

LESSON 32 • FEBRUARY 1

“I have invented the world I see.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To teach you that you are not the effect of the world; it is the effect of you.

Longer: Two times, morning and evening, for at least three to five minutes.

As with yesterday’s lesson, repeat the idea a few times while looking around you slowly. Then close your eyes and apply it to the images that arise in your inner world. Remain detached by reminding yourself that both worlds are equally imaginary.

Remarks: The counsel in 4:3 about when to practice is repeated in different forms several times in the Workbook. For a discussion, see “When Should You Take Your Morning Quiet Time?” Following the Workbook’s counsel in this regard will enhance the quality of your practice, so that, as with today’s lesson, you may find yourself wanting to go longer than five minutes.

Frequent reminders: As often as possible.

Repeat idea *slowly* while looking about either your outer or inner world.

Response to temptation: Whenever a situation upsets you.

Immediately respond with: “I have invented this situation as I see it.”

Commentary

If I’m not the victim of the world, what is my relationship to it? I’ve invented it. If I’ve invented it, if I made it up, how can I possibly be its victim?

Now, saying that I’ve invented the world is a pretty heavy statement. Saying that I can give it up as easily as I made it seems even more improbable. Yet that is what the practice of the Workbook is setting out to prove to us, not by rigorous logic but through experiences that demonstrate that it is true. That’s what miracles are. Miracles demonstrate that “the world you see outside you” and “the world you see in your mind” are “both...in your own imagination” (2:2–3).

This lesson is simply introducing the idea, not trying to prove it. The Text discusses the same thought in several places (T-21.II.11:1; T-20.III.5:1–5), the most telling of them being:

What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? (T-20.VIII.7:3–4)

It isn’t a concept you can easily avoid if you study the Course; the Course insists on it.

All that is really being asked here is that we open our minds to the idea that we have invented the world we see. It is a concept that can throw our minds into turmoil because it flies in the face of our fundamental beliefs about the world. The world has a few nice things about it, but also a lot of ugly junk. And being told I am responsible for it, I made it up, doesn’t sit easily with my mind.

If it raises all kinds of questions in my mind, fine; let the questions bubble up. For today, for the practice periods, just apply the idea as given. It’s okay if part of your mind is kibitzing in the background saying, “This is nuts! I don’t really believe this.” The introduction warned us we might even actively resist the ideas. It said:

Whatever your reactions to the ideas may be, use them. Nothing more than that is required. (W-In.9:4–5).

It may be difficult to see at first, but we really only have two options. Either I made up the world, or I am its victim. Either I am the cause, or the effect. There aren’t any other choices; think

about it. Either I am the dreamer, inventing the whole mess, or I am part of someone else's dream (maybe God's). If I am not the cause, I am at the world's mercy. But if I *am* the cause—there is hope! I can change the dream, and perhaps, eventually, stop dreaming altogether.