

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 6

I am upset because I see something that is not there.

Sarah's Commentary:

These early Lessons are essential in setting the groundwork for the discipline of mind watching. We are entertaining the possibility that the way we think about everything has been based on false premises. In fact, Jesus says very clearly that our minds are untrained, and **"An untrained mind can accomplish nothing."** (W.PI.IN.1.3) If you do the exercises as prescribed in the workbook, you will be undoing the way you see now (the first half of the workbook) and gaining a new (true) perception through the Lessons in Part II of the workbook.

I have been with the Course for over 25 years and have done the Lessons many times, but I can attest to the significant changes that took place in my life after doing the Lessons in the first year. This was in spite of my very limited understanding of the metaphysics of the Course. Jesus promises that as we apply ourselves to the mind training in a systematic way, we will have a **". . . different perception of everyone and everything in the world."** (W.PI.IN.4.1) Every step we take is strongly reinforced. **"Were not each step in this direction so heavily reinforced, it would be hard indeed!"** (M.4.I.A.7.9)

Today, we are again reminded that any upset, big or small, results in a loss of peace. We can't be a little bit peaceful. Either we are at peace, or we are not. Anything that is upsetting to us and brings to mind worry, fear, depression, anxiety, anger, expectations, or desires, is disturbing to our peace. There is no hierarchy of big or small upsets. **"There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind. And: I cannot keep this form of upset and let the others go. For the purposes of these exercises, then, I will regard them all as the same."** (W.6.3.2-6) They are all the same because they are all unreal. While upsetting thoughts are talked about here, the same would apply to what we call "pleasurable" thoughts. They too detract from the real thoughts in our right minds.

What is important about this Lesson is to see there is nothing outside of us. None of it is real. It is all illusion. This is not easy for us, as we do experience things that seem to come from outside of us we give reality. We attribute our upsets to something that seems to be coming at us, but more and more, we will understand that everything that upsets us starts with our own inward condition. What is upsetting to me is the meaning I am giving to what is actually a neutral situation or event. The good news is that we have the power within us to change our condition.

Today, we are asked to specifically identify our feelings. **"I am angry at _____ because I see something that is not there."** (W.6.1.4) We take a few minutes to search the mind for feelings of upset. Sometimes, we get so used to the painful and fearful feelings, which are literally there all the time, that it is hard to identify them. We are not conscious of them so have no idea they are always playing in the background of the mind until we start to get more consistent in noticing them. They cannot be healed if we don't see them, so this step is necessary.

Don woke up this morning from a distressing dream, and as he told me about it, I said it must be a relief that it was just a dream. He was distressed by something that was not there. Isn't it a relief to know that the disturbing things in our nighttime dreams are not there? This is the kind of relief we feel when we realize in our waking dream that we are also seeing something that is not there. As children, we may have believed there was something menacing in our bedroom, but when our parents turned on the lights, we saw there was nothing there. In the same way, we are seeing what is not there. Everything we see is a projection of thoughts in the mind, and these projections are illusions because they are not there either.

It does not mean that an event hasn't occurred in the illusion. Some time ago, I was involved in a controversy related to events that took place at my mother's seniors' residence. I was worried, angry, frustrated, and distressed by this situation. The event did occur, but what upset me was my interpretation of it. It was my lack of acceptance and feeling that I should be able to control the outcome. I felt at the mercy of what was being proposed. I reminded myself I was giving meaning to something that in reality was not there. It is no different than a nighttime dream. I was reacting to the interpretation I was giving the situation and that is what upset me. Each of us may perceive it differently. While the event may have occurred on the level of form, my upset about it is what I am invited to look at. I am responding to a thought in my mind and actually choosing to be upset.

This is not a course in behavior. It is a course in mind training. A Course in Miracles is addressing the mind and is concerned only with the content of the mind. A perceived problem in the world may still need our attention, but the real work is in the mind. We then approach the problem with equanimity or distress depending on the decision we make and whether we turn to the ego or the Holy Spirit for how to see it. When we take the time to look at the mind and ask the Holy Spirit how to see this problem differently, sometimes the solution we thought was applicable is not required.

"No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous." (T.11.V.1.1-2) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.39)

"The 'dynamics' of the ego will be our lesson for a while, for we must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth." (T.11.V.1.5-6) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.39)

The Course is taking us to the realization that God created everything that exists, but he created only that which is real and eternal. Nothing in the world of form could be created by God because it is all temporary, including our bodies. At the beginning of the Course Jesus tells us, **"Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God."** (T.IN.2.2-3) (ACIM OE T.IN.4-5) Can we accept that God did not create upsetting things? And if God did not create those things that upset us, they can't be real and they don't exist.

Jesus tells us the world was not created by God but is a projection of the wrong mind. We believe we have separated from God and our reality is a body living in this world. We are reliving that moment of terror when we seemed to separate from eternity, and now we are replaying that moment over and over in these upsetting incidents of fear and distress. Each upsetting incident is just a small part of this whole separation saga we replay again and again.

Slowly, step by step, we are being led to a serenity that cannot be disturbed by the circumstances and events of the world. We are slowly undoing the normal human way we have learned to see

things. We are opening to a new possibility where we are slowly learning to release the attachment we have to the world of form and to our thoughts about it. Our interpretations are being brought to question. Again, we don't even have to accept or believe these Lessons for them to be effective.

The important thing is to do the exercises as prescribed. Our current way of thinking all comes from guilt in the mind. The guilt comes from the belief that we stole our identity from God. This is the cause of all our pain and distress. We are now engaged in a process of undoing our current way of seeing. We just need to trust in the process. We have been brought to this path because we are ready to find a better way to live our lives and to ultimately wake up to the truth of who we are.

Thus, the steps involved in applying these teachings begin by: 1. Seeing the problems we have made up in the world. 2. Dealing with the problems in the normal way (i.e., paying taxes and paying our bills). 3. Learning to recognize that the problems are made up as a smokescreen for the real problem. 4. The real problem is the choice in the mind to take the thought of separation seriously. **"Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh. In his forgetting did the thought become a serious idea, possible of both accomplishment and real effects. Together, we can laugh them both away, and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity. It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which means there is not time."** (T.27.VIII.6.2-5) (ACIM OE T.27.IX.82) A Course in Miracles gives us the means to remember not to take everything in our lives so seriously and realize we have never left the Mind of God.

The purpose the ego assigns to the world's problems is to keep us invested in the illusion so we will not look within and see the real problem, which is the guilt in the mind. Since we believe in the world with its bills and taxes as real, we hold judgments that need to be acknowledged because they reveal our hidden beliefs in scarcity, victimization, and loss. Our feelings reflect the beliefs and values we hold. They cannot be dispelled if we are unaware of them.

In the same way, belief in the body cannot be undone by denying it or by ignoring specific conditions of the body. Not paying bills or taxes would certainly bring on an avalanche of other problems. The exacerbated situation would reinforce the ego's smokescreen and would not facilitate healing. Only when the real problem, which is the belief in separation, is recognized can we turn to the Holy Spirit in the mind to seek the real solution, which is undoing the belief in separation through forgiveness. To forgive is to bring our dark thoughts to the healing light of the Holy Spirit within the minds. When forgiveness is complete, we will see that the world, with all its "problems," is not real, and move beyond this illusion to the truth.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemert@shaw.ca

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