

**CLASS: TWELVE WEEK – DECODING AND LIVING ACIM
WEEK SEVEN - GENERAL HANDOUT WEEK # 7 HANDOUT # 1**

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Opening prayer: from ACIM T.2.5.18

“ I am here only to be truly helpful. I am here to represent Him Who sent me. I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do, because He Who sent me will direct me. I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing He goes there with me. I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal. And so it is.

Name sharing.

Four Levels of understanding or learning

- 1) **Unconscious Incompetence:** You don't know that you don't know. **i.e.** Someone who doesn't know that he can't ride a bike.
- 2) **Conscious Incompetence:** You know that you don't know. **i.e.** Trying to ride a bike, you fall off. Now you know, you don't know.
- 3) **Conscious Competence:** You need to be consciously aware of the task in order to perform it. **i.e.** When you first learn to ride a bike.
- 4) **Unconscious Competence.** You can perform the task automatically without any conscious effort. **i.e.** Riding a bike after you have mastered the task.

The ego's goal is to keep us unconsciously incompetent so that we remain mindless. The ego does this through victim consciousness. The ego does not want us to reclaim our mind's ability to act as the decision-maker.

Review of terms: Sin, guilt, fear, the world and the body.

Review & discuss Lesson # 26-30 & Summary Lesson # 56. Review handout that demonstrates the need to utilize a questioning mind while reading ACIM course materials.

Discussion of homework assignment from week # 6: Discovering your operating beliefs

Ego

Webster's definition of ego as a psychoanalytical term is as follows. **Ego** = that part of the psyche, which experiences the external world through the senses, organizes the thought process rationally, and governs action.

Webster's general definition for the ego is. **Ego** = the self; the individual as aware of himself.

ACIM says that the **ego** is that part of your thought system that believes you are separate from the Mind of God. As such, the ego is based on the belief that the separation is real and that you have defied God's Will and replaced God's Will with your own will. In this world of individuated perception, Level #2, the ego is our decision-maker's answer to the question, "What Am I?" It is how we define ourselves. Your own egoic will has

concealed the truth about your Oneness and replaced it with your desire to be special. This special self is a little “s” self. It is based on your desire for “littleness” rather than being the everything that a Oneness truly is. The ego is that part of your thought system that represents specialness. Specialness sets you apart from the Oneness. It sets you apart from your brother. Your mind is the controlling power behind the ego. The ego has no power of its own. Any power that the ego seems to possess comes only from your decision-maker’s choice to follow the thought system of the ego. The ego’s thought system is our little “s” self’s attempt to make the true false and the false true.

ACIM says that the ego is insane. When we compare that claim to the Webster psychoanalytical definition, we need to understand that the external world for ACIM represents the dream world of provisional reality. The physical senses are a tool of the ego which are used to trick us into believing that we are something that we are not. The physical senses tell us that we are a separate and limited ego-body. When we choose to govern our actions and beliefs based on what we “see” in a dream, we are indeed insane. We have mistaken our delusional dream and made it into our reality. We have forgotten that to escape from the dream of separation, one needs only to reawaken to the truth what we always remain us God created us, perfect whole and complete. Our decision-maker’s temporary denial of this truth cannot make a false dream real.

Reference W-pII.12.2. The ego is insane. 2 In fear **the ego** stands beyond the Everywhere, apart from All, in separation from the Infinite. 3 In its insanity, **the ego** thinks it has become a victor over God Himself. 4 And in its terrible autonomy **the ego** "sees" the Will of God has been destroyed. 5 **The ego** dreams of punishment, and trembles at the figures in its dreams; its enemies, who seek to murder **the ego** before **the ego** can ensure its safety by attacking **these dream figures**.

We have previously discussed the thought system of the ego. See the prior handouts for Week # 5.

Since the ego is based on the idea of specialness or individuality, we need to understand what ACIM refers to as specialness.

Specialness

Specialness is any attempt to replace the Love of God with something else. Specialness takes a Oneness and attempts to divide the Oneness into fictitious, individualized parts. Specialness then takes these indivisible parts that it has separated from the whole and gives these parts their own separate egoic autonomy. Specialness disregards the true relationship of the inseparable parts to the whole. It creates false relationships between these separate parts and then judges these relationships as either good or bad. Specialness places value on these false relationships based on how the decision-maker has chosen to currently define its egoic self. Specialness fails to see the holographic nature of everything. Specialness is an attack against the Oneness. Because our Oneness is real, it is part of the Mind of God. Being holographic in nature, any “part” must contain the whole. In the Mind of God there can be no separation.

Since the ego always seeks to fragmentize, the thought system of the ego is the guide for specialness. Through the use of specialness the ego creates an illusionary world in which the ego can dream it is something other than the Oneness that it truly is. Specialness defends this illusion against the truth and, because of this, specialness is an attack upon

God. Specialness sees inequality in everything and then judges the perceived unequal parts. Specialness rests on our desire to judge. Specialness is always making comparisons. When we see inequality in everything, we must conclude that there is lack. This belief in lack spawns our belief that we are limited ego-bodies in competition with other ego-bodies for the limited resources that we now believe we need for our survival. When we claim to be special, we argue for littleness. The pursuit of specialness always costs us the peace of God since the price tag for specialness requires the denial of our Big “S” Self.

Reference T- 24-II.14.4 “The death of specialness is not your death, but your awakening into eternal life.”

Reference T-24-I-3.1 “Specialness is the idea of sin made real.”

The Holy Spirit utilizes our experiences with our brothers to teach us that we are not special or separate. It teaches us that we share one equality. We are equal because we are all this same holographic Oneness within the Mind of God. Forgiveness is the tool that demonstrates our common purpose with our brother and helps us recall what we really are.

Sacrifice

Specialness requires that you must **sacrifice** something to get something. Specialness, which is our claim for littleness, is the mask that the ego uses to hide from us our true identity as the Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches that to give is to receive. In contrast, the ego believes that giving results in diminishment. The ego tells us that when we give, we lose. Thus, the law of the ego requires that “you only give to get.” Believing that the separation is real, the ego also believes that it has a will different from God’s Will. The ego is constantly looking for a good trade to compensate for its perceived lack. Because the ego believes that we are limited, the ego tells us happiness requires sacrifice since the source of happiness must come from outside ourselves. We are always looking outside of ourselves to get something that we perceive that we are lacking. As such, we are constantly bartering with the outside world in hopes of gaining our happiness. Believing we are a body, the ego tells us that we will be happy when we obtain fame, wealth, power or pleasure. The ego tells us to seek happiness in these worldly things yet, happiness is never found there since they, like the body, are not real. The ego’s false ladders to happiness (fame, wealth, power or pleasure) are only designed to conceal our true identity from ourselves. These egoic paths to happiness all lead to dead ends. True happiness can never be found by following the thought system of the ego. The motto of the ego is “Seek and never find.” Being a Oneness of All That is, you can never be happy being less than perfect, whole and complete.

Reference T- 24-III.1.1 “Forgiveness is the end of separation.”

Reference WB Lesson #187. 6.2 “Who understands what giving means must laugh at the idea of sacrifice.”

This Lesson # 187, like all the lessons, should be studied in depth. Lesson # 187 talks extensively about the concept that to give is to receive.

Egoic or Conditional Love

The Problem

How our egos defines love is closely associated with the belief in specialness and sacrifice. Recall that ACIM defines the ego as that part of your thought system that believes you are separate from the Mind of God. The ego is how we chose to answer the question “What am I?” Instead of seeing ourselves as a spiritual being choosing to have

an earthly experience, we claim we are the body. When we mistakenly exchange our spiritual essence for the false claim we are the body, we perceive others and ourselves as vulnerable. We believe that being the body; we can be hurt, suffer and die. This belief in our own mortality impacts how we relate to our world of perception and form (Level #2). We have accepted the illusion that we are the body and made it part of our core belief system. It is our beliefs, not the truth, that govern what we will choose to call into our awareness. Our beliefs become the provisional reality that we experience. When we forgot to laugh, we made the game of separation appear real within our split-mind. Correct this mistaken belief about what and who we are and the logic behind the entire egoic thought system crumbles.

The Ego's Solution - A Substitute for Love

Like all special relationships, the concept of egoic or conditional love rest on this mistaken belief that we are a vulnerable, limited ego-body in competition with other ego-bodies. Egoic love rests on the notion that as a separate ego-body we also have a separate egoic will. We believe that we have a different will that can oppose God's Will. The ego sees others and itself as limited with real needs that must be met if we are to survive. The ego perceives both inequality and individuated self-autonomy for all within its own split-mind. The ego establishes its own plan as to how its needs are to be met. It seeks some way to make itself less vulnerable to outside forces. The special relationship is a way for the ego to form alliances that it perceives can increase the ego's ability to survive. A special relationship is based on the belief that something outside of ourselves can make us better off than we presently are. Due to our belief in lack, the special relationship provides a means to obtain from another something that we believe will improve our long-term or current position. It is a process in which two parties agree to sacrifice something that they possess in exchange for something from the other that they believe is of greater value. The special relationship is a disguised form of bartering. We want a good trade. We are giving only to get.

Egoic love is based on this same principle of giving to get. Egoic love must not be mistaken as real love for egoic love is a conditional agreement with many strings attached. Whenever one party feels that the other party is not fulfilling their part of the contract, the agreement may be terminated. If someone feels they are receiving less than what they are giving up, the contract is renegotiated. Guilt is often used to enforce compliance with the contract. If one party finds a "better deal" they are apt to jump ship. Conditional love is a reward and payback system. Since it rests on the idea of separate egoic autonomy, egoic love is not voluntarily giving. Instead it is a program of giving with the expectation of personal gain. Conditional love follows the ego's plan that confirms that you are a separate and limited ego-body. The ego prefers to be "right" even if it costs you your divine inheritance. Often, egoic love may take the form of protecting another that it perceives to be vulnerable. Yet, to the ego, this protection proves that we are the body and not unlimited spirit. It proves that we are "innocent victims" of outside forces that are beyond their control. The goal of egoic love is to impress, change, fix or control "something." The "something" could be another or yourself. Egoic love refuses to allow the other party the freedom to do whatever he or she wants. We claim that our own egoic plan is what the other party should follow. Thus, when we attempt to change, fix or control another, we often claim it is done because "we love them." Yet, what we are actually doing is confirming our superiority and acknowledging the fact that we believe

that they are too stupid to know what is best for themselves. As long as the ego's plan is based on separateness and inequality between the giver and receiver, our so-called act of love is really an attack upon the reality of both parties' spiritual essence. It is an attack on the Oneness of the Whole. It is an attack upon God. We are confirming that the dream of separation is real and that lack, limitation and vulnerability are the ultimate inheritance of God's Children.

The Ego's Mistake

Our entire egoic plan rests on the misperception that we are the body and not unlimited spirit. It claims that the Oneness has been shattered and that it has been replaced by specialness, inequality and limitation. Now competition exists for the limited resources that we perceive we lack and need to make us happy. Egoic love's first step is always to confirm that we are a vulnerable limited ego-body that has real needs. If these needs are not provided by something outside of us, we will suffer and ultimately die. Egoic love attempts to prolong and confirm the dream that we are the body. It demands that sacrifices be made in order to protect these bodies from outside victimizers. Egoic love claims that we must protect someone we "love" from his or her own free will. Rather than see each person as the creator of his or her own experience, we see a world of victims and victimizers. We develop an egoic plan to protect others and ourselves from these so-called imagined victimizers of our world. We deny that each party has the power to freely write their own script and has chosen the role they wish to experience. Egoic love is based on the belief that our ego knows what is best for the object of our love and that we should impose our will upon the other party. We believe our script is the best plan for all involved. Egoic love attempts to place restrictions upon the other party's freedom to be the creator of their own experience. They need to follow our egoic plan, not their own. Guilt and blame is often the tool used by the ego to get its way. All this confirms our egoic belief that we are the body and that people remain innocent victims of outside forces beyond their control. The ego's plan is focused on tolerating and minimizing the effects of the problem. The ego never addresses the cause of the problem. The cause is our erroneous belief that we are the body with a will different from God's Will. Thus, by focusing on the effects of the problem and not the cause, the ego's plan insures that we remain stuck in the dream of separation.

The Correct Solution

God's Love is unconditional Love. Coming from the truth that there is nothing outside the Oneness of All That Is, God Love flows unceasingly to all parts of the indivisible Oneness. There are no conditions placed on this flow since God's Love cannot be earned nor can it be lost. God does not judge. God only Loves. God says to the Sonship, you are my Child and all I have is yours. There is nothing we can do that can force God to stop loving us. If there were, God's Love would not be unconditional. Thus, God's Love grants us total and perfect freedom to be or imagine whatever we want. We cannot alter how God acts and feels toward His Creation. This freedom includes our ability to deny God's love and to claim that we could be separate from our Source. We can even imagine God hates us and that we hate God yet, our imaginings and denials cannot change the truth of the Oneness that we share. God's eternal Love continues to flow for an effect cannot change its cause. We merely need to accept the truth that we are not the body. We are free and remain eternally as God created us.

Question:

When did you feel most loved?

You feel most loved when another allows you to just be the way you are. There is no judgment. No efforts to impress, fix, change or control you by the other party. There are no threats or actions that could result in the withdrawal of his or her love. Love allows you the freedom to be your own person. Love accepts you just the way you are.

How do we transform the special relationship into a Holy relationship?

We need to stop the egoic mind chatter, ask and listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Abandon our egoic game plan and listen to the Voice for God. Only the Holy Spirit knows the way home. Only the Holy Spirit's Plan rests upon the truth of what we are. The Holy Spirit knows this truth.

**There is no one to impress
There is no one to fix.
There is no one to change.
There is no one to control.
There is no one.
There is just the One Self.
God Is and You are That One.**

When we need accept this truth for ourselves, God's prodigal Son will have freely chosen to return Home.

For next week:

Homework: Review handouts. Complete next five Lesson # 31-35 & Summary Lesson # 57

Homework: Complete Honesty, Compassion and Oneness Exercise of next week's class discussion.

Group meditation or Ending prayer: Father, I believed I had lost my divine birthright. Now, I realize I was only "living" in my own self-created nightmare of illusion. I reawaken now to reclaim my divine birthright. Thank you for preserving what I feared I had lost. I forgive my brother and myself and remember all that you have given me. Your unconditional Love is all there is. I love myself unconditionally. Your Will is only that Your Child be happy. I now freely embrace Your Will as my own will. I come home to You, Father. Your prodigal son has return to his source. I join in the Oneness that is You. And so it is.

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