

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 5

I am never upset for the reason I think.

Sarah's Commentary:

What is it we get upset about? Anxious about? Worry about? Hate? Fear? Resent? Get disgusted about? What kind of a day have you had? Did a news story upset you? Did a driver cut you off in traffic? Did you drop something? Break a nail? Get on the scale and see you have gained weight? Have an angry exchange with someone? Felt betrayed by a friend? Has your computer crashed? Missed a call? Forgot an appointment? Hundreds of things upset us in a day. We try to find ways to do life better only to end up feeling depressed because we can't get this thing called life to work for us, no matter how hard we try. And this leads to disillusionment.

We think there are myriad causes for our upsets, all outside of ourselves. The forms of the upsets seem different. However, the form does not matter for purposes of this exercise. We are asked to apply the Lesson to each form of upset that shows up in our day. Ultimately, we are learning that all upsets are the same.

As Jesus reminds us in the Introduction, while we are applying the Lessons to the specifics in our lives, ultimately our learning is eventually generalized. This will come to us when we see that every form of upset is the same because all upsets are disturbing to our peace of mind. We also see that nothing comes from outside of our own minds. We think our upsets are generated by things in the world, but in fact, they are all generated by our own minds. Thus, the mind is the cause of every upset, rather than what is thought to be coming from outside of ourselves. Our upsets come from the way we look at everything and the interpretations we give to what we are seeing.

The truth is, nothing outside of the mind causes us to be upset. When we are disturbed by something in the world it is because we have already made a decision to be upset. The decision comes from the belief we hold that we are innocent victims of outside events. We see ourselves in that way because we actually want to be upset by events seemingly outside of the mind. This is because we actually don't want to assume responsibility for how we feel. We want to make others responsible.

When the decision was made in the mind to run away from God, guilt was accepted by the mind. It is the guilt in the mind that is the actual source of all our upsets. We think we know the cause of our upsets, but Jesus tells us we really don't. Everything comes from inside of us, not from outside. We have made the events "outside" real. To us, they are as real as the monsters in our nightmares while we sleep. When we awaken, we see they don't exist. It is the same in this illusory dream where no matter what the nature of our daily experience is, it all comes from our own minds. But now we can choose how we see it. **"The power of decision is your one remaining freedom as a prisoner of this world."** (T.12.VII.9.1) (ACIM OE T.11.VIII.70) **"When you want only love you will see nothing else."** (T.12.VII.8.1) (ACIM OE T.11.VIII.69) In other words, what we see is a witness to what we are holding in the mind.

The exercise starts by having us look within. We look at whatever thought or feeling we are holding about anything or anyone. **"I am not angry at _____ for the reason I think. I am not afraid of _____ for the reason I think."** (W.5.2.3-4) We search our minds for "sources" of upset as we perceive them so that we can start to recognize they come from within ourselves and then show up as forms of upset we project "out there".

We may think some upsets only cause a slight irritation and there is no point in spending time on them, while the things that make us really angry seem more important to us. Thus, **"You may also find yourself less willing to apply today's idea to some perceived sources of upset than to others."** (W.5.6.1) We are cautioned not to do this. If we want to exclude anything, we are urged to remind ourselves, **"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."** (W.5.6.3-4)

To us, there is an order of difficulty with regard to our upsets. We place a hierarchy of importance on what upsets us. We experience some as bigger and harder than others. What we are learning is that there is no difference in the nature of our upsets. The goal of the ego is to keep us invested in the world, constantly working to solve the myriad problems in our lives. The ego wants to keep us from recognizing the real problem, which is the guilt in our minds. By keeping us distracted from the real problem, the ego ensures our allegiance to it. Jesus gives us the only answer to every problem. It is to heal the guilt in the mind, which is where the real problem is. Only then can the love we are, shine forth. The love in us is currently blocked by our wrong perspective. When we bring our dark thoughts to light, we make space for the love, peace, and joy already in us, to shine through. This should be sufficient motivation to commit to this mind training. It requires we stay vigilant in undertaking to practice these lessons as they are laid out.

We are reminded that we don't believe this idea and we don't need to. We don't even need to accept it or welcome it. All we are asked to do is apply it. When I started the workbook, I found that even though I hardly understood what was being said, simply doing the lessons, to the best of my ability, resulted in my mind being shifted in miraculous ways. It just happened in spite of my very limited understanding of the metaphysics of the Course as laid out in the Text.

I approached the lessons with a naive perspective but a significant hunger to learn. The willingness was generated as a result of the desperation I felt about my life. I had so much angst and distress in my life that I was very receptive to anything that might work to shift my perspective. It seemed that everything I had tried up to that time, and I did try very hard to be happy in the world, was just not working for me. Oh yes, I looked successful as the world determines success, but inwardly, it seemed to me that nothing was working. I was jealous of what others seemed to have and felt deprived at my inner core. Only now I see that this is the state for everyone here, regardless of appearances. We all came here to seek and never find. That is the nature of this world until we start on a path of awakening to who we really are.

All we need is to be willing to be taught. Are we willing just to do the lesson and accept that we don't know? If we think we already know, our minds are not open to being taught. Really take in the idea that you don't know, and what you think is the reason for your upset, your worry, or your jealousy is not the reason. Are you willing to let go of being in charge, of taking the leadership role, of thinking you know something and just accept the "know nothing" mind? Are you willing to fall on your knees as the song says? What is asked of us is to be willing to be obedient to the truth. It is a state that is difficult for those of us who want to be in charge.

Do not overlook any upset. Start the exercises by reminding yourself, "***There are no small upsets. They are all equally disturbing to my peace of mind.***" (W.5.4.3) Our decision to overlook an upset is actually a decision to keep it. Jesus continually asks us to make no exceptions. Don't keep anything for yourself. Don't keep it apart from this healing process.

While we are to be gentle with ourselves and not push through resistance, clearly mind training such as this does take discipline and attention. This may be a simple course, but it is not an easy Course to undertake. We may wish it were soft and magical, without doing the disciplined work it calls for. Some walk away from the Course because it seems too hard or too much work. There may be a temptation to start shopping for other spiritual paths, but it is all a rationale for keeping our ego intact. Why? Because the ego is significantly threatened when something that might be its undoing shows up. Clearly, the ego is threatened by the power in us to change our minds and choose against its lies. The ego does not love us. Yet this path will take us all the way home to the love we are. I can't attest to that with certainty, but I have had enough demonstration of its power to stay very committed to this path.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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