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[Previous Section](#)

[Next Section](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Search the Course](#)

[We invite you to comment on this section.](#)

[The Little Garden Home](#)

VII. The End of Illusions

T-16.VII.1. It is impossible to let the past go without relinquishing the special relationship. 2 For the special relationship is an attempt to re-enact the past and change it. 3 Imagined slights, remembered pain, past disappointments, perceived injustices and deprivations all enter into the special relationship, which becomes a way in which you seek to restore your wounded self-esteem. 4 What basis would you have for choosing a special partner without the past? 5 Every such choice is made because of something "evil" in the past to which you cling, and for which must someone else atone.

T-16.VII.2. The special relationship takes vengeance on the past. 2 By seeking to remove suffering in the past, it overlooks the present in its preoccupation with the past and its total commitment to it. 3 No special relationship is experienced in the present. 4 Shades

of the past envelop it, and make it what it is. 5 It has no meaning in the present, and if it means nothing now, it cannot have any real meaning at all. 6 How can you change the past except in fantasy? 7 And who can give you what you think the past deprived you of? 8 The past is nothing. 9 Do not seek to lay the blame for deprivation on it, for the past is gone. 10 You cannot really *not* let go what has already gone. 11 It must be, therefore, that you are maintaining the illusion that it has not gone because you think it serves some purpose that you want fulfilled. 12 And it must also be that this purpose could not be fulfilled in the present, but only in the past.

T-16.VII.3. Do not underestimate the intensity of the ego's drive for vengeance on the past. 2 It is completely savage and completely insane. 3 For the ego remembers everything you have done that has offended it, and seeks retribution of you. 4 The fantasies it brings to its chosen relationships in which to act out its hate are fantasies of your destruction. 5 For the ego holds the past against you, and in your escape from the past it sees itself deprived of the vengeance it believes you so justly merit. 6 Yet without your alliance in your own destruction, the ego could not hold you to the past. 7 In the special relationship you are allowing your destruction to be. 8 That this is insane is obvious. 9 But what is less obvious is that the present is useless to you while you pursue the ego's goal as its ally.

T-16.VII.4. The past is gone; seek not to preserve it in the special relationship that binds you to it, and would teach you salvation is past and so you must return to the past to find salvation. 2 There is no fantasy that does not contain the dream of retribution for the past. 3 Would you act out the dream, or let it go?

T-16.VII.5. In the special relationship it does not seem to be an acting out of vengeance that you seek. 2 And even when the hatred and the savagery break briefly through, the illusion of love is not profoundly shaken. 3 Yet the one thing the ego never allows to reach awareness is that the special relationship is the acting out of vengeance on yourself. 4 Yet what else could it be? 5 In seeking the special relationship, you look not for glory in yourself. 6 You have denied that it is there, and the relationship becomes your substitute for it. 7 And vengeance becomes your substitute for Atonement, and the escape from vengeance becomes your loss.

T-16.VII.6. Against the ego's insane notion of salvation the Holy Spirit gently lays the holy instant. 2 We said before that the Holy Spirit must teach through comparisons, and uses opposites to point to truth. 3 The holy instant is the opposite of the ego's fixed belief in salvation through vengeance for the past. 4 In the holy instant it is understood that the past is gone, and with its passing the drive for vengeance has been uprooted and has disappeared. 5 The stillness and the peace of *now* enfold you in perfect gentleness. 6 Everything is gone except the truth.

T-16.VII.7. For a time you may attempt to bring illusions into the holy instant, to hinder your full awareness of the complete difference, in all respects, between your experience of truth and illusion. 2 Yet you will not attempt this long. 3 In the holy instant the power of the Holy Spirit will prevail, because you joined Him. 4 The illusions you bring with you will weaken the experience of Him for a while, and will prevent you from keeping the experience in your mind. 5 Yet the holy instant is eternal, and your illusions of time

will not prevent the timeless from being what it is, nor you from experiencing it as it is.

T-16.VII.8. What God has given you is truly given, and will be truly received. 2 For God's gifts have no reality apart from your receiving them. 3 Your receiving completes His giving. 4 You will receive *because* it is His Will to give. 5 He gave the holy instant to be given you, and it is impossible that you receive it not *because* He gave it. 6 When He willed that His Son be free, His Son *was* free. 7 In the holy instant is His reminder that His Son will always be exactly as he was created. 8 And everything the Holy Spirit teaches is to remind you that you have received what God has given you.

T-16.VII.9. There is nothing you can hold against reality. 2 All that must be forgiven are the illusions you have held against your brothers. 3 Their reality has no past, and only illusions can be forgiven. 4 God holds nothing against anyone, for He is incapable of illusions of any kind. 5 Release your brothers from the slavery of their illusions by forgiving them for the illusions you perceive in them. 6 Thus will you learn that you have been forgiven, for it is you who offered them illusions. 7 In the holy instant this is done for you in time, to bring you the true condition of Heaven.

T-16.VII.10. Remember that you always choose between truth and illusion; between the real Atonement that would heal and the ego's "atonement" that would destroy. 2 The power of God and all His Love, without limit, will support you as you seek only your place in the plan of Atonement arising from His Love. 3 Be an ally of God and not the ego in seeking how Atonement can come to you. 4 His help suffices, for His Messenger understands how to restore the Kingdom to you, and to place all your investment in salvation in your relationship with Him.

T-16.VII.11. Seek and *find* His message in the holy instant, where all illusions are forgiven. 2 From there the miracle extends to bless everyone and to resolve all problems, be they perceived as great or small, possible or impossible. 3 There is nothing that will not give place to Him and to His Majesty. 4 To join in close relationship with Him is to accept relationships as real, and through their reality to give over all illusions for the reality of your relationship with God. 5 Praise be to your relationship with Him and to no other. 6 The truth lies there and nowhere else. 7 You choose this or nothing.

T-16.VII.12. *Forgive us our illusions, Father, and help us to accept our true relationship with You, in which there are no illusions, and where none can ever enter. 2 Our holiness is Yours. 3 What can there be in us that needs forgiveness when Yours is perfect? 4 The sleep of forgetfulness is only the unwillingness to remember Your forgiveness and Your Love. 5 Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not Your Will. 6 And let us receive only what You have given, and accept but this into the minds which You created and which You love. 7 Amen.*

[Previous Section](#)

[Next Section](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Search the Course](#)

[We invite you to comment on this section.](#)

[The Little Garden Home](#)

>