

Opening Story: Bill Clinton and the Crumbs of Truth

Remember that famous Bill Clinton line: "I did not..." (You know the rest). The more he tried to defend himself, the more stuck he became. The world watched a man shrink beneath the weight of his own words. And let's be honest, haven't we all had our own crumb-on-the-shirt moments? Someone says, "You ate the last cookie," and we respond, "No, I didn't!" while brushing off the evidence. Defensiveness doesn't make us strong. It makes us small.

Today's message is simple, powerful, and freeing: **Defending diminishes us. Love expands us.**

Introduction: Marianne Williamson, The Mystic Jesus & A Course in Miracles

Marianne Williamson, beloved spiritual teacher and author, invites us to meet Jesus not as a religious mascot, but as a mystic. In her book *The Mystic Jesus: The Mind of Love*, she interprets A Course in Miracles as a path of inner transformation—not through dogma, but through love. This 5-part talk series draws on her teachings and the mystical essence of Jesus, guiding listeners to shift from fear to love in every moment.

Central Teaching

Marianne writes: *"Our safety lies not in defensiveness but in defenselessness."*

It sounds backwards. We're taught to protect our image, our opinions, our stuff. But real strength? It comes when we let the walls down.

Every thought we think is either rooted in fear or in love.

Jesus' miracles weren't parlor tricks. They were powerful demonstrations of what happens when love triumphs over fear.

The Challenges of Defensiveness

Let's tell the truth. Defensiveness is everywhere.

In relationships? Someone says, "You didn't call me back," and we say, "Well, you didn't either!"

In politics? Ask a simple question of a politician and get a ten-minute monologue that dodges the point.

In everyday life? Someone gives us feedback, and we at once build a moat of justifications around our ego.

But Marianne warns us: *"If our habitual reaction to the lovelessness of the world is to toughen up, to wall ourselves off, then we will only experience more pain."*

Defensiveness cuts us off. Love connects us.

Five Core Teachings from The Mystic Jesus

1. Defensiveness Diminishes Us

"We attack, we judge, we defend, we withhold—constantly deflecting the love that is our natural inheritance."

2. Our True Self Emerges When We Drop Our Defenses

"If you were able to drop your fear, your anger, your armor, your defensiveness... there would be one thing left: the real you."

3. Fear Contracts; Love Expands

"Thinking such things, we shrivel... critical rather than forgiving, always seeing a reason to blame rather than bless."

4. Gentleness is Stronger than Harshness

"Our gentleness is stronger than our harshness, our humility is stronger than our arrogance, and our flexibility is stronger than our self-will."

5. Love Leads Us to Resurrection and Expansion

"That is what it means to grow our wings... to fly above the illusions of this world."

My Own Reaction: The Feedback Trap

Sometimes after a Sunday talk, someone gives me feedback. Maybe they say, "*Your talk was too long,*" or "*I didn't like the images you created.*" And boy, do I feel the walls going up? I want to say, "*I've been doing this for 20 years!*" or "*Let's see what YOU would do!*" But when I breathe and center, I can respond from love: "*Thank you for your thoughts. I will consider them.*" That shift—from defending to receiving—is everything.

Practical Steps to Choose Love Over Defensiveness

1. Pause Before Reacting

When we feel attacked, our instinct is to fire back. But here's the truth: between stimulus and response, there is a holy pause. That pause is where love lives. Practical exercise: Next time someone pushes your buttons, silently count to three before responding. In those three seconds, Spirit has a chance to step in.

2. Breathe and Soften

A deep breath is holy medicine. When the body is defensive, it tightens up—shoulders raise, jaw clenches, fists ball up. When we breathe deeply, the armor drops.

Practical exercise: When you feel defensive, place your hand on your heart and take three slow breaths. Say silently, "*I am safe. I am loved.*"

3. Shift the Goal

Defensiveness is about winning. Love is about connecting. When you feel the urge to defend, ask yourself: *Do I want to be right, or do I want to be free?*

Practical exercise: Try shifting your inner question from "How do I win this?" to "How do I love in this?" Ask: *Do I want to be right, or do I want to be free?*

4. Choose Forgiveness

Forgiveness dissolves the need to defend. Let go. Be free. Now, I know... sometimes just hearing the word makes us flinch. Especially when we're the ones who've been hurt, and sometimes we flinch even harder when we realize the person we most need to forgive... is ourselves.

Here's what the Mystic Jesus reminds us: "*Our safety lies not in defensiveness but in defenselessness.*"

When we hold onto anger, blame, or resentment — even subtly, or even spiritually dressed up as "setting boundaries" — it becomes like emotional armor. We think it's protecting us. But what it's really doing... is *blocking love from getting in*.

5. Practice Defenselessness Daily

Defenselessness doesn't mean weakness; it means standing strong in love.

Practical exercise: When someone gives you feedback or criticizes you, instead of explaining or justifying, say, "*Thank you for sharing, I will consider your thoughts.*" Watch how it changes the energy.

The Mister Rogers Story: Love in Action

In 1969, Mister Rogers faced a gruff senator ready to slash PBS funding. Others had defended with data. He stood up and shared a children's song about handling anger. No charts. No armor. Just love.

By the end, the senator said, *"I think it's wonderful. You've just earned the twenty million dollars."*

That's the power of love over defense.

Affirmation: *I release my defenses and open my heart to love.*

Closing Blessing

May you walk into this week with a heart wide open. May you release the need to defend and allow love to lead you. May your defenselessness be your superpower, and may love expand you into the fullness of who you are.