

Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

LESSON 32

I have invented the world I see.

The lesson points out that its purpose is “to develop the theme of cause and effect” (1:1). Bear that in mind as you read the lesson and practice it. If, contrary to the prior lesson, you *are* the victim of the world you see, then the world is the cause, and you are the effect. If you are *not* the victim of the world you see, but the inventor of the world you see, then *you* are the cause and the world is your effect!

While this may appear to lay a heavy responsibility on you, it also is the key to incredible freedom. “You can give it up as easily as you made it up. You will see it or not see it, as you wish” (1:3-4).

As the Introduction suggested, today’s idea may seem incredible to you. Remember: You are asked not to judge the idea (“Me, invent the world? How ridiculous!”), but merely to use it as directed. Practice it as instructed, repeating the idea as you look around you, first outside, and then within your mind. It does not matter whether or not you believe the idea or even understand it. Just practice with it. The Text discusses the same thought in several places (T-21.II.11:1; T-20.III.5:1-5), the most telling of them being:

What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? (T-20.VIII.7:3-4)

It isn’t a concept you can easily avoid if you study the Course; the Course insists on it.

This idea is another that can be extremely useful in defusing wild thoughts that threaten to spiral out of control in response to some threatening or confusing situation in your life: “I have invented this situation as I see it.” It reminds us that our perception of any situation is very likely not entirely accurate!

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LESSON 33

There is another way of looking at the world.

As the preceding lesson said, if you invented the world, you can just as easily give it up. You can *choose* to see it differently, both the world without and the world within (1:1). All you are doing in this lesson, though, is recognizing that another way of perceiving things exists.

You are not even being asked to find an alternate perception, just to realize that there is one.

Pay special attention to the practice instructions here: you are asked for two longer morning and evening sessions, five minutes each, *plus* “shorter exercise periods” that are “as frequent as possible.” If you can remember every fifteen minutes, do it. And in addition to those *chosen* practice periods, where you casually glance at what is around you, and what is within your mind, and apply the idea, you are instructed “when any situation arises which tempts you to become disturbed” (3:2) to make a specific application of the idea to it, saying, “There is another way of looking at this.” And because you are attempting to counteract an upset, the lesson suggests that you sit quietly for a minute or so, closing your eyes, and repeating the idea several times.

This is quite intense practice. The idea for the day should never be far from your mind all day long.

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LESSON 34

I could see peace instead of this.

Here, we are given an idea of what the difference might be between how we see the world now, and how we could see it. We *could* see peace! (1:1) What a powerful idea this is! Notice that it says “I *could* see peace,” not, “I *should* see peace.” Do not allow yourself to feel guilty if you are seeing something other than peace; congratulate yourself that you find the un-peaceful thoughts to be disturbing! Thoughts that are not peaceful are out of sync with what you are.

This lesson celebrates the power of mind. You can replace undesirable thoughts with thoughts of peace. The song we often sing, “Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me,” surely fits in nicely with today’s lesson. Peace begins in me, in my mind, and extends outward.

No matter what is going on “out there,” you have the power to look on it with a peaceful mind. And if you are at peace, your response to whatever is happening outside will be wiser, calmer, and more effective than what might follow from panic or anger.

Note that the practice level steps up another notch, asking for *three* longer practice periods of about five minutes each, as well as frequent shorter ones. When the Course says “frequent,” it seems to mean every ten to fifteen minutes, four to six times an hour. The shorter applications need only take a few seconds, just applying the idea to whatever is going on at the moment.

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LESSON 35

My mind is part of God's. I am very holy.

How often, prior to today, have you ever used the words, “I am very holy,” about yourself? What does that tell you about your sense of self-worth? Or about your evaluation of your morality? *Holy* is just not a term we are used to applying to ourselves. Either we do not think we deserve it, or we believe that laying claim to holiness is tantamount to arrogance.

If God is holy, what God creates is holy as well. It does us good to repeat these words, “I am very holy.” They fly in the face of everything we believe to the contrary, and challenge our self-doubt. Holiness is not a measure of what we have done or not done. It is not dependent upon us at all; we are holy because of our Source.

The Course stresses both honestly confronting our egos and accepting responsibility for them, and forcefully reminding ourselves of our exalted spiritual reality.

Notice that today’s lesson moves to three practice periods, each *five* minutes long. Unless you have meditated previously, you may find it difficult to sit with your eyes closed for five minutes doing mental exercises, but even if you do, I encourage you to stick with it. It’s very much like doing that extra one or two sit-ups at the gym. You have to push your limits to strengthen your muscles. Even so, you need to push your limits at meditation to grow into a stronger meditator. It gets easier with time, and eventually you will find that five minutes seems scarcely long enough.

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LESSON 36

My holiness envelops everything I see.

If you are holy everything you see is holy, too. You are holy because God created you as a holy part of Himself, and everything you see was created by God, so its all holy. (I’m reminded of the song by Blaine Moody, “Everything is Holy Now.”)

Since you and your neighbor are equal members of one family, as you perceive both so you will do to both. You should look out from the perception of your own holiness to the holiness of others. (T-1.III.6:6-7)

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LESSON 37

My holiness blesses the world.

This lesson says it very clearly:

Your purpose is to see the world through your own holiness.
(W-pI.37.1:2)

“To perceive truly is to be aware of all reality through the awareness of your own” (T-13.VI.1:1).

Our self-concept acts like a filter or overlay. We are looking at the world through ME-colored glasses. Our job is to accept the Atonement for ourselves, to recognize our own holiness, and then, as saviors of the world, to bless the world around us:

And so they call it forth in everyone they look upon, that he may be what they expect of him. This is the savior's vision; that he see his innocence in all he looks upon, and see his own salvation everywhere. He holds no concept of himself between his calm and open eyes and what he sees. He brings the light to what he looks upon, that he may see it as it really is.
(T-31.VII.11:4-7)

The Course's message is a message of total equality. No one is better or worse, less or more, or lacks anything another has, and therefore there is no room for sacrifice. If you have ever experienced being loved just as you are, with no demands of any kind being placed on you, you will understand the power of such a vision of the world.

This lesson also says much about the way the Course is to be spread: not primarily by words but by action, or perhaps more precisely, by *attitude*:

Your holiness is the salvation of the world. It lets you teach the world that it is one with you, not by preaching to it, not by telling it anything, but merely by your quiet recognition that in your holiness are all things blessed along with you. (W-pI.37.3:1-2)

Suggestion: Imagine that you are an enlightened master, knowing your oneness with God and all things. As you do the exercises for today, look around you from that state of mind. Look on everything with eyes of love, and a heart that only wishes blessing on all things.

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LESSON 38

There is nothing my holiness cannot do.

Another opportunity to extend blessing to the world! What a wonderful sense comes from doing these “holiness as blessing” lessons, a sense of our power to bring good into the world through our thoughts and prayers.

The Bible says, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). This lesson refers to “the power of God” three times in the second paragraph, and “With God, all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). “There is nothing the power of God cannot do” (2:3). In this lesson the Course is clearly talking about the kind of things we normally associate with

miracles: removing pain, ending sorrow, solving problems. The power of God working through our holiness is “beyond every restriction of time, space, distance and limits of every kind” (1:2). It can literally do anything.

Do we believe we have such power? I think all of us have experienced such things, or at least read about experiences or known someone who has had experiences of such things: events that defy the laws of the world, that operate across incredible distances as if they were not there. In short, things that, in view of the world’s laws of time and space, are simply impossible. Yet very few--no one I know personally--can bring about such events at will. We’ve all experienced miracles, but they seem sporadic, rare, and random events. Yet, according to the Course:

Miracles are natural. When they do not occur something has gone wrong.
(T-1.I.6:1-2)

Something obviously *has* gone wrong. Today’s exercise is a step in the direction of recovering our misplaced power, dusting it off, and applying it to the situations we are involved with. “The purpose of today’s exercises is to begin to instill in you a sense that you have dominion over all things because of what you are” (5:5). You probably do not believe you “have dominion over all things,” even though that power was given us at creation.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26 KJVS)

Nevertheless, do today’s practice *as if* you had such dominion.