

LESSON 6 • JANUARY 6

“I am upset because I see something that is not there.”

Practice instructions

Exercise: Three or four times, for one minute or so.

Same instructions as yesterday, only using a new idea.

Tip: The lessons speak as if you should *first* search your mind for a minute, and *then* apply the lesson to everything uncovered in your search. However, you may have difficulty remembering all the things you uncovered. If so, rather than practicing in these distinct two phases, you may want to practice in a slightly different way: Search your mind, find a single upset, apply the idea to it, then search your mind for another upset, apply the idea to that one, and so on.

Response to temptation: Optional.

The idea can be used throughout the day to dispel your upsets. But do not substitute this for the practice periods.

Commentary

This begins to explain why I am really upset. I am never upset for the reason I think; I am upset because I see something that is not there. (Once again the Workbook builds its case piece by piece; it does not tell us just what we are seeing, only that it is something that isn't there. If you're curious, go ahead, peek at the next lesson.) We can't begin to imagine how much of what we see, things we think of as “real” and “objective facts,” are really things that are not there. The case being built here is that all of our upset comes from things that aren't there. Only what God creates is real, and nothing He creates is upsetting, and if those are facts, today's idea must be true. So when I feel upset I can say to myself, “I'm upset because I'm seeing something that isn't there.”

We are asked to recall the “two cautions stated in the previous lesson” (3:1). Since they are repeated they are obviously important, so let's think a little about each.

There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind.
(3:2–3)

I find I have to remind myself of this a lot. It is so easy to overlook “small” upsets and leave them undealt with. A rage at someone who betrays me and steals my job is no different than a “minor” annoyance at slow service in a restaurant. Both have the power to disturb my peace of mind. If my goal is a mind at peace I must learn to deal with all upsets as being of equal importance; I must learn to “recognize what is the same and what is different” (W-pI.4.3:4).

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. (3:5–6)

At least during the practice periods of the Workbook, we need to regard all upsets as the same, and apply the lesson to them. If I insist on not applying the lesson to some “minor” upset or to an upset that seems justified to me, I won't really be able to let any of the upsets go. I will be holding on to the principle behind all of them. It would be like saying you are going to lose weight by cutting out sugar and fat, except for that half gallon of ice cream every night. The Course insists that we be thorough and absolute in our practicing.

“I am upset because I see something that is not there.”

