

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 229

Love, which* created me, is what I am.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson is about the importance of accepting our reality, which is not a body or personality that we think of as ourselves. **"I am not a body. I am free for I am still as Love created me."** (W.RVI.3.3-5) When the mind is healed, we experience Oneness with the Father and with all our brothers and sisters. There is no separation.

What does forgiveness have to do with all of this? Forgiveness is the process of releasing all the judgments we hold about ourselves and all our self-concepts, beliefs, and grievances, which are made-up by **"my foolish mind."** (W.229.2.1) Nothing we think about ourselves and the world is true. The body has no reality. It is just a piece of clay. **"And what are you who live within the world except a picture of the Son of God in broken pieces, each concealed within a separate and uncertain bit of clay?"** (T.28.III)

The body is a projection of the mind. It is a projection of the unconscious guilt we hold in the mind that keeps us from awareness of our reality. **"What has the body really given you that justifies your strange belief that in it lies salvation? Do you not see that this is the belief in death? Here is the focus of the perception of Atonement as murder. Here is the source of the idea that love is fear. The Holy Spirit's messengers are sent far beyond the body, calling the mind to join in holy communion and be at peace. Such is the message that I (Jesus) gave them for you."** (T.19.IV.B)

To heal, we must bring all judgments, opinions, ideas, beliefs, and concepts to the truth. It is about bringing the darkness to the light, not about bringing spirituality/God/truth to the illusion. To do so is to overlay spiritual concepts onto what we currently hold in the mind. It is another defense against the truth, adding another block to the awareness of love's presence. Thus, spiritualizing the illusion is not helpful. Spiritualizing the illusion is when we try to bring God into our lives in the mistaken belief that we can make our lives better and happier in the illusion.

The goal of the Course is to awaken from this dream, not to make the prison house prettier so we can have a better dream. When the blocks to love are released, space is made for the peace and joy already in the mind. This means we need to look at our thoughts with courage, honesty, and clarity and bring them to the inner altar where Holiness abides in us. Thus, we bring the illusions to the truth and recognize their falsity. Our job is to be vigilant in watching our thoughts and taking responsibility for our projections. We must look at our grievances with honesty and non-judgment, recognizing they are just foolish thoughts and don't belong to us. They are part of the tiny mad idea where the Son of God remembered not to laugh. Now we can smile at the unreality of these thoughts and wait patiently

in trust and confidence for the Holy Spirit to do the rest. The Holy Spirit responds immediately at our request. There may seem to be a delay, yet all we are waiting for is our own readiness to receive His answer and be released. Even when we say we are ready, there may still be resistance to letting our perspectives go. The ego does not give up readily.

For example, I have, in the past, been insecure in my relationships, which created feelings of possessiveness and jealousy. I thought the way to address my problem was to find ways to control my partner in the mistaken belief that if he did what I wanted him to do or stopped doing what was making me jealous, I could be happy and secure. I was ready to ask for real healing only when I was willing to take total responsibility and accept that it was my own mind that was the cause of my feelings of insecurity and had nothing to do with my partner. My own self-attacking thoughts were being projected onto him. I needed to come to willingness to release my fearful thoughts and my feelings of unworthiness and take responsibility that it was all coming from my own mind.

Healing happens when we are ready to look at our projections that are based on what is going on in the mind, rather than trying to change things in form. The jealousy persisted even after I thought I had forgiven it. Clearly, it was an indication that there were lingering fears still in the mind that I was not yet ready to release. Then one day, I noticed that the same intensity of feelings about abandonment and unworthiness were considerably lessened. What had happened? Initially, it seemed that I had given them over to the Holy Spirit, but I was unaware that I was consistently taking my fears back. I had not completely surrendered them to Him. Each time I noticed the thoughts were there again in my mind, I reminded myself that they were being handled by Him and I could trust that it was not up to me to do anything about them. One day I noticed there was significant release of the feelings of jealousy and possessiveness. I realized it was still a process. The beautiful thing about this process was that it was not my doing. The ego will never undo itself. Our part is always to bring awareness to our issues, take responsibility for them, inquire into the root cause, and place the issue on the inner altar, and the Holy Spirit does the rest. It is what makes forgiveness easy, as our part is not difficult when we do not insist that we have the answers or that it is up to us to fix ourselves.

The reason it seems to take time is that, even though we say we are willing to let certain fears and issues go, we still stubbornly hold onto them; or we turn them over only to take them back. For example, we might give over a fear thought, but later notice that our minds are ruminating on that same thought again. This is the temptation of the ego to keep the fear thought and thereby justify its own existence. When we ruminate on thoughts we think we have released, we are still invested in them. We like our own thoughts, which define us as special and separate from others. Who would I be without these thoughts? Our mind-watching must be vigilant if we are to catch the ego at its game. When our determination for healing is strong, all situations and events in our lives contribute perfectly. When this is the case, nothing in our day is wrong. Everything is perfectly orchestrated. We do not see anything as a problem, but only as an opportunity to heal another layer of the mind.

This Course does not simply tell us that the world is a dream, but it takes us to the root of that belief, and slowly, as we are ready, we learn to undo the hallucination until we recognize truth. Affirmations assist us in this process because they affirm the truth, but they will never be enough. We can never drown out the incessant voice of the ego with the truth. We must do the work of undoing the ego with willingness and determination. We must question everything we currently hold as true.

Forgiveness is at the core of the work of healing the mind. Releasing our judgments helps us realize there is nothing we need to do to know the truth about ourselves. There is nothing to seek. We are it.

We are Love. That is the truth about us, even though it is obscured by illusory thoughts and beliefs. **"You may be surprised to hear how very different is reality from what you see. You do not realize the magnitude of that one error. It was so vast and so completely incredible that from it a world of total unreality *had* to emerge. What else could come of it? Its fragmented aspects are fearful enough, as you begin to look at them. But nothing you have seen begins to show you the enormity of the original error, which seems to cast you out of Heaven, to shatter knowledge into meaningless bits of disunited perceptions, and to force you to make further substitutions. "** (T.18.I.5.1-6) (ACIM OE T.18.II.5) It all comes from projection of the thoughts in the mind. I have taught myself this madness and I suffer for it, but I am urged not to be afraid of what I have made, for it is **"not sin but madness."** (T.18.I.6.7) (ACIM OE T.18.II.6) **"Inward is sanity; insanity is outside you."** (T.18.I.7.4) (ACIM OE T.18.II.7)

"Love is not learned. Its meaning lies within itself. And learning ends when you have recognized all it is *not*." (T.18.IX.12.1-3) (ACIM OE T.18.XI.96)

We do not need to fix ourselves. We just need to release all the beliefs and concepts that are not true. Many of these beliefs are reinforced by the world. An example of this is from a manuscript written by Karen Bentley, a Course teacher who wrote that Rush Limbaugh, a talk show host, apparently spoke of four popular beliefs about addiction, which are:

1. We need help to solve our problems with addictions
2. We are powerless victims of the disease
3. We can never really heal and are stuck in the limbo of recovery forever
4. To stop yourself from addictions is a monumentally difficult task

Jesus helps us to see these ideas are taught to us by an ego mind that is false, limiting, disempowering, and self-attacking. We are not weak, helpless, sick, or victimized by anything. Yet it is easy to embrace such statements and believe in them when everyone around us holds them near and dear; just because millions or even billions hold this as true does not make it so. As we accept these kinds of popularized thoughts into the mind we limit ourselves and block our healing and happiness. It is apparent that we cannot look to the world to change our perceptions. We need to look to our own minds and bring these and other false thoughts to the truth. Any addiction *can* be healed. Willpower is not what is required. In fact, willpower has very little power on its own because it is not of God. Only willingness to bring our unhealed thoughts to the truth has true power to heal. These are thoughts that have been kept locked away in the conditioned mind.

Jesus asks us to examine, **"Have you not wondered what the world is really like; how it would look through happy eyes? The world you see is but a judgment on yourself. It is not there at all. Yet judgment lays a sentence on it, justifies it and makes it real. Such is the world you see; a judgment on yourself, and made by you. This sickly picture of yourself is carefully preserved by the ego, whose image it is and which it loves, and placed outside you in the world. And to this world must you adjust as long as you believe the picture is outside, and has you at its mercy. This world is merciless, and were it outside of you, you should indeed be fearful. Yet it was you who made it**

merciless, and now if mercilessness seems to look back at you, it can be corrected." (T.20.III.5.1-9) (ACIM OE T.20.IV.20)

This is saying that it is within our control to change what we perceive because the world is just a projection of the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear held in the mind. In other words, the world reflects what we are thinking. I do not have control over the world I made, but I do have control over the thoughts I choose to believe. By trying to change things in the world or by trying to change or control others to make me happy, I will always be fighting a losing battle; but, as I heal my mind, I look on the world through the eyes of love. It does not necessarily mean the behavior of others will change, though it may. But if not, my perception of their behavior certainly will.

I have been a master of manipulation and control in my relationships. It was all based on fear and a deep sense of unworthiness. I did not feel the love within and therefore tried to extract it from others. It was all based on neediness and a sense of lack. It was not easy to take back my projections and take responsibility for them, but as I did so more and more, I recognized the love in me was always there. When my husband left me many years ago, I learned that love was not about trying to keep the form. Yes, it was difficult, and feelings of rejection, abandonment, and unworthiness came up, but I felt assurance from Jesus that I was not left comfortless. I learned that when the goal for the relationship is changed from specialness to holiness, initially there is significant conflict, so I accepted this was part of the process of healing. As such, I held in my mind the firm belief that I would come through it with His help. This is the value of the Course because Jesus lays out the path very clearly for us and helps us see what we can expect as we go through this process. When everything seems to be falling apart, we do not need to run from the Course, but instead, to recognize that we are on the way through the darkness to the light. The process is indeed difficult at times, but the end result is more and more peace and joy in our lives.

"Love wishes to be known, completely understood and shared. It has no secrets; nothing that it would keep apart and hide. It walks in sunlight, open-eyed and calm, in smiling welcome and in sincerity so simple and so obvious it cannot be misunderstood." (T.20.VI.2.5-7) (ACIM OE T.20.VII.46)

If you are distressed today, know there is a program, running in your mind of thoughts, beliefs, and self-concepts, to be uncovered for your healing. The Holy Spirit will not bring these thoughts to the light because we are the ones that made them, and now it is our job to bring them to the truth. No one but myself is responsible for my lack of peace. If I do not have peace, it is because I have thrown it away, believing that someone or something has the power to take it from me. I can withdraw that power when I realize that everything that is happening is what I have called into my day. When I take responsibility for my lack of peace and willingly turn over my beliefs, what I perceive as problems become opportunities for healing.

As we become more and more confident in the power of this process, we welcome challenges, as they assist us to look more deeply into the ego thought system. **"The darkest of your hidden cornerstones holds your belief in guilt from your awareness."** (T.13.II.3.1) (ACIM OE T.13.II.3) Increasingly, we move toward these dark cornerstones with more and more confidence. We come to know and trust the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives because we have tested it and found it to be true. When the mind and emotions shift, there is also a shift in the seeming world, and thus we experience more and more peace and joy.

The caution is that as chronic problems in our lives are brought up for healing, there may be a sense that things are getting worse, but this is only because these problems have layers. As we uncover each layer, we go deeper into the mind, a place the ego has kept out of our awareness. This is where our unhappiness, conflict, and fears originate. The deeper we go into the mind, the more we uncover and, sometimes, the worse we feel; but this need not be. From outside of the dream, we can see the unreality of it all and approach mind-watching with positive anticipation, knowing the outcome is ultimately more peace and joy.

The ego says, "Don't go there." Yet when it seems dangerous to the ego mind, it is celebrated by Spirit. Under the darkness is the love. What the ego is really afraid of is love. The ego is happy to see us stay in our suffering and continue to believe our own thoughts. The real fear held by the ego is that when we go through the dark clouds, we will discover the truth that the clouds are not real. The sun has always been shining on us, simply obscured by the clouds which are our own thoughts. We are pure Love. Our fear is of losing control and submitting to the love, which we have kept out of awareness in order to preserve our beliefs and self-concepts.

We are eternally powerful beings who can never die. **"Love, which created me, is what I am."** (W.229) I dedicate these words today to the memory of my ex-husband Dr. Ken Ward, who left his body on this date, but, like all of us, was created in love and continues in the truth of his eternal being that cannot die. May this awareness grow in each of us. It is what time is for.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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