

Decoding & Living ACIM - ACIM Student Lessons # 11 –15 WK# 4 H-O # 5

LESSON 16.

I have no neutral thoughts.

W-16.1. The idea for today is a beginning step in dispelling the belief that your thoughts have no effect. 2 Everything you see is the result of your thoughts. 3 There is no exception to this fact. 4 Thoughts are not big or little; powerful or weak. 5 They are merely true or false. 6 Those that are true create their own likeness. 7 Those that are false make theirs.

W-16.2. There is no more self-contradictory concept than that of "idle thoughts." 2 What gives rise to the perception of a whole world can hardly be called idle. 3 Every thought you have contributes to truth or to illusion; either it extends the truth or it multiplies illusions. 4 You can indeed multiply nothing, but you will not extend it by doing so.

W-16.3. Besides your recognizing that thoughts are never idle, salvation requires that you also recognize that every thought you have brings either peace or war; either love or fear. 2 A neutral result is impossible because a neutral thought is impossible. 3 There is such a temptation to dismiss fear thoughts as unimportant, trivial and not worth bothering about that it is essential you recognize them all as equally destructive, but equally unreal. 4 We will practice this idea in many forms before you really understand it.

W-16.4. In applying the idea for today, search your mind for a minute or so with eyes closed, and actively seek not to overlook any "little" thought that may tend to elude the search. 2 This is quite difficult until you get used to it. 3 You will find that it is still hard for you not to make artificial distinctions. 4 Every thought that occurs to you, regardless of the qualities that you assign to it, is a suitable subject for applying today's idea.

W-16.5. In the practice periods, first repeat the idea to yourself, and then as each one crosses your mind hold it in awareness while you tell yourself:

2 This thought about ___ is not a neutral thought.

3 That thought about ___ is not a neutral thought.

4 As usual, use today's idea whenever you are aware of a particular thought that arouses uneasiness. 5 The following form is suggested for this purpose:

6 This thought about ___ is not a neutral thought, because I have no neutral thoughts.

W-16.6. Four or five practice periods are recommended, if you find them relatively effortless. 2 If strain is experienced, three will be enough. 3 The length of the exercise period should also be reduced if there is discomfort.

LESSON 17.

I see no neutral things.

W-17.1. This idea is another step in the direction of identifying cause and effect as it really operates in the world. 2 You see no neutral things because you have no neutral thoughts. 3 It is always the thought that comes first, despite the temptation to believe that it is the other way around. 4 This is not the way the world thinks, but you must learn that it is the way you think. 5 If it were not so, perception would have no cause, and would itself be the cause of reality. 6 In view of its highly variable nature, this is hardly likely.

W-17.2. In applying today's idea, say to yourself, with eyes open:

2 I see no neutral things because I have no neutral thoughts.

3 Then look about you, resting your glance on each thing you note long enough to say:

4 I do not see a neutral ____, because my thoughts about ____ are not neutral.

5 For example, you might say:

6 I do not see a neutral wall, because my thoughts about walls are not neutral.

7 I do not see a neutral body, because my thoughts about bodies are not neutral.

W-17.3. As usual, it is essential to make no distinctions between what you believe to be animate or inanimate; pleasant or unpleasant. 2 Regardless of what you may believe, you do not see anything that is really alive or really joyous. 3 That is because you are unaware as yet of any thought that is really true, and therefore really happy.

W-17.4. Three or four specific practice periods are recommended, and no less than three are required for maximum benefit, even if you experience resistance. 2 However, if you do, the length of the practice period may be reduced to less than the minute or so that is otherwise recommended.

LESSON 18.

I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing.

W-18.1. The idea for today is another step in learning that the thoughts which give rise to what you see are never neutral or unimportant. 2 It also emphasizes the idea that minds are joined, which will be given increasing stress later on.

W-18.2. Today's idea does not refer to what you see as much as to how you see it. 2 Therefore, the exercises for today emphasize this aspect of your perception. 3 The three or four practice periods which are recommended should be done as follows:

W-18.3. Look about you, selecting subjects for the application of the idea for today as randomly as possible, and keeping your eyes on each one long enough to say:

2 I am not alone in experiencing the effects of how I see ____.

3 Conclude each practice period by repeating the more general statement:

4 I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing.

5 A minute or so, or even less, will be sufficient for each practice period.

LESSON 19.

I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my thoughts.

W-19.1. The idea for today is obviously the reason why your seeing does not affect you alone. 2 You will notice that at times the ideas related to thinking precede those related to perceiving, while at other times the order is reversed. 3 The reason is that the order does not matter. 4 Thinking and its results are really simultaneous, for cause and effect are never separate.

W-19.2. Today we are again emphasizing the fact that minds are joined. 2 This is rarely a wholly welcome idea at first, since it seems to carry with it an enormous sense of responsibility, and may even be regarded as an "invasion of privacy." 3 Yet it is a fact that there are no private thoughts. 4 Despite your initial resistance to this idea, you will yet understand that it must be true if salvation is possible at all. 5 And salvation must be possible because it is the Will of God.

W-19.3. The minute or so of mind searching which today's exercises require is to be undertaken with eyes closed. 2 The idea for today is to be repeated first, and then the mind should be carefully searched for the thoughts it contains at that time. 3 As you consider each one, name it in terms of the central person or theme it contains, and holding it in your mind as you do so, say:

4 I am not alone in experiencing the effects of this thought about ____.

W-19.4. The requirement of as much indiscriminateness as possible in selecting subjects for the practice periods should be quite familiar to you by now, and will no longer be repeated each day, although it will occasionally be included as a reminder. 2 Do not forget, however, that random selection of subjects for all practice periods remains essential throughout. 3 Lack of order in this connection will ultimately make the recognition of lack of order in miracles meaningful to you.

W-19.5. Apart from the "as needed" application of today's idea, at least three practice periods are required, shortening the length of time involved, if necessary. 2 Do not attempt more than four.

LESSON 20.

I am determined to see.

W-20.1. We have been quite casual about our practice periods thus far. 2 There has been virtually no attempt to direct the time for undertaking them, minimal effort has been required, and not even active cooperation and interest have been asked. 3 This approach has been intentional, and very carefully planned. 4 We have not lost sight of the crucial importance of the reversal of your thinking. 5 The salvation of the world depends on it. 6 Yet you will not see if you regard yourself as being coerced, and if you give in to resentment and opposition.

W-20.2. This is our first attempt to introduce structure. 2 Do not misconstrue it as an effort to exert force or pressure. 3 You want salvation. 4 You want to be happy. 5 You want peace. 6 You do not have them now, because your mind is totally undisciplined, and you cannot distinguish between joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, love and fear. 7 You are now learning how to tell them apart. 8 And great indeed will be your reward.

W-20.3. Your decision to see is all that vision requires. 2 What you want is yours. 3 Do not mistake the little effort that is asked of you for an indication that our goal is of little worth. 4 Can the salvation of the world be a trivial purpose? 5 And can the world be saved if you are not? 6 God has one Son, and he is the resurrection and the life. 7 His will is done because all power is given him in Heaven and on earth. 8 In your determination to see is vision given you.

W-20.4. The exercises for today consist in reminding yourself throughout the day that you want to see. 2 Today's idea also tacitly implies the recognition that you do not see now. 3 Therefore, as you repeat the idea, you are stating that you are determined to change your present state for a better one, and one you really want.

W-20.5. Repeat today's idea slowly and positively at least twice an hour today, attempting to do so every half hour. 2 Do not be distressed if you forget to do so, but make a real effort to remember. 3 The extra repetitions should be applied to any situation, person or event that upsets you. 4 You can see them differently, and you will. 5 What you desire you will see. 6 Such is the real law of cause and effect as it operates in the world.