

Illusions – I. True Empathy

T-16.I.1. To empathize does not mean to join in suffering, for that is what you must *refuse* to understand. 2 That is the ego's interpretation of empathy, and is always used to form a special relationship in which the suffering is shared. 3 The capacity to empathize is very useful to the Holy Spirit, provided you let Him use it in His way. 4 His way is very different. 5 He does not understand suffering, and would have you teach it is not understandable. 6 When He relates through you, He does not relate through your ego to another ego. 7 He does not join in pain, understanding that healing pain is not accomplished by delusional attempts to enter into it, and lighten it by sharing the delusion.

T-16.I.2. The clearest proof that empathy as the ego uses it is destructive lies in the fact that it is applied only to certain types of problems and in certain people. 2 These it selects out, and joins with. 3 And it never joins except to strengthen itself. 4 Having identified with what it thinks it understands, the ego sees itself and would increase itself by sharing what is like itself. 5 Make no mistake about this maneuver; the ego always empathizes to weaken, and to weaken is always to attack. 6 You do not know what empathizing means. 7 Yet of this you may be sure; if you will merely sit quietly by and let the Holy Spirit relate through you, you will empathize with strength, and will gain in strength and not in weakness.

T-16.I.3. Your part is only to remember this; you do not want anything you value to come of a relationship. 2 You choose neither to hurt it nor to heal it in your own way. 3 You do not know what healing is. 4 All you have learned of empathy is from the past. 5 And there is nothing from the past that you would share, for there is nothing from the past that you would keep. 6 Do not use empathy to make the past real, and so perpetuate it. 7 Step gently aside, and let healing be done for you. 8 Keep but one thought in mind and do not lose sight of it, however tempted you may be to judge any situation, and to determine your response *by* judging it. 9 Focus your mind only on this:

10 I am not alone, and I would not intrude the past upon my Guest.

11 I have invited Him, and He is here.

12 I need do nothing except not to interfere.

T-16.I.4. True empathy is of Him Who knows what it is. 2 You will learn His interpretation of it if you let Him use your capacity for strength, and not for weakness. 3 He will not desert you, but be sure that you desert not Him. 4 Humility is strength in this sense only; that to recognize and accept the fact that you do not know is to recognize and accept the fact that He *does* know. 5 You are not sure that He will do His part, because you have never yet done yours completely. 6 You cannot know how to respond to what you do not understand. 7 Be tempted not in this, and yield not to the ego's triumphant use of empathy for its glory.

T-16.I.5. The triumph of weakness is not what you would offer to a brother. 2 And yet you recognize no triumph but this. 3 This is not knowledge, and the form of empathy which would bring this about is so distorted that it would imprison what it would release. 4 The unredeemed cannot redeem, yet they have a Redeemer. 5 Attempt to teach Him not. 6 You are the learner; He the Teacher. 7 Do not confuse your role with His, for this will never bring peace to anyone. 8 Offer your empathy to Him for it is *His* perception and *His* strength that you would share. 9 And let Him offer you His strength and His perception, to be shared through you.

T-16.I.6. The meaning of love is lost in any relationship that looks to weakness, and hopes to find love there. 2 The power of love, which *is* its meaning, lies in the strength of God that hovers over it and blesses it silently by enveloping it in healing wings. 3 Let this be, and do not try to substitute your "miracle" for this. 4 I have said that if a brother asks a foolish thing of you to do it. 5 But be certain that this does not mean to do a foolish thing that would hurt either him or you, for what would hurt one will hurt the other. 6 Foolish requests are foolish merely because they conflict, since they always contain some element of specialness. 7 Only the Holy Spirit recognizes foolish needs as well as real ones. 8 And He will teach you how to meet both without losing either.

T-16.I.7. *You* will attempt to do this only in secrecy. 2 And you will think that by meeting the needs of one you do not jeopardize another, because you keep them separate and secret from each other. 3 That is not the way, for it leads not to life and truth. 4 No needs will long be left unmet if you leave them all to Him Whose function is to meet them. 5 That is His function, and not yours. 6 He will not meet them secretly, for He would share everything you give through Him. 7 That is why He gives it. 8 What you give through Him is for the

whole Sonship, not for part of it. 9 Leave Him His function, for He will fulfill it if you but ask Him to enter your relationships, and bless them for you.