

*Pathwork*TM *Steps*

DUALITY THROUGH ILLUSION; TRANSFERENCE

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture 118

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

In philosophical thinking, mankind itself is paired -- man and woman, night and day, life and death. These are but a few examples of life representing a two-way split. This two-way split applies to mankind, but not to the animal, plant, or mineral kingdoms, which are still in a lower state and find themselves in a more than twofold split.

Meditation in an abstract way about this fact cannot really bring forth a profound understanding. But the work on this path, when little by little you discover your personal and heretofore unconscious misconceptions, must make it abundantly clear how your various misconceptions on any given subject create the conflict of having to choose between two alternatives. Of course, both alternatives are dissatisfactory and create a state of hopelessness just because they arrive at an unrealistic conclusion.

When you are in confusion, you are negatively involved with life, with others. The primary negative involvement occurs with yourself, in your misunderstanding of concepts, of aspects of reality. Unresolved confusions remain in the psyche and are bound to reoccur in each life. Life conditions are bound to bring these confusions to the fore unless the personality persists in disregarding them and evading the issues.

The karmic relationships that are most intense and dramatic are those between parents and children. The unresolved confusions, conflicts, and subsequent basic split must be challenged most dramatically in this relationship. This double relationship from the child to both father and mother is another of the symbols of splits which marks this earth sphere. To have a set of parents is an asset to the degree that the relationship is healthy because of a relatively free psyche. But when the negative involvement is still strong, this double relationship to two parents symbolizes the inner split.

If you regard your particular main problems and conflicts, the images, the defense mechanisms, pseudosolutions, wrong conclusions that you have found so far, they will eventually reveal a basic inner attitude by which you are governed. This basic attitude is always split in half, which means that your fundamental attitude in your negative involvement fluctuates between two ways of reacting. ... When this realization begins to take shape, you will come to see that these two fundamental attitudes constituting your split represent your basic attitude to your parents. Through the influence exerted upon you by one parent, and your emotional response to it, one conflicting and distorted attitude exists. And an entirely different influence by, and emotional response to, the other parent reproduces the other side of your conflict. This twofold split is a conflict that you could not resolve before you entered this life. Your parents or, rather, certain of their aspects and your subsequent response to them personify this unmended split within your psyche. Hence, it is not your parents who are responsible for your problems, and yet their faulty behavior toward you has to be faced and understood, for it will seem during some time on your path that they induced your particular way of reacting. And this is true, too, but only because you already came with your duality, born out of illusion. When you perceive how you represent your parents within your psyche, when you sense the subtle interaction between identification, rebellion, and various other responses and reactions to them, you must come to experience your basic twofold split by which you are governed throughout your life. This will persist until you resolve and mend it through insight and understanding. At this point, theories cease to matter. It is not necessary to believe in reincarnation. The important thing is the discovery of your parents expressing and personifying, for you, your duality, your illusory way of life.

When this is truly understood, there can no longer be a dividing mark between modern psychology and spiritual, metaphysical, or philosophical ideas. When this is understood, so-called spiritual and heretofore theoretical concepts become just as much a personal experience as any psychological discovery.

The child, starting a new life cycle, contains its personal unresolved conflict. Its duality is due to illusion and misconception. At the same time, its psyche is very impressionable. Everything it experiences has a much fresher and more intense impact. Impressions go deeper and remain more firmly rooted -- but always according to the inherent health, or lack of it, which determines how impressions and experiences are assimilated. The freshness and impressionability of the child's psyche causes early experience to have a more far reaching effect than a similar experience would have for an adult. This can be observed constantly in other ways and in other matters with children. Children, for example, have a keener sense of smell, of taste. They are more curious about the most simple manifestations of life. This strong impact of life on the child's soul can be clearly observed. How much more, then, must negative experience, resulting from previously unresolved conflict, impress the psyche! But it cannot be too strongly emphasized that negative experience and involvement occur only to the degree that the psyche is still in a state of duality, of illusory conceptual conflict when the entity is born.

It is right here ... if you realize how your attitude to both parents governs your basic life situations and is an expression of your basic personality difficulties. When you discover how you relive your father and mother within yourself, as well as continue to respond to them, you experience your basic split, your very own brand of duality -- for duality is not always the same. And therefore your comprehension grows regarding your personal human limitations. Therefore these limitations instantly lessen by the mere fact that they are truly perceived. Your range must widen, your freedom increase, your vision extend, your security grow -- and, of course, your harmony established. Because split and harmony are incompatible; by the same token, mending the split through comprehension and realization must increase harmony.

As long as awareness of this chain is incomplete or missing, you are not in control of yourself and of life. I mean healthy control and not the many erroneous ways the personality seeks in order to be in control because this awareness is lacking and therefore one feels weak and helpless.

Being geared to the original experience, you are convinced that what is happening to you today is real while initially it is not, but becomes so only because of your reaction. Therefore your reactions are not responsive to the real person, to the real situation, but to imagined persons and situations, your parents. Hence, you do not live in reality. ... But only when one has recognized his own duality and discontinues his acting out from parents to others will he be capable of withstanding the onslaught of misdirected responses. He then, as it were, refuses to express the duality, or one side of it, of other people because he is aware of his own. Unnecessary pain is thus avoided and help given in the most subtle way. The negative involvement has no response, and, finally, this must bring the one who misdirected his stream of consciousness to the realization that the original situation and the new situations are not identical. Even if this happens on an unconscious level, it is of help, but then one is dependent on the health and liberation of others who do not respond to one's unreality. It is certainly better to begin with the self, to find one's own split, to see the transference of it from parents to others with whom one is involved, and gradually recognize that the emotional climate in which one lives is not applicable to the real situation.

Lack of awareness imprisons you and makes life not worth living because you are constantly caught between two dissatisfactory alternatives. You ever react to your father and your mother in the "way of life" you have adopted to deal with, and you respond to them and to life in consequence of their impact on you. Response to one parent may be reaction to, and correction of, an unwanted situation with the other parent -- a compensation. But the two sets of basic attitudes together form your basic split, your "way of life," and you are, at the same time, a result of this. A new experience of life's manifold manifestations is possible only after having broken the repetitive chain from the duality to parents, to others. Then life becomes vibrant in joy, peace, and meaningfulness, in newness and richness.

Quotes from Chapter 10. PARENTS – IMAGES

From *The Path to the Real Self* By Eva Broch Pierrakos

Attitudes can be changed, once they are fully understood. Thus, the damaging occurrence in childhood need not destroy a person's happiness. Actual conditions in the past cannot be changed, but need not be harmful if coped with in a constructive manner.

Crisis always brings out what is hidden. It cannot bring out what does not exist in the first place. In other words, imperfect outer conditions bring them to the fore. Perfect conditions would cause them to remain smoldering underground.

This entire process -- the original painful experience, the imprint made on the malleable soul substance, the misjudgment through generalization, the pseudo-defense against re-occurrence of the original experience, the apparent re-experience through the pseudo-defense -- sets up an elaborate negative chain reaction. These are: a number of wrong conclusions, derivatives of the principal misconception; vicious circles; unjustified fears; negative experience; lack of fulfillment; limitation. For simplicity's sake, we call this entire process *An Image*. An image is simultaneously a wrong evaluation of a past situation, and a protection against its re-occurrence, which is taken for granted for all situations. ... The work of this path must extensively deal with finding these images, by using the method described previously.

No human being is free from images, since no one is perfect or free from disturbances, inner conflicts, problems, misconceptions. ... If the soul is born with deep imprints of previous wrong conclusions and unresolved images, the child will experience any frustration of his over-demanding will as lack of love, rejection, pain. ... Such a person may then interpret a happening as though its significance were his personal rejection, while the actual facts were based on entirely different reasons. Again, the fact that all these "reasoning processes" are unconscious, makes it impossible to correct them.

It is a good beginning, in this new phase of the path, to think about your parents, your relationship to both. What did you really feel for both? It is more than possible that you never confronted yourself in this particular respect; that you never deeply questioned your true reactions to both your parents; that you content yourself with a glib, superficial attitude you think tells the whole story -- either loving or resenting them. But it is never as simple as that. ... Take all important relationships of your life and question yourself about them in the same way as you did about your parents. You will be amazed how many parallels you are going to find.

These conditions not only influence your behavior and attract partners with equally unresolved problems, equally incapable of having a satisfying relationship, but they also hinder the strength of your feelings of pleasure and joy. Hence, you are imprisoned in more ways than one. We shall discuss this topic later in more detail.

Positive identification may appear desirable, but it is not, at least not for an adult person. Identification means emotional bondage. ... A child is incapable of obtaining either physical sustenance, or intellectual, or emotional sustenance through its own efforts and ingenuity. During this time of helplessness and dependency, positive identification is natural and desirable.

However, if a person continues to depend on parents, or parent substitutes, for nourishment of either body, mind or emotions, he has not severed the ties that should now be severed. What was right once, is no longer so in an adult individual. If the adult lives as though he were a helpless and dependent child, he is crippled. The wonderful thing is, though, that this kind of crippling can be corrected the moment honest self-facing, without reservation, to the deepest possible layer, takes place.

The mature adult, apart from healthy interdependence of all human life, is self-reliant on all realms of being. ... Nevertheless, many an adult human being finds himself in just such a state of helplessness --

often on all levels of his existence, although most frequently on the emotional level, where it passes by least noticed, for it is easiest to rationalize. Organic growth of the entire organism is hindered if such dependency persists. Dependency always indicates, and is connected with, identification. ... Just as identification with parents prevents identification with the real self, so does it prevent perceiving the real individuality of the partner.

It is quite frequent, and to be expected, that, at first, one experiences a complete blank when investigating his relationship to parents and early family life. Memories are vague, unrevealing and the picture in the mind seems very uncomplicated. Feelings are flat and can easily be dispensed with a liking or not liking -- and this seems all there is to it. It is necessary to be consistent and probe seriously if insight into fundamental questions is desired. The less one can come up with at the beginning, the more likely that early memories were too painful or confusing to face. Such pain may have existed in spite of outer harmony and happiness. Do not necessarily expect specific, dramatic hurts. It is more frequent that it was a general condition, the atmosphere as such, which left a void and insecurity. Once one begins to unplug the clogged up memory-channel, one may come up with little incidents which may, at the moment, not seem particularly significant. Let yourself go, follow their tracks -- they are bound to lead to what you are searching for, what you really felt for and experienced with both parents, and what marks these reactions left in you.

These laws are immutable, working in immeasurable exactitude, to the minutest detail. There is nothing which does not add up, nothing arbitrary or coincidental. According to this wise and perfect law, conditions and environment are not only a consequence of the totality of the personality, but conspire to afford a maximum possibility to unfold, express the self, and correct unresolved problems and false conclusions, imprinted in the soul. The particular combination of favorable, positive, pleasant conditions, and apparently unfavorable, difficult, negative or painful ones, is exactly what the entity needs for his personal maturation. All this is built into this same law of cause and effect.

Environment, as well as hereditary factors, are both "visible" manifestations of karmic law. If the law of cause and effect would be followed through to its natural end, rather than arbitrarily breaking it off where direct vision happens to end, both these angles would be seen as two aspects of one whole.

When it says in Scripture not to make an image of God, the meaning is that God should not be imagined as a personality. He is too vast and all-inclusive for the limited confinement of a personality.

When Scripture says, on the other hand, that man is made in the image of God, what is meant is what I explain again and again in these lectures, in various ways. That is, man is created out of the identical life substance as the substance of God. This is why God is within man. Whether or not he knows it, man molds divine substance in every one of his actions, thoughts, feelings, expressions, desires, goals, attitudes. When he realizes the vast meaning of these words, he has finally come into his own. It is then that he truly understands the meaning of the words that man is created in the image of God

I chose the word "image" because it connotes that an impression is held tightly, is put down in static, petrified form. I could as well have chosen the word "picture." Both imitate life, hold it fast in dead, rigid, imitative fashion -- no matter how artistically it may be done.

Inner images are also static and unreal, inflexible, unchangeable (until the images themselves are dissolved) as long as they exist. By their very nature, they are out of tune with the ever changing, flowing rhythm of life, which is in constant movement.

Also, image refers to imagination -- an imagined, not a realistic -- perception of life circumstances.

Definitions of Transference

TRANSFERENCE: The displacement of one's unresolved conflicts, dependencies, and aggressions onto a substitute object (e.g. substituting a lover, spouse, etc. for one's parent). This operation can also occur in the psychoanalytical cure, when a patient transfers onto the analyst feelings that were previously directed to another object. By working through this transference of feelings onto the analyst, the patient can come to grips with the actual cause of his or her feelings.

Transference: From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Transference is a phenomenon in psychoanalysis characterized by unconscious redirection of feelings for one person to another. One definition of transference is "the inappropriate repetition in the present of a relationship that was important in a person's childhood." Another definition is "the redirection of feelings and desires and especially of those unconsciously retained from childhood toward a new object." Still another definition is "a reproduction of emotions relating to repressed experiences, especially of childhood, and the substitution of another person ... for the original object of the repressed impulses." Transference was first described by Sigmund Freud, who acknowledged its importance for psychoanalysis for better understanding of the patient's feelings.

According to "The Source" published in June 2001, "During transference, people turn into a "biological time machine". A nerve is struck when someone says or does something that reminds you of your past. This creates an "emotional time warp" that transfers your emotional past and your psychological needs into the present. In less poetic terms, a transference reaction means that you are reacting to someone in terms of what you need to see, you are afraid of or what you see when you know very little about the person. This all happens without you knowing why you feel and react the way you do."

Journal of MetaPsychology definition: Transference is reacting to a person in the present as though he or she were a person in one's past.

Excerpts from Review by: Dr. Carole Gaato July 9, 2008
of the book "Transference" By: Dr. Suzanne LaCombe, June 26, 2006.

Transference in psychotherapy is typically an unconscious process where the attitudes, feelings, and desires of our very early significant relationships get transferred onto the therapist.

In other words, as your relationship with your therapist deepens, the situation triggers familiar feelings related to previous connections with others. You begin to experience the therapist - in the present - in much the same way you had experienced a significant person from your past.

Basically, transference allows your issues to be experienced - not just talked about in a superficial way. In other words, transference makes your issues more palpable so you can work through the feelings being triggered and ultimately make new neural connections. Without it happening in the moment, change is only a left brain idea.

New pathways in the brain result in different ways of being in the world and behaviours that feel natural and integrated.

What's important to understand is that simple awareness of the transference is only half way to healing. To change your internal reactions, the brain needs to "experience" the transference in the present moment. This provides an opportunity for the brain to re-wire itself over the emotional issue.

To benefit most from the phenomenon of transference it is essential that you be present with your feelings. Access your right brain, the seat of your emotions. A verbal discussion largely divorced from your emotional reactions will compromise your chances for real change, embodied change.

What this might look like in a session is taking the risk of letting your therapist know your personal reactions or feelings towards him or her.

Knowing logically does not change feelings.

Excerpts from Transference www.MentalHelp.Net by Mark Dombek, Ph.D.

Transference is something that people do most all the time. It is itself an instance of a more fundamental and general process of perception that all people do which is to read patterns into things that aren't there in an effort to make sense out of incomplete data.

Transference is a simple appearing idea that has to do with the way people understand one another and form relationships with one another. What is being transferred in this case is an understanding of a person. Where it is being transferred to is onto another person. When transference is occurring, basically what is happening is that we are trying to understand someone (usually someone we don't know very well) by making an assumption that they are similar to someone else, and will thus feel and behave in ways that are similar to how that other person would feel and behave.

The act of transference, like these other fundamental human processes, reveals and illuminates our motives and our thoughts; thoughts and motives that would otherwise remain hidden away from others and often even from ourselves (especially from ourselves Freud would say). Our acts of transference provide an information rich window into what we are desiring and what we wish to avoid. What we read into other people reveals our secret prejudices and our unfulfilled wishes. What is particularly wonderful about transference information is that it reveals or illuminates motives that people are often themselves unaware of having, or loath to fess up to. Part of Freud's genius was to recognize not only that transference was something that occurred on a regular basis, but also to realize that the information about personal motives that a person's transference activity revealed about him or her could be used as a therapeutic tool to promote self-understanding and healing.

It is not easy to get to know another person. When we first meet people what we appreciate about them is their surface. By surface I mean, our first impressions of who they are, and not just how they look (although that is clearly part of it). We interpret the world through the lens of our senses; we can't appreciate it directly. The brain looks for a match between appearances out in the world (the way someone looks, acts, etc.) , and what is know about the world. The brain does this because if a match can be found between something new and something old, then all of the stored knowledge can be applied to the new situation without having to figure it all out again and again.

Transference is really an interpretation and an illusion that is generated inside the brain as the brain tries to organize the world.

Transference As A Therapy Tool

Did you ever wonder why the classical Freudian therapist and the patient aren't looking at each other? The reason is that this "no eye contact" arrangement was thought by early therapists to best promote the patient forming a transference relationship with the therapist. The therapist minimizes eye contact, and says nothing about himself and his life outside the therapy room so as to become a blank slate or canvas or screen onto which the patient can project his or her transferences, and the therapist can view these transferences happening, figure out what they are, and help the patient to become aware of what they're doing. In theory, the patient's behavior will change as he or she becomes more aware of what he or she is doing. In practice, such insight is often not enough to motivate real change in the patient's life. It is helpful, but something more is often needed to get the patient to actually behave differently than they have been.

The occurrence of transference then becomes an opportunity for growth of the patient's self awareness. If you can recognize the patterns you are susceptible to falling into, you aren't as much at their mercy anymore.

Counter-Transference

A typical counter-transference might occur when a therapist starts feeling angry with a patient who describes doing something that is similar to something that previously harmed (or would harm) the therapist or someone the therapist cares about.

Experienced and ethical therapists notice when they are forming counter-transferences and handle them appropriately. This means that they take steps to deal with their own issues so that they do not impose on their work. If they cannot manage their reaction on their own, they seek out their own therapy or supervision situation where they can get help in dealing with it. If they cannot deal with it, they must then stop working with the triggering patient if feasible and possible, recommending another comparable therapist who will not be so affected whenever that is possible. Therapists should strive to never abandon patients, but this doesn't mean that sometimes everyone isn't better off with a therapist recusing him or herself from working with a particular patient.

Recognizing counter-transference is as hard as recognizing transference, which is to say, very hard, and even good therapists may take a little while to figure out what is happening. It is ultimately the therapist's responsibility to figure it out, however.

Conclusion

Transference is a truly amazing process, casting light as it does on hidden thoughts, feelings, wishes and motivations that would otherwise remain hidden and troubling. Freud's recognition and characterization of transference was brilliant in of itself (although I believe there were writers who recognized the phenomena before he did), but the thing that moves his contribution over the top to genius status was his recognition that transference could be used as a therapy tool.

Awareness of transference is no cure-all. It is really best suited for problems that are relational in nature (such as anger or depression problems – where transference leads patients towards inappropriate and exaggerated moods and actions).

Transference Exercise

Re-written from <http://www-usr.rider.edu/~suler/inclassex.html>

1. Think of your boyfriend/girlfriend, or husband/wife, or a close friend. Think about some aspect of their personality that you have a strong reaction to, either positive or negative. Now write that down on a piece of paper. Describe what that aspect of their personality is like, and how you react in your thoughts, feelings, and behavior toward that part of their personality.
2. Draw a box around what they have written, and to write at the top of the box, "Is this transference?"
3. Now think about your parents. Is the personality characteristic of the person you wrote about, and your reaction to it... is it a kind of replay or recreation of something that went on in your relationship with one (or both) of your parents? For example, does your parent have that same personality trait that you react to so strongly? If so, maybe this reaction to the person you described is a kind of transference from your relationship with your parent.
4. You may immediately see the connection. You may not. To increase the power and complexity of the exercise, the transference may be more tricky than simply reacting to others the way you reacted to your parent. Here are several possibilities:
 - * you see the other in the same way as you believed your parent to have been (simple transference)
 - * you see the other as being like what you WISH your parent COULD have been like
 - * you see the OTHER AS YOU were as a child and you act like your parent did
 - * you see the other as you were as a child and you act like you WISHED your parent could have acted

With this added depth, you may be able to make the connection. You may not.. That's OK.

The person that you describe in the exercise may indeed be something like the parent. Nevertheless, the "transference" may still be evident in the fact that you have chosen someone with whom to recreate an old parental relationship, in how strongly you react to that characteristic of the other person, or in the whole variety of ways you think, feel, and behave in reaction to that characteristic in the other.

From Chapter 10, Parents and Images, The Path to the Real Self by Eva Pierrakos

It is not the actual original hurts which create the deep psychic imprints, later producing unfulfillment and conflict, but the solutions the child has adopted to make itself immune. These solutions, or defenses, might have worked in a particular instance, as long as the child was dealing with the adult who could exert power over him. But when these same defenses are used with different people, who neither have the intention of acting like the childhood authority, nor the power, nor is the individual a helpless child any longer, these pseudo-solutions or defense mechanisms bring the very result the person wishes to avoid. Without them, the recurrence of the painful childhood situation would not happen with such unflinching regularity. The patterns you probably observed in the preliminary steps of our work are an indication of this.

PRS10

Guided Meditation Excerpted from paper on Transference by Susan Thesenga

- 1) Align with positive intention to free yourself of emotional reaction so that you can be in truth and love with this person, seeing objectively and compassionately.
- 2) With pillow or “stand-in” for this person, start talking to the person with whom you have emotional reaction.
- 3) As soon as you are able, switch the identity of the pillow or “stand-in” person to the “archetype” or parental / family figure whom this person represents in your psyche: father, mother, grandfather, etc. Continue giving this person your feelings as honestly as possible in the moment.
- 4) Specifically, be sure to include
 - a. Your demands and expectations of the other
 - how you feel they “ought” to have been in relation to you.
 - b. Your disappointments, angers, and resentments
 - that they did not meet your expectations.
- 5) Consider if you are willing to let go of your expectations and demands; and your subsequent disappointments. Align with the intent to let go.
- 6) Fully feel the grief that you did not, in fact, receive what you wanted, and even, perhaps, what you really needed from this person. Hold your hurt child in compassion and love. Allow the emotional letting go, and the willingness to be “empty” and to let God fill the space.

Spiritual Transference notes by Jan Rigsby

Within spiritual disciplines, God is the ultimate authority and the source of our deepest inner knowing. Spiritual transference can be seen as an attempt to transfer onto God the responsibility for our own unresolved issues, soul distortions, and false beliefs. After all, God is the ultimate parent.

According to the Pathwork lectures, we chose our parents (and by extension our culture, economic and social circumstances, and even our birth order within the family) as being the best instruments to help us in our path of self-development, transformation and purification. Our parents were selected to represent how our own soul is split, with each parent embodying an argument for or against a central concept that we are struggling to resolve in this specific lifetime.

Sometimes the parents can seem to hold a joint perspective, while other family members, society or circumstances seem to represent the alternative view. Yet even then, our parents may represent more subtle forms of our same distortions and false beliefs – no two people have identical attitudes or beliefs. Absent parents force us to create or imagine ‘place-holders’, substitutes, images created from hearsay, circumstantial evidence, and how this absence is perceived by others. An absent parent can allow for a powerful spiritual experience, as having no real-life feedback can allow even more latitude to project our inner struggle onto another. Our own inner distortions determine our attitudes.