

## ***I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts.***

Another year is rushing to a close and I have been wondering what spiritual practice I could share with you this New Year that might really make a difference to your levels of happiness and fulfilment in 2019. After some considerable internal debate, I have finally decided to share with you one of the radical teachings from *A Course in Miracles* which is Lesson 281: *I can be hurt by nothing but my thoughts*'.

When I first read this lesson over 20 years ago, it actually annoyed me quite a lot. I could not accept that what was happening in the world around me could not hurt me directly regardless of my thoughts about it. 'What if I got cancer or WW3 broke out??' I argued inside my head. 'Surely I would have every reason to feel terrified, regardless of my thoughts?'

But 20 years later, I am finally beginning to get this crucial lesson. (Yes I know, I am a slow learner. But *A Course in Miracles* is a pretty tough course to crack!!)

We all tend to think loads and loads of fearful thoughts about ourselves and our future. In fact, some spiritual teachers would go so far as to claim that virtually every thought that pops into our head is basically a fearful thought because it is an egoic 'What about 'me?'' thought.

Now the ego always speaks first and so I do not think we are ever going to stop a stream of fearful thoughts pouring through our minds. However, we can definitely become mindful enough to notice - at least some of the time - when a fearful or judgemental thought pops into our mind. Then we can consciously choose to delete it and replace it with a loving thought. If we just keep doing this pretty simple, but quite demanding practice over several months or years, we will definitely train ourselves to become less fearful and more loving, and once we change for the better, our whole life has to follow suit.

To help you get going on this life-changing practice, I will share with you a simple version of how it works using my own fearful reaction to a recent minor upset in my life as the example.

First something happened to me:

A good friend told me that she was really irritated by something I did.

Then, I noticed my fearful thoughts about this event.

'Maybe my good friend does not want to be friends anymore. I thought I could really rely on her. Now I feel really upset!!'

Please note here that I am now interpreting what happened to me in a fearful way. In fact, I am catastrophizing about the future.

Then, my years of practising *A Course in Miracles* kicked in and I asked myself 'How can I change these fearful thoughts about what happened into loving thoughts?'

So I stopped and contemplated on the situation for a moment or two and come up with:

'My friend was clearly stressed when she told me that I irritated her and what she said to me was not so much a criticism, as an unskilled cry for love and support. She and I are not really personalities in bodies. We are both eternal souls having a hard time down here on Planet Earth. So I am going to send love and compassion to both of us from the depths of my heart.' ..... Oh! Now I feel better!!'

So the life-enhancing process goes like this:

Step one: Mindfully notice that an event has upset you.

Step two: Kindly and gently notice your fearful/judgemental thoughts about that event.

Step Three: Change your fearful thinking into loving thinking and then just bathe everyone concerned in love and compassion

Please note that the crucial step in this three step process is the third one!!

Now please don't assume that I am some kind of saint who instantly does this life-changing practice every time I have a fearful or judgemental thought. I have to confess to you that I still sometimes hang onto a fearful attack thought about someone for days, weeks or occasionally months. But I do now tend to notice pretty quickly that doing this doesn't make me feel peaceful, joyful or loving. So I do now tend to delete at least some of my judgemental or fearful thoughts a lot quicker than I did several years ago.

But something else I have noticed is that when I am really tired or my vibrations are low, I am much more likely to think fearful or judgemental thoughts than when my energy and consciousness are really high. So I make sure that I do things on a regular basis to raise my energy and consciousness. I go for regular walks in nature. I practise The Infinite Arts (tai chi kung and meditation) and above all, I go on as many spiritual retreats each year as I possibly can.

For example in 2019, I have already booked to go on two retreats with Master Jason Chan and three retreats in Assisi! Am I a retreat junkie? Yes – because going on a retreat led by a powerful spiritual master (male or female) is the only way I know to raise my consciousness high enough to think no fearful thoughts whatsoever for a while. When my vibration soars upwards towards the end of an intense spiritual retreat, I think and feel nothing but love, gratitude or compassion for all living creatures and this state of mind is so miraculous, it is beyond measure and beyond price.

But when I am not on retreat, I know that the only way to rise above all my endless fearful, judgemental thoughts is to practise deleting them quicker and quicker. Only then, I begin to dwell in inner peace and harmony regardless of the worldly chaos raging all around me.

So this New Year, I am not going to wish that you will not face any troubling challenges in 2019, because I know that we all will. But I do sincerely wish that you find a way to rise above these endless, fearful challenges to find that deep inner peace and joy that are always there just waiting for us to slow down enough and calm down enough to really connect to them!

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