forgiveness comes into the equation. True forgiveness undoes illusion rather than perpetuate it. For as long as you insist that illusion is reality, you won’t forgive it. Because if illusion could be reality, that would mean oneness/heaven really was destroyed. That is the trap that we put our mind into. It is a “virtual reality self-made prison” where we play the game of “preserve a false sense of innocence by finding guilt in others.”

Every time we deem someone or something guilty, we are reinforcing in our mind that illusion is reality and that we really destroyed oneness. True forgiveness reverses that and therefore undoes the illusion. In other words, true forgiveness recognizes what is illusory in favor of reality.

And that brings us to the subject of this book: individual differences between humans. Most forgiveness lessons involve other humans because other humans most clearly reflect our “selves.” Other humans show us what we don’t want to face within ourselves.

To quickly appreciate the relationship between forgiveness and individual differences, we need simply look to where A Course in Miracles explains the first law of chaos:
“The first chaotic law is that the truth is different for everyone. Like all these principles, this one maintains that each is separate and has a different set of thoughts that set him off from others. This principle evolves from the belief there is a hierarchy of illusions; some are more valuable and therefore true. Each one establishes this for himself, and makes it true by his attack on what another values. And this is justified because the values differ, and those who hold them seem to be unlike, and therefore enemies ... Think how this seems to interfere with the first principle of miracles. For this establishes degrees of truth among illusions, making it seem that some of them are harder to overcome than others. If it were realized that they are all the same and equally untrue, it would be easy, then, to understand that miracles apply to all of them. Errors of any kind can be corrected because they are untrue. When brought to truth instead of to each other, they merely disappear. No part of nothing can be more resistant to the truth than can another.” (T-23.II.2)

**Personality**

It wouldn’t be helpful to imagine that there is some kind of ideal holy personality. Because, first, simply putting on a show of behavior doesn’t change the inner content. And second, any given personality is simply an aspect of one’s classroom of life. And classrooms are tailored specifically for individuals. Our classrooms
represent what we need in order to undo the dream or, if we choose ego instead, sustain it.

Here’s what the Course says about individual uniqueness and special personalities:

“The surface traits of God's teachers are not at all alike. They do not look alike to the body's eyes, they come from vastly different backgrounds, their experiences of the world vary greatly, and their superficial ‘personalities’ are quite distinct. Nor, at the beginning stages of their functioning as teachers of God, have they as yet acquired the deeper characteristics that will establish them as what they are. God gives special gifts to His teachers, because they have a special role in His plan for Atonement. Their specialness is, of course, only temporary; set in time as a means of leading out of time. These special gifts, born in the holy relationship toward which the teaching-learning situation is geared, become characteristic of all teachers of God who have advanced in their own learning. In this respect they are all alike.” (M-4.1)

So just think of personality this way: personality is part of your classroom. And everything else that makes you individual is also part of your classroom. When you don’t need your classroom anymore you also don’t need your individual specialness.

Personality is part of the dynamics of the ego. And the ego loves to have us study it. The study of the ego is not the study of the mind. Studying the ego is endless because the ego is ultimately nonsense. So it is safe to
say that no personality system will ever be complete. Humans have been devising systems for quantifying personality throughout history. For instance, playing cards have imbedded in them a personality system, which is a simplification of the tarot system, which came from the Chinese. In the present day world, there are a number of popular personality systems. But here I’m simply going to concentrate on the Big Five personality traits system also known as OCEAN. Before that though, I will briefly mention the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

Myers-Briggs

The Myers-Briggs is popular. Even though Myers-Briggs lacks a sufficient scientific grounding, it nonetheless successfully identifies useful patterns and quantifies them.

Throughout this book, I am going to use my own personality as a reference—since that’s the personality I know the most about. In the Myers-Briggs system, I’m an INTJ. That means Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Judging. The inverse of my personality would be Extroverted, Sensing, Feeling, and Perceiving. All together, there are sixteen personality types in the Myers-Briggs system.

If unfamiliar with Myers-Briggs, don’t get caught up in the common meaning of words like Perceiving and Judging since the words have specific definitions within the Myers-Briggs system. The specifics are beyond the
scope of this book, but you may find it fun to explore the Myers-Briggs system on your own.

ISFJ, ESFJ, and ISTJ are generally the most common personalities. INFJ, INTJ, and ENTJ are the rarest personalities.

My own opinion of the Myers-Briggs is that it does identify some reliable patterns. And those patterns can be useful to know. But many people have a personality that doesn’t consistently fit in one type category. For many people, taking the test multiple times renders different results. And that’s a problem with personality tests in general: they are self-reporting. People don’t necessarily know themselves. Plus, often the tests ask questions where the answers would change if the questions were made more or less specific.

**Big Five**

Currently, the personality system most grounded in science is the Big Five traits system. And for that reason it is the system I’m going to focus on in this book. The Big Five traits were teased out of statistics. The traits are: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. The traits can be remembered using the acronym OCEAN. There is also a potential sixth factor of honesty/humility. Consequently, OCEAN may eventually be replaced by what is currently known as the HEXACO model. But the verdict is still out on the sixth factor (as of 2020). And the verdict is also still out on the Big Five model as a whole. The model
was developed in the English language and may only be reliable in English. The same basic model teased out of other languages might give a different system.

In the Big Five system, test takers score higher or lower in each category to reveal their personality. For example, in the system I score very high in openness, high in conscientiousness, low in extroversion, medium low in agreeableness, and low in neuroticism.

A Northwestern University study found that, in the big five system, most people cluster around one of four main personality types: average, self-centered, role model, and reserved.

- Average: high in neuroticism and extraversion, low in openness.
- Self-Centered: high in extraversion, below average in openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.
- Role Models: low in neuroticism and high in all the other traits.
- Reserved: mid-range in extroversion, below average in neuroticism and openness, and above average in agreeableness and conscientiousness.

No surprise to me. I don’t fit in with the normies. I’m closest to role model but way too low in extroversion and also a bit too low in agreeableness.

Fun fact, the most common personality traits of people in prison are very low agreeableness and very
low conscientiousness. That puts them in the self-centered group.

The science so far indicates that personality is about half genetic and half environmental. Openness and extroversion seem to be the most genetically determined and agreeableness the least. Even at just half genetic, personality is still half set in stone from the beginning. Nonetheless, personality tends to change a bit with age. Agreeableness and conscientiousness tend to rise some with age while openness, extroversion, and neuroticism tend to drop.

Once you figure out your own personality traits, it becomes not only easier to forgive others but also to forgive yourself. People are quite robotic. Even though personality can be shaped some by environment, how to best shape it exactly is a whole other matter.

There is no ideal personality because all personalities serve a function. The primary function of personality is as a forgiveness classroom. But personality differences are also useful for society as a whole. Different activities, occupations, and functions appeal to different personalities.

In this world, you are essentially a robot and so is everyone else. Do you take robots seriously? Probably not—because we tend to think of robots as unreal—just machines. But really, people’s bodies and personalities are robotic too and so not real. The mind behind people is real but not the specialness. Take away the phony specialness and we are one.
We all know clear introverts and extroverts. Yet, many people are less extreme and harder to pin to one side or the other. In general, societies are set up for extroverts. Therefore, there is an inherent extrovert privilege in most societies. Society set up by introverts would be different. But introverts aren’t social and therefore are somewhat antithetical to society. I myself am a textbook introvert. Introvert doesn’t mean shy. Shy means social anxiety and is separate from introversion; shyness is neuroticism. While I’m a clear introvert, I’m not really shy. I’ve often been called shy, especially when I was a kid, but I’m not shy. I’m just not an extrovert. I avoid group social interaction not because I’m shy but because it’s often exhausting rather than rewarding.

The science indicates that the major difference between introverts and extroverts is in how they deal with the neurotransmitters dopamine and acetylcholine. In reaction to external stimuli, introverts produce dopamine much slower than extroverts. Conversely, extroverts produce much less acetylcholine in reaction to internal stimuli. In other words, extroverts thrive on dopamine while introverts thrive on acetylcholine. Introverts don’t get the same dopamine hit extroverts get from things like social interaction. And extroverts don’t get the same acetylcholine hit introverts get from things like introspection.
Dopamine makes us feel good when we find external rewards like getting money, getting food, getting a compliment, or getting a mate. Acetylcholine makes us feel good when we find internal rewards like formulating a useful idea or reading. External rewards tend to quickly burn out introverts while internal rewards tend to under-stimulate and thus bore extroverts. Extroverts are energized by external stimuli while introverts are energized by introspection. Introverts prefer the parasympathetic side of the nervous system, which is “rest and digest.” Extroverts prefer the sympathetic side of the nervous system, which is “fight or flight.”

I’m personally a fairly extreme case of introversion. I get very little satisfaction out of external pursuits. I find fantasies much more satisfying than so-called actualities. I often joke that I’m anti-social, but I’m really just introverted and so easily over-stimulated; that makes social interaction often undesirable. It’s something extroverts just rarely seem to comprehend about introverts. It’s not that I’m a jerk; it’s just that I can’t handle extroverted things much. There are some extroverted things I force myself to do since logically I know it’s the best thing in the big picture, but that doesn’t mean I get satisfaction out of those things.

Fortunately, I have figured out tricks to make some extroverted activities more palatable and less exhausting. For instance, although I don’t like concerts, I do like certain music and like seeing people play certain music. So if I go to a concert I wear earplugs. I can still
hear the music but at a more acceptable volume. And my visible ear plugs prevent people from trying to socialize with me.

Overall, I can force myself to act extroverted but I liken it to trying to drive 70mph in second gear; I can try but I get horrible gas mileage; it is exhausting. Conversely, an extrovert trying to be introverted is like trying to go 10mph in fourth gear; it leads to stall out.

Considering the infinite power of the mind, one would think it is unnecessary to be stuck as an introvert or extrovert and so beholden to the tyranny of illusory neurotransmitters. But following that logic, should I be expected to stay stuck with the same skin color or height? Such quirks just represent our individualized forgiveness classrooms. Our classrooms will change with our minds if necessary. Other than that, just forgive it. Sure neurotransmitters aren’t real and our brains are at most merely probable brains (as I explain in *The Universe Is Virtual*). But forgiveness is your task at hand, not changing illusions.

I will talk a bit later about potentially reprogramming things like personality. For now though, just accept that unless some personality quirk or other kind of preprogrammed trait is a problem, it’s not worth concern. Forgiveness is way more essential. The script is written and your quirks are part of the script. The script is written and the happy ending is certain.

**Openness**
Openness means openness to new experiences. High openness people are often described as curious, open-minded, and imaginative. Low openness people are often described as close-minded, traditional, and literal. It’s fairly safe to say that most people reading this book are on the higher openness side than the lower openness side.

As should come as no surprise, high openness introverts have different preferences than high openness extroverts. A high openness extrovert would be more interested in new social experiences. While a high openness introvert would be more interested in new less social experiences.

Conscientiousness

Those high in conscientiousness are often described as careful, diligent, calculating, dutiful, punctual, organized, neat, and self-disciplined. While those low in conscientiousness are often described as careless, impulsive, irresponsible, spontaneous, messy, and undisciplined. High conscientiousness people tend to be more system-oriented and often also more conformist. Low conscientiousness people tend to be less system-oriented and less conformist.

People high in conscientiousness are much less likely to do things like: lounge around the house naked; read a tabloid paper; pick up a hitchhiker; ride in or drive a car without using a seatbelt; use foul language around
others; shop at a second-hand store; tell a dirty joke; or smoke.

High conscientiousness is the personality trait most correlated with longer life expectancy. And that makes sense since the discipline to do certain things and not do other certain things is all it takes to avoid certain health problems. Higher conscientiousness is also correlated with people being happier and having more stable relationships, which also makes sense. Lower conscientiousness people are more likely to have avoidable problems that hinder their happiness.

**Agreeableness**

Those high in agreeableness are often described as kind, friendly, forgiving, sympathetic, cooperative, warm, altruistic, and considerate. While those low in agreeableness are often described as cruel, unfriendly, unforgiving, lacking empathy, competitive, cold, selfish, and inconsiderate.

Extremes in agreeableness are correlated with gender. The least agreeable people tend to be men and the most agreeable people tend to be women. Consequently, women are on average higher in agreeableness than men.

Sometimes higher agreeableness comes in handy and sometimes lower agreeableness. For instance, say you had to fire someone who has proven to be dangerously incompetent. That would be a very difficult task for a person who is highly agreeable. On the other hand, not
only would it be easy for a person low in agreeableness, the person low in agreeableness might actually enjoy the task.

I’ve personally learned to be less agreeable as I’ve aged. And ironically, as I’ve become ever better at forgiving, it has become easier to be less agreeable. That’s because I can be disagreeable now without guilt. For instance, being an introvert, it’s often preferable to say no to extroverts. I can do that more easily now.

**Neuroticism**

Neuroticism is also described oppositely as emotional stability. Those higher in neuroticism are more likely to experience feelings such as anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depression, and loneliness. Those lower in neuroticism are less likely to experience such feelings. Neuroticism measures how well or poorly a person responds to stress. And those higher in neuroticism are more likely to have mental disorders and have problems delaying gratification.

I was never very neurotic, but *A Course in Miracles* has helped me become even less neurotic. When you really start to believe that the world isn’t real and that God and reality are oneness and love, neuroticism can’t help but slip away. In that sense, neuroticism is a relatively malleable trait. For most people, certain types of neuroticism, such as fear of public speaking, can be reprogrammed with training to reduce neuroticism.
IQ

There are more layers to people’s specialness than just personality. Another layer is intelligence, which science tries to measure using the intelligence quotient, also known as IQ. There is debate over what IQ measures exactly. Some argue, quite convincingly in my opinion, that IQ measures lack of intelligence much more accurately than intelligence. In other words, an IQ test can tell you if someone is relatively dumb but it can’t really tell you how smart someone is. That’s because, invariably, at a certain point, an IQ test measures the ability to take IQ tests more than anything else.

People tend to deem other people smart when those other people think like they do. Which makes sense since that is what school is. The more in sync your thinking is with the teacher the higher your grade. Academics are the people who make IQ tests. And academic success revolves around knowing how to regurgitate the answers the teachers want. Famed physicist Richard Feynman scored 125 on an IQ test, which is high but well below what one would expect if IQ was a great measure of intelligence.

Ideally, we’d want IQ to be a function of education and environment, which could be controlled and altered. That makes the correlation between IQ and genetics a touchy subject. If IQ is instead mostly a function of the genetic lottery, then no amount of
money and time spent on education will change the genetics. In that sense, much of what passes for education in the world is likely just chasing rainbows. That’s why you never hear schools complaining about being overfunded and the students being too smart.

We know growing to be seven feet tall is mostly genetic. And we know that being seven feet tall increases a person’s probability of being an NBA basketball player. If you are five foot three, the competition to make it to the NBA is much more fierce—making success much less probable. If IQ is similar at all to height, genetics play a role that renders an uneven playing field.

Regardless, to me, intelligence has to be practical to be worthy of being called intelligence. If you graduate from Harvard and become the Unabomber, I don’t consider that intelligence. However, to be fair to the Unabomber, he was the subject of mind experiments while in college, which may have robotically reprogrammed him. Some speculate that the experiments done on the Unabomber were part of the CIA’s MKUltra mind-control program. Of course, some also speculate that *A Course in Miracles* was a product of MKUltra. That is not true. But we can talk more about MKUltra later in the book when we look at conspiracy theory.

The intelligence that impresses me is intelligence able to make consistent, accurate predictions about the future. Intelligence is the ability to make a mental model
that works in practice. And what works best in practice is that which is the most win/win. Given that definition, intelligence is rare. Other than that, intelligence isn’t all that important. *A Course in Miracles* says near nothing about intelligence.

**Discrimination**

At this point in human history, many societies have evolved enough to recognize that it is not acceptable to discriminate based on unchangeable superficialities like skin color. But the fact is that discrimination works as a way of achieving certain outcomes. So discrimination is often necessary and desirable. Like in the NBA example, we accept that, in general, seven foot tall people are going to have better success at putting a basketball through a ten foot high hoop than five foot three people. And we accept discrimination against five foot three people in favor of seven foot tall people when it comes to assembling basketball teams.

Since discrimination works yet also marginalizes certain people in certain circumstances, it is a hotbed of conflicted thinking. As we’ll explore in detail toward the end of this book, there is actually a movement that has been infiltrating many societies in recent history that promotes discrimination in the name of anti-discrimination. That movement has been evolving in the humanities departments of academia for decades. That movement combines critical race theory,
intersectionality, and identitarianism. But we still have a lot to cover before we delve into that subject.

The fact is that most things that make people individuals are rooted in genetics. And even the stuff that is part environmental becomes rather permanent once the environmental influences take root. A great example of this is politics. It turns out that political preferences are to a significant extent an unchangeable superficiality linked to personality. Liberals tend to be high in trait openness but low in conscientiousness. Conservatives tend to be low in trait openness but high in conscientiousness.

**Political Genes**

Once personality takes root through genetics and environment, it’s not reasonable to expect people to change much since much change doesn’t often happen. Now take that into account and think about forgiving political differences. Political division is just another form of discrimination—it’s just programmed robots projecting guilt onto other programmed robots playing a game that they were programmed to believe was the only option.

It is important to note that liberal versus conservative, in terms of personality, doesn’t necessarily reflect the political left versus right. Most people aren’t extremes in terms of openness and conscientiousness. To win in politics requires appealing to the lowest common
denominator. Political parties tend to reflect the lowest common denominator.

There are conservative left wingers just as there are libertine right wingers. Boundary preferences are what really differentiate conservatives from liberals. Boundaries are used in this universe to defend and protect vulnerable bodies and minds from inevitable destruction.

An extreme liberal wants the minimal amount of boundaries needed to stay alive while an extreme conservative can’t get enough boundaries. In that sense, government is a collective boundary maker and maintainer through which people try to use force to impose their subjective boundary preferences on others.

Male and Female Boundaries

Both the political left and right believe in boundaries, but they have different preferences for where they want to put boundaries. And that brings us to another thing that differentiates humans from one another: male versus female. The biological fact is that reproduction and parenting are not the same for men and women. Men don’t give birth and women don’t have an unlimited amount of eggs. Fathering instincts are not the same as mothering instincts. There are aspects to gender roles that are social constructs but testosterone, estrogen, eggs, and sperm are not. And on top of that,
not all men are very masculine and not all women are very feminine. But on average, men and women, fathers and mothers, do see the world differently.

For example, as I already mentioned, extremes in high agreeableness are a female personality characteristic while extremes in low agreeableness are a male personality characteristic. That makes sense biologically since there are advantages to women (and some men) being hard-wired for high compassion. High compassion can be exploited by infants, the sick, the wounded, and the downtrodden. Conversely, it is also biologically useful for men (and some women) to be hard-wired for a lack of compassion so they can kill animals for food, fight against threats, and not be taken advantage of by others. We don't want everyone to have the same agreeableness because not everyone is a helpless infant and not everything is a threat. Altruism can be just as much a vice as callousness can. In the dualistic ego universe, any virtue run to extremes invariably becomes vice.

**Societal Parent**

The differences between males and females and mothers and fathers is an important fact to consider when trying to understand the concept of government. That’s because government is ultimately an attempt to make and maintain a kind of societal parent to act as the supreme authority. In other words, government is an attempt at a human-made earthly god.
Consequently, what is offered by the political left versus the political right has evolved into a kind matriarchal ethic versus a patriarchal ethic. The left is more motherly while the right is more fatherly. Both fatherly governments and motherly governments are dualistic attempts at god substitutes, which people use to protect themselves from their unconscious, faulty beliefs about the real God. In other words, both are idiot gods with different approaches to building protective boundaries against the misperceived real God. Also, both are tyrannical because both need to foster dependence so voters will keep deeming them necessary (at least relative to the opposition) and so keep voting for them.

Motherly governments make for nations of children and mothers because they tend to disincentivize the father role in society. The male fatherly role is often portrayed as downright predatory. Fatherly governments make for nations of adults and fathers because they keep the mother and child role strictly to the individual family unit instead of the societal level.

Motherly governments are more socialistic and anti-competition while fatherly governments are more capitalistic and pro-competition. Note though that it would not be true to say that fatherly governments are more free market because a pure free market is necessarily parentless (rules without rulers). There are two ways of organizing society, free markets and force. Governments inherently reject free markets to varying
degrees because governments are force. Therefore, the differences between motherly and fatherly governments revolve around how they use force.

Motherly governments tend to use force to assure unequal opportunities to make for equal outcomes. While fatherly governments make a compromise and tend to use force to assure equal opportunities to make for unequal outcomes. Technically, an extreme fatherly government wouldn’t care about equality of opportunity at all; instead, free-for-all war would determine the pecking order. But more civilized fatherly governments know that there are advantages to having rules for war. Equal opportunity is a compromise between free-for-all war and equality of outcome.

Think of a motherly basketball game versus a fatherly basketball game. Basketball games are usually played in the fatherly way; there are equal rules for the teams to determine the unequal outcome of winner versus loser. In a motherly basketball game though, the rules would be fluid enough to make sure the outcome was not only a tie but that each player on each team played an equal role. Society tends to do things the fatherly way instead of the motherly way because, if you want things to actually work, there is more usefulness in awarding excellence than in awarding mediocrity and failure. Similarly, there is more usefulness in awarding excellence with rules that establish a sense of equal opportunity than in rewarding the brute force of free-for-all war.
Overall, motherly versus fatherly approaches to things like governments are a lose/lose choice offered up by ego to deal with our unconscious beliefs about God and heaven. A motherly government represents a god that would never allow the dreaming of an unreal, dualistic world. A motherly government god tries to maintain a fragile, corruptible, and destructible heaven. A fatherly government represents a god that would allow the freedom to dream of an unreal dualistic world but not without punishment for doing so. Both are faulty notions of God.

The real God allows the dreaming of an unreal dualistic world but makes sure it is unreal and so has no consequences in reality. Such a God could not be represented by a government because governments don’t have the magical ability to undo all errors and render them without consequence. All that governments can do is undo violations of fake laws where there are usually no consequence, like tax laws and speed limits (victimless crimes).

That’s why the government used tax laws to help sentence Jesus to crucifixion. Tax laws are fake laws and so their violation is fake too. Laws like “do not murder” aren’t fake though since governments can’t just raise the dead and undo murders. The seeming irreversibility of murder represents the idea of the seemingly permanent destruction of heaven.

When it comes to laws, some are more motherly, some more fatherly. Take gun laws as an example. An
extreme motherly government would not want anyone to have guns. An extreme fatherly government would allow guns but would punish the unlawful use of guns. Contrast that with a government that reflected the true God. A true God government would allow guns but have the power to undo all unlawful uses of guns and so render them inconsequential and thus ultimately illusory. See how that works?

**Boundary Preferences**

Guns are tools that both make protective boundaries and break protective boundaries. Some people believe that the right to own and carry guns will help protect their vulnerable bodies from inevitable destruction. Alternatively, some people believe that the government having a monopoly on guns to keep individuals from owning guns will help protect their vulnerable bodies from inevitable destruction. Then there are a bunch of in-between opinions. Who is right? No one. You can try to make rational arguments but it all comes down to individual preference. What’s better, pizza or tacos? It’s an individual preference.

People decide first and then rationalize their decisions. And one of the reasons people decide first is because they are robotically programmed both environmentally and genetically. That’s why it’s a fool’s errand to try to rationalize about a subject like guns. Regardless of one’s gun stance, someone is inevitably going to use guns or other weaponry to initiate force—
whether individuals or governments. And once the force is initiated someone is going to use guns or other weaponry to protect against that force.

As part of my own forgiveness homework, I long ago stopped projecting guilt onto inanimate objects like guns. And I also stopped projecting guilt onto people with different preferences. I say, if you are someone who really likes guns, then invent voluntary force-free ways to make their availability uncontrollable. And if you are someone who really dislikes guns, then invent voluntary force-free ways to make guns not work or undesirable. If you try to force your preference either way using actual force or threats of force, then you are the very problem you are trying to defend against. Laws are just letters to Santa without men and women in special uniforms with badges and guns willing to enforce them.

As someone high in both trait openness and conscientiousness, and who isn’t a fan of false-god societal parents, neither side of the political divide appeals to me. My politics are minimalist. I believe in the Golden Rule. Which politically I formulate as, we should strive for all human interaction to be voluntary and never involve initiated force. That precludes the whole concept of government, since government is an attempt at a monopoly on the initiation of force in society. To do unto others as you would have them do unto you must be voluntary; if it is forced it is inherently suicidal. Once the initiation of force is permitted, that means it can be used on you!
Although I’m fine with governments protecting against initiated force, governments also initiate force. And for that reason politics is an endless go-nowhere fight between who has control of the force of government and who the force of government is used upon. Politics is what I define as a loser’s game because you can’t ever really win the game. The end game of politics is eradication of the opposition, which would require some sort of dystopian tyranny—such as mind-control or eugenics. The other end game is to give up and let the Golden Rule organize society instead of force.

Technology will put human society at a crossroads eventually where humans will try to use technology to eradicate the opposition or use technology to usher in the Golden Rule society of voluntaryism (rules without rulers). You can’t beat people over an anvil to form them into changing their political preferences without killing them in one way or another.

George Orwell once said, “If you want a vision of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever.” That’s the worldly future people have to look forward to if they aren’t willing to eventually give up on the antiquated idea of one size fits all government force in the form of a societal parent. Force is never really a solution, because with force you will never really win unless you are willing to kill all opposition. That’s the boot stamping on a human face forever option.
Oneness born of killing off “others” is the ego’s idea of oneness. Fatherly force is mostly projected externally on protecting against external “others” while motherly force is mostly projected internally on absorbing "others." Therefore, right wing authoritarians want ordered homogeneity through forceful exclusion while left wing authoritarians want ordered homogeneity through forceful inclusion. Both have an acute pathological desire for worldly homogeneity, which is what happens when you look for oneness in the world. Oneness in this universe is death: maximal entropy. Don't confuse levels! Pursue oneness in the mind, where it is not only obtainable but also desirable.

Level confusion is very common when it comes to spirituality because people tend to try to change the world instead of their minds about the world. The world is messy; it was made that way; it was made for separation and conflict. You can never really win trying to spiritualize the level of form; it’s a carrot and stick.

True, you can seemingly change the level of form to some extent. And there is nothing wrong with that as long as you don’t make it real. To simply live in the world is to change things on the level of form. You can make things work differently and do things to control entropy, but none of that is making the world spiritual; it’s just trying to make it less of a pain and a more reliable sanctuary from inevitable destruction on the level of form.
Borders and Entropy

Everyone in this world believes in borders to some extent. The body is a border between the seemingly inner and outer. Sever the border of the body enough and the result is a corpse and a pool of blood.

And since bodies are not the strongest borders possible, we build borders on top of bodies. We breathe, eat food, drink water, wash ourselves, and take medicine as additional borders to maintain and repair our constantly threatened bodily border. We wear clothes, sun screen, build shelters, structures, vehicles, prisons, divide into special groups of bodies, build weapons and armies, build fences, dig moats, make climate control systems to protect from heat and cold, invent and enforce societal laws, filter air, contain waste and pollution...

That’s what life is in this universe: maintain enough borders to avert entropy/death. That’s why the personality traits of openness and conscientiousness are so linked with political preferences. Politics is people fighting over their subjective preferences for borders. For instance, some people are worried about maintaining and rebuilding borders like the ozone layer while also worried about growing borders like greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Some people are worried about maintaining borders between themselves and diseases through forced vaccines while also worried about growing borders between countries.
If you were to examine any random person’s politics closely, you would mostly just find a subjective, self-contradicting, cherry-picked, and societally programmed hodgepodge of border preferences. Some people like left wing borders better, some right wing. Some like neither left wing borders nor right wing borders. And then some like both left wing borders and right wing borders.

Personally, I desire minimal borders when it comes to the mental sphere. For instance, I’m extremely pro free speech. But I do like physical borders. It’s just that I like to have control of my borders, not someone else, like a government. There is a reason I live in a house and not an open field; I like borders.

At one extreme of physical border preferences you lock yourself inside a blast-proof sterile room by yourself until you die. And at the other extreme you remove all conceivable borders between you and the universe at which point you die when your body is disintegrated in the vacuum of outer space.

Although personality determines if we like more or less borders, we all like borders to some extent. Borders are life in this universe. And since we all have a limited and incomplete model in our heads of how the world operates, what we deem as worthy borders and unworthy borders is subjective. You can rationalize your border preferences but that doesn’t mean the rationalization is ever complete.
Plus, people don’t even come up with a lot of their own border preferences. A lot of border preferences come from being influenced by others. The left and right are constantly trying to sell their border preferences as better than their opposition’s. The left and right even try to sell borders against the borders of the other. One of the best ways to manipulate people is to scare them and then sell them a protective border.

**Disgust**

The science indicates that, in general, people who feel more disgust support stronger borders against the objects and ideas that trigger disgust. The lower in intelligence people are the more willing the disgusted people are to outsource that protection to authoritarianism. The disgust correlation is supported by the “parasite stress hypothesis,” which shows that threats to human welfare in the form of disease and famine feed the desire for borders and thus authoritarianism. Collective threats breed collective borders.

Disgust is a strong emotion because it has important survival advantages. For instance, the indigenous South and North Americans were devastated by disease upon the arrival of Europeans. Which illustrates the value of having a predisposition to being disgusted and repulsed by that which is foreign, unfamiliar, dirty, or polluted. But disgust is also a vulnerability, because the disgust link with authoritarianism means that a diabolical
person or group left or right could exploit it to gain authoritarian power.

The more a person is disgusted by something or someone the harsher a person is willing to be in the treatment of that person or thing. Consequently, disgust becomes fuel for supporting the use of government force and thus authoritarianism. So look out for what disgusts you, because eliminating that object of disgust is your ticket to supporting authoritarianism. And also watch out for being disgusted by the disgust of others.

Combine high disgust sensitivity with high conscientiousness and low intelligence and you have a recipe for authoritarianism. There is left wing authoritarianism and right wing authoritarianism. The difference simply goes back to the male versus female dynamic. In that sense, personal border preferences are much less problematic than collective border preferences.

(\textit{Note: Eye rolling is an expression of disgust. And eye-rolling about one's partner in romantic relationships is a strong indicator of a doomed relationship. So if you can't help but roll your eyes about your romantic partner, that's a bad sign.})

Risk Profiles

Face it, people have different border preferences. This universe is hard to predict and so people have different risk profiles. I say, if you are fine with spending the night submerged in the alligator infested waters of a swamp
then go for it. Just don’t force me to join you. I personally would rather sleep in a nice, clean, comfortable bed in a quiet, secure, climate-controlled room.

Overall, I’d prefer if I had total control of my security instead of being forced to outsource it to the government. It won’t be long until armed protective drones are a thing that people want to buy and use to protect property. However, while you can legally booby-trap your own property to protect it, you can only do so in ways that can’t injure people. Would you ever trespass on other people’s property if you thought it might contain deadly booby traps? I know I sure wouldn’t. That’s a much more persuasive deterrent than the threat that someone might call the cops. A major reason you can’t fully booby-trap your own property is because the government wants to retain the ability to come in and effortlessly take over your property at any time if it wishes.

I mention this because part of forgiveness is forgiving form in favor of content. Judge not border preferences. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus is not a reassuring story if you want to advocate against borders, which are physical defenses. Physical defenses are magic.

As the course says in Workbook Lesson 135, “If I defend myself I am attacked.”

“Defense is frightening. It stems from fear, increasing fear as each defense is made. You think it offers safety. Yet it speaks of fear made real and terror justified. Is it
not strange you do not pause to ask, as you elaborate your plans and make your armor thicker and your locks more tight, what you defend, and how, and against what?” (W-135.3)

The reality is that all of life in this universe is defense. Every breath we take is a defense against bodily death. A breath is just as much of a defense as a bomb. Just as a bomb can deter attack as well as assure attack, a breath can deter death as well as assure it if you inhale the wrong thing.

And to be perfectly clear, this is an example of why I don’t consider *A Course in Miracles* a perfect book. The course says what it needs to say but it isn’t ego-proof. And workbook lesson 135 is a popular spot for ego. It’s a place often referenced by those who like to play the ego game I call “pretend enlightenment.”

As Shakespeare once wrote, “The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. An evil soul producing holy witness is like a villain with a smiling cheek, a goodly apple rotten at the heart. Oh, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!”

**Pretend Enlightenment**

Acting out spirituality on the level of form is just pretend enlightenment; it’s an ego game of keeping up appearances. Pretending that you can jump out of an airplane without a defensive border between you and gravity called a parachute is just a fancy form of being suicidal. If you can float around without parachutes, you
should do that and impress the world with the power of the mind. Otherwise, face it. Your life is still borders. Your life is still defenses.

(Since this is a book of text and not pictures, imagine this comic panel: A person pealing a dead body off a sidewalk while saying to another person, “He claimed he was ascending to heaven but never did his forgiveness homework.”)

Having an income is a defense against poverty. Being a bum is a defense against work. Just about everything you can think of and do in this world is a defense of some kind. This is a world of defenses since this world is ultimately a defense against God. You want to deal with your defenses with Spirit instead of ego. That’s it. That’s how you forgive them. Pretend enlightenment is a defense against doing the actual work of forgiveness. Doing the actual work of forgiveness is a defense against staying in illusion.

I personally don’t let anyone bully me into playing pretend enlightenment. Pretend enlightenment is a game the ego likes to play. Don’t fall for it. I don’t care how the form appears; I’ll just forgive it instead of trying to paint lipstick on a skeleton. The day you don’t need any defensive borders is the day you are done with this universe. Before then it is just pretend enlightenment, trying to change the illusion instead of the mind.

Fake it until you make it does work in some realms, but not spirituality. There are no Faustian bargains to be made if you desire spiritual success rather than physical.
That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try to be better than your ego self in terms of form. But you do that by first tuning into Spirit instead of ego.

**Dirty Work**

We all have defensive border preferences. Let whoever is without any borders cast the first stone against borders. The relative ease of contemporary life has made it evermore easy to play pretend enlightenment. As a prime example, most people don’t ever have to get their hands dirty to maintain the borders that maintain their personal bubbles. And even when people do get their hands dirty, it is only within a limited capacity. People are generally unconscious of all the dirty work that goes into most things.

People don’t think much about all the dirty work required to mine and grow materials. People don’t think much about all the dirty work required to transport materials, preserve them, and protect them from theft. People don’t think much about all the dirty work required to transform materials into finished products. People don’t think much about all the dirty work required to transport finished products, preserve them, and protect them from theft. And people don’t think much about all the dirty work required to keep the lights on, food refrigerated, the internet running, and so on.

*Here is another comic visual for you to imagine: a bunny being run over by a truck carrying food; a bird being decapitated by a wind turbine; a clothing tag*
showing petroleum as an ingredient in the fabric; a farm of crops being eaten by pests with a sign saying “organic, pesticide free.”)

And on top of all that, since pretend enlightenment doesn’t actually heal the mind, the pretend enlightened have a tendency to start projecting guilt onto the very people that do the dirty work on which they depend. That dirty work would not exist if people didn’t want it done and weren’t willing to pay for it one way or another.

Yet, regardless of delusions made possible by outsourcing dirty work, life or death survival situations quickly subvert playing pretend enlightenment. In the few times in my life when the borders maintaining my bubble of stability were threatened, my life or death mode instincts kicked into gear. I quickly turned into a brave hard-ass willing to fight to the death if necessary; I still preferred peace and peace won out but that instinct of fight or flight was still there.

I’m adamantly against the initiation of force, but once initiated by others or even nature I’m not going to roll over and become a martyr. Martyrdom is just a fancy form of suicide, which is just self murder. There’s nothing spiritual about that unless you are actually enlightened. Most martyrdom is just part of the pretend enlightenment game. Just think—if Jesus wasn’t enlightened then his death was essentially suicide by cop. Forgive instead of playing pretend enlightenment. Don’t judge the form; it’s the content that counts. If you
are ever in a life and death situation that requires win/lose defense, deal with it accordingly and forgive later.

Due to outsourcing dirty work and therefore being detached from the maintenance of essential borders/defenses, few people these days can accurately assess their border preferences. And that inability for accurate assessment makes border preferences even more subjective. Take this statistic as an example. As of the time of me writing this, America has been around since about 1680, or 340 years. There have been two major violent revolutions in that time. That gives a statistical probability of 0.59% that in any given year there could be another major violent revolution. During the course of an average human lifetime the statistical probability of living during a major violent revolution is 37%. And America is relatively stable compared to some places. Russia, for example, had two world wars, a civil war, a revolution, and several uprisings in the last 340 years.

Given those probabilities, I can empathize with someone who wants to own a powerful rifle and some ammunition. Because in the case of a violent revolution, you may not have the luxury of outsourcing the dirty work. And if the rifle is kept locked up, only to see the light of day if absolutely necessary, then that eliminates the probability of accidents—which should also be considered.
You never know, part of your forgiveness lessons might someday involve using a rifle. And refusal might be refusal to forgive an inanimate object. Organized, sophisticated armies are still no match to down and dirty guerilla warfare. And guerilla warfare can suck you in whether you want to get involved or not. Don’t be fooled by form. Form is the fake enlightenment game. The content is where real enlightenment is found. Hopefully violent revolution isn’t part of your forgiveness script, but if it is just remember that it is part of your forgiveness classroom.

If a large asteroid was heading for earth and you could successfully destroy it before it collided with earth would you feel bad about doing so? If you were stuck exposed to the sun, would you feel bad about stopping the sun with a barrier of shade? Similarly, if a human was heading for you hell bent on your destruction would you feel bad about stopping that human? The world is messy. How you want to handle your borders is up to you. I won’t judge. Just don’t force your border preferences on me and also try to consult Spirit the best you can.

Golden Rule

The only worldly border I universally advocate others adopting is the Golden Rule border: we should strive for all human interaction to be voluntary and so free of the initiation of force. That’s how you do unto others in society as you would have them do unto you. Then from
there people can choose their borders based on their subjective preferences.

Borders are an attempt at locking ourselves in safe prisons. If you want to lock yourself in a maximum security prison that’s fine, but to force me or anyone else to join you in your prison is not acceptable. Equally, it is not acceptable to forcefully prevent people from locking themselves in a maximum security prison if they want.

As *A Course in Miracles* states:

“You respond to what you perceive, and as you perceive so shall you behave. The Golden Rule asks you to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This means that the perception of both must be accurate. The Golden Rule is the rule for appropriate behavior. You cannot behave appropriately unless you perceive correctly. Since you and your neighbor are equal members of one family, as you perceive both so you will do to both. You should look out from the perception of your own holiness to the holiness of others.” (T-1.III.6)

If you look past illusion to the fact that we are all ultimately the same one mind dreaming the universe, you will forgive. Forgive others as you would have others forgive you. The Golden Rule is a great starting point for spirituality because it helps bridge the gap between people’s belief that the illusion is real versus the spiritual —which is perceived as potentially unreal. For that reason, if you want a metric to measure humanity’s
spiritual awareness, measure the prevalence of uncompromising respect for the Golden Rule.

Currently, the respect for the Golden Rule isn’t that great considering most people still think it is okay to impose their subjective preferences for boundaries/defenses on others using the force of government. And part of the belief in government stems from the fact that most people aren’t creative enough to imagine a viable alternative that doesn’t violate the Golden Rule. That lack of creativity causes people to imagine a governmentless Golden Rule world as simultaneously both Mad Max and utopian. If you lack creativity to imagine such a world, you might find the old book *The Market for Liberty* by Linda and Morris Tannehill interesting. That book describes one way a world of rules without rulers might work, but it is not the only way. And in a free world you could pick whatever way you wanted as long as it was in tune with the Golden Rule and thus voluntary. None of it will ever be heaven, but still, don’t succumb to failure of imagination.

**Creativity**

That brings us to another thing that differentiates humans from one another: creativity. An offshoot of the openness personality trait is creativity. Just as people put boundaries around physical things, they put boundaries around ideas. And a hallmark of creativity is less mental boundaries.
Creativity is a bit tricky. Although creativity depends on divergent thought patterns, divergent thought patterns are not enough. A random word generator can construct a sentence that replicates a divergent thought pattern. Instead, divergent thought patterns also have to render useful ideas. In other words, creativity is a mix of novelty and usefulness—an optimal mix of intellect and aesthetics.

The scientific research indicates that not all humans are very creative. And it is debatable if creativity is even a desirable trait to begin with. I happen to be someone high in creativity. Creativity is high risk and high reward. So far, for me, I’ve only done slightly better than the proverbial starving artist. Not because I’m incapable of making commercially appealing art, but because there is a price to success that I have been unwilling to pay.

As a hardcore creative, I can tell you that creativity is all I really care about. The satisfaction I get out of seeing an idea come to life is my food. But I also need actual food and that tends to require money. Even growing food requires land which requires money—even if only to pay property tax.

I can write books, draw, compose music, perform music, paint, sculpt, design, animate—you know, all the standard creative stuff. The creativity is the easy part. The harder part is finding a market for it all to justify putting in the effort. And since I’m an introvert, self-promotion is a daunting and unenjoyable task. I’ve thus
far been unwilling to pay the price of being too well known.

Even though only a fraction of the population is very creative, there is nonetheless a lot of competition in the realm of creativity. And the few winners in the creative realm tend to take all. Furthermore, some don’t even take all until after death, like Vincent Van Gogh, El Greco, Galileo, and Edgar Allen Poe. Also, in the rare case of success, a certain percentage of people inevitably will hate the artist’s creations. And that becomes another part of the price of success.

A main reason why only a few winners take all in the realm of art is because art is generally scalable. For instance, a writer could theoretically sell a book to every person on the planet all on the same day, but a plumber could only do a limited amount of plumbing, and within a limited geographical area, in a day. For that reason, it is a lot easier to be a starving artist than a starving plumber; plumbers have less competition since plumbing isn’t scalable. Teaching plumbing is scalable, but not actually doing it.

Things that can be scaled are subject to extreme variations of the network effect. The network effect means the value of a product or service increases according to the number of others using it. An offshoot of the network effect is the 80/20 rule, also known as the Pareto Principle. And since art is generally scalable the 80/20 rule applies.
An example of the 80/20 rule is, 80% of the music most people listen to is made by 20% of professional musicians. But it doesn’t end there. Of the music most people listen to, 80% of that music is made by 20% of the top 20% of professional musicians. And it keeps going. As a result, a few winners take almost all. Sometimes it is because the artists really are just that good. But more often than not it is simply the result of an artist’s art appealing to the lowest common denominator. And appealing to the lowest common denominator doesn’t necessarily reflect the content of the art. Appealing to the lowest common denominator often simply means popularity based on publicity, which leads back to the network effect.

The 80/20 rule is just a general estimate, so don’t take that exact ratio too seriously. But the 80/20 rule does capture the average. Even in the A Course in Miracles community the 80/20 rule applies. Of all the books written about A Course in Miracles, 80% of the books purchased and read are by 20% of the authors. And of the top 20% of authors, only 20% of them sell 80% of the books. Are the most popular A Course in Miracles books necessarily the best books? The answer is no. The most popular books are instead the ones that have the network effect working for them the best.

So, as you can see, realistically, creativity is, for most people, a path to failure. The only meaningful success for most is the satisfaction of creating. Which is a shame but also the way things work in this world. Creativity
usually isn’t very practical. While I’m a creative and have empathy for fellow creatives, the reality is that I don’t care about most people’s creations. I don’t have the time, money, or interest to distribute to more than a handful of creatives. I patronize creatives that cater to my niche interests in ways I find satisfying and useful.

Although people with higher trait openness tend to consume and appreciate art of greater variety, all personalities consume art of some kind. At the very least, most people like some TV shows, movies, and music. Artists teach people to experience and think differently. Consuming art is educational and transformative in that sense, regardless of one’s personality specifics. But still, people tend to gravitate to art that resonates with their personalities.

Since a lot of creative types who do things like write stories that turn into books and movies are low in conscientiousness, there is a common theme in stories where the writers glorify their own personality type. You know the typical story: the irresponsible free-spirit breaks the up-tight conscientious person out of his or her rigidity.

*The Shawshank Redemption* is pretty much my favorite movie partly because it flips around that typical counterproductive and unrealistic story. *The Shawshank Redemption* glorifies conscientiousness combined with intelligence and openness; plus it is anti-authoritarian. The main character Andy Dufresne is usually pegged in the Myers-Briggs system as an INTJ. Naturally, I gravitate
to a movie that glorifies my personality traits. Movie tastes tend to reflect personality. Which is why I actually like the edited-for-TV version of *The Shawshank Redemption* better than the standard version; the edited version eliminates a bunch of unnecessary sordidness. My personality isn’t a fan of sordidness unless perhaps if it is humorous sordidness. I personally don’t use much foul language unless there is a point to it. As I already mentioned, foul language is usually a trait of low conscientiousness.

Music

Musical tastes also tend to reflect personality. Consequently, different people like different music. People even identify with music and use it to fabricate their ego identity. Since musical tastes differ, many people don’t like hearing other people’s music. Yet, ego identity with music often makes people want to aggressively broadcast their musical preferences. That is a trait of lower conscientiousness. We all know the archetypal person inconsiderately rolling down the street in a car blasting music with obnoxious bass polluting the neighborhood, waking up sleeping babies and adults alike. The physics of sound makes music a kind of physical assault when it is unwelcomed. And the more power and lower the frequencies, the farther music can travel to assault people’s bodies and eardrums with vibrations.
Mobile noise polluters are annoying enough but neighbor noise polluters (whether music, barking dogs, etc.) are a total nightmare—especially when the noise hinders the ability to sleep. Noise pollution is a forgiveness lesson I’ve gotten better at forgiving thanks to wax earplugs and white noise, but that doesn’t mean I’m willing to tolerate it anymore than I’m willing to tolerate people coming up and slapping me. Noise pollution is a violation of the Golden Rule. So these days, as part of my forgiveness homework, whenever I’m bothered by chronic noise pollution, I use it as an opportunity to teach the offender the basics of the Golden Rule. Maybe someday I might even build a Golden Rule noise device that reflects people’s noise pollution back at them tenfold. That’d make for a nice visceral lesson in the logic of the Golden Rule.

Although I’ve found music from just about every genre that I liked to some extent at one time or another, the only music I’ve always liked and am almost always in the mood to listen to is baroque followed by classical (I’m much more picky about classical though). Although I like plenty of music with words, I don’t listen to it much because lyrical repetition of words is too hypnotic. And I’m very careful about what kind of word hypnosis I allow. My rule is: if I wouldn’t want to say the lyrics as a mantra I should limit my exposure to the music.

Music is powerful stuff. Music is like a drug and you should be mindful of what drugs you take. I find random playlists of music quite annoying and counterproductive
because different music alters my mood in different ways. I don’t want to pick on any specific genres but there are genres I totally avoid. Because not only do I not like how the music influences me but I also see how it adversely influences others that consume it habitually.

Although I’d like to imagine myself as the total master of my own mind, I don’t do so. Because that would be a case of playing pretend enlightenment. Humans are robotic; that’s the ego way. And we’d all be wise to pay attention to the programming we let in.

That’s why I avoid anything that is known to be addictive. My general advice is that if it is known to be addictive and it isn’t essential, avoid it. Because addiction throws human roboticism into overdrive. I even made a point to never get into the habit of consuming caffeine. I’m probably one of relatively few authors who write without being under the influence of caffeine. I am often under the influence of Beethoven, Telemann, or Vivaldi when writing. But that’s not addictive. No withdraw symptoms like headaches come if I don’t listen to music.

Ego is the ultimate addiction and ego is happy to use addiction to keep us seeking and never finding. Addiction implies a lack fulfilled by something external. The only habit we really want is miracles, because miracles tap into the abundance within. We really have only one choice in this world, ego or Spirit. The rest unfolds accordingly.
When we imagine that people could easily be different if they just tried to change, we become more reluctant to forgive. When we see the world as real we want to change it instead of forgive it. Because if the world is real, error is irreversible. Our differences in illusion are vast. Our sameness in truth is singular.

Food

We don’t even have the same tastes for food. Some of it has to do with what food we were raised to eat. But other tastes are genetic. For instance, some people love the taste of cilantro while others liken it to eating soap. That’s because some people have a variation in a group of olfactory-receptor genes that allows them to strongly perceive the soapy-flavored aldehydes in cilantro leaves. I know this personally because cilantro tastes soapy to me. However, as I’ve exposed myself more and more to cilantro over the years, in light doses it now tastes fine to me—but only light doses. Put cilantro leaves in a salad and I’m likely to gag.

There are also allergies that lead to different food preferences. For instance, I run into skin allergy issues when consuming soy in various forms. Consequently, I avoid soy the best I can. Some people are lactose intolerant. Some people will literally die from eating peanuts. There are many factors that make food preferences subjective.

Don’t let food snobs tell you what you should like. Just tell them to speak for their own genes and conditioning.
Sexuality

Sexuality is yet another realm of subjectivity. People have different sexual preferences. Some have preferences for certain looks and personalities. Some have preferences for certain genders. Some preferences are culturally programmed, some are genetic, and some are programmed by experience. On the surface, it all just seems like a hodgepodge of confusing nonsense. But at a deeper level it reflects different forgiveness classrooms.

The progression of the acceptance of alternative sexuality in society has been interesting to observe. And of particular interest is the trend of “it is never enough.” The reality is that the end game of acceptance is always disappointment. Just because people learn to accept the preferences of others doesn’t mean they will adopt those preferences as their own.

There are things I’m just not interested in due to my own robotic preferences. For instance, I have no desire to go to, watch, and or participate in something like a drag show. I accept such things and say live and let live. Anything that is voluntary and so follows the Golden Rule is fine by me. But sorry, a lot of things just don’t interest me and so I have no desire to spend time or money on those things. As another example, despite being a straight male, I have zero interest in going to a strip club full of beautiful women (if such a strip club even exists); it’s just not my kind of thing and it isn’t just
because I’m an introvert. Not everyone would be interested in going to a car show either, or a cat show, or a comic convention, or a Bitcoin conference, or an ACIM conference. It’s nothing personal; it’s not bigotry or intolerance; we just robotically like what we like and so are indifferent about many things.

Don’t make people eat cilantro if they don’t like it!

**Humor**

Humor is another thing that is rather subjective. Inner contradiction makes humor. What we deem as funny is what gives us an inner sense of simultaneous yes/no, true/false. The more balanced the inner contradiction the more funny. But that balance is subjective and depends on numerous factors.

One big aspect of humor is respect. Someone you respect as being smart and also cool is more likely to be able to conjure up a yes/true in your mind. So the ability to conjure up the contradiction necessary for good humor is not just in the joke but in the perception of the joke teller.

As I mentioned before, the people we tend to perceive as smart are people we perceive as thinking like we do. This is reflected well in politics and therefore political humor. To find political humor funny, you tend to have to think like the person doing the political comedy. In other words, you have to live in a similar mental bubble as the comedian; otherwise, the attempts at producing inner contradiction often fail.
I could make a long list of professional humorists that I fail to find very funny, but I won’t since such a list would be subjective. Just because I don’t find someone funny doesn’t mean much—other than that I don’t reside in the bubble required for that humor to work on me. Just because I don’t like cilantro doesn’t make it bad except to me.

**Heritage**

Heritage is an interesting thing people often use to fabricate specialness. Heritage uses group specialness. The further back in time the more singular the source. So, in theory, we should all have the same heritage due to coming from the same one source. But people tend to concentrate on the branches rather than the trunk of the heritage tree. For instance, people usually don’t talk about being proud of their ape heritage or mouse heritage—even though humans share DNA with apes and mice. People instead talk about their Irish heritage or African heritage.

Before DNA tests, people mostly just relied on family hearsay or skin color to quantify their heritage. But now it can all be confirmed with DNA tests. And yes, the DNA tests can confirm things like Irish heritage, but, like I said, DNA also indicates shared heritage with apes and mice.

What I’ve personally learned about my own genetic heritage from DNA testing is that my current body is very much a mutt. So if I really wanted to, I could try to
identify with a lot of different ethnicities. But I don’t know why I would. Because, for instance, since I know from DNA testing that I’m part Italian, does that mean I should be proud of Leonardo da Vinci? Does that mean I painted The Last Supper? Since I know I’m part German, does that mean I should be proud of Beethoven? Does that mean I composed the Ninth Symphony? Since I know I’m part Indian, does that mean I should be proud of Siddhartha Gautama? Does that mean I reached enlightenment and founded Buddhism?

Of course, I shouldn’t be proud. Pride is ego nonsense; it’s an attempt to fabricate specialness. I do wonder though if perhaps there is some reincarnation data embedded in DNA. But really, if it is atonement we want, then we should realize that atonement is total escape from the past and total lack of interest in the future.

Realistically, it doesn’t mean much to be genetically related to certain people or groups of people. Heritage is unnecessary specialness baggage used to make a special “we” rather than just a special “I.” There are many ancient conflicts still going on in the world today based on individuals being genetically related to certain people and groups of people. That appetite for group identity is what makes identitarianism.

Identitarianism, which is politics based on social identity (identity politics), is societal poison regardless of the particular social identity of the people engaging in it. As I mentioned earlier when looking at discrimination,
identitarianism by way of critical race theory and intersectionality is becoming more prevalent in society, not less. Social identity can align through gender, skin color, sexuality, disability, and whatever else people can think of to separate themselves into separate groups. Most white people learned the lesson of the danger of racial identitarianism once and for all by way of the actions of Hitler. But not all groups have seemed to learn that lesson, nor have certain whites learned that identitarianism is societal poison universally, not just when whites use it. For that reason, identitarianism is on the rise not the fall. And that is why we will explore it later in this book.

**Culture and Language**

Culture is similar to genetic heritage; it is another variant of group specialness. Culture can overlap with racial and ethnic specialness but it doesn’t have to. The key component of culture is usually language. When people share language they usually share a lot of culture. In the United States, there is a certain American way of talking which is considered speaking English without an accent. If you talk that way, most people will simply think of you as culturally American. But there are also plenty of accents in America. If you speak in one of those accents people automatically put you into a subculture rather than being an overall American. For instance, there are regional accents like New York, Boston, the South, Louisiana, and Minnesota. There are
also race-related accents like Black, Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Chinese, and British. There are also accents that indicate class, like speaking ghetto or hillbilly.

At this point in history, most Americans are accustomed to racial diversity and fine with it. If you want to blend in as a regular American, just speak American English without any accent and dress like the average. If you do that, most people, other than identitarian zealots, will think nothing of your racial or regional heritage.

**Melting Pot**

Lions have a hard time hunting a herd of zebras. That’s because to focus on which zebra to attack requires a zebra being discernible from the herd. Zebra stripes are camouflage with the herd. Zebras with discernible markings are the ones that don’t last long. Common language without accents is similar to zebra stripes in human societies. Stand out and be special at your own risk.

Unfortunately, skin color is one trait people can’t change. And so skin color remains an issue in human societies. If you are in a place in the world where your skin color stands out from the average, then you are more likely to find trouble. That’s just the reality.

Fortunately, America has long been a melting pot and so at this point in history there are many areas where skin color is so diverse that no one stands out. America’s
melting pot has worked as long as the people that came in assimilated. The first waves of people into America were settlers that sculpted raw nature into civilization. Later waves of people into America immigrated to already settled land. The uncomfortable truth about America is that discrimination is a key part of what made it work. It was very simple; whoever was the last off the boat was discriminated against. That encouraged each group to speak English to get a job and blend in. The better each group was able to blend in, the better the group faired socially. Even people with noticeably different physical traits, like skin color, were eventually accepted—that is as long their group developed a good reputation of assimilating and blending in culturally.

**Group Separation**

There are two groups in particular that have been more separate throughout America history than other groups. Those two groups are the Native Americans and the African Americans.

The Native Americans were separated due to being unable to defend the vast undeveloped land of North America. As a compromise to preserve their group specialness, they were eventually forced onto reservations. On the other hand, the African Americans were brought to America by force and enslaved by force. Their slavery was made possible by the obvious fact that they were unable to defend themselves from being caught and enslaved. A major variable that made the
slave trade possible was that different groups of Africans were capturing other groups of Africans and selling them for profit into slavery. Both the Native Americans and African Americans lacked the borders that would have been necessary to preserve their relative freedom. And their unique circumstances led to both groups being legally separated from the whole in America by government force.

Fortunately, at this point in American history, legal separation has since been eliminated and even reversed by affirmative action to promote easier assimilation. But despite the removal of forceful barriers, plenty of separation remains between those groups and the rest of America.

Who is to blame for that continued separation depends on who you ask. Some blame it on systemic racism, even though the only official systemic racism that still exists on the books in America is affirmative action. And affirmative action is designed to help those groups by giving them special advantages. Others blame it on other things. The blame game is subjective. In the big picture, objectively the problem is perpetuated by the fact that special victimhood and victimizing continues to be preferred rather than forgiveness and personal responsibility. So don’t count on that subject being solved anytime soon, especially with the current trend of identitarianism, which we’ll explore later.

Realistically, if people want to be special and separate they should be allowed to do so; that’s why most of the
people who voluntarily came to America did so to begin with. The idea that people who want to be different all have to be forced together into the same society and government is not very logical or practical. But as I’ll explore later, closer to the end of this book, there are advantages to groups being lumped together with other groups. That’s because different groups and cultures have different advantages and weaknesses just like individuals.

**Group Personality**

When groups and cultures are compared they aren’t equal. With positive stereotypes—which people tend to like—also come negative stereotypes. Some groups and cultures excel at certain things relative to other groups and cultures. Also, groups and cultures as a whole tend to have their own personalities. For instance, just think of some groups and cultures that make you think of high conscientiousness. Now think of groups and cultures that make you think of low conscientiousness. The same can be done with all the personality traits. Some groups and cultures are higher in openness, some lower. Some groups and cultures are more agreeable, some less.

As an example, here is an amusing joke that you may have heard before that summarizes different European group cultural personality stereotypes: In heaven, the police are British, the cooks are French, the engineers are German, the administrators are Swiss, and the lovers are Italian. In hell, the police are German, the cooks are
British, the engineers are Italian, the administrators are French, and the lovers are Swiss.

That joke is funny because, although when it comes to individuals it isn’t true at all, it does seem true enough on the level of group culture. Culture is a social operating system. Forgive specialness and install an advantageous social operating system for your unique circumstances and you’ll have a lot less problems.

Reprogramming

As I mentioned briefly earlier, even though I’ve been emphasizing the roboticism of genetic and environmental programming, that doesn’t mean change is impossible. Mind is powerful. You can change if you really want; it just takes mastery of the mind and practice. I’ve successfully reprogrammed myself numerous times in my life. But I’ve only reprogrammed things I wanted to change. Other things I don’t want to change because I like them. For instance, I like my introversion most of the time. It’s more often than not an asset rather than a liability. It’s nothing I’m eager to change. My introversion is what allows me to enjoy things like writing this very book. Nonetheless, I would change it if my introversion became a major problem. I’ve changed such things in the past and could change them again if necessary.

One example of a time I reprogrammed myself was when I was thirteen years old. Growing up I had a shy bladder. It usually wasn’t a problem because I could
usually find sufficient privacy when using a public restroom by using a stall. But in middle school it became more of a problem. One day, to be funny, I wet a paper towel and threw it into the restroom stall my friend was using. He thought it was funny and was eager to get me back. The wet paper towel prank quickly became a popular trend. That was a problem for me though. Because it made it so the stall was no longer a reliable remedy for my shy bladder. Most of the time, other people in the restroom didn’t do the paper towel prank, but I never really knew if it was coming. Before long, my only hope to urinate effortlessly was if the restroom was completely empty. But it turned out to be a good problem. I was sick of having shy bladder anyway and so the wet paper towel obstacle prompted me to find a remedy.

I started observing the circumstances when shy bladder wasn’t an issue. When the person around me was my brother, it wasn’t an issue. When the dog or cat was near, it wasn’t an issue. And I also had no issue around lifeless objects like toilets, urinals, and sinks. So whenever I was in the school restroom I just started thinking of other people in the restroom as my brother, dog, or cat. That helped immediately. I kept on using the same technique every time I used the restroom. Eventually, I added robot to the mix and started thinking of other people in the restroom with me as robots. After a few months, I was pretty much cured. Ultimately, I was
able to use the urinal while throwing wet paper towels back at my friends.

To this day, short of someone being in a public restroom with me who looks like a criminal, is acting crazy, being loud, or is right next to me at a urinal staring at my sausage, shy bladder is no longer a thing for me. Since I nipped my shy bladder in the bud right around the time I hit puberty that might have made it easier for me to reprogram myself. But regardless, I learned doing such a thing is possible. If you have shy bladder (Paruresis), it might be time to tackle the condition. If you can’t kick it, that’s fine too; I won’t judge, just let me know and I’ll be happy to let you pee in peace.

If you don’t like it reprogram it, especially if you know you can. You can reprogram your mind or you can just reprogram matter if you want. Like when I was a kid, I eventually got sick of my shoelaces coming untied and becoming frayed. The adults told me to just tie a knot with my laces, but knots were hard to untie and still often failed. So I eventually came up with a working solution: I started tucking my shoelace bow into my laces. I still do; it rarely fails.

There is usually some sort of trick that can cure most issues. It’s just a matter of finding the trick. And these days, with the internet, finding tricks is easier than ever. However, it often requires sorting through a lot of junk. When I was around the age of nine, I figured out a way to reliably end hiccups in myself. Through trial and error I figured out a solution. I took a deep breath, held my
breath with my mouth open, and concentrated on very slowly moving my right hand index finger and thumb toward each other. After about twenty to thirty seconds my index finger met my thumb and I pinched the fingers together. My hiccups were gone. It still works for me to this day. Sometimes I fail to concentrate and it takes two tries, but it always works.

Reprogramming tricks are vast and could occupy a whole book. But this book is about forgiving differences rather than changing them. If you want to and can change things about yourself, that’s great. But when it comes to changing others or things you can’t quite seem to change about yourself, forgive.

The free will we have in this universe is the choice for Spirit or ego. The script is written. The ego realm is robotic because ego is a surrender of free will. As the Course states:

“The ego cannot teach you anything as long as your will is free, because you will not listen to it. It is not your will to be imprisoned because your will is free. That is why the ego is the denial of free will. It is never God Who coerces you, because he shares his will with you.” (T-8.II.3)

**Cognitive Bias**

Beyond personality, IQ, gender, genes, and so on, there is another layer of human subjectivity: cognitive bias. Cognitive bias keeps humans from having any hope of seeing the world anything remotely close to
objectively. Cognitive bias is studied mostly in psychology and behavioral economics. And cognitive bias is essentially faulty thinking. There are many recognized forms of cognitive bias. We will look at four main groups of cognitive bias: memory, information, meaning, and action.

The beauty of true forgiveness is that it is a kind of universal remedy for cognitive biases and general subjectivity. After all, *A Course in Miracles* is designed to remedy the ego’s faulty thought system. And specific cognitive biases are examples of the ego’s faulty thought system.

**Cognitive Dissonance**

Following the logic of *A Course in Miracles*, a strong argument could be made that the king of cognitive biases is cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance refers to conflicting attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and thoughts. Cognitive dissonance produces a feeling of discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, or thoughts to reduce the discomfort and restore balance. Cognitive dissonance is the nature of dualistic thinking. A cognitive dissonance example is, God is love and God made the universe. Most Course people are well aware of the variety of religious craziness that has been invented to rationalize contradictions like that one. Religion is a treasure trove of cognitive dissonance and so is politics. That's why religion and politics are pretty much the two most
dangerous subjects to discuss. Because when discussing such topics outside the bubbles of those who share the same basic beliefs, such discussions start exposing cognitive dissonance. In other words, egos become threatened.

Have you ever read the Aesop’s Fable about *The Fox and the Grapes*? That short fable is about cognitive dissonance. Here it is: “Driven by hunger, a fox tried to reach some grapes hanging high on the vine but was unable to, although he leaped with all his strength. As he went away, the fox remarked ‘Oh, you aren't even ripe yet! I don't need any sour grapes.’ People who speak disparagingly of things that they cannot attain would do well to apply this story to themselves.”

In the fable of *The Fox and the Grapes*, it is possible the grapes really were sour. And if the fox had got one grape and found it was sour then it would have been justifiable to leave the other grapes. But making up a story to dismiss the grapes as sour is cognitive dissonance at work. The fox wanted the grapes but the reality was that the fox could not get them. This is how the ego preserves itself. The ego hallucinates justifications to preserve the ego. For instance, treating oneness as unobtainable leads to all kinds of sour grapes dismissals of God.

The ego cannot exist without cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance requires hallucinating a justification to maintain inner conflict. Ego is the essence of inner conflict. Therefore, ego preservation requires
hallucinating a reality that does not exist. That's what this universe is after all. And that's also why no two people see the world the same. That's the first law of chaos: the truth is different for everyone. For us to all recognize that we are all the same we have to see the world objectively as it really is: illusory. To do that requires true forgiveness. Forgiveness is the ego eradicator because it is the cognitive dissonance eradicator.

When confronted with information that conflicts with beliefs, people tend to experience cognitive dissonance. When cognitive dissonance occurs, there are two main options. Accept that you were wrong and modify your beliefs accordingly (happy instead of right). Or make up a reason why you are still right despite evidence to the contrary (right instead of happy). Spirit prefers happy rather than right while ego prefers right rather than happy.

**Memory**

*A Course in Miracles* talks a lot about the memory of God. God is the only true memory we have. All our other memories are of illusion. As the Course says in lesson 258: “All that is needful is to train our minds to overlook all little senseless aims, and to remember that our goal is God. His memory is hidden in our minds, obscured but by our pointless little goals which offer nothing, and do not exist.” (WB-258.1)
In the big picture, all memory, other than the memory of oneness, is the result of cognitive bias. Cognitive bias allows us to make memories that obscure reality. In our day to day lives, we do the same thing we do in the big picture; we obscure reality. Even though the so-called physical world is itself ultimately unreal, it still represents the concept of reality relative to subjective hallucination. That’s what science is all about: figuring out how the world operates independent of individual interpretations.

When it comes to cognitive biases regarding memory, we do four main things. One, we store memories differently based on how they were experienced. Two, we reduce events and lists to their key elements. Three, we discard specifics to form generalities. And four, we edit and reinforce some memories after the fact.

An example of how we store memories differently based on how they were experienced is the Google effect. Since the internet has made it easy to just look up certain types of information, we tend to no longer remember such information. Spell check has had a similar effect on the ability to remember proper spellings. Anything easily looked up in a Google or DuckDuckGo search is easily forgotten. The simple, mindless activity of doing an internet search usually doesn’t register in memory. On the other end of the scale, we tend to remember things that involve a lot of emotion, particularly pain. For example, it was found that students would have better memory recall when
studying for a test if they did their studying while suffering some pain, such as having an arm submerged in icy water.

The ultimate emotional memory of pain is of course the seeming destruction of heaven: the time of terror. And that memory haunts us constantly. “Each day, and every minute in each day, and every instant that each minute holds, you but relive the single instant when the time of terror took the place of love.” (T.26.5)

The time of terror is the opposite of the Google effect. Yet, we still don’t quite fully remember the time of terror enough for it to be fully conscious. It’s more like the time of terror is always on the tip of our tongue. Tip of the tongue is a cognitive bias that results from being unable to fully retrieve information. Tip of the tongue is one of the most persistent and debilitating cognitive biases in my life. For instance, I love telling quick zinger type jokes in reference to what is occurring or being said in any given moment. But about nine times out of ten I’m unable to execute my zinger quickly enough due to some key part of the joke being stuck on the tip of my tongue.

Memory is a game of efficiency. And quick recall isn’t necessarily efficient. That’s why we reduce events and lists to their key elements. An example of this is the cognitive bias known as memory inhibition. Just as we tend to forget things we can Google we also forget irrelevant information. In general, we forget most things and only remember a limited number of things. Some
people remember more, some less. But we all tend to scrap irrelevant information. Even people with amazing memory recall, such as those with amazing episodic (autobiographical) memory, still omit information from memory. Also, just because something is remembered doesn’t mean the memory stays accurate.

In the cognitive bias known as the misinformation effect, recall of episodic memories becomes less accurate due to post-event information. Memories tend to be foggy enough that alternative descriptions after the fact, whether true or false, can change what we remember. When false information is added, we can start to remember false things. This cognitive bias is a vulnerability that can be used to purposefully change people’s memories. This is related to the psychological manipulation technique called gaslighting. Nonetheless, memory is often so fragile that people can imagine that someone trying to tell the truth is instead gaslighting due to the person already having a distorted memory.

Memory is usually more about generalities than specifics. We actually discard specifics to form generalities. Probably the most well-known cognitive bias involving generalities is prejudice. Prejudice is a feeling about a person or thing based on the perceived group membership of that person or thing. Prejudice can be positive or negative in nature. Prejudice is a result of dealing with generalities rather than specifics. One can be prejudice for something or someone or prejudice against something or someone. Most people think of
prejudice in a negative connotation though because of another related cognitive bias called negativity bias.

Negative things stand out to people and grab their attention and emotions more than positive or neutral things. That’s why the news business uses the motto, “If it bleeds it leads.” That’s also why when people look at reviews of products online when making buying decisions they usually can’t help but zero in on the one star reviews—even if there are only two one star reviews and hundreds of perfect five star reviews. Negative things are usually the things that threaten our survival, not positive things. So humans are wired to find the negative in their environments so they can eliminate the negative. Humans concentrate on what is going wrong rather than right. The problem is what needs solved not the thing going right.

You can purposefully use negativity bias to get attention and make something more memorable. For instance, you could post a tweet or status update with purposefully wrong spelling or purposefully wrong use of a phrase. Negativity bias will make people focus on the seeming error, which will gain attention. Such tricks work because humans are subject to another cognitive bias, suggestibility.

We edit and reinforce some memories after the fact. Consequently, people are prone to suggestion. People are also prone to cryptoamnesia (remembering a forgotten memory as if it is new), source confusion, and plain old false memory.
In the big picture, the idea that oneness was destroyed is a false memory. Just as remembering that oneness was never really destroyed, as if that is some sort of new revelation, would be a form of cryptoamnesia.

Information

The world is set up to show us the information the ego wants us to see. The information the ego doesn’t want us to see is kept hidden. For that reason, we notice things already primed in memory or repeated often. You have probably noticed the frequency illusion cognitive bias at work in your life. And if you haven’t, you will now. An example of the frequency illusion is learning a new word you never thought about before. Then afterwards, you recognize it being used frequently. This can sometimes be striking. The same basic principle is why having intentions is a key trick to manifesting intentions.

One of the most well known forms of cognitive bias is confirmation bias. We are drawn to details that confirm our own existing beliefs. We have a tendency to cherry-pick information to support our pre-established beliefs, expectations, and preferences. When we tie our ego to being right about something, confirmation bias tends to go into overdrive. After all, the ego would rather be right than happy. That’s what the whole guilt projection game is about: trying to make the case that the guilt is out there in others instead of within.
So, no surprise, we have cognitive biases that help us notice flaws in others more easily than we notice flaws in ourselves. Some specific examples of this are reflected in the naïve realism bias and naïve cynicism bias. In naïve realism, people believe that they see the world objectively, while others who disagree are uniquely subjective—stuck in ignorance and illusion. Naïve cynicism is similar. In naïve cynicism, people overestimate the egocentric subjective bias of others while dismissing it in themselves.

A major theme of general cognitive bias is self-blindness. We tend to treat our own biases as neutral. And so we notice change only relative to ourselves. An example of this is the cognitive bias called the money illusion. In the money illusion, we tend to think of money in terms of the face value on currency rather than the purchasing power. The face value remains the same but purchasing power fluctuates. In general, purchasing power usually decreases over time due to money supply increase as well as supply/demand inflation.

People tend to form a set sense of the value of money based on memory. For instance, my sense of the value of U.S. currency was very much solidified in the late 1990s. Therefore, the prices of things in the United States as they existed in the late 1990s seem like reasonable prices to me. As a result, the prices these days for things like groceries, restaurants, insurance, and fuel often seem ridiculously high to me. But things like computers,
TVs, cameras, and cell phones seem like great deals. That late 1990s price bias makes me spend less money because I don’t feel good about making purchases when they feel like a rip-off. As an example, the idea of paying more than about four dollars for a meal at a fast food restaurant still seems ridiculous to me. And I can’t stand paying more than ten dollars, including tip, for a meal at a basic sit-down restaurant. Consequently, I don’t go out to eat much. Carry out pizza though still seems reasonable in price from most of the major companies.

The money illusion is related to the anchoring bias. In the anchoring bias, people get stuck on initial information which then skews additional information. Simply ageing inevitably leads to all kinds of anchoring. For instance, as people age, they often don’t keep up with fashion trends—since they were already anchored into an idea of what acceptable, normal clothing is. As people age, they also tend to get anchored to certain preferred music types; often the popular music from their teens and twenties.

Things like fashion and music change because selling new clothes and music requires change. Bizarre, funny, visually striking, or anthropomorphic things stick out more than non-bizarre/unfunny things. So, even though humans are prone to the cognitive bias of anchoring, they also have cognitive biases that allow their attention to be grabbed to make new anchors. Advertising often exploits these kinds of cognitive biases. One very simple cognitive bias trick advertisers use is the picture
superiority effect. Pictures beat words when it comes to persuasion. That’s one reason I’m fond of making comic books rather than books of pure text like this one. However, visual language can have a similar effect. So all is not lost by writing instead of making pictures.

The humor effect is another cognitive bias that I often employ that can be used for advertising and general persuasion. Things that make you laugh are harder to forget. If you’ve read any of my other books, you can probably think of something right now that you remember that is both visual and funny.

Meaning

Lesson one of the *A Course in Miracle* Workbook is, “Nothing I see means anything.” The second lesson is, “I have given everything I see all the meaning that it has for me.” Meaning is exploited by the ego to keep us lost in dreams. The universe is ultimately meaningless and so humans are often starving for meaning. Consequently, there are numerous cognitive biases related to lack of meaning.

For starters, we tend to find stories and patterns even when looking at sparse data. That means we have biases that make meaning out of very little. We already looked at the frequency illusion, where, for instance, learning a new word you never thought about before then starts appearing frequently. But there is another layer to the frequency illusion. People who experience the frequency illusion often also slip into the recency illusion. In the
recency illusion, people come to the false conclusion that a new word recently brought to their attention is literally new and of recent invention. The recency illusion is a false conclusion based on a perceived pattern. Another example of such a thing is the hot-hand fallacy.

The hot-hand fallacy is a cognitive bias whereby it is assumed that just because something happened before it has a greater chance of happening again. So, for instance, if someone flipped a coin four times and all four times it came up heads the hot-hand fallacy would predict the next flip is more likely to land on heads again. The inverse of the hot-hand fallacy is the gamblers fallacy. In the gambler’s fallacy, if someone flipped a coin four times and all four times it came up heads it would be assumed that the chances of getting heads again is lower. In a coin flip, the chances are in theory 50/50 every time. Therefore, past coin flip results shouldn’t be able to predict the future at all; they are meaningless.

People simplify probabilities and numbers to make them easier to think about. People also fill in characteristics from stereotypes, generalities, and prior histories. As an example, earlier in the book I talked about the probability of a violent revolution taking place in the United States based on the frequency of such revolutions in the past. There is no guarantee that the past of such revolutions can predict future ones other than that the past demonstrates that revolutions are possible. A normalcy bias would forget to take into
account that while the probability in any given year may be low, the probability over the course of an entire lifetime is considerably higher. On the other hand, a selection bias may forget to take into account the fact that you yourself could decide to start a violent revolution and bring the odds up to one hundred percent.

People tend to project their current mindset and assumptions onto the past and future. For that reason, it would be easy to leave yourself out of the equation of being the one who could start a violent revolution. Projection bias is the tendency to project one’s current mindset onto future events. Nonetheless, even if you were able to muster up the drive to start a revolution, you may fall prey to the impact bias and overestimate how long you could keep up the emotional intensity required for a revolution.

Humans can’t even predict or read themselves accurately. Yet, people also tend to fall prey to the cognitive bias of thinking they know what other people are thinking. That is the mind reading fallacy, whereby people project their own thoughts as the thoughts of others. Chances are if you’ve ever been in a romantic relationship you have firsthand experience of your partner’s bad mind reading—as well as your own bad mind reading.

Another cognitive bias people have is that they imagine people and things they are familiar with or fond of are better. That could be called the special love bias.
Therefore, when we pretend to read the minds of special loves we tend to project innocence onto the thoughts. But when we pretend to read the minds of special hates we tend to project guilt.

When you find yourself mind reading, catch yourself and forgive. Mind reading is just pure projection and so is often a symptom of unforgiveness. At best you might occasionally guess right but most often not. The only mind that can be read is our one mind, which is our true mind. Our fragmented minds were made for private thoughts. Yes, private thoughts are technically a fiction since there is only one mind. But the fact remains that most mind reading is just projection. If you disagree with me about mind reading and insist that you can read minds contact me so we can put your mind reading abilities to work in a casino setting. And if there is a rule that says mind reading can’t be used for such things but it works for other things, then fill me in on the arbitrary and convenient rules.

The flip side of mind reading is the illusion of transparency. In the illusion of transparency, people imagine that their own thoughts are transparent to others. To even think that people care about your thoughts at all is the cognitive bias known as the spotlight effect. In general, most people are much more concerned about what you think of them rather than what they think of you. The only exception is people closely identified with you such as family or friends or even fans.
Action

The final realm of rampant cognitive bias is action. To stay focused, we favor the immediate, relatable thing in front of us. And we favor simple-looking options as well as complete information over complex, ambiguous options. Consequently, Occam's razor is a persistent cognitive bias. Occam's razor proposes that the simplest explanation is most likely to be true. But often the simplest explanation isn’t true. And not only that, different people have different ideas about what is simple. One very simple explanation for most things is to say, “God did it.” The fact is that people tend to have their own pet explanations for things that they put their own work into. And people tend to deem their pet explanations as simple.

Overall, to get things done, we tend to favor things in which we've invested time and energy. That bias is found in what has become known as the IKEA effect. IKEA furniture often requires assembly. People who put the time and effort into assembling something put a disproportionately high value on that object relative to a similar pre-assembled object.

A related bias is the sunk cost fallacy. A sum spent in the past should not be considered relevant to decisions in the future. But the sunk cost fallacy leads to people making decisions based on money already spent. As an example, a person might say, “I already spent a thousand dollars to get my car running and it’s still
giving me problems, so I might as well spend more money to get it working without problems.”

To act, we must be confident that we can make an impact and feel what we do is important. That feeds cognitive biases like the Dunning–Kruger effect. In the Dunning–Kruger effect, people overestimate their cognitive abilities. That overestimation gives people confidence to act. But the deluded sense of intelligence can easily lead to poor decisions.

To avoid mistakes, we aim to preserve autonomy and group status, and avoid irreversible decisions. That feeds cognitive biases like the status-quo bias. If the current status-quo state seems good enough, then deviation from the status-quo is perceived as a loss. Furthermore, loss aversion bias makes avoiding loss preferable to equivalent gain. Therefore, loss aversion makes it more preferable to not lose $10 than to find $10.

When we let ego guide our actions, we let cognitive biases guide our actions. The ego’s guidance is designed to sustain the ego. When we let Spirit guide our actions we free ourselves from cognitive biases. In fact, absence of cognitive biases is a good sign that Spirit is in charge rather than ego.

**Collective Cognitive Bias**

Even if you exercise the discipline to quell your own cognitive biases, you live in a society filled with humans deeply inflicted with cognitive biases. Fortunately though, dealing with your own faulty thinking makes it
easier to forgive the faulty thinking of others. Don’t expect humans to be rational, because they aren’t. Nor do all humans have the same definition of rational.

One of the symptoms of thinking more clearly is that it often makes it impossible to take sides. There are no sides to objectivity. Sides are a product of subjectivity. For instance, what you decide to have for dinner tonight is subjective—even if you don’t make the decision yourself. There is no objective choice for what you should have for dinner tonight. And the same is true for everyone else. As long as it is food that won’t kill you or make you sick, and as long as it is food you like and can afford, there are a whole lot of potential options. There are no sides to take when you can make a decision yourself—other than ego (subjectivity) or Holy Spirit (objectivity).

Due to the existence of governments in the world, grown adults don’t have full freedom in all their decisions. Governments force collective decisions upon people. Collective decisions make people fight over decisions they otherwise would have been able to make themselves.

Logically, if government should exist at all, it should be to protect people from the tyranny of others, not guarantee it. In that sense, all governments in the world today are nonsense, except for perhaps Liberland. Governments are classic ego inventions in the sense that they do precisely what they purport to defend against. Government is itself a fallacy and thus a cognitive bias.
The primary government fallacy is the idea that some people are bad, so we need a group of people, some of which will inevitably be bad, to have a monopoly on the initiation of force in society to protect us from some people who are bad. Arguments for government usually revolve around the idea that we need governments because without governments governments would form. In other words, coercive monopolies are inevitable so we should support coercive monopolies. By that logic, since bodily death is inevitable we should all just commit suicide. The Golden Rule is the remedy to the fallacy of government and even to suicide.

If people were not crippled by cognitive bias, governments would not exist. But instead, government is a cognitive bias that collectivizes and imposes cognitive bias. As nineteenth century political philosopher Lysander Spooner once aptly noted about the United States:

“But whether the Constitution really be one thing, or another, this much is certain—that it has either authorized such a government as we have had, or has been powerless to prevent it. In either case, it is unfit to exist.”

The world is merely a perceptual problem. And that is true not only in the big picture but also the little picture. At this point in human history, bad thinking is the primary problem. And collectivized bad thinking keeps everyone more or less stuck.
Global Warming Perception

One problem many people in the world, including governments, are currently concerned about is global warming. Global warming is very interesting since it is very much a perceptual problem. I find the whole subject of global warming very fascinating. The subject of global warming is a strange mix of science and politics with a side of religious fervor; it is a microcosm of the foibles of human thinking. The subject of global warming is ripe with subjectivity and cognitive bias. And no side has a monopoly on bad thinking on the subject of global warming; believers, deniers, and skeptics all suffer from their shares of bad thinking.

I take no stance on global warming. And I don’t know where people get the confidence to plant their feet firmly on one side or the other on such a complex topic. If I did take a stance all I would be doing is guessing and I’d then be tying my illusory ego to being proven right. That’s not the way I like to live. So, regardless of your own opinion on the subject, just imagine I agree with you.

The basic premise that humans increasing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will cause the globe to warm over time makes sense, because the basic physics makes sense. And as time has progressed, the case that the world is getting warmer rather than cooler has become
progressively more compelling. The global temperature record is not long enough or good enough though for me to be willing to accept that anything that has happened so far is beyond natural variability.

If scientists were going around telling everyone that clearing land of trees or that urban heat islands were the main thing causing global warming, I'd find that just as potentially believable as attributing it to human caused greenhouse gas increases. I'd also find the idea that the earth contains natural feedback mechanisms for controlling excess greenhouse gases in the atmosphere believable too. After all, the earth has survived a lot of variation through history and so it’s not unreasonable to suspect that earth has some decent natural feedback mechanisms in place. Have you ever heard of dimethyl sulphide and its potential role in seeding clouds to reflect the sun’s energy and therefore regulate earth’s temperature? And have you ever heard of the role heat from the earth’s center has in warming oceans when it reaches the earth’s surface?

That's the problem with just trusting others to decide what you should believe as true. There is no guarantee an authority majority is right let alone thorough and honest—especially in a field where full scientific testing isn't possible. There is only one earth and so there are no duplicate earths to use as controls in scientific testing. People are people and simply choosing a career in science doesn't make people immune to the long list of human cognitive biases, or immune to the limits of
the scientific method for fully testable hypotheses. Computer models are a very poor substitute for actual experimental controls.

Given where things stand in terms of global warming at the present time, I wish I never heard about the idea of global warming. Given the bleak picture I was presented with about global warming decades ago when I was a child, I would have thought that by now things would be really blatantly bad—especially since global emissions have only gotten worse. But when I look around, all climate change is essentially imperceptible. The beach looks the same, perhaps even better. The weather seems the same in the sense that it has never been reliable. The same occasional natural disasters that happened back then still are occasional. Perhaps global warming will eventually become blatantly perceptible, but it hasn’t yet. Sure, if you look closely you can find evidence of change to make a case that the change is caused by global warming (confirmation bias). But otherwise, if you don’t look for such things you don’t notice them (normalcy bias).

I often hear people trying to tie things like certain weather events to global warming, but the historical records of weather usually aren’t good enough or long enough to take such claims seriously. There was plenty of horrible and erratic weather in the past despite the limited historical record. In fact, due to equipment failure, records tend to be destroyed or not recorded during the most extreme weather events. Nonetheless,
there are constant claims that weather disasters are becoming worse and more frequent due to global warming. So far, in general that isn’t true; it is just faulty perception. The perception of increased weather related natural disasters has thus far been a product of economic growth and inflation. Due to growth and inflation, there is more property at risk worth more money and so more potential targets than the past. With more targets, more targets get hit. (Source: Pielke, Jr., R. 2019. Everything You Hear About Billion-Dollar Disasters Is Wrong, Forbes, 7 November.)

After three decades of the same dire global warming warnings, it all usually just feels to me like the little boy who cried global warming. The global warming people jumped the shark too many times and continue to do so. Sure, I can find some charts of global temperatures made by people I can only assume are trustworthy—who use data from instruments that I can only assume are trustworthy—that show a slight but steady climb in global temperatures. And I can find charts showing rising greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Yet, I can also find charts showing that in 1820 94% of the world's population lived in extreme poverty, in 1990 34.8%, and in 2015 just 9.6%. And I can’t help but think that mostly imperceptible differences in temperatures and weather are a small price to pay for that so far.

Nonetheless, I’d be happy to reverse human caused greenhouse gas emissions regardless of how dire or overblown the issue of global warming is. The only
caveat is that there has to be a set of cost-effective solutions that would actually work. Otherwise, the problem will persist. You know a solution is authentic if people voluntarily choose it. Forced solutions, like most government actions, are fake solutions. If it has to be forced, there is a problem not a solution. Nothing is ever enough if the goal is to “not” solve a problem.

**Nuclear Cognitive Bias**

Old nuclear power plants designed using slide rules, fictional nuclear power plants like the one where Homer Simpson works, and nuclear weapons have warped the public’s perception of nuclear energy. Yes, nuclear weapons and their liquid nuclear waste have been problematic. And yes, old nuclear energy technology had serious issues. But with modern technology, those issues have been remedied with new nuclear reactor designs. Generation three nuclear plants already exist and are perfectly safe relative to other power sources. Generation four nuclear plants, which are in development, are not only perfectly safe, but they also eat nuclear waste as fuel.

As of this point in time, nuclear energy is the only emission-free power source ready and able to replace the power plants that increase greenhouse gases. Everything else is still speculative at best. Serious people who have been pouring large amounts of their own money into clean energy know this fact. Unserious people continue to dismiss nuclear in favor of fantasies.
Those fantasies have led to nuclear power plants being closed only to be replaced by coal powered plants.

Even if the world suddenly woke up to nuclear, the slope is still steep. Net-zero global carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 would require a new nuclear power plant going online every day from now (2020) until 2050. That’s obviously already not happening. Other than nuclear, the best realistic option is to just wait out the development of some grand new cheap, abundant, and clean energy source. The people serious about global warming are actively working on cheap, new, clean energy. Most everyone else is just fantasizing in fantasy land with things like empty virtue signaling. (Source: Pielke, Jr., R. 2019. Net-Zero Carbon Dioxide Emissions By 2050 Requires A New Nuclear Power Plant Every Day, Forbes, 30 September.)

Entropy Cognitive Bias

All forgiveness lessons are related to the concept of entropy. That's why in my book The Universe Is Virtual I say that entropy is fear. Entropy is the manifestation on the level of form of sin, guilt, and fear. Entropy in terms of physics is described in the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that the amount of energy available to do work in a closed system decreases with time and therefore entropy increases with time. From a spiritual perspective, the birth of entropy was the birth of the idea of the separation from oneness—the birth of duality. Zero entropy is oneness and
maximal entropy is no more energy available to do work—which is total equilibrium—which is basically a default return to oneness. Illusion is subject to entropy and it has to be. Otherwise, illusion would be real and infinite. Illusion is finite and entropy is the clue to that fact. The first law of chaos (T-23.II.2) is essentially about information entropy. Due to information entropy, none of us are working off of the same model of the world and so we all see things subjectively.

All energy has to come from somewhere and when that energy is used the result is overall higher entropy. Even the sun's energy production produces entropy that pushes the sun ever-closer to its inevitable death (that is assuming humans currently understand how the sun really works). It's easy to miscalculate just how clean any energy source is relative to any other energy, because all energy use results in entropy. Entropy is often the same as pollution in the realm of energy production. Get rid of carbon dioxide entropy and you better make sure the replacement entropy is less problematic and doesn't still result in carbon dioxide—or other worse greenhouse gases like SF6.

Energy is the core of the economy. Prices of things tend to represent the cost of energy input. If you move to an energy source that is 50% less polluting but it costs twice as much, then the amount of energy required to purchase that energy doubles. A doubled price leads to more energy consumption to pay for that extra cost. So the net pollution could easily end up the same. The only
difference would perhaps be in the type of pollution/entropy. Energy is tricky stuff and few people seem to appreciate the zero-sum game aspects of energy. Those who wait for technology and cost to catch up before going green will likely be big relative winners. A whole lot of polluting energy can be spent trying to go green in the wrong way.

Unfortunately, most people don’t think about such things, including the people most vocal about the threat of global warming and the need for action. Like most problems that humans can see coming, the global warming problem will likely be solved. For those who weren’t born yesterday and who have a memory, you’ve seen dire problem after dire problem get solved. Life has taught me to not be a doomer. Remember things like peak oil and the Y2K bug? The surprises are the trouble makers. Humans are really good at solving problems they can see coming. It just takes some time for an acceptable voluntary solution to emerge. The medicine can’t be worse than the illness.

Fortunately, not all global warming remedies simply involve moving away from the power sources that put greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Some solutions involve scrubbing the air of excess greenhouse gases. Those solutions already exist. They just aren’t cost effective enough yet. A Finnish company is even working on making food out of air, a process which also removes carbon dioxide. The company has a protein powder product called Solein made from air. There is also the
potential idea of using fleets of ocean vessels called “albedo yachts” to create denser clouds out of ocean water to reflect more of the sun’s energy back into space and cool the oceans.

Humans are good at solving slow motion problems. And global warming is just such a problem. At some point humans might do such a good job fixing global warming that they are faced with the opposite problem: not enough greenhouse gases. Solutions for the perceived problem of global warming already exist. They will be implemented as they are warranted. Forced solutions are doomed to fail one way or another.

Complexity

The world is complex. Human thinking is not good at handling complexity. So humans tend to simplify things to a single cause and effect. Those simplifications are inherently false. But humans nonetheless use those simplifications as input to come up with new simplifications when dealing with new complexity. Climate and energy are realms of vast complexity, which makes the subject of global warming very complex. Another realm of vast complexity is economics. And incidentally, economics is the key to global warming.

An example of an economic oversimplification is the common U.S. history myth that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt ended the great depression in the U.S. with the New Deal. It’s a mindless falsehood repeated over and over because it’s so simple that it sounds true.
Plus, it’s what a lot of people want to believe. The Great Depression started in 1929 and lasted through the entire 1930s. The depression started under president Hoover. Hoover tried to intervene by increasing government spending to goose the economy. But the depression persisted. The New Deal started in 1933 and goosed the economy with even more government spending. That spending got the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) positive again. Unemployment stayed very high though and didn’t start to significantly recover until the 1940s when the government cranked up spending again with World War II. Considering the statistical realities, it would be more accurate to say that the Great Depression finally ended in the 1940s despite the New Deal and also despite World War II.

In 1920, a depression hit the United States that started out worse than the Great Depression. Unemployment grew from around 4 percent to as much as 12 percent by some estimates, and GDP went down 17 percent. President Wilson was at the end of his term as president. Wilson had a stroke which prevented him from intervening. When Harding became president in 1921, he actually cut government spending. Federal spending went down from $18.5 billion in Fiscal Year 1919 to $3.3 billion in 1922. In all, the depression lasted from January 1920 to July 1921.

So how long would the Great Depression have lasted if the government did nothing and or actually cut spending instead of increasing it? We’ll never know. But
the 1920 depression is a precedent that shows doing nothing can work much better. There is a business cycle of growth and correction that averages eight and a half years. And the more governments try to prevent the business cycle, the more distorted the economy becomes.

But even everything I just said is still a simplification. There were all kinds of factors at play in each depression. Even if I wanted to find every little factor, I couldn’t. In more recent history, you can find all kinds over oversimplified single cause and effect explanations for the 2008 financial crisis. One of the most popular oversimplified explanations is that the 2008 crisis was caused by deregulation. Ask someone who believes deregulation was the cause to name some specific examples of deregulation and you’ll quickly find out how mindless the belief is. At best you might occasionally find someone able to cite the repeal of Glass-Steagall as an example. But then if you ask what Glass-Steagall had to do with anything you’ll most likely find a dead end. Given how incredibly regulated banks and the financial sector were then and still are, it’d make more sense to say regulation failed rather than deregulation failed.

The fact is banks made bad loans to set up the 2008 crisis. They thought they could get away with the bad loans by securitizing them and selling them as investments. A number of smart people saw the collapse coming. But the 2008 financial crisis was complex. Even the few people who predicted it haven’t had a great
track record of predictions since. A lot of factors came together to make a perfect storm.

Although still not a complete picture, Hollywood made a good movie filled with A-list actors about the 2008 financial crisis called *The Big Short*. I highly recommend it for anyone interested in the subject. It’s a Hollywood movie, so it is embellished. But surprisingly it got a lot right.

When I see complexity I get skeptical. Because I know how bad humans are at dealing with complexity. Global warming is complex and the economics of potential solutions is complex. That’s why I find the global warming topic such a great example of the foibles of human thinking. And that’s why I only have faith in voluntary approaches to global warming.

**Economic Preferences**

Society tends to offer two economic choices, capitalism and socialism. In the absence of government, free market is the base economic option. And from the base of a free market the options are only limited by imagination. But the world we currently live in is controlled by governments. Technically, capitalism entails free markets. For that reason, it isn’t totally accurate to say capitalism and socialism are the options. The options are instead more like corporatism or socialism.

The main difference between capitalism and socialism is who owns what. Capitalism is about private
ownership. Socialism is about collective ownership. In that sense, government is inherently socialistic since government entails collective ownership of certain things. Corporatism is the merger of government and corporate power and so capitalism combined with government leads to varying degrees of corporatism.

In the contemporary world, the terms socialism and capitalism mean many different things to many different people. In general, people who project innocence on socialism tend to call everything they don't like capitalism. And people who project innocence on capitalism tend to call everything they don't like socialism. If you asked most people what they really believe about capitalism and socialism you'd find a contradictory hodgepodge that advocates some of what socialism has to offer and some of what capitalism has to offer.

For those unaware of the complexities of economics, pure socialism often seems appealing. But socialism has a fatal flaw that has been known since 1920. In his 1920 article *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth*, economist Ludwig von Mises introduced the world to the fatal flaw of socialism. Many attempts at socialism in many forms have come and gone since 1920. All of those attempts have confirmed to varying degrees the flaw Ludwig von Mises identified.

The gist of the economic calculation problem (a.k.a. socialist calculation problem) is that since collective ownership leads to economic planning as a substitute
for market-based allocation of the factors of production, socialism must always lack a reliable pricing system for allocating scarce resources. Without reliable prices, inefficiencies thrive leading to eventual scarcity. Unfortunately, many people have never gotten the memo about the fatal flaw of socialism, so people continue to pursue socialism. However, contemporary pursuits of socialism tend to not be pure socialism. Contemporary pursuits of socialism are simply socialism riding on the back of capitalism.

Prices are subjective and capitalism is a mechanism that calculates that subjectivity into something usable, reliable, and objective. As long as an economy is capitalistic enough to have a reliable price system, socialism is only a half problem. Things like police, firefighting, schools, and roads are inherently socialistic when they are done by government. In the presence of capitalism, there is a price system to figure out the price of things like police cars, school buildings, and wages. But those socialistic things still suffer from lack of market-based feedback and so still suffer from half of the economic calculation problem. There is no reliable feedback mechanism to assess if the quality of socialistic services is in harmony with the amount of money they cost. The closest thing to feedback on government services usually comes through voting, which is an extremely low resolution form of feedback. When paying directly for things, if the quality to cost ratio is insufficient, people stop paying. But people mostly don't
have the option to stop paying taxes. Since paying for government services usually isn't optional, those services tend to be monopolistic. Even when private businesses try to compete with government, people usually don't have the luxury to skip paying taxes and so end up paying for the preferable private service on top of the inferior government service.

What would police, schools, firefighting, roads and so on look like without government? For instance, do you think private roads would have you sitting at traffic light after traffic light? Is that something you’d voluntarily want to pay good money to do? Do you think kids would hate education if it was unhindered by government regulation and involvement? Would people voluntarily pay for police to hand out extortion tickets? Would people pay for firefighters to sit around, go grocery shopping, cook, play cards, play video games, wash the fire truck, and do all sorts of other unimportant time-killing chores while waiting for a fire to start? Regardless of the details, all that stuff would be more geared to what consumers wanted to pay for voluntarily. When things are owned collectively, people are left with the lowest common denominator. So even when socialism rides on the back of capitalism, socialism still trends toward failure and inefficiency. If the fluctuating economy cannot keep up with the bloated price of socialism, the system fails.

Now, even though serious thinkers know the economic calculation problem is the fatal flaw of
socialism, most people aren’t serious thinkers. Therefore, most people who are pro-socialism or anti-socialism have never taken the economic calculation problem into account. Most people aren’t for or against socialism because they are rational, it’s because they aren’t rational. For example, I’m sure most pro-socialism people who read this book won’t change their minds just because I told them about the economic calculation problem. Nor will most people abandon their support for certain types of initiated government force just because I explained that we should follow the Golden Rule and strive for all human interaction to be voluntary and absent of initiated forced. To have a change of mind, such a person would not only have to understand what I said about such things but also be rational. The economic calculation problem and voluntary interaction are two very logical concepts that are as logical as 3-2=1. They are a bit more complex than 3-2=1, but the tight logic is equivalent. I don’t take clear stands on things unless they are as clearly logical as 3-2=1.

Personally, due to what I understand about economics, I’m anti-forced-socialism in all its forms. And I’m also anti-forced-capitalism in all its forms. I’m only for things that are voluntary and thus free of coercion. Consequently, I’m pro-voluntary-socialism. As long as I’m not forced to participate in the socialism I’m fine with it. And the reality is, there is little holding people back from pursuing voluntary socialism. Life insurance is an example of voluntary socialism, except it is for-profit
socialism. Unlike voluntary capitalism where the government wants a cut and therefore adds various forms of initiated force to the equation, the governments in most places have exemptions for non-profit organizations that remove force rather than add to it. The problem though with voluntary socialism is that most pro-socialism people want to get more out of socialism than they give and that requires force (government). Plus, there is often an envy element to pro-socialism as if wealth is finite and not created. Wealth is created by the productive capacity of the people. That's why despite not having natural resources and despite being devastated in WW2, Japan became so rich. Japan has since ruined that wealth with bad central banking and government, but that's a government force problem not capitalism. In free market capitalism instead of government manipulated capitalism, a fool and his money are soon parted; so even when starting out with advantages it all evens out in the big picture; it is nothing to worry about except to the envious. As long as wealth is accumulated voluntarily and not by force everyone wins to some extent.

The problem is that a lot of wealth in the current world is made possible by force, particularly government force. That force turns capitalism onto corporatism (the merger of government and corporate power). In general, if there is a central bank you don’t have free market capitalism, you have a government manipulated economy. And you also don’t have free market
capitalism if you are forced to use a certain currency or suffer a penalty. Even if that penalty is just taxes (as is the current case with crypto currencies and gold and silver), then you still don’t have free market capitalism, you have a government manipulated economy.

There are many ways of profiting from government force. Perhaps the best way is by being able to line up when the central bank creates currency/debt out of thin air. Yet, there are plenty of other good ways. Some of those other ways of profiting from government force include, selling the government things paid for by taxes and public debt, working directly for the government, and getting laws passed that give certain businesses a market advantage.

But there are also less obvious ways of profiting from government force. For instance, technically, you can only own as much as you can afford to protect. But governments socialize protection. That socialized protection is of much less value to those who own little. Governments socialize protection in the form of police, firefighters, and military. But governments also socialize protection in the form of financial bailouts. When wealth is kept in the financial system, such wealth exists merely as entries in a ledger. And that wealth can evaporate if any part of the ledger fails. Nonetheless, there are more threats to property than the threats governments claim to cover. Property also needs protection from things like bugs, animals, weather, natural disasters, and rot. So, the point is, there is a
price to preserving ownership of property. Don’t envy those enslaved to their possessions.

As a general rule, don’t compare yourself to other people. The comparisons always leave out important details and are pointless. But if you must compare, at least don’t compare yourself to other people alive today; compare yourself instead to people hundreds of years ago. It doesn’t take much money in the current world to live a life vastly better than even the richest people in the world a couple hundred years ago. Most people reading this probably own a smartphone. If you time traveled back to the year nineteen fifty with your smartphone in hand, you’d own the most valuable object in the world. Just because your situation isn’t the best relative to your contemporaries doesn’t mean it isn’t amazing relative to the lives most people lived throughout human history. Yes, the world is far from perfect but it also never will be. One primary thing that keeps holding the world back is that humans just won’t give up on force.

Force is a corrupting element regardless if the force is used in socialism or capitalism, or by governments or individuals. Pollution is a simple example of a form of force that’s often hard to control. Part of the cost of legitimate business is containing pollution to one’s own property. Letting pollution go to the property of others, including the air above the property and the water below it, is force; it is forced pollution socialism. Sometimes the force is just annoying like in the case of
music pollution. Other times the force is undetectable since pollution is often diluted. But it is all force nonetheless.

Defining what exactly constitutes pollution can be rather subjective. Is exhaling a form of pollution? We exhale carbon dioxide which is considered a greenhouse gas. If we totally contained the carbon dioxide we exhale, then many people would eventually be unable to afford space in which to store it. Therefore, many people would eventually use up all their breathable air and die. At what point does anti-pollution become genocidal or suicidal? As I explained earlier, when borders are taken too far death is the result. So you know you’ve taken pollution laws too far when it starts killing yourself or others.

An average human breathes about nine million cubic feet of air in a lifetime. Exhaled air is about four percent carbon dioxide. That translates into about three hundred and sixty thousand cubic feet of carbon dioxide produced by each person in a lifetime by just breathing. In a given year, just breathing, humans worldwide exhale seven percent of the carbon dioxide humans release from burning fossil fuels. That’s a lot. Fortunately though, exhaling carbon dioxide is generally not considered pollution, because it is part of the pre-existing carbon cycle. The carbon dioxide that humans exhale comes from food, which ultimately comes from plants—even meat ultimately comes from plants. Conversely, burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide
that was previously locked in the ground and was not in the carbon cycle.

Energy is the core of the economy. And even though most energy in the world still adds carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, the current benefits still way outweigh the potential pollution drawbacks. If the world stopped using fossil fuels today, the result would be little energy and thus a vastly shrunken economy and vastly shrunken standard of living. The world would quickly become more hellish than even the most apocalyptic global warming predictions. It wouldn’t be long before murderous mobs got the energy up and running again. The same basic thing would happen if the whole world became socialist and completely abandoned capitalism today. The pricing system would cease to function and inefficiency and scarcity would quickly follow. Murderous mobs would eventually form and be sent to gulags until the mobs became bigger than the government.

Voluntary capitalism and voluntary socialism are no problem because they can actually work due to the feedback of economic calculation. Add force in any form and capitalism and socialism suffer from inaccurate economic calculation. The Golden Rule is the essential formula for making things work sustainably in human society. Don't do to others as you would not have them do unto you. Don't rob people if you don't want to be robbed. Don't kill people if you don't want to be killed. In other words, “no initiation of force.” By initiating force
you become subject to it due to the inevitability of defensive actions by others. Since people too often don’t have the discipline to interact by the Golden Rule, people tend to revert to giving power to an attempted monopoly on the initiation of force: government. But government doesn't really stop initiated force; it instead assures that certain kinds of initiated force are made lawful and unavoidable.

Historically, capitalism has worked well for conscientious people. Capitalism has been more of a crapshoot for lower conscientious people though. That plays into why the left favors government forced income redistribution (socialism) to achieve homogeneity by inclusion.

High openness people start companies (novelty) but high conscientiousness people run them (stability). While some of the richest people are liberal due to creative entrepreneurial tendencies favoring large financial rewards, the conservatives don't favor wealth redistribution nearly as much since conscientious people as a whole tend to have more money and work harder for it. In any organization, the most conscientious people do the bulk of the work.

In America, statistically there are only three things a person has to be conscientious enough to do to stay out of poverty: one, graduate from high school; two, get married before having children; three, get and keep a full-time job. The bar for conscientiousness, even in the flawed government force filled capitalist system of
present day America, is not very high for those who want to live a life vastly better than almost all people who have ever lived on earth.

**Artists Imagine**

If you want a story to justify what you want to believe, look to artists. Artists consist of writers, actors, musicians, painters, sculptors, designers, academics, politicians—and even most journalists are artists since their desire for a good story is often greater than their ability to maintain accuracy. Artists are great at inventing meaning out of little, or even nothing. However, artists are usually quite bad at figuring out the truth. Artists tend to live in bubbles of imagined meaning. In other words, their rationality tends to be merely in their own imagination. I’m someone who is both a fan of the arts and maker of art. But I also know that art is mostly a bunch of subjective nonsense. Art is most often a window into a bubble (subjectivity) not objectivity. Artists tend to be goal oriented rather than system oriented. Artists can imagine goals, but not systems to get there. Few artists know anything about a subject like economics or engineering. And even when artists try to study such subjects they tend to twist them.

I went to college for architecture, which is a blend of art and engineering. A professor I had in college had a great example of how artists think versus engineers. Say you are constructing a building and you need a large steel beam to support the structure. A good engineer
will of course do calculations to make sure the beam can handle the load without any problems for as long as the building stands. An artist will instead favor giving the beam the meaning of strength instead of actual strength—or an artist might dismiss the need for strength altogether in favor of aesthetics. So an artist might say something like, “Paint the beam red because red is a strong color,” or, “Eliminate that beam, it ruins the openness of the space.”

Simple conversations can reveal quite quickly how much of an artist or an engineer a person is. For one, artists often feign certainty about things that no one knows for certain. Engineers are only certain when something has been tested and confirmed repeatedly. For that reason, the political realm leans much more to the artist side than engineering. On the other hand, the science realm attracts more engineering-minded people. But science is still filled with plenty of artist-minded people. And politicians like to call on artist-minded scientists to support their own artist thinking about the world. In general, engineers don’t believe their own lies like artists do. That makes artists more persuasive. But while artists excel at persuasion they don’t excel at execution. Artists deal in the market of wet noodles painted red presented as strong beams.

I learned a lesson about the importance of function over aesthetics when I was twelve years old. Some friends of mine took summer enrichment classes and were planning on taking them again. The summer
enrichment program ran alongside the summer school program. The classes ran in two semesters, each semester consisted of two weeks. One of the classes my friends took was a model rocket class. That intrigued me. I wanted to take the model rocket class. So I had my parents sign me up for summer enrichment classes.

The beginner’s model rocket class didn’t offer much room for creativity. I learned the basics and made a few basic rockets. The rockets I made looked cool and flew well. The next semester I was able to take the advance model rocket class. In that class, we built bigger rockets and had more freedom to be creative. For the final rocket build, I built a replica of the space shuttle. It looked great. It had the two white solid rocket boosters, the big red external tank, and the shuttle orbiter (spaceplane), which I made out of paper. The shuttle orbiter looked just like the real thing, just a bit more angular rather than round. I made the shuttle orbiter so it would actually glide. And I made a mechanism so the shuttle orbiter would separate from the rocket when it reached peak height. I wanted the shuttle orbiter to glide back down to the ground while the boosters came back down by parachute.

The instructor had been teaching the rocket class for many years and no students ever tried to make a replica of the space shuttle. The instructor thought the rocket needed some fins for stability. But my logic was that the fins on the shuttle orbiter must be all the fins needed since it works on the real shuttle. Plus, fins would have
ruined the cool look. And my rocket was by far the coolest looking one in the class.

The instructor let me launch the rocket on launch day. But the instructor made the class stay farther back than usual. That was a somewhat wise move, because the launch went a lot like the final Challenger launch. The rocket made it about ten feet into the air and then traveled horizontally over part of the class. The rocket slammed into the ground. When the second round ignited to deploy the parachute, the rocket was already on the ground. The wading in the rocket was dislodged from position due to the crash and so it was inadequate to prevent the rocket from catching fire.

I’ve ever since made it a point to always pay attention to the engineering side of things before the aesthetics. I’m an artist who has spent his life trying to be an artist second rather than first. I later dropped out of architecture school precisely because my instructors were more artists than engineers. They could rarely answer my engineering questions, which did not inspire confidence in the quality of my education. They were more fit for teaching art than architecture. Most artists in the realm of art are great; outside the realm of art though, they easily become menaces. Fortunately, artists don’t usually take over things where sound engineering is crucial, like nuclear power plants. But through the force of government, artist-minded people too often do impose their artistic nonsense in realms
requiring engineering minds; the results are various levels of chaos and disaster.

One thing that often annoys me (sparks forgiveness opportunities) about the *A Course in Miracles* community is that it attracts a lot of artist-minded people. And a lot of the *Course’s* popularizers are artist-minded. That actually turns off engineering-minded people. Despite being a blatant artist, I’ve purposefully tried to give *A Course in Miracles* the engineering treatment with the things I do. That was especially the point of *The Universe Is Virtual*.

Following the formula of artist versus engineer, some Course students dwell on the goal of the Course while neglecting the system of practicing uncompromising forgiveness. Other Course students dwell on the system of practicing uncompromising forgiveness while deemphasizing the goal. I personally dwell on the system more than the goal. I like practicing true forgiveness because it is a good, practical system; if it actually eventually leads to the oneness of heaven, all the better.

Since creativity is a balance of intelligence and aesthetics, it is difficult for artists to consistently find that balance. For artists, the balance is most often skewed way more to aesthetics. Engineers skew to function. Think of the difference between a real chocolate factory and the one envisioned in the Roald Dahl story of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. That’s the difference between art and engineering. When art
and engineering are well combined, amazing things come into existence.

**Conspiracy Theory**

I may say artists are dreamers, but they aren’t the only ones. You don’t have to have a career in the arts to engage in the activity of inventing meaning. Everyone does it to some extent. It is just that artists tend to take it to a whole other level. Conspiracy theories are a common example of inventing meaning. And most people believe in at least a few conspiracy theories. A lot of conspiracy theories are invented by artist-minded people, but others often adopt such theories as their own. Some conspiracy theories end up being true. For instance, the Gulf of Tonkin incident was a false flag used to start the Vietnam War. That was theory for a long time but ended up being true. Nonetheless, completely true conspiracy theories are relatively rare.

As I mentioned earlier in the book, a popular conspiracy theory about *A Course in Miracles* is that it was a product of the CIA’s MKUltra mind control program. Firsthand accounts debunk the theory. But I can easily forgive uninformed people who come to such faulty conclusions. The main source of the conspiracy theory was the fact that Bill Thetford worked many years on the Personality Assessment System (PAS). PAS was funded by the CIA.

When I think about it, with enough “level confusion,” *A Course in Miracles* could be used as a government
mind control tool. The Course could be twisted to support a one world socialist government. The Course could be twisted to make people docile and unwilling to stand up to a tyrannical government. Nonetheless, a lot of things could be twisted to support that kind of stuff. Guilt projection is the name of the game in this universe. So a common formula for conspiracy theories is a simple cause and effect that paints someone or some group as guilty. That’s why the A Course in Miracles MKUltra conspiracy isn’t spread by those who support the Course, only those who oppose it.

Guilt projection conspiracy theories are popular in the global warming debate. Both sides in the global warming debate have had a tendency to accuse the opposition of being part of a conspiracy. Global warming is seen by some as an overhyped threat being used as an excuse to increase government power and perhaps even form a one world socialist government. Conversely, dismissal and downplaying of global warming is seen by some as a conspiracy funded by the fossil fuel industry. And there are a lot of nuanced details to different variations of those two main conspiracy theories.

In 2015, seven U.S. academics were investigated by U.S. Representative Grijalva (Democrat-Arizona) who was the ranking member of the House of Representatives Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Grijalva was looking to find funding from the fossil fuel industry in scientists who came to conclusions different from what he wanted to believe. Instead, all
Grijalva found was that honest science can come to
different conclusion than what he wants to believe.
Some people just have the integrity to stick with what
they see in the data instead of succumbing to peer-
pressured groupthink. Criticism from the American
Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical
Union eventually caused Grijalva to abandon the witch
hunt (guilt projection hunt).

Much of what is imagined as conspiracy is simply
human subjectivity. People have subjective agendas,
bias, and preferences. No coordinated conspiracy is
required for people with similar agendas, biases, and
preferences to come together or to similar conclusions.

Sometimes conspiracy theories oversimplify and other
times overcomplicate. The overcomplicated conspiracy
theories are often a sign of trying to remedy cognitive
dissonance. Either way, conspiracy theories don’t
necessarily have anything to do with the truth. The truth
is often something never even considered in any theory.

**Half Opinions**

With everything there is a ratio of cost to benefit; that
is the nature of entropy in this universe. Therefore, any
valid opinion must factor in both cost and benefit.
Otherwise, it is only a half opinion. For example, in my
opinion, *A Course in Miracles* is for me the spirituality
with the best cost to benefit ratio that I’ve found. The
benefit of *A Course in Miracles* is a more peaceful mind
with the added potential benefit of enlightenment;
while the cost is simply giving up guilt projection by practicing uncompromising forgiveness the best I can. If I only had a half opinion about *A Course in Miracles*, I’d likely either have dismissed it as too costly to my ego or I’d tout the Course’s benefits without paying the cost of actually practicing true forgiveness.

The world is full of half opinions. If your opinion doesn’t have a good and accurate cost to benefit ratio, it is a letter to Santa Claus at best and a suicide note at worst; at best you are wishing for something essentially impossible and at worst you are asking for something that will cost you your life. And that’s why politics is such a mess; it’s a bunch of people trying to force their half opinions on other people using the barrel of a government gun. And to further confuse things, people tend to only see the impotence of their opponents’ half opinions while being blind to their own.

Yet, even when people have full opinions, the opinions aren’t necessarily accurate. Most opinions are missing out on many variables and are therefore too simplistic to be accurate or even believable. For that reason, good opinions also come with alternatives. Any good opinion comes with several next best plans. With multiple plans, the plans can be compared to see which has the best cost to benefit ratio.

However, even then objectivity still isn’t anywhere near guaranteed; you still have what may be a purely subjective opinion, albeit one backed up by better reasoning. The fact is, what people deem beneficial is
subjective and so is price; that’s why, as I mentioned already, the free market system is so important and why socialism always fails without enough of a market to calculate accurate prices and demand. Trial and error is the path to finding something objective rather than subjective. Markets are trial and error systems; lots of little failures lead to discovering what works. Governments do the opposite and try to impose one size fits all half opinions that either cost too much or give too little benefit.

Peer Pressure Guilt

We are all inherently innocent since the universe is an illusion. Heaven wasn’t destroyed and the things we do in the illusion aren’t real. Yet, even in the illusion it isn’t very hard to maintain innocence on the level of form in human society. All you have to do is follow the Golden Rule and not initiate force. Unfortunately, the Golden Rule standard isn’t always followed in society. In fact, it is common for people to actually project guilt on others for not participating in the initiation of force. A prime example of this is the “voting for government guilt trip.”

It is very rare for people to have an opportunity to vote against the initiation of force. Most voting is just voting for different variations of the initiation of force. I personally don't vote. Not because “it's pointless,” or “rigged,” or because “I don't care,” but because voting is democratic slavery; it's a culturally conditioned ruse. Voting is an attempt at forcefully enslaving my neighbor
to my own preferences, or often more accurately the preferences of my preferred masters (of which I personally prefer none). No one has that right, even if people imagine they do thanks to conditioning. The majority cannot give consent on behalf of an individual; doing so is a recipe for atrocity. We should strive for all human interaction to be voluntary, not forced.

Yet, even ignoring the ethical argument against voting, not voting still is nothing to project guilt over or be guilty over. Voting is statistically insignificant almost always. The larger the sample size, the less important any vote is since everything tends to average out. That’s especially true when the number of choices is very limited. If voting results are so close to 50/50 that voting would have mattered, then why should you get to be the tyrant that decides for the losing fifty percent? Or, if there are many choices, you could be the tyrant deciding against an even larger percentage of people. I’m not saying voting is bad if you voluntarily accept it and others voluntarily accept it too. I’m just saying it’s nothing I believe in. I just happened to have been born in a place where people were conditioned to believe in voting as something not only legitimate but also desirable.

There are lots of forms of peer pressure guilt; it is the nature of special relationships. The group pressures people to conform to the group or be deemed guilty and so ostracized. If society drew the line of peer pressure guilt at conforming to the Golden Rule, we wouldn’t have many peer pressure guilt issues. But that is not the
current case. Although you can’t stop other people from engaging in peer pressure guilt, you can at least not partake in it yourself. If you have to bully people who are otherwise living by the Golden Rule into agreeing with your subjectivity, the problem is on your end not the other end. Change yourself, don’t worry about others.

**Your Lane**

In life, we all carve out some kind of a safe lane for ourselves. Sometimes that lane is the result of an innate talent; other times that lane is the result of years of practice and experience. Lanes are safe, but they also are often bubbles. Don’t stay in your lane if don’t want to. When you leave your lane you can start to better notice your blind spots. And once you start to see blind spots you can fill them in.

When people leave their lane they tend to seem like idiots for awhile. And that’s because they are. I leave my lane all the time. I try to go though my idiot phase in private, but that doesn’t always work. For example, am I really qualified to talk about economics, or psychology, or quantum physics, or even *A Course in Miracles*? Not by any formal standards, but I do anyway. I do because I left my lane and did my homework. Leaving my lane helped me up my game, including my forgiveness game. And while I up my game, I up your game too.

The two lane changes that I most credit as greatly improving my ability to think were economics and psychology. My formal education in both those subjects
was little more than college introductory courses. But with access to books and the internet, I was able to informally educate myself. After learning the basics of psychology, my interest in psychology steered toward spirituality, which eventually led to *A Course in Miracles*. After learning the basics of economics, my interest in economics steered toward free markets, which eventually led to my great respect for the Golden Rule and advocacy of voluntary human interaction free of force.

Incidentally, during my foray into economics, I bought a used copy of the book *Human Action* by Austrian economist Ludwig Von Mises; the book ended up being a first edition from 1949. The book is missing its dust jacket, there are some scuffs on the edges of the cover, and there is some browning of the pages. But other than those things, it is in good shape. Online, copies in similar condition can fetch as much as $2000. So that is by far my most valuable book in terms of monetary value. But the book also ended up being a book valuable to expanding my thinking. Needless to say, since realizing the value of my copy of *Human Action*, I have not reread it; it is safely bagged and hidden.

I’m a big supporter of leaving lanes. However, what you don’t want to do is leave your lane and not learn anything new. That’s a recipe for failure. That’s something a lot of artist-minded people do. Often when artist-minded people leave their lane they don’t learn anything new but instead just make up a story about
why they are right. When you leave your lane you often find that there are numerous lanes you need to explore. Lanes are bubbles. And if you expand your lanes you expand your bubble so it isn’t so tiny. With an expanded bubble, you can recognize important ingredients missing from other people’s bubbles and so you become immune to their limited thinking. Short of waking up from the dream, bubbles are inescapable. This universe is itself a bubble. But at least if you have a bigger bubble you can save yourself from a lot of grief and frustration. And if you forgive, bubble expansion tends to follow naturally because forgiveness opens the mind.

Just think, would this book exist if I didn’t leave my lane all the time? Maybe you wish I’d write books that are one hundred percent about *A Course in Miracles* and stay in that lane. Maybe you wish I’d write books that instead stay completely out of the *A Course in Miracles* lane. Maybe you wish I’d stick to comic books instead of also making books of pure text. There are lots of lanes I could stick to, but that’s just not going to happen.

**Woke Identitarianism**

In college, I was working on a minor degree in literary theory. I eventually abandoned that minor degree though. The classes required for the literary theory minor were not being offered frequently enough for my minor degree to complete at the same time as my major degree. Nonetheless, in my pursuit of that minor degree I read through much of the source material that has
developed into the present day political religion that I call woke identitarianism. There are other umbrella names for it like PC leftism, critical social justice, and intersectionality, but I prefer the term woke identitarianism.

You’ve probably heard things like, language is violence, science is sexist, practicing yoga is cultural appropriation, racism is systemic, silence is violence, the language of A Course in Miracles is sexist—and heard terms like, micro-aggressions, rape culture, fat shaming, safe spaces, white privilege, colonial violence, and body positivity. All such things come from the religion of woke identitarianism.

As I mentioned earlier in this book when talking about heritage, identitarianism is politics based on social identity (identity politics). To specifically get “woke” identitarianism out of plain identitarianism though requires two additional major ingredients: intersectionality and critical race theory.

Critical race theory examines society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race, law, and power. While intersectionality is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability as they apply to a given individual or group. Such categories are presumed to create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Combine identitarianism, intersectionality, and critical race theory and you’ve got the modern day religion of
woke identitarianism. Woke identitarianism sorts people into groups of special victimizers (guilty) and special victims (innocent) based on social categorizations. People are not treated as individuals but as special group members. Woke identitarianism is the antithesis of the Martin Luther King doctrine of judging people by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin—or any other superficial group trait. Woke identitarianism is thus anti-Enlightenment (as in the philosophical movement the Age of Enlightenment) and replaces science, reason, and classical liberal ethics with critical authoritarianism.

Woke identitarianism is something made by and adopted by artist-minded people rather than engineering-minded people. All it takes is an engineering-minded person doing a little research into woke identitarianism to quickly conclude that it is a system designed to justify subjectivity in a game that can never be won by objectivity. In other words, it’s a rigged game; it is not designed to end discriminatory power hierarchies but instead to fool and bully people into rearranging the hierarchies.

The more your social categorizations are seen as higher in the power hierarchy, especially historically, the more you are deemed a guilty special victimizer by woke identitarianism. And the more you are deemed guilty, the less incentive you have to even try to play the game. The only incentive to play is to fit in with the mob and avoid consequences—like being ostracized. In other
words, the only incentive to play is to appease bullies (authoritarians).

As a straight male, I’m automatically a devil incarnate in the religion of woke identitarianism. Add white to the mix and I become a super devil. The only thing I’m lacking is wealth, which would make me a king of devils. All that is offered by the woke identitarians to a person like me is a dead end of self-flagellation and endless restitution (slavery). I’d have to be a total moron (total artist) to ever get suckered into such nonsense. As a white, straight male, there is nothing I can do that won’t continue to make me guilty by categorical association. White, straight males are seen as the worst devils in the religion of woke identitarianism because they are the ones who dominated in the construction of the present day world—you know, the world where most people have never had it so good in all of recorded history. Therefore, it is presumed that everything is designed to favor the social characteristics of white, straight males. Not that there isn’t some truth to that idea, especially in the past. But that is just the nature of being successful/winning in the game of human power dynamics.

The same would be the case with any successful group, including woke identitarians. But woke identitarians won’t ever really succeed since their system is inherently a losing system. People who adopt winning systems can’t help but succeed because winning systems are winning strategies. Take a bunch of people
from different social categorizations, have some use losing life strategies and some winning life strategies and you’ll see the strategy is what makes the big difference, not the social categorizations.

The end game of woke identitarianism, as is the case with all identitarianism, is voluntary ethnostates at best and gas chambers and gulags at worst. The ego is tricky. We live in a world where subjectivity allows people to advocate the very things they purport to advocate against. Because when you combine ego and subjectivity, guilt projection is the name of the game, not objectivity. Woke identitarianism is a religion of guilt, fear, and unforgiveness that keeps the perceived sins of the past real. In that sense, not only is woke identitarianism anti-Enlightenment, it is anti-\textit{A Course in Miracles}. Yet despite that fact, I’ve encountered plenty of people that simultaneously support woke identitarianism and also claim to practice and teach \textit{A Course in Miracles}. Are you one of those people unwittingly advocating that which you’ve never even researched and therefore don’t even understand? No need to do detailed research if you reject such a thing, but if you accept it and don’t do your research you are likely a dupe.

An important tenet of woke identitarianism is the idea that society can be transformed by changing and controlling language. So, for instance, it is presumed that sexism could be remedied by making language gender neutral. The fact that \textit{A Course in Miracles} doesn’t
concern itself with gender neutral language makes it blasphemy in the religion of woke identitarianism. Therefore, you must ask yourself, “Was the author of the Course clueless, or is woke identitarianism mistaken in its belief in the magical power of words to change so-called reality?” My money is on the idea that language isn’t anywhere near as important as the woke identitarians insist. And, in fact, I’d venture to say forgiving of language is an introductory step in the path of true forgiveness. Fail that and you won’t get very far.

As the Course says: “Strictly speaking, words play no part at all in healing. The motivating factor is prayer, or asking. What you ask for you receive. But this refers to the prayer of the heart, not to the words you use in praying. Sometimes the words and the prayer are contradictory; sometimes they agree. It does not matter. God does not understand words, for they were made by separated minds to keep them in the illusion of separation ... words are but symbols of symbols. They are thus twice removed from reality.” (M-12.1)

The seeds of woke identitarianism were planted incrementally. You can go all the way back to W.E.B. Du Bois to find early critical race theory. And you can go back to Karl Marx to find a critique of society based on power relations. Marx’s critique of society and culture, which attempted to expose and challenge power structures, developed into what became known as “critical theory.” And then critical theory eventually
evolved (or devolved) into postmodern critical theory, which includes critical race theory.

The umbrella term of postmodernism encompasses the many ingredients that spawned woke identitarianism. Postmodernism has been the dominant trend in academia for around a half a century. And a major tenet of postmodernism is the rejection of the concept of objectivity.

Two people of particular importance that came out of early postmodernism were French academics Foucault and Derrida. Foucault explored the relationship between power and knowledge, and how both are used as a form of social control through societal institutions. And Derrida devised deconstruction theory, which established the very framework that made formulating woke identitarianism possible.

I studied and read the postmodernists. I took college classes on them and got A's. But even though I did find some useful grains in the postmodernists that even resonate with *A Course in Miracles* and nonduality, I'm no fan of postmodernism (although I do like Baudrillard). One example of postmodern-compatible-thought in *A Course in Miracles* is the idea that there is no hierarchy of illusions. That's nice to know. But, of course, in practice you are able to read this e-book right now because people sorted out hierarchies of illusion. Another example of a link between postmodernism and *A Course in Miracles* is in how the work of Derrida and others gets deep into the issues surrounding the first law
of chaos: unlimited interpretations/perspectives. The problem with Derrida's analysis though is that, in practice, there are a limited number of interpretations of the world that are at least “true enough.” And knowing those “true enough” interpretations clearly helps human survival and progress.

In many ways, postmodernism and its child of woke identitarianism, are examples of what happens when you confuse levels in *A Course in Miracles*. When you confuse levels, you tend to try to change the world instead of your mind about the world and so you try to make illusion into oneness. That's why, despite Marxism's history of catastrophic failures in implementation, postmodernism has only doubled down to create a kind of new Marxism. Woke identitarianism is new Marxism in the sense that it uses intersectionality to go beyond Marx’s single social category theory of rich versus poor. Woke identitarianism is expanded to include every possible social category. Postmodernism revitalized Marxism by turning everything into power struggles between oppressed and oppressor rather than just rich and poor. As a result, we now have the postmodern new Marxism of woke identitarianism, which has instigated an endless victims and victimizers game of oppressed and oppressor. And that game is being exploited for objectives of political power.

After the foundations of woke identitarianism were established with the rise of postmodernism, a whole
bunch of academics over many decades worked out the details. Some important contributors were people like academic Peggy McIntosh who introduced the concept of “white privilege” in the late eighties. You also had people like academic Kimberlé Crenshaw who introduced the theory of “intersectionality” in 1989 with her paper, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” (Incidentally, my grandmother went to the same high school as Crenshaw.) You had people like academic Patricia Hill Collins who developed the matrix of domination/oppression to explain the workings of intersectionality. You had people like academic Bell Hooks (Gloria Watkins) who made contributions such as the book, *Teaching to Transgress* in 1994. You had people like academic Megan Boler who formulated “a pedagogy of discomfort,” which claimed that a major goal of education should be to overcome privilege. And you had, in recent history, people like Robin DiAngelo who popularized the concept of *White Fragility*.

Woke identitarianism is what you get when you have a bunch of artist-minded academics in the humanities departments of higher education cross referencing each other to make a self-serving, confirmation-bias-fueled social conspiracy theory of internally consistent, criticism-proof sophistry. Woke identitarianism is all critique but no critical thinking. In fact, woke identitarianism is opposed to critical thinking since
critical thinking aims for objectivity. That fact is something that makes woke identitarianism criticism proof—at least according to its own subjective thinking. Critical logic directed against woke identitarianism is dismissed by woke identitarians as white supremacist male colonial oppressor thinking. Consequently, woke identitarianism seeks to deconstruct everything except for itself and in doing so assigns itself the privilege of being critique-proof; in that sense, it survives on being anti “freedom of speech that is critical of it.” Because speech critical of woke identitarianism must, by its nature, aim for objectivity over subjectivity.

Woke identitarianism is what happens when you let artists invent meaning and present it as truth. Woke identitarianism has all the authenticity of the nuclear power plant made by the artists writing and drawing for the cartoon “The Simpsons.” That nuclear power plant resembles a real one but would be unworkable at best and a disaster at worst if constructed in so-called real life. Unfortunately, more and more people are trying to construct woke identitarianism in so-called real life. And I liken it to a nuclear power plant designed and run by artists.

If interested, I recommend looking up “The Grievance Studies Affair,” which was a project undertaken from 2017 to 2018 by a team of three authors—James A. Lindsay, Peter Boghossian, and Helen Pluckrose. The objective was to highlight what the authors regarded as poor scholarship in several academic fields. They
submitted fake scholarly papers to see if they could get them published. In the end, many of the submissions were published; one even won an award. Essentially, it was an engineering-minded experiment used to expose the artist-minded world of woke identitarianism.

**Critical Social Justice**

Practitioners and evangelizers of woke identitarianism have become known as social justice warriors. Social justice sounds good since it entail fairness and equality. But different people have different subjective ideas about what justice entails. For instance, to me justice has nothing to do with grievances based on social categorizations. To me justice is simply the Golden Rule. That’s the closest you’ll get to anything resembling an objective idea of justice in this world. To me, treating people as groups instead of individuals is the antithesis of justice.

Woke identitarians have their own subjective idea of what social justice entails. What woke identitarians mean by social justice is critical social justice. Critical social justice is about equity not equality; it is about equality of outcome and not simply equality of opportunity. The term social justice is very much a Trojan horse. Many who support the positive sounding idea of social justice only have a half opinion about it and so don’t realize they are supporting a tyrannical authoritarian ideology. Equality of outcome is not something most people would voluntary accept. And
since most people wouldn’t voluntarily accept equity, implementation would require authoritarian tyranny.

The social justice movement pulls people in by exploiting empathy and guilt and by filling a void of meaning. Furthermore, since critical social justice pushes equity through the religion of woke identitarianism, it promises both revenge and penance. In that sense, woke identitarianism is really a religion of forgiveness to destroy; it makes sin real and then offers penance that seeks revenge by subjugating the sinner and perpetuating the proposed reality of the sin. We are all ultimately guilty in the religion of woke identitarianism. Because we are all guilty oppressors to someone in some way in the social hierarchy. No pure motives are possible.

Unlike the simplicity of the voluntaryism of the Golden Rule, woke identitarianism eliminates the possibility of a common ground of relative objectivity. Without that common ground, society crumbles. You can’t have a functioning society of special social groups fighting over who are the most special victims and who are the most special victimizers—all in the name of equity. In that sense, critical social justice is a road to ruin; it rewards failure and punishes success. So, unless you want to live in a world where artist-minded authoritarians build and run nuclear power plants, you want the Golden Rule not social justice. And furthermore, you don’t want human justice at all; you want the justice of God.
“Pray for God's justice, and do not confuse His mercy with your own insanity. Perception can make whatever picture the mind desires to see. Remember this. In this lies either Heaven or hell, as you elect. God's justice points to Heaven just because it is entirely impartial. It accepts all evidence that is brought before it, omitting nothing and assessing nothing as separate and apart from all the rest. From this one standpoint does it judge, and this alone. Here all attack and condemnation becomes meaningless and indefensible. Perception rests, the mind is still, and light returns again. Vision is now restored. What had been lost has now been found. The peace of God descends on all the world, and we can see. And we can see!” (M-19.5)

**Critical Social Media**

Thanks to social media, subjectivity is more blatant than ever. Whereas in the past we had limited exposure to the subjective half opinions of friends, family, celebrities, politicians, and strangers, we can now scroll through an essentially endless stream of subjective half opinions. The formula of content creation on social media is: produce and critique. And by produce and critique I mean produce things like photos and critique using subjective half opinions that deconstruct and discriminate.

I don’t know what the exact ratio is but there is a lot more critiquing going on in the realm of social media than any other kind of content. Most content production
in the social media sphere is simply production of critique. The simplest form of critique comes from choosing who to friend and follow versus not friend, not follow, and block. On top of that, another simple form of critique comes from the like and dislike buttons. Then on top of that, comments add more sophisticated critique. And that is all on top of the fact that often the materials being critiqued with likes, dislikes, and comments are also forms of critique.

Say someone posts about reading a book and liking it; that is a form of critique. Some people who see the post will then like, dislike, or ignore that post. Others will comment and say, “I agree” or “I disagree.” And then people will critique the comments with likes, dislikes, and comment on the comments. In that sense, social media is a cacophony of critique. Sure, there is some legitimate content that isn’t critique that is produced and shared using social media, but most social media activity is critique. The social media companies themselves even critique by removing, blocking, suspending, throttling and promoting certain content.

After writing the first draft of this book in early 2020, I dropped off of social media and stopped using it. My accounts are currently dormant. Will I ever go back? I don’t know. Once I was able to articulate to myself what social media is, I decided to walk away. I decided I’d rather spend my time on creation rather than incessant critique. Plus, the fact that social media sites are policing speech these days, especially algorithmically, makes
social media very unappealing to me. Censorship of thought is where I draw the line. The few people I ever unfriended or unfollowed on social media were all people who censored me—such as by deleting a reasonable comment I made, instead of addressing it.

The problem is not that all critique on social media is negative or that there is no legitimate creative content on social media. The problem is that, regardless, social media is a constant war against entropy. Social media entropy comes in the form of negative criticism and also obscurity (no eyeballs viewing posts). Consequently, much of the activity on social media is propping up subjective half opinions that people like with positivity in order to combat negativity and obscurity. To me it’s a pointless, losing battle. It’s annoying enough that we all have to deal with physical entropy in this universe. Spare me human-fabricated social media information entropy.

It’s difficult to build things but relatively easy to destroy or ignore things. And the same is true on social media. Just think, is it easier to construct a building or burn it down? Is it easier to construct a building or never construct a building at all? Is it easier to maintain a building or leave it fall into disrepair?

On social media, positive reinforcement helps sustain content against the entropic wrecking ball of negative critique and against obscurity. However, much of what people try to protect on social media is itself just critique. So people protect critiques they like from ones
they don’t. That’s certainly the standard procedure when it comes to political content on social media.

Since social media is mostly the activity of engaging in critique and submitting things for critique, it has, in essence, produced a society of amateur critics. Although people don’t write out and express all their critiques on social media, especially the negative ones, people do nonetheless steadily critique in their own minds while using social media—otherwise those like buttons would never be used. Unfortunately, critique is not at all the same as critical thinking. Critical thinking is an engineering-minded approach to thinking that aims for objectivity. Critique however is subjective; it is an artist-minded approach that at best aims for the illusion of objectivity.

Incidentally, critique is what gave us critical theory, which in turn gave us critical race theory, which in turn gave us critical social justice. So, as should come as no surprise, the critique quality of social media has made it an ideal conduit for the spread of woke identitarian critical social justice. Social media is high-tech prayer for woke identitarians where they pray to the deities of discourse. Critical social justice is social-media-friendly because it is pure critique and so destructive (deconstructive) rather than productive; in other words, it is easy. For instance, it’s difficult to build and sustain a successful business but relatively easy to try to figuratively burn down a business by unleashing a cancel culture mob on it through social media. Although cancel
Culture mobs don’t always work in destroying their targets, they do work in the sense that their attempts at destruction create a chilling effect. Consequently, the threat of cancel culture mobs works to bully people and businesses into paying lip service to the demands of woke identitarians. Paying lip service though can also be detrimental since those opposed to critical social justice can assemble their own cancel mobs in retaliation. Therefore, there is an ever-present danger of “get woke, go broke” as well as “don’t get woke, go broke” depending on the customer base. That’s what happens when people judge people and businesses by their ideological lip service to equity rather than the actual quality of their products or services.

Lip service to equity is a really bad metric compared to competence, ability, and quality; especially since equity is a destructive rather than productive goal. If you find yourself on the losing side of something, critique the failure not the success. That’s how you turn failure into success. Otherwise, you are just trying to destroy success (increase entropy) and turn the successes of others into failure. That is what cancel culture mobs do. If the goal is failure, you’ll probably succeed since failure is easy. In that sense, woke identitarian critical social justice is doomed to fail even when it succeeds—its objectives are the destruction of success rather than the fixing of failure. That makes it a “change the world instead of myself” approach; or more specifically, a “destroy my competition rather than outcompete my
competition” approach. It’s relatively easy to forgive woke identitarianism when you realize it is doomed to fail. But still, the path of destruction that woke identitarianism will inevitably leave on its path to failure will be a forgiveness smorgasbord for lots of people—as it already has been.

If I never left my lane and did the homework to understand woke identitarianism, I might have fallen for it and gotten suckered into playing its game of unforgiveness. Also, I might not have realized that woke identitarianism is doomed to fail. If I believed woke identitarianism could work, whether I was for it or against it, it’d be more real to me. That’s why, at least for me, learning about things makes forgiveness easier. The closer you get to the truth about illusions the more you see illusions as illusions.

With that fact in mind, it is easy to realize that the constructive use of social media, and everything else, is forgiveness. And sometimes forgiveness just means recognizing a battleground as a battleground and so leaving it.

“There is no safety in a battleground. You can look down on it in safety from above and not be touched. But from within it you can find no safety.”

(T-23.III.6:5)

**Unspecial Privilege**

In societies, the mob tends to rule; especially in democratic societies. That’s because societies tend to
adapt to the preferences of the majority, and with that comes majority privilege. For example, in the United States, Sunday is the day that tends to have the least economic activity. That’s because in much of the Christian world Sunday has been the Sabbath for a long time. But that’s not true in all religions nor does it matter at all for the non-religious. If you practice a religion in the United States where Sunday isn’t the Sabbath, you lack that minor privilege you’d get by being more in the majority.

In general, the more similar you are to the majority in any given society, the more privileges you tend to have. For the sake of efficiency, that’s just how things are in societies. There is a caveat though. A society has to be constructive rather than self-destructive for majority privilege to be valid and desirable. That’s because, like most things, privilege is tied to the Golden Rule. Violating the Golden Rule is self-destructive and so a society that doesn’t adhere to the Golden Rule is also self-destructive. Technically, no societies strictly adhere to the Golden Rule, but the societies that survive at least adhere to the Golden Rule enough to be sustainable.

There is inherent privilege to many things in society. Something as trivial as having an average shoe size is usually a privilege. In a constructive society, an average shoe size means more shoes are produced in your size. Being born wealthy is usually a privilege. Being in the racial majority is usually a privilege. Having good parents instead of dirtball parents is usually a privilege. Just
being raised to talk the same language and with the same accent as the majority is usually a privilege. For men, being tall and athletic is usually a privilege. For women, having proportions in tune with the Golden Ratio is usually a privilege. Being bilingual is usually a privilege. Knowing the logic of the Golden Rule is a privilege.

Overall, you may be able to notice that there is a trend in that most privilege starts with parents, whether by nature or nurture. So, if you are mad about lacking in certain privileges, complain to your parents first. But remember that, on a deeper level, you chose them, so ask yourself, “why?” You are ultimately responsible for your forgiveness classroom. Seeing yourself as a victim is failing to use your unique forgiveness classroom.

Obviously, there are lots of different forms of privilege. And you can’t cherry pick which privilege is good or bad or just or unjust, because privilege is both subjective and ubiquitous. There are even some subtle forms of privilege so ubiquitous that you may have never even considered them. As I mentioned briefly earlier, an interesting example of a near universal privilege across all societies is extroversion. Extrovert privilege is something I’ve been well aware of most of my life. That’s because I’ve always been a big time introvert. And I probably always will be an introvert unless I suffer some sort of brain damage. Society is set up for extroverts and so extrovert privilege is rather invisible to extroverts. But it is quite noticeable to
introverts. That isn’t to say that there aren’t many advantages to introversion, but introversion is certainly not privileged in society. As an introvert, I don’t expect society to change to accommodate me; that wouldn’t be realistic or practical. I am happy though that the invention and growth of the internet has been making society a bit more introvert-friendly.

There aren’t really any solutions to privilege that are any better than the problem of privilege to begin with. That’s because solutions tend to entail equity. And, as I already mentioned, getting too far into equity starts getting into creepy, forceful realms like eugenics, re-education camps, and thought policing. The most voluntary and therefore Golden Rule solution is merely decentralization of society. It’s often most ideal to live in a society where you are most like the average. However, as I already mentioned, if you are self-destructive you don’t want to live in a society where you are the average. If the average is self-destructive and thus anti Golden Rule, you are better off being in a society where you aren’t privileged with majority status. In other words, there is privilege to being unprivileged if you are self-destructive. If you are self-destructive, then a society where you would be average would be unsustainable. So there is a societal bias against self-destruction in societies that survive and thrive. Since societal survival is a key aspect of society, less self-destructive societies are naturally privileged. For that reason, globalization and multiculturalism are recipes for
conflict since they naturally tend to bring with them self-destructive societal traits. Societies that welcome and tolerate self-destructive societal traits don’t survive.

There are many subtle cues people communicate within any society that facilitate useful discernment. That useful discernment protects against self-destruction. That’s why it’s usually not good practice to show up to a job interview looking like a disorganized slob. You instead want to communicate reliability, competence, and mental stability. In other words, you want to communicate that you are a person who is societally constructive rather than self-destructive.

The goalpost of what communicates constructive rather than self-destructive is always moving to some extent and differs between societies. For example, at one time in the United States having visible tattoos communicated that you were not interested in fitting in, which was seen as self-destructive. Consequently, there was a “no visible tattoo” privilege in society. But over time tattoos have become more societally acceptable. It has reached the point now that many people actually get tattoos to fit in rather than to stand out as rebels. Now you have to have a face tattoo or really excessive tattooing to communicate to society that you are not interested in fitting in with society. Perhaps someday face tattoos will be a great communicator of reliability, competence, and mental stability due to years of good reputation building by people who have them. But that day certainly isn’t today. You need to know the language
of society so you don’t accidentally communicate the wrong things. Knowing that language and using it for your benefit is taking privilege into your own hands.

Ideally, you want privilege. Only a fool would give up privilege, especially to the self-destructive. Therefore, it’s a losing battle to try to take away privilege from others. Sure, you can always find suckers but not everyone is a sucker. Instead, if you want privilege, do what you can to be in the constructive majority; or do what you can to be uniquely valuable. Realize that privilege is a mixed bag for everyone. Everyone has some privilege and everyone is lacking in some privilege. Adherence to the Golden Rule is the ultimate societal privilege and that is in your control. Don’t worry about not having self-destructive privilege, because that privilege doesn’t last. And keep in mind that the world was not made to be heaven and therefore you will never find it there. Equity is of the mind not form.

Reframing and Kindergarten Forgiveness

*Course in Miracles* is a course in reframing the mind to the Holy Spirit perspective. And true forgiveness is a kind of universal reframing that turns all guilt into innocence. As a general rule, if you don’t like what you are seeing, reframe it. If you don’t like what you are seeing, it is because what you are seeing is a story of guilt. You made up the story. Reframe it to a story of
innocence by using true forgiveness. The sin is not real; it is merely your perception.

Sometimes you don’t have to go as far as the big picture to reframe something. Big picture reframing, where you recognize something as ultimately illusory and forgive, always works. But it is not the only option. Realistically, not everyone is willing to reframe using the big picture. Fortunately, reframing the little picture can also work. But you have to be willing to expand your bubble by learning something new. I call this kindergarten forgiveness.

For example, I mentioned earlier how I wish I never heard about the idea of global warming. Because the bleak framing I was presented about global warming decades ago when I was a child was premature at best. A much more sane and accurate framing would have been to say, “if the theory is accurate, global warming will likely take a long time to be blatantly significant and by that time numerous technical solutions will have been invented; it will just be a matter of which solutions people choose to implement and when.” That’s how I currently frame global warming now that I’m a grown adult with a wide range of knowledge. I’m immune to small picture doomer hysteria. I recognize global warming as a risk but I also realize that it is perfectly solvable. If I insisted on a particular solution for global warming within a particular timeframe, then I’d be back in the bad framing trap. There is not one solution. Nor is there one timeframe for a solution. Conversely, if I
framed global warming as just a hoax or unreal, I’d be correct in the big picture (since the whole universe is unreal) but I’d run the risk of being wrong in the little picture.

Little picture reframing is kindergarten forgiveness and I recommend it. If you don’t have the humility to change little picture stories that you tell yourself that make you worried or mad or miserable, you aren’t serious about forgiveness; you’d rather be right than happy. I’d rather be happy than right. That’s why I rarely take sides on anything. The rightness of a side is rarely objectively confirmable. And often all sides are by themselves incomplete and so inherently wrong.

**Truth or Persuasion?**

The name of the game in human society is persuasion, not reason and evidence. So the path to success in human society is not really truth, it is persuasion. Facts matter in terms of outcomes, but not in terms of persuasion. People are always out looking to cherry-pick data to rationalize their irrational choices. So it is bad business to produce data unless there are large groups of people looking for it to rationalize their irrational choices. To do otherwise is just a form of stubborn martyrdom.

I consistently struggle with persuasion versus truth. I know enough about how human minds work that I could do a really good job telling people what they want to hear. But when your primary objective in life is to
understand the nature of reality, it is hard to give up on truth. Nonetheless, I’m happy to err on the side of persuasion if it doesn’t mean sacrificing truth.

Persuasion exploits cognitive bias. So the better you understand cognitive bias, the better you can persuade. For instance, analogies are not persuasive. Analogies can be great for teaching concepts but not persuasion. Analogies, like “the universe is a dream” or “the universe is a virtual reality,” are not persuasive but they are educational. What is persuasive though is visual imagery. As I mentioned earlier, visual imagery is an example of something that is very persuasive and one of the reasons I like making comic books. Persuasion works on the irrational side of people. Truth works on the rational side. Since people aren’t rational, it’s actually a wiser move to present truth persuasively over truthfully. The only problem is that we all tend to think we know what truth is and we don’t.

Disagreement

Subjectivity leads to disagreement. Sometimes people disagree about things that are purely subjective and so there is no right answer; like what to have for dinner. But other times, there is something resembling an objective right answer. Religion and politics are two areas where disagreement is prevalent. Religion and politics are examples of group subjectivity bubbles. Disagreements that come out of group subjectivity can lead to literal wars of bloodshed. Because if one or both sides are
stuck in a subjectivity bubble, there is no hope of finding an objective common ground to sort out the disagreement rationally with language (that’s the problem with woke identitarianism). If humans were rational, humans would be less subjective. But it takes serious effort for a human to maintain anything resembling rationality. And group subjectivity bubbles make rationality even more difficult.

People worship and vote their temperament. So, for example, you can find all kinds of formulations of A Course in Miracles that appeal to different temperaments. There is no universal personality only a universal experience. Don’t get fooled by form; it is the content that counts.

“A teacher of God is anyone who chooses to be one. His qualifications consist solely in this; somehow, somewhere he has made a deliberate choice in which he did not see his interests as apart from someone else’s. Once he has done that, his road is established and his direction is sure.” (M-1.1)

Humans invented science to sort out objectivity from subjectivity. And science often does a good enough job. But science itself gets stuck in group bubbles. A model can work without being completely correct. For instance, surveyors treat the earth as if it is flat. And a flat earth model works fine for most surveying since the curvature of the earth is insignificant at small scales. Most of what is science is just models that work but are incomplete. That makes sense since trying to make
sense of the universe is a game of seek but never really find; the universe is ultimately nonsense. When an incomplete model is embraced by the scientific community, the model becomes a group subjectivity bubble. It often takes generations to move to a new scientific model, because scientists are human and so are vulnerable to group subjectivity bubbles.

When it comes to people’s subjectivity bubbles, there are three main types: cage bubbles, blob bubbles, and expanding bubbles. We all have all three types of bubbles within our overall bubbles of subjectivity.

Cage bubbles are stubborn beliefs that are the result of brainwashing and programming. Reason and evidence can rarely break a cage bubble. Cage bubbles become extra problematic when they are group cage bubbles. Religion and politics often form cage bubbles. And sometimes people start killing to protect their cage bubbles.

There are some things people pretend to believe just because it is beneficial to do so at any given moment. Such beliefs make up blob bubbles. Blob bubbles are essentially made of lies. Blob bubbles change shape as needed. Group blob bubbles mean lying for the benefit of a team. So think of the job of a lawyer. Lawyers deal in blob bubbles. A lawyer makes up a story to support whoever hired the lawyer. Salespeople also deal in blob bubbles. Salespeople make up stories to sell things. Such stories don’t have to be complete lies, but they often are at least lies by omission. Once a person starts to believe
lies though, then blob bubbles start to solidify into cage bubbles. Cognitive dissonance leads to people believing their own lies and therefore makes cage bubbles.

Expanding bubbles are the final bubble type. Expanding bubbles look for truth and objectivity. Ideally, science is a realm of expanding bubbles. But science doesn’t always live up to that ideal. Expanding bubbles, whether individual or group, constantly try to move away from blob bubbles and cage bubbles.

If you start from the position of an expanding bubble, you can evaluate the state of other people’s bubbles. When you run into a disagreement with someone, it is valuable to know if you are dealing with someone in a cage bubble, blob bubble, or expanding bubble; because unless the person is in an expanding bubble, debate is usually pointless. You start by challenging the person with whom you disagree by making a reasoned point. Then you evaluate if the person is able to respond to your challenge by accurately restating and addressing your point. People in cage bubbles will just sound crazy in their responses; their responses will at best only make sense within their own bubbles. Cage bubble people cannot understand your point of view because if they did their cage would be unlocked and so they would not be in it. On the other hand, people in blob bubbles will usually just try to change the subject when challenged—since they can see you aren’t buying their lies. But if there is an audience, the blob bubble person might try to lie about your point and turn it into a strawman that
can easily be dismissed. Finally, people in expanding bubbles will be able to restate your point accurately and either argue against it by citing reasons and evidence to articulate “whole” opinions or surrender and agree.

**Artificial Dumbness**

Artificial intelligence is becoming ever more popular and prevalent. But what passes for artificial intelligence these days is mostly just expert systems. Expert systems use databases of expert knowledge to offer advice or make decisions. Expert systems mimic human intelligence some but humans are both smarter and dumber than expert systems. It is my hypothesis that mind is essentially the computer computing the universe and that what makes humans authentic rather than artificial is that human minds are tapped into the computer computing the universe. In other words, humans are part of the essential hardware of the universe and not just software. However, the hardware of the universe is actually not hard at all, it is mind and so abstract. Artificial intelligence, at least at this point in time, isn’t tapped into the computer computing the universe, except by way of the humans making AI; artificial intelligence is derivative and not primary. Perhaps humans will eventually figure out how to make artificial intelligence that is directly tapped into the computer computing the universe. But that hasn’t happened yet.
Even though artificial intelligence currently isn’t directly tapped into the computer computing the universe, that doesn’t mean that AI can’t mimic humans. Humans don’t necessarily utilize the computer computing the universe much. The computer computing the universe really only has two functions: ego and Spirit. That choice, ego or Spirit, is the extent of our free will in this universe. In that sense, although artificial Spirit should be impossible, artificial ego should be possible; after all, ego is by its nature artificial.

Artificial intelligence will become human like as soon as humans start programming AI with ego. That is to say, artificial dumbness is what we want if we want something resembling humans. Take artificial intelligence and start programming it with the long list of known human cognitive biases and you’re likely to end up with something as irrational as a human.

**Holy Spirit Programming**

Your genes, personality, skin color, where you live, your gender, your family, your culture, who you know, it all makes up your forgiveness classroom. Your classroom is the result of a mix of ego and Spirit. You can use your classroom to sustain the ego or to choose Spirit and undo the ego. Your classroom will change in life according to how you use it.

As an *A Course in Miracles* student, you know to use your classroom to practice true forgiveness. True forgiveness is about taking full responsibility for
everything you perceive. The reward for taking on that responsibility is healing the mind and thus awakening. ACIM isn't about changing behavior and so it isn't about changing your personality any more than it is about changing your skin color or height. Those things are all part of your class curriculum. Who you choose as your teacher, ego or Spirit, is what matters. Spirit has an antidote for all personality pathologies, which help facilitate the Characteristics of God's (advanced) Teachers (M-4).

The Course list ten traits of God’s teachers: trust, honesty, tolerance, gentleness, joy, defenselessness, generosity, patience, faithfulness, and openness. You’ll have to read the Characteristics of God's Teachers in the Manual for Teachers to see exactly how the Course defines each of those words. While it is useful to know those ten traits, don’t use them to play pretend enlightenment; also, don’t use them to judge others since that would require mind reading. Remember, anyone can put on an act. People can play pretend enlightenment just as they can play pretend ignorance.

Subjective Holy Spirit

If you tune into the Holy Spirit, you’ll get your own unique guidance. And that guidance will seem subjective. No need to judge your own guidance against others. The Holy Spirit reacts to where the ego takes us. The ego takes us to guilt. Thanks to projection, most of
the time that guilt is seen as outside ourselves and external to our own subjective bubbles of seeming innocence. What exactly people deem guilty is in the eye of the beholder.

For instance, if ego has you projecting special innocence on animals and special guilt on eating animals, then eating animals is going to come with guilt. Guilt is what you need to forgive. Perhaps the Holy Spirit knows that the only way you’ll forgive that guilt is slowly. And perhaps part of that process means becoming vegan. Perhaps the Holy Spirit knows that by becoming vegan you won’t project guilt on yourself for eating in a way you deem guilty. And perhaps the Holy Spirit knows that being vegan will leave you in the position to forgive others who don’t share in your guilt projection idiosyncrasy about eating animals. Furthermore, perhaps with slow and steady forgiveness, the world will change around you and killing animals for meat will be replaced with something like 3-D printed meat made from cells and not from animals. Nonetheless, maybe the world will change around you and yet you will still resist forgiveness. If the guilt remains you won’t be satisfied. So perhaps you’ll just start projecting innocence on animal cells and guilt on those who eat them—or perhaps you’ll find a whole new subject to keep the guilt alive. The ego script just keeps going without forgiveness.

A lot of what people call being guided by the Holy Spirit is actually plain old being guided by the ego. The
Holy Spirit really only guides you to forgive. Any specific thing the Holy Spirit may guide you to do is merely a means to optimal forgiveness and thus minimized guilt/fear. Therefore, if you bring Spirit along wherever the ego takes you, you’ll be guided to forgive and therefore the ego will have fewer places to take you. And the ego will have nowhere to take you once you’ve forgiven all the guilt in your mind.

Sometimes you’ll hear someone like a politician say something like, “I was guided by God to run for office.” The accurate translation of that is usually, “I was guided by ego to run for office and by doing so I’ll be shown a bunch of stuff I need to forgive—and I’ll also show other people a bunch of stuff they need to forgive.” If the politician doesn’t use running for office to forgive, the politician might as well have said, “I was guided by the devil to run for office.” Because, unless forgiving is going on, the politician is just going to be sustaining the ego’s script, not reducing it. And even if that politician did truly practice uncompromising forgiveness, the politician would still not be universally supported. No matter what you do in life, subjectivity means some people are going to project guilt on you while others will project innocence. We live in a world where Jesus was crucified after all. And human nature hasn’t changed; it’s all about that special guilt and special innocence.

The world is set up as an ego arena for guilt projection. In general, the world provides enough of a sanctuary of seeming innocence to keep guilt projection
appealing and thus the ego in control. The world’s guilt arena will only become more peaceful if collectively people start forgiving consistently. Eventually, if humanity evolves by forgiving, the world will be run by the Golden Rule (voluntaryism) and nothing more. Is the Golden Rule world coming anytime soon? Nope. But I’m at least making a point to plant the seeds that will make it possible.

Conclusion

We are now at the end of this little book. Which means it is now time to put into practice what you’ve learned here. Stop expecting people to be anything other than subjective and irrational. And don’t try to force your subjectivity upon others if you don’t want others to force their subjectivity upon you. Yes, sometimes people are objectively wrong. But objectivity needs no defenses. The objective truth prevails over subjectivity; sometimes people just have to learn the objective reality the hard way.

The Golden Rule is what is objective in human society since it tames subjectivity. But the fact is that at this point in human history people still don’t appreciate the Golden Rule. If people did appreciate the Golden Rule and therefore lived by it, people wouldn’t be constantly trying to force others to comply with their own subjectivity through both government force and private force. Instead, we’d mind our own forgiveness classrooms and forgive and let forgive. Force is part of
the ego’s game of seek and never really find; it is the ego
game of change the world and others instead of your
own mind. And since you can’t magically make everyone
start following the Golden Rule, you’ll just have to see
that noncompliance as an external manifestation of your
unconscious guilt and therefore forgive it.

Differences are the illusion. Don’t get tricked by the
illusion. The reality is that we are all the same one mind.
And we are all responsible for restoring our own mind
fragments to the awareness of reality. What other
fragments do is of no concern because once we restore
our own fragment to reality, time ends and the wait for
everyone else is instantaneous.

Since this is exclusively an e-book, this book will be
updated as new information presents itself. So I don’t
want to end this book too conclusively. Perhaps maybe
the Big Five personality system will prove wildly
inaccurate for some reason. Maybe woke
identitarianism will be tossed to the dust bin of history?
Or maybe woke identitarianism will be embraced to
usher in an era of woke authoritarianism. Who knows?
In such a case, I’d like to be able to address such things
in the future if warranted. I’d also like to fix any of the
many typos that probably exist in this book. Although
maybe I don’t, since the negativity bias makes such
mistakes more memorable.

Acknowledgements
There were two main people that influenced me to make this particular book, psychology professor Jordan Peterson and cartoonist/hypnotist Scott Adams. If you are of a particular political persuasion (woke identitarianism), those are two people you are supposed to dislike and avoid. And that’s because if you actually listened to them, they’d likely change your mind some and thus you’d forgive. Both Peterson and Adams teach some ideas compatible with *A Course in Miracles*, without necessarily even knowing what *A Course in Miracles* is. In that sense, they are priming mainstream audiences for books like mine.

I paid little to no attention to Peterson or Adams before late 2016. Yet, I had written books saying similar things to what both of them say. So there is naturally a lot of Peterson and a lot of Adams in my customary way of seeing and thinking. And since both have decades more experience in life than I do, they’ve been able to facilitate insights in me that may have otherwise taken decades. In general, the personality parts of this book were inspired by Peterson and the cognitive bias parts were inspired by Adams. And in between were my insights and anecdotes, including my insights in relation to *A Course in Miracles*.

One more person I should also acknowledge is political pundit Marianne Williamson. On one level, I shouldn’t mention her, but it’s funny to do so because she truthfully was a helpful part of making this book. Without her high profile relentless subjectivity (guilt...
projection) presented as objectivity (truth) and decorated with flowery spiritual language, I may not have been inspired to accumulate enough material to make this book.