

Pathwork™ Steps

SHAME

Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture 31

Full text all lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

When we spirits observe human beings, we can always see your bad need of spiritual nourishment. ... when it comes to spiritual nourishment, most human beings starve themselves. ... the most important substance of spiritual food is self-development. ...if you are not quite happy -- in spite of occasional outer difficulties -- you have denied your spirit some of the nourishment it craves, most probably in the right way of self-development, of self-recognition.

Tonight I will discuss the subject of shame. There is a right kind of shame and a wrong kind of shame. The right kind of shame, differently expressed, would mean true repentance. Without this kind of shame, there could never be the incentive for self-development. True repentance is therefore a constructive and very positive element. But there is also the wrong kind of shame. You say, "I am so bad, I am hopeless, there is just nothing doing." With this attitude you not only wallow in self-pity, but what is even more important and harmful, this attitude expresses to all intents and purposes the sluggishness that prohibits you from lifting yourself up and working actively on the elimination of that which is wrong in you. Furthermore, this attitude becomes more and more unreasonable and unjust, for you still demand and expect respect and love from others although you do not respect and love yourself -- not, mind you, because of your shortcomings, but in the deepest regions of your being, you cannot respect yourself because of this wrong attitude, this wrong kind of shame that just makes you passive where you should be active. Thus you find yourself in a vicious cycle. You do not have to be perfect in order to respect yourself; all you have to do is to have a realistic attitude about your imperfections and adopting a constructive attitude in regard to them. The more your self-respect is established, the less you will crave for the respect of others, for you then rest secure within yourself. And this will so change your inner attitude and your emanations that you must have a different effect on others. This will make it so much easier for your surroundings actually to give you the love and the respect you desired in the first place.

It may not have occurred to you that this wrong kind of shame comes from your pride and furthers your pride even more. The moment you hopelessly despair about the lower side of your nature, you have not accepted yourself as you are. That means you are lacking the humility of courageously facing everything about yourself -- and that is pride. So the wrong kind of shame means pride, laziness, injustice, and escaping your present reality. And this makes you feel guilty, my friends, not the actual faults you may possess.

But the wrong attitude brings further hazards. Because of your pride, because of your need of respect and love from others, you begin to withdraw with what you really think and feel about yourself and hide it behind a wall, so to speak. You dare not stand up for what you really are because your emotions say that if you would be yourself, you would be despised. As I said before, the more you lack self-respect, the more important the respect of others becomes to you. So you create a mask self. In some subtle way, you become a fake. And that in turn makes you even more despondent with yourself, you despise yourself even more.

You, whoever you are, feel ashamed of something. Big or small, grave or unimportant, that is not the point, but you feel ashamed. You know how you react. You cover it up, you hide it, you appear to be without that something you are ashamed of. This is the wall that separates you from others. In this way you can never be sure that you are really loved and appreciated. For always this little voice in you keeps saying, "If they only knew how I really am, what I have done (or whatever it may be), they would not love me." And that makes you alone and suffering and cold. You feel all the affection given to you is destined for the person you appear to be but not for the person you really are. ... So the only way to build a secure ground on which to stand in life is to take off the pretense you have laboriously planted all your life.

This seems a hard step at first, my friends; and again I want to stress, you are not expected to tell everyone you meet your secrets. Choose the right person to whom you can open up; choose the person who can help you; and then choose the people you are really close with and who have to know you as you really are. Otherwise you can never be really yourself.

True repentance in the positive sense will therefore simply take stock of the self and accept the weaknesses in their present state, deeply desiring to change them, but realistically recognizing that the change can only come by forever and ever anew recognizing the deeply ingrained fault and comparing the faulty reaction to the ideal state. Thus humility is learned while the fault lingers on by necessity, for it cannot be overcome so quickly. The moment you will not want to appear better or more than you are, even in your own eyes, you will have taken yourself down from the high place you have put yourself. Then, and only then, can you start rebuilding, after having torn down the false house.

If you have the courage to stumble one hundred thousand times over the same faults and forever again lift yourself up and try again, recognizing your weakness, then you pay God the debt you owe Him, then you are worthy of His grace; then you are truly on the path. ... **But if every time after you stumble again over a recognized fault, you become so despondent and depressed that you despair with yourself, that you even want to give up and say "this is senseless," you have the wrong kind of shame, the destructive and weakening kind that is not pleasing to God and that will never get you anywhere.** For as long as you despair so easily, there is too much pride in you; and the healing, curative action of being able to observe your own weaknesses in the true light of what they are -- not exaggerating them and not diminishing them either -- will not be able to affect your soul. ...

Besides that, the faults you are battling against are often ingrained in you for many, many incarnations, so you cannot expect to get rid of them within a few years. But if you are capable of meeting these weaknesses and your inability to change them immediately in spite of your best will and hard work, and if you meet them with open eyes and a healthy attitude and, while you are still stumbling over them, learn humility and to place yourself on the height you really belong on -- not too low, not too high -- then, even while you are still imperfect in one or the other respect, you contribute the ground stones to this very healthy and normal inner make-up you need. Think about this well, my friends. Meditate on these words.

And therefore, you will perhaps begin to understand or sense why it is so necessary on the path, at one time or another, to be able to talk openly about yourself to the qualified person -- and then to the people you are really close with. For, as long as you keep things hidden within you, it puts everything out of proportion. You may exaggerate one thing and underestimate another, while another person who is detached from your problem and your own inner struggles may see the things in the right light. The moment you open up to another person, this indicates an act of humility, at least towards that one person. So, to that one person, you show yourself as you are, or to some degree, perhaps, to begin with. Even if that person does not give you one piece of advice, you will instantly feel relief, the relief your spirit has cried for. And you feel better, all of a sudden you see things differently; it is the law of brotherhood. Something in you says, "At that moment I do not want to appear better than I am, I show myself as I am; I do not strive for respect and love that I think is not really due me because of these things I am ashamed of." Because you are wrong in that too -- love and respect is due every living creature, but you think it is not due you because of something or other you keep in hiding. So you can see that the wrong kind of shame also violates the law of brotherhood, in addition to the aforementioned violations.

Guide Lecture quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999
Full text all lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Pathwork™ Steps

SELF-WILL, PRIDE, AND FEAR

Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture 30

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

Since the fall, these three attributes became stronger and stronger in the measure the fall progressed; they blur your basic light. It is the purpose of the path of purification not only to sense, as I just said, what your basic light is like -- for it is not the same with everyone -- but it is of utmost importance to realize that self-will, pride, and fear exist in you, to what degree, how they interact, how one is dependent of the other.

Self-Will:

I will repeat that free will can be used for good or for bad; free will is important. You cannot say it serves only good purposes, for, as just said, it can also be used for evil ones, but certainly self-development cannot be attained without the full use of free will. The will of God cannot be fulfilled unless you use your free will to do so out of your own accord, out of your own choosing. Free will is the greatest gift you have been endowed with and without which you could never attain a Godlike status. But self-will is the will of the little self, the little ego. Self-will strives to get what it wants, regardless of the consequences, regardless of harm that may be done to others and therefore ultimately also to the self. Only, the little ego is too blind to understand this. And self-will in its blind and immature state is equally too blind to realize that what is desired against spiritual law must bring hardship and imprisonment to the self. A crass example is a spiritually underdeveloped person, let us say a criminal: he will use his self-will in a very obvious way to serve his immediate seeming advantages, disregarding all laws, spiritual as well as human ones. ... The average human being does not commit crimes or antisocial acts, partly because he realizes that it is wrong -- even if he is unreligious, his sense of ethics is already developed enough to desist from the desires of the lower self that may still have such wishes -- and partly because he is simply afraid to get into conflicts with his surroundings, and not because of a particular sense of ethics and morals. But we are not discussing the action of the self-will, or following the self-will, for to none of you would this be applicable in such obvious cases. We are discussing the feelings, the emotional currents of self-will, and these are within each of you. For each unpurified being, perhaps unconsciously, desires things that are wrong, things that are against spiritual law. And this conflict between the conscious desire and unconscious desire represents the greatest handicap in your development. Therefore it is of utmost importance that you muster the courage to, as I say again and again, test your feelings, translate them into clear and concise words so as to realize "Here I have a desire coming from my little ego, from my self-will, that does not correspond with the other part of my nature that is equally as real as this heretofore hidden part."

Fear:

But how does that connect with fear, let us say? If your self-will is strong -- and it can be all the stronger if it is unconscious, be sure about that -- you must constantly be afraid that the desires of this self-will will not be gratified. So as there is self-will, fear must be coupled with it. For deep down in your heart, you do know that all the wishes of your self-will can never be fulfilled; they are for the most part impossible, unreasonable wishes. Perhaps not unreasonable as such, perhaps what you desire exists with other people, but in your own particular case, due to your own previous lives and the

hindrances you have put into your soul that you have concocted yourself, what you wish cannot be fulfilled, at least not at this time unless you find out these hindrances so as to eliminate them. So the currents within you run in different directions. The self-will current desires very strongly something that is wrong or impossible or contradictory to other currents within you; and at the same time, there is the knowledge within you of your deeper, more profound being, let us say the higher self, that knows very well that these are unfulfillable wishes. And this knowledge, since the self-will is not eliminated, creates a fear. Perhaps if you meditate on these words, my friends, you will gain a great deal more insight into your soul, your life, and your present situation. Again it is not sufficient that you hear these words once in order to really understand them. So if you meditate over them and apply them to you personally, search within you for where you may have such wishes and for how the fear comes automatically, due to these wishes of the self-will. You will thus get a step further on the ladder upwards, but you must have the courage of searching in that direction, for only there lies your liberation, the liberation of your own chains.

Pride:

Now let us turn to pride: what does pride mean? It means that ego is more important than the other person, not only in the sense that may apply to self-will, namely that you desire advantages of any sort, but also in the sense of vanity. He who feels the humiliation of another person less than his own, still has too much pride. And who does not feel that way, my friends? Who is really and truly equal in his reactions to other people's humiliations as he is to his own? None of you. All of you feel that if you yourself are humiliated, you are hurt; if the other person is humiliated in the same way, you may feel sorry, but it certainly gives you an entirely different reaction no matter how much you try to tell yourself that this is not so. Be honest with yourself, and this honesty will surely do more for you than the self-deception that you have the same reaction to another person's humiliation as to your own. ... If you learn to be more detached about this vanity of yours, then and then only will you have the proper proportion from yourself to others and therefore have the same reactions for others as for yourself. That is what is meant by loving your brother as you love yourself. But as long as you feel differently for your brother than for yourself, it means, the violation of the spiritual law of justice, along with the law of brotherhood. For your reactions are surely not just. You may act in justice, that is true; that is already something for some people, but perhaps not enough for you. You know that your actions, and even your thoughts, are not sufficient for the pure emanation to penetrate; your lightforce cannot be liberated as long as your feelings do not correspond to these laws. So thus you do feel injustice; you put yourself emotionally on a higher plane than your brother. And the moment your vanity and pride has such an importance, again you must be in constant fear, being afraid that the gratification of your pride will not be granted to you by your surroundings. So you must give up this desire to have your own person on an elevated level compared to your fellow creatures, emotionally speaking. Only in that way will you be free of fear.

How they are connected:

Each single day brings you a number of possibilities to observe your feelings in exactly this way. Only, unfortunately you pass by most of these opportunities for self-knowledge and purification. You let them slip by. And if an unpleasant feeling comes up in you, you are very quick to put it aside. ... You only remove the symptom, you do not cut out the cancer within you. So think about these words, meditate about them.

Pathwork Steps

SHAME

Worksheet for Lecture #31

Full text of this lecture is available at www.pathwork.org

1. Do you (or have you in the past) starve yourself by refusing to give yourself spiritual nourishment? How did you justify affecting your progress / process by such extreme means?

But when it comes to spiritual nourishment, most human beings starve themselves. There is a great confusion about what spiritual nourishment really means. It does not merely mean to read, hear, or learn about spiritual truth or law, about God and His creation. It does not even merely mean prayer and meditation, which, of course, if done in the right way, is also a very important part of spiritual nourishment. But the most important substance of spiritual food is self-development.

2. Can you see where you have wallowed in self pity? Where you you now say, "I am so bad, I am hopeless, there is just nothing that can be done?"

...The more you lack self-respect, the more important the respect of others becomes to you. So you create a mask self. In some subtle way, you become a fake. And that in turn makes you even more despondent with yourself, you despise yourself even more. And the vicious cycle continues in full force and brings you into deeper emotional conflicts until you develop the courage and humility to break it.

3. Draw your vicious circle. Where do you believe you have to be perfect?

4. Set aside some quiet time, and focus on the phrase 'I do not have to be perfect in order to respect myself' over and over until you feel clear about your feelings towards this concept. What emotions surfaced?

So the wrong kind of shame means pride, laziness, injustice, and escaping your present reality... But by having the wrong kind of shame, you do escape this reality, for your emotions express that you will not accept yourself as you are. The moment you hopelessly despair about the lower side of your nature, you have not accepted yourself as you are. That means you are lacking the humility of courageously facing everything about yourself -- and that is pride.

5. Where are you a fake in your current life? What are you trying to accomplish? What does hiding behind this mask cost you?

6. Do you take responsibility for the misery in your life, or do you still honestly believe that others are responsible for your misery?

7. What do you think it would cost you to 'take off the pretence you have laboriously planted all your life'? Is there a way you can jump-start the process, or accelerate even further than the pace you have chosen? Are you using pragmatism or rationalisation to avoid moving faster (or at all)? What are you still afraid of?

8. 'Spiritual food is when you try to compare where your feelings still deviate from the ideal state which I have explained here...' Please try to explain, in your own words, how you understand this statement.

9. 'In each one of you, there is a certain number of faults with which you are in love'. Usually, these faults are bound up in pride. What is one such fault in you, that you are in love with and hesitant to expose- much less, to work on?

Worksheet questions © Jan Rigsby 2003

Guide Lecture quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999

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

SHAME OF THE HIGHER SELF

Excerpts from Pathwork Guide Lecture No. 66

Full text all lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Tonight I should like to discuss another aspect of the human personality, the shame about his higher self, the best and noblest in his heart. This may sound incredible; nevertheless, it is so. I am certain that you will all recognize the truth of these words when you listen carefully.

When a child feels rejected -- and you know that each child does, whether this feeling is justified or unjustified makes no difference as far as the child is concerned -- in most instances the child feels more rejected by one particular parent. Again I say that it need not be so in reality. In reality, the very parent who appears so may have more real love for the child than the other parent. But the way the child feels it is what counts in the accumulation of inner depressions which form the images -- the petrified wrong conclusions and the patterns of his subsequent emotional life.

The child would like to be loved and approved of to a much greater extent than is possible, particularly by this one parent who seems to reject the child. When this exclusive tenderness and affection is not forthcoming, the child feels it as a rejection which is followed by a confusion arising in the soul. In vaguely felt emotions, love and acceptance from this particular parent becomes the most desirable aim, all the more desirable because it seems unattainable to the degree that the child wishes. The desirable aim -- exclusive love and acceptance -- is confused with the parent withholding it. Hence, in the confused, immature mind of the child, the rejector becomes desirable, taking the place of that which was originally desirable -- all-exclusive love, approval, and acceptance. A further result of this confusion is that the rejector seems unloving. He is desirable also because that which is wanted from him is desirable. Therefore, to be unloving is a desirable state. The psyche says: "If I am unloving, I will be desirable. My love will be sought. Just as I do not reject my rejector, so will I no longer be rejected." In a certain way, the rejector seems cold, aloof, free of emotions. Therefore this behavior pattern -- imagined or real -- becomes desirable and something to emulate.

You can find the existence of this conflict by various symptoms. You can find it by self-observation as to how you react in certain situations, or rather how your emotions react and behave! It is often manifested in ways ever so subtle. These subtleties are at work when you are ashamed to ask for something. When you show your heart and thereby expose your innermost need, you detect an acute feeling of shame. Or, for instance, you are ashamed to pray. Does not that which you are ashamed of -- the need of your heart, the demonstration of your true self with all its loving generosity, as well as prayer -- stand for the best in you?

If the situation is such that the rejector is outwardly the "superior" one, always the winner, while the loving parent is subdued, apparently weaker and under the domination of the rejecting parent, and perhaps even a little bit despised -- whether this is actually so or not makes no difference as long as the child feels it to be so -- this conflict becomes even stronger within the soul. Then, in addition to one's own experience of rejection, the child witnesses the apparent or actual rejection of the loving parent. This creates the impression that the loving parent is weak, while the rejector is strong. Therefore love becomes weakness, and aloofness from love a sign of strength, at least unconsciously. The child's desire is to be as strong as the desirable parent and certainly not as weak as the undesirable one.

A further complication is that often the outward appearance does not correspond to the inner situation. In other words, outwardly one parent may be much more domineering than the other. But inwardly it may be just the opposite. Thus, you ally yourself in an ever so subtle way with the rejector, and together with him (or her), you reject the weak parent. The mere inclination is sufficient for you to feel this act as betrayal, and in a sense, it is, of course. The betrayal is aggravated because you abandon the very thing that you yearn for.

Thus you betray the best in you because you prohibit the unfoldment of your love capacity. At the same time, you betray the parent who has actually given you what you desired to receive from the other parent. That very act of giving, you now (unconsciously) consider as a weakness that deserves contempt.

This betrayal is subtle, but it is at the same time the most dominant conflict in your soul. It is necessary in the course of your work that you find in you that part wherein you betray not only the best, the highest, and the noblest in you, but also the one parent who was the weaker one to begin with and who might have loved and cherished you in a much more satisfying way.

This betrayal weighs you down with guilt. It is the deepest of your guilts. It eliminates your self-assurance, your self-confidence, your self-respect. This betrayal is responsible for the deepest roots of your inferiority feelings. You do not trust yourself with this betrayal locked in your soul. If you do not trust people, you are bound to attract those who will constantly confirm to you that you have no reason to trust them. But if you genuinely trust others, you will have the proper discrimination and judgment, and you will attract a good many who will warrant your trust in mankind. But this can only happen if you first establish the reason for trusting yourself. And this, in turn, can only happen if you find and eliminate the basic betrayal I have indicated.

So, my friends, find in yourself this betrayal which you have been carrying. Follow it through even if you no longer have the opportunity with your parents. You may be transferring these same feelings to other people who in some remote way replace them psychologically. Whenever you find yourself in a situation in which you reject a person who is ready to offer you genuine love and affection or friendship or help in some way, and for one reason or another you feel (it need not actually be so) that this person is helpless or weak or dependent in some way, he or she takes on the role of the "weak" parent. On the other hand, there may be a person who is not so ready to give you what you wish. It need not be love; it may be respect, admiration, acceptance. Then this person takes on the role of the rejecting parent.

This act of betrayal is so very subtle, my dear friends, that you cannot put your finger on it by any outer acts you commit. No deeds are to be found (at least in most cases) which may prove the act of betrayal. If you are not truly desirous of examining your innermost reactions and emotions in this respect, no one could convince you. Your arguments proving that it is not so would always sound most convincing. But your heart will never be convinced, and that is what really matters.

To present the problem in its simplest terms, we may say that it is based on the following wrong conclusion. Love is weakness; withholding love and affection is strength. Since you do not wish to be weak and needy, you not only emulate the person who corresponds to your wrong concept of strength, but you also betray the one who seems weak to you. Find the part in your emotions wherein you ascribe actual or imagined weakness to love and humility that is tendered in the healthy and real sense. Find in you the part which believes that strength is aloofness or a kind of coldness. When you find that, you will find your self-betrayal.

Your true self is very often hidden behind a wall of stone. The main components of this wall behind which you hide the real you is the shame of imagined weakness, of being yourself with all the tenderness and understanding, with all the sympathy and vulnerability of your loving heart.

How much it means, you may already sense at this point. For, the goal of purification is to free your true personality. That is the real meaning of freedom and the only possible way to live happily, to be strong in the healthy and real sense. You have no idea what a tremendous relief it is to remove this phantom world and live in reality. You will live in freedom, you will find it no longer necessary to betray the best in you or in another.

Pathwork™ Steps

Spiritual and Emotional Health Through Restitution for Real Guilt

Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture # 109

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

Perhaps the most difficult thing for man is that of facing his lower self. And, after all, it is in connection with the lower self that real guilt exists. Man goes to any length to avoid facing the lower self. Or perhaps he is capable of and willing to face parts of it, yet certain parts he is absolutely unwilling to accept. He is so frightened by the possible implications and so eager to be better than he can possibly be at the moment, that he would rather produce much worse guilts that are untrue than accept the tiniest real guilt belonging to the area of the lower self that he is unwilling to accept.

In order to make man capable of facing his lower self in its entirety, he has first to learn to accept and to forgive himself. This means to recognize and then to stop the tendency to moralize with oneself, to understand the harm of perfectionism. This may seem quite paradoxical. For on the one hand, I invite you to face your lower self, your real guilts, and to make restitution for them, to purify yourself; while on the other, I emphasize how dangerous perfectionism, self-condemnation, moralizing, false guilt feelings are. ... This is why it is so important -- as long as one deals with these respective personality levels -- to shy away from any implications of sinfulness, from anything that might even remotely appear as condemnation on my part so as not to encourage this tendency in yourself.

Self-exploration and facing lesser "evils" make the psyche strong enough to face very unflattering truths. However, this strength can be cultivated by the right kind of meditation and thought process and the proper self-observation as to your reaction whenever you come close to this phase.

Here, it is a question of saying to yourself: "Do I wish to pamper myself? Do I wish to be in self-pity? Or can I just calmly look at myself with the negative tendencies that side by side exist with the constructive ones?" If this wish is cultivated, daily uttered, and sincerely meant, your extreme reaction to certain destructive tendencies, which so far you only vaguely sense, will give way to calmly looking at yourself from this particular point of view. It is this very attitude that is the prerequisite to creating the resiliency of facing yourself in utter truthfulness. It demands of you the ability not to lose a sense of proportion, or rather the understanding that this is what you tend to do -- lose your sense of proportion. When you approach certain trends you are not ready to accept in yourself, you produce, almost artificially, as it were, an overreaction of despair, hurt, self-abasement, or a feeling of injustice. ... You fluctuate between the two extremes of either being good or being bad, rather than seeing the good and the bad. It is this very "and," instead of "or" you have to keep in mind.

Psychology has reached the insight that false guilts are produced, that weakness and paralysis exist, that impairment of inherent productive faculties exist. But it has as yet not, or not fully, understood the underlying cause for these factors, which basically is always the nonfacing of the lower self, the carrying of burdens of unrestituted real guilts. ... Therefore one has to proceed with caution, or rather with the proper timing, in order to approach this deepest cause for human unhappiness and illness of the soul. So long as worldly psychology seeks for other causes than impaired integrity, cures will not really take place, only occasional alleviation of symptoms.

As I have said, the first step necessary is a concise understanding of what nonfacing of lower self areas does to you. In not facing these areas, you are incapable of dealing with the results of the trends of the lower self in question. Thus you load a double guilt upon yourself: (1) the actual selfishness and lack of love, manifesting in deed, thought, or feeling; (2) the evasion and self-deception and hypocrisy of pretending often the opposite, and therefore your not making restitution for the original fault.

Such a double-edged guilt produces false guilt; a sense of weakness and ineffectiveness; a lack of self-respect with subsequent feelings of insecurity and inferiority -- therefore dependency upon others to restore this damaged self-respect. This dependency weakens, causes submissiveness, and allows the person to be exploited. As you know, all of these

tendencies are not out in the open. They have to be dealt with, explored, and understood in the second major phase. It often takes a considerable length of time to even become aware of the false guilts, let alone the real ones.

The various means you employ to gain acceptance from others, many of which have been found in the course of this work, are always a result of not accepting yourself. This desperate struggle to be accepted by others in lieu of self-acceptance impairs your integrity even further. It always, in some subtle way, causes you to betray yourself and others, to sell your soul, as it were.

Self-respect and self-assurance can only exist if you do not hide from your impaired integrity. When you come courageously face to face with that part in yourself, you will repair damage that cannot otherwise be repaired. In order to muster up the necessary courage and concentration, you have to understand fully the corroding effect on your life of the best that is in you. This will give you the incentive. ... This happens by looking at your reactions. You can use all of your efforts, your will, your concentration, and your acute self-observation so as to detect the fine, and sometimes not even subtle, reactions of shying away from facing yourself in this touchy area. This observation will enable you to remove the blindfolds which are not at all unconscious. They manifest in many ways, every day. If you will just point your finger at them, you will by that very action remove them. By having the incentive, I mean just this attitude of discovering your disproportionate hurt from any suggestion of certain negative trends, your disproportionate fear and rebellion against such implications coming from others or yourself or simply through certain events of your daily living -- also your disproportionate reaction that now you are no good, which might not be thought of in these exact terms, but translating your emotions, this is what it amounts to.

It is not sufficient merely to recognize it although, of course, it is the first necessary step in this particular phase. ... But the time will come when you will want to undertake such actions of making good. You will truly want to even though it may mean overcoming a certain resistance. ... In fact, when this stage arrives through the process of organic growth and development, such a possibility will be a welcome way out for you. Without this possibility, you may remain in despair because you falsely believe that wrongs cannot be made good, that they are unattonable. This is often an unconscious reason for not facing the guilt. One can make restitution when one really wants to. ... When you are fully aware of the pain you may have inflicted on others, your desire will be strong enough to remove that pain, and then you will also find the right way. But as long as you do not want to face the pain you have inflicted, you cannot truly want to make good for it. And, furthermore, because you do not want to become aware of inflicted pain, you do not want to face your lower self in its entirety.

In short, my friends, two major steps are necessary for you to free yourselves of the crippling effects of real guilts and unrecognized aspects of the lower self. One is finding and facing these aspects, calmly and proportionately viewing these aspects, without self-condemnation or self-justification, yet fully taking responsibility for any wrong you have inadvertently done, directly or indirectly, by commission or omission. It is necessary to penetrate through all the false guilts, through the paralysis and the weakness and the areas where you are exploited, and which you consider a neurosis -- which it is even if it is only an effect and not the cause -- until you come to face areas you have kept "private" so far. And the second major step is the restitution, which is often subdivided into two parts: the expression of it to another human being and ceasing to carry it alone, and the finding of a way to make good and to atone.

This will give you a new energy and vitality in your daily life that will make you capable of fully living. It will also provide you with the stamina, flexibility, and resiliency to meet life in all its aspects -- making the best of difficulties and fully enjoying life's offerings. In other words, my dear ones, this indeed is the final cure of the soul.

Guide Lecture quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999
Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Pathwork™ Steps

Notes for Teleconference on Shame PL 31

SHAME: a powerful emotion caused by a strong sense of GUILT, creating feelings of embarrassment and unworthiness, leading to stronger judgments around dishonor, condemnation, and disgrace.

‘A shame’ = a great disappointment (= to fail to satisfy the hope, desire or expectation of; to frustrate or thwart.

Shame of the Higher Self: any time we try to hide our real self, or any quality of who we truly are, we become vulnerable to shame.

‘Right shame’ leads to repentance, true self respect, humility

(ref: Spiritual and Emotional Health through Restitution for Real Guilt pgl 109)

“He is so frightened by the possible implications and so eager to be better than he can possibly be at the moment, that he would rather produce much worse guilts that are untrue than accept the tiniest real guilt belonging to the area of the lower self that he is unwilling to accept.”

‘Wrong shame’ leads to guilt complex, sluggishness, lack of self-respect.

Comes from pride and furthers pride; “I should be better than I am”.

Promotes fear; “No one else must know the truth fully”.

Manipulated by self-will, used as a verb;

To cause to feel shame, put to shame

To bring dishonor or disgrace upon

To disgrace by surpassing

To force by making ashamed

(ref: Pride, Self-Will and Fear pgl 30)

This cannot be worked with in the abstract; it occurs in the tiniest details of our lives.

Example; Hot ice cream

Another principle mentioned in this lecture;

The importance of openness with others, specifically as suggested previously (in pgl 27 – Finding Your Faults) around inviting discussion around your faults.

Worksheet questions © Jan Rigsby 2008

Guide Lecture quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999

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

Pathwork™ Steps

Defusing Shame

1. Ground yourself in who you are today.
 - Sense into your capacity as an adult to deal with a variety of situations well.
 - Sense into your positive intention for self-development.
 - Sense into your higher self, the part of you that can access spirit.
2. Remember your child self as if you stood beside yourself and held your own hand.
 - Allow your intuition to choose the memory.
 - Notice how old you are, how you are dressed, what you look like.
3. Invite your child self to remember a moment that felt shameful.
 - Allow that for the sake of this exercise, it's useful for the example to be a mild one rather than something major. The idea is to learn to work with shame differently than you may have in the past.
 - Every child makes mistakes, misbehaves, tries to get away with something. Every child has upset, disappointed, or angered their parent or guardian.
 - Holding the hand of your adult self, find one of those moments.
4. Allow your child self to fully feel the feelings, knowing that these are only memories.
 - Just notice the feelings.
 - Notice that you are not alone this time.
 - Sense into the who, what, where, when of the feelings of shame.
5. It is possible that some of you have remembered a moment of real shame. For others, it may be a moment where you simply feared it was real. Whether the shame was real or false, now allow your adult to sense what was real in that moment, in that situation, at that time.
7. Notice what your images might have been, expectations that a child might not have been able to meet. What kind of child 'should' you have been? How 'should' you have acted? How 'should' you have been seen or received?
8. If the shame was caused by real guilt, what did you learn? Allow that you may have needed a strong emotional experience of being wrong. See if you can accept yourself as you were -- imperfect, undeveloped, sometimes unaware. Notice what feelings remain.
9. If the shame was false, notice how the strong feelings might have exaggerated the situation and masked other feelings. What can you notice this time that had been hidden? See if you can accept yourself as you were – imperfect, undeveloped, sometimes unaware. Notice what feelings remain.
10. Come back into the present moment. Sense into any feelings which might still be active. Notice any feelings about the memory which may have changed or shifted.

*Pathwork™ Steps***Shame of the Higher Self – Exercise**

1. Sit for a while and meditate / consider your feelings from childhood about being rejected / abandoned / not seen or heard.
2. For each parent, make a list with two columns. In one column, list your loving feelings for this parent. In the other column, list any anger, resentment, or disappointment.
3. Note which parent you felt more rejected by.
4. Which parent did you see as stronger / superior / desirable? Why?
5. Which parent did you see as weaker / inferior / undesirable? Why?
6. What qualities of the stronger parent do you see in yourself? What are your judgments about these qualities?
7. What qualities of the weaker parent do you see in yourself? What are your judgments about these qualities?
8. Allow that feelings which were suppressed may surface. It is useful to go through this exercise several times over a period of weeks, noticing and changes in feelings and interpretations.

Worksheet questions © Jan Rigsby 2008
Guide Lecture quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999
Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org