

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 3

**I do not understand anything I see in this room
[on this street, from the window, in this place].**

Sarah's Commentary:

It is important to read these Lessons in the context of what Jesus tells us in the Introduction to the Workbook. The Introduction helps us to understand some of the key elements that help in making the practice of these Lessons meaningful for us. To start, Jesus is saying we need the theoretical understanding the Text offers if we are to get real meaning from the Lessons. When I started with the Lessons, I had not yet read the Text, and therefore, I did not have the theoretical framework to make the Lessons deeply meaningful. However, in spite of limited understanding of what the Lesson were getting at, I nevertheless found my mind shifting and my life changing. Wherever we start the process, it can all contribute to our investment in our spiritual healing. Having said that, to really get the deeper meaning, we do need the framework the Text provides. This is the only way we will get the full benefit of the intent and metaphysics behind these Lessons. As I write these commentaries, I find it helpful to refer to passages from the Text in order to amplify the meaning of the Lesson.

While the Lessons are based on one-year of mind training, clearly this is not a one-year course. The workbook is simply a starting point in disciplining and training the mind. **"An untrained mind can accomplish nothing."** (W.PI.IN.1.3) When we come to the end of the workbook, Jesus says in the Epilogue, **"This course is a beginning, not an end."** (W.PII.EP.1.1) **"It is the purpose of this workbook to train your mind to think along the lines the text sets forth."** (W.PI.IN.1.4) The mind training, thus, goes on for years, whether we are actively doing the Workbook or not. The process is not complete until our minds are healed through complete forgiveness.

Complete forgiveness means no one is exempt from forgiveness. In the introduction to the workbook, Jesus says, **"On the other hand, one exception held apart from true perception makes its accomplishments anywhere impossible."** (W.PI.IN.5.3) That is what makes the Course so very challenging. It means, if we see some more deserving of our love and some less, some more deserving of attack than others, or some more having more guilt, we are making exceptions. Everything in the illusion is the same since it is all illusion. That is why Jesus tells us that our minds are being trained in a systematic way to a different perception of everyone and everything in the world until we come to see there is no world. **"The exercises are planned to help you generalize the lessons, so that you will understand that each of them is equally applicable to everyone and everything you see."** (W.PI.IN.4.2)

While we practice with specificity in the application of each Lesson, the idea is that our lessons in forgiveness will ultimately be generalized to everything and everyone. What we are learning is that every problem and every difficulty is the same since they are all unreal. There is no order of difficulty in the illusion. Having said that, it is not something we currently believe. We don't

believe, for example, that the pen we are holding is the same and not more important than our arm. We don't believe that one situation is as difficult as any other, and we still believe that some are guiltier than others. It takes a lot of mind training to see that there is no order of difficulty in miracles and no differentiation in the illusion. As long as we see differences, we have work to do, but our work with mind training begins with specifics for now.

As we look around us and say, "Nothing I see in this room means anything," we are looking at specifics. Eventually, we will have the experience of understanding that nothing in this world means anything. This is the generalization that will eventually be made. Oneness has been seemingly fragmented into all the forms of this world. This may be what is referred to as the Big Bang---when the choice was made for the ego at the time of the seeming separation from Heaven and God's Love, sin, guilt, and fear entered the mind. With it came a belief in time and space and all aspects of the linear world of form. Thus, the Lessons are about undoing what we now hold to be true about who we are and what the world is. All our thoughts and beliefs are a defense against God's Love. We are now invested in this world of form and actually fear His Love. In fact, Jesus says that the world is a place where we have come to hide from Him, believing He wants revenge on us for what we believe we have done.

The ideas presented in these Lessons are foreign to the mind, although at some level, we recognize truth. Jesus addresses this in the Introduction where he says, "**Remember only this; you need not believe the ideas; you need not accept them, and you need not even welcome them. Some of them you may actively resist. None of this will matter, or decrease their efficacy.**" (W.PI.IN.9.1-2) This says to me that he is addressing a part of the mind beyond the ego. He tells us that what we think of the ideas does not matter. They still have power if we use them. "**It is their use that will give them meaning to you and will show you that they are true.**" (WP.I.IN.8.6) The importance is in doing the Lessons and applying them to the situations and events in our day without making exceptions. Whatever our reactions to the ideas may be, he urges us to use them. "**Nothing more than this is required.**" (W.PI.IN.9.5)

This suggests that we will experience resistance to the ideas and that fear may come up. We don't need to understand or engage in a struggle to understand but simply to do the Lessons as instructed and not to be concerned about our reactions to them. All we are asked to do is notice what is going on as we do the Lessons, be gentle and patient with ourselves, and trust the process. The process of undoing the way we think now is considerable. Fortunately, we have a lot of help as we go through these Lessons since the healing is not done by us but by the Holy Spirit. Our part is just to keep watching our thoughts without judging ourselves. This takes a lot of practice, but most important, it takes a willingness to do what we are asked.

What is it like to be in a world where we don't understand anything we see? It seems like we do understand, but it is this very understanding that we place on everything that keeps us from opening our minds to another way of seeing. Just consider the possibility that you don't understand anything. Consider the possibility that everything you have learned so far in your life is there to simply uphold the illusion and our beliefs of what we think is real. As Jesus tells us in the summary to the Course, "**Nothing real can be threatened and nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.**" (T.IN.2.2-3) (ACIM OE T.IN.4) What we have made real in the world and have given meaning to is all illusory and not real at all.

If I think I know and understand everything I see, there is no room in my mind for new learning, new understandings, or a new perspective. I have always taken pride in my ability to figure things out in the world and effectively manage my way in it. I have worked hard to gain a perspective of how things work, what they are for, how people tick, and how to manage my life. Having said this,

there has always been an underlying low-level fear and anxiety underpinning my journey through life. Some people need to hit a deep "emotional bottom" before they come to the realization that their way of managing in the world no longer works. For me, it was a general sense of dissatisfaction with my life. There was nothing seriously wrong, only a feeling of, "What is the point?" This showed itself as an underlying restlessness and a vague sense that something was missing. Much as I tried, I could not find the answer in the world.

Fortunately for me, the Course came into my life and it has given me what I was looking for in undoing the beliefs, concepts, and values I had come to believe protected me in this world and kept me safe. The crazy thing is, we have come to believe our protection has come from aligning with fear. Yet our only real protection is Love. All our survival strategies have actually kept us from trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit because in our minds we think we know what we need! We think we know our own best interests, but we are wrong.

With the steps that we are now taking in mind reversal, we are giving the Holy Spirit a little bit of room by acknowledging that we may not be right about everything we believe. All our past learning and our judgments about everything must be questioned. Again, we don't have to believe the ideas given us here, only to use them. Just because there will be resistance to the total acceptance of these ideas does not mean that they are not effective when applied. The lessons resonate with the part of the mind that knows they are true even if we consciously have resistance to them. Our practice of the ideas eventually leads to acceptance of what we already know because the truth is already in us. When the blocks to love are brought to the light, we come to know our innocence.

For me, as a result of the application of these Lessons, there is more trust, freedom, joy, and peace in my life. Increasingly, I humbly accept that I don't know anything and I don't understand anything. I continually need to step aside from my own answers and ask for help rather than assigning my own meaning. We are engaged in a radical, life-changing process, and for it to be effective, we must be willing to be wrong about everything we think we know.

It can seem more than a little disorienting and even frightening to let go of what we think we know, but the process is a gentle one, and we are the determiners of how quickly we go. Simply start by doing the exercises as described. When a difficult or unsettling situation comes up, it is helpful to remember that our upset does not come from the situation but from the way we are interpreting it. Our interpretations all come from our belief that the way we see things is the way they are. Now we remind ourselves, **"I do not understand anything I see."** (W.3) This is a prerequisite to opening up to new learning. And, as I said previously, it is not really new because there is "Something" in us that already understands.

In your practice today, apply the idea without making distinctions of any kind. Whatever you see becomes a proper subject for applying the idea. Be sure you do not question the suitability of anything for application of the idea. He is asking us: 1) not to make exceptions 2) not to judge what is suitable and what is not 3) to lay our emotions aside regarding anything we look upon clearing our minds of all past associations, and 4) see things exactly as they appear as color, shape, size, nothing more. Basically, we need to realize how we really don't understand what we are looking at because we have given our meaning to everything. If that is the case, we can't understand it because true understanding means we would know its purpose. I think I understand what the telephone does, but what I don't understand is that my thoughts about it are what keep me invested in the world of form. As I occupy my mind with my thoughts about everything, I leave no room for the miracle.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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