

## A Course in Miracles - Lesson 8

### *My mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.*

1. This idea is, of course, the reason why you see only the past. No one really sees anything. He sees only his thoughts projected outward. The mind's preoccupation with the past is the cause of the total misconception about time from which your seeing suffers. Your mind cannot grasp the present, which is the only time there is. It therefore cannot understand time and cannot, in fact, understand anything.
2. The only wholly true thought one can hold about the past is that it is not here. To think about it at all is therefore to think about illusion. Very few minds have realised what is actually entailed in picturing the past or in anticipating the future. The mind is actually blank when it does this because it is not really thinking about anything.
3. The purpose of the exercises for today is to begin to train your mind to recognise when it is not really thinking at all. While thoughtless "ideas" preoccupy your mind, the truth is blocked. Recognise that your mind has been merely blank, rather than believing that it is filled with real ideas, is the first step to opening the way to vision.
4. The exercises for today should be done with the eyes closed. This is because you actually cannot see anything, and it is easier to recognise that, no matter how vividly you may picture a thought, you are not seeing anything. With as little investment as possible, search your mind for a minute or so, merely noting the thoughts you find there. Name each one by the central figure or theme it contains, and pass on to the next. Introduce the practice period by saying:
  5. *I seem to be thinking about \_\_\_\_\_.*
  6. Then name each of your thoughts specifically. For example:
    7. *I seem to be thinking about (name of the person), about (name of object), about (name of emotion);*
    8. and so on, concluding at the end of the mind-searching period with:
      9. *But my mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.*
  10. This can be done four or five times during the day, unless you find it irritates you. If you find it trying, three or four times are sufficient. You might find it helpful, however, to include your irritation, or any emotion which the idea may induce, in the mind searching itself.