

Mindfulness with Lucy

Week of 1 May 2023 *What world do you choose to live in?*

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Image by Lucy

Innocence is strength
A COURSE IN MIRACLES

Dearest friends

A story ...

Yusuf Salaam was 15 years old when he was arrested along with 4 other teenagers of the same age and another who was 16. They were arrested on the allegation of raping a woman jogger in New York's Central Park. The case was brought against them by the New York Police. This was in April 1989.

The black and Hispanic teenagers were sentenced to the maximum allowed for juvenile crime - 5 to 10 years. They had all pleaded 'not guilty' despite having 'confessed under coercion' (as argued by their defence counsels) to the police. The story and the case became famously known as the *Central Park 5*.

On May 1, 1989, a man called Donald Trump, took out a full-page advertisement in response to the incident in four newspapers including the Daily News. In it, he called for the return of the Death Penalty.

In his advertisement and in several interviews that he gave during that period, Donald Trump maintained that criminals like the charged teenagers deserved the highest form of punishment and his and others' hatred. It has been widely commented that, together with the media fueled fear-mongering around the safety of joggers in New York's parks, this advertisement played a significant role in the conviction of the teenagers.

BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY.

BRING BACK OUR POLICE!

What has happened to our City over the past ten years? What has happened to law and order, to the neighborhood cop we all trusted to safeguard our homes and families, the cop who had the power under the law to help us in times of danger, keep us safe from those who would prey on innocent lives to fulfill some distorted inner need. What has happened to the respect for authority, the fear of retribution by the courts, society and the police for those who break the law, who wantonly trespass on the rights of others? What has happened is the complete breakdown of life as we knew it.

Many New York families — White, Black, Hispanic and Asian — have had to give up the pleasure of a leisurely stroll in the Park at dusk, the Saturday visit to the playground with their families, the bike ride at dawn, or just sitting on their stoops — given them up as hostages to a world ruled by the law of the streets, as roving bands of wild criminals roam our neighborhoods, dispensing their own vicious brand of twisted hatred on whomever they encounter. At what point did we cross the line from the fine and noble pursuit of genuine civil liberties to the reckless and dangerously permissive atmosphere which allows criminals of every age to beat and rape a helpless woman and then laugh at her family's anguish? And why do they laugh? They laugh because they know that soon, very soon, they will be returned to the streets to rape and maim and kill once again — and yet face no great personal risk to themselves.

Mayor Koch has stated that hate and rancor should be removed from our hearts. I do not think so. I want to hate these muggers and murderers. They should be forced to suffer and, when they kill,

they should be executed for their crimes. They must serve as examples so that others will think long and hard before committing a crime or an act of violence. Yes, Mayor Koch, I want to hate these murderers and I always will. I am not looking to psychoanalyze or understand them, I am looking to punish them. If the punishment is strong, the attacks on innocent people will stop. I recently watched a newscast trying to explain the "anger in these young men". I no longer want to understand their anger. I want them to understand our anger. I want them to be afraid.

How can our great society tolerate the continued brutalization of its citizens by crazed misfits? Criminals must be told that their **CIVIL LIBERTIES END WHEN AN ATTACK ON OUR SAFETY BEGINS!**

When I was young, I sat in a diner with my father and witnessed two young bullies cursing and threatening a very frightened waitress. Two cops rushed in, lifted up the thugs and threw them out the door, warning them never to cause trouble again. I miss the feeling of security New York's finest once gave to the citizens of this City.

Let our politicians give back our police department's power to keep us safe. Unshackle them from the constant chant of "police brutality" which every petty criminal hurls immediately at an officer who has just risked his or her life to save another's. We must cease our continuous pandering to the criminal population of this City. Give New York back to the citizens who have earned the right to be New Yorkers. Send a message loud and clear to those who would murder our citizens and terrorize New York — **BRING BACK THE DEATH PENALTY AND BRING BACK OUR POLICE!**



Donald J. Trump

In December 2002, following the confession to the rape by a man who was already in prison for other crimes, the five teenagers, now grown men, were exonerated. It didn't change the fact that Yusuf Salaam had, by then, spent almost 7 years in prison, having gone to prison at 15 and been released at the age of 22.

The continuing story...

In recent times, when asked whether he would apologize for what he had said about the Central Park 5, Donald Trump refused to, asserting that the exoneration was wrongful, that the new evidence was contestable and that he still believes they are guilty.

On April 4, 2023, Donald Trump was arraigned in the same New York courthouse where the Central Park 5 had been tried. 34 charges have been brought against him in one of several law suits that he currently faces in New York and in the state of Georgia. Donald Trump, as you would know, was President of the United States of America from 2017 to 2021 and is currently making a second presidential bid.

On April 4, 2023, on the day of Donald Trump's arraignment, Yusuf Salaam posted an 'advertisement' in his Twitter feed that looked similar to the one that Donald Trump had posted in the Daily News back in 1989. But his advertisement said something very different.

BRING BACK **JUSTICE & FAIRNESS.** **BUILD A BRIGHTER** **FUTURE FOR HARLEM!**

On May 1, 1989, almost thirty-four years ago, Donald J. Trump spent \$85,000 to take out full-page ads in *The New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post* and *New York Newsday*, calling for the execution of the Central Park Five—an act he has never apologized for, even after someone else confessed to and was convicted of the crime, the convictions of all five of us were overturned, and we were renamed the Exonerated Five.

Instead, Mr. Trump has often doubled-down. A few weeks after taking out the ad, he went on CNN and stated: "I hate these people and let's all hate these people because maybe hate is what we need if we're gonna get something done."

Even after our exoneration and acknowledgment by the government that we had been wrongfully convicted, Mr. Trump continued to incite animus against me, my peers and our families. In 2013—over a decade after our exoneration—Trump called the Ken and Sarah Burns *Central Park Five* documentary "a one-sided piece of garbage," and when asked how he felt now that we were shown to be innocent, responded: "Innocent of what?"

In 2014, the City of New York finally reached a settlement with the members of the Exonerated Five, awarding us compensation to help us rebuild our lives after so many years were taken from us. But even that acknowledgement from the city wasn't enough for Trump to see five young Black and Latino men as anything other than criminals, saying "settling doesn't mean innocence."

Now, after several decades and an unfortunate and disastrous presidency, we all know exactly who Donald J. Trump is—a man who seeks to deny justice and fairness for others, while claiming only innocence for himself.

Being wrongfully convicted as a teenager was an experience that changed my life drastically. Yet I am honored when people express how deeply they connect with my story.

It matters because, while my experience may have been extreme, I have lived through a form of trauma that many of us experience in some way every day throughout our country. My past is an example of systemic oppression imposed by the injustice system.

But the problems our community faced when my name was splashed across the newspapers a generation ago—inadequate housing, underfunded schools, public safety concerns, and a lack of good jobs—became worse during Donald Trump's time in office.

I am trying to change that, by working with so many other dedicated community members to build a better future for everyone, both here in Harlem and across the country.

Here is my message to you, Mr. Trump: In response to the multiple federal and state criminal investigations that you are facing, you responded by warning of "potential death and destruction," and by posting a photograph of yourself with a baseball bat, next to a photo of Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg. These actions, just like your actions leading up to the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, are an attack on our safety.

Thirty-four years ago, your full-page ad stated, in all caps: "CIVIL LIBERTIES END WHEN AN ATTACK ON OUR SAFETY BEGINS."

You were wrong then, and you are wrong now. The civil liberties of all Americans are grounded in the U.S. Constitution, and many of us fight every day to uphold those rights, even in the face of those like you who seek to obliterate them.

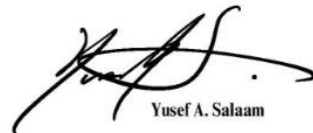
Now that you have been indicted and are facing criminal charges, I do not resort to hatred, bias or racism—as you once did.

Even though thirty-four years ago you effectively called for my death and the death of four other innocent children, I wish you no harm.

Rather, I am putting my faith in the judicial system to seek out the truth. I hope that you exercise your civil liberties to the fullest, and that you get what the Exonerated 5 did not get—a presumption of innocence, and a fair trial.

And if the charges are proven and you are found guilty, I hope that you endure whatever penalties are imposed with the same strength and dignity that the Exonerated Five showed as we served our punishment for a crime we did not commit.

1309 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10029



Yusef A. Salaam

Image from [Snopes.com](https://www.snopes.com)

In interviews that he's given, Yusuf Salaam has repeatedly said that he hopes that, unlike himself and the other teenagers of the Central Park 5, Donald Trump will be given a fair trial.

The world of Miracles

Dear friends, when I sat down to write this weekly email to you, I had no idea I would be writing about the Central Park 5. All I had was an intention to write something that was meaningful for me and that would be useful to you. This is what resulted.

‘Innocence is strength’

That’s a quote from A Course in Miracles (ACIM), a ‘book’ whose central themes are

1. The nature of reality i.e. our true nature i.e. Love
2. Forgiveness and
3. Joy/Happiness

Now, it may seem strange to you that I don’t state ‘miracles’ as one of its central themes when that is what the title of the book suggests. The reason is explained by the 3rd Principle of Miracles according to ACIM:

**Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love.
The real miracle is the love that inspires them.
In this sense, everything that comes from love
is a miracle.**

Receive my weekly email in your mailbox

Back in 1986 (before some of you were born!), Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics wrote and performed this beautiful song:

The Miracle of Love

How many sorrows
Do you try to hide
In a world of illusion
That's covering your mind?
I'll show you something good
Oh I'll show you something good.
When you open your mind

You'll discover the sign
That there's something
You're longing to find

The miracle of love
Will take away your pain
When the miracle of love
Comes your way again.

Cruel is the night
That covers up your fears.
Tender is the one
That wipes away your tears.
There must be a bitter breeze
To make you sting so viciously
They say the greatest coward
Can hurt the most ferociously.
But I'll show you something good.
Oh I'll show you something good.
If you open your heart
You can make a start
When your crumbling world falls apart.

The miracle of love
Will take away your pain
When the miracle of love
Comes your way again.

So, dear friends, I think I have given you plenty of grist for the mill
and I'd like to pull it all together in a way that helps to
communicate to you what is in my heart as best I can:

The world of Illusions

We live in a material world in which we experience hatred,
unforgiving, the need to punish, to hurt, to harm those we see as a
threat to us, to control people and things so that they bend to our
will, to our beliefs, to our values and to our neediness, and to find
ourselves guilty when we have (briefly) done with finding others
guilty. This, dear friends, is the world of the Ego. It is the only
'world' in which you will experience suffering, sorrow, fear and
hurt. And, as [Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart so beautifully sing](#), it
is the world of illusions.

What does that mean?

It means that it is a world *conditioned and constructed by our thinking, by our perceptions, our beliefs and our values*. We see as we believe. And we have learned what to believe, what to see and what to value.

The world of Love

The world of love, on the other hand, the spiritual world, the world of Innocence, the world of miracles, is the world that requires no belief. Rather, it is a world that is unconditioned by, and impervious to, human thinking and all its judgements. It is naturally and eternally radiant with goodness, peace, infinite possibility, the power of Love, and the abiding and undeniable freedom from all suffering.

You see, in this world of Love, all of us, including the most vile perpetrators of whatever atrocities they are accused and found guilty of (or not), are innocent. Why? Because they are created in Love, of Love and from Love.

AND

Because everything that is not done out of Love is, by default, done out of Ignorance.

And what is this Ignorance?

Not stupidity.

What then?

The failure to recognize who and what we truly are, beyond all our beliefs, all our perceptions, all our conditioning by our life experiences.

And what is that?

Innocence. Created in the very image, the very nature, of Love, of God, of Truth.

Finally...

Dear friends, this world of Love, of Innocence, is not unreachable. It is not an unfathomable distance from where you are. On the contrary, it is HERE and NOW, always HERE and NOW. And you can experience it right now because it is literally

A thought away! An intention away! A moment of willingness away!

Choose the world of Love. Choose the world of miracles. Choose the world of Innocence. Choose again. And again. And again. And again. For the rest of your life. For yourself and for the world.

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Tuesdays 6pm and Thursdays 11am Brisbane AEST time

Contemplate

An unforgiving thought is one which makes a judgment that it will not raise to doubt, although it is not true.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

If the only prayer you ever said was 'Thank you', that would be enough - Meister Eckhart

What can you be thankful for right this moment? Even if it doesn't seem to benefit you directly?

Right now...I am thankful for the *willingness to know truth*

Prayer for the World

I am created innocent as is every person. When I see guilt, whether in myself or in another, it is because I have forgotten who and what I truly am and who and what my brother truly is. When I

experience and act out of anger, shame, guilt, unworthiness, impatience, doubt...it is because I have lost sight of my birthplace, my true home, the world of Love, where I am born innocent. When I perceive anything but love, it is because I have momentarily forgotten my innocence and my brother's innocence. When I perceive anything but Love, I am in a state of Ignorance. May I choose to return to the real world of Love from the fabricated world of evil, guilt and hatred where judgement is the way of existence. May I choose to return home again and again and again and so bring myself and the world back to our natural state of peace, joy, freedom and unconditional Love.

**You are loved. You matter.
Life recreates you moment by moment!**



If you'd like to find out about working with me in a Mentoring program, in Self-Awareness and Empowerment workshops, or would simply like to receive my weekly emails, please contact me [HERE](#).

This weekly message was produced by Lucy at
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