

Pathwork™ Steps

Stages of Commitment

Study Guide for Online Meetings on Additional Materials 6 / AD6
Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.Pathwork.org

- Week 1: Origins of the Stages of Commitment**
- Week 2: Stage One; Committing to a Spiritual Path**
- Week 3: Stage Two; Community & Leadership**
- Week 4: Stages Three and Four: Helping Others**

Week 1: Origins of the Stages of Commitment

During times of change and a new influx of energy, old customs must often give way to the new. So it is now with the Path.

Do not confine the future procedure to this message only; this is merely an outline, to be expanded by many of you and commonly discussed. A choice should be given to the individual about the nature of his commitment and participation, which can always be intensified to a more advanced state later.

Stages of Commitment AD6

In 1973, Eva sold her home in New York City and purchased retreat grounds near Phoenicia, N.Y. for the growing Pathwork community. In 1978, the Guide s outlined 4 stages of commitment for members, community leaders, and Helpers in order to codify varying levels of intention. He also suggested ‘mission statements’ for the employees who took care of the retreat grounds, and the volunteers who administrated the programs. This teaching was documented in the Additional Guide Materials as AD6.

Pathwork Steps represents a completely different kind of community than the Pathwork in Phoenicia. Viewers and subscribers may be members of other Pathwork groups or regions, studying with a helper or on their own. A small number of this online community participates in the free weekly process groups and workshops.

My intention in selecting this topic was to invite an *individual* exploration of

- 1) Your personal commitment to self-development
- 2) Your individual spiritual path
- 3) What supports self-leadership as well as community leadership
- 4) A desire to help others find and follow their spiritual paths.

I invite you to explore these commitments *one question at a time* over the next few months. Experiment! What do they mean in your private life? How do they impact your relationships with others, your social or professional interactions? Which commitments are easy, and which seem difficult to hold or manifest?

Blessings upon your journey, Jan R.

Exercise 1a: Even before you review the Stages, consider your experience with being asked to make commitments and promises, or any request to ‘state your intentions’ in a formal setting.

Commitment: Cause and Effect

Commitment means, above all, a one-pointedness of attention, giving of the self in a wholehearted way to whatever the area of commitment may be. If you are committed to give your best and your all to whatever it may be, you will concentrate on all angles of the subject. You will not shy away from investing all your energies, all your attention. You will use your available faculties of thinking, of intuition, of meditation. In other words, you will use your physical energies, your mental capacities, your feelings, and your will to activate the as yet unmanifest dormant spiritual powers so as to make the venture constructive.

This requires a wholeness of approach that can only come when the will is unbroken by negative counterforces. Here is where cause and effect come in -- a split in consciousness [leads to] negative chain reactions. Whenever there is lack of commitment, there must always exist negative intentionality as well.

[Commitment: Cause and Effect](#) PL 196

The Law of Paying the Price

There is a price to be paid for each desired gratification. *Finding God's Will* PL29

The price for illusion is extremely high. The more you want to evade paying the natural and fair price, the heavier the toll becomes. This is unalterable law. *The Abyss of Illusion* PL60

You will get out of life exactly as much as you commit yourself to, whether this means shaping and creating your life by committing yourself to the universal forces to cooperate with you, whether this means to an undertaking or to a person or to a relationship. It makes no difference what it is. If you only commit yourself with reservations, forever watching out that you remain "safe," with strings attached, bargaining and holding back, to exactly that degree will life pay you back.

The blind person constantly believes he can "get by." He holds back, hoping that life will give him first a big slice and then, maybe, he is willing to give back a crumb. A wholehearted commitment is so feared because it is falsely believed that it demands giving up your intelligence, your rights, your reason, your self preservation, your ability to choose, your self determination. That is not true. It simply means full integrity, direct purpose, no evasions, uncovered motivations, doing the thing for the sake of itself, without subterfuge.

Full commitment presupposes wide awake choosing, the freedom to do so without compulsion, conflict, or guilt. But such choosing requires to be very much aware. It must begin with the truthful facing of the self, with courageous self confrontation of the most ingrained emotional reactions.

[Winning vs. Losing: Interplay between Self and Creative Forces](#) PL 129

Exercise 1b: Do you agree or disagree with the passages on commitment above? Find examples in your life where you were uncertain or unwilling to fully commit. Were the results fulfilling? Then notice areas in your life where you willingly (even enthusiastically) and whole heartedly committed. Were your feelings of fulfillment different, even if the outcome was disappointing?

Week 2: Stage One; Committing to a Spiritual Path

The answer to each of these questions should be more than a simple Yes. It should come forth in verbalizing a commitment expressing the thought of the question in the words of the person. All the questions, for all stages, should be worked through in the private work of each individual before the celebration, so that there is full clarity.

Stage One: A commitment to the self, to one's own spiritual growth through the light of the Guide's teachings.

Question 1. Are you fully aware that this is a spiritual path and not an individual therapy?

This is a spiritual path in that it develops man's spiritual nature and faculties; it opens inner channels to experience cosmic events, which is a very different process than superimposing dogma. It should be made clear that there is no obligation to believe in anything, but that all ideas need to be questioned, opened up, that an inner receptivity be established and all barriers be removed. Only this inner emptiness can release personal dormant faculties, as well as cosmic truth.

A person who makes the decision to enter the Pathwork may not be inclined to involve himself or herself in a more extended group process. They may therefore start his/her work on the Path only in private sessions, and perhaps a Pathwork Group.

Stages of Commitment AD6

You do not enter a therapy. You embark on a voyage leading you into a new territory of your inner universe. How long, you may ask? The time is indicated by your state of mind, your state of feeling, your outer life manifestation. When your inner negativities are overcome, this will express itself in your life, and there will be no doubt. The path will organically bring you into other emphases and concerns. The aim of this path is not to cure you of an emotional or mental illness, although it does this very well. And it is bound to do so, if you do the work. But you should not enter the path for that purpose.

Do not enter this path if you expect from it that it will make you forget your sadness and pain, make you gloss over those aspects of your personality you like least or even outright dislike. The path must teach you to face whatever is in you, for only then can you truly love yourself. And only when you do, can you find your essence, your Godself. But if you wish to attempt to find your essence, and yet, under the guise of your spiritual inclinations, refuse to face whatever is in you, this is not the path for you.

Dealing with confusions, inner misconceptions, misunderstandings, destructive attitudes, alienating defenses, negative emotions, paralyzed feelings -- all this is essential, and all of this psychotherapy also attempts to do. However, while this is the ultimate goal of psychotherapy, the Pathwork enters its most important phase only after this stage is over and done with.

That most important phase is, briefly, **the learning of how to activate the greater consciousness dwelling within every human soul.**

[What is the Path?](#) PL 204

Exercise 2a: Explore your expectations about Pathwork, and making a commitment to it.

Question 2. Although at this point of your commitment, your involvement is still only on a more or less individual basis, are you willing to allow for the fact that you are entering a spiritual community whose aim goes beyond personal development?

The difference between counseling (or giving therapy) and being a helper on the path is primarily that the former concentrates on learning, on knowledge of techniques to be learned, while the intuitive faculties, are still a secondary aspect. Being a helper on a path such as this puts the primary weight on the intuitive channel. The ego must become an active instrument to lead to the inner channels.

Questions and Answers PL 213qa

Exercise 2b: Recall your initial experiences with therapy, spiritually based counseling, and/or the lectures. What were your goals back then? Then look at why you continue to study the lectures. Have your goals changed?

Question 3. Since this work is based on the teachings in the lectures, do you commit yourself to study the lectures carefully and, when not understanding parts of them, to allow yourself to be helped in this understanding?

Exercise 2c: What does it mean to you, to study the lectures carefully? Do you take the time to observe how the Guide's teachings play out in your life? Do you have opportunities to discuss spiritual concepts with others? Have you explored the growing number of online Pathwork groups? Explore whether you are honestly ready to 'step up your game'.

Question 4. Do you commit yourself to allow for any eventuality as far as the reality of Creation is concerned? You do not have to believe anything, but you need to remove a tight no in you that may barricade experience. Are you willing to let yourself experience, without preconceived ideas, whatever is real?

Do not accept my word for it, my dear ones. I always ask you never to do that. But think about it. When you really think about it, you will see for yourself that this is so.

[Intellect and Will as Tools or Hindrances of Self-Realization](#) PL 104

When your mental processes were challenged, there were always those who did not want to tamper with them and resisted. When your emotional processes were worked with, there were always those who resisted psychological therapy. When spiritual truths were discussed, there were always those who did not want religion. Each of these arguments was and is nothing but the fear of expanding yourself according to who you are meant to be, who you potentially are on a not-yet-manifested level of reality.

When unconscious, irrational feelings were lifted to the surface, many of you were terrified. Some friends left the path. The same happened when responsibility for the lower self became an essential aspect of the Pathwork. When prayer and meditation was explained in detail, and its dynamics taught so that you can use this essential tool, again many turned away with resistance and rebellion (which was always rationalized, of course). When the body was included in the total work [the practice of Core Energetics], the same reactions came up. When different spiritual realities were emphasized (Jesus Christ is one of them), this, too, was used as an opportunity to avoid the total revision of the personality aspect, the healing of the soul.

Questions and Answers PL 246qa

Exercise 2d: What were *your* experiences working through the topics that impacted membership in the original Pathwork? Verbalize belief systems that felt challenged. Recall what resources helped you to overcome your resistance, Note that the commitment is to allow an eventuality, and open to an experience, vs. to accept the Guide's word for it.

Question 5. If you feel threatened in the process of removing a fixed prejudice, are you willing to understand the dynamics behind this fear in the process of your Pathwork, even before you may actually dare give up the prejudice or fixed belief in question?

The personal longing that brought you to this path, regardless of what you had consciously in mind, can only be fulfilled when you bring your personality into alignment with spiritual truth, whatever that may be at any given time of your evolutionary journey. Some of you violently struggle against this movement, but ignorantly so. The deep reason for this struggle is fear. The tragedy is that this fear is so entirely needless and unfounded, while there is everything to fear by obstructing and not even considering a larger truth that you have not allowed into your heart as yet.

Truth can only fill you when you remove the tight "knowledge" and make room for a different knowledge. If this attitude exists, and if your originally believed-in truth is indeed truth, you will come back to it anew. But if it turns out to be faulty, you will remove an obstruction that can only limit and bind you. Real autonomy must rest upon what is cosmic and universal truth, not a personal and possibly false opinion about universal truth.

Questions and Answers PL 246qa

Suggestions for Community Rituals and Celebrations

All stages need to be worked through in private sessions, so that there has been a good preparation. It should be made clear that changing to a more advanced state later is much easier and better than retracting the commitment to a lesser stage.

Each phase should be entered into with a certain celebration, *a ritual of your own creation*, commemorating the event. He or she should be allowed to express, according to his own feelings, what this means to him. He should be welcomed by some representative of the community into this new phase. Prayer and song should express the embracing, the welcoming, the good wishes. The person should clearly feel the boundaries of his choice involvement, his responsibility, his privilege, the gifts he receives from the community by belonging to it.

Stages of Commitment AD6

Exercise 2e: AD6 outlines a facilitated, in-person, formal community event. Be creative! Many elements can be reimagined; what is possible with the resources available to you? For instance, you might take a stage of commitment in private, 'trying in on' before attempting anything more formal or public. To 'retract' a commitment, repeat the process in a similar way (i.e., alone or with witnesses) stopping before the stage (or question within a stage) that you are able and willing to maintain.

Daily Review 2.0 PL 28

<http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/028-DailyReview-Suggestions.pdf>

Track your daily experiences of disharmonies. After keeping logs for several weeks, see if you can find a common denominator.

Exercise 2f: Keep a log of how you feel about each of the questions. Make VERY short entries, such as: Q1: yes/no, what I object to /fear (emotional reaction), what I challenge (mental judgement). Q2: yes/no, etc. Then notice where you are at the end of one week.

Week 3: Stage Two; Community & Leadership

Questions designed for volunteers and employees, in any capacity in the Path:

By working for your daily bread in the Path, you have an obligation to perform in the best way possible. To give your best. If anyone has another inspiration for a question and commitment, it should also be included.

Question 1. Are you willing to give your very best to this greater venture and leave out your ego reasons, personal glory and vanity?

Question 2. Are you always open to see and accept when being told by your supervisors when you act out on the job? Are you ready to stop doing so?

Question 3. Are you prepared to give to your full capacity, as well as not strain for more than your present capacity? In either case your giving will be damaged and your inner peace disturbed.

Question 4. Your work may leave nothing to be desired, but your human contacts may. This can be as disturbing as inadequate work performance. Are you willing to take this as seriously as any other impairment in the performance of your duty?

Question 5. Do you commit yourself to start every day and each task with a full commitment to God to give your best in every smallest detail and to ask for help to follow through?

Question 6. Are you willing to give up stubbornness and other ego defenses for the sake of the truth?

Question 7. Do you remind yourself daily (or do you intend to do so) that God is your boss and that you are working for a much greater cause, and not for human exploiters (which is often what you want to feel in your emotions)?

Stages of Commitment AD6

Exercise 3a: Do these commitments seem harder or easier than the Stage One commitment?

Explore how these commitments, one at a time or one a day, would change how you behave, think, or feel about work, play, or your home life. Do any seem unnecessary or burdensome in a 'secular' environment vs. in working for a Pathwork center? Why?

Stage Two; A commitment to relationships with others that are based on truth and love.

The answer to each of these questions should be more than a simple Yes. It should come forth in verbalizing a commitment expressing the thought of the question in the words of the person. All the questions, for all stages, should be worked through in the private work of each individual, so that there is full clarity.

Question 1. Do you fully accept and commit yourself to all the questions pertaining to Stage One? *[In a formal commitment ceremony, all 5 questions for Stage One are asked before taking Stage Two. That is, each time a new commitment is made, the previous stages are re-affirmed.]*

Question 2. You are now a part of a larger community and, as such, you share responsibility with all your Path brothers and sisters in the building of a new society. Are you willing to carry this awareness with you and consider it whenever issues come up?

Three stages in our personal work:

-- **Recognizing resistance:** By a feeling of anxiety when certain questions or points are raised; by impatience, boredom, lack of concentration; the consistent desire to do something else, often less important; by tiredness the moment the work is approached, by consistently forgetting

-- **Investing time:** However, a certain amount of quantitative time is necessary, so we might say, as an average, and at the beginning of this path work, about twenty minutes to half an hour a day should be excellent. No one need be too rigid about it. [This time might include reading and studying the lectures, discussion with others, or simply 20 minutes of meditation.]

-- **Daily Review:** One of the most important tools for this work. This daily review can be conducted any time of the day, most suitable to you. Just consistently register your reactions in a notebook -- every day, again and again. When you ponder over an accumulation of days, in which you took notice of your reactions, you will undoubtedly find a recurrent pattern.

[Constructive Attitudes in Self-Confrontation](#) [Path to the Real Self](#) Chapter 5 / PRS05

Exercise 3b: Review the volunteer and employee questions above, and your responses to 3a. These questions outline how a new social order based upon self-awareness, a search for the truth, and love might operate. Yet question 2 only asks if you are willing to carry awareness, and to consider that awareness when issues come up.

Question 3. As part of a larger community, concerned with a larger cause, you can be confronted by your peers about something they may see in you. They may be correct in their perceptions, or they may harbor hate or jealousy feelings for you, which would taint their perceptions. Are you willing to consult your innermost self, the truth of God in you, about the relevancy and accuracy of such a confrontation?

-- Attitude is what determines how things affect you. The more constructive, realistic and reasonable your attitude to your negative emotions is, the less damage they will do. This proves that it is not so much these emotions themselves that are damaging, but your fearful, guilty, untruthful, exaggerating attitude about them! Covering them up is emotional toxic poison and ruins your psychic blood stream. This can only be done by taking stock and finding their origins

[Constructive Attitudes in Self-Confrontation](#) [Path to the Real Self](#) Chapter 5 / PRS05

Exercise 3c: The word ‘attitude’ appears almost 1900 times throughout the lectures. It is the only thing that you have absolute control over, and that no one else- human or spirit – can affect without your permission. Notice what happens whenever you ‘just’ change your attitude!

Question 4. If you see something negative in one of your Path brothers or sisters, are you prepared to take the risk to confront them? Are you willing to chance their anger with you, for the sake of the truth, for the sake of their higher self, as a real expression of your love?

I have discussed the aggressive aspect which you assume as a protective measure against the vulnerability of the underlying submissive aspect. I have discussed the withdrawal aspect, which is another, similar protection, only it manifests in a different way. I have discussed the artificiality with which you overdramatize your life, your emotions, and everything pertaining to your person. All of these are measures by which you hope either to gain what you want, or to protect yourself against the disappointment and frustration of not getting what you want. Find all this, and you will set the way free for true communication in all its facets and in all its aspects. You will then realize and understand what may have seemed a contradiction in your belief that you are healthily

interdependent on one another. This healthy interdependence, however, can exist only if you are independent, not of the other person but of your own distorted need and urgency. Only on the basis of independence can you have healthy interdependence.

[Cooperation, Communication, Union](#) PL 80

Exercise 3d: Confronting others in a loving way requires practice, whether the other is blind to their negativity, or aware and unwilling to admit it. Plus, any negativity on your part will allow them to challenge you. Consider how you might start the process of developing this skill.

Question 5. Are you willing to foreswear all kinds of collusion, active as well as passive by commission or omission; against peers or authority figures? Are you willing to muster the courage to confront the other person if the collusion comes from them and, propose to go together to the third person who may possibly be maligned or gossiped about, to question with an open mind what the truth is? This means giving up a momentary gratification and relief, a negative pleasure, and this would be your sacrifice for God, for the larger cause of which you have become a part.

Stages of Commitment AD6

What happens when you are weak, when you do not stand up to evil behavior, when you collude with it and refrain from fighting for the truth? You encourage evil, you sustain the illusion in the person who perpetrates it that it is not "so bad," that it is all right, that it is "smart," and that many are with him. This then also perpetrates the further illusion that by asserting truth, standing up for decency, and exposing evil, you will be isolated, ridiculed, and rejected. In other words, you foster the delusion that in order to be accepted one needs to sell out integrity and decency.

All this happens constantly in human contact and interaction. Such encouragement of evil is a subtle climate, easy to push out of full awareness. Yet around the person who indulges in this kind of negative action and behavior, there is a cloud of guilt, confusion, and an emotional climate of self-rejection. No matter how you try to talk yourself out of self-hate and into self-esteem on theoretical grounds, you will not succeed until you have gained the spiritual courage to be willing to sacrifice acceptance from others -- if indeed you believe that this price has to be paid.

When someone in your presence maligns another, for example, your silence is not goodness, gentleness, peacefulness. Far from it, in a sense it is more destructive and insidiously negative than outright, active maligning. The maligner exposes his evil, and thus takes the chance of being rebuked and having to pay the consequences for his evil act. The passive listener cheats by trying to get it both ways: he derives as much negative gratification from the maligning as the active one, without, however, risking any negative consequences and even priding himself that he really did not participate in the act.

Can you see that silent collusion with evil is more abrasive than active evil? The same is true of the mass murders in totalitarian regimes. The few perpetrators could not have gotten very far if they had not been aided by the silent collusion of those for whom their own skin was more important than truth, decency, honesty, charity, love, empathy -- in short, God, all that God stands for.

The Evil of Inertia – 'Be In the World but Not Of the World' PL 244

Exercise 3e: Recognizing collusion is also a skill that requires practice. Consider starting off by noticing it in social groups, interactions at work, or in films and stories.

Week 4: Stages Three and Four: Helping Others

The questions in Stages Three and Four are included because they are relevant to developing self-leadership and self-helpership in our individual lives. Self-leadership supports leadership in others, and leading a more spiritually-based life models this process for others. JR

Stage Three: A commitment to a sense of planetary responsibility, and to serving in the world through the wisdom in the Guide's teachings.

You have now made a commitment to enter a Training Class to learn helpership, either directly or indirectly, in conjunction with another task on your path in this community. This imposes a much greater responsibility on you to live up to all the above points, for both Stages One and Two; and whenever you fail, to work on it, so that acting out will become less frequent.

Here the awakening occurs, in which the path is no longer seen as a mere personal venture but the sense of planetary responsibility is released within the soul. The sense of being involved with creating a new society in God, serving a larger cause, is beginning to flower. This does not mean that all doubts in God and/or Christ have necessarily disappeared, but there is an openness and a willingness in the personality to experience whatever the truth may be. Subsequently some such experiences begin to happen occasionally.

When this category is being entered into, the desire exists to enter a training class in order to understand the lecture material in depth and learn about helpership. This does not mean becoming a regular helper for all participants, but it does mean the readiness to undertake some task in the great scheme, for which helpership principles are necessary. This automatically implies a greater responsibility for the whole, which follows the awakening of personal responsibility that was developed in the previous phase.

Question 1. Are you willing to fully make this commitment, with all your heart and mind?

Question 2. Are you willing to further your study and practice of the Pathwork teachings by participating in all fundamental Pathwork activities available to you, such as regular private sessions, groups, and lecture study formats?

Question 3. Are you prepared to want to, not have to, contribute in some way to the growth of your community? Do you pray for the love of this venture so that giving to it will become your self-interest?

Stages of Commitment AD6

To the degree you are committed, what you do will be pleasurable, free from conflict, fruitful and rewarding. It will be one-pointed in direction; it will have depth and meaning; it will be successful; and it will bear the stamp and feeling of blessedness.

[Commitment: Cause and Effect](#) PL 196

Stage Four: A commitment to Pathwork Helpership and leadership.

You are now entering the 4th stage, whether you are an apprentice, a junior helper or a senior helper. This means, in addition to all the previous questions and commitments in the previous three stages, (which you should specifically pronounce, each separately), that you carry

responsibility for another soul. You need to think and pray very deeply whether this is indeed the path you wish to remain on.

Helpers and people involved in other activities of responsibility within the community; i.e. all leadership falls into this category. Here the commitment is total, the surrender to God's will unquestioned, the openness to all existing possibilities unbarricaded. Last but not least, resistances fully admitted, rather than justified and rationalized. (Obviously everyone may have periods of darkness where this is all forgotten and strong defensive positions adopted. Throughout such periods, all peers should stand by with vigorous help, loving, caring, but also firmly removing all untruthful, justified defenses). This category is clearly motivated by serving the greater cause and God's will.

Question 1. Do you commit yourself to carry out your responsibilities faithfully with your workers in all ways?

Question 2. Do you cleanse your motives daily that you wish to give to the person whom you help without ulterior motives, not withstanding any ego or power reasons, motives for personal gain, etc.? These motives may still exist, but they can be eliminated every day by making anew this commitment to Jesus Christ who personally guides you in this task.

Question 3. Do you consider your own Pathwork, apart from the benefits it brings you in your personal fulfillment, a necessary prerequisite for executing your duty as a helper, for being able to be the best you can be?

Question 4. Do you commit yourself to become a model, an example for those whom you will help, and others who will look to you as an authority figure?

Question 5. Do you do your utmost in your focus in your personal Pathwork to resolve whatever authority problem you may still have? For how can you be a truly inspiring authority and leader if your attitude toward authority is still distorted? Are you willing to give up the seesaw between placating, submission, and rebellion and spite? Do you give up the ruse to use the latter as an antidote against the former?

Question 6. Are you willing to be prepared to deal with inevitable hostility, hate, maligning of your workers, even though it is painful, rather than avoiding this issue, diverting your worker's feelings onto others and in any way colluding with them so as not to have to deal with this pain?

Question 7. In this ritual celebration of initiating your new status, you establish a strong spiritual root and bond. *If you tear up this form by suddenly dissolving it on the material level, you inflict harm on your workers, those who have looked up to you and, most of all, on yourself.* Are you fully aware of this responsibility, and are you willing to honor it?

Question 8. As a helper, it has definitely become your task to also contribute to the community in some manner, according to your gifts and talents. Are you prepared to give this?

Stages of Commitment AD6

Study Guide © Jan Rigsby: 2022

Guide Quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999

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