

Pathwork™ Steps

Helping Ourselves

Self-Study Materials for July 2009 Teleconference

Please always use self-care and self-love in considering how much personal work to do. Trying too hard can create overload, congestion, a spiritual constipation. Negative intention loves to masquerade as higher self, positive intention, 'in your best interests'.

If you feel overwhelmed by input or suggestions, consider that there may be a grain of truth in such feelings. It may help to put study materials aside for a while. Working consciously is a way of accelerating a process; it is not the only way, and in many cases it may not be the fastest way. Try placing a lecture or worksheet under your pillow, on your bedside table, or in the center of your desk or work area overnight; in the morning, notice any change in attitude or energy.

Some of these exercises may give you pleasure and make you feel centered and strong. Despair, sadness, numbness and irritation may also come up; notice these in your Daily Review. Your commitment to doing this work is an act of the Higher Self. Allow some smaller, less developed parts of you to protest. Treat all of yourself with love. You deserve it.

1. Allow yourself to have a 'presenting complaint'.

This is a conscious statement describing what you want to work on, what you perceive the problem or dilemma is (or is about). It may also be about a symptom you are experiencing, which you feel involves a larger issue that you may not be able to articulate yet.

Describe your 'complaint' in terms of feelings rather than as a theory about what they might be about or an opinion or judgment. Keep your 'complaint' brief and straightforward. "I feel tired all the time", "I am concerned about my negative feelings", or "I can't seem to feel affectionate towards my mate". They may start out as blame, resentment, or even intolerance: "My parent makes me feel angry" or "I don't feel appreciated at work". For some, just finding this original 'complaint' may become a process in itself, as you may resist feeling something that you do not respect or understand.

Do not judge or edit what you are feeling, *especially* if it feels childish, self-centered, or in distortion. Covering up a primary impulse (or trying to make it politically or spiritually 'correct') is based upon an assumption that we are wrong in feeling what we feel. It is usually our interpretation, rather than our feeling, which needs to be reviewed.

2. Activate positive intention.

Your positive intention led you to work on this exercise. It can guide you to greater awareness, deeper understandings, and self-transformation. Yet it is seldom strong and conscious at all times. Before you do any work that might address your negative intentionality, it is important to honor and activate your positive intent.

Some people like to start this process with a few moments of meditation or ritual, such as lighting a candle. Spending a few moments in a special posture or environment can help you feel and focus your intention. Objects that represent your deepest held beliefs or which bring up memories of inspiration and clarity can also help.

This could take a while. Each one of these steps can be transformational by themselves – your personal process is unique, and is always more important than any specific exercise or sequence. It can be a breakthrough moment to realize that we are in resistance, that our sense of being 'trapped' comes from within, and that outer circumstances simply justify fears that we choose to listen to. If we are frightened of change, the work then becomes understanding our fear rather than creating change. Accepting exactly who we are in every moment is a profound act of love. It is an act of unconditional love and acceptance, and we have the power to bestow it.

3. Searching for patterns.

Everyone experiences occasional feelings of being unloved, helpless or miserable. If we believe that these feelings are deserved, we may consciously and unconsciously agree with comments or situations which re-enforce such judgments. We hear only what we already believe to be true and disregard any evidence to the contrary. Before we address such judgments and attitudes, it is useful to become aware of how these thought patterns are reinforced in our daily lives

Daily Review is a technique for revealing ongoing attitudes, and patterns of behavior. Keep a very brief,

ongoing Daily Review every day for 2 weeks. Just 10 words per entry will be enough! The purpose is to track disharmony. For this exercise, focus upon any disharmony which touches upon your 'presenting complaint'. If your 'complaint' evolves, allow this by defining a new topic or question -- and keep going with the Daily Review. Since changing topics can be a way to avoid depth and scrutiny, this may also represent a pattern in your life -- and allow that changing your mind continuously might be the topic to explore!

At the end of each day, recall moments of discomfort, pain or negativity. Write down a few words which will remind you of a) the trigger or situation b) how you felt -- sad, angry, or frightened, for instance c) your thoughts or judgments about the incident, what it meant about others who were involved.

If you have too many disharmonious incidents a day and feel overwhelmed, narrow your focus.

4. Vicious Circle

Try to diagram one or two of your recurring patterns of disharmony using the clock technique in the Vicious Circle worksheet (attached).

5. Noticing Dualistic thinking

"The majority of human beings live predominantly on the dualistic plane. The dualistic plane means that man sees, perceives, and experiences everything in opposites. It is always either/or, good or bad, right or wrong, life or death. In other words, practically everything man encounters, every human problem and predicament, is determined by this dualistic way of perceiving life." Pgl 143, Unity and Duality

Whenever we perceive a choice as life-affirming, we immediately cast the alternative as a form of 'death', and vice-versa. Believing that a choice is deadly (in terms of removing pleasure, connection or opportunity for our life force) causes tunnel-vision, as we feel we must escape death at any cost.

Any time we feel we are in a life/death scenario, we will choose life. Yet this is almost always an exaggeration or over-dramatization.

Practice noticing dualistic thinking, where you feel, think and say 'or' -- meaning that you feel you must make a clear-cut choice -- and ignore the possibilities of 'and'.

It can be very helpful in understanding duality to see how we interpret events based upon self-preservation (I live or I die) or procreation (my dreams live or they die). The Instincts of Self-Preservation and Procreation in Distortion / at Conflict, pgl 85 and 86, can be useful study tools here. Download an audio MP3 file of a recent teleconference from <http://www.esnips.com/web/PathworkTeleconferences> Study guide for the teleconference is attached/

6. Idealized Self Image (ISI)

What is your idealized self image of yourself? Be kind -- that you don't meet these expectations is not important here. What values do you ideally want to personify? Make a list. Who / what do you want to be by the time you die? The key word here is 'Ideal' = A conception of something in its absolute perfection, an ultimate object of endeavor; a goal.

7. Daydreams and Fantasy as indicators of our Forcing Currents

What are your daydreams ("Desire-Life")? These can last a few seconds or several hours a day. Write them down, looking for only a few key elements just as in Daily Review. Note the scene - work, love, play, conversation, or total fantasy -- robbing a bank, saving the world, accepting a top honor, finding yourself in grave danger. Write down the qualities you display or are called upon to display - heroism? beloved? martyr? partner? genius?

What is driving you in your daydreams -- a quest for power or a quest for love? If you feel torn between the two, the ending of your daydreams may involve seeking serenity = withdrawal, a secondary pseudosolution enacted when neither power nor love seems attainable.. For this exercise, focus upon the primary pseudosolution - power and/or love.

8. Connecting our Desire-Life to our Idealized Self Image

What part of your idealized self image plays the greatest part here? Honesty, loyalty, willingness, hard work? Connect the dots between your list of Idealized Self Image qualities and who you are in your daydreams.

The Vicious Circle of the Idealized Self Image

“The idealised self masks the real self. It pretends to be something you are not.”

Pathwork Guide Lecture 83

Draw a simple clock face and write in the numbers 1-12 in a standard pattern. Add 2 curved lines, connecting 3 back to 12 and 8 back to 6. As you go through this exercise, use the examples as inspiration to find a Vicious Circle issue in your own life. Except where noted, quotes are from Pgl 83.

0/12 = The starting point. We are inspired by our Higher Self and our connection to the Divine. This place is never specific, because the Higher Self is not attached to how things manifest. *Challenge any statement here that feels as if it is already ‘in motion’ or which may harbor an agenda or hold onto fixed idea.* Example: “I want to be good, generous, kind and loving in my interactions.

1= We attempt to manifest this HS desire. This may be somewhat specific, but it does not have a forcing current or agenda yet. The destructive element here is engaging in dualistic thinking, thinking in terms of ‘or’ instead of ‘and’. “My friend could use some help” contains “or unhappiness will result”.

“When man knows and senses that there is only good, freedom, right, beauty, love, truth, life without a threatening opposite, and when he tries to apply this on the dualistic plane, he will immediately be plunged into the very conflict of opposites he needs to avoid. He then fights for one of the dualistic aspects and against the other. Such a fight makes the transcendence impossible.” Unity and Duality, Pgl 143

2= We experience some resistance. In a Benign Circle, we might re-examine our inspiration and how it started to manifest, adjust based upon feedback, and try again. In a Vicious Circle, we decide to push forward without challenging our premise. “I wasn’t able to help this time, but I can figure something out!”

“practically everything man encounters, every human problem and predicament, is determined by this dualistic way of perceiving life.” Pgl 143

3= There is a growing sense that something has gone wrong. Depending upon our personality type and history, we start to question ourselves or others. “I am failing” “I can’t do this” “He/She doesn’t like / understand me” This is a primary exit point for the Vicious Circle, before we have become invested or attached and before feelings have become strengthened into emotions.

“Unhappiness and lack of belief in oneself are interconnected. Hence, the creation of the idealized self-image serves the purpose of obtaining the missing self-confidence.”

4= A decision is made to push forward. We assume that the fundamentals behind both our inspiration and our methods – the Ideals that make up our Image – are valid. “If I only...” “I can’t quit now” “Maybe another way will work...”

“And when you try to hide your reactions to your own “failure,” you take to special means in order not to become aware of your “failure.” Pgl 143

5= Discomfort increases / resolve hardens. We feel forced to choose: give up, or commit further.

“You knew perfectly well that you were not as good and as perfect as the world seemed to expect you to be. This truth had to be hidden as a guilty secret, and you started to build up a false self. This, you thought, was your protection and your means of attaining what you desperately want -- life, happiness, security, self-confidence. For, whenever you fall short, as you are bound to, you feel so impatient, so irritated that such impatience and irritation can snowball into fury and wrath at yourself.”

6= The Idealized Self Image is now in charge. The seduction of the ISI is that it represents our ideals. We have no argument against it – it is ‘good’. Any protest must be ‘bad’.

Since the standards and dictates of the idealized self are impossible to realize, yet never giving up the attempt, you keep and cultivate within yourself an inner tyranny of the worst order. The original insecurity, supposed to be whisked away by the establishment of the idealized self, steadily increases. It snowballs, and becomes worse and worse. The more insecure you feel, the more stringent the demands of the superstructure, the idealized self, the less are you able to live up to it, and the more insecure do you feel.”

7= We sense the pretense. It is here that negativity’s most attractive aspect – that we do not have to feel uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings – is revealed as a lie. We cannot remain in stasis or contraction. Eventually, some expansion will occur. This process may take days, weeks, years or lifetimes, but it is inevitable and uncontrollable. Living is a verb; life is defined by movement.

“Sense of failure, frustration, and compulsion, as well as guilt and shame, are the most outstanding indications of your idealised self being at work. These are the consciously felt emotions of all that lies hidden underneath. Thereby,

further vicious circles come into existence. ...the more you take out of that live-center in order to invest into the robot you have created, the more estranged you become from the real self, and the more you weaken and impoverish it."

This is another place where we can exit the vicious circle, by becoming more conscious of what is really going on. Going forward from this place by simply expanding our efforts continue the circle.

"You will gain an objective view of yourself in this respect, and this view will liberate you. You will fully assume responsibility for the faulty attitude, being willing to take the consequences upon yourself."

8= Our imperfections and mistakes are used against us – by ourselves. Under the tyranny of the ISI, we may succumb to its apparent perfection.

"Thereby, further vicious circles come into existence. ...the more you take out of that live-center in order to invest into the robot you have created, the more estranged you become from the real self, and the more you weaken and impoverish it." Pgl 83

9= We feel the need to choose 'good' over 'bad', plunging further into dualistic thinking and energizing the choices we have made.

"The more you try to identify with your idealized self-image, the harder is the disillusionment whenever life brings you into a position when this masquerade can no longer be maintained."

10 and 11 = We move forward within a forcing current, moving past the point on the circle where our original intention came in, remembering our longing but blinded by our ISI's version of how we should manifest it.

"Needless to say, you also have to recognize most particularly and in detail what your specific demands and standards are; and further, you have to see their unreasonableness, their impossibility."

Based upon the specifics of the situation or circumstances, a decision is made, blame is assigned, fault is determined and our resolve is hardened.

"First will come changes in your reactions to life, to incidents, to yourself and others. This changed reaction will be quite astounding enough. But little by little, outer things are also bound to change. Your different attitude will cause new effects.

You cannot approach this most important part of your inner work by a general concept. As usual, your most insignificant daily reactions, considered from this viewpoint, will yield the necessary result. So continue your self-search out of these new considerations, and do not be impatient if it takes time and relaxed effort.

The difference between the real and the idealized self is often not a question of quantity (as regards the goodness or badness of a trend) but rather one of quality.

Another important consideration is the time element between these two selves. The idealized self wants to be perfect (according to its specific demands) right now. The real self knows this cannot be and does not suffer from this fact.

Then you will truly experience the following words. The more egocentric you are, the less can you have of self-confidence. The idealized self believes just the opposite. Its claims for perfection are motivated by sheerly egocentric reasons. And this very egocentricity makes self-confidence impossible." The Idealized Self Image, pgl 83

Worksheet questions © Jan Rigsby 2008

Full text of all Pathwork Guide Lectures may be downloaded at www.pathwork.org