

How To Have A Non Critical Spirit

A talk by Vernon Howard given on 05-19-78

I was just thinking, wouldn't it be a nice state to be at home with oneself? Now don't pass the words off lightly, just think about it. When you're at home, in your physical home, you're comfortable. Everything you need is there. The house is arranged the way you like it for yourself. Wouldn't it be nice to be equally at home with our inner nature?

Mine isn't exactly like yours. Yours isn't like the next man, but the nature, the bare nature, which has been given you, which has found itself because it has found Truth. Then you can express yourself quite different from the way I might, or your husband or wife might.

You might be more active and passive, you might be a little more emotional than intellectual or vice versa, but the combination of all your parts put together – it doesn't make any difference because they're all ruled, all governed quite rightly, quite easily, quite casually by something that is not myself, that is not you.

Now if I ask you here, those of you here already whether you're at home with yourself or not, I think you know what the answer is going to be, correct? So now watch the blank that appears in your mind when I ask this question. Watch the blank that appears. What are you going to do about it? You don't know. You haven't any idea. Don't go quoting something. That's not knowing, is it?

The reason your mind is a blank and you don't what to do about it, is because you have a thousand things to do about it. All of them fighting with each other, in conflict with each other, getting real excited that this is the answer which is the marriage or the divorce or the spiritual study group or whatever. But have you ever noticed, and I hope you will begin to notice, if you haven't already, that when you go in to self-deception about the nature of the answer, a part of you knows you're telling yourself an untruth.

It is not easy for any of us to face the fact that when we get a pseudo-solution, a false savior, it isn't easy for any of us to slow down and say, "Instead of going along with that as I've been doing all my life, I am going to challenge it, challenge it's authority to take me over and lead me down another blank trail which is the story of my whole life."

To do this, to challenge the wrong answers, the false answers you're going to have to live with them and watch – not just one – but see that you have a dozen, have fifty of them inside of you. How you're anxious to go out somewhere and the minute you get to that party you're anxious to get home again. Right?

You go down to the bar and you look around a little bit and you don't see any likely prospects. You go to the business meeting and it doesn't look like you're going to make a commission there – you're ready to start somewhere

else. Why don't you stay where you are and suffer until you shatter the illusion that going somewhere on your own can save you?

There is a part of you that will lie to you when you do this and that part will say this will be the death of you if you stay home and try to understand, instead of permitting yourself to be carried off left and right.

Isn't it the death of us all to be carried away? And do you know when any of us get carried away that it's with our own unconscious consent? And let me tell you why you give that consent. Because you would rather be babied temporarily, you would rather be babied temporarily even if you're betrayed finally after five minutes or five hours or twenty years.

You'd rather be babied by not doing any work for yourself. You'd rather do that and just let yourself be kidnapped instead of doing some very alert work on yourself to watch yourself being kidnapped wherever you go – not trying to change it or anything, but doing much higher work and catch yourself at the split second you go to that party.

Look, look. You're sitting home, you go to the party an hour later, two hours later you look around – nothing for you there. Catch yourself at the split second where something has switched up here, something has changed where you say, "I'm now going home!"

If you do that often enough, you'll begin to see for yourself something that you have quoted for yourself a thousand times, read in books, heard at these talks. You will begin to see something that you didn't want to see. You will see that there's at least two people inside of you. The first one who said, "If I go to the party or if I get married, then I'll be happy." Right? Okay. But when you found out later that going to the party or getting married didn't do it for you, you didn't understand truth principals at that time. You didn't understand that at the split second where there was a shift in thoughts, in "I's", in ideas, in ambitions, in aims, you didn't see that shift and so you didn't see that there's at least two people in you.

If you can catch yourself right in the middle – not that you make the decision to go home – it is made for you, right? You don't sit there and say – even if you say, "Ah, I think I'll go home," that is something talking in your name. Something that says, "I am bored here. I'm not going to get what I want here. I'll go home and watch television or do whatever I want."

But if you can catch the idea that there are at least two people inside you, you can then go on to work intelligently with those two people instead of living any longer in the delusion that you're always one person, always a consistent person. You always vote Republican or you always believe this or that. You always do a certain thing which is not you at all, but merely a conglomeration of fixed ideas which you get a sense of identity out of, and which you think makes you safe.

Will you agree that nothing has made us safe up to this point? Will you agree that going to the party or then going home hasn't done a thing for us? I want to tell you, you have so much hard work to do on yourself and we're doing it.

Now we'll talk about something else and I guess we're officially started. I want to give you, at the very start, a marvelous exercise! How many of you here would like to feel good? (Laughter) Alright. I'm going to give you an exercise. Look, look how simple that is. That's too simple for you, isn't it? Feel good? And yet you say, "I want to feel good," so you turn on the record-player and you feel excited – you don't feel good. I'm going to give you an exercise that will authentically lead you into feeling good.

Now you know what that means in a small way, when temporarily your problems are absent and you're a little bit in charge of yourself. This may sound strange to you so follow.

Here is the exercise. This is Friday night. You're to continue this exercise starting right now, immediately right now as soon as I say it, and continue it up until Sunday night until you go to bed. And obviously, it should be obvious, that you should continue it for the rest of your life. But sometimes you put a time element in there and then it will concentrate it more and you can work on it a little better perhaps.

Here is the exercise. Effective as of right now, until Sunday night, you will not criticize anyone or anything. Now I didn't say not just with your tongue, I say with your whole system, with your mind, with your feelings, with the way you gesture, the way you tilt your head. You can criticize when you turn your head, can't you?

Notice where we direct our criticism toward other people, toward circumstances, toward events, toward conditions, toward ourselves. Notice how critical you are. "Oh, I'm so dumb." And you listen to this. Now this is very – especially tricky – so you'll have to follow it. We even criticize God. Now we don't really criticize God because we don't know who he is. You don't know who God is, so how can you criticize something you don't know?

What has happened in this case is that you have set up a certain ideal condition, a certain aim, a certain ambition that is your god. Your god is to win the favors of another person. Your god is to make a good impression on someone. Your god is to make more money – whatever it might be – or get rid of something. This is your god, and when you don't get your simple desire you criticize. But you see, that has become your god so you're criticizing what your present god is with a small "g". So this is to be included in your task 'till Sunday night of not speaking criticism, of not showing it in any way at all. Now this isn't going to do anything for you immediately. What it's going to do is reveal things to you – the fact that you can't do it.

How many of you love to criticize? Let's see the hands of the critical people. Isn't it easy, isn't it convenient, just throw out a snarky remark at someone and be done with it and get the little glow of pleasure. "Well, I got you even though you got me." I'm serious, I'm not joking. If after a long long time of practicing non criticism you will see that there's a thousand times more involved in it than the simple little exercise revealed at the start. And I'm sure you understand, at least a bit, what we are trying to do is put a block in front of a very habitual habit, something that takes us over real quick, takes over our nervous system, takes over our emotions, and makes us feel

good in the wrong way.

It makes us feel good in that I feel that I have won a victory over you. "I've got my tension out a little bit, but I have to keep doing this all the time. I have to keep criticizing someone or something or myself in order to keep giving myself this thrill – false thrill of feeling good."

Do you know what feeling good is then in actuality? Feeling authentically good – now you'll see the connection with non criticism – means the absence of anything that is making me feel bad. My fear of being alone – you name them – you go down a long list. What makes me feel bad? Maybe I'm afraid of losing you, I'm afraid of the future, I'm afraid of growing old, I'm afraid of the past. I'm afraid maybe I'm so thickly conditioned that I can't break it. If you get rid of all those things would you not indeed feel good because you're living right now in the free present moment? Wouldn't you feel good?

Well, so now you have a good aim, do you not? Start right now remembering that you're to be non critical. Now look, some of you – how many of you snap at other people? How many of you snap at your husband?

I assume you come to these classes because you really want to break out of the net. Now I've given you the opportunity, and you're to take a piece of paper and you're to write down every time you mentally, verbally, gesturally, criticize anyone between now and Sunday night. You better get a long piece of paper. And you will find that you won't be able to see most of them – they'll be unconscious.

During the break, for example, if you're wide awake you might be able to catch one or two little critical remarks. "Why does she dress that way? Why does he stand in my way when I want to get through the doorway?" A thousand and one little thing like that.

Now we can investigate why we criticize at all. We said a little bit ago that criticism disguises itself as a good, proper, good feeling when in fact, it's a very compulsive thing that has a whip in its hand. All right, you don't believe it? Can you watch your face while you're being critical. You think you can do that sometime? You watch your face and if you're able to see it – you can do it without a mirror – you'll be able to see the strain and the pain in it. You'd be able to see the unhappiness in it.

Now why would any of us be so stupid that we would engage all day long and all month long in critical, sarcastic comments toward ourselves toward other people, toward events, toward what we call god. Why would we continue to do that when it is hurting us?

It's so simple and yet so profound. If you don't think we're dumb listen to this. I take the pain of criticism – which it is. It hurts me. I take the pain of a critical spirit as being necessary to my psychic survival. "I am somebody. I am somebody aggressive. I am somebody fighting for himself. I'm somebody who's taking charge. I am somebody who doesn't let people walk all over him."

Whenever I'm critical, whenever I'm hostile, whenever I'm angry, I have the

delusion that I'm acting in my favor, that I'm keeping myself protected, that I'm actually building a state that is necessary for me.

This will continue to go on – this self-whipping will continue to go on until two things happen. The first one is a vast collection of knowledge, of facts, of ideas that we're talking about here, right now, this collection of knowledge so I have right elementary education on the intellectual part of my mind. So that when a situation comes up where I am just about to be sarcastic or critical in a small or large way because I have collected this knowledge – one of them being to remember these truths – at one minute when I'm just about to make my usual sarcastic comment toward someone, I remember the knowledge, the ideas, and then added to that the second factor that I am willing to let go of my false pleasure hyphen pain in order to experience something new in the vacuum of not criticizing.

If I add that, then the two together will produce a third feature, a third and very new situation to me, which, after I've paused and not criticized I then look and see, very easily by the way, the new condition, the new state that I have inside of me, and this you can call if you like, this you can call the entrance of light. This you can call God teaching you rather than our own low-level intellect teaching you. You can begin to see that this – this is indeed a new experience. And in this experience that is new there is no fear, no anxiety, no tension of being without the false thrill of a sarcastic remark.

Now this state is the beginning of the end of you, of me, right? It comes very very dimly at the start because we're so reluctant to go into it. But having given you this very very specific exercise to work on, it's a marvelous one to carry through all the way so that you find out for yourself by your own personal experience exactly what I'm talking about.

And let me urge you not to miss the fifty opportunities that you have yet tonight before you go to bed. When you go back to your home, back to the motel, when you get in your car watch how you even criticize that motor for not obeying your kingly instructions to turn on.

"Here I am, a prince among human beings and I in my royal instructions turn the key for that mechanical monster to obey me by turning over and it refuses. What arrogance!" This is why the fact that we can't command mechanical things is so scary because when it doesn't obey – "Good heavens. Maybe I'm not the king I thought I was after all. Maybe I'm not someone, after all, who by a mere flick of the key can make things happen."

See look, this is all very very personal and very psychological, right? It's a very psychological thing. This is why you have to – you have to turn your attention back when turning on the key, when dealing with mechanical things including mechanical human beings which are machines too with just a little difference in them.

So you can begin to understand the necessity, the false necessity for being critical, for being sarcastic which can be stated in this way now. When I let you have it or I let me have it or I let what I call god have it or the situation have it or the opposite political party have it. When I have it, I am sending out my message to the exterior world, "I am in command. And since I am in

command and have such a great right to be in command, you had better obey me, whatever I ask of you – money whatever. You had better obey me because if you don't obey me I will be forced to see what a fake I really am and I won't have it!"

So when those times come up when I throw my demand out into the world and the world says no instead of yes, my little cunning mind is anticipating that emergency and it is going to handle it. And guess what I do? Get mad, get critical.

Now that very criticism, that violence that I have in me does two things. First off all it's a smoke screen. The very agitation of it helps me to not see what a fraud I am. That's one thing. But the other one is the false identification of still being the king that I insist on being. The identification – "If I can't get what I want, I can still pretend that I am entitled to it and if you don't give it to me, guess who is evil? You are! It's a very bad world out there. It's a terrible world. People don't agree with my religion. They don't agree with the way I want to live. They don't agree with most things that I want. So therefore, it's a very evil world. I'm not evil. I am pure and good. The world is evil out there and I have seen it as that.

Look how – quote mark – "safe" I have made myself simply by using the one out of a thousand devices that I have for keeping the illusion going that I'm a world unto myself that must be served by everyone out there."

Now, this kind of life, this kind of way of going through our day is better known as self-destruction, right? Why not then, in our exercise – the exercise for those of you who are late – the exercise effective as of right now, you are going to refrain from criticizing anyone or anything – including yourself.

You're not to criticize yourself. That is simply another form of self-centeredness. You're not to criticize, but rather to remain silent so that, among other things, you can begin to see that it's the most difficult thing to do. But the observation that it's difficult to do is part of your success because we don't know how our whole lives are wrapped around all these self-protective, falsely self-protective devices including criticism, but zeroing in on this one thing.

Alright now. You know and I know that for every time we criticize someone with words we do it silently in our own mind and feelings, don't we? Because we're afraid we'd get bopped if we criticized outwardly. So we say, "You can keep me from talking, but you can't keep me from thinking."

So a non critical spirit – what would – what would be there if there was no criticism? What would be in it's place? I started off the meeting by telling you – an authentic feeling of quietness. And add to that, the sure knowledge for the first time in your life that you are indeed in command of the entire world. That's right. You're in charge of the entire universe. Listen – because it consists of who you really are in Reality, in Truth right now inside.

Oh, I see. I see the mistake we've been making. We thought that that world out there in some way should be ours, should be conquered in order to

affirm the spurious king in here. "Ah, if I see the fake king with the cardboard crown inside me, if I see that he's a fake, which he is, in which he tries to confirm himself uselessly with criticism. If I see that he is a fake, then if you deny me that money, that sex, that compliment, that reward, that honor – if you do deny me that then it doesn't make any difference at all because there's no one here, I understand, to be rewarded."

Ah, now we see what it means to be in the world but not of it. How can you give anything to the Kingdom of Heaven within? How? You can't! Ah, now we see – now we see how dumb we've been. I put on the cardboard crown, you put on the paper robe and then we have mutually demanded that the world confirm it, that the world honor it, that the world make this fakery seem real.

This is it! This is the very false foundation of all our problems, of all our difficulties, of all our fears that somehow, somehow – the whole world helped us in it – somehow we've got the idea that there is something here that can get something from the outer world and if it doesn't then get critical and if it does, then fawn and thank the world out there for, quote mark, "confirming" me.

How easy your work becomes from the point you understand this, that no matter what happens out there – which you call good or bad – or no matter what happens equally inside – good or bad – it has no connection when the level is different than the level we have discovered up here by seeing that there is really no one down there who can be either rewarded or punished and now we are out of it. This state is what is known as a non critical spirit.

There is no relationship! You say you're going to leave me. What's that got to do with me? Good bye! You're saying, "You're going to give me a raise, boss, and I'm going to make fifty thousand a year now instead of thirty! What's that got to do with me?" You understand? Huh? If you understand what we've discussed then you understand that the world can't do anything for you or against you.

If I work on this criticism exercise it will lead me all the way to this state – to this state where there's no need to criticize and what would be the opposite of criticizing? Praising. There would be no need equally, of course, to praise. You're going to praise that idiotic senator who just helps wreck the country? You're going to praise that parent who brought you up in the fear that you now suffer from? Who are you going to praise? The opposites have been transcended and we're above them.

After the break which we're going to have in a minute, you might want to ask questions or make comments on everything we've talked about including the particular exercise of criticism. And we will take a break.

Here are some writings which will eventually be in a book which I'm doing at home which I am now reading to you.

A criminal committed a murder. A judge appointed a panel of three famous psychiatrists to give the murderer a four month psychiatric evaluation. At the end of that time the psychiatrists unanimously agreed on the conclusion

there is something wrong with the mind of the accused. At that point, a spectator in the courtroom asked the judge for permission to speak. When the annoyed judge reluctantly agreed, the spectator said to the judge, "Sir when the man committed murder wasn't that simple and absolute evidence that there was something wrong with his mind? After pausing a moment, the judge ordered that the psychiatrists be paid in full for their services. He then set the murderer free on probation. The spectator who ask the question was fined for contempt of court. That is the society you live in.

A man inherited a country home which was surrounded by tall and wild bushes and weeds. Wanting to see what kind of scenery was beyond, he removed the bushes and weeds. He discovered that he lived in beautiful scenery. Inwardly our bushes and weeds consist of wild ideas and words.

How about this one. Let's see if it hits home anywhere. At last I have perfected my act of cowardice. I will childishly criticize any idea that is above my ability to understand.

If you angrily object to being called a coward your very objection proves that you are one. Your objection also proves that you are also a big liar. I wish we had some new people tonight.

Pretense tells a lie when it tells you the battle is won by fighting for your positions. Reality tells the truth when it tells you the battle is won by seeing you need not have any positions to fight for.

We discussed that didn't we. I'll read that again.

Pretense tells a lie when it tells you the battle is won by fighting for your positions. Reality tells the truth when it tells you the battle is won by seeing you need not have any positions to fight for.

How about this one?

You give people a helping hand only because you have nothing better to give them.

Right?

Five liberating words: I need no one's approval! I need no one's approval.

Wouldn't it be heaven to live that sentence? Huh? Wouldn't that be bliss?

Now listen to this one.

Get up off your knees and stand up like a man. Just do it! You need no one's permission. Stand up right now.

You little creepy cowards. That was my add-lib. People ought to feel ashamed of themselves, but many are too far gone for even this. You know any one who is too far gone for shame? Yes, they're too far gone for even that.

Those sick friends who back you up in this life, do you really think they will always do so? Those sick friends who back you up in this life, do you really think they will always do so?

This next question is more for a certain situation and you may see me

say it sometimes in this room. Not tonight, but I'll read it to you anyway.

May I ask you a question please? If you know the meaning of the word blasphemy would you please define it for me.

The term justice has no meaning unless connected with spiritual principles. Such as love for Truth and a wish to understand. The term justice has no meaning unless connected with spiritual principles. Such as love for Truth and a wish to understand. There is no justice in society.

If I yearn to be accepted by a sick society what does that tell me about myself? If I yearn to be accepted by a sick society what does that tell me about myself?

Ideas cannot explain realities. Ideas cannot explain realities.

To be truly spiritually healthy is to be unique. To be spiritually sick while pretending to be healthy makes a man a part of the common herd. Nothing is more common than to be sick.

How is this for just a short sentence? How is this for a password for about a week.

Nothing matters except to stay awake! Nothing matters except to stay awake!

Agree?

Everything that happens in this world is perfect evidence of the truth of everything you hear in this class. Everything that happens in this world is perfect evidence of the truth of everything you hear in this class.

The aim of wrong people is to try to make you feel wrong, and I forbid you to fall for it. The aim of wrong people is to try to make you feel wrong, and I forbid you to fall for it.

You have a flip-flop life simply because you have a flip-flop mind. Try to get out of that one. You have a flip-flop mind simply because you have a flip-flop mind.

A happiness which is lost was not happiness at all. Now I want you to listen to this. A happiness which is lost was not happiness at all but a dull smugness that thrived on a temporary absence of challenges to its smugness. A happiness which is lost was not happiness at all but a dull smugness that thrived on a temporary absence of challenges to its smugness.

That's plain isn't it? No problem.

A primary cause of guilt is our failure to live up to our illusions about ourselves. How ridiculous. A primary cause of guilt is our failure to live up to our delusions about ourselves. How ridiculous.

The only standard and the cowardly standard lived by most people is this. Quote: what acts of mine will please the maximum number of people and offend the minimum number? The only standard and the cowardly standard lived by most people is this. What acts of mine will please the maximum

number of people and offend the minimum number.

Politicians being the perfect example.

Always extend this adventurous invitation, "Come on devil, I'm waiting for you." Do this and the devil won't appear. He will be too busy worrying that you have seen through him. Always extend the adventurous invitation, "Come on devil, I'm waiting for you." Do this and the devil won't appear. He will be too busy worrying that you have seen through him.

A lost person is lost because he permits other people to tell him what is important and necessary in life. A lost person is lost because he permits other people to tell him what is important and necessary in life.

Who are you listening to? Okay. And the last one.

A self reminder! Everything I need to know about inner healing can be known. Therefore, there is no need to be anxious over a lack of answers to my questions. In fact, anxiety toward my unanswered questions prevents me from finding real answers. This is because I already have filled the inner space with a false answer. The false answer being anxiety itself.

A self reminder. Everything I need to know about inner healing can be known. Therefore, there is no need to be anxious over a lack of answers to my questions. In fact, anxiety toward my unanswered questions prevents me from finding the real answers. This is because I already have filled the inner space with a false answer. The false answer being anxiety itself.

Did it ever occur to you that anxiety is your answer, my false answer. Why don't you just give it up then? It's not that easy – is it? – when that's all you've got?

(Side 2 of tape. Note: At this point, the transcript has been edited. Not all questions and comments have been transcribed. Students are not identified by name and some questions have been paraphrased.)

Questions and comments?

Student: What is the difference between clear seeing and criticism?

Vernon: Yes, clear seeing, obviously, has no "I" in it, so it's not criticism. And if you are in that state, you will know it but no one else will. If they're in that state they'll know what you're doing if you – like Christ chased the money changers out of the temple.

Student: When I start criticizing it never stops with the initial criticism. It snowballs and then it goes until everything around me is criticized.

Vernon: Yes. You know what it's like? Being lassoed by a cowboy and being forced to – he drags you along behind the horse, forces you to go along with him. You don't want to go but you can't help it! You're dragged by that rope.

Student: You've often said that we have to turn the arrow back in on ourselves. I notice when I am criticizing I am out there at somebody else

there is absolutely no possibility to have anything left over to watch me with.

Vernon: Right. Good escape!

Student: If I didn't have self-criticism I would imagine I wouldn't have criticism of others.

Vernon: Oh, yes. Are you aware of self-hate in yourselves? How you despise yourselves at times? You understand, don't you, you're just despising ideas about yourselves. Do you understand that? That that's a delusion to despise yourself and a very very handy one to keep you intact. I've told you, it must be about the thirtieth time now, you can no more be a great sinner than you can be a great saint if you are going to break out. You must cease being such a horrible sinner, such a terrible person.

Student: Could it be constructive – is there a place for constructive criticism.

Vernon: What is your definition of constructive criticism?

Student: When you may have to show or teach someone something that they do not know.

Vernon: Of course. Of course there is. All we're saying is this and it is very easy to decide if it is constructive or destructive. You have to teach children. We are very critical here in this class, but we are doing it for a positive purpose. What false reward am I getting out of correcting you? That's the standard. What false reward am I getting out of correcting you? Do I get a pleasure out of it? Or am I doing it simply because I have a certain right responsibility to do it? A parent most certainly has a right natural responsibility toward disciplining their children. The boss most certainly has a right to tell his employee, "Please do it the right way not the wrong way." Spiritually, the same thing.

Student: What about if you have to work with adults and you have to criticize them.

Vernon: Yes, if you have to correct them about something in social life most certainly. If that's your duty to do that, most certainly.

Student: This exercise connects also with what you said earlier about loving people enough to leave them alone.

Vernon: Yes. Quit nagging them, sniping at them. Quit getting pleasure at just making bad remarks.

Student: It's also – it seems almost the nature of the false self as I observe it sitting here now to criticize everything around it.

Vernon: Yeah. It feeds on the fire of criticism, doesn't it? You can see something is wrong without criticizing it. You can see something – can't we begin to see that there is something wrong with the whole world without criticizing it. For criticizing it we are saying that we are not a part of that sickness and we still are. When we get above the world then we can see the sickness without being a part of it. Then we're not criticizing it as an "I" that

is superior. There is no superiority or inferiority in right seeing. There is only seeing. There is no "me" seeing.

Student: If you understand it, you wouldn't criticize it.

Vernon: Correct. You would see it. You would criticize it consciously if someone asked you to spiritually. You are asking here.

Student: It seems that behind a lot of my criticism is the assumption that I can change or I can change myself a little bit, someone else can change themselves or the world can change itself. It can't. I can't change myself but I keep trying to change myself by criticizing myself.

Vernon: Well look, every time we criticize ourselves we harden the illusion there is a terrible person there. There is no terrible person. There is no terrible Paul there, no terrible Irene, terrible Al there, no terrible person there. That is just as sick as saying there is a marvelous person there, a generous person, a kindly person. Do you understand that or not? How many do understand that? How many don't understand that?

Student: I often tell myself I'm lazy and it makes me get up and get moving. Is that right or wrong?

Vernon: You tell yourself that you are lazy? Why do you say that to yourself? Do you mean you talk to yourself all the time? Don't talk to yourself. Seeing laziness is a different thing then engaging in self-condemnation.

Student: Criticism would activate agitation, right?

Vernon: Yes, criticism is agitation. You can't be calmly critical. You can put a calm look on if that's your role. But inside you're agitating because you want that other person to – what's the phrase? – shape up, conform to what you want.

Student: There is a lot of fear connected with criticizing in making sure that the criticism is received properly and not backfired upon you.

Vernon: I don't know though – to add to that a little bit. If I criticize someone maybe I'm half hopeful that I'm going to start a fight! Because I haven't had a fight for the last hour. I'm beginning to feel a little lonely. (Laughter) Very easy to start a fight, isn't it?

Student: Last week I had a day where I was the star of my own melodrama in self-criticism and then I saw that it stopped – not of my will – but that it just plain got tired and switched to another "I" which I'm very relieved to find.

Vernon: That's good that you didn't give yourself credit, did you? False credit for it.

Student: You brought this up to me once that my state, my sickness will demand everyone else to act in a certain way. In other words, their supposed to like me or something. And then I'll criticize it when they don't do it, when they don't act the way I want them to I'll let them know.

Vernon: Oh yes. All day long we criticize the world for not confirming our

beautiful self-pictures of ourselves. We're so afraid that the lack of confirmation is going to force us to look down into that cellar where all those dragons are hiding out and see that that's the actual condition. What we don't see – we are not at the stage where we can realize yet if we don't identify with those dragons down in the cellar we'll be all right. But it's because we say, "Boy, I'm sure glad you don't know how much hatred I have in me." You have identified with that hatred.

Do you know how utterly cunning, how clever, how dark that trick is? If we begin to get on the track of this trick alone this weekend there'll be great gain. The fact that we hide from the dragons in the cellar because we are afraid that they are real and a real part of us. And we want them to be a real part of us. We won't give up the illusion that they are nothing at all except as they exist in our "I" imagination – our self false building imagination.

But look, if I do this, if I see that the dragons are not really me, if I see that, that means I have to go! I have to disappear as the dragon. And now comes the great terror of what will I be if the dragons go? Which I'm hiding them but even if I go so far as to see that they are there I call them me. I don't want to see that I'm not these dreadful dragons because I don't know what's on the other side and so I go into fear and even to go this far is great advancement. But you get to the point where you ask, "But what will I be if I'm not the dragons?"

If you go that far you then – you have to be told, "Drop the question!" The question is still on the level of the intellect, the level of opposites. "Who will I be?" See, the intellect is tricking you again. There is no end to the tricks. "Who will I be?" It's a wrong question! Drop it! You want the guarantee that you as either a saint or sinner will continue, and it's all a wrong concept. If you don't ask the question, "What will I be?" then there is no question of you either being a saint or a sinner on the other side. And if you don't think about whether you're going to be either a saint or sinner then the question has no value at all. It's the asking of the question that creates the problem! If the mind stops asking, "Who will I be?" there can't be any anxiety over who you will be because you'll understand by dropping intellect, you as you have always been will not be there and that's liberty.

Alright better write this down. We fight in vain! You know what we are fighting for, don't you? To keep ether opposite going. I'm horrible, I'm marvelous. We fight in vain to keep either of them going. You'll never win. I'll never win. What I can do is win in a new way by seeing through my compulsion to keep my illusion going that I'm good or bad. I get rid of that, there is no one to wonder if he is good or bad. And that's what is known as being out of the trap of yourself.

Student: Necessary correction is seeing. Conditioning thought says something which causes fear and hesitation to do what you know what you should do and you have to go against the fear and do it.

Vernon: Alright fine. Go against the fear, yes. And that's a general statement – don't get specific now – general statement. Work, fight the

devil most certainly. You fight the devil to the point where you see there is nothing to fight and no one to fight and the fight is over. But you have to fight until you get tired of fighting. That's the same thing as giving up.

You are all asleep. You don't know you are though. You really don't. You think – you think when I say you are asleep that you understand what I am talking about. You don't understand. You understand the English language. You understand the word "sleep". But you don't know your state. If you knew your state something different would have happened to you in these classes and out there, which is known as self-transformation. You don't know what you're like inside.

Student: It seems like my present nature confuses critical observations with knowledge. It thinks that it knows because it is critical of everybody and everything it sees. That's why I walk around in this daze thinking I know something when I really don't at all.

Vernon: Yes. You can know something on the practical level – how to build a house. That can either have vanity in it or not have vanity in it. But real spiritual knowledge has no vanity in it, real spiritual knowledge. Spiritual facts can have vanity in it. I am talking about the higher insight, of course, which is above spiritual knowledge.

Student: I think if we watch our criticism we will be horrified at how we drag ourselves down and everyone else we come in contact with.

Vernon: Oh yes. That's your duty in life, to drag everyone down to your level. You have no choice. Your level is the drag. The expression in your face, the things you say, your self-centered talk.

Why don't you try sometime getting rightly emotional for yourself. And that will happen when you suddenly see something. That will be right feeling.

Student: It is hard to see the contradiction if I am always right, how come the other person always feel right.

Vernon: Something wrong somewhere, isn't there? (Laughter) Watch the sudden blank look on a person's face if you were to say – bring that out to him. See, I say I'm always right and you say you're always right. It's impossible. What's the answer to that? The blank look won't last very long because he'll think of a very fast lie. (Laughter)

Don't be afraid to hurt your own feelings. Don't be afraid to hurt your own feelings, that's the way you'll see them. Disappoint those feelings, don't feed them. Don't be afraid.

Student: No one out there knows what they are doing.

Vernon: You know why the world is confusing to you G.? Because G. is confusing to G. And I guarantee you and the rest of you too, that when you go out into that world you've got your hands in front of you, your eyes wide open that you look awake, but you're walking in a daze through that world. And all your petty little desires are leading the way.

You see that in the shop window and you want that. Why don't you watch yourself looking at that object in the shop window for a change instead of

just looking at it and going through all these little greedy reactions. "Well, can I afford it? Can't I afford it? What will my husband say. I used to have one like that and it broke so I guess I won't."

Why don't you just watch yourself watching that object in the window instead of being one with the object in the window. If you do this, the world will become perfectly clear to you. You'll know why everything happens as it does. Because you have understood why you happened as you used to do. You'll know everything about war. You'll know everything about the boss. You'll know everything about men, about women. You'll understand and be in charge. You'll be in charge because you're in charge of yourself. Not because you blast them or anything, but because you're in charge of yourself and that is all you care.

To be in charge of the universe, the whole universe is possible. Where is the universe? Right here! What do you care about the fakes and the artificials out there. What have you to do with that? What has light to do with darkness? That's not the universe. That's the studio village where everything looks so real in front when you walk down the street.

You go inside and try to turn on the water – no water. Nobody in there, no furniture. It's all a front. What's that got to do with you? Your universe is the one right in here. You're living in one with it. That's the world. This world of Truth understands the world of falseness out there. And understanding it means you have nothing to do with it, because it has nothing to give you.

Get disappointed at walking in the false fronts of the movie studio and expecting to get a drink of water or to sit down in a chair and rest. There are no chairs in there, there is no rest in there. That's all a false front to deceive you into thinking that it is a valuable place to live in. You try it on a practical way and see how it disappoints you. But everybody is disappointed, but they won't give up. They want that disappointment because of the false feeling of life it gives them more than to investigate and find out why they suffer so much.

We are here willing, we hope, to be able to investigate and see why we suffer so much. The understanding of that will put an end to the delusion that we have to suffer at all. Suffering has no value whatever. And I know that all of you to your own degree cherish your pain. I talk with you on the phone and I hear a voice that is dramatic, it's marvelously enjoying its agony. I don't believe in it, thank heaven for you I don't believe in it. It's a shame you believe in it. Wake up.

Student: To understand everything outside of us we have to go deep within ourselves.

Vernon: Correct. Because the false movie set out there, is in here. My illusions that I have to please you, that I have to get your approval. I have to get your approval? How insane, that I'm going to sell my soul for your approval, for your acceptance! I must be mad! I must be mad to associate with a madman like you! We are both mad.

We'll fight together. I'll fight – I'll fight with you and for you. Will you fight, will you fight for yourself, for the class, with me? I'll blast you, don't you pull that on me. If you understand that, you are fighting with me.

Aren't you glad that this class won't take your nonsense like every one else does? Aren't you getting tired of being accepted by those people out there who are just trying to exploit you? You know that. You sense it, don't you? Of course you do. I'll make it worse for you so it can get better. I'll disappoint you at every turn and then we'll see if you stick. My task is to increasingly disappoint you. And if you fall away, then you didn't mean it in the first place. If you can go through that disappointment and the next one and the next one, each one a little more forceful and therefore a little more beneficial for you. If you can go through each of these disappointments and shocks you'll have something. He that endureth unto the end shall be saved.

Student: We have the blessing of not getting Vernon's approval. (Laughter)

Vernon: The approval of God is the Truth itself. Let's get that approval!

Good Night!