

LESSON 27 • JANUARY 27

“Above all else I want to see.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To bring closer the day when you want vision more than everything else.

Exercise: At least every half hour (three or four times an hour is suggested).

Simply repeat the idea. You can do this even in the middle of conversation. Don't worry if you don't fully mean the idea. Repeat it to bring closer the day when you *will* mean it. If repeating it arouses fear of having to give up something, add, “*Vision has no cost to anyone,*” and, if still afraid, say, “*It can only bless.*”

Remarks: This is a very important lesson, the second lesson in frequent practice (the first was Lesson 20). It is clearly serious about this frequency. At the beginning of the day you are supposed to set the interval you will use (e.g., every twenty minutes, every thirty minutes). If you have not done that yet, it would be good to do so now. Then, for the rest of the day, you are asked to do your best to stick to the frequency you yourself chose. The Course realizes that, in all likelihood, you will not do this perfectly. When you forget a practice period, do not get angry with yourself. This eventually makes you feel like giving up (and is, in fact, an ego ploy to engineer just this outcome; see W-pI.95.7:3-5, 10:1-2). Just get back to your practicing as if nothing happened. What is important is not lamenting past failures to practice, but *doing* the practice in the present and future. The benefits of this can be enormous. Just one truly sincere repetition can put you forward years in your development.

Commentary

This is reminiscent of Lesson 20, “I am determined to see,” to which a subtle reference is made in the first line: “Today's idea expresses something stronger than mere determination.” It puts the desire to see into first place, “above all else.” I want to see more than I want anything else. If we mean this, we will choose the path that leads to vision every time, no matter what other lesser goal might be tempting us.

The lesson recognizes that the idea may not be wholly true for us yet. Since desire determines vision, if it were now wholly true you would *already* see, and therefore would not need the lesson! So working with a lesson like this is not hypocritical; it is an exercise intended specifically for people for whom the idea is not yet wholly accepted, designed to move us closer to the day when it will be.

The phrase “above all else” may tempt us to think we are being asked to sacrifice. “Vision at any cost!” Therefore the lesson suggests that if we feel uneasy about unreservedly committing ourselves to vision, we should add this thought: “Vision has no cost to anyone” (2:3). If that isn't enough, add, “It can only bless” (2:5). Put them all together: “Above all else I want to see, and vision has no cost to anyone. It can only bless.”

This hints at an idea stated clearly many times in the Course: this path does not believe in sacrifice. It says we are asked only to sacrifice illusions, and that this is in reality only an illusion of sacrifice. “Nothing real can be threatened” (T-In.2:2).

Still, the lesson is leading us toward this kind of single-minded, unreserved determination to have true vision. We *do* need to be willing to put vision above anything that seems to compete with it. It may *seem* at times that we are being asked to give things up, and we may actually have to give them up, but when we do, we will realize we have given up nothing we truly wanted. The entire process is perfectly safe, and entails no real loss of any kind.

The practice requirements suddenly leap into high gear in this lesson: repeat the idea “at least every half hour” (3:2). That’s *at least* every half hour, “and more if possible. You might try for every fifteen or twenty minutes” (3:2–3). (Things will ease up again tomorrow.) Specific structure, with a set time schedule, is recommended. All we are asked to do each of these times is to repeat the one sentence to ourselves: “Above all else I want to see.” This is not a big deal. There isn’t any reason we can’t do it, even in the middle of a conversation—if we want to, if we are willing.

The real question is, how often will you remember? How much do you want today’s idea to be true? Answer one of these questions and you have answered the other. (4:1–3)

How often we remember will be the measure of how much we really want to see above all else. This will be a very revealing day!

Notice carefully how we are supposed to deal with the fact that we probably will forget and come nowhere near the ideal of every fifteen minutes. It says a lot about how the Workbook views this whole matter of “practice.” Basically it says, “Don’t let your ‘failure’ bother you; just get back on track immediately.” All that it takes to save “many years of effort” (4:6) is to, just once during the day, repeat the idea with perfect sincerity. To achieve that one time, many repetitions are needed. Simply do the best you can—but let it be the *best* you can do.