

“Nothing more than that is required” (W-In.9:5). That is, apply them to your life as instructed. Notice that applying the ideas is “*required*” for the program to work. If we apply them they will transform our minds; if we don’t, our mind will shed them like Teflon sheds water. Only if we use the ideas will we become fully convinced of their truth (8:6).

No one can read this carefully without realizing what is being asked of us. Reading the Text isn’t enough to reach the goal of the Course. Reading the Workbook as well is also not enough. We have to carry out the instructions in each lesson, the specific procedures for applying the idea during the day. It is our willingness to practice every step, to follow every instruction, and to do the exercises, that will determine the speed with which we reach the goal.

envelope of our present abilities. When you train in a gym or health club the whole idea involves pushing past the limits you now have and learning to do things you cannot now do. Yet at the same time it also carries with it the idea that what is being developed is something latent, the calling out of an undeveloped potential, and not the addition of something heretofore entirely lacking.

What is being trained is our minds. The separation is nothing more than a mistaken mind-set, and since the mistake is on the level of the mind, that is where it must be corrected (T-2.IV.2:3-4; T-2.V.1:7; and W-Int.4:1).

So this is a very thorough mind training, intended to affect the way you perceive literally *everything*. That we are learning a *different* perception clearly implies that our existing perception is mistaken.

Notice some of the very simple rules for doing the Workbook.

1. Do only one lesson-worth of exercises each day (W-In.2:6).
2. Practice “with great specificity” (one of those words I never used until I began studying the Course) (W-In.6:1). This means that we are to pay great attention to details, and to applying the general ideas of the lessons specifically to many different things in our lives. The purpose is to help us generalize the ideas and to see that they apply to “everyone and everything in the world” (W-In.4:1).
3. Do not deliberately refrain from applying the ideas to anything (W-In.6:3). Everything is fair game; exclude nothing.

Having 365 lessons, one for each day of the year, implies that we should do the lessons in order. (There is nothing wrong with doing some out of order at random times, but in following the training program, they should be done in order.) As you move through the lessons, it becomes obvious that the later lessons build quite squarely on earlier ones; doing them in order is the most effective way, therefore, to learn.

Some people wonder about doing one lesson per day. They wonder if, perhaps, they should repeat a lesson if they feel they did not “get” it, or did not do the practice correctly. The wisdom of many students who have worked with the book can be summed up like this: Don’t “guilt yourself” about the lessons. In general, there is no need to repeat. Later lessons will repeat the same concepts in many cases. If you want to repeat a lesson because you found it beneficial, by all means do so. If you are repeating because you are trying to do it perfectly, you may be subconsciously resisting moving on to the next lesson, which may be the one that will free you. It is usually better to forgive yourself and move on.

I’d like to linger a little on the words, “exercises” and “practicing” in sentence 7:1. We are not just *reading* these ideas. “Doing the Workbook” is not just reading the lessons. It is *practicing* the lessons. Each lesson gives “specific procedures by which the idea for today is to be applied” (W-In.3:3). Practicing means following those procedures, and practicing is “doing the Workbook.” How much chemistry would you learn if all you did was read the lab manual but never performed the experiments?

If we do the exercises, the results are guaranteed. Our part is to do the exercises; the extension of the benefits derived from exercise will happen automatically (W-In.7:2-3). You may practice with certain specific things or individuals or thoughts; the benefits of that practice will extend, without your effort, to everything in your world.

Like working out in a health club, you don’t have to even like the program. If you work out, your body will benefit whether or not you like working out. So here, in doing these mental exercises, it isn’t necessary that we believe the ideas at first, or like them, or accept them, or welcome them. You can even actively resist them (9:2). It doesn’t matter what we think about the ideas; just use them (W-In.8:5).

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKBOOK

Comments by Allen Watson

The Workbook's Introduction is something everyone doing the Workbook should definitely read thoughtfully. In my opinion, we could profit from reading it over once a month or so as we do the Workbook to remind ourselves of its basic instructions. If you think you would like to do that, you might want to go through the Workbook (or this book) now and mark a large symbol, perhaps a star, on every thirtieth lesson--30, 60, 90 and so on—to remind you to re-read the Introduction.

The first paragraph explains the interrelationship of the Text and the Workbook. *Both* are essential for anyone doing the Course. Without the “theoretical foundation” of the Text, we will not have enough background to understand what the exercises of the Workbook are trying to accomplish (1:1) . We should all pay careful attention to the Text; it is necessary to do so if we want the benefits of the Workbook exercises. Does that mean that one should study the Text before doing the Workbook? Not necessarily. The Manual discusses the order in which the volumes should be used, and says it differs from person to person. Some, it says, should postpone reading the Text and Workbook, and go straight to the Manual, which—for many people—is the most clear and concise of the three volumes (M-29.1:6). Other people have found that what works best for them is starting right in with the Workbook lessons. It is evident from this Introduction, however, that if one begins with the Workbook, the Text should follow, or perhaps be read along with the Workbook. Several lessons make the assumption that the reader is already familiar with the Text.

On the other hand, studying the Text without doing the Workbook is equally useless because “doing the exercises [is what makes] the goal of the course possible” (1:2). To simply study the theoretical foundation without practical application results in little more than empty head knowledge. You may understand intellectually what the goal is, but you will not be able to attain it without the exercises. In Chapter 30 of the Text, the Course puts forth this same idea. At this point the Text is almost complete. All of its basic ideas have been presented, many of them repeatedly, so anyone having read this far should have a fairly clear idea of what the Course wants to accomplish. Having that clear idea, however, is not enough. It says that we need “specific methods” for attaining our goal (referring, I believe, to the exercises given in the Workbook) (see T-30.Int.1:2-5). The “one thing alone” that determines how fast we reach the goal is our “willingness to practice every step” (T-30.In.1:3).

In terms of doing the Workbook I think this can be aptly applied to how willing we are to practice the daily exercises *as instructed*. If the lesson calls for four or five repetitions during the day, how willing are we to actually do that? Each time we remember to practice it may not seem as if much is happening, but every time helps a little. In the Course's method, enlightenment does not come all at once. It is all the little, repeated times of practice that, when added together, will eventually lead us home (T-30.In.1:4:5). The Workbook does not promise to change us overnight; rather, it says that if we will make the effort to do the simple practices the lessons ask of us, each such attempt will, little by little, purify our minds of the ego's darkness.

The Workbook is designed to take you beyond mere intellectual understanding to the point where the ideas of the Course take you over and dominate your way of thinking (1:4) The word *train* in sentence 1:4 calls to mind things like piano practice, sports exercises and drills, and even military training. It definitely carries with it the idea of manifold repetitions, of disciplined effort, of pushing beyond the