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to Sam,

From Lesson 1: ***Nothing I see (in this room, on this street, etc) means anything.***
To Lesson 2: ***I have given everything I see (in this room, on this street, from this window, etc.) all the meaning that it has for me.***

So, the Lessons appear to be awakening me to "how" I have come to be in this state of confusion....and they begin with a "radical" statement that "no thing means any thing" (except for whatever meaning I HAVE GIVEN IT.)

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Lesson 3: I do not understand anything I see (in this room, on this street, from this window, in this place).

This email was sent on January 3rd and, at that point, I had not really used the daily emails to Sam as a way to "dive into" the specifics of how to apply each Workbook Lesson. So, for details about Lesson 3, I suggest you read, and absorb Christ's "how-to," on application for this day. I am leaving the rest of my email here, as it is nice for me to re-visit my "why" for becoming involved in the activities at The Christ Community Center.

After our meeting yesterday at **The Christ Community Center**, I decided to review the "Introduction" to the workbook lessons. It feels necessary that I really IMBIBE the AIM for the workbook, to understand the "WHY" of MY reason for "bothering to do" the lessons. In my Siddha Yoga practice, there is a term called, "Sankalpa" which translates to, "Intention." So, what is my "Intention" for practicing the workbook lessons? And, come to that -- what is my "Intention" for becoming involved with The Christ Community Center?

My "INTENTION" for resuming my practice of the principles of A Course in Miracles, as well as for attending the weekly meetings at The Christ Community Center is ACTUALLY a DESIRE -- to have an ONGOING AWARENESS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE LIVING CHRIST WITHIN ME, and to ALLOW THAT PRESENCE TO PERFORM ALL ACTIONS (thought, emotions, and physical action), THROUGH THIS "VEHICLE" OF "ALICE". This character of "Alice" wishes to really EXPERIENCE the phrase, "Thy Will Be Done," -- and to know that "my will IS Thy will."

My mind is like a rescue animal -- it can be skittish, and distrusting. Yet, it LONGS to feel SAFE, and to find TRUE REST. So far, this mind has found such rest while chanting God's Name as I practice Siddha Yoga, and while keeping company with those who share devotion to this practice. CONSISTENCY is a quality that I would LOVE to experience throughout 2019. May I know a CONSTANT experience of my TRUE SELF, my CHRIST SELF, as I practice the workbook lessons and as I read the text from A Course in Miracles.

Amen.

Lesson 4: These thoughts do not mean anything. They are like the things I see in this room (on this street, from this window, in this place.)

I am typing this document on January 11th. I began by copying specific emails into a “new document” on my laptop, and formatting the text (changing the font, adding “bold”, “italics,” etc). I had decided to do the formatting from the “last” of the eleven emails, and work my way “forward.” Why I decided to do it this way, I KNOW NOT! The result has been quite interesting!

For one thing, I get to “review” each lesson as I look at the emails...AND I can see how Christ “eases us into the practices” with respect to applying each stated lesson into our day. For example, in Lesson 4, he asks us to begin the practice periods by simply ***noting the thoughts that are crossing your mind for about a minute. Then apply the idea*** (today’s lesson) ***to them. If you are already aware of unhappy thoughts, use them as subjects for the idea.*** He then cautions, ***Do not, however, select only the thoughts you think are “bad.” You will find, if you train yourself to look at your thoughts, that they represent such a mixture that, in a sense, none of them can be called “good” or “bad.”*** He concludes, ***This is why they do not mean anything.***

As you read this post, I ENCOURAGE you to go back to your text and VERY CAREFULLY read what Christ says for this lesson! Discover WHY, in terms of how to apply the lesson, he says, ***Do not be afraid to use “good” thoughts as well as “bad.”*** adding, ***None of them represents your real thoughts, which are being covered up by them.*** Even “good” thoughts do not “qualify” as your REAL thoughts! WOW! There is SO MUCH good stuff in this Lesson – READ HIS STATEMENTS AGAIN AND AGAIN TODAY!

Love,
AB

Lesson 5: I am never upset for the reason I think.

This statement is followed by: ***There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind.***

In my specific case:

I am not worried about my finances for the reason I think. So, yesterday, upon the conclusion of the massage session, as I awaited payment...when the client said, "I'd like to redeem this gift certificate, is that okay?" I instantly replied, "Of COURSE it is!" while inwardly saying, "Oh CRAP! I was COUNTING ON THAT money to cover my next Visa payment!" -- so, in terms of this lesson, I guess THAT inner "wobble" was NOT for the reason I think!

Christ says, ***Apply*** (this lesson) ***specifically to whatever you believe is the cause of your upset, using the description of the feeling in whatever term seems accurate to you. The upset may seem to be fear, worry, depression, anxiety, anger, hatred, jealousy, or any number of forms, all of which will be perceived as different. This is not true.*** WHA?? He explains, ***...until you learn that form does not matter, each form becomes a proper subject for*** (today's) ***exercises. Applying the same idea to each of them separately is the first step in ultimately recognizing they are all the same.*** WTF? Well, *I don't have to UNDERSTAND it in order to DO it!*

Sometimes, I can't seem to "identify" a specific upsetting thought, so I will also apply the lesson this way: First, to note any "somatic disturbances" in my body – feeling a "knot" in the stomach, or discovering shallow breathing or "holding" my breath...noting feelings of restlessness, or impulsiveness – and then say to myself, ***This disturbance is NOT caused by whatever I may think it is, because I am never upset for the reason I think.***

Christ gives a few examples of how to word the statements for today's lesson, and cautions us to AVOID "picking and choosing" which type or degree of "upset" is relevant for the lesson's application. Remember: ***There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind.*** And, another help:

I cannot keep this form of upset and let the others go. For the purpose of these exercises, then, I will regard them all as the same.

3 to 4 practice periods are recommended, and we are to first "search our mind" for a minute or so to identify whatever disturbing thoughts are there. Then, apply the statement in the manner shown in the book.

Okay, here I go!

AB

Lesson 6: I am upset because I see something that is not there.

In terms of applying this lesson to my current circumstances, I could say, *I am worried about my finances because I see something that is not there.* In his explanation for this lesson Christ says, *Today's idea is useful for application to anything that seems to upset you, and can PROFITABLY be used throughout the day for that purpose.* (I typed the word "profitably" in caps, because I found it amusing to read that particular word just after writing my statement regarding my finances!)

As I begin each of the 3 to 4 practice periods today, I am instructed to FIRST do a minute or so of "mind searching" to uncover whatever "upsetting thoughts" are there, then to apply the statement to each item found. Christ says to ...name both the form of upset (i.e: the specific emotion: anger, fear, worry, depression and so on) and the perceived source very specifically for any application of (today's) *idea.* For example:

I am angry at __ (so-and-so) __ because I see something that is not there.

Christ also addresses any "resistance" I may throw into my own path, *...if you resist applying the idea to some upsetting thoughts more than to others, remind yourself of the two cautions stated in the previous lesson:*

There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace-of-mind.

And,

I cannot keep this form of upset and let the others go. For the purposes of these exercises, then, I will regard them all as the same.

Okay, here I go...

Love,

AB

LESSON 7: I see only the past.

Christ attributes THIS statement as the SOLE reason **why**:

1. ***Nothing I see means anything***, and how it is that,
2. ***I have given everything I see all the meaning it has for me***, and **WHY**
3. ***I do not understand anything I see.***

With regard to the "inner world," of thoughts, this lesson is **WHY**:

4. ***My thoughts do not mean anything...***and
5. ***I am never upset for the reason I think.***

In point of fact,

6. ***I am UPSET BECAUSE I see something that is NOT THERE.***

My “Aha!” about this: If I am ONLY SEEING the PAST -- then I am seeing NOTHING because the past IS NO THING, and is NO WHERE.

As Christ explains, ***Old ideas about time are very difficult to change, because everything you believe is rooted in time, and depends on your NOT LEARNING these new ideas about it.*** He adds, ***Yet that is precisely why you need new ideas about time. This first-time idea is not really so strange as it may sound...*** Christ then gives us a WONDERFUL example of how the mind DOES NOT REALLY SEE: ***Look at a cup, for example. Do you see a cup, or are you merely reviewing your past experiences of picking up a cup, being thirsty, drinking from a cup...*** See where He’s going with this? After the initial “impression” or experience of a thing is “recorded,” the mind uses this “past data” to relate to it in each subsequent encounter. All sensory data is recorded, so each new encounter is NOT “freshly experienced” even on THIS level! Mind-blowing, eh? As He puts it, ***You would have no idea what this cup is, except for your past learning.***

Do you, then, really see it? So, He entreats us to look around, and admit that we ARE really only seeing the past everywhere. He says, ***Acknowledge this by applying the idea for today indiscriminately to whatever catches your eye. For example, I see only the past in this pencil, (...in this shoe, in this hand, in that body, in that face, etc.)*** He reminds us NOT to dwell on any ONE thing in particular, and NOT to OMIT anything either. 3 to 4 practice periods will do for today.

Here we go --Lesson 7: I see only the past.

Jan 8, 2019: Lesson 8

Hello Christ! The Lesson You have given me for today is:

My mind is preoccupied with past thoughts. (Lesson 8)

You explain that THIS is the reason WHY ***I see only the past.*** The experience known as “seeing” appears to be a “by-product” of my thoughts being projected onto the “screen” of my conscious mind (awareness). You add that being distracted-by or preoccupied-with past thoughts ALSO results in a misconception of “time.” The only “time” that exists is the “present”, but this cannot be experienced as long as the mind is caught-up in the past. Then, You add: ***The one wholly true thought one can hold about the past is that it is not here. To think about it at all is therefore to think about illusions.***

I LOVE how you go on to say, ***Very few have realized what is actually entailed in picturing the past or in anticipating the future. The mind is actually blank when it does this, because it is not really thinking about anything.***

So, when I ALLOW my mind to dwell upon or “wallow” in the **past** -- getting caught-up in regrets, resentments, grieving, etc; or I feel myself becoming anxious or fearful regarding the **future** (eg: thinking about what “bad things” might happen), you’d say that my mind is actually **blank!** And, because my mind is “fixated” in the “non-present”, I am **really NOT thinking about ANYTHING!**

You explain: ***The purpose of the exercises for today is to begin to train your mind to recognize when it is not really thinking at all.*** You add, ***While “thoughtless ideas” (my quotation marks) preoccupy your mind, the truth is blocked. Recognizing that your mind has been merely blank, rather than believing that it is filled with real ideas, is the first step to opening the way to vision.*** WOW! There is “seeing”, and then there is “vision,”....hmmmmmm....

Today I am directed to take about a minute, with eyes closed, and see what thoughts wander through the mind. As I do this, I say to myself, **I seem to be thinking about_____ (insert topic: person, object, emotion).** I repeat this statement for each item noted. I conclude the exercise period with: **But my mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.** Repeat about 3 to 5 times during the day. If it becomes “trying” or “irritating” to do the repetitions, I’ll just include that feeling! **I seem to be irritated as I do this exercise.** That way, I can incorporate the teachings in a “universal” way -- without discriminating between “acceptable” and “unacceptable” topics to note.

WOW!

Here we go!

Love,

AB

Lesson 9: I see nothing as it is now.

Christ says: ***This idea obviously follows from the two preceding ones.*** He anticipates the likelihood that this statement can only be grasped intellectually, and assures us that there is NO NEED to understand it. In fact, as he explains, ***the recognition that you do not understand is a prerequisite for undoing your false ideas.*** And, he adds, ***These exercises are concerned with practice, not with understanding. You do not need to practice what you already understand.*** Compassion is offered in the next section of this Lesson's explanation: ***It is difficult for the untrained mind to believe that what it seems to picture is not there.*** He adds that this idea may be ***quite disturbing, and may meet with active resistance in any number of forms.*** Yet, he adds, ***that does not preclude applying it,*** adding that, ***Each small step will clear a little of the darkness away, and understanding will finally come to lighten every corner of the mind that has been cleared of the debris that darkens it.***

3 to 4 practice periods are recommended during the day...and examples of HOW to apply the lesson are given. So, I just have to look around me, and apply the lesson to every specific item upon which my eyes light: *"I do not see this laptop as it is now....I do not see these hands as they are now...I do not see this image of Sri Lakshmi Devi as She is now..."* and so forth. Christ says, ***Begin with the things that are nearest you, and then extend the range outward...It is emphasized again that while complete inclusion should not be attempted, specific exclusion must be avoided. Be sure you are honest with yourself in making this distinction. You may be tempted to obscure it.***

Okay, so HERE WE GO!

Love,

AB

Lesson 10 -- My thoughts do not mean anything.

Well, I am so HAPPY to be doing the Workbook Lessons at this point of my life -- because, for the FIRST TIME, this statement makes perfect sense! After "searching my mind" for a couple of days, and seeing what thoughts seem to streak through it, or whirl round-and-round, I see that, indeed, I am MOSTLY mentally recalling and replaying experiences; mulling over my own opinions and judgments about one thing or another; making NEW judgments; and doin' the old "What-If?" game about "the future!" As noted in Lesson 8: ***The purpose of the exercises...is to begin to train your mind to recognize when it is not really thinking at all. While thoughtless ideas preoccupy your mind, the truth is blocked.*** So, today's Lesson will be applied to ALL of my thoughts as I become aware of them, because, as Christ says: ***they are not your real thoughts.*** Christ goes on to say that, ***The emphasis is now on the lack of reality of what you think you think.*** Christ synthesizes the past several lessons, ***This aspect of the correction process began with the idea that the thoughts of which you are aware are meaningless, outside, rather than within;*** (lessons 1-3), ***and then stressed their past rather than their present status.*** (lessons 7-9) Christ clarifies the current focus: ***Now we are emphasizing that the presence of these "thoughts" means that you are not thinking....your mind is really a blank.*** The "AHA!" of recognition related to these "meaningless thoughts" and what they TRULY ARE turns out to be, in Christ's words, ***the prerequisite for vision.*** Five practice periods of approximately ONE MINUTE are called-for today...each of which should be started with my telling myself: ***This idea will help to release me from all that I now believe.***

From that initial statement, I can watch the parade of thoughts across the screen of the mind, and "customize" the lesson: **My thought about _____ (insert subject) does not mean anything.** ("Lather, Rinse, Repeat" for every thought).

Okay, here we go!!!

Love,

AB

Lesson 11: My meaningless thoughts are showing me a meaningless world.

Lesson eleven (11 – a “Master Number” in Numerology!) gets at the "Heart" of the proper perspective for understanding "the outside world." -- As Christ explains it: ***This is the first idea we have had that is related to a major phase of the correction process: the reversal of the thinking of the world.*** Christ goes on to say what many of us are already coming to understand: ***It seems as if the world determines what you perceive.*** ("All Aboard the train to Victim Town!" LOL) So, Christ, in THIS LESSON -- FINALLY "fits us with the proper lenses" through which we can REALLY see this world CLEARLY! He says, ***Today's idea introduces the concept that your thoughts determine the world you see.*** He encourages us to ***Be glad indeed to practice the idea in its initial form, for in this idea is your release made sure.*** He adds, ***The key to forgiveness lies in it.***

Today, my practice is to begin with eyes closed, slowly repeating the idea to myself. Then, I open my eyes, and look around me...***near and far, up and down -- anywhere,*** as Christ says. He advises me to, ***merely repeat (the idea) to (myself) being sure to do so without haste, and with no sense of urgency or effort.*** He explains that ***for maximum benefit,*** I should glance fairly quickly from one thing to another...not lingering on any particular thing. In other words: just look at the "set" of this "3-D fantasy drama" -- check out the props, and set dressing...but don't get caught up in any one particular thing on the set. And, Christ adds, ***The words...should be used in an unhurried, even leisurely fashion. The introduction to this idea in particular should be practiced as casually as possible.*** BECAUSE, as He says, ***this idea contains the foundation for the peace, relaxation, and freedom from worry that we are trying to achieve.*** Wow! GREAT! The ANSWER to my prayer!!!

Christ concludes this section of the Lesson directions with, ***On concluding the exercises, close your eyes and repeat the idea once more slowly to yourself. Three practice periods today will probably be sufficient. However, if there is little or no uneasiness, and inclination to do more, as many as five may be undertaken. More than this is not recommended.***

WOW! What a POWERFUL DAY THIS IS GONNA BE!!

Love,
AB