

A basic tenet of ACIM and NTI is to change your old ideas. This includes changing, releasing old patterns of behavior, thoughts, ideas, and beliefs.

Much of what we are holding onto is not conscious, so part of the process is allowing this stuff to raise to a conscious level so that it may be released and/or transformed.

Let us use PEACE for instance since Peace is a major theme for 1 Thessalonians.

Inner peace is usually at the top of most people's spiritual wish list.

So here is an internal dialogue and progression of thinking that many of us have gone through. The process has NOT been successful in producing inner peace, but, up until this time, it has been the only one we knew.

Here I am yearning for Inner Peace. I don't feel peaceful (that is one of my initial mistakes, in associating peace with just an emotion).

I don't perceive myself as experiencing peace.

I want it; I don't think I have it. (and, of course, if I don't think I have it, it must be "out there" somewhere).

Now what do I tell myself? I say to myself, "I am not at peace." I tell myself that, and I believe it because it surely feels true and sounds true.

I say it again, with a little more conviction and perhaps also more anger, "I am not at peace." Every time I repeat that thought to myself, I am less and less at peace

Peace—I don't feel it. I don't perceive myself as experiencing it.

I want it; I don't think I have it.

What do I tell myself, "I am not at peace." And every time I tell myself that I am less and less at peace.

What am I doing? Although I am not conscious of it, I am creating a space for non-peace, confusion, chaos, guilt, fear—you name it.

We can step back and realize the craziness of our thinking. Although our object was to be at peace, all we managed to do was create more unrest.

We can attempt to reject the old pattern, and try to create a new one, but NTI suggests a new and different approach. It is sort of a variation on the theme of "work with what is already working."

"Lack of peace in any measure is an opportunity to be healed."

This is a loaded statement. First, it presumes we will some times perceive ourselves as being unpeaceful.

We will "fall asleep," be unaware of our Truth. We will wake up, be at peace, and become aware again.

An aspect of my old method would be to beat myself up for falling asleep. "Idiot, what's wrong with you? How come you can't just always be aware of your truth? How come you get caught up in fear, anger, separateness thinking and other distractions?"

I would start beating myself up for falling asleep. What I do not realize is that as soon as I begin to beat myself up, I have fallen pray to unawareness again. I am no longer acting or treating myself as a beloved child of God, I am right back into my blame, shame, and guilt of ego consciousness.

The quote above, "Lack of peace..." also tells me that there is a whole other way of approaching unpeacefulness. Instead of self-punishment, even lack of peace can be used for HEALING.

WOW. What a deal.

Here is what the Holy Spirit says:

2To look at the intrusion and to focus on it as a failure is to continue to hold onto error. 3Do not judge your own lack of peace. 4Rejoice that the Holy Spirit has brought you to another moment of healing. (v 6 – 10) **1Let Me change your mind about what you experience, so you may use your experience to heal without delay. P. 365**

We let the Holy Spirit change our mind. See, we don't create peace or a peaceful mind, it is already there.

Now there is another step that helps break the pattern of being angry and upset for falling into unawareness or being asleep.

We are told now to: 4Rejoice in each moment that peace is known within your heart. 5Do not judge from whence the peace has come or whether it is for the "right" or the "wrong" reason. 6Celebrate its glory regardless of the reason, and be glad. P. 365

Two things here: 1) Be grateful for nay awareness of peace. Gratitude opens the heart and makes room for the awareness of more peace; 2) don't get involved with trying to figure out what happened to cause the peace or where it comes from. That kind of thinking simply reinforces the false idea that peace comes from outside you.

The chapter ends by stating: 3Remember the purpose of peace and the purpose of lack of peace. 4Peace is the path of remembering. 5Lack of peace is evidence that you have momentarily strayed from your path. 6Therefore, it is a reminder to put forgetfulness aside and to step joyously on the path of peace again. P. 367-8