

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 10

My thoughts do not mean anything.

Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus tells us that this is the second time this idea has been introduced. The first time was in Lesson 4. The only difference is a change from "These thoughts" to "My thoughts do not mean anything." In Lesson 4, we were told, **"This is a major exercise, and will be repeated from time to time in different form."** (W.4.3.1)

Why would this Lesson be so important? To address that question, we need to look at what is said in the text. If we look at Chapter 21, Introduction, we read **"Projection makes perception."** (T.21.IN.1.1) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1) This is a significant statement, but what exactly does it mean? To start, we need to see the connection between our thoughts and what we perceive. While we think that our thoughts are real, Jesus tells us we are not thinking at all. In fact, he says our minds are actually blank, the reason being we are holding thoughts and ideas in the mind that are not real; they are meaningless thoughts.

We project these meaningless thoughts, and now they show us a meaningless world. Yet we all believe there is a real world outside of the mind. In fact, our senses confirm its reality, but our senses were made by the ego precisely to affirm what is not true. All we are seeing and experiencing in the world is our own state of mind. **"The world you see is what you gave it, nothing more than that. Though it is no more than that, it is not less. Therefore, to you it is important. It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition."** (T.21.IN.1.2) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1) Our thoughts are neither good nor bad, only meaningless. They are meaningless because they come from a false self (ego) that seems to be separate from God. This is important because it is the basis for forgiveness. We are told to forgive others for what they did not do. If the world is not real but only a projection of our thoughts, then nothing is happening except what is in the mind. Therefore, we are not the victim of the world or what others do as none of it is real. It is all a drama playing out in the mind.

We project our meaningless thoughts, and now we see them as images in a world that seems real to us. We think the world acts on us, and we are innocent victims at its mercy, but we learn we have it backward, as it all starts in the mind. Therefore, the world is the effect of our thoughts. Our own minds are the cause. If I believe someone has betrayed me by what they have said or done, what I am seeing is my belief that I can be hurt, that I am a body, and there is someone outside my own mind who has the power to hurt me. All these beliefs are false. When given to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation, He reminds us that this seeming attack is a call for love from a brother. Nothing else is happening. It is much like our nighttime dreams where something real seems to be going on, but it is all coming from the dreaming mind. We only see the unreality of the dream when we wake up from it. In the same way, this is a world of illusion, and it is not real. It is just our dream. We are holding onto a belief system about the world as being outside our own minds, but it is simply a reflection of the thoughts and beliefs we hold in the mind.

What do we do when we are feeling distressed, troubled, or unhappy about a situation in our lives? We generally try to make changes in the world, don't we? We try to solve the problem by changing something "out there." Yet Jesus reminds us, **"Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world."** (T.21.IN.1.7) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1) Because we currently hold the belief that the world is separate from our thoughts, we try to work with the effects of our thoughts, but working with effects cannot bring real change. The only change that has meaning is the healing of our misperceptions. We can only do the healing by recognizing that what we are seeing is false. It has no meaning because it comes from a meaningless thought. The cause of everything we see in the world starts with the thoughts in the mind.

We are asked to look at our thoughts without selection or judgment and remind ourselves that the thought about _____ does not mean anything. Our minds are full of thoughts and ideas that don't mean anything. We are now asked to try to look at these thoughts with no personal attachment. What this means is that the "you" who doing the looking is not the same one who is thinking the thoughts. This "you" is the observer of those thoughts. It is awareness, watching the thoughts without judgment. Eckhart Tolle describes his epiphany, sitting on a park bench, thinking thoughts of despair when he asks himself, "Who is thinking these thoughts?" In this question, there is a realization of another part of the mind that is asking the question. In that moment, he becomes his awareness, leaving the thinking mind and coming to a place of peace and ultimately, having an experience of awakening.

Apply this practice to **". . . all the thoughts of which you are aware, or become aware in the practice periods."** (W.10.1.1) Jesus tells us, **"The reason the idea is applicable to all of them is that they are not your real thoughts."** (W.10.1.2) What are our "real thoughts?" The thoughts that currently occupy our minds do seem like real thoughts, don't they? Yet we are told there is no reality to what we think we think! Jesus says we don't really know our real thoughts. He says that we **". . . have no basis for comparison as yet."** (W.10.1.4) And we won't until we have some experience of our real thoughts behind the illusory thoughts we are thinking. When we do have an experience of our real thoughts, he says that we **". . . will have no doubt that what you [we] once believed were your [our] thoughts did not mean anything."** (W.10.1.5)

We are assured however, that real thoughts are currently in our right minds while illusory thoughts come from our wrong minds. What we call the wrong mind is the part of the mind that has identified itself with the ego thought system of separation. The right mind is where the truth of what we are resides. It is hidden from us by our illusory thoughts. It is where the Holy Spirit waits for us to turn to Him for His reinterpretation of what we are currently thinking. He is the bridge from the wrong mind to the right mind. We come to it through the decision maker that is between the wrong mind and right mind and the one that chooses to turn to the ego or Holy Spirit. It is wonderful that we have the decision-making power within us to choose what we believe simply by bringing our false thoughts to the truth. This is the experience of the miracle, which is a shift in the mind from false perception to true perception.

Does that mean that we deny what we see in the world as just an illusion? Do we deny our feelings. Are we to deny our belief in the body and the world. Jesus tells us that this is an inappropriate use of denial. It is not helpful to deny what we currently believe, or we would be doing a spiritual bypass rather than looking at our thoughts and beliefs. What we are asked to do is to watch the thoughts and be willing to apply the Lesson by seeing a thought and affirming it does not mean anything. Thus, it is a denial of the power of the thoughts to affect us.

Currently, I am involved in addressing a difficult situation that seems to have no easy solution. Lawyers are involved and everything seems tenuous. What a tremendous opportunity for me to look at all my obsessive concerns and all my neurotic future projections as I remember **"My thought about [this situation] does not mean anything."** (W.10.4.3) When I acknowledge that maybe there is another way to see this situation, I am willing to be shown. When I think that I know how to see the situation and what to do, I am using my own past experience to try to solve a problem in form that seems beyond solving. I am not making way for the miracle. The Holy Spirit will reinterpret any situation when we invite Him in.

Today, search your mind for **". . . all the thoughts that are available to you, without selection or judgment."** (W.10.4.4) **"You might imagine that you are watching an oddly assorted procession going by, which has little if any personal meaning to you."** (W.10.4.6) We are practicing a kind of detachment here. We are simply witnessing our thoughts. **"Try to avoid classification of any kind."** (W.10.4.5) It matters only that I look at the thoughts and watch them pass by without any judgment. You may wonder who is doing the looking at these odd assortments of thoughts that may include worry, hatred, anger, jealousy, sadness, frustration, discomfort, fantasies, planning, anticipation, strategizing, discomfort, or whatever? My mind may be chewing on a grievance against someone, strategizing how to get even, looking at how to fix a relationship, solve a problem, or plan my day. The observer of the thoughts is awareness that is what we are removed from the ego.

When we step back to a place outside this thinking mind, we join with Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or whatever the symbol of eternal love is for you, and watch the self that is doing the thinking. This thinker is just a character in the dream, but the aware mind behind the dream figure can step out of the dream and become the observer of the character who is thinking that what it believes are meaningful thoughts. It is an important exercise because **"This idea will help to release me from all that I now believe."** (W.10.4.3) Incredible as that sounds, the basis for what I believe is that I have actually left the truth of who I am and separated from Love! It is my belief that I am now different and separate from you and everyone else and have a special, individual self that I call Sarah.

It is not an easy exercise because our thoughts are so much on automatic pilot that we are not aware of them most of the time. When we try to look at what we are thinking about, it can be difficult for the untrained mind.

If any of these exercises are a strain, we should then reduce the time to less than a minute. Just be aware of any resistance. It will be there! Try not to judge the thoughts that come up. It is helpful to recognize that they are not important, meaningful, good, bad, big, insignificant, beautiful, or tragic. They are nothing. When we categorize them and put judgment on them, we believe that what is actually nothing and means nothing is indeed important. If, for example, I am feeling vengeful or jealous, I judge myself because I think of these as bad thoughts. I then judge myself for not being sufficiently loving or spiritual; or I may judge some of my thoughts as meaningful and important and, based on those judgments, I think of myself as loving or spiritual. What is important is to look at all thoughts without judgment of ourselves. Behind these thoughts is where the truth lies.

The purpose of this exercise is to recognize how we are blocking our real thoughts. Our meaningless thoughts are what keep us from the peace and joy given us in our inheritance. They block our awareness of the Self we are, perfect and lacking nothing. Yet we cling to the limited small self. We may wonder, as Byron Katie asks us to consider, who would I be without these thoughts? We have used all kinds of words and ideas about ourselves in constructing who we think

we are. This self-concept we have constructed and the world we think is real is all that covers over the mystical Self, we think we have lost. Yes, we have lost our way, but we can never change who we are as the Christ Self. This journey is about coming to the awareness of this Self. We may be nervous about what it means to know the Self we are, but that is just another meaningless thought.

The power is in us to do our part. No one can do it for us. Even Jesus says that he can't override our decisions. There is no point in praying to him to take away our fear because we are the ones who made it. **"You may still complain about fear, but you nevertheless persist in making yourself fearful. I have already indicated that you cannot ask me to release you from fear. I know it does not exist, but you do not. If I intervened between your thoughts and their results, I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect, the most fundamental law there is. I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking. This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course. It is much more helpful to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts carefully enough. You may feel at this point it would take a miracle to enable you to do this, which is perfectly true. You are not used to miracle-minded thinking, but you can be trained to think that way."** (T.2.VII.1.) (ACIM OE T.2.V.93)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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