

A Course in Miracles - Lesson 23

I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts.

1. The idea for today contains the only way out of fear that will ever succeed. Nothing else will work; everything else is meaningless. But this way cannot fail. Every thought you have makes up some segment of the world you see. It is with your thoughts, then, that we must work if your perception of the world is to be changed.
2. If the cause of the world you see is attack thoughts, you must learn that it is these thoughts which you do not want. There is no point in lamenting the world. There is no point in trying to change the world. It is incapable of change because it is merely an effect. But there is indeed a point in changing your thoughts about the world. Here you are changing cause. The effects will change automatically.
3. The world you see is a vengeful world, and everything in it is a symbol of vengeance. Each of your perceptions of "external reality" is a pictorial representation of your own attack thoughts. One can well ask if this can be called seeing. Is not fantasy a better world for such a process and hallucination a more appropriate term for the result?
4. You see the world which you have made, but you do not see yourself as the image-maker. You cannot be saved from the world, but you can escape from its cause. This is what salvation means, for where is the world you see when its cause is gone? Vision already holds a replacement for everything you think you see now. Loveliness can light your images and so transform them that you will love them even though they were made of hate. For you will not be making them alone.
5. The idea for today introduces the thought that you are not trapped in the world you see, because its cause can be changed. This change requires, first, that the cause be identified and then let go, so that it can be replaced. The first two steps in this process require your cooperation. The final one does not. Your images have already been replaced. By taking the first two steps, you will see that this is so.
6. Besides using it throughout the day as need arises, five practice periods are required in applying today's idea. As you look about you, repeat the idea slowly to yourself and then close your eyes and devote about a minute to searching your mind for as many attack thoughts as occur to you. As each one crosses your mind say:

7. *I can escape from the world by giving up attack thoughts about _____.*

8. Hold each attack thought in mind as you say this, and then dismiss that thought and go on to the next.
9. In the practice periods, be sure to include both your thoughts of attacking and of being attacked. Their effects are exactly the same because they are exactly the same. You do not yet recognise this and you are asked at this time only to treat them as the same in today's practice periods. We are still at the stage of identifying the cause of the world you see. When you finally realise that thoughts of attack and of being attacked are not different, you will be ready to let the cause go.