

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 282

I will not be afraid of love today.

Sarah's Commentary:

My true Self is love. Why would I be afraid of love? Why do I not want to know my Self? Isn't love something we all want? Yet we resist its presence. Why? We resist love because the ego is the embodiment of the fear of love and has given us substitutes for love. We made the ego, and we love what we have made. We don't fear what we call love in the world, but this "love" is based on fear and a substitute for the real thing. The real thing is what we are, and a threat to the ego because we value the self we made. In fact, we see real love as weak and give it the attributes of fear. We rely on fear to protect us. **"Fear looks on guilt with just the same devotion that love looks on itself."** (T.19.IV.A.i.10.9) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.49) Fear is familiar to us and thus seen as our friend, but even though we identify with the ego, the ego does not love us. **"You who identify with your ego cannot believe God loves you."** (T.4.III.4.1) (ACIM OE T.4.IV.49) **"You made the ego without love, and so it does not love you."** (T.6.IV.2.3) (ACIM OE T.6.V.46)

The ego wants to maintain the separate self, housed in a body, seeing everyone else as different. It holds onto grievances, sees itself as an innocent victim, sees itself unfairly treated, and uses its power to support its own specialness. To give this up for love seems dangerous. It feels like a sacrifice to surrender our will to God's Will.

Jesus asks, **"And can the truth be changed by merely giving it another name?"** (W.282.2.3) In other words, we already are Love and can't change that fact. We are simply hiding from the truth. The Holy Spirit, Who abides in the right mind, is the memory of the Self we are. The Holy Spirit is the Call within us to which we have responded and has got us on this path.

We have shown a willingness to undo the blocks to love by putting our foot on this path, even if only tentatively. We now use the means provided us to remember the love we are, so we can experience the freedom, peace, joy wholeness, creativity, beauty, abundance, and harmony which is our inheritance. To know this Self requires that we release resentments, specialness, judgments, grievances, self-concepts, and blame. In other words, we must look at all our false perceptions and bring them to the Holy Spirit's healing light. If we truly want our suffering to end, we can't continue to cling to our judgments, our opinions, and our interpretations. We must be willing to learn what Jesus teaches. We must be willing to no longer cling to the past and the pain of past unhealed hurts. Yes, it does take determination. It is the **"determination not to be asleep in dreams of death."** (W.282.1.3) It is the determination to be vigilant in watching our thoughts, to lose interest in our stories, to walk through the darkness with Jesus, to keep choosing Heaven in place of hell in each moment, and to consistently turn to the Truth within for another interpretation of how to see everything.

When we affirm, "**I will not be afraid of love today,**" (W.282) we are really saying we are willing to be taught how to bring more peace and joy into our lives. As I willingly look at my misperceptions and admit I have been wrong about who I am, space is made for the miracle. Thus, while we still have a lot of resistance, every step we take toward the truth is strongly reinforced. If we completely got this one Lesson, or indeed any Lesson, we could wake up from the dream. But fear comes up in the mind. We wonder what will I be without the self I currently hold onto as my identity? Will I no longer be accepted by my family and friends? Will I have anything to talk about? If I am not joining in the drama, what is there that will connect me with others? Will others leave me? Will I be judged and considered weird? There is a pull to awaken yet resistance is still there.

The ego is insanity whose only purpose is to keep us away from our true reality. I remember when I was in my preteen years, I would get upset with my parents and give them the silent treatment. I thought I was really hurting them, which perhaps I was, but more important, my ego strategy was keeping me in hell. Yet I stubbornly refused to give up the program that gave me the illusion of power over them. I told myself they deserved the guilt for what they did to me. I punished them with my withdrawal, even if it hurt me. I continued that pattern long into adulthood until a memorable day when I chose to forgive instead of projecting guilt, after a hurtful incident with my husband. In that moment, I recognized how the ego relished this situation and was only hurting myself. I thought I was punishing others, but it was all my mind. By projecting guilt onto the seeming victimizer, I suffered. But to the ego suffering seems worth it to make someone pay for their 'crime' In that moment of realization, I chose to see my brother as innocent. Instead of condemning him, my grievances disappeared, and we joined in healing. It was such a relief to let go of a long-held story and a pattern of manipulation, holding me in chains while also holding my brothers as prisoners with me while getting the perverse pleasure of making them wrong.

It took a lot of determination to go past the ranting of the ego, urging me to get revenge on my brother for what he seemingly did to me. The voice of the ego running in the mind was that he deserves to suffer for what he has done. Yet each time I released this long-held pattern, it got easier and easier, and the amount of time held in anger was significantly decreased. As a result, there was much more joy in the relationship. It was another demonstration that the ego never has our best interests in mind. It urges us to prolong our suffering rather than admit we are wrong. We so often choose to be right rather than to be happy. Yet with forgiveness, the only thing I "sacrificed" was suffering!

We have substituted special love for the real love we are. In this world, every relationship, whether we call it love or hate, is special. Why? It is because the ego uses every relationship as a bargain to try to extract love while projecting guilt on another. It is the guilt of separation from God. Now we want to make someone else responsible so we can buy our innocence at their expense. We can blame them for our condition. If we use a relationship in this way, it is actually a relationship of hate. Special love relationships are actually hate relationships camouflaged as love! **"Be not afraid to look upon the special hate relationship, for freedom lies in looking at it. It would be impossible not to know the meaning of love, except for this. For the special love relationship, in which the meaning of love is hidden is undertaken solely to offset the hate, but not to let it go."** (T.16.IV 1.1-3) (ACIM OE T.16.V.30) The first time I came across this statement in the course, I must say, I was outraged at the thought. It was a blasphemous thought to the ego yet with time I came to see the truth of it!

To limit others to the body is an attack because we are keeping them bound to the false self. In our special relationships, we are always trying to get something from the other that we feel is missing in us. Yet we resent the other because we believe they are withholding from us what they could, and

should, be giving us. We also resent that we are dependent on them for having to get what we want from them. Therefore, any love relationship in this world will always have ambivalence in it, with a combination of attraction and hatred. And the hatred in the relationship is all our own self-hatred reflected back at us.

Jesus tells us that whatever is missing in any relationship is what we are not giving. **"Every brother you meet becomes a witness for Christ or for the ego depending on what you perceive in him."** (T.11.V.18.1) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.58) **"If he speaks not of Christ to you, you spoke not of Christ to him. You hear but your own voice, and if Christ speaks through you, you will hear Him."** (T.11.V.18.6-7) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.58) Nothing can come to us from outside of ourselves. Others can't upset us or rob us of our peace. When we make sin and guilt real in the mind, we make others responsible for how we feel. We see them robbing us of our peace, yet we have actually set it up this way, so we can blame them for our condition. True, they may say and do unkind things, but if we react personally to what someone has said, we have interpreted their call for love and understanding as an attack, and this interpretation comes from our own unhealed minds.

Now we are called to take our misperceptions to the Holy Spirit and be willing to have them reinterpreted. For any relationship to be healed the purpose for it must be changed so the relationship now has a different goal. Instead of using it to extract love from the other, the only purpose it now has is for healing. Only in this way can the love we are be remembered. In other words, it is only about our own minds as we are only in relationship with the ego or the Holy Spirit. Which teacher we turn to in the mind determines the nature of our relationship either special with the ego, or holy with the Holy Spirit.

"Father, Your Name is Love and so is mine." (W.282.2.1) This is not a statement about our Father as a Being that loves us, but that we are essentially Love itself and One with Him. If our Father is seen as someone who is a Being that loves, He has the option also not to love. I think this is an important distinction and, while subtle, recognizes our true nature and Oneness with the love that can never change nor be separate from what we are.

While we have given ourselves the name of fear and forgotten who we are, it is not a reason for guilt and self-attack. It is only a mistake to be undone and not a sin. Neither is it helpful to deny the pain, distress, grief, and other emotions that we experience. In fact, it is not helpful to fight with the ego but to recognize these emotions arise from thoughts and beliefs we hold that are not the truth. It is not to deny our feelings but go into them fully and inquire what is fueling them so we can let them go as they are brought to awareness. They do not define us. It is just all mistaken perception that requires our willingness and readiness to turn to the Holy Spirit for His Correction. Choosing to see the emotions from above the battleground and smiling at their unreality without judging them will dissipate them into the nothingness from which they came. I love the simplicity of it all. Our stubbornness and resistance and our identification with this false self is the only thing that stands in the way, but we have the power of decision in us to choose again.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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