

# Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

Lesson 262 • September 19

“Let me perceive no differences today.”

## Practice instructions

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Throughout the day, when you have a spare moment, pick someone and silently say to him or her:

*You are not that one form. You are the Mind behind all forms.*

*Your name is not [name], for you are not separate. Your name is “Father,” for you are part of Him.*

*You are not a stranger to your Father. You are His beloved Son.*

*You are not a stranger to me. You are my ancient friend.*

## Commentary

In order to move toward perceiving no differences, I must begin to let go of identification with the body, both in identifying myself with a body, and in identifying my brothers and sisters as bodies. The body, says the reading for the week, is a fence (W-pII.5.1:1). It establishes difference; it fairly screams, “I am different.” Why is it that every body has different fingerprints, different retinal prints, different DNA patterns? How can it be that in all the billions of bodies, no fingerprint is ever duplicated? Our bodies are saying, “I am different. I am unique. I am completely unlike all of you.”

Love sings softly, “We are the same. We are one. We share one life, and that with God.” It is the one Son that we would look upon today (1:1–2). The “thousand forms” (1:4) are different; the life we share is one. We need not denigrate the body to do this. The body can become a means to heal the separation of our minds. We use the body to express our unity. We touch, we embrace, we care for one another, we assist one another. We *use* the illusion to transcend the illusion.

In each body that comes before us, we see the one Son. “Let me not see him as a stranger to his Father, nor as stranger to myself” (1:7). Each one I see today is part of me, and I of him, and together we are part of God our Source (1:8). Seeing this is what seeing no differences means. Of course, I will still see male and female, tall and short, fat and thin, poor and rich, black and white and brown and yellow and red. But I choose to look beyond these differences today, and to see the sameness, the one Son in whom we are the same, not different.

Separation means differences, and differences breed judgment and attack. The vision of our sameness and our unity brings peace, “and nowhere else can peace be sought and found” (2:3). We choose not to let our sight stop at the differences, but to go beyond them to the oneness. We look and we say, “This is my brother (sister) whom I love, part of me, loved by God and part of God with me. Together we are the holy Son of God.”

## What Is the Body?

### **Part 2: W-pII.5.1:4-5**

When we see our safety in the body, we identify with it. We see ourselves as bodies (1:4). It is this that promotes and supports the ego's ideal of separation, judgment, and attack. To the ego, this is the purpose of bodies, although it tells us that the purpose is our own safety. It seems to me that it is beneficial, then, to recognize the frailty of our bodies, their temporary and ephemeral nature. The sickness and death of the body, then, instead of being a fearful thing, can become a gentle reminder that this is not what we are. Why would we want to identify with such a vulnerable thing? Recognizing the body's impermanence and the brevity of its existence can impel us to seek a more permanent identity elsewhere. Becoming aware of the lunacy of seeking our safety in the body, we can understand that our strong attachment to the body must come from some hitherto unsuspected motive: the ego's desire for separateness.

How else could he be certain he remains within the body, keeping love outside? (1:5)

If we did not have this strong attachment to and identification with the body, if we realized that what we are transcends the body and dwarfs its significance, we could not keep love away from us. This is the ego's purpose in promoting our bodily identity: to keep love out. This is where our seemingly instinctive need to regard ourselves as bodies comes from. It is a deception and trap of our egos, and when we see this clearly, we realize that it is not something we want at all.

The seemingly good reasons for identifying with our bodies, in the Course's eyes, simply do not hold water. Bodies are unsafe vehicles; there is no security in them. Behind the seemingly benign reasons our egos set forth there is a much darker hidden motivation: the ego's blind belief in the value of separateness and difference. The Course is asking us to acknowledge this dark motive within ourselves, and to disavow it, turning instead to the eternal safety of Love Itself, which is our true nature as God's creation.

## Lesson 263 • September 20

### “My holy vision sees all things as pure.”

#### Practice instructions

A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** Look randomly about you for a minute or two. In relation to whatever your eyes alight on, say, “*My holy vision sees this \_\_\_\_\_ as pure, that I may pass it by in innocence.*”

Then close your eyes and think of various people you know. In relation to each one, say, “*My holy vision sees [name] as pure, that we may walk together to our Father’s house.*”

#### Commentary

This lesson is about seeing all things as God created them: without sin, innocent, and pure. His Mind created all that is, His Spirit entered into it, and His Love gave life to it (1:1). To see things in this way, at first, has to be a conscious choice, because we have trained our minds to see otherwise. We have learned to judge. We will categorize, evaluate on a scale of one to ten, and attempt to determine whether this is something or someone we want to draw closer to us or to push away. We’ve trained our minds to do so since birth, and probably in many previous lifetimes. Thus, there has to be a conscious choice to say, “No. I choose to see this as pure.” We downgrade our reflexive evaluations and choose instead to accept the Holy Spirit’s judgment.

Eventually—a long eventually—our minds will become retrained. The choice to see purity will become more and more automatic. The judgmental thoughts will probably always be there, slowly receding into the background, until we leave this world completely, but the choice to see purity will become less and less a conscious choice, and more and more a habit of thought. Frequent and persistent repetition will speed the process.

## What Is the Body?

#### Part 3: W-pII.5.2:1–4

The body, of course, is transient. It will not last (2:1). The biblical psalmist compared man’s life to grass, as brief as a flower in the field, and quickly disappearing (Ps 103:15).

Our transient nature is near to the surface of every mind, as I was reminded last night in a restaurant, when someone came in and greeted the host with, “How’s life?”

“Too short,” he replied.

You might think that the shortness of physical life would instantly alert us to the fallacy of the ego’s attempt to have us find safety in the body, but the ego quickly twists the very shortness into a proof of its case. The ego wants to prove separation. And what is more separating than physical death? So the short

life of the body “proves” that the fence works; we really are separate from one another and from God (2:3). We made the body to manifest separation, and lo! it does. One body can attack another and kill it. If we were really one, so the ego’s logic goes, this would be impossible (2:4). The ego is a master of sophistry.

There is a masterful counterargument in Chapter 13 of the Text. There, it says:

For you believe that attack is your reality, and that your destruction is the final proof that you were right.

Under the circumstances, would it not be more desirable to have been wrong, even apart from the fact that you were wrong? While it could perhaps be argued that death suggests there *was* life, no one would claim that it proves there *is* life. Even the past life that death might indicate, could only have been futile if it must come to this, and needs this to prove that it was at all. (T-13.IV.2:5–3:3)

If you have to die in order to prove you were right (separation does exist), wouldn’t you rather be wrong—and live? “Even though you know not Heaven, might it not be more desirable than death?” (T-13.IV.3:6). Much of our fear of letting go of our identification with the body lies right here; we’re afraid of being proven wrong. If we are wrong in this one thing, so much else of our lives has been wasted effort. We’ve been pouring our very souls into something that, in a very short time, will be only dust. The Course is asking us to realize the futility of all this, and to look around us and ask, “Is there perhaps something else more deserving of all this effort?” And there is.

## Lesson 264 • September 21

### “I am surrounded by the Love of God.”

#### Practice instructions

A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** This is one of my favorite prayers. I recommend praying it over and over. Give each line your full awareness. Make it a personal communication from you to God. To aid this process, you might want to insert the specific comments I’ve indicated in brackets below:

*Father, You stand before me [in that \_\_\_\_\_]  
and behind [in that \_\_\_\_\_],  
beside me [in that \_\_\_\_\_ on my right and that \_\_\_\_\_ on my left],  
in the place I see myself [on this chair, couch, floor, street, etc.],  
and everywhere I go [such as \_\_\_\_\_, where I am going later].  
You are in all the things I look upon [like this \_\_\_\_\_ and that \_\_\_\_\_, which I am seeing  
right now],  
the sounds I hear [like this \_\_\_\_\_ and this \_\_\_\_\_, which I am hearing right now],  
and every hand that reaches for my own [such as the hand of \_\_\_\_\_, who journeys with  
me].  
In You time disappears [because every moment, being filled with You, is the same],  
and place becomes a meaningless belief [because every place, being filled with You, is the  
same].  
For what surrounds Your Son, [insert your name],  
and keeps him safe is Love Itself [not time, not place].  
There is no Source but This, and nothing is [including \_\_\_\_\_, that difficult person in my  
life]  
that does not share Its Holiness;  
that stands beyond Your one creation,  
or without the Love which holds all things within Itself.  
Father, Your Son is like Yourself [and Your Son is all of us].  
We come to You in Your Own Name today [we are not trespassers; we come at your  
invitation],  
to be at peace within Your everlasting Love.*

#### Commentary

The bulk of today’s lesson is a beautiful prayer, and my suggestion to us all is that we take the time not only to read it, but to read it aloud, with all the expression of which we are capable. Jesus says:

My brothers, join with me in this today. This is salvation’s prayer. (2:1–2)

Will you do that? Perhaps we might pause at noon, each in our time zone, and as we do, realize that

others are joining us in that very moment to pray this same prayer, together. And Jesus joins with us all, every time we repeat it. “Let all the world be blessed with peace through us” (W-pII.360.Heading).

(If you can't pause at noon, pause on another hour. Someone, somewhere, will be joining with you.)

Imagine the effect on yourself if, at least once an hour, and more often if possible, you simply pause for a moment and silently repeat to yourself, with conviction, “I am surrounded by the Love of God.”

“Love is your safety,” says the “What Is the Body?” section (W-pII.5.5:4). The purpose of these ten lessons is to focus our attention on love, which is “invisible,” rather than on the body, which is visible. A passage in the Text I happen to be reading today goes right along:

When you made visible what is not true, what *is* true became invisible to you....It is invisible to you because you are looking at something else. (T-12.VIII.3:1, 3)

What is not seen is not therefore gone. Love is still in my mind because God placed it there. Love is still in everything, all around me, and I will see it if I will but stop looking at something else. Jesus says that if we look at love enough, what is not there will become invisible to us. That process is the shift the Course is talking about. As we learn to stop wanting to see something other than love, we will stop seeing anything but love. That outcome is inevitable because love is all there is.

We want to see separation, we want to see bodies, because we think somehow that keeps us safe. It preserves our individuality. Our real safety, however, lies in love. Our real safety lies in realizing that we are part of that ocean of love, never ending. Body, ego, and individual consciousness are not what need to be preserved and adhered to. Rather, we need to adhere to Universal Consciousness and to playing our part as a synapse in that Universal Mind, with no purpose that ends in this little cell of self, but only a purpose that serves the whole.

The way to experience love is to give it. “For if love is sharing, how can you find it except through itself?” (T-12.VIII.1:5). Let me today open my heart to love the world. Let me know that this is my function. As I open to let love out, love will flood in. It always flows both ways. And what I am loving is myself, not a separate thing or things. I am not simply a cell; I only exist in relationship to the universe. The whole is in every part. Everything is related to everything else, and only the whole has meaning. I am surrounded by the Love of God.

## What Is the Body?

### **Part 4: W-pII.5.2:4–9**

Our identification with the body seems to protect us from love. The insanity of the ego believes that death “proves” that we are separate. Yet in reality there is only our oneness. If we are one, the lesson asks:

Who could attack and who could be attacked? Who could be victor? Who could be his prey?  
(2:4–6)

We believe attack is real, that there are really victims and really murderers. If our oneness remains untouched (2:4), this simply cannot be. And therefore all such appearances must be illusory, or else the oneness *has* been destroyed. The horrors of this world are the ego's attempts to demonstrate the destruction of oneness. Death is the ego's demonstration that “God's eternal Son can be destroyed” (2:9). As students of the Holy Spirit, we deny this.

We do not deny that, within the illusion, victims and murderers exist. We do not pretend that children have not been blown up with bombs, that genocide is not practiced, that atrocities do not occur, that wars are not going on, that lives and families and emotional stability are not being shredded all over the world. All this is true *within the illusion*. What we deny is the entirety of the illusion. We deny that this picture represents the truth. We deny that anything real is threatened. We are aware that what we see is only a

dream. We see the dream figures come and go, shift and change, suffer and die, but we are not deceived by what we see (see M-12.6:6–8). We bear witness to reality, invisible to the body's eyes, but seen by the vision of Christ.

The truth is: Oneness is. The world, the body, and death, all deny this truth. Our task as miracle workers is to “*deny the denial of truth*” (T-12.II.1:5). We deny separation, the denial of oneness. We stand, with hands outstretched to help, and by our words, our actions, our thoughts, and above all, by our love, we demonstrate the truth of eternal oneness.

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## SEEING THE MEANING IN THE IDEA FOR THE DAY

Much of doing the Workbook is repeating the idea for the day, the sentence at the top of every lesson. Therefore, if this idea falls flat in our mind, chances are that we will not get much out of that day's practice. We might as well be repeating some phrase in Latin. At least that is how it feels sometimes. The remedy to this is understanding the meaning contained in that brief sentence. This meaning is what makes the practice come alive. The more meaning we see in those words, the more powerful will be the practice of them.

This meaning is supplied in large measure by Text study, but also by careful reading of the lesson. After all, most of the lesson's words are teaching about what that idea for the day means. Therefore, we should ideally read each line of the lesson with an eye for what it says about the meaning of the day's idea. I prefer a kind of mental posture in which I have one eye on the idea for the day while the other eye is reading the lesson's teaching. I will read a sentence or paragraph in the lesson and then go back and ask how this relates to the day's idea. This will often give that idea a different meaning than I would have otherwise assumed, as well as a deeper and more multifaceted meaning. In short, it will make the practice of it more powerful and effective.

Let's see this at work in the case of Lesson 264 and its accompanying prayer, which provides the teaching for that lesson.

### LESSON 264

#### **I am surrounded by the Love of God.**

When we first read this idea we would probably assume that it means there is a presence of God that surrounds us, somewhat like an aura, and follows us wherever we go. This in itself is a comforting thought, but let's see what meaning the lesson's teaching puts in this idea.

*1. Father, You stand before me and behind, beside me, in the place I see myself, and everywhere I go.*

This first sentence does not say anything too different from what we would assume about the day's idea. It does, however, make that idea more concrete by specifically mentioning “before,” “behind” and “beside.” It also makes the idea more absolute. God is not only around me, He is everywhere I go, and even in the place I see myself. This gives us a hint of what is to come.

*2. You are in all the things I look upon, the sounds I hear, and every hand that reaches for my own.*

This sentence expands and deepens the idea considerably. God is not merely a kind of invisible presence that hovers around me in, say, a four-foot radius. He is in everything I look upon. He is not one invisible item among a great many more visible things. He is all-pervasive. What's more, He is even in

the ~~World is direct, some how statement, the prayer is again, it is being in physical objects, the place is as~~  
~~Seems like nothing. They~~ are just vibrations in the air, just motion. This means that God is not only in things, but also in processes, in movements. He, of course, is inside those who walk with me. Yet He is also in their hands that reach for mine, and in the movement of the hands as they reach, and in the sound of their footsteps. I am literally surrounded by God, for He dwells in every sight, sound, person, object, and movement—in everything. We have now come a long way from God as aura.

*3. In You time disappears, and place becomes a meaningless belief.*

This sentence seems to take off in a new direction, yet it is just the logical outcome of the previous sentences. If God is in everything, then every place contains the same thing: God. And if every place contains the same thing, if all places are the same, then there really is no such thing as place. The very concept of place implies that one place is different from another, distant from another. The same with time. If God is in every moment, then apparently different moments are really the same, which means that there aren't different moments. Without different moments there can't be time. Without different places there can't be space. Therefore, "time disappears, and place becomes a meaningless belief."

This thought is somewhat different than what I have encountered in some spiritual teachings. I have heard many times that God is in everything, but the impression I usually got was that those things were therefore real. By the act of God dwelling in a rock, for instance, He is sanctioning the rock's reality. That rock must be real, or God would not bother to be inside of it. In fact, in these thought systems, God Himself gave birth to the rock and dwells inside the house He created.

The Course is doing something very different with the idea. It is implying that God is the only thing real in that rock. The form of the rock, its physical substance, is not real at all. The form is not a manifestation of God. It is just an illusory picture of the crazy thought that God is absent. Thus, the rock is not really there at all. Only God is.

*4. For what surrounds Your Son and keeps him safe is Love Itself.*

This sentence takes things even further. We seem to be surrounded by time and space. Enveloping us is space; behind us is the past; ahead of us, the future. That is what it means to be in this world—being surrounded by time and space. Yet the lesson has told us that what is behind and before us is God, not past and future, not physical space. If that is really true, then *we are not in this world at all*. We are really in God's Love, in Heaven. If we could only see, if the scales could fall off our eyes, we would realize that right now we are standing not in this world but in Heaven, enveloped by His Love. We have now come very far indeed from God's Love as four-foot aura.

*5. There is no Source but This, and nothing is that does not share Its holiness; that stands beyond Your one creation, or without the Love Which holds all things within Itself.*

The scope of God's Love continues to expand. Now we are not only surrounded by God's Love, we *came* from that Love. It is our Source; what gave birth to our being. Further, this total relationship with God's Love is now extended to cover everyone and everything. Not just us but *everything* comes from that Love and is made of It, sharing Its holiness. And *nothing* has been left outside Its eternal embrace. Everything is held within It, not within time and space. How can there be a world of time and space when there is only Love creating more of Itself?

*6. Father, Your Son is like Yourself.*

Sentence 5 was a longer, more philosophical statement about the relationship of the Source to everything else. Now we take those ideas and, in sentence 6, compress them into a brief, direct, and intimate statement from a Son to his Father. "This is the only Source and everything shares Its attributes" becomes "Father, we are all like You, because we are all Your Son." This Son is us individually, but (given the context of the previous sentence) it is also everyone and everything.

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With this direct, intimate statement the prayer begins and lead us into the place it has been talking about. The implied "we" of sentence 6 continues into the prayer's concluding line.

7. *We come to You in Your Own Name today, to be at peace within Your everlasting Love.*

### Practice instructions

The ideas the prayer has described are a kind of red carpet it has laid out before us. Now, with this concluding line, we are meant to walk that carpet straight into the reality of what has been discussed, the reality of God's Love. We know that in doing so we are not just acting on our own. We are not trespassing. We walk up to God's front door holding in our hand an invitation from the Lord of the house Himself. We come to Him in His Own Name. He Himself has rolled out the red carpet. How do we know this? As the rest of the prayer says, He has already placed us forever within Himself. If His Love is what created us and what surrounds us, and indeed is all there is, where else would we go?

The situation we may have initially read into the idea for the day has now been completely reversed. God's Love is not merely an aura that surrounds us, a silent ghost we take with us on our busy tour through the world of separate things. The world is the ghost; God's Love is the only reality there is. It is the all-pervasive realm that beckons us beyond this shadow world and into Itself. And not just us—It beckons everyone and everything; all the countless minds that comprise the one Son of God.

Thus, rather than, "How nice of You, God, to come with me on my errands," we conclude by saying, "*We* (the entire world and all living things) come to *You*." We come to Him, to rest from our busy doings and nervous plans, to be free of the endless parade of little objects scurrying through frantic days. We come to Him, to leave behind the thousands of shadows that haunt this unreal place and pass forever into the light of Heaven. As one Son, we come to Him to forget all anxious separate identities as together we find eternal rest in His boundless Arms. We come to Him to be at peace within His everlasting Love.

"I am surrounded by the Love of God" means so much more than we ever would have guessed at first. Holding in mind this deeper, broader, expanded meaning, do you think that practicing this lesson would be any different?

## Lesson 265 • September 22

### “Creation’s gentleness is all I see.”

#### Practice instructions

A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

#### Commentary

This lesson so clearly states how the world comes to be, apparently, attacking us:

I have indeed misunderstood the world, because I laid my sins on it and saw them looking back at me. How fierce they seemed! And how deceived was I to think that what I feared was in the world, instead of in my mind alone. (1:1–3)

I feel guilt over some aspect of myself. I project that guilt outward; I lay my sins on the world and then see them looking back at me. “Projection makes perception” (T-21.In.1:1). There is more than one place where the Course says quite clearly that we never see anyone’s sins but our own (for instance, T-31.III.1:5). The world I see is the outward reflection of an inward condition (see T-21.In.1:5). *The Song of Prayer* says:

It is impossible to forgive another, for it is only your own sins you see in him. You want to see them there, and not in you. That is why the forgiveness of another is an illusion....Only in someone else can you forgive yourself, for you have called him guilty of your sins, and in him must your innocence now be found. Who but the sinful need to be forgiven? And do not ever think you can see sin in anyone except yourself. (S-2.I.4:2–4, 6–8)

“Do not ever think you can see sin in anyone except yourself.” Wow! What a powerful statement. “It is only your own sins you see in him.” A lot of people, including myself, have some trouble with this concept. I really think our egos fight this, and use every possible way of refusing to accept it.

A common reaction to statements like this in the Course is, “No way! I never beat my wife. I never murdered or raped or betrayed the way he did.” Where I think we go off the track is in looking at particular actions and saying, “They do that. I don’t,” and thinking we’ve proved that the sin we see isn’t our own.

The action is not the sin. The guilt is. The principle is much broader than specific actions. The principle of attack is this: “It is the judgment of one mind by another as unworthy of love and deserving of punishment” (T-13.In.1:2). The person’s action that we are judging isn’t relevant; we are seeing another person as “unworthy of love and deserving of punishment” because we see ourselves that way first. We feel our own unworthiness, dislike the feeling, and project it onto others. We find particular actions to associate the unworthiness with that we don’t perceive as being in ourselves (although sometimes they are in us, just suppressed or buried); that’s exactly how we try to get rid of the guilt!

Projection and dissociation go on within our own psyche as well as externally. When I condemn myself for, say, overeating, and think I feel guilty because I overate, I am doing the same thing as when I condemn a brother for lying or whatever. I am putting the guilt outside of myself in one case; in the other

case, I am putting the guilt onto a shadow part of myself which I then disown. “I don’t know why I do that; I know better.”

When I feel guilty, I am actually disowning a part of my own mind. There is some part of me that feels a need to overeat, or to be angry at my mother, or to sabotage my career, or to abuse my body with some drug. I do these things because I am guilty and think I need punishment. The original guilt comes not from any of these petty things, but from my deep belief that I have really succeeded in separating myself from God. I have actually succeeded at making myself other than a creation of God. I am my own creator. And since God is good, I must be evil. Deep down we think the evil is in us, that we are the evil. We can’t stand that idea, and so we push away some part of our mind and our behavior and lay the guilt at its feet.

It is exactly the same mechanism at work when I see sin in a brother. But from the ego’s perspective seeing guilt in *someone else* is much more attractive and does a better job of concealing the guilt it wants us to keep; it puts the guilt completely away from myself. In reality, my brother is a part of my mind just as much as the shadow self is a part of my mind. The whole world is in my mind; my mind is all there is.

How deceived was I to think that what I feared was in the world, instead of in my mind alone. (1:3)

He [one who identifies with the ego] always perceives this world as outside himself, for this is crucial to his adjustment. He does not realize that he makes this world, for there is no world outside of him. (T-12.III.6:6–7)

Take off the covers and look at what you are afraid of. (T-12.II.5:2)

We need to look at what we are afraid of until we realize that all of it is in our own mind. When at last we recognize the truth of that, we will be in a place where we can do something about it. Until then, we are helpless victims.

We see sin in others because we think we have a need to see sin in others, to avoid seeing it in ourselves. We believe in the principle that some people are unworthy of love and deserving of punishment. Deep down we know that we are one of the condemned, but the ego tells us that if we can see the guilt out there in others, see them as worse than ourselves, we may escape judgment. So we project the guilt.

What this Workbook lesson is saying is that if we lift the blot of our own guilt off the world, we will see its “celestial gentleness” (1:4). If I can remember that my thoughts and God’s thoughts are the same, I will see no sin in the world, because I am not seeing it in myself.

The world around us, therefore, offers us countless opportunities to forgive ourselves. “Only in someone else can you forgive yourself, for you have called him guilty of your sins, and in him must your innocence now be found” (S-2.I.4:6). When someone appears in our life as a sinner, we have a chance to forgive ourselves in him. We have a chance to let go, a bit more deeply, of the fixed perception that what this person did makes him guilty of sin. We have a chance to look past his harmful actions to see the underlying innocence. We lay aside our conditioned judgment and allow the Holy Spirit to show us something different.

It seems as if we are working with forgiving another person. In reality we are always forgiving ourselves. When we find the innocence in that other person, suddenly we know our own innocence more deeply. When we see what they did as a call for love, we can more easily see our own misbehavior as likewise a call for love. We discover a common innocence, a radical innocence. It is absolute innocence, totally unchanged since the instant God created us.

## What Is the Body?

## Part 5: W-pII.5.3:1–3

The body is a dream. (3:1)

This whole melodrama of attacking and being attacked, victor and prey, murderer and victim, is a dream, with the body playing the chief role. Think about the implications of my body as a dream. In a dream, everything seems completely real. I've had some really gross and terrifying dreams about my body. Once I dreamed that all my teeth were disintegrating and falling out. But when I woke up, nothing of the kind was happening. It was all in my mind while I slept.

By calling the body “a dream,” the Course is saying that what happens to our bodies here is really not happening at all; it is happening only within our minds. It is saying that the body itself is not happening; it is not a real thing. We are not really here, as we think we are; we are dreaming about being here. My son, who is working in computers in the field of virtual reality, was once hooked up to a robot by computer, seeing through its eyes and touching things with its hand.

He had the very weird sensation of experiencing himself on one side of the computer lab while his body was on the other side; he even looked across the lab and “saw” his own body, wearing the VR helmet. Our mind experiences itself as being “here,” on earth, in a body; but it is not here. *Here* is not here. All of it is within the mind.

Dreams can picture happiness, and then very suddenly revert to fear; we've all experienced that in dreams, most likely. And we've experienced it in our “lives” here in the body. Dreams are born of fear (3:2), and the body, being a dream, is born of fear also. Love does not create dreams, it “creates in truth” (3:3). And love did not create the body:

The body was not made by love. Yet love does not condemn it and can use it lovingly, respecting what the Son of God has made and using it to save him from illusions.  
(T-18.VI.4:7–8)

The body was made by fear, and the dreams that result will *always* end in fear.

The body was made by fear for fear, yet “love can use it lovingly.” When we give our bodies to the Holy Spirit for His use, we change the dream. For now the body has a different purpose, motivated by love.

## Lesson 266 • September 23

### “My holy Self abides in you, God’s Son.”

#### Practice instructions

A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** I have found it helpful to make today’s idea more specific. Think of someone in your life and say, “*My holy Self abides in you, [name].*”

#### Commentary

These are not words I speak to Jesus, or to the Christ as some abstract being. These are words I speak to the person who is sitting next to me, to my boss, to my family members, to whomever is in front of me or in my mind. “My holy Self abides in *you*, God’s Son.”

If my mind is enlightened, everyone is my savior. Everyone points the way to God (2:2–3). Jesus is saying here, “Wake up! You can’t miss the way home. The world is filled with people, and *every one* is pointing the way to God. Every one reflects His Son. Your Self is in every one of them. Just let your eyes be opened and I will give you the sight to see it.”

God’s Will is your salvation. Would He not have given you the means to find it? If He wills you to have it, He must have made it possible and easy to obtain it. Your brothers are everywhere. You do not have to seek far for salvation. Every minute and every second gives you a chance to save yourself. (T-9.VII.1:1–6)

Nothing shows quite so vividly how skewed our perception is than our reaction to this lesson. Perhaps right now you are thinking, “Yeah, sure. They certainly don’t seem like saviors and bearers of God’s holy Voice to me!” If we are honest, most of us will admit that we perceive our brothers as the stumbling blocks and barriers on the way to God, if not outright antagonists. Let us, then, consider the possibility that the reason we see them that way has nothing to do with them, or with the truth. Let us consider that perhaps we have laid our sins on them, and see them looking back at us (W-pII.265.1:1). Let us begin to realize that our perception is truly upside down, and needs to be turned right side up.

May I open my eyes today. May I remind myself with each person I encounter, or think about, “She (or he) is my savior, my counselor in sight, the bearer of God’s Voice to me.” Let me ask, “God, give me the sight to acknowledge my Self in this person.” Let me acknowledge that seeing anything but this, which God says is their reality, is my own sickness of mind, my own twisted perception, and let me bring those perceptions to the Holy Spirit for healing.

### What Is the Body?

## **Part 6: W-pII.5.3:4–5**

Our minds chose to make the body. We made it from fear, and we made it to be fearful. Once that purpose is in motion it will continue, unless the purpose is changed. The body “must serve the purpose given it” (3:4), and it will continue to serve fear as long as we do not question the premises on which it was made. It will continue to preserve our separateness, fencing us in, protecting our little self from love.

Our minds have great power, however. Our minds can choose to change the purpose of the body. Our minds do not serve the body; the body serves the mind. If, within our minds, we change what we think the body is for, the body will begin to serve that new purpose. Instead of using the body to keep love out, we can begin to use the body to extend love, to express love; to heal rather than to hurt, to communicate rather than to separate, to unite rather than to divide. Instead of being a fence, it can become a medium of communication, the mechanism by which the Love of God can be seen and heard and felt and touched in this world.

This is our function here.

Fail not in your function of loving in a loveless place made out of darkness and deceit, for thus are darkness and deceit undone. (T-14.IV.4:10)

We are here to express the Love of God, to be the Love of God in this dark and loveless place. God’s formless Love takes form in our forgiveness, and in our merciful and grateful acknowledgement of the Christ in all our brothers and sisters (see W-pI.186.14:2), as we reach out our hands to help them on their way (see W-pII.5.4:3).

## Lesson 267 • September 24

### “My heart is beating in the peace of God.”

#### Practice instructions

A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

#### Commentary

This is a short Workbook lesson, but very powerful. It is one of those very positive lessons that say wonderful things about us. If most of you are like me—and I am certain you all are to some degree—often when you read a lesson like this, there is a kind of mental filtering going on. The lesson says, “Now is my mind healed” (1:4), and you instantly edit it. “Well, partly.” “My mind will be healed some day.” “My mind is in the process of being healed.” We dilute the meaning. When it says, “Peace fills my heart, and floods my body with the purpose of forgiveness” (1:3), we are tempted to deny that it is so and to think, “Peace is not flooding my heart.” The ego is constantly trying to negate the truth about ourselves.

What the Course is saying about us often does not fit the picture of ourselves we have in our mind. The very low opinion of ourselves that we constantly maintain is one of our major problems. When we do a Workbook meditation, we need to practice letting go of that poor self-image for a while. The Course is constantly saying that we actively block from our awareness a true picture of who and what we really are. The Workbook meditations are part of our training in letting go of our self-made picture, and accepting God’s picture instead. Somewhere within each of us there is a dim flicker of recognition that this paragraph is about us, and not about some impossibly distant saint. It is that little spark, as the Course calls it, that the Holy Spirit wants to fan into a flame.

That is the whole point of the Course. We are underestimating ourselves, undervaluing ourselves. “I am a messenger of God” (1:6). I really am. I may feel like something much less than that, but I am always that messenger. I always have all I need to save the world.

As you read this lesson today, attempt not to edit the lesson in your mind. When it says, “Now is my mind healed,” just let that be true for you right now. Don’t worry about how you were all day yesterday. Don’t worry about how your mind will be after the meditation is over. Just for that moment, let it be so. Agree with the way the vision of Christ sees you, and say in response, “Yes, now is my mind healed.”

Read slowly, to give yourself time to absorb each phrase. We need time, mostly to spot the negative responses that the ego mind will be throwing up and to, quite simply, ignore them. Don’t fight or argue with the ego. Just decide, for these few minutes, not to listen. Just decide, for these few minutes, to listen to the Voice for God.

## What Is the Body?

#### Part 7: W-pII.5.4:1–2

What a shift there is as paragraph 4 begins! We have been told the body is a fence to separate parts of

our Self from other parts (1:1); the body is impermanent (2:1, 3); the “proof” in its death that God’s eternal Son can be destroyed (2:9); and a dream, made of fear, made to be fearful (3:1, 4). Now, with a change of purpose, everything suddenly changes: “The body is the means by which God’s Son returns to sanity” (4:1).

It’s worth stopping and repeating that to myself: “The body is the means by which God’s Son returns to sanity.” With all the apparently negative things the Course says about the body, this is an astonishing statement. Most of us, certainly myself, could do with a good, solid shot of some positive thoughts about the body like this. I find that making it personal helps to bring it home: “*My* body is the means by which God’s Son returns to sanity.”

Instead of the negative, almost hateful attitude of some religions towards the body, attitudes that make a person impatient to get out of the body and leave it behind, this statement of the Course gives one an affirmative attitude towards the body. “This body is my way home!” How can the body be our way back to sanity?

It becomes that when we change its purpose. We substitute “the goal of Heaven” in place of “the pursuit of hell” (4:2). We begin to use the body to express and to extend the love that the body was made to shut out, and shut in. Clearly this implies physical activity in the world, since anything involving the body is, by definition, physical. Remember what Jesus said to us back in Review V:

For this alone I need; that you will hear the words I speak, and give them to the world. You are my voice, my eyes, my feet, my hands through which I save the world. ( W - pI.rV.In.9:2–3)

This is how the body becomes “the means by which God’s Son returns to sanity.” As we give our bodies to serve God’s purposes in this world, using our voices, our eyes, our feet, and our hands to give Jesus’ words to the world (perhaps verbally, or by example, or through physical assistance, helping and healing), our minds are healed, along with the minds of those around us. In this physical dream, God needs physical messengers. And you and I are those messengers.

## Lesson 268 • September 25

### “Let all things be exactly as they are.”

#### Practice instructions

A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

**Practice suggestion:** When I repeat this idea, I often add an extra word: “*Let all things be exactly as they really are*” (or, making it more specific, “*Let this thing be exactly as it really is*”). The word “really” emphasizes that accepting things as they are does not mean resigning ourselves to the “what is” seen by our eyes. Rather, the world we see is itself our refusal to accept what is, our attempt to be God’s critic (1:1), our projection of separation onto Heaven’s unity (1:3). Accepting things as they really are means *refusing* to accept the world our eyes see, refusing to accept it as real, and accepting instead only the pristine reality of Heaven as “what is.” This is how we “let all things be exactly as they are,” and this is how we find our peace.

#### Commentary

Seen in the light of forgiveness, this lesson teaches us that to criticize what *is* is to judge and condemn God. To let all things be exactly as they are is a form of forgiveness. To insist that things be different is to judge and to be unforgiving. As Paul Ferrini wisely says in his little book *From Ego To Self*,<sup>1</sup> “Only when I resist what is here do I desire what is not.”

We are all filled with wishes for how things should be. We are all discontent with things as they are. Is anybody really perfectly content with everything in their life?

Yet this is what this lesson counsels. It could seem to be cruel counsel, both towards myself and towards the world around me. If we are in unpleasant conditions—sick, trapped in a destructive relationship, dying of an illness, financially strapped, miserably unhappy—how can we say in any honesty, “Let all things be exactly as they are”? It seems a horrible thing to affirm.

If we see horrible conditions around us, in family, friends, or the world, with people in some condition like the above, how can we say, “Let it be”?

Our reluctance to say these words under such circumstances testifies to our firm belief that the conditions we see are real. If we believe the suffering is real, of course we do not wish that it continue! We cannot say it if what it means to us is “Let my mother be dying in pain,” or “Let my husband continue to drink and beat me.” Of course not!

The lesson is really a call to recognize that the conditions of suffering we see are not real. “Only reality is free of pain” (2:2). It is a call to recognize that “nothing real can be threatened [and] nothing unreal exists” (T-In.2:2–3). We cannot say “let it all be” until we first recognize that “all” means only what is real, only what is of God. The rest is illusion.

To say, “Let all things be exactly as they are” is an affirmation of faith that what appears to be pain and suffering is not really there. It is a response to God’s call, drawing us up out of the world of conditions

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<sup>1</sup>1. Paul Ferrini, *From Ego to Self* (Greenfield, Mass.: Heartways Press, 1990).

and into unconditional truth. It is a phrase that applies not to the world we see with physical eyes, but to the world we can see only with the eyes of Christ. It is an affirmation that we want to see the solid reality behind all the illusion of pain.

It does not mean that we turn our eyes on a brother in suffering and pain, see that, and callously say, “Let that be exactly as it is.” That is the old Christian mistake of “It’s God’s will.” It is not God’s will that we suffer and die. To think so is to see the error, make it real, and then blame it on God.

This lesson is about not seeing the error at all.

*Do not see error.* Do not make it real. Select the loving and forgive the sin. (S-2.I.3:3–5)

To say, “Let all things be exactly as they are” is an affirmation that conditions do not need to change for love to be real. Only the love is real, no matter what the conditions appear to be; that is what this is proclaiming.

The error, the pain and suffering we see, does not come from God. It is not, therefore, real. It is only a projection of our collective minds. It is there because we have allowed ourselves to wish conditions would be different. Ending the wish for different conditions is the start of dispelling the illusion. Resigning as creator of the universe is what is called for. We think we can change this, fix that, patch this up, and the world will be a better place. It is our interference with reality that has made it what it is! It is our interference that must stop.

While we are in the world of illusion, we must function there sanely. If I cut my finger, I don’t let it bleed untended because I know the body is not real. No, I put a Band-Aid on it. Yet as I do that, let me recognize that what I am doing is “magic.” I’m just patching the illusion, and it isn’t really important. It just makes for a more comfortable illusion. Making the illusion more comfortable is fine, but in the end it is completely irrelevant.

The same therefore applies to extreme conditions. Suppose I am dying of cancer. Of course I treat it. How I treat it does not really matter. I may use medical therapy. I may try to heal myself through diet. I may do affirmations and mental conditioning. All of it is magic, all of it is patching the illusion. In the final evaluation, it does not matter if my body lives or dies. “Let all things be exactly as they are” in this circumstance means, “What happens to my body is not what counts. Giving and receiving love counts. I don’t need to be free of cancer to be happy; what happens to my body does not affect who I really am.”

If, when ill, I live with a continual insistence that the condition of my body must change in order for me to be happy, I am merely perpetuating the error that made me sick in the first place. “Let it be” does not mean I cease all effort to change conditions, but it does mean I give up all investment in the outcome. It means that, however the conditions evolve and manifest, I rest assured that they cannot affect the ultimate good of all living things.

“I do not perceive my own best interests,” says Lesson 24. Saying “let it be” is the natural outcome of realizing our ignorance. Operating from our extremely limited viewpoint, we can still attempt to change conditions, but as we do so, we recognize that there is a lot we don’t understand, a lot we haven’t taken into consideration because, from the perspective of a separated mind, we simply cannot see it. So we do what we see to do, but we are not attached to the outcome, recognizing that whatever our efforts, the results are in God’s Hands, and God’s Hands are good Hands.

Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane is an example of this attitude: He said, “Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt]” (Mt 26:39). From his perspective as a human individual, Jesus did not want to be nailed to a cross. From his trust in God, he could still say, “Let it be unto me as You will.”

It is necessary for the teacher of God to realize, not that he should not judge, but that he cannot. (M10.2:1)

To say “let it be” is to realize this, and to affirm that God’s judgment is perfect. We are not to judge anything that happens. “Today I will judge nothing that occurs” (W-pII.243.Heading). That means we

don't judge anything bad, and *neither do we judge it good*. We don't judge at all. What is, is. Period. Let it be.

## What Is the Body?

### Part 8: W-pII.5.4:3-4

How does it work out, practically, when we change the purpose of our bodies from murder to miracles, from the pursuit of hell to the goal of Heaven? “The Son of God extends his hand to reach his brother, and to help him walk along the road with him” (4:3). It's that plain and simple. We reach out and help a brother. We put our hand under his elbow when he stumbles and help him walk with us, to God. We allow ourselves to be the first to smile in welcome. We drop our pride and become the first to seek reconciliation in a wounded relationship. We visit a sick friend. We *help* one another.

Some people say that since our only responsibility is accepting the Atonement for ourselves, there is no connection to outward actions. It's all a mental thing. I say, “Bushwa!” Accepting the Atonement for ourselves is the sole responsibility of “miracle workers.” This means that if you *do* accept the Atonement, you will work miracles. If you aren't working miracles—bringing healing to those around you—you aren't accepting the Atonement. The two go hand in hand. Read the paragraph in which that “sole responsibility” statement occurs (T-2.V.5), and notice what follows that statement. By accepting the Atonement, your errors are healed and then your mind can only heal. By doing this,

you place yourself in a position to undo the level confusion of others. The message you then give to them is the truth that their minds are similarly constructive. (T-2.V.5:4-5; see entire paragraph)

In order to be a miracle worker, you must accept the Atonement for yourself; to heal the errors of others, you must have your own errors healed first (see M-18.4).

If you are familiar with Christian theology, this confusion about healing myself versus healing others is like the old argument about salvation by grace versus salvation by works. Doing good works will not save you, the Bible says; salvation is only “by grace through faith.” And yet, it also says that if you *have* faith you will do good works; the good works are the evidence of the faith. Therefore, “faith without works is dead” (Jas 2:20). Similarly, accepting the Atonement is all that is necessary, but the evidence of doing so, the “proof” you have accepted healing for your own mind, is the extension of miracles of healing to those around you. The Course repeats this over and over, saying that the way you know you are healed is by healing others.

That is why miracles offer *you* the testimony that you are blessed. If what you offer is complete forgiveness you must have let guilt go, accepting the Atonement for yourself and learning you are guiltless. How could you learn what has been done for you, unknown to you, unless you do what you would have to do if it *had* been done for you?” (T-14.I.1:6-8)

So what these sentences are saying (back in “What Is the Body?”) is that the body becomes holy as we use it in service to others. By extending our hands to help, we bring healing to our own minds. Reaching out instead of drawing back, seeking to heal rather than to wound, is *how* we accept the Atonement, or better, how we demonstrate to ourselves that we have accepted it. The mind that has accepted Atonement can only heal, and by healing, we know our true Self. Notice here that *the body* “serves to heal the mind” (4:5). Yes; the mind is what needs healing, but the body serves to heal it, by acting in healing love towards our brothers.