

## ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



### Lesson 4

**These thoughts do not mean anything.  
They are like the things I see in this room  
[on this street, from the window, in this place].**

#### **Sarah's Commentary:**

It is initially challenging to watch our thoughts, yet that is precisely what we are being asked to do. We are generally not aware of the myriad thoughts that play on the surface of our minds. The mind is very noisy, but we are not used to paying attention to what our thoughts are about. Now we come to the end of our day and feel depressed and disheartened, and we don't know why because we have not tuned into what we have been telling ourselves all day. Our thoughts dictate our feelings, and thus, our feelings can be a good gateway to the beliefs we hold about ourselves and others. Because our feelings come from the thoughts, beliefs, values, and concepts we hold, it is important to watch what we are thinking.

When we lament, "I can't help it. That is just the way I feel," we are assuming that we are at the mercy of something outside of us. Thus, we feel the world is the cause, and we are the effect of outside events and circumstances. We are learning that the events that seem to have an impact on us are actually neutral. It is the meaning we choose to give these events that determines how we feel. The inner and outer are the same. We are being shown that ultimately our thoughts have no meaning, just like the forms we see have no meaning. The only meaning they have is the meaning we give them. Our thoughts are not different from the forms we perceive and give meaning to. **"They are like the things I see in this room."** (W.4) It is not about good thoughts or bad thoughts. We judge our thoughts as good or bad, but we are being told they are simply not real. The only reality is Oneness. Nothing outside of that is real. The problem is, we give what is "outside" meaning. The meaning we give it is all based on past learning. Jesus says that what we are seeing is an ". . . **outside picture of our inward condition.**" (T.21.IN.1.5) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1) We give the picture meaning. It serves the ego, which wants us to see value in the world and stay focused on what is outside of our own minds so we will stay invested in the world.

When we start to look at our thoughts and pay more attention to them, we can see how they are all over the place, rapidly changing from one thing to another. Noting the thoughts crossing our minds is not an easy exercise for us. We have not been trained to look at our thoughts. In looking at our thoughts today, we are told, **"Do not, however, select only the thoughts you think are 'bad'. You will find, if you train yourself to look at your thoughts, that they represent such a mixture that, in a sense, none of them can be called 'good' or 'bad'. That is why they do not mean anything."** (W.4.1.5-7) What we want to consider today is that they are neither good nor bad but that they simply don't mean anything. What we are trying to get to here is that underneath the thoughts we think we are thinking are our real thoughts, of which we are not aware. To become aware of our real thoughts, we need to look at our meaningless thoughts and see them for what they really are---nothing.

This begs the question of what are our real thoughts. They are a reflection of the truth. They are thoughts that spring forth from the eternal Self and are thoughts of joy, love, and the Oneness of our being. The truth of who we are is behind these meaningless thoughts we are thinking. Our thinking mind has covered over the truth because the ego has us focused on the seeming reality of this world. As we apply these Lessons, the thought system of the ego is being exposed.

This is just the start of our mind training, and we may find ourselves judging and reacting to the exercises, but it does not matter. What is important in doing these exercises is not to require some kind of perfection of ourselves, nor is it helpful to strain in doing them. To strain is to put the ego in charge of the undoing. Remember, all that is required is our willingness to look at our thoughts. Our part is to bring these thoughts to the light and the Holy Spirit will do the rest. Our part is not about undoing our egoic thought system because the ego will not undo itself. The Holy Spirit in our right minds is the true strength and power in us that brings the correction. Thus, our part is not difficult. We are not the ones to change ourselves. All we do is bring awareness to our thoughts and the desire to know ourselves. The Holy Spirit will do the rest.

It is not helpful to drive yourself crazy trying to catch all your thoughts. Do the exercise only as long as you don't feel strain, and try to suspend your judgment about all of this. Recognize in this process that the ego may get threatened and resist the exercise. It does this because it is at risk of being undone by the power of our right minds. Our true Self remains unified as the love we already are. There is nothing we need to achieve. Our part is simply to bring our attention to our thoughts.

Jesus tells us this is a major exercise that will be repeated in a different form. **"The aim here is to train you in the first steps toward the goal of separating the meaningless from the meaningful."** (W.4.3.2) What thoughts do you cherish? We may cherish memories of good times, but we also cherish grievances, judgments, painful thoughts, and thoughts of unworthiness. Obviously, these are thoughts that hurt us, so why do we keep them? We keep them because they have come to define who we think we are, and thus, there is a pleasure we get, even from thoughts we see as painful. Likewise, the thoughts we think we like come with a hefty price tag because they keep us rooted in the illusion and the illusion always brings suffering.

While these thoughts do seem to have power over us, Jesus still tells us to consider that they are meaningless. **"It is a first attempt in the long-range purpose of learning to see the meaningless as outside you, and the meaningful within."** (W.4.3.3) What is meaningless is outside because what is outside is not real. Another way to see this is that behind what we call our minds, with all their random thoughts, is the real or spiritual mind that is still unwavering and all-encompassing. It is blocked by the mind that differentiates and takes pleasure in its own thoughts. We are attached to our own uniqueness and special individual self, even if the experience of that self is full of pain and suffering. We are at the beginning steps of letting go of this self-identity by being the observer of it. It all starts with observing our thoughts.

This Lesson is a first small step in realizing that we can start the process of looking at our thoughts and recognize we give them all the power they seem to have. We can learn through this process that we can ultimately be released from the grip they seem to have on our emotions and feelings and ultimately from the ego.

We learn early in the text reading, **"The Holy Spirit and the ego are the only choices open to you. God created one, and so you cannot eradicate it. You made the other, and so you can. Only what God creates is irreversible and unchangeable. What you made can always be changed because, when you do not think like God, you are not really thinking at all. Delusional ideas are not real thoughts, although you can believe in**

**them. But you are wrong. The function of thought comes from God and is in God. As part of His Thought, you cannot think apart from Him." (T.5.V.6.8-16) (ACIM OE.T.5.VII.67)**

Jesus explains that there are only two emotions: One is love, which is our inheritance, and the other is fear, which we have made. As we learn to uncover our thoughts and are willing to give them over to the Holy Spirit, we make space for the love that we are to come through. Another way of putting it is that when we uncover our ego thoughts, which are in our wrong minds, we make way for miracles. Regardless, the love we are never changes, in spite of our thoughts. No matter how shameful, ugly, or demeaning our thoughts seem to be, they are meaningless because the part of the mind thinking them is also meaningless.

In the practice instructions, we are told, **"Unlike the preceding ones, these exercises do not begin with the idea for the day. In these practice periods, begin with noting the thoughts that are crossing your mind for about a minute. Then apply the idea to them. If you are already aware of unhappy thoughts, use them as subjects for the idea. Do not, however, select only the thoughts you think are 'bad'. You will find, if you train yourself to look at your thoughts, that they represent such a mixture that, in a sense, none of them can be called 'good' or 'bad'. That is why they do not mean anything."** (W.4.1.1-7)

Then we are told, **"This is a major exercise and will be repeated from time to time in somewhat different form."** (W.4.3.1) From this, we get the sense of its importance in our mind training. We learn to recognize that the meaningless is outside and the meaningful is within, but since there is nothing outside of our own minds, nothing in form is meaningful, including our own thoughts. Our thoughts are no different than other forms, like the things in the room, which don't mean anything. The only meaning is in content, not form.

Our thoughts have actually put us into a state of mindlessness. Thus, the ego has succeeded in blotting out of our awareness the content of God's Love. Now, we see the world of form, and the content of love is buried beneath the forms (our thoughts). That is why it is important that we learn to look at them and learn that we have a choice and a Mighty Power in the mind to heal all that stands in the way of the truth.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
[huemmert@shaw.ca](mailto:huemmert@shaw.ca)

Published in DAILY LESSON MAILING by <http://www.jcim.net>  
JOIN MAILING LIST HERE: <http://bitly.com/CIMSMailingList-Signup>