

The Wizard of Oz, a 100-year old story, demonstrates many of the principles of A Course In Miracles. So we know the basic premise of the Course is at least 100 years old. Lyman Frank Baum (1856-1919), the author, writes about the orphan, Dorothy Gale.

The movie version of the story begins where Dorothy is frantic that her dog, Toto, will be taken away or harmed. She finds excuses for his behavior regardless of his destructive behavior.

Toto chases Mrs. Gulch's cat and tramples her flowers whenever they pass her house. Mrs. Gulch threatens Dorothy and Toto. In her mind, she has a monumental problem and no one cares to help her resolve it; everyone seems oblivious to her pain. Hulk, one of the workmen offered a simple solution, "Don't go past Mrs. Gulch's house!"

Here was a very simple solution to Dorothy's problem, the power to create a peaceful relationship with Mrs. Gulch. She had been warned many times of Toto's unacceptable behavior and its ramifications, but insisted on exercising her "right" to walk past Mrs. Gulch's house. How much trouble would it have been, for her peace of mind as well as for Mrs. Gulch, to choose another route? Dorothy could choose again to allow peace instead of chaos. Too often the ego convinces us to choose the defiant path to prove a useless point.

Rather than change her route (change her mind), Dorothy runs away from home to escape the dreadful problem no one seems to care about, which is the threat of a separation from her dear Toto that she loves dearly.

Some of us run away literally or run to drugs, alcohol, or seek other temporary gratification, which provides an escape from what seems to be a hopeless or unloving situation, or separation from love.

On her journey to nowhere, Dorothy meets Professor Marvel, a traveling magician. He pretends to read her future using a crystal ball and provides a false prediction to purposely frighten her to return home. The magician appealed to her emotion (ego) and guilt to influence her return home. It worked, for she frantically headed back home with Toto in tow.

The journey back home was frightening for Dorothy with an approaching storm. Nothing was stable, nothing seemed safe. Horrified, she ends up facing an enormous "twister." and life got out of control

First, she headed for safety, pulling at the storm door, but it did not open. As she rushed through her bedroom door, an object struck her head and she fell unconscious. She symbolically had lost her way home, separated from her family and entered a dream state.

Now the Course says that we have merely fallen asleep and only need to awaken from the dream. In Dorothy's dream she found herself in an imaginary world, Oz. This becomes her reality and world of victimization.

Her life of victimization first began in Munchkin Land, where her house was tossed by the violent twister and fatally landed on the Wicked Witch of the East. In appreciation of this fatality, the Munchkins reward her with red slippers.

Although killing the wicked witch has ended evil in Munchkin Land, Dorothy's guilt rises for murdering the witch. She clings to this guilt in spite of having brought peace and joy to the land. The Course says that guilt seeks punishment and finds it.

Glenda, the good witch, appears and explains the value of Dorothy's red slippers. These slippers represent her intuitive guidance, protection, and power over all things, obstacles, and situations.

All Dorothy wants is to get back to Kansas and so begins the whole story about her journey back home. She wanted to leave her home in Kansas so badly and now all she could think of was returning home. The good witch warns her, "Never ever take those ruby slippers off your feet for a moment or you are at the mercy of the Wicked Witch of the West. It is similar to "remembering" your power, don't lose sight of it, or try to give it away, lest you fall under the guidance of the ego.

The good witch sends her off to find the Wizard of Oz, in Emerald City, who will have the directions for her way back home. "How do I start to Emerald City?" Dorothy asked the good witch. "It's always best to start at the beginning," said Glenda. The beginning was right where she was. She just had to get started on

the designated path, the yellow brick road, and follow it. Getting started can be a challenge when we are paralyzed by fear or indecisiveness (another form of fear). A start, regardless of momentum, is what will eventually help you reach a goal or destination.

The yellow brick road can symbolize the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It will lead us where we want to go if we but follow it. As a brick road, it becomes a physical form to help us remain focused and stay on course. For on the road to Truth we learn many lessons, create many new relationships, and victor many challenges.

Various characters in the movie too were seeking outside themselves for things considered critical to feeling complete. They felt incomplete, that somehow they were lacking in some area. These things become issues.

The Course says we lack nothing. We have all we need, right within us. It is just being denied. Denial dictates we seek gurus and things to help us get rid of our lack. When that fails, gurus and things are deemed the cause of our lack and validate our lack.

### **Scarecrow**

Ever found yourself paralyzed in a situation? There's so much to do and you want to do, but you can't seem to get going? Every time you start the task, somehow you end up helping someone else with theirs? You have been convinced that what you need to do can wait, taking less priority.

The Scarecrow believed, "I am a failure because I have no brain." He declared he was a victim of the crows, a mockery. Victimization is his excuse for ignorance. This is projecting his failure onto the crows through blame. His stupidity and failure in his career were not his fault. The crows are deemed proof of his failure, uselessness, and hopelessness.

He asked Dorothy, "Do you think the Wizard will give me a brain?" She responded, "I don't know but even if he didn't you wouldn't be worse off." Often we are afraid to give something a try for fear of failure. Usually, there is nothing to lose. And the only sure way to success is a try.

## Tin Man

Further along the yellow brick road Dorothy and the Scarecrow encounter an unclear faint cry for help. How often we want to cry out for someone to help us, but have difficulty expressing it. We clam up for so long, that it becomes difficult to speak. After listening intently they both realize the Tin Man is trying to speak. And the thing he needs most has been just inches away from his grasp. Dorothy grabs the nearby oilcan and lubricates his joints, which gave him free movement and freedom to speak.

The Tin Man said, "If only I had a heart, then...." Here, the Tin Man had the "If only....." blues. Oh how much he could do; oh what he could be "if only....." He was depressed, deep in self-pity, expressing it in words and actions. These are emotions that devastate the heart.

Here we have the brainless Scarecrow who *thought* about going to the Wizard and the emotionless Tin Man who was *depressed*, both claiming they did not have what they were seeking from the Wizard. They were each so much into their own victimization and shortcomings that they could not even see the truth for each other.

So Dorothy, Scarecrow, and Tin Man go merrily skipping down the road and eventually must pass through a dark and creepy forest. They did not like this darkness; it was frightening. Surely there was something wicked lurking in the darkness waiting to harm them.

We often have dark moments, moments when things seem threatening and terrifying. On our journey, we may encounter darkness. One thing the Scarecrow said while they were in the dark and creepy forest was, "It will get darker before lighter."

However, there was nothing on that dark and creepy portion of the journey that would or could hurt them. Couldn't have told them that at one point when the ferocious Lion leaped out. We know what horrible things a Lion can do! He is the king of the jungle! Says so in the encyclopedia.

## Lion

Just like the ego, the Lion was all talk. It boasted and growled trying to scare everyone, hiding behind its cowardly mask. It was a bully. People will appear in life hiding their cowardice with boasts, aggression, intimidation, and put-downs. Know any lions in your life?

The Lion confronted each one, got in their face, and then put them down harshly. He needed to destroy their belief in themselves to make himself look powerful. This verbal abuse hid what he really believed himself.

At first they were frightened by his words and accepted what he said. They believed they were those awful things he claimed. We do not have to accept anyone's opinion of us. It is only an opinion, which cannot change who we are.

Dorothy found courage amidst her fear and stood up to the Lion! When something she valued was threatened, she fought back. She let go of her fears for an instant to face the challenge! The Lion backed down.

We too only need to stand up with courage against those challenges that seem surely to beat us, consume us, or kill us. We are always wearing those ruby slippers, determined to find our way back home. The Holy Spirit is always guiding us when we allow ourselves to follow the safe yellow brick road.

Sometimes we question our worthiness of this guidance. The lion questioned his worthiness to join the trio. People often accuse others of not respecting their worth, when it is really their own judgment about themselves.

When the Lion was asked to join them to get courage for himself he responded, "Wouldn't you be embarrassed to be in the company of a cowardly Lion? This is comparison. This is low self-esteem, the old not-good-enough song we may hear humming in our ears from time to time.

Being King of the jungle, there were expectations of a lion described in his encyclopedia that he was not be able to live up to. A veterinarian researcher of sorts had defined a lion's demeanor and capabilities for him; therefore, it was fact in the Cowardly Lion's mind. This meant failure for the lion, to be able to fill a stereotypical role.

Scarecrow and Dorothy convinced the lion to seek courage from the wizard, and then they all merrily continued to skip down the yellow brick road. They were

all pumped up and very hopeful. Dorothy, always being the positive one, encouraged the others that they too could have their dream. They were "hoping" she was right.

They traveled that yellow brick road on "Dorothy's belief", not their own. That is okay. She was seeing the truth for them. We need each other in that respect, someone to hold the light for us or someone who can see the light for us so we can stay on the path of our goal. At a point, we will see the light for ourselves.

#### Wicked Witch

Further along the road they run into another wicked witch of course, proof there are powers to which they are weak and helpless.

How could they possibly reach their goal with something so powerfully evil against them? The witch was determined to get even more power by taking the ruby slippers from Dorothy. But we do not need to give up our power to that which threatens us, especially to something so powerless.

Dorothy even tries to give the ruby slippers to the witch, but she cannot remove them. We can deny our power but it can never be given away. We can deny who we are, but we cannot change who we are. We can deny the love of God, but we cannot be without it. Those shoes were her divine protection and guidance to the love and home she thought she had lost.

But how could they conquer this most evil and powerful thing (witch). It was a simple, intuitive response that worked. Water, what seemed to be no weapon at all, is what killed the evil witch.

#### It Was Always There

All through this journey, the Scarecrow figured out ways to get beyond obstacles and ultimately kill the wicked witch so they could get to the Wizard. The Tin Man worried about Dorothy while the Lion frightened away intruders.

Finally they arrived at Emerald City but were devastated when they met the fake Wizard. After such a long treacherous journey they discovered that what

they were seeking outside of themselves (Wizard) was no more powerful than they.

Wizard recognized their true selves and proceeded to reveal their desires to them. The Scarecrow was given a diploma. It was merely a piece of paper acknowledging he had a brain. The Wizard said that everyone has a brain. That piece of paper is what convinced the Scarecrow that he now had a brain too. Upon acceptance of this written intellectual confirmation, he then recited the Pythagorean theorem. That mathematical theorem was always in his head. Faith in himself strengthened by the written acknowledgment just allowed it to come forth to see that he had an exceptional brain.

Next, the Wizard pinned a medal of courage on the Lion. That simple medal convinced the Lion that he could do anything and fear nothing! He too had tangible proof acknowledging his tremendous courage.

The Tin Man cried often throughout the journey, often rusting his joints. Yet it was not until the Wizard handed him a heart shaped clock that he was convinced he had a heart. The clock ticked (beat) as a heart would. Again, more physical proof of what already existed for him.

Each one of them always had what they were seeking, intellect, courage and love. It was always being demonstrated, but they did not notice it for hopelessly blaming, denying and focusing on what they could not do. So much so that they believed they could not. Their abilities were concealed by self-pity and attitude of defeat.

Dorothy's turn came to get what she was seeking, to fly home in the Balloon with the Wizard. While busy tending to others, she missed her take-off and felt that was her last chance to get back home.

How often we think we have missed our last chance at something, missed qualifying by a few points on an exam, missed a deadline, and miscalculated. New opportunities never cease to greet us. These are only thoughts of lack and limitation. There is no limit to the power of God.

There is no one way of doing something, no one way to reach the goal. Yet we will limit our vision of how something should be achieved, never looking for

another way to achieve it. We grieve over the seeming loss of a dream and stare hopelessly at our balloon adrift without us and ask, "Why me?"

In the midst of Dorothy's moment of self-pity and seeming hopelessness, a beautiful witch appeared. The others asked the Good Witch why Dorothy did not get what she wanted when everyone else did. The good witch answered, "It was not enough to want."

When the Good Witch asked Dorothy what she had learned Dorothy replied, "If ever I go looking for my hearts desire again, I won't go further than my own back yard. Because if it isn't there, it was never lost to begin with." All we need is within us. Right where we are is the answer.

The others asked why she was sent to the Wizard when that was all she had to know. The Good Witch responded, "She had to learn it for herself."

We are all Dorothy and her friends. We have the courage, brains, love and power to find our way home, to reach our goals. Keep wearing those ruby slippers. As the Course says, we are merely trying to find our way back home to heaven. And when Dorothy woke up, she was at home-- in her bed, surrounded by love, not enemies. It all seemed so real, yet it had all been a dream.

Each one around Dorothy played a role in her dream, disguised as a different character. All of them loved her and wanted the best for her. With her awakening, she recognized their love for her and could appreciate them just the way they were.

So you see, the journey down the yellow brick road was all an illusion with lessons for spiritual growth. It all seemed so real and at times things seemed threatening, unfair, and hopeless. Those things only existed in her creative fantasy. She had never left home but in her mind