

FALL FAITH 2011



Fearless Living

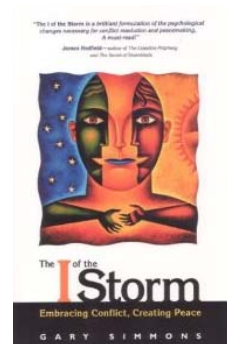
Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace

Study Guide

Unity Church of Overland Park

Based on Gary Simmons' book *The I of the Storm: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace*

Study Guide by Reverend Patricia Bass



Fall Faith Resources

The I of the Storm: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace by Gary Simmons
The I of the Storm for Teens: Finding Peace in the Midst of Conflict by Jane Simmons
Day-By-Day Reconciliation Journal by Gary Simmons, ThD

Additional Resources

The I of the Storm for Teens Finding Peace in the Midst of Conflict 12 Week Curriculum for Teenagers by Jane Simmons
The I of the Storm Teacher's Guide 8 Week Adult Curriculum by Jane Simmons & Gary Simmons, ThD
The I of the Storm Curriculum by Kelly IsolaTao Te Ching, Translated by Stephen Mitchell

Special Acknowledgements

Thank you to Rev. Kelly Isola, Dr. Gary Simmons and Dr. Jane Simmons for their support in creating our series.

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FALL FAITH 2011



SUNDAY CELEBRATION SERVICES

September 25 - November 6
9 & 11 a.m.

KICK-OFF CONCERT & DESSERT BAR

7 p.m., Friday, September 23
Featuring Molly Hammer, Fred Albers and the UCOP Band
Dessert Bar sponsored by the Couples Affinity Group

WEDNESDAY SMALL GROUP STUDY CIRCLES

September 28 - November 9
6:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. - Music, Message & Meditation in Sanctuary
7:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. - Small Group Study Circles meet
8:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. - Food and Fellowship in Harmony Hall

FALL FAITH CELEBRATION EVENT

Held at the Ritz-Charles in Overland Park, KS
Friday, November 11, 2011

Dinner • Dancing • Auction

FALL FAITH 2011

Fearless Living

Dear Friend,

Welcome to Fall Faith, 2011 – “Fearless Living: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace.” You will discover that there is a center of wholeness in you that is the “I” of any storm. When you access this infinite power, you are able to embrace conflict and create peace in your world. You will live centered and strong, knowing that nothing and no one is against you.

During our seven-week exploration, you will have many resources to support your personal transformation: “The I of the Storm, Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace” by Gary Simmons, “Day-By-Day Reconciliation Journal” by Gary Simmons, our inspirational Sunday Celebration series and this specially created study guide for personal or group study. Check out our bookstore for other related books. For many of you, of course, the greatest gift of all will be your group study in your Small Group Study Circles. Trust and know that you have been divinely guided to a particular circle of individuals who have been sent by Spirit to support your own exploration and transformation.

Fall Faith is a time to deepen your faith and your connection to your beloved spiritual community. It offers the opportunity to make lasting friendships as you open to your true nature as a magnificent expression of God.

We have declared 2011 to be a year of making a difference and this year’s Fall Faith will prepare you to make a powerful difference in the world. I celebrate you for your commitment to your own growth and unfoldment. It is my sacred honor to walk the spiritual path with you.



Love and Blessings,
Patricia Bass

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Fearless Living

PRAYER (“I”)

Nothing and no one is against me. The Universe fully supports me in being all I am created to be. I embrace conflict with ease, being open to each new opportunity to stretch and grow my soul. I no longer resist the now moment, and I release judgments about myself and others. I relax into oneness, rejoicing in the freedom of forgiveness and understanding. I claim the truth of my inner wholeness. I now bring the energy of peace into every relationship, every room and every situation. I am a blessing to the world.

PRAYER (“We”)

Nothing and no one is against us. The Universe fully supports us in being all we are created to be. We embrace conflict with ease, being open to each new opportunity to stretch and grow our soul. We no longer resist the now moment, and we release judgments about ourselves and others. We relax into oneness, rejoicing in the freedom of forgiveness and understanding. We claim the truth of our inner wholeness. We now bring the energy of peace into every relationship, every room and every situation. We are a blessing to the world.

AFFIRMATIONS

- Nothing and no one is against me. The Universe fully supports me in being all I am created to be.
- I embrace conflict with ease, being open to each new opportunity to stretch and grow my soul.
- I release judgments about myself and others. I relax into oneness, rejoicing in the freedom of forgiveness and understanding.
- I release the illusion of separation and I relax into the bliss of divine communion.
- I see through clear eyes of love and faith and find God present in every circumstance.
- I no longer resist life’s challenges and I surrender to the natural movement of Spirit as it guides me with ease and grace to higher awareness.
- I now bring the energy of peace into every relationship, every room and every situation. I am a blessing to the world.

FALL FAITH 2011

Fearless Living

GROUP SHARED AGREEMENTS (Sample)

1. Listening - I listen deeply.
2. Confidentiality - I hold in strictest confidence what is said in circle.
3. Safety - I speak for myself. I use “I” statements. I am not here to “fix” myself or others.
4. Okay to pass - I am not required to share. I may pass.
5. Respect - I am open to different perspectives. I accept that others may not hold the same view.
6. Presence - I understand that my presence is important and I will contact the facilitator when I am unable to attend.
7. Time - I am mindful of time in balanced sharing, in being on time and remaining until circle is complete.
8. Commitment - I commit to being current with my reading and any other preparation work that is mine to do.

WEEK 1 - "Nothing and No One Is Against You"
Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 7 - 39)

Read Group Shared Agreements (p. 5) and Check In

AFFIRMATION

Nothing and no one is against me. The Universe fully supports me in being all I am created to be.

SACRED WRITINGS

Matthew 6:33 - "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." NRSV

Tao Te Ching, 19 - "Just stay at the center of the circle and let all things take their course."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What thought or message would you put in a fortune cookie?
2. Share some funny or not-so-funny things you have done to avoid conflict.
3. What do you think is meant by the statement "Nothing and No One is Against You?"
4. How comfortable are you with conflict? What kinds of situations put you on the defensive?

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. Consider the idea "I have experiences, but experiences don't have me." Journal what comes to mind and note any ahas.
2. Make a list of inner resources. What inner resource would you like to have to help you find your center in the midst of conflict (i.e., confidence, worthiness, self-acceptance, patience)?
3. Read Chapter 4.

JOURNAL

WEEK 2 - "Embrace the Tiger"
Chapter 4 (pp. 51 - 79)

Read Group Shared Agreements (p. 5) and Check In

AFFIRMATION

I embrace conflict with ease, being open to each new opportunity to stretch and grow my soul.

SACRED WRITINGS

Matthew 5:25-26 - "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison." NRSV

Tao Te Ching, 35 - "She who is centered in the Tao can go where she wishes, without danger. She perceives the universal harmony, even amid great pain, because she has found peace in her heart."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Share about a time when conflict in a relationship ultimately proved to strengthen the relationship. How did this unfold?
2. Recall a time when you held back from speaking your truth in order to avoid hurting someone or to get someone to like you? How did that feel?
3. Gary Simmons says that conflict brings us to the edge of our resourcefulness and helps us live our soul's purpose. Share a time when you grew and stretched as a result of a conflict.

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. This week, notice when you find yourself in situations of conflict. Notice how you feel. Simply notice, without labeling or judging. Focus on your breathing. When you have time later in the day, journal about the experiences.
2. Read Chapters 3 & 11.

JOURNAL

WEEK 3 - "Love Your Enemies"
Chapters 3 & 11 (pp. 40 - 50, 150 - 157)

Read Group Shared Agreements (p. 5) and Check In

AFFIRMATION

I release judgments about myself and others. I relax into oneness, rejoicing in the freedom of forgiveness and understanding.

SACRED WRITINGS

Matthew 5:43-44 - "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." NRSV

Tao Te Ching, 46 - "There is no greater illusion than fear, no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself, no greater misfortune than having an enemy."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What did you notice this week about how you responded to conflict? Any ahas?
2. Think back over yesterday and today. Call to mind a situation with another person where you feel you may have fallen short of acting from your highest authentic self. If you had been more heart-centered and connected to your own wholeness, how might the situation have been different? How might you reconcile it tomorrow?
3. Simmons suggests a 21-day reconciliation practice. If you have begun the practice, how is it going? If not, what support would you need in order to commit to such a practice?
4. Discuss whether you would like to attend the Fall Faith Celebration Event on Friday, November 11 as a group.

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. Begin the 21-day Reconciliation Practice. Each night, ask Spirit to reveal to you persons or situations where reconciliation is needed. Each morning, make it a priority to reconcile those situations.
2. Record your experiences in a journal or in the "Day-By-Day Reconciliation Journal" available in CommUnity Books and Gifts.
3. Practice Ho'oponopono (for more information on this prayer form, go to: ucop.org, listen to audio online lessons, 5/29/11) to clear your energy field. Inwardly repeat "I love you. I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you." The words do not have to have a particular focus. They are intended to clear your own energy field and any blocks you may have to your own divinity.
4. Read Chapters 5 & 6.

JOURNAL

WEEK 4 - "You Are Not Alone"
Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 80 - 104)

Read Group Shared Agreements (p. 5) and Check In

AFFIRMATION

I release the illusion of separation and I relax into the bliss of divine communion.

SACRED WRITINGS

Luke 10:27-28 - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself."
NRSV

Bahá'u'lláh - "Let your vision be world embracing..."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Describe a time when someone judged you. How did it feel? How is it possible that their judgment could actually be "for" you?
2. Can you think of a time when you "won" an argument but didn't feel like you really "won?"
3. Do you know anyone who has a need to be right? How does it make you feel? How do you respond?
4. How is your Day-By-Day Reconciliation process unfolding? Have there been any ahas?

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. Try using "tell me more" the next time someone lashes out at you with a judgment or criticism. Journal what happens.
2. Read Chapter 7.

JOURNAL

WEEK 5 - "See It Right - Not Make it Right"
Chapter 7 (pp. 105 - 115)

Read Group Shared Agreements (p. 5) and Check In

AFFIRMATION

I see through clear eyes of love and faith and find God present in every circumstance.

SACRED WRITINGS

Philippians 4:8 - "Finally, beloved,* whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."
NRSV

Chang Tzu Taoist sage from 3rd century - "The true person sees what the eye sees and does not add to it something that is not there."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Have you ever made a judgment about someone and then gathered evidence in your mind about them to prove the truth of what you believed?
2. Can you think of a time when you thought you understood a situation fully, but upon being challenged you broadened your point of view?
3. Think of a time when you made a judgment about something and found out later it was not correct. What was missing in you that prevented you from seeing the situation more thoroughly?

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. Make a commitment this week to see everything that happens to you with "new eyes" and ask Spirit to show you how you can see it differently.
2. Read Chapter 9.

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WEEK 6 - "Let Go. Let God."
Chapter 9 (pp. 129 - 138)

Read Group Shared Agreements (p. 5) and Check In

AFFIRMATION

I no longer resist life's challenges and I surrender to the natural movement of Spirit as it guides me with ease and grace to higher awareness.

SACRED WRITINGS

Psalm 139:7-10 – "Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast." NRSV

Tao Te Ching, 30 - "The Master does his job and then stops. He understands that the universe is forever out of control and that trying to dominate events goes against the current of the Tao."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Have you ever entered a room and immediately felt the tension of defensiveness present? How did you (and others) respond?
2. Describe a time when you felt the need to control a person or situation. What happened when you insisted it had to be "your way?"
3. Discuss how you might continue to meet and connect as a group to support your spiritual growth.

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. This week, notice when you become defensive. Ask your inner wisdom, "What wants to be revealed here?"
2. Pray this excerpt from the Grace Prayer by Diadra Price - "Reveal what needs to be revealed and heal what needs to be healed." Journal what comes to you.
3. Read Chapters 8 & 10.

JOURNAL

WEEK 7 - "Your Pathway to Peace"
Chapters 8 & 10 (pp. 116 - 128, 139 - 149)

AFFIRMATION

I now bring the energy of peace into every relationship, every room and every situation. I am a blessing to the world.

SACRED WRITINGS

Matthew 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
NRSV

Tao Te Ching, 32 - "If powerful men and women could remain centered in the Tao, all things would be in harmony. The world would become a paradise. All people would be at peace and the law would be written in their hearts."

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How do you feel when you say, "I am the Christ of God?"
2. Make your personal commitment to be a peacemaker in the world. What does this mean to you?
3. What has been the greatest blessing of your Fall Faith experience?
4. Confirm whatever plans your group has made to come together again.

MASTERMIND PRAYER (Study guide p. 13)

GET ACTIVE

1. Establish your intention each day to be the "Way of God," to express your Christ Nature. Then, at the end of each day, notice when you showed up as the Way of God. Journal about the experiences.

JOURNAL

MASTERMIND PRAYER

Read through steps 1 – 4 slowly and with intention. Pause a few seconds (about 5) between each step to truly absorb what it is that you are becoming a part of in the process.

1. **I COMMIT.** I now make the commitment to place my life completely under the direction of the Christ within. I dedicate myself to be of maximum service to God and my fellow humanity and to remain an open channel of God's will.

2. **I ACCEPT.** I now accept that my personality is powerless to transform my life. It is the Christ within that does all the work.

3. **I BELIEVE.** I believe in One Presence and One Power active in the universe. This Power is perfect life, love, intelligence and wholeness expressing through me now. With God, all things are possible.

4. **I FORGIVE AND I UNDERSTAND.** I understand that erroneous self-defeating thoughts and fears are the cause of my problems and unhappiness. I now forgive all others and myself for any real or imagined mistakes. I am willing to be changed at depth.

5. **I ASK, BELIEVING.** In the awareness of the Christ Presence, I ask, believing that my heart's desire is fulfilled now.

(Each person takes a turn succinctly speaking his or her heart's desire into the circle by using the format:

“My heart's desire is”

After the person has stated their heart's desire, the rest of the circle responds in unison:

“Your heart's desire is now made manifest!”

At that point, you move onto the next person. When you have gone around the circle, continue on with reading steps 6 & 7.)

6. **I GIVE THANKS.** I give thanks as I joyously and expectantly assume the very feelings I will have when my heart's desire is made manifest.

7. **I LET GO.** I let go and let God express through me in perfect ways.

AND SO IT IS! AMEN.