PathworkTM Steps

Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts

Excerpts from Pathwork Lecture 73 Full text of this lecture available at <u>www.pathwork.org</u>

You will remember that I frequently mentioned how the child desires to be loved exclusively and without limit. In other words, the child's desire to be loved is unrealistic. Yet, it is also true that the child would be very satisfied with real mature love. In fact, if it were given, the unrealistic demand for exclusive love would be diminished considerably.

Since the child so seldom receives sufficient mature love and warmth, he continues to hunger for it throughout life unless this lack and hurt is recognized and properly dealt with. If not, the person will go through life unconsciously crying out for that which he missed in childhood. This will cause an inability to love maturely.

The remedy cannot be sought by wishing it were different and that people would learn to practice mature love. The remedy lies solely in <u>you</u>. True, if you had received this love from your parents, you would be without this unconscious problem -- a problem of which you are not really and fully aware. But this lack need not trouble you nor your life if you see it, become aware of it, and rearrange your former unconscious wishes, regrets, thoughts, and concepts in that regard.

Very few people realize and personally <u>experience</u> (theoretical knowledge notwithstanding) the strong link between the child's longing and unfulfillment and their present difficulties and problems. It is very important to become aware of this link....There may be isolated, exceptional cases where one parent has a sufficient degree of mature love. Even if one parent has it to some degree, very likely the other does not. And since mature love on this earth is only a question of degree, the child will suffer from those manifestations wherein the loving parent is bound to fall short.

More often, however, both parents are emotionally immature and cannot give the love the child craves for -- or only in insufficient measure. During childhood, this need is rarely conscious. The child has no way of putting his need into thoughts. He cannot compare. He does not know that something else might exist. ... Thus the child grows up never quite realizing or understanding why he is unhappy nor even that he is unhappy. Many of you look back on childhood convinced that you had all the love you wanted just because you actually did have <u>some</u> love, but rarely all that you wanted.

There are a number of parents who give great demonstrations of love. They may spoil or pamper their children. This very act of spoiling and pampering may be an overcompensation and sort of an "apology" for a deeply suspected inability to love maturely. The child feels the truth very acutely. He may not think it, he may not consciously observe it, but inwardly the child keenly feels the difference between mature, genuine love and the immature overdemonstration offered instead of it.

In the case of the strict parent, the resentment and rebellion will be open and therefore more easily traced. In the other case, the rebellion is just as strong but hidden and therefore infinitely harder to trace. If you have a parent who smothered you with affection, or pseudoaffection, yet lacked in genuine warmth; or if you have a parent who conscientiously did everything right by you, but also was lacking in real warmth, unconsciously you knew it when you were a child and you resented it. Consciously, you may not be aware of it at all because when you were a child, you really could not put your finger on the lack. You were outwardly given everything you wanted and needed. How could you differentiate in your intellect the subtle, fine borderline distinction between real affection and pseudoaffection? The fact that something bothered you without your being able to explain it reasonably made you feel guilty and uncomfortable. You therefore pushed it out of sight as much as ever possible.

As long as this hurt, disappointment, and unfulfilled need from your early years is unconscious, you cannot come to terms with it. No matter how much you may love your parent, unconscious resentment exists, and you therefore cannot forgive for the hurt. You can only forgive and let go if you recognize this deeply hidden hurt and resentment.

As long as you are unaware of this conflict, of your longing for perfect love from your parents, <u>you are bound to try</u> <u>remedying the situation in your later years</u>. ... The most frequent way of attempting to remedy the situation is in your choice of love partners. Unconsciously, you will know how to choose in the partner aspects of the parent who has particularly fallen short in affection and love that is real and genuine. But you also seek in your partner aspects of the other parent who has come closer to gratify your demands. Important as it is to find both parents represented in your partners, it is even more important and more difficult to find those aspects which represent the parent who has particularly disappointed and hurt you, the one more resented or despised, and for whom you had little or no love. So you seek the parents again -- in a subtle way that is not always easy to detect by outer similarities -- in your marital partners, in your friendships, or in other human relationships. In your subconscious, the following reactions take place. Since the child in you cannot let go of the past, cannot come to terms with it, cannot forgive, cannot understand and accept, this very child in you always creates a somewhat similar condition, thereby trying to win out in the end, trying to finally master the situation instead of succumbing, as it seems to the child in you. Losing out means being crushed, and this must be avoided at all costs. The costs are high indeed, for the entire process is unfeasible. It cannot ever come to realization what the child in you sets out to accomplish.

This entire procedure is utterly destructive. In the first place, it is an illusion that you were defeated. Therefore it is an illusion that you can be victorious. Moreover, it is an illusion that, sad as the lack of love may have been when you were a child, it represents the tragedy that your subconscious still feels it to be. The only tragedy lies in the fact that you obstruct your future happiness by continuing to reproduce and then to attempt to master the situation. It goes without saying, my friends, that this process is very unconscious. Of course, nothing is further from your mind in your conscious aims and wishes. It will take a great deal of digging to uncover the emotions that lead you, again and again, into situations in which you wish to remedy childhood woes.

In trying to reproduce the childhood situation, you unconsciously choose a partner with aspects similar to those of the parent. And these very aspects will make it as impossible to receive the mature love you rightfully long for now, as it was then. Blindly you believe that by willing it more strongly and more forcefully, the parent-partner will <u>now</u> yield, whereas, in reality, love cannot come that way. Free of this ever continuing repetition, you will no longer cry to be loved by the parent. Instead, you will look for a partner (or for other human relationships) with the aim of finding the maturity you really need and want.

If you already have a partner, the uncovering of this conflict may show you his similarities and immaturities. But since you know that there is hardly a really mature person, these existing immaturities will no longer be the tragedy they were while you constantly sought to find your parent or parents again, which of course could never come to pass.

You have no idea how preoccupied your subconscious is with the process of reenacting the play, so to speak, only hoping that "now it will be different." And it never is! As time goes on, each disappointment weighs heavier, and your soul becomes more discouraged.... If you learn to look at your problems and unfulfillment from this point of view and, by the usual process, allow your emotions to come to the fore, you will gain much further insight.

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Pathwork[™] Steps

Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts

The Guide's suggestions for working with Pathwork Lecture 73

1. 'Take a current problem. Strip it of all superimposed layers of your reactions. The first and most handy layer is that of rationalization, that of "proving" that others or situations are at fault and not your innermost conflicts which make you adopt the wrong attitude to the actual problem that confronts you. The next layer might be anger, resentment, anxiety, frustration. Behind all these reactions, you will find the hurt of not being loved. ... When you experience the hurt of not being loved in your current problem, it will serve to reawaken the childhood hurt.'

2. 'With the present hurt, think back, try to re-evaluate the situation as to your parents -- what they gave you, how you <u>really</u> felt about them. You will become aware that in many ways you lacked something you never clearly saw before -- you did not want to see it. You will find that this must have hurt you when you were a child, but you may consciously have forgotten this hurt. Yet, it is not forgotten at all. <u>The hurt of your current problem is the very same hurt</u>.'

3. 'Now re-evaluate your present hurt, comparing it with the childhood hurt. Finally, you will clearly see how it is one and the same. No matter how true and understandable your present pain is, it is nevertheless the same childhood pain. A little later, you will see how you contributed in bringing about the present pain because of your desire to correct the childhood hurt. But at first, you only have to <u>feel</u> the similarity of the pain.'

4. Once you can synchronise these two pains and realize that they are one and the same, the next step will be much easier. Then, by overlooking the repetitious pattern in your various problems, you will learn to recognize where the similarities exist in your parents and in the people who have caused you hurt or are causing you pain now. When you experience these similarities <u>emotionally</u>, it will carry you further on the particular road of dissolving this basic problem. Mere intellectual evaluation will not yield any benefit. When you <u>feel</u> the similarities while at the same time experiencing the pain of now and the pain of then, you will slowly come to understand how you thought you had to choose the current situation because deep inside you could not possibly admit "defeat." '

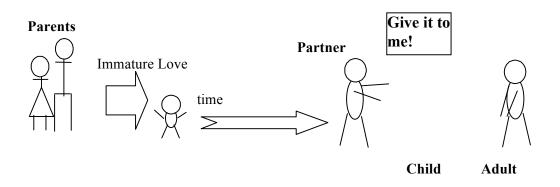
5. 'Only after experiencing all these emotions and synchronizing the "now" and the "then" will you become aware of how you tried to correct the situation. You will see further the folly of this unconscious desire, the frustrating uselessness of it. You will survey all your actions and reactions with this new understanding and insight -- whereupon, you will release your parents, you will leave your childhood truly behind and start a new inner behaviour pattern that will be infinitely more constructive and rewarding for yourself and for others. You will no longer seek to master the situation that you could not master as a child. You will go on from where you are, forgetting and forgiving, truly inside of you, without thinking that you have done so. You will no longer need to be loved when you were a child. First, you become aware that this is what you still wish, and then you no longer seek this type of love. Since you are no longer a child, you will seek love in a different way, by giving it, instead of by expecting it.

6. 'To be fruitful and bring real results, it must go beyond mere intellectual knowledge. You have to allow yourself to feel the pain of certain unfulfilments now and also the pain of the unfulfilment of your childhood. Then compare the two until, like two separate picture slides, they gradually move into focus and become one. Once this happens, the insight that you gain, the experience that you feel exactly as I say here, will enable you to take the further steps indicated.'

Worksheet Jan Rigsby ©2002 Guide Lecture quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999 Full text of this lecture available at www.pathwork.org

Overcoming the Compulsion to Recreate Childhood Hurts

Summary of Pathwork Lecture #3



If there is something we didn't get from our parents and the lack of it caused us pain, we will try to get it from our partner.

We felt the lack acutely but it conflicted with our need for our parents to be perfect, so we buried it deep in our unconscious. A part of us is afraid of feeling those feelings, so we seek to find a way to "win" so we never have to. This is the part that recreates the old situation over and over again. If we can "win," then we believe we will be safe and never have to feel those feelings.

The Guide says we must find that original pain and feel it now so that it no longer haunts us like some vague threat hanging over our relationships. How do we do this?

- 1. Take a current problem
- 2. Strip away your reactions
- 3. Let go of blaming the other, of proving yourself right
- 4. Release any anger, anxiety, frustration
- 5. Feel the hurt of not being loved in the current situation
- 6. Connect this current feeling with how you felt as a child
- 7. See how these feelings are similar or the same
- 8. Feel the pain as thoroughly as you can

Once you can connect the current pain with the one from the past, you will begin to see how this pain has occurred many times in different settings: with friends, partners, bosses, children. The circumstances may seem very different, but if the pain feels similar, they are related. This has to be a <u>feeling</u> exercise, not an intellectual one.

How do we recreate the childhood situation?

- We act in ways that will cause our partner to react in the required/expected manner.
- Energetically, we demand they act in those ways.
- We interpret things to fit the childhood picture.
- We tend to focus on the similarities and not notice the differences.

Created by: Dottie Titus, Pathwork[®] Helper, The Pathwork[®] of Minnesota

The Pathwork of California

Lecture 73 - "Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts"

Worksheet

Homework Assignment: Pick a current or past love partner.
Which aspects of this person are like your mother? father?
How is this person like the unloving parent? loving parent?
How do (did) you recreate and attempt to overcome an old childhood hurt in this relationship?

Use the following process to do the above assignment:

- a) Observe and set aside your super-imposed reactions in the relationship (rationalization, blame, anger, resentment, anxiety, frustration).
- b) Behind these reactions, find the real hurt.
- c) Re-evaluate the present hurt, comparing it to the childhood hurt see that they are the same synchronize the pain.
- d) See how you brought about the present pain in order to "correct" the childhood hurt and not admit "defeat."

Work with the following questions:

- 1. In what way(s) did your parents' inability to love maturely cause you to feel *hurt* or *unfulfilled*?
- 2. How have you exaggerated and/or *minimized* your childhood hurts?
- 3. What are you still determined to get from your parents (or others)? How do you refuse to accept their imperfections now?
- 4. With a current problem, how do you rationalize to *prove* that others are at *fault* rather than face your own inner conflict and attitude?
- 5. In what ways do you provoke other people to *behave as your parents did* in your childhood?
- 6. Notice the emphasis you give to how you are BEING loved rather than on *how you* are GIVING love. This a tip-off that <u>you are still trying to repair the original hurt</u> instead of surrendering to the pain and accepting it

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Pathwork Steps

The Role of Parents in Pathwork by Jan Rigsby

When I first started doing Pathwork-based sessions and process work, I quickly became irritated by the constant focus upon my parents. It didn't help that my father had been a military office, subject to easy clichéd interpretations, and that my mother and I didn't get along – an immediate 'gotcha' to explain my repressed anger (which I was not aware of).

Over the years, I became more aware of the depth of human experience. I realized that being human was not an adjunct to spirituality. The earth plane is not a penalty box or a 'time out' corner; it is the Olympics of process work.

We aren't 'imprinted' by our parents because of simple proximity. That belongs to the 'I didn't ask to be born' version of creation. The power our parents have over us is the result of our having chosen them as perfect accelerators for the task we have chosen to accomplish in this lifetime. We searched high and low for the developmental influences which would load us up with 'stuff' so that we felt compelled to act out and explore. We outfitted ourselves for our task with personality, talents, intelligence and an appropriate dose of self-will. We also 'wore' the DNA which would cause body development, facial appearance, and a constitution favorable to illness or health.

What would your like have been like if you had been radiantly attractive? A musical prodigy? The best sports player of the century? Many of us fantasize about fame and glory. The key element in fantasy is that we can control it – we can imagine only the positives, without any intrusion of reality. What deep experiences have you had that you would have missed out on if you'd been born with different gifts?

Perhaps the most critical pre-birth decisions were about what to leave behind. Would athletic ability lead us away from our task? Would the pain of being unattractive actually help us to focus? By removing options – not being able to function as a brain surgeon, ballerina, world leader, orator – we sharpened our chances to focus on our task like a laser beam. Short height might make you easy to overlook, but what did you learn that you would not have if you'd grown up looking down on others? Wearing glasses or being overweight may have caused children to tease you, but in your hurt and loneliness, was there an opportunity to develop empathy? Is it possible that your real self knew how hard empathy would be for you to develop, and felt that the only way you could understand the pain such cruelty caused was experientially. Knowing our adult ego could deflect childish talk and immature judgements, it would be imperative the experience occur when we are young and vulnerable.

Whoa – wasn't this supposed to be about parents? Yes. An integral part of being born is that we develop based upon the DNA we get from... our parents. Our parents contribution to our spiritual journey is carried in every cell of our body for every moment of our lives. We cannot separate ourselves from it. Our choice of parents includes all that they are, on a cellular level. Our bodies are programs which enact physical, psychological, and intellectual elements of our

plan. Do you look just like one of your parents? How has that affecting your attitudes towards yourself? Do you like seeing your parent in the mirror? Is it harder to be different from them, or does it compel you to rebel and seek your uniqueness? Picking up some recessive genes and creating something novel from them can lead to lifelong feelings of being 'different'. Remember – we set this plan in motion when we were smarter and had more resources than our human form may have. We designed a plan that our distortions could not outwit.

Distortions? Where does that come in?

Actually, that's the whole point of the earth plane: to allow our distortions fertile ground to grow – er, manifest in. References to the Real Self are meant to distinguish between larger divine spirit we are in God from the portion of spirit that we condense into a soul which can then incarnates as a person. The larger purpose of our plan is to allow us to bring our distortions into a 'reality' that we cannot escape. Big or small, fast or slow, distortion (false beliefs) will inevitably create pain and suffering, as they are by definition not in alignment with Spiritual Law.

On the journey to finding the divine truth in our own distortions, we attract negativity. Negative influences, negative specialists, collusion by others who also want to believe in distortions – we magnetize them to us in order to augment the distortion. Experientially, we need to know on every level of our being that Spiritual Law is divine and unbreakable. We learn this by trying to bend, twist, outfox, outrun and hide from what is essentially true. Some of us work hard at this, running fast, trying hard. Others find themselves in lives of meditative-like circumstances. Our tasks are different, our gifts unique, our paths infinitely varied. Yet for all of us, our greatest enemy is ourselves, the part of us that holds distortion as truth even as the greater part of us sets a table for eventual transformation.

Back to parents.

There is the emotional imprinting that we receive during the formative years of our childhood. It is generally accepted that around 7 years of age, we begin to shift into developing ourselves as individuals. In the 'individuation' stage of child development, we are learning that we are not our parents; later, we are learning who we are as individuals in a larger context than family – school, playground, society. Few of us are conscious at 7 of how we have dealt with the inevitable contradictions and incongruities humans are prone to. Yet personality is well-established by 7, even if it's focus is not to be seen or noticed.

These are some of the underlying spiritual concepts which PL 73, The Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts, works with.

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Pathwork Steps

A Spiritual Perspective on Parents And Their Ongoing Influences Upon Our Lives by Jan Rigsby

A essay on context to supplement the Teleconference Tutorial on The Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts. PL 73

When I first started doing Pathwork-based sessions and process work, I quickly became irritated by the constant focus upon my parents. It didn't help that my father had been a military office, subject to easy clichéd interpretations, and that my mother and I didn't get along – an immediate 'gotcha' to explain my repressed anger (which I was not conscious of).

Over the years, I became more aware of the depth of human experience. I realized that being human was not an adjunct to spirituality. The earth plane is not a penalty box or a 'time out' corner; it is the Olympics of process work.

Lecture 73 offered me a fundamentally different perspective of human life. I began to understand how my parents represented a soul split in me. I saw how I alternated between the two aspects, and how my parents manifested elements of each. I would ask myself the question – who am I aligning with here, mom or pop? And I began to differentiate between strong feelings (which might be real and appropriate for the situation) and childhood reactions (based upon my relationships with my parents).

My intention in this essay is to illustrate how spiritual tasks and the human condition become inextricably entwined through the choice of parents.

That's a big step for some people – the idea that we choose our parents, instead of having been brought in by them. This process is briefly outlined in Preparation for Reincarnation, PL 34. If you don't accept the premise, see if you can just play along for a while and consider what the consequences would be if it were true.

One way of thinking about this is to imagine life as a game cards ¹. Depending upon the rules of the game, you are limited by the cards you are dealt and the ones you may draw or receive from other players. Some aspects of the game are assured by the original cards, others by your skills and the skills of the other players. Another analogies can be drawn from how the first move strongly influences how the game unfolds, such as chess, pool or even tic-tac-toe. Malcolm Gladstone ² suggests that those who first accumulate 10,000 hours of practice may then outperform their peers, gaining experience at a faster and faster rate which might easily compensate for having less talent. Economic or social status and overwhelming social influences (such as war or cultural renaissance) result from the parents we choose. Birth order among siblings (and our horoscopes) follow their agreement to 'host' us. By choosing these two specific

individuals, all the circumstances of their lives become part of ours. It's a package deal. In addition, we accept their ability to exercise free will around their own spiritual task. To some extent, we may anticipate that a parent might not be able to stay committed to the family or to us, that they are vulnerable to addictions or illnesses, or are governed by strong personality distortions which are bound to result in pain and suffering. We are not responsible for their actions. Yet in proposing that soul contracts be agreed to, we have already made a decision that the affects of these circumstances would be in our highest good. This positive intent comes from our divine self and is supported by spiritual masters and teachers who will be present with us throughout our incarnation. Filled with courage, wisdom and love we are incarnate into the earth plane. Yet one of the key elements of this process is that we must forget the plan, who we really are, and what we are here to do. We are born. Programmed by our senses, experiences, and minds, we succumb to believing that WYSIATI – what you see is all there is. One of our tasks may be to remember, but life will flow forward based upon foundations dictated by our birth choices with or without consciousness about its purpose. The plan was designed to succeed regardless.

If we deliberately chose our parents, then we aren't 'imprinted' by our families because of simple proximity. That belongs to the 'I didn't ask to be born' version of creation. The power our parents have over us is the result of our having chosen them as perfect accelerators for the task(s) we need to accomplish in this lifetime. We searched high and low for the developmental influences which would load us up with 'stuff' so that we felt compelled to act out and explore life loaded with specific attitudes, tools and emotional wounds.

We outfitted ourselves for our task with personality, talents, intelligence and appropriate dosages of self-will. We also carry DNA which would narrows the possibilities for body characteristics, facial appearance, and constitution (favorable to illness or health).

What would your life have been like if you had been radiantly attractive? A musical prodigy? The best sports player of the century? Many of us fantasize about fame and glory. The key element in fantasy is that we can control it – we can imagine only the positives, without any intrusion of reality. Yet this overlooks positive life lessons which might have resulted from poverty consciousness, unpopularity, or deprivation. What deep experiences have you had that you would have missed out on if you'd been born with different gifts?

Perhaps the most critical pre-birth decisions were about what to leave behind. Would athletic ability lead us away from our task? Would the pain of being unattractive actually help us to focus? By removing options – not being able to function as a brain surgeon, ballerina, world leader, orator – we may have sharpened our chances to focus on our task like a laser beam. Short height might make you easy to overlook, but what did you learn that you would not have if you'd grown up looking down on others? Wearing glasses or being overweight may have caused children to tease you, but in your hurt and loneliness, was there an opportunity to develop empathy? Is it possible that your real self knew that there was a callous area in your soul that needed to learn empathy? Perhaps by incubating your callousness so that it grew into active cruelty, you would finally understand why little negativities cannot be ignored or discounted.

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separate ourselves from it. Our choice of parents includes all that they are, on a cellular level. Our bodies are programs which enact physical, psychological, and intellectual elements of our plan. Do you look just like one of your parents? How has that affecting your attitudes towards yourself? Do you like seeing your parent in the mirror? Is it harder to be different from them, or does it compel you to rebel and seek your uniqueness? Picking up some recessive genes and creating something novel from them can lead to lifelong feelings of being 'different'. Remember – we set this plan in motion when we were smarter and had more resources than our human form may have. We designed a plan that our distortions could not outwit.

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And how might it start? Barbara Brennan writes:

"If, for example, a baby's cries for attention are not immediately met, it may suffer a terrible sense of abandonment. That terror may be wired into tis yound mind and body – and become part of its consciousness that never grows up. This undeveloped consciousness is what people often mean when the talk about their inner child. But it is not really an inner child; it is the remnants of consciousness of the child you were that have not grown up. It is your child consciousness that still believes and acts like a child. So, unless the belief is addressed, the individual is likely to have issues around abandonment for the rest of its life."

"The other major fears are of annihilation, fear of invasion and being lost within another, fear of betrayal and fear of inauthenticity. All of these have their origins in the arroneous belief that we must maintain separateness to maintain our individuality. And, of course, we are not restricted to one particular fear. Depending on our wounding, we may even have elements of them all within our psyche." ³

These are some of the underlying spiritual concepts which PL 73, The Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts, works with.

1. <u>Where to Go from Here</u>, Discovering your own life's wisdom in the second half of your life by James E. Birren and Linda Feldman. Chapter: If life was a card game...

2. Outliers (2008) and The Tipping Point (1996) by Malcolm Gladstone

3. "Healing the Splits that Hold Us Back" by Barbara Brennan, printed in the Indigo Sun March 2008.

4.

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