

A NEW EARTH ONLINE CLASS

COMPANION GUIDE

1. The first part of Chapter 3 is about complaining, which includes faultfinding, grumbling and making negative comments in your speech or thought. This week, keep a running list of how often you complain during each day. Pay particular attention to a complaint that serves no useful purpose (any complaint that is not going to bring about a positive change in a situation or another person). For example, complaints about traffic, weather, having to wait in line or on the phone. Complaints about what someone said or did (or failed to say or do). Complaints about your marriage, job, finances, health or groups of people. Notice the complaining voice in your head. Notice its only purpose is to be right, to be superior, to feel a stronger sense of separateness from others. Whenever you notice the complaining voice, are you able to see it for what it is—a conditioned mind pattern, the voice of the ego? It is not who you are. And who are you? *The one who recognizes that voice*. Record your running list of complaints and your observations about them here.

2. This week, watch out for any underlying resentment and negative thoughts about what

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you are doing, which invariably implies, "I don't want to be doing this." (For example: "I don't want to be cleaning up after my kids." "I don't want to be in this traffic jam." "I don't want to be doing this work today." "I don't want to be sick at home today.") Can you see that these thoughts are futile and harmful? Are you able to let go of the complaining voice and just do what you have to do right now and be free of all negativity while you are doing it? Cite a few experiences of moments this week when you were able to release an underlying resentment about something you were doing. What happened when you did?

3. Is there someone in your life you have not completely forgiven, someone you have turned into an "enemy"? Write down that person's name and a list of your grievances. Then answer the questions from page 74: *"What is it in [your perceived enemy] that you find most upsetting, most disturbing? Their selfishness? Their greed? Their need for power and control? Their insincerity, dishonesty, propensity to violence, or whatever it may be?"* Be honest as you write. Feel the emotion behind your thoughts.

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4. ***"Anything that you resent and strongly react to in another is also in you."*** (p. 74) In that sense, you have much to learn from your enemies. Go back and re-read your response to the last questions. Then list here what you can learn about yourself from your grievances about your "enemy."

5. How would you answer this question: "Do you want peace or drama?" We all want peace, of course, and yet there might be something inside you that craves the drama, wants the conflict. This week, pay attention to situations or thoughts that trigger a reaction in you. Can you, as it says on page 77, *"feel that there is something in you that is at war ... that would rather be right than at peace?"* Can you become aware of your mind racing to defend its position, justify, attack or blame? Can you awaken at that moment of unconsciousness? List three situations this week, or at any time in your life, when you chose being right over being at peace.

6. ***"The underlying emotion that governs all the activity of the ego is fear. The fear of being nobody, the fear of nonexistence, the fear of death. All its activities are ultimately***

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designed to eliminate this fear, but the most the ego can ever do is to cover it up temporarily with an intimate relationship, a new possession, or winning this or that. Illusion will never satisfy you. Only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free" (p. 80). What does your ego fear? What is the truth of who you are?

7. Gossip is just one of the ego's strategies that satisfy its need to feel superior. Try to notice a few instances this week where you gossiped, acted like a know-it-all or shared news in such a way that temporarily created an imbalance in your favor. Notice other people's ego strategies as well. Without judging yourself or others, just be aware of the ego's need to feel superior. Write your observations about yourself and others here.

8. *"In a genuine relationship, there is an outward flow of open, alert attention toward the other person in which there is no wanting whatsoever. That alert attention is Presence. It is the prerequisite for any authentic relationship"* (p. 84). This week, practice not wanting anything from the people in your life. When you are with them, just be with them. If you feel yourself wanting something from them, acknowledge that emotion and release it.

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Does being present change the quality of your relationships?

Your Personal Space

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