

# A NEW EARTH ONLINE CLASS

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## COMPANION GUIDE

### CHAPTER 7

1. Chapter 7 starts with these words: *“Know Thyself. What those words imply is this: Before you ask any other question, first ask the most fundamental question of your life: Who am I?”* (p. 186). First, write a list of all the labels you normally use to define yourself: your name, age, occupation, family members, shape or state of your body, religion, political party, opinions, beliefs. Start each item with the words “I am.” Then, move on to the next question.

2. *“You are not the ego, so when you become aware of the ego in you, it does not mean you know who you are—it means you know who you are not. But it is through knowing who you are not that the greatest obstacle to truly knowing yourself is removed”* (p. 189). Re-do the list you created in the previous question, using the words “I am not” instead of “I am.” Who is the “I” that speaks in each list?

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**3. After completing the previous two questions, sit in silence and internally repeat, “Who am I?” “Who am I?” “Who am I?” Be still and listen. Repeat the question and listen again in the silence. What did you experience? How was the question “Who am I?” answered?**

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4. ***"Your sense of who you are determines what you perceive as your needs and what matters to you in life—and whatever matters to you will have the power to upset and disturb you. You can use this as a criterion to find out how deeply you know yourself. ... So you may want to ask yourself the question: What are the things that upset and disturb me?" (p. 186-187). Make a list of the things that upset and disturb you on a regular basis. It is not your true self who is disturbed, but rather, "The small me that seeks security or fulfillment in things that are transient and gets anxious or angry because it fails to find it. Well, at least now you know who you really think you are. ... If peace mattered to you more than anything else and if you truly knew yourself to be spirit rather than a little me, you would remain nonreactive and absolutely alert when confronted with challenging people or situations. ... Then out of your alertness would come a response" (p. 188). The next time you are upset by something on your list, don't respond from your "little me." Instead, become alert—present in the moment—and then respond to the situation.***

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5. ***“Whatever you think the world is withholding from you, you are withholding from the world”*** (p. 190). This week, try the following and see how it changes your daily interactions, relationships, and life itself: ***“Whatever you think people are withholding from you—praise, appreciation, assistance, loving care, and so on—give it to them. You don’t have it? Just act as if you had it, and it will come. ... You cannot receive what you don’t give. Outflow determines inflow”*** (p.191). Write about a few instances this week where you tried this—with a family member, colleagues at work, friends, a stranger in the street.

6. On page 215 of *A New Earth*, there is a powerful spiritual practice that we can do from time to time: ***“When someone criticizes you, blames you, or calls you names, instead of immediately retaliating or defending yourself—do nothing. Allow the self-image to remain diminished and become alert to what that feels like deep inside you. ... You may then come to an amazing realization: When you are seemingly diminished in some way and remain in absolute nonreaction, not just externally but also internally, you realize that nothing real has been diminished, that through becoming 'less,' you become more.”*** Use this practice in your interactions this week, and write about your experiences here.

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**7. Nonreaction is not the same as allowing abuse. "Sometimes a situation may demand that you tell someone to 'back off' in no uncertain terms. Without egoic defensiveness, there will be power behind your words, yet no reactive force. If necessary, you can also say no to someone firmly and clearly, and it will be what I call a 'high-quality no' that is free of all negativity" (p. 216). This week, if an appropriate situation arises, practice saying a "high-quality no." How did you feel afterward? What was the response from others?**