

Integrating Form and Content

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

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Part II "The Face of Innocence"

Once again, we are the walking integration of form and content, without any awareness that that is what we are doing. We think we are surviving, living in a den of iniquity called the world—that is the content. Those of you who know the section near the end of the text called "Self-Concept Versus Self" will remember that the first part of that section is all about how we make a self that is an adjustment or reaction to the world, and that is the self that puts on the "face of innocence" (T-31.V.2:6). The world is cruel and merciless, and in order to survive we do the very best we can, which means that sometimes we have to defend ourselves and attack. But when we do so, we feel the attack is justified because we have been attacked first. Thus, for instance, of course I am an angry little boy; my parents beat me every night. Of course I hate school; the kids humiliate and mock me, and the teachers are very punitive. It's not my fault! That is "the face of innocence."

What we find, then, is that our lives integrate form and content, but we think the world's content. The world's content of hate, insensitivity, and lovelessness is the cause of why I am what I am, why my body—my form—has evolved the way it has. It is not my fault. That is the ego's fundamental purpose. In fact that, in a sense, is the ego's reigning cry that governs its kingdom: *It's not my fault!*

One of the first questions people ask when anything happens, whether it is an event in the world or something in their personal world, is "Who did this?" "Why did they do it?" And of course underlying all this is "Why was this done to me?" If that is not explicit, it certainly is implicit. We would not care about anyone in this world if we did not somehow see what happens as having an impact on us. We would not care about anyone or anything, someone in our personal world or someone in the world at large unless we identified with that situation. The dynamic of that identification is that we are the victim.

We also love to identify with other victims because that solidifies our position that there is evil outside us. And evil perpetrates evil; evil hurts, maims, punishes, tortures, kills, rejects, abandons, and betrays. That justifies our case. *Misery loves company. Insanity loves company.* We always want to have people join with us. That is why we love to hear devastating things on the news and why we worship crises, why the news always makes a big deal out of crises whether it is a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, volcano, or it is a war or a serial killer. It becomes front-page news. And we love it because it justifies our perception that this is a world of victims and victimizers in which the innocent are punished.

We identify with all of that, and, again, we do not realize that the content that we are integrating into our form is not outside us. The hatred, cruelty, and the murderousness are not outside. They are inside. Why?—because *ideas leave not their source.* If I find myself reacting to someone else's ego, it can only be because I am seeing my own ego in that person. Jesus does not react to other people's egos, and the

reason he does not is that he does not have one. The reason we react to other people's egos is that we do. That is the difference. It takes a real stretch to believe, which Christians have been doing for over two thousand years—that Jesus judges, hates, sanctions war, that he is the one who drops bombs on people's heads, and that he believes in holy wars. Only someone who has an ego can judge, condemn, persecute, and wage war in the name of an ideal of truth, unity, and love.

Therefore, when we react to other people's murderousness, we are not responsible for their egos, and we are not responsible for what goes on in the world. *We are responsible for our reactions to what goes on in the world.* And when we have a reaction that is anything other than perfect peace that embraces everyone—any reaction that is not that is not due to what is outside us; it is due to the hate inside us that we have made real.

The recognition that happens as we work with this material is first realizing that everything here is an integration of form and content. The ego, however, would have us believe that we are integrating the outside content, and so the shift Jesus is asking us to make is to recognize that the content we are integrating is our own. The importance of this is that it at least gets us back in the right ballpark. We are in the right place because now we are talking about a mind, not something external to us that we believe affects us. We are talking about what is *internal*. It is our own content of hate that is making us choose up sides in the world. It is our own guilt over our belief that we separated from love that causes us to see separation in the world around us; a world divided into good and evil, victim and victimizer, oppressor and oppressed. Otherwise we would not see that.

Jesus does not see that. He sees everyone here, everyone who believes he or she is here, only as calling out for help. That is all he sees. Any other distinction is purely arbitrary and all made up. He tells us the only distinction the Holy Spirit sees in the world is someone expressing love or calling for love, and even that distinction ends up being irrelevant because if someone is expressing love, of course your response will be to love, and if someone is calling for love, of course your response will be to love. So what difference does another's behavior make? Even that distinction is not important—it is a correction for the ego's way of looking at things.

In the end, all that is important is not that I try to understand whether you are expressing love or calling for it. Rather, if I am not being loving, kind, and thoughtful, it is only because I am accusing myself of having been unkind to God, and it is the guilt over that that I am always projecting. So my life then is an integration of that unconscious guilt with my everyday life. I integrate it by taking the unconscious guilt, believing I can put it onto someone else, and then accusing that person, whether it is someone in my personal world or someone in the world at large.

The shift that we are asked to make is to realize that the content we want to be integrating is not hate, judgment, guilt, and separation. The content we want to integrate is forgiveness and peace, which gives birth to the vision of seeing everyone as the same. Right at the end of the text, in that glorious final vision, Jesus says, "Yet this a vision is that you must share with everyone you see"—*everyone*—"for otherwise you will behold it not" (T-31.VIII.8:5). That is the vision. So at any time in our day when we find ourselves not embracing the entire Sonship in the love and peace that we know Jesus represents, we know we have chosen the content of guilt. That is all we have to know. We do not have to change it. We certainly do not have to feel guilty about it, but at least now we can identify the source of the problem. Another person is not our problem. The weather is not our problem. The world is not our problem. Our insane mind is the problem!

Lesson 79 says, "Let me recognize the problem so it can be solved," which means if I do not recognize the problem, it is because I do not want it to be solved. That is very important to understand. If I do not recognize that the problem is my decision-making mind's having made a mistake, having chosen the wrong teacher, it is because I do not want the problem solved. Why don't I want the problem solved? Because *I* am the problem, and if I solve the problem of *me*, there is no longer a *me*. So I do not want the problem solved. I do not want my guilt to go away. I want to protect, preserve, sustain, nourish, and cherish my guilt by pretending it is in you and then attacking you. Since *ideas leave not their source*, my guilt continually gets strengthened and reinforced the more I seek to deny and project it and attack you, because somewhere inside I know I am attacking you falsely. I know that you are not my problem. You might be your problem, but your ego is not my problem unless I give your ego power to affect me.

The perfect right-minded integration of form and content is where my form becomes defenseless. As the beginning of Lesson 155 says, "I smile more frequently and my forehead is serene." That is the perfect integration of form and content, where everything I do, say, believe, feel, and think is done with that gentle smile, with a peaceful forehead that says nothing in this world can make me happy, nothing in this world can bring me salvation, nothing in this world can hurt me, nothing in this world can damn me. Nothing! This frees me to be perfectly present to every single person and to every single situation. It does not matter whether it is a big problem or a little problem, whether I am with someone I like or someone I don't like, whether I am with someone who likes me or someone who hates me. My response is the same, because my focus has shifted from outside, from what is around me—where we are all extremely paranoid, where we care about what other people are doing and thinking because we think it makes a difference—to what I am choosing in my mind.

If I am not in a state of perfect peace that embraces everyone in that peace, I have chosen the ego. That is all I ever have to know. It is very simple. That is why Jesus tells us this is a very simple course. There are even a few passages where he says it is easy, because that is all you have to do. He tells us in one place, "look at the problem as it is, and not the way that you have set it up" (T-27.VII.2:2). He does not say "fix the problem" or "heal yourself" or "work at this." He simply says, "look at the problem as it is, and not the way that you have set it up." Looking at the problem means recognizing that if I am not at peace it is because I chose the teacher of conflict, and if I am at peace it is because I chose the teacher of peace. When I am aware that I am not at peace because I chose the ego as my teacher I can say, "Obviously I was insane; obviously I was really fearful; obviously I am still insane because I don't want to let it go."

At least now I am speaking the truth. I am not cloaking it with all kinds of projections or self-deceptions. I am saying the problem is that I am still too afraid of love, still too afraid of losing my specialness, still too afraid of living a life in which whatever abuse I have experienced is gone, and has absolutely nothing meaningful to teach me and is totally irrelevant. Whatever physical or psychological problems I have, have nothing to do with the state of peace in my mind, and I am too afraid of recognizing that and identifying with that. At least I am being honest. That is all Jesus asks of us. He asks us to be honest with him and to hide nothing from him (T-4.III.8:2). He does not ask us to be ego-free. He does not ask us to be perfect. He simply asks us to be honest about what our egos are doing.