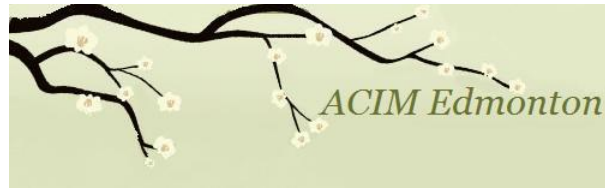


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 33

There is another way of looking at the world.

Sarah's Commentary:

Do you notice how much you like your own ideas? How attached you are to them and how you think that your way of thinking and seeing are the right way? I know that I often end up defending a position that I don't necessarily feel convinced about, but as I take it up, I manage to convince myself more and more of how right I am. I also sometimes hold an opinion that I defend vigorously even if I am not entirely certain about it. Jesus reminds us that our conviction actually covers over **". . . underlying doubt, which you would hide with show of certainty."** (W.151.2.6) In the process of forming my perspectives, I get more and more convinced of the merits of my position. We rely on the evidence given us by our senses, but it is not the truth. Our senses present us evidence of the physical world, and it does seem **". . . strong, convincing, and without a doubt because of all the doubting underneath."** (W.151.1.6) But today, we are reminded we can shift our perception and change our minds about what we hold onto as the truth. **"There is another way of looking at the world."** (W.33)

Taking positions, digging in our heels, and being determined that we are right about how we see things, are what the ego is about. It is competitive. It is judgmental. It needs to be right. It thinks it knows something. It always focuses its attention on the screen (the world) and tries to manage things "out there," instead of recognizing that the only change that can be made is to change our minds. This does not mean we don't do anything in the world, but it does mean that we must first do our inner work because it is here where the true power lies to make a real difference. It is where the miracle is.

In the psychological system known as Transactional Analysis, there is a description of the different games we play. One is called the game of "Ain't It Awful." What is involved in this game is lamenting the state of this world. No change can be made from this position, of course, because nothing is happening except in our thoughts. It is an ego "bitch" session of how awful the world is. Of course, the ego can find lots and lots of examples from wars, family fights, bureaucracy, traffic, weather, and political processes. What this does is keeps us in the belief that we are victimized by the world. It keeps us from taking responsibility for having set it up this way ourselves. We have invented the world we see. When we acknowledge, **"There is another way of looking at the world,"** (W.33) we recognize that there is a choice we can make. We are not stuck with our wrong-minded perceptions. The power is in our minds to change our perceptions, and with it change the way we see the world. The change reflects whether we look through the lens of the ego, or the Holy Spirit. One is through judgment and condemnation and the other is with vision where we look beyond the forms of this world.

Millions and billions will probably agree with our way of seeing, and thus a strong agreement forms that we are right about everything. And, of course, there is a lot of support for our ideas, which further reinforces our positions. If everybody sees something a certain way and agrees

together that that is the way it is, it seems to be convincing evidence that it must be so. In this Lesson, we are asked to recognize that maybe there is another way of looking at a situation.

When we assume that the way we see and interpret our world is just the way it is, our minds are locked into the matrix of the world. There are no solutions there. No matter how many answers are given by the egoic thinking process, we will always hit the wall. It reminds me of Kirsten Buxton in her book *I Married a Mystic*, where Holy Spirit says to her:

"Going 'somewhere else' to try to achieve a state of mind is like a goldfish swimming from one side of its bowl to the other, expecting to find the ocean. Choose purpose by choosing for God, and allow the form to be what it is—reflections of thoughts. "

To us, the world seems to be a place of many choices. We think we can find solutions here and answers that will lead us to truth and happiness; but we will always come up against the sides of the goldfish bowl similar to what Truman experienced in the movie, *The Truman Show*. The answer is the recognition that we are innocent now. Nothing needs to change in form. We just need to recognize that **"There is another way of looking at the world."** (W.33)

In the past, I have assumed that the way I see and experience things in the world is just the way they are. It is a perceptual rigidity that is easier for me to see in others than in myself. We like being right about our thoughts and ideas. We are invested in them. We often wonder why everyone doesn't see things the way we do. Our beliefs have become quite firmly established as a result of past conditioning. Yet when we let go of our perceptual blinders, we open to another way of looking at the world. Remember, Jesus is not saying there is a better way of looking at the world. Instead, he gently suggests another way. This invites our interest and perhaps our curiosity. It encourages us to be open to that other way. We are being slowly guided to begin to realize that we have two thought systems in the mind. Our ego thought system is our conditioned way of looking at the world based on sin and guilt, but Jesus reminds us there is another way open for us to consider. It is the only way that will bring us the peace and happiness that will always be elusive in the world of form. We will always come to the edge of the goldfish bowl.

In Chapter 30, Section II, **"The Rules for Decision,"** we are helped to open to the possibility that the way we have set things up and the way we see things could be wrong. **"This tiny opening will be enough to let you go ahead with just a few more steps you need to let yourself be helped."** (T.30.I.9.4-7) (ACIM OE T.30.II.20) **"Now you have reached the turning point, because it has occurred to you that you will gain if what you have decided is not so. Until this point is reached, you will believe your happiness depends on being right. But this much reason have you now attained; you would be better off if you were wrong."** (T.30.I.10.1-3) (ACIM OE T.30.II.21)

What Jesus is saying is that with willingness, we can choose to shift our perception of how we see. We are actually recognizing that the Holy Spirit can work miracles when we give up our way. As our minds are loosened from the way we have always seen things, we will experience a new way of seeing. It comes with a realization that our frame of reference will never lead to peace. We have taught ourselves an upside-down perception of the world and are now shifting into major relearning. **"Today's idea is an attempt to recognize that you can shift your perception of the world in both its outer and inner aspects."** (W.33.1.1)

In Chapter 4, Section IV, **"This Need Not Be,"** Jesus reminds us that what we are doing is fighting to keep the ego thought system. We guard it carefully. **"Your mind is filled with schemes to save the face of your ego, and you do not seek the face of Christ."**

(T.4.IV.1.5) (ACIM OE T.4.V.56) Now we are given another way to see. **"But where you look to find yourself is up to you."** (T.4.IV.1.8) (ACIM OE T.4.V.56) **"I have said before that you cannot change your mind by changing your behavior, but I have also said, and many times, that you *can* change your mind. When your mood tells you that you have chosen wrongly, and this is so whenever you are not joyous, then *know this need not be*. In every case you have thought wrongly about some brother God created, and are perceiving images your ego makes in a darkened glass. Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think."** (T.4.IV.2.1-4) (ACIM OE T.4.5.57)

Jesus tells us, **"It is pointless to believe that controlling the outcome of misthought can result in healing."** (T.2.VI.3.1) (ACIM OE T.2.IV.74) What this means is that in this world we think that if we behave nicely toward someone, despite how we feel, it is enough. Our motivation comes from pleasing others and expecting an outcome in form. But when this is the case, it is a choice we make for illusions. We are giving in order to get.

We must be discerning about which voice we listen to. The voice that tells us to be good and do the right thing is not always the Spirit. When we try to minimize guilt by doing good, we are not following guidance. Thus, it takes discernment and great honesty to see the difference. It is what we are thinking that needs to be addressed. It is not about behavior. Jesus tells us that thinking is everything and that putting all of our energy into behavior is not where the answer lies. Behavior will merely follow our thoughts.

The mind is powerful. He says that when we address our thinking, our behavior will become spontaneous and effortless. This is contrary to the world's thinking where, for example, a therapist says, "Don't worry about your crazy thoughts as long as you don't act on them." Yet all thought has immense power. We are always creating, even when we sleep. We like to dismiss this kind of power. It scares us to think how destructive our thoughts can be. The only way out is to appreciate the power of our minds and to watch our thoughts, and by looking at them, the choice can be made for love instead of fear where we bring awareness to our unloving thoughts. Our part is only to bring awareness to our unloving thoughts. The rest is done by the Holy Spirit.

We are learning to **". . . change your [our] mind to think with God's. This may seem hard to do, but it is much easier than trying to think against it. Your mind is one with God's. Denying this and thinking otherwise has held your ego together, but has literally split your mind."** (T.4.IV.2.5-8) (ACIM OE T.4.V.57-58) **"The habit of engaging with God and His creations is easily made if you actively refuse to let your mind slip away."** (T.4.IV.7.1) (ACIM OE T.4.V.63) That is precisely why we need to be vigilant in watching our minds. **"The problem is not one of concentration; it is the belief that no one, including yourself, is worth consistent effort."** (T.4.IV.7.1.2) (ACIM OE T.4.V.63)

"There is another way of looking at the world." (W.33) Aren't we all worth the consistent effort these Lessons ask? The instructions Jesus gives us for practicing these Lessons are important to follow for maximum benefit. When you set the intention for this teaching each morning and remind yourself of the Lesson each evening, taking the time recommended in between, the benefits are enormous to your peace of mind. But it is not just for you. **"For each five minutes spent in listening, a thousand minds are opened to the truth and they will hear the holy Word you hear. And when the hour is past, you will again release a thousand more who pause to ask that truth be given them, along with you."** (W.106.9.2-3) Just by this practice alone, we can do so much for the world.

Let us stay vigilant throughout the day and ask for help whenever we feel upset, angry, guilty, or distressed. It is important to apply the idea to any distress, any upset, no matter how small it may seem. Remind yourself that you can look at this upset differently. Recognize that there is another Teacher you can choose. Even if you don't choose the Holy Spirit in that moment, just know that this choice is always available to you. This is a practice that can be challenging because the ego immediately goes into overdrive when anything goes wrong, trying to find its own solution that will never work. It gets frantic, indulges the upset, or begins to look for allies who are sympathetic to its story. Alternatively, we may start to race around trying to fix things in the world, allowing no time for the Holy Spirit to offer another way of seeing the event, person, or situation. When we do this, we are blocking the miracle that is always available in every situation.

Any mistake can be corrected when the mind is ready. **"There is another way of looking at the world."** (W.33)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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