

THOUGHTS ON
A COURSE IN
MIRACLES

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Intuitive Comments
on the Lessons in
the Workbook

Johanna van Zwet

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Cover design: Hendrikje de Koning
ISBN: 9789403602455
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Preface

This book began in December 2018 with the desire to support the efforts of an international online study group that I had been participating in for several years at the time. The study centered around the teachings contained in “A Course In Miracles”, or ACIM.

The website dedicated to “A Course in Miracles”¹ describes the book as follows:

A Course in Miracles – often abbreviated *ACIM* or simply called the Course – is a complete self-study spiritual thought system. As a three-volume curriculum consisting of a Text, Workbook for Students, and Manual for Teachers, it teaches that the way to universal love and peace—or remembering God—is by undoing guilt through forgiving others. The Course thus focuses on the healing of relationships and making them holy. *A Course in Miracles* also emphasizes that it is but one version of the universal curriculum, of which there are “many thousands.” Consequently, even though the language of the Course is that of traditional Christianity, it expresses a non-sectarian, non-denominational spirituality. *A Course in Miracles*, therefore, is a universal spiritual teaching, not a religion.

After having received helpful intuitive messages during my daily morning writing for several years, I plucked up the courage to suggest to the group I include in my daily session the text of ACIM’s daily workbook lesson and see what that would yield. During each of the 365 days of 2019 I shared with the group the messages I received and that now have been collected in this book.

You may wonder how I ended up doing daily intuitive writing sessions. In 2015 I read Linda Howe’s three books² on how to access the Akashic Records. I was already quite familiar with the notion of the Akashic Records, or the Akasha, through my study of the Edgar Cayce Readings³ since 1989. I was well

1 <https://acim.org/about-acim/>

2 <https://lindahowe.com/akashic-records-bookstore/>

3 <https://www.edgarcayce.org/the-readings/akashic-records/>

aware of the fact that Cayce had attributed the information coming through him to the Akashic Records. Since the spiritual principles contained in the Cayce readings continued to strike a chord with me, I was obviously keenly interested in the source of that information, the Akasha.

What exactly are the Akashic Records? Akasha is a word in the Sanskrit language. According to the Oxford dictionaries⁴ 'akasha' means:

(In Indian religion) a supposed all-pervading field in the ether in which a record of past events is imprinted.

People in Western society may be more familiar with the term "the Book of Life", a term that appears in the Bible in Revelation (for example Rev. 20:12).

Whatever the name, what is meant is a universal log where records are being kept of everything that has been done, said or thought from the beginning of time till the present moment. It represents a source of information that those who attune to it may access at will. As they do so, they will benefit from the wider perspective this source offers.

Having steeped myself in teachings coming from the Akasha for over 25 years, I jumped at the chance to acquaint myself with the Akasha. I followed the steps outlined in Linda Howe's books and started doing my morning intuitive writing sessions. I have been doing the daily practice ever since.

4 <https://www.lexico.com/definition/akasha>

Introduction

This book is a companion to the “Workbook for Students” in “A Course In Miracles”, or ACIM⁵. Each of the comments was inspired by the corresponding daily lesson in the workbook. The thoughts are the result of daily morning intuitive writing during the year 2019 in which I would quiet my mind and ask to receive an intuitive insight on the ACIM workbook lesson of the day.

The comments are “as is”, meaning that they have not been edited, other than obvious errors; spelling and grammar mistakes have been corrected and the construction of an occasional sentence was changed for clarity. Occasionally, the information sparked a question or comment within me, while writing, which then became a part of that day’s sharing. It is represented in italics.

The register of the language in the comments is very unlike that of the Workbook. The language used in ACIM is sometimes difficult to understand, due to psychological jargon as well as terms associated with the Christian faith. The comments in this publication on the other hand are far more simple and direct. In addition, the thoughts have come through someone for whom English is a second language, requiring simple and straightforward phrasing to avoid misunderstandings. The frequent use of metaphors serves to clarify an aspect that might otherwise elude understanding.

The length of a given comment is in no way linked to the length of the lesson it corresponds to. Some lengthy lessons are supplemented with brief thoughts, while some shorter lessons are teamed up with elaborate thoughts. In all instances, the aim of the thought, whatever its length, is to facilitate the study of the ACIM workbook lesson for that day, in the hope that it will help the reader to delve deeper into ACIM’s profound spiritual teaching.

5 See “Preface” for an explanation of what ACIM is.

Aknowledgments

I would like to thank the members of my online ACIM study group for the inspiring exchanges over the years and for their kindly reception of my daily intuitive writing during the year 2019.

I would like to thank my sister Lizet, whose support for my intuitive writing has been unwavering, and to her husband Herman, both of whom suggested I seek and find a wider audience for these comments.

Part I

LESSON 1

**“Nothing I see in this room [on this street,
from this window, in this place] means anything.”**

The workbook lessons offer a means for gradually letting go of ossified concepts and frameworks that hinder your free reception of creation. Lesson 1 is the first in a series of perception-changers.

You tend to categorize everything according to need, usefulness, or any other type of divider. Since this categorization of items is different for each person, although people may experience overlap for certain items, it may be clear that the items themselves (that you see on this street, from this window, in this place) do not intrinsically carry the meaning you have assigned to them.

LESSON 2

**“I have given everything I see in this room [on this street,
from this window, in this place] all the meaning that
it has for me.”**

Things you observe do not intrinsically carry the meaning that you have assigned to them. A door can play the role of a portal, but it might just as well play the role of a barrier, depending on the circumstance. The door itself does not have the intrinsic value of portal or barrier. It is a flat rectangular form that fits in a casing. What it means to you depends on the role you have assigned to it. (And that is fine, just know that that is so.)

LESSON 3

**“I do not understand anything I see in this room
[on this street, from this window, in this place].”**

You understand the role an object plays for you through the meaning you have assigned to it. When you strip an object, like a door, from the role and meaning you have assigned to it, what remains is an object of certain dimensions that consists of a certain substance. Those attributes come to you through your senses. You cannot observe properties that lie beyond your senses.

You understand a person in your life according to the role and meaning you have assigned to that person. When you let go of the role and meaning you have assigned, what remains is a creature that is mostly unknown to you.

The aim of this exercise is to help you become aware of the labels (role and meaning) you have assigned to everything: things, people, circumstances. It will help you to realize that when you let go of your labels a new world will open up to you that you have yet to begin to understand.

LESSON 4

**“These thoughts do not mean anything. They are like
the things I see in this room [on this street
from this window, in this place].”**

The term “these thoughts” refers to the thoughts that are crossing your mind at any given time. People often use the term “the monkey mind” to refer to the jumble of thoughts that jump back and forth all the time, a condition that seems to be very common with much of humanity.

How do you distinguish between a random thought like that and a thought inspired by your higher self (your inner being, or to use ACIM’s term: the Holy Spirit)? Very simple: You ask your higher self to inspire you and the thought you then receive will

definitely be very different in quality compared to a monkey thought, and it will definitely not be meaningless but will mean something to you and will move you. You'll know the difference.

Why can we be so certain that you will know the difference? The reason is the source of the thought.

Think of all the thoughts that humankind has thought up and is in the process of thinking up as a large cloud of vibrational frequencies. Your mind is picking up on various signals out there simply because it is a receiving and processing mechanism. It will chew on anything it is given. Any thought that you pick up and focus on will attract other thoughts like it. Why? Because of your focus on it, your attunement to that type of signal. If you are not aware of the various directions your mind is focused on you end up with the monkey mind: thoughts from all over the place, flitting and darting.

However, when you consciously focus your attention on your higher self's communication, you attune your receiving and processing mechanism to the signal offered by your higher self. The higher self is always communicating, announcing itself, declaring what it is and what it stands for. As soon as your dial is in the neighborhood of its signal, you have reception.

You recognize its communications by their nature: calm and centered, transparent and to the point, clarifying and loving. And they always make you feel lighter. (Compare that to the thoughts of the monkey mind.)

"These thoughts do not mean anything" is the case simply because they are random and because they dissolve as soon as you strip them of the meaning you have given them. Communications from your higher self, on the other hand, relate to the core of your identity, which is love in expression, and therefore are naturally and almost indescribably moving and meaningful.

LESSON 5

“I am never upset for the reason I think.”

The last word “think” relates to the thoughts that we talked about earlier.

Per definition, any thought that may occur to you as the reason for your upset, anger, worry, concern, etc., cannot have been inspired by your higher self (the Holy Spirit in ACIM’s terms) and therefore it is a random thought, a thought of the monkey mind. It has derived from the label and role you have assigned inadvertently to the thing or person that seems to upset you. When you strip the person or situation of that label, what is left is creation-as-is, which is a dynamic that you are now starting to understand.

So whenever you feel upset, worried, frustrated, angry, etc., simply know that the person or thing “out there” is not the reason. They can never be. You are only having a monkey thought that they are the reason. Now you understand how little you can trust that thought. That thought is not truly yours as it has not come to you through your inner being. On the contrary, it is caused by the labels that are still active and that this training is helping you to release.

LESSON 6

“I am upset because I see something that is not there.”

“Something that is not there” is nothing other than a thought of the monkey mind. It is a thought you have unknowingly burdened the object of your attention with.

Any type of negative emotion—upset, anger, frustration, desolation, sadness, and so forth—is the monkey mind at work. No person, object or circumstance has the intrinsic capacity to cause any of those emotions in you. The monkey thought that you happen to entertain about the person, object or circumstance is causing negative emotion, always. Negative

emotion means that you are tuned into a random thought of the monkey mind. A thought like that can be persistent and may have become familiar through habit. All the more reason to abandon it.

All you need to do at this stage is to shine your inner light on the statement of today: Be fully present as you consider the statement every time you feel upset.

LESSON 7

“I see only the past.”

The text offers the example of a cup. You could think of any object, situation, people, relationship and organization and the role they play in your experience. The way you are accustomed to viewing any of them is based on your take on their history, on your take on the road they have traveled up to the moment that you interact with them. Now the question arises: Is that view sufficient to live your life fully in the present moment?

With this statement the course is helping you to see the restriction you put upon yourself by relating to people and things in terms of their imagined history.

LESSON 8

“My mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.”

The monkey mind regurgitates thoughts that have been thought, over and over again. Even when you think that a recurring monkey thought is about the future (as in worry or in dread), its basis lies in the past that you believe happened. It may be clear that those types of thoughts are in no way sufficient to live the present moment to the fullest.

The course is helping you to see the restriction you put upon yourself by entertaining and believing the random thoughts the monkey mind regurgitates, if you let it.

LESSON 9

“I see nothing as it is now.”

This follows from the previous lessons. In case it rubs you the wrong way, think instead:

“I see nothing as fully as I could.”

You have already seen that everything you see is the past, and most of the thoughts you are thinking are thoughts of the monkey mind that are based on what you think the past was about. None of that seems to form a solid base for living life fully in the present. And so, the thought

“I do not see anything as fully as I could.”

indicates an opening. When you say this wholeheartedly you leave an opening for a different way of seeing. That is all that is needed with this lesson.

LESSON 10

“My thoughts do not mean anything.”

The text talks about the mind really being a blank. When talking about meditation some sources compare the mind to the blue sky and thoughts to clouds appearing and floating by.

It may be helpful to picture your mind as the blue sky. The monkey mind may serve up clouds – regurgitated thoughts – but you are not fooled by them. You see them simply appearing and passing by and you do not cling to any of them. You do not believe them, you do not attach to them. Your real thoughts are

not like passing clouds. Your real thoughts are like sunlight that warms and inspires. You may have gotten glimpses of that light already.

For the purpose of today's lesson, it suffices to simply become aware that the thoughts that, like clouds, seem to habitually occupy the sky that is your mind, are not at all interesting. You can observe them in their passing without entertaining them. You are preparing to welcome the light that warms and delights.

LESSON 11

"My meaningless thoughts are showing me a meaningless world."

In the past days we have talked about thoughts darting about in your mind being the work of the monkey mind. These thoughts do not at all form an inspiring basis on which to fully live the present moment. So much is clear.

Lesson 11 describes a major shift in perspective that has to do with cause and effect. Most people think that circumstances in their environment (the "world") are the cause and that they experience the effect of that. While that may be true on the appearance-level—after all, you get wet when you venture out into the rain—on a deeper level the opposite is true.

When you think of a structure like the Golden Gate Bridge, it is clear that the idea begins in the architect's imagination, while the physical bridge is the final outcome.

Think of the world as a movie screen. Your thoughts, ideas and feelings—in short, all that goes on inside of you—is the film that is being played. The light in the projector and the film in front of it cause moving images, the result, to appear on the screen.

We could translate "My meaningless thoughts are showing me a meaningless world" into: The crazy monkey mind is showing me a crazy world. By the same token, your real

thoughts, the thoughts that light up within you and lighten you up, will show you a lighted world.

LESSON 12

“I am upset because I see a meaningless world.”

This statement may sound off at first. How can the world be meaningless? Isn't creation meaningful?

But when you accept that the thoughts and images in your mind, like a movie reel, cause the moving images on the canvas that you call the world, and you realize that most of those thoughts and images are the monkey mind at work, then the statement will start to make sense.

The canvas that you call the world is indeed like a screen on which movie images appear. The meaningful part about a movie is the idea behind it, the message that the director wants to convey. Moving images are meaningless without the director's underlying message. And so it is with everything you see around you. All appearances are meaningless without the underlying message.

As long as you allow the monkey mind to occupy the clear sky that is your mind, sending you cloud after cloud after cloud, and allow it by default to project its thoughts onto those appearances, you will not detect nor receive that underlying message. You will not see the truth in them. Instead, you will see a crazy world, a world that does not make sense. How eager are you to let that crazy world go and experience a world in which you experience the truth?

LESSON 13

“A meaningless world engenders fear.”

Usually people are not aware that there is an underlying message of truth behind each and every appearance. As long as they are unaware of that, they may believe that if they do not make sense of appearances themselves they will end up in some kind of void. And that is scary. And so, it will take a leap of faith to let go of the interpretations of appearances they are in the habit of making.

You may want to experiment with this a bit. Whenever something in your environment strikes you as puzzling or in any way less than desirable, tell yourself: “The monkey mind is apparently in the process of making sense of this and not doing a very good job at it. I would very much like to know what this truly means.” Then let go of the monkey mind trail. Don’t be scared, be happy. For now you have allowed an opening inside in which the truth can reveal itself. And it will, more and more, for the door is now ajar.

LESSON 14

“God did not create a meaningless world.”

Ha, here you have it. This statement affirms that creation is not meaningless; it is truth in expression.

The reason you are not always seeing the world around you as truth in expression is that you are taking for face value the meaning that the monkey mind has laid upon it. The moment you withdraw your energy from the monkey mind’s projecting, an opening occurs within you. In that opening you will receive the truth of the appearance as created.

It is the shift within you that will make it seem as if the outer world has changed. You will no longer read all kinds of puzzling, sinister or threatening messages in appearances, but you will be attracted by the truth that shines in them in various ways:

peace, trust, love, joy, freedom, and so forth, and you will be able to connect with it.

This may not happen overnight, although it could. Be willing to give this shift a chance to work its glory in you.

LESSON 15

“My thoughts are images that I have made.”

You have made the images you see by thinking them. You actually thought them up. And since much of your thinking is haphazard, the images you see are often confusing or disturbing. Other people may be thinking up similar images, and in your agreement you tend to see proof of their truth. But most of the images you see are due to the monkey mind’s conjuring through you. Your thoughts project and become images that you think you see. You see what you think about.

Your physical eyes receive the features of physical form. They are not equipped to detect nor receive the truth that expresses in form.

As was explained before, the meaning that you assign to a given form depends entirely on the thoughts you have about it.

LESSON 16

“I have no neutral thoughts.”

Every thought has a flavor to it. And it is the flavor that determines if the thought is on the loving end of the stick or on the fear end.

The good thing about all this is that you are in the position to change the flavor of a thought as well as the thought itself. You can vary the flavor of a thought like “I’ll have cereal for breakfast” any way you like. And if you find that you cannot

change the flavor of a thought like “This is just to spite me”, you can decide to not embrace the thought but let it go, and turn to a different thought that you can think lovingly.

LESSON 17

“I see no neutral things.”

If the thoughts you think conjure up the images you see, and if your thoughts are not neutral because they always have some flavor, then it follows that you see no neutral things.

Yesterday we talked about thoughts on the fear end of the stick and thoughts on the love end of the stick.

Let’s first consider the thoughts on the fear end of the stick. These are the thoughts you are allowing the monkey mind to think through you: the clouds crowding the sky that is your mind. They are chaotic and fear-based, and project outwardly in ways that cause you to perceive creation as confusing and disturbing. That can hardly be called neutral.

Now let’s look at the real thoughts, the real inspirations that are like light shining in the vast expanse that is your mind. These thoughts are on the love end of the stick. They are enlightening, loving and liberating, and extend outwardly through you in ways that allow you to connect with the light and the love in all of creation. That can hardly be called neutral either. This lesson is helping you to see the difference the flavor of the thought you think makes in the world you see around you.

LESSON 18

“I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing.”

You are not the only one with flavors to your thoughts. Other people may be utilizing similar flavors to similar thoughts. And

since thoughts determine how you see your environment, it follows that there may be agreement in the way you and others experience your environments.

People tend to think that their mind is theirs alone and that what goes on in their mind belongs to them alone. While you are still mesmerized by the monkey mind's thoughts that fill up the blue sky that is your mind, that may seem the case. But the more you are able to let those clouds pass by and thus experience the vast blue space that is your mind, even if intermittently and limited at first, the more you come to understand that that inner space is not personal property at all. It is source's interface with the created. It is the space where creative impulse lights up and is translated, through you, into something tangible in your environment.

LESSON 19

"I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my thoughts."

This statement is a variation of yesterday's statement: "I am not alone in experiencing the effects of my seeing." Now that we know that thoughts determine the way we see what is around us, it is safe to say that both statements are describing the same principle: the principle that the content of the mind translates into images that are seen outside of us. And that holds for all of us.

A person will think a thought flavored in a certain way, and that thought translates into an image. The same image results when someone else focuses on that very same thought in the same way.

By the same token, lights lighting up and shining in the vast expanse that is the mind are accessible to all who have let go of the clouds. The mind is creation's interface.

LESSON 20

“I am determined to see.”

This statement helps remind you of your resolve to let the clouds pass by and experience the clear blue sky that is your mind.

Physical eyesight is the perfect tool to observe physical form that appears in the material world. It is not the appropriate tool to detect the meaning that lies beyond the appearance.

The tool for detecting truth and meaning beyond appearances is attunement to the small voice within. When you ask the small voice within what the truth in an appearance is, it will tell you. Attunement requires a determined focus on the voice within. Today you are reaffirming that determination.

LESSON 21

“I am determined to see things differently.”

This statement follows in the footsteps of yesterday’s statement: “I am determined to see.” It is a confirmation of the fact that when you allow your inner voice to tell you what the truth is about the things and situations you encounter in your environment, your perception will be very different.

How will you know if you have heard the inner voice and not one of the members of the peanut gallery whispering in your ear? By the feeling the information generates in you. When you still feel doubtful or angry or frustrated, etc., you can be sure it’s the monkey mind at work. When you get a sense of relief, of possibilities opening up, of inclusiveness, of gladness, you can be sure it is the still small voice speaking.

LESSON 22

“What I see is a form of vengeance.”

The course explains how the belief that we created ourselves causes a feeling of separation from Life. This results in the perception of the world of form and the body. The belief has created a split, a discord inside of us. As long as we do not recognize that this discord is active in us, it can project its discordant vibrations onto reality unchecked. We sense that something is not right and because we do not see the cause of our discomfort in ourselves, we place the cause in the outside world. We feel that the outside world is the disturber of our peace, where in fact we are disturbing our peace ourselves.

You could also think about it this way: On the stage that is the world innumerable scenes are playing out at any given time. There is no lack of choice. Neither is there any reason nor obligation to view one scene as more true or more relevant than any other. Each image is relevant to those involved, to the extent that it reflects their state of mind. The question now becomes: How relevant to you is the image that seems to have drawn your attention? Do you want to use it as your base for living fully in the present moment?

If the answer is “No”, then turn around and look at something that reflects a quality that appeals to you, and allow your mind to function on the basis of that. The scene you have turned away from will continue to play out for as long as it reflects the content of the minds of those participating in it. It does not need your reluctant assistance.

If you still feel drawn in again and again by a certain image and it bothers you, it means that something in you is vibrating and projecting outwardly, thereby obscuring creation’s signal, and that something is messing up your reception. For the quality of the images you see in the outer world reflect the quality of that which you hold within.