

## LESSON 22 • JANUARY 22

“What I see is a form of vengeance.”

### Practice instructions

**Exercise:** Five times (at least), for one minute (at least).

- Look about you. As your eyes move slowly from one thing to another say, “*I see only the perishable. I see nothing that will last. What I see is not real. What I see is a form of vengeance.*”
- Conclude by asking yourself, “*Is this the world I really want to see?*”

**Remarks:** The four lines that we are asked to repeat do not seem to logically follow from each other, even though it seems like they are meant to. Based on paragraph 2, I would say they do follow from each other, only *in reverse order*—meaning, the conclusion comes first and the argument’s foundation comes last. The logic all rests on the idea (mentioned in paragraph 1) that we see the world through angry eyes. As a result, we are convinced that the world *must* want to get revenge on us for the daggers that came out of our eyes, so to speak. This (unconscious) conviction on our part makes us perceive ourselves surrounded by a world thirsting for vengeance on us. (That explains the fourth line.) The vengeful world we see, therefore, is our own projection. It exists only in our imagination. It is not a real world. (That explains the third line.) And, because it is not real, it does not have the *attributes* of reality; in this case, permanence. (That explains the first and second lines.) To make this fully clear, let me place the original lines and my explanation side by side:

Original lines	Explanation
<i>I see only the perishable.</i> <i>I see nothing that will last.</i>	I see a world that has no permanence.
<i>What I see is not real.</i>	It has no permanence because permanence is an attribute of reality, and the world I see is not real. It is only a picture in my imagination.
<i>What I see is a form of vengeance.</i>	This picture is painted by my attack thoughts. They cause me to imagine a world poised to get revenge on me for my attack on it.

### Commentary

This is a lesson that I simply did not understand the first few times I went through the Workbook. I’m not entirely sure I understand it now, but it makes a certain sense to me, and to the degree that I do understand it, I’d like to share that understanding with you. Notice one thing, however, as you read through the lesson. What you are asked to actually practice with is *not* simply the thought that heads the lesson, but quite a bit more, ending with the question: “Is this the world I really want to see?” (3:8). So understanding the lead thought isn’t really the purpose of this lesson; rather, the purpose is to help us realize that we do not really want what we are seeing.

We are seeing it, however, because in some part of our mind, a part we have hidden from consciousness, we do want it. We always see what we want to see, and we are seeing what we are seeing because we want to see it.

You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there.  
Perception has no other law than this. (T-25.III.1:3-4)

If we are seeing what we are seeing because we want to see it, then if this lesson can help us learn we don't *really* want it—that we really want something else—it will help us change what we see. Change what we want, and our perception changes with it.

If we hold attack thoughts in our mind we must see the world as a vicious place, a dangerous place. It is a world of pain, and “pain is but witness to the Son’s mistakes in what he thinks he is. It is a dream of fierce retaliation for a crime that could not be committed” (W-pI.190.2:3-4). As I said yesterday, we are angry at ourselves over what we think we have done, and as a result we are having “a dream of fierce retaliation” for our crimes. As egos we are also angry at reality for not being what we want it to be, for not supporting our wish for separation and specialness. We cannot face our own anger at ourselves, and we cannot support the guilt of our insane rage at reality, so we project it: “Having projected his anger onto the world, he sees vengeance about to strike at him” (1:2).

The anger and attack we see in the world is only the reflection of the intensity of our inner rage, the rage we cannot see in ourselves *precisely because* we have denied it and projected it outward. The world I see thus shows me what I am thinking. “What I see is a form of vengeance” because vengeance is what fills my own mind, although I am unaware of it. That I see vengeance in the world is the proof it is in my mind, because that is the law of perception.

He will attack, because what he beholds is his own fear external to himself, poised to attack, and howling to unite with him again. Mistake not the intensity of rage projected fear must spawn. It shrieks in wrath, and claws the air in frantic hope it can reach to its maker and devour him. (W-pI.161.8:2-4).

“It is from this savage fantasy that you want to escape” (2:1). The words the Course uses—“savage fantasy,” “a dream of fierce retaliation”—are so evocative! If the world looks like this—and surely it does, quite often at least—what must be the state of our minds that spawn it? “This becomes an increasingly vicious circle until he is willing to change how he sees” (1:4).

We *do* want to escape from this savage fantasy. That is the goal of today’s lesson, to help us become willing to change how we see. None of what we are seeing exists, and if we are willing to change how we see, we will no longer see it.

The Course’s definition of “real” is “eternal, everlasting, changeless.” What does not last is not real, by definition. “I see nothing that will last” (3:4). Therefore none of it is real, by this definition. If it is not real, what is it? “A form of vengeance” (3:6). Ken Wapnick said once that the world is simply crystallized guilt. This lesson is saying that the world is crystallized attack thoughts, vengeance solidified into a world of attack and counterattack.

*Is this the world I really want to see?*  
The answer is surely obvious. (3:8-9)

Bear in mind that this lesson is working at the level of motivation. It is not telling us *how* we can see something differently. It knows that if it can get us to the point of *wanting* something different the battle is over, because what we want, we will see. So if this lesson leaves you thinking, “God! No, I don’t want to see the world like this anymore, but what can I do about it?” then the lesson has been successful. The question will be answered as the lessons progress.

