

Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

REVIEW III PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose: A second chance at the last twenty lessons, in which you can practice them more diligently, and which can carry you so far ahead that you will continue your journey “on more solid ground, with firmer footsteps and with stronger faith” (12:3).

Remarks: Please follow the format below as closely as you can. If you miss a practice period (either the longer ones or the every-half-hour ones) because you simply couldn’t do it at the appointed time, your progress is not hindered. Don’t worry about making those ones up. If, however, you missed because you just didn’t want to give the time, your progress is hindered. Those ones *should* be made up. You missed because you thought some other activity would deliver more. As soon as you remember that “your practicing can offer everything to you” (4:5), do your make-up practice periods as a statement that your real goal is salvation.

In deciding if you should make up a practice period, be very honest with yourself. Do not try to pass off “I didn’t want to practice” as “I couldn’t practice.” Learn to discern between situations truly unsuited to practicing and those in which you could practice if you wanted.

Longer: Two—one in the morning, one in the hour before sleep (ideally the first and last five minutes of your day), for five minutes (longer if you prefer).

- Read over the two ideas and the comments about them, so that the ideas are firmly placed in your mind.
- Then close your eyes and begin to think about the ideas and also to let related thoughts come (you should remember both of these practices from earlier lessons). This time, however, there is an important twist. Let your mind search out various needs, problems, and concerns in your life. As each one arises, let your mind come up with thoughts related to the ideas, thoughts which apply the essence of those ideas to the need, problem, or concern. In other words, let your mind creatively apply the ideas so as to dispel your sense of need, problem, or concern. This is a more developed version of letting related thoughts come, in which this technique combines with response to temptation (there were hints of this in Review II—see my comments on response to temptation in my Review II practice instructions).
- Remember your training in letting related thoughts come: place the ideas in your mind. Trust your mind’s inherent wisdom to generate related thoughts (this trust is a big theme in this review). Don’t strain—*let* your mind come up with thoughts. The thoughts need only be indirectly related to the ideas, though they should not be in conflict. If your mind wanders, or you draw a blank, repeat the ideas and try again.
- If you try this and it is just too unstructured for you, I have found the following more structured version to be useful:
 1. Let a need, problem, or concern come to mind, and name it to yourself (for example, “I see this conflict with so-and-so as a problem”).
 2. Repeat one or both of the ideas for the day (for instance, “I am spirit”).
 3. While repeating the idea, watch your mind for any sparks of insight that arise which apply the idea to your need, problem, or concern, and verbalize this insight to yourself (for example, “As spirit, I cannot be hurt. I am totally invulnerable”).

4. Either continue with more such related thoughts, or go on to the next need, problem, or concern.

Frequent reminders: On the hour and on the half hour, for a moment.

- Repeat the applicable idea (on the hour, the first idea; on the half hour, the second idea).
- Allow your mind to rest in silence and peace for a moment.
- Afterwards, try to carry the idea with you, keeping it ready for response to temptation.

Response to temptation: Whenever your peace is shaken.

Repeat the idea (the one you are carrying with you from your last practice period). By applying the idea to the business of the day, you will make that business holy.

Remarks: These shorter practice periods (frequent reminders and response to temptation) are at least as important as the longer. By skipping these, which you have tended to do, you have not allowed what you gained in the longer periods to be applied to the rest of your life, where it could show just how great its gifts are. After your longer practice periods, don't let your learning "lie idly by" (10:1). Reinforce it with the frequent reminders every half hour. And after those, do not lay the idea down (11:3). Have it poised and ready to use in response to all your little upsets. In this way, you forge a continuous chain that reaches from your longer practice periods all the way into the hustle and bustle of your day.

LESSON 114 • APRIL 24

(97) “I am spirit.”

(98) “I will accept my part in God’s plan for salvation.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

“No body can contain my spirit” (1:3) or limit it. So often, even when we connect with spiritual reality in some way, we think of ourselves (as someone has said) as human beings having a spiritual experience; it would be more accurate to conceive of ourselves as spiritual beings having a human experience. The first way of looking at it makes our humanness the basic reality, with the spiritual something that comes and goes within that reality. The second way of looking at it realizes that the spiritual is our basic reality, and the “human” experience is something that comes and goes within that reality. “I am spirit” (1:1). That is what I am. The experience of being a human being in a body is a temporary, passing thing. It does not alter what I am, and it cannot limit what I truly am, although it seems to do so because I believe in limitation.

The value of such things as psychic or paranormal experiences lies in the degree to which they help us realize that the limits under which we habitually operate are not firm and fixed. Minds really are joined, space and time are not absolute limits, and so on. We all have many abilities of which we are not aware (see M-25.1:3), because we are not bodies but spirit. The transcendence of these limits, while appearing “supernatural” from the bodily perspective, is really completely natural; it is the limits that are unnatural (see M-25.2:7–8). Anything that breaks our illusion of being limited to the body and makes that illusion less solid in our perception is useful, to the degree that we use these experiences or powers under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The experiences and powers are not ends in themselves.

Our primary purpose is not to develop paranormal abilities, but to fulfill our part in God’s plan for salvation, which is simply to accept His Word about “what I am and will forever be” (2:2). In other words, spirit, complete and holy and everlasting. Notice that: my function, my part in the plan, is to *accept* the truth about what I am. It may seem as though that has nothing to do with anyone else, but it has everything to do with everyone else, because what I am is a part of everyone and everyone is a part of me. My illusion is that I am separate; the truth is that we all are one. To accept the truth about myself is to accept you as part of me, and us together as part of God. That involves forgiving you, forgiving the world, and forgiving God. To accept the Atonement for myself *means* to extend the Atonement to everyone around me; I cannot find my Self if I exclude you. To accept the fullness of my Self and my own creative power, I must cease to see myself as the victim of anyone or anything—because that is not the truth about what I am. To accept my unsullied integrity of being, I must cease to blame you for anything and realize that I am affected only by my own thoughts.

Today, I will relax and let go of bodily limits. I will look at the limits I believe in and remind myself they are unreal. I will cease to “value what is valueless” (W-pI.133.Heading) and let go of my investment in my body. I will care for it as I would any useful possession, but I will try to undo, at least a little, my attachment to it and my feeling of identity with it. It will die. It will cease to be, but I will not, for I am spirit. I will accept this reality about myself because this is my part in God’s plan for salvation.

LESSON 115 • APRIL 25

(99) “Salvation is my only function here.”

(100) “My part is essential to God’s plan for salvation.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

My job is to forgive the world for all of *my* mistakes (1:2). Unless I have some idea of the Text’s teaching about projection I won’t have a clue as to what this means. Every “sin” I see out there in the world (even things like terrorist bombings) is, in some way, a projection of a judgment I have made on myself. My reluctance to forgive anything, or to see it as a call for love which merits a response of healing love, is a reflection of the degree to which I haven’t forgiven myself. The form I perceive “out there” may be shifted, altered, and transmogrified from my own form of “sin” so that I don’t recognize it. In fact, so far as the ego is concerned, the more unrecognizable the better. But the content is always the same. I may not blow up children, but if I judge those who do as unforgivable I am harboring a belief in vengeance that I haven’t forgiven in myself, and my judgment of the bombers is my judgment of myself.

Therefore, when I release the world from guilt I have released myself.

My only function is to forgive. Not to be a success in the world, not to change anything, just to forgive. It’s only when I accept this that I come to real inner peace.

My doing this—my part in forgiveness—is essential to the whole process. For the world to find its complete guiltlessness I must stop laying guilt on it. There are people around me today who need guilt lifted from their shoulders, and doing that is why I meet them. It may look like I’m doing business, buying and selling, teaching, mending broken bones, or programming computers, but the real reason I am here is to save the world, to forgive, and to release from guilt.

LESSON 116 • APRIL 26

(101) “God’s Will for me is perfect happiness.”
(102) “I share God’s Will for happiness for me.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

Somewhere in our collective psyche there is a dark and terrible myth. The myth is that God’s Will means suffering and sacrifice, the loss of all that we love, giving up everything that is dear to us for the sake of His Kingdom. Doing God’s Will in this myth is a dark and cheerless thing. In one of her lectures, Marianne Williamson characterized it as: “I thought I would have to wear gray for the rest of my life.”

God’s Will is happiness. How could Love want anything else for us? Every human being, even the lowest, wants those they love to be happy. How could we have ever imagined that God, the perfect Lover, wanted anything other than perfect happiness for us?

All our suffering, then, must come from a belief that there is some “other” will opposing God’s that wants to ruin our happiness. We secretly suspect, perhaps, that that will is our own. If not, we know “they” are out there someplace, and they have it in for us. Yet there is no “other” will. There is no malevolent power stalking the universe and targeting us for destruction. There is only God.

I share God’s Will for happiness for me. I am not incurably self-destructive, with some dark and unfathomable vein of antipathy towards God, the universe, and myself inescapably driving me to death. My real will is one with God’s, and I will happiness. “I will there be light,” as Lesson 73 said. His Will is really all I want.

The Course talks a great deal about the dark foundations of the ego that drive toward death. Those Stygian currents do flow within our minds, and they do warp and befoul our experience in this world. But the Course does not leave us there, without hope. It bears the message that although the ego seems very real, it is not us. It has no power over us; it is a mistaken fabrication our minds have made. And because we made it, we can unmake it. Because we chose it, we can choose again. If we stop being afraid of those murky corners of our minds and look at them, we will recognize they have no substance. We will see through them to our true Self. We will see what those dark foundations have been hiding all this time: our own intense and burning love for God, and His for us (see T-13.III.2:8). Here, in the *real* foundation of our being, we want what God wants, we love what God loves, and we will what God wills.

Today, then, I let myself rest in the happy thought that at the root of my being is an irresistible drive towards truth. Perhaps I do not yet experience “perfect happiness,” but I will. I must. Because the heart of my heart wills it, and joins with God in willing it, and there is nothing that stands in the way that has any reality or power to resist.

Nothing can prevent what God would have accomplished from accomplishment. Whatever your reactions to the Holy Spirit’s Voice may be, whatever voice you choose to listen to, whatever strange thoughts may occur to you, God’s Will *is* done.
(T-13.XI.5:3–4)

There is no chance that Heaven will not be yours, for God is sure, and what He wills is as sure as He is. (T-13.XI.8:9)

LESSON 117 • APRIL 27

(103) “God, being Love, is also happiness.”
(104) “I seek but what belongs to me in truth.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

“Let me remember love is happiness, and nothing else brings joy” (1:2). One of the things that over time has convinced me of the truth of the Course is this very experience: I am happiest when I am loving. I don’t just mean “I’m happy when I’m in love,” in the romantic sense of the word, although that certainly isn’t excluded. When love flows through me, whether it is in a closely intimate relationship or in something more “distant” (sitting here writing these notes and thinking of all of you, for instance), I am happy. Loving makes me happy. No, more than that: “Love is happiness” (1:2).

(Barry Kaufman wrote a wonderful book called *To Love Is to Be Happy With*.¹ I always thought that was a profound title.)

On the other hand, anger is misery. If I think about how I feel when I am angry, I will notice that I don’t like the way I feel. As much as the Course is about concepts and about changing our mind, often the change of mind is a decision about feelings: “You can begin to change your mind with this: *At least I can decide I do not like what I feel now*” (T-30.I.8:1–2). Feelings can be very useful when we think about them, and use them as motivators for changing our mind. Anger makes me miserable; loving makes me happy. Therefore, I will choose love. Is that paying attention to feelings, or is it logic? Or both? Whatever it is, it works.

I said that noticing that loving and happiness go together has helped convince me that the Course is true. Here’s why. The Course says we are wholly loving and wholly loveable. It says, “Teach only love, for that is what you are” (T-6.I.13:2). Sometimes I don’t feel as if I am love. Yet if when I love I am happy, love must be my will; it must be my nature. What is happiness, except the freedom to be myself and to fulfill my nature? If I am happy when I love, then I must *be* love.

That is what this line means: “Love is my heritage, and with it joy” (2:2). My heritage. My nature. What I am. Love belongs to me in truth, and with it happiness, since they are the same thing.

Today, as often as I can, I intend to remind myself: “Love is happiness.” And then, in that moment, to just be the love that I am. If I want to be always happy, let me always be loving. And joyous! Oh, the happiness and joy when the heart opens and lets out the love! May I not cause myself pain today by holding it back. God bless you all!

¹. Barry Neil Kaufman, *To Love Is to Be Happy With* (New York: Fawcett Crest Books, 1977).

LESSON 118 • APRIL 28

(105) “God’s peace and joy are mine.”
(106) “Let me be still and listen to the truth.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

The substitutes that I have made are what stand in the way of my accepting God’s peace and joy. I already *have* God’s peace and joy, but my ego has decided they are not enough. As the Course says, I want “more than everything” (T-29.VII.2:3); my own wholeness is not enough. That section of the Text actually says that my seeking for “more than everything” is shown by the very fact that I am in this world. “No one who comes here but must still have hope, some lingering illusion, or some dream that there is something outside of himself that will bring happiness and peace to him” (T-29.VII.2:1). “Happiness and peace” is what I am looking for, but outside of myself. I have denied that they are within me, where God placed them.

In order to find the peace and joy that are inherently mine, I have to “exchange” all the substitutes I have made. I have to let go of looking for happiness anywhere outside of myself. That isn’t easy, in my experience. It seems to happen gradually, over time. Little by little we learn that what we are looking for in the world simply isn’t there, not in any lasting way. Little by little, in parallel, we begin to take little tastes of our internal joy and peace. As we begin to weigh the two experiences it starts to become obvious that the peace and joy that come from within are much more reliable and satisfying than that which comes from without. We may try for a time to hold on to both, but it doesn’t work. Eventually we will let go, and fall back into the arms of God. Eventually we will simply accept God’s peace and joy.

My voice keeps trying to declare how things should be. Essentially the Course is telling us to stop listening to our own advice: “Resign now as your own teacher” (T-12.V.8:3), it urges us. We have to stop thinking we are in control, that we know what to do and what is needed, and learn to listen. Like a drowning person, our own efforts to save ourselves are the biggest barrier to our Life Guard. We need to trust Him, to lie back and let go.

The best way I know of to learn to do this is to practice doing it. To simply sit down for five, ten, fifteen minutes (whatever the lesson calls for, whatever seems right) and, after very briefly reviewing the idea of the day, just to be quiet. It seems hellaciously difficult, many days, to simply be quiet. The minute I try my mind starts reminding me of things: “Don’t forget to make that phone call. You need yogurt from the store. What are you going to do about your relationship with X? You haven’t done your laundry this week. You are overweight and you’re going to die.” I take a deep breath. Another. Another. I repeat the words for the day, “Let me be still and listen to the truth” (2:1). Or I say, “Help!” to the Holy Spirit. I let the thoughts come and go. I step back and watch them and try not to get drawn in. And I listen; maybe there is some word from my Teacher that will come. And sometimes, there is. Sometimes I just get very quiet, and the chatter of thoughts subsides, if not completely, to a dull, background murmur, like a crowd in a busy restaurant that I’m not really paying attention to. I practice getting quiet and listening. I don’t know about you, but I think it is a worthwhile exercise. Sometimes, it even carries over into my day, and I find myself listening to the Voice and not to myself as I move through it. And that’s what it’s all about.

LESSON 119 • APRIL 29

(107) “Truth will correct all errors in my mind.”

(108) “To give and to receive are one in truth.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

The first idea speaks of the correction of all error. The two explanatory sentences that follow speak on a very high level, defining “error” as any thought that we can be hurt. What I am is spirit. Spirit is eternal and unchanging, created by God like Himself. By the Course’s definition, what can be hurt or damaged is not real. That includes our bodies, our woundable psyches, everything we see in the physical universe; all of it has an end. “Nothing real can be threatened,” says the introduction to the Text (T-In.2:2). What I am learning is the invulnerability of my being, the eternal safety of my Self, at rest in the Mind of God.

We are undergoing a very gradual and gentle weaning away from our identification with the ephemeral. What we are, in truth, does not die. We have dreamed a dream, and foolishly have come to believe the dream is us. We are not the dream; we are the dreamer. (The Text speaks at length of this in Chapter 27, sections VII and VIII.) The Holy Spirit eases us through a transitional phase, changing our terrifying dream into a happy one, so that we will waken softly and joyfully, no longer gripped by terrors of the night.

How are we to shift our dream? It is too great a leap to go from a state where pain and hurt and death are bitter realities to us, into an awareness of our eternal nature. So the second idea for today speaks of the means by which we can begin, gently, to shift into the happy dream: forgiveness. We come to recognize our sinlessness, and thus our Self, by forgiving all things around us. We have to *learn* to accept the truth in ourselves, and we do so by learning to see past the error in others, until with a start of recognition, we realize that what is beneath the errors of others is Something we share with them. We find ourselves in our brothers and sisters, through forgiveness. What we have learned to give to others has, all the time, been given to ourselves. We awaken by awaking others. We teach peace to learn it. In kindness and mercy towards others, we ourselves fall into the kind and merciful heart of God.

LESSON 120 • APRIL 30

(109) “I rest in God.”

(110) “I am as God created me.”

Practice instructions

See Review III practice instructions above.

Commentary

Every now and then I'm glad my old high school English teacher taught me to diagram sentences. I find myself doing things like noticing the main phrases in a sentence like this: “I rest in God and let Him work...while I rest...” (1:2). For me, today, what this says is just to relax and trust the process. Just to “let go and let God,” as the saying goes. Sunday is traditionally a “day of rest” in the Christian tradition, and for most of us, a day in which it is convenient (more than other days) to practice resting. Periodically it is beneficial to take one day, and consciously make it a day of rest for yourself. That doesn't mean you might not do something productive, but if you do, it will be because it is something you enjoy doing, something you want to do.

Today I want to remember *peace*.

Sometimes I get so worried I won't make it. I pick at the scabs of my healing mind, wondering when they will heal completely. I fuss and wonder what else I can be doing to make the healing happen faster. Fussing just makes it worse. Fussing is what I am being healed *from*. So let me rest today. Ahhh!

As I rest, my Father tells me Who I really am. “The memory of God comes to the quiet mind” (T-23.I.1:1). When I allow myself to settle back in spirit, I find a firm foundation, the bedrock of my Self, as God created me. I'm okay. The turmoil I am so concerned about is nothing but “sick illusions of myself” (2:3). What I am is just fine, and I don't have to protect It. I am home.