

Integrating Form and Content

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Part IV Questions (concluded)

Q: I find that I'm spending a lot of time staying with the ego thought system. I'm really not thinking with the Holy Spirit as much as I used to. I'm no longer learning to think with the Holy Spirit; I'm just learning how to be kind while blind. It's sort of getting ready for miracles instead of actually having them. Is this a normal, healthy thing, or is there something I'm missing about how to use this situation in which I seem to be settling for a much lower level of achievement as far as I can tell?

K: Let me read something first. It's from the section in the text called "The Happy Dream":

"Put yourself not in charge of this [the process], for you cannot distinguish between advance and retreat. Some of your greatest advances you have judged as failures, and some of your deepest retreats you have evaluated as success" (T-18.V.1:5-6).

That is Jesus' way of telling us we do not know which end is up. What could be happening in you is that your experience of the Holy Spirit, while it was helpful, did not go as deep as it really should, and what you are going through now could very well be a deepening of that experience, but much different from what you thought. I think the fact that you are still able to be aware of the importance of being kind is very spiritual. There is no way you or anyone else could know what are advances and what are retreats because we always judge by criteria that are always external. Even though we think they are internal, they are always external. Thus, it could very well be that your experience now, while it seems to be a relatively dark one as opposed to the light-filled miracles your life was radiating in the past, may be a moving deeper into the ego thought system so that those experiences would really become even purer. It sounds as if you are still a work in progress and that's nice. So keep being blind but kind. I like that.

Q: How do you help someone who is feeling suicidal? It's sort of like there is no hope.

K: There is a line in the Course that says "Men have died on seeing this..." (T-31.IV.3:4) -- realizing that there is no hope in the world. The title of the section is "The Real Alternative." It is right near the end of the text, and I will read paragraph 3. The point is that every possible alternative that the world holds out to us for hope, salvation, peace, and happiness will end in death.

(T-31.IV.3) There is no choice where every end is sure. Perhaps you would prefer to try them all, before you really learn they are but one. [Every road in the world is the same.] The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number, but the time must come when everyone begins to see how like they are to one another. [And the previous paragraph says all roads lead to death.] Men have died on seeing this, because they saw no way except the pathways offered by the world. And learning they led nowhere, lost their hope. And yet this was the time they could have learned their

greatest lesson. All must reach this point, and go beyond it. It is true indeed there is no choice at all within the world. But this is not the lesson in itself. The lesson has a purpose, and in this you come to understand what it is for.

I will stop with that, but the rest of the section explains that the value of realizing that the world does not work is that it gets us to say "there must be another way; there must be another world." This, of course, is the mind. If you get through the despair and the hopelessness realizing there is no hope, then all of a sudden a whole new world opens up and you realize there is a mind and there is hope in the mind. That is the only choice. Thus, the "real alternative" is between God and the ego. That is a meaningful choice.

So when you are in the presence of someone who is feeling suicidal, what is important is not what you say, but that you pay attention to what is within you. If you agree with the person and find yourself getting afraid, feeling guilty and responsible for the other person's talking about suicide, then you are basically giving that person the message, "You're absolutely right."

If, however, you can identify with the peace in your mind, you will be peaceful, which means you will be loving when you are in the presence of someone who is despairing. And out of that experience of inner peace you will say and do whatever is helpful, which does not necessarily mean talking a person out of suicide. It does not mean handing a person a razor blade or a gun. It simply means that you communicate with that person on the level of the mind, even though your mouth may be going and you are saying all kinds of things.

There is no right or wrong way of dealing with that, but there is a wrong and right way of *thinking* about it. And so when you are in the presence of someone who is troubled—so deeply troubled that the person is thinking of suicide—at that point you want to monitor your own mind. If you are not totally at peace then you are the one who needs help. When you can be at peace, then the message you are giving this person is, "Yes, there is no hope in the world, but there is hope in your mind, and I'm now an example." Not that you say this in words, but your defenseless, loving presence says, "I am an example of there being a right mind that you can choose." That gives the person hope. From that right-minded peace you would say whatever would be helpful.

The Course never deals with behavior. I have quoted many times the experience Helen had when she once asked Jesus what she should say to someone who was in need of help. His answer to her, in the form of a message she had written down, was "Don't ask me what you should say. Ask me instead for help to look at this person through the eyes of peace and not judgment." So when you become aware that you are not at peace when you are in the presence of someone who is very upset, very angry, very fearful, or in a lot of physical or emotional pain, then you ask Jesus for help not for what to say or do but that you realize you could make another choice and that your being upset in the presence of someone else who is upset has nothing to do with that person. That is the world's lie—that someone else's ego, or someone else's right mind for that matter, has an effect on me, whether that someone in front of me is a Hitler or a Jesus. It does not make a difference because if *ideas leave not their source*, then there is no one out there.

So if I am not at peace it can only be because my mind has chosen not to be at peace, and I have projected responsibility for that guilt-ridden decision to tell God to get lost again onto this situation or this person. Consequently, the message I am giving this person is, "You are right. The ego is alive and well, and there is no hope." No matter what I say, even if I say the most loving, comforting, wise words, my presence will say the opposite. Therefore, if I find myself not at peace because someone else is not at peace, that is the cue for me to go within and ask for help of my teacher to look at this differently: "Help me realize that it is not the person outside who is responsible for how I am feeling

right now. I am feeling this way because I became afraid of your love." That is what you tell Jesus. Use any other words or symbols you want, but honesty is recognizing that "I am never upset for the reason I think," as Lesson 5 states.

Let me read what Jesus says in the teachers' manual because this is a very nice way of expressing all of this. This is from "How Is Healing Accomplished?" section III, "The Function of the Teacher of God." The context is sickness, but we can extend the idea to anyone who is troubled, to those who believe they are suicidal, those who believe they have been unfairly treated, those who believe they are dying of cancer, those who believe anything that is not putting them in a state of peace.

(M-5.III.2:1-7) To them God's teachers come, to represent another choice which they had forgotten. The simple presence of a teacher of God is a reminder. His thoughts [right-minded thoughts] ask for the right to question what the patient has accepted as true. As God's messengers, His teachers are the symbols of salvation. They ask the patient for forgiveness for God's Son in his own Name. They stand for the Alternative. With God's Word [the Atonement] in their minds they come in benediction, not to heal the sick but to remind them of the remedy God has already given them.

Just as Jesus is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, he asks us to be his manifestation in the world (C-6:1,5). That is the meaning of "They stand for the Alternative."

I may not be in my right mind two minutes from now, but in this moment I am in my right mind. The peace that I have chosen is in you because minds are joined and the Sonship of God is one. We all have the same split mind.

(M-5.III.2:8-10) It is not their hands that heal. It is not their voice that speaks the Word of God. They merely give what has been given them [and indeed has been given to everyone].

It is not what you say or do that is important. It is the peace in your mind that heals.

In the text Jesus says sickness is a little form of death (T-27.I.4:8). So whether someone is actively suicidal or just choosing to be angry or sick, it's all the same.

(M-5.III.2:11) Very gently they call to their brothers to turn away from death . . .

This is what we say in thoughts, and again, this does not mean we have to say these words or that we have to think these words. It is the *content* that is important.

(M-5.III.2:11-12) "Behold, you Son of God, what life can offer you. Would you choose sickness in place of this?"

This allows you to be in the presence of anyone, anywhere, anytime, regardless of the form, and give the message that there is a choice. You do not make the choice for the person any more than Jesus makes the choice for us. By your defenselessness you are telling the person that there is a right mind he or she can choose. That is all you do. From that peace with which you are identified at that moment, you will say and do whatever. It is not your hands that heal. It is not your voice, what you say, that speaks the Word of God.

This is a correction for Christians who believe that they heal with their hands, who believe they heal with what people call "healing hands." How could hands heal? How could a lifeless piece of wood do anything? What heals is the right-minded presence that says, "The decision I made you can make."

That is healing. It is not your holy words. It is not praying from the Bible or from *A Course in Miracles*. That does not mean anything. This is not to say you should not quote something if you find it helpful, but that is only a form. It is the content that is important.

(M-5.III.3:1) Not once do the advanced teachers of God consider the forms of sickness in which their brother believes.

It does not matter if someone has a hangnail, is dying of cancer, or is threatening to jump off the roof. It does not matter if someone is angry at you and is expressing that physically, let alone verbally. It does not make any difference. Not once do you consider the forms of sickness, the forms of guilt, because when you are in your right mind you realize those forms are projected images of a guilt that is already undone. When you are in your right mind there is no guilt, which means you do not see the guilt in anyone else. You may recognize that the person feels guilty, but you do not see the guilt. You just see a call for love, because all guilt is, is a cover for love. So it does not make any difference what the form is.

The first law of chaos is that there is a hierarchy of illusions, which means some forms are more difficult to heal than others; some people are holier than others; some people have holy hands; others do not; there are significant distinctions in the world among the Sons of God. That is a lie! How could there be meaningful distinctions within illusions? That does not make any sense. Multiply one times zero and 757 times zero, and what do you get? Zero. So write as many numbers as you want; the total still ends up as zero. When you are an advanced teacher of God, which means you spend more and more of your time in your right mind rather than in your wrong mind, you recognize that everything here is silly—not sinful, not evil, not wicked, not serious, just silly.

People believe 757 times zero is more meaningful than one times zero and is a greater number. All you have to do is be right-minded, and if you think something here is serious, that is a sure-fire clue that you have become wrong-minded, and that is your problem. Everything comes back to what is inside us.

What an advanced teacher of God represents is this integration of form and content. The content is love, peace, and the vision of shared interests. The form, the behavior, integrates that. Therefore anything you say will be nonjudgmental because you won't be judging among illusions. You won't be saying some people are nicer than other people, or some people are more deserving of my love, my attention, or my money than other people. You will realize everyone is the same.

Q: What I'm struggling with the most now is that while I'm grateful that I'm able to choose peace, there are times the littlest things trip me up, and even in the midst of knowing what's happening intellectually, I can't get free. I can't get back to peace. And then when I get back to peace I wonder, if I could have chosen it all these other times, why was it so hard to choose it this time, or why did it take so long or why was it so difficult? Should I just be patient or is there some...

K: Yes. There is a line in the Course that says, "The ego analyzes; the Holy Spirit accepts" (T-11.V.13:1). So don't analyze it, don't worry about it, just be patient. All you have to know is that if you are in your ego you became afraid of love. So what else is new? You knew that anyway. So don't make a big deal about ego attacks. Just say, "If I am not totally at peace I am aware of it, and obviously I am afraid, and that is okay." Take as your guide: I will just be kind while blind (a reference to the first question in this excerpt).