

Pathwork™ Steps

Decision Making

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 32

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Week 1: Deciding to Believe that All Things Work Together for Good

Week 2: Self-Responsibility in Decision Making

Week 3: Facing the inability to love; Resentment, Shame and Guilt

Week 4: Positive and Negative Elements of Ambition

Week 1: Deciding to Believe that All Things Work Together for Good

The true love of God means to work spiritually, to develop, and to get to know divine law in all its psychological aspects as they pertain to you personally. In order to be able to do so, -- in order to get to know yourself thoroughly so that not only your deeds, your words, and your thoughts are in conformity with spiritual law, but also your emotions, -- you must love God. (The latter is, of course, a lengthy process.)

Only he who is on this road can truly say he loves God. How then can we explain the meaning that all things work together for good? And this is indeed the truth, my friends! For him who follows this path of development and purification, whatever happens must be for good! Only when you have reached a certain stage of this development will you come to realize the truth of these words. There is no apparent tragedy, mishap, or misfortune that does not carry some good for him who follows this path and thus proves his love for God.

Yet so many of you do not know this. You are still living under the delusion that this is a world of coincidence and chance or even a world of injustice. Though you may not think this is true, many of you feel so. And that is your great error and your tragic illusion.

On the other hand, a person who is not following this path (or, in other words, a person who does not love God above everything) will find that the best things that happen to him will not be for the good; at a later time they might create difficulties and tests that only begin to work for good -- perhaps incarnations later -- the moment this path has been started. But up to this time, nothing is for the good in an ultimate sense.

However, from that time on, which is the most crucial period in a soul's evolution, everything that happens, has happened, and will happen must be for the good. As long as these words remain merely words for you, it is not sufficient. You must come to the point when you deeply realize the truth of these words. This is why I am giving each and every one of you **this suggestion for meditation:**

Exercise 1a: Think of all the tragedies and difficulties and troubles of your life up to now -- past and present. If you can find some good in it, you will have accomplished a further step upwards.

Reflect on the possibility that *“there is no apparent tragedy, mishap, or misfortune that does not carry some good for you; that whatever happens must be for good.”*

Allow your arguments *against* this possibility to come forward; do not hold them back.

Simply keep asking, *what if whatever happens must be for good.*

When the understanding is still lacking

Where you cannot find the good in a particular situation or happening, this ought to be an indication for you that a very important portion of self-knowledge is still lacking. If it were not lacking, you could immediately find the connection, one in which each misfortune will touch off a particular fault or ignorance of an emotional current running contrary to divine law.

If you do know all your inner weak points, you will come to understand that without such apparently disadvantageous happenings, they could not come into your conscious mind; you could not truly understand them -- which is the basic requirement before you can alter them.

But where you cannot make the connection, ask [others; the Guide spoke of coming to him for private sessions here] more precise questions on the subject, and [they will help you] find the connecting point in your own soul.

Remember, my friends, once you are on this path, even your wrong actions and faulty judgments become beneficial to you -- not just things that seem to happen from the outside!

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Exercise 1b: Consider a painful, disruptive, or negative experience. Using your Observer Self [ref: [Chapter 3 of The Undefended Self](#)] step away from your desire for a positive outcome. Believe for a moment that this experience is the only way -- the best way -- for you to understand a truth that you have been resistant to. Try to verbalize this understanding. For example:

-- *The emotional dynamics of my family of origin are angry / unfair / _____.*

-- *I am resistant to learning about _____.*

(withstanding unfair accusations; loving others, even then they speak and act without loving consideration of myself or others; allowing others the right to have their own spiritual path, etc.)

-- *This is the only / best way I could learn about _____.*

(my desire to be righteous or to enact vengeance; my doubts about God/spiritual law, etc.)

-- *I will work to find any grain of truth. When I find it, I will admit it.*

Daily Review 1.0 from The Call PL 17

You can find out your true reactions about certain things, begin to pull off certain masks and pretenses, find out where you act against a [Spiritual Law](#) [PL 171]. It is like a puzzle you begin, when you cannot as yet see the picture; but if you are patient, you will succeed. Thus you will uncover your hidden anxieties and complexes which of course are responsible for your disease.

Let the whole day pass in front of your eyes, in your memory, and think of everything that has happened that has given you in some way a disharmonious feeling or reaction. No matter how wrong the other person may have been, the moment you have been touched by it, there must be something wrong within you. At first these incidents will appear entirely unconnected and isolated; they will be meaningless for you at the beginning. But later on, you will begin to sense -- at first, and then clearly understand, a pattern.

If you follow this through for some time to come, really faithfully, you will, after a while, see a clear pattern coming out of it. Pray for enlightenment and guidance every time you conduct this daily review, [The Call](#) PL 17

Daily Review 3.0 from PL 56

Learn to investigate your reactions, and ask yourself what the meaning and further significance of them may be. What do they imply? What lies behind the emotions you register in the most casual incidents of your life? What is the emotion you register just at first, and what is behind it?

The Capacity to Wish: Healthy and Unhealthy Motives in Desire PL 56

Week 2: Self-Responsibility in Decision Making

The subject of decision is a very, very important one in man's life, for everything is a decision. This is true not only of your deeds, your obvious and material choices, but it also involves every emotional attitude a decision holds.

The majority of human beings are incapable of making clear cut and mature decisions. That is why their souls become sick and suffering. That is why a great disorder is created in the soul, which of course leads to confusion and to conflicts. For you who are on this path, it might be very beneficial to start to view your life, particularly your conflicts, from that point of view.

As long as you are living in this sphere of matter, every decision offers two and sometimes more alternatives. With some decisions and in some cases, there are several wrong ways and one right way. Only mature and responsible searching will eventually show you what the right way is. However, in many instances, it actually does not matter on what way you decide, provided the decision has been made wholeheartedly, awarely, responsibly, not shirking any issues or possible results.

Even in the cases where one way would be right or better for you than the other alternatives, it is infinitely healthier for your soul, strange as this may appear at first, if you choose the wrong way but in the right attitude.

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Exercise 2a: Have you made a real decision about your spiritual work and self-development?

Or have you decided here and there superficially, not weighing, not facing what is involved. And then, as a result of it, when things naturally do not turn out to your satisfaction, do you then feel thwarted? Do you then revolt against your self, your surroundings, and with life in general?

What is the right and mature attitude with which to decide?

The answer is simply to know what you want; to know what is the price involved; to realize that you cannot fully have what you want on this earth sphere because there is always a price or a disadvantage with every alternative; **and to be wholly willing to pay the price** -- even before it becomes a certainty that the possible disadvantage may turn out to be true.

On the other hand, let us assume you chose by accident the right alternative. (When I say by accident, I mean that you have chosen as most people do -- immaturely, with half-closed eyes, not accepting beforehand the disadvantageous side.) In this way, you harm your soul a great deal more than by shouldering a needlessly more difficult alternative because for the moment it just seems better to you for one reason or another.

By doing it with the right attitude, you responsibly accept the price to be paid. So beware of making your decisions halfheartedly like a child, going into it with closed eyes, wishfully thinking that the price can be evaded. With each alternative, on one side lies an advantage and on the other side a disadvantage as long as you live in the world of matter. In high spiritual spheres and realms, this negative side does not exist anymore. On the other hand, in the lower spheres of darkness, no alternative carries with it an advantage, so to speak.

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Law of Paying the Price

There is a price to be paid for each desired gratification. *The Forces of Activity and Passivity -- Finding God's Will* PL29; Every advantage has its disadvantage. *Images: The Damage They Do* PL41; The disadvantageous side of each alternative or decision has to be faced and accepted. *Decision Making* PL32; 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 -- Freedom & Self-Responsibility* PL60.

The Spiritual Principles with which We Manage Ourselves to Create Heaven on Earth PC10

In your sphere there is always an advantage and a disadvantage as long as you have not raised your spiritual development to a point when, even while still living in the body in the world of matter, you have worked yourself up to these higher spheres where no disadvantage can befall you. But to reach such a point, you have to go through the laws governing this lower sphere that is rightfully yours for the moment; you have to fully accept these laws and keep them willingly, not being forced by life to do so. Then and only then will you reach that point, and not by trying to avoid the laws of your own world, no matter what "spiritual acrobatics" you may try.

By the same token, a human being bound to the world of darkness will have the very same conditions governing this latter world, on this earth sphere, in the subject just under discussion as well as in many others. This ties in with the first words of tonight's lecture, my friends [*Deciding to Love on the Level of Spirit*]. To love God means naturally, among many other things, to abide by these various laws -- and not only to abide by them, but also to accept them willingly.

One of these laws is that the disadvantageous side of each alternative or decision has to be faced and accepted. To make a mature decision means therefore to deliberate each alternative thoroughly -- to face not only the advantageous sides of all alternatives in making your choice, but also the disadvantageous equally.

When you have done that, knowing that whatever you choose, there is a price to be paid, you can ask yourself, *which price do you prefer to pay?* You can think it over to see if perhaps you do not prefer to risk a higher price on one side because the possible advantage seems worthwhile in comparison with the price. You will then have accepted another one of this earth life's rules -- *the uncertainty that also has to be accepted*. This includes the risk, the lackings of life, and that which offers you no risk-proof plan. This, too, is important in emotional health, my friends. In that way you act as a mature being, and your soul must benefit from it.

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Exercise 2b: We have all had experiences of being cheated, lied to, or fooled. Remember one incident in your life that still irritates you. Notice if you still want to 'even things up' or exact some form of vengeance, upon that individual or any group that you feel represents risk or lack.

Then look at your reaction to the **Law of Paying the Price**. Consider -- who is payment being made *to*? Do you believe that in the realm of spirit, you would be cheated, lied to, or fooled?

If the answer is No, what holds you back from paying a fair price for what you desire?

If the answer is Yes, consider the universal consequences if the realm of spirit lacks integrity/operates lawlessly, such as justifying everyone to also behave without integrity or law.

Law of Self-Responsibility

You create your own reality. *More on Image-Finding* PL40; Your life experiences are a reflection of the beliefs in your soul. You should never believe for one instance that what you experience is unjust and unfair, no matter how much it may appear that way. In the last analysis, in absolute truth and reality, it is your misconception that has caused it. *The Life Force in the Universe* PL48; Only you create your own happiness and unhappiness. Nothing can come your way that is not self-produced. *The Abyss of Illusion -Freedom & Self-Responsibility* PL60
The Spiritual Principles with which We Manage Ourselves to Create Heaven on Earth PC10

No one who makes a decision in this [mature] way will ever come to grief because of it! Nor will he ever have conflicts resulting from the lack of making decisions in that way. The conflicts are not created because of the possible wrong decision or the less advantageous one, but they are created because you go into it blindly, not weighing and not being ready to shoulder the price. This, my friends, happens with each one of you, here and elsewhere.

Some people have learned to some degree, at least in the more superficial realms of life, to decide properly. However, I do not see anyone who has made, and is making, his emotional decisions in this way.

Again, here I am giving you strong material with which to work on your path. Think again about all your conflicts and problems. Wherever they exist, in one way or another, you have not made your decisions properly.

Do not remain on the surface level. You will have to dig deeper into your emotions in order to find the answer. Within your emotions, sooner or later you must find -- provided you search honestly -- that you have somehow not made a whole decision. You had somehow hoped to gain the advantage without paying the disadvantage. And often you even hope -- again without thinking it out in clear-cut words -- to gain the advantage of each alternative, and to be spared the disadvantage of each side! This amounts to a cheating of life, and the result must inevitably be that life will teach you a lesson, and you will reap the disadvantages, standing on both or all sides you wished to avoid. If you test this emotional and, for the most part, unconscious current, what does this amount to? It amounts to greed.

On this earth sphere most people are greedy, not necessarily materially speaking, but emotionally. And when I say greedy, I mean you want to amass advantages without shouldering the responsibility of paying the price for them. That, of course needless to say, is a violation of one spiritual law.

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Law of Consciousness Reflects Experience

Working out of abundance, produces abundance; but working out of poverty and need produces more poverty and need. *The Function of the Ego in Relation to the Real Self* PL132
The Spiritual Principles with which We Manage Ourselves to Create Heaven on Earth PC10

Exercise 2c: Consider where you may manifest greed in your life, wanting advantages ‘without shouldering the responsibility of paying the price’. How does that reflect your experiences?

Week 3: Facing the inability to love; Resentment, Shame and Guilt

You all know that to love your fellow creatures is one of the important laws of the universe. We have discussed love at great length: how to acquire it, what stands in its way, how to face your inability to love as you would like to, etc.

As long as you are not completely purified, your love cannot be divine and perfect. Your love will be blurred in the measure to which you are still lacking purification.

There are various ways in which, according to the complexities of an individual's character, this deviation from divine love may take place. One way is that you put the loved one on too high a place. In other words, you invest the loved one with a perfection he or she does not possess as yet. And here you are doing a great wrong even though you may feel that this is really a proof of your love. This is not true.

It must be a burden to the loved one to be overestimated. Sometimes consciously, though more often subconsciously, the particular person in question or the loved subject will know or feel it and will therefore feel a compulsion to live up to that idealized image. On one hand, all human beings are starved for love; most seek it in the wrong way, namely to receive it first and give it perhaps afterwards. This is provided there is no risk involved. This longing for love seems to force the subject to strain and struggle to maintain this idealized image, feeling that if he fails to do so, love may be jeopardized.

On the other hand, the subject resents the giver of love because deep down it feels the love is wrong. The unpurified soul lacks the strength to be willing to jeopardize love given on wrong premises. So it feels compelled to create a mask self in which, of course, it never really feels comfortable, at ease, and loved for its own sake and for its real personality.

Exercise 3a : So I should like you to search within yourself, my friends: when you do love someone dear or close to you, do you unspokenly or even thoughtlessly demand too much perfection? In addition, there must be a lack of tolerance and compassion in you, a lack of being able to accept people as they are. You should be able to love a person, accepting his imperfections, not having to close your eyes to them. In that way, you will really bestow a gift on the loved one, for he will then feel free to be himself and not be forced or burdened in any way.

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When you find the affirmative answer, you will then know that this is not a good and healthy love, neither beneficial to you nor to the loved subject. It is to some measure in your power to help destroy the harmful masks of others. This you can do not only by destroying your own and courageously facing up to your real self, but also by trying to see the other person as he really is and loving him that way and not just a perfectionalized picture of him.

Furthermore, realize what your deeper and hidden reasons are for **needing a more perfect love subject than reality produces**. In all probability there is a measure of pride as a covered motive for this type of love you are bestowing.

Remember, my friends, when you do love, think about it and about how you are doing it. Think whether or not you are loving the wrong way.

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Resentment

QUESTION: I wanted to know what the fault is when you have feelings of rejection, culminating into feelings of resentment?

ANSWER: In the first place there is a vanity not being gratified. There is a lack of humility whereby the unconscious emotions claim that the personality must not be rejected, this must not happen to it. In this way, you want to be accepted by all, or by the person you have chosen. And you cannot bear that this desire of yours not be granted. (Again I emphasize that I am not speaking personally, since this same feeling exists in so many people!)

In other words, there exists **self-will** [ref [Pride, Self-Will, and Fear](#) PL 30]. That is, your own will has to be gratified, or else you become resentful. In order to overcome these feelings, this current should be examined separately at first. Bring out the emotion that says "*my will be done.*" Then, when this is conscious, the proper procedure would be to say to yourself, "*But my will must not always be gratified. I have to accept standing back, if need be.*" Try to become humble where you are lacking in this humility.

Then recognize the **pride** in combination with the self-will. Treat it similarly. If you can conquer both self-will and pride in this particular connection, your **fear** will be eliminated. As soon as you have given up, your fear will vanish, and with it your resentment. By giving up, I do not necessarily mean to give up a person with whom there is a real bond or a task to fulfill. I just mean to give up the desire current.

Whenever there is resentment, it comes from a germ of hatred. Hatred may not manifest itself as such anymore, but as long as resentment exists, the root of hatred is still in the soul. It is not necessarily hatred against a particular person, but hatred nonetheless.

There is inevitably a power drive in a person who resents because of rejection or possible rejection. The emotion says: "*If you do not do what I want, which is in this case to be liked and accepted, I resent you for it.*" You could not resent if this power drive did not exist -- however subdued it may be. Recognize that. The moment you recognize this, you will be able to redirect this emotional current gradually by growth, which is the only right way.

These things cannot change suddenly. The more you do so, the more you will see, feel, and know the truth that is so far merely a nice theory for you, but has as yet no reality in your heart: namely, that you are never rejected because of your lackings -- whatever they may be -- except in a rare case when a human being becomes spiteful and unpleasant because of his *own* insecurities.

-- Rejection is given only because of the rejector's own fear of life, of disappointment, of inferiority, of insecurity, and any number of symptoms of a sick soul that has not learned yet to apply spiritual law to the emotions.

-- Even then, such a person is not rejected for his true self, but merely for a badly chosen mask. All masks are bad, even the apparently pleasant ones. However, some people, through pride and defiance, choose an unfavorable one. But this realization will only dawn on you after you have learned to give up, and after you have conquered your pride and self-will.

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Exercise 3a: Find any feelings of resentment you have towards individuals or groups. Can you identify the elements of pride, self-will, or fear? Can you sense the germ of hatred?

Shame and Guilt

QUESTION: In the last lecture [[Shame](#) PL 31] you talked about the feeling of shame that manifests itself in guilt feelings, and so on. This often has an effect on others. What should our proper attitude be in a case like this toward such a person?

ANSWER: It is already of tremendous help to realize that a person to whom you are close has that shortcoming. This realization will give you an understanding and a compassion that, even if you do not mention a word of it, must help. This realization will prevent you from being hurt unnecessarily, for people who are in any deviation of spiritual law, and are therefore suffering, often hurt others as a supposed means of protection. Thus the other person hurts back, and a vicious cycle is set in motion. But when you do understand, this cannot happen.

Furthermore, there is this undeniable fact that your subconscious affects the subconscious of the other person. In a case like this, a subconscious shame and guilt feeling is subconsciously absorbed by the surroundings. Because all this is going on subconsciously and is therefore not properly understood through the emotions, something sick and negative is felt. A very negative and unfavorable reaction comes forth, contrary to the desire of the person having these shame and guilt feelings. Besides, there is nothing so contagious, my friends, than emotions, thoughts, attitudes, etc., conscious or unconscious. This, too, is a universal law.

So, the moment a sick current is recognized by another person and fully understood, a vicious cycle is already broken -- by the mere fact of understanding. The full understanding of the facts as explained here will help even more, and add a more constructive force of truth into the psychological and emotional world.

As for outer action, there the procedure varies. Caution is, of course, necessary. It is often better to say too little than too much to a person not mature enough to understand or one who lacks the willingness to do so. But if the person is open and has understanding to grasp these things, one may feel one's way about how to reach such a person.

If you pray for guidance and inspiration and keep yourself open, the right moment will come when there is receptivity. But if this receptivity is lacking and you come out with the truth too bluntly, before the other person has prepared the way somehow to be able to face such truth, the effect would be a bad one, and he or she would only close the door to the soul even more tightly.

A safe way would be to first have general discussions on that subject, staying away from the personal, and to see how this is received. See whether the person becomes thoughtful and whether he or she has understanding for it in the first place. So, if you see there is a somewhat favorable response, then slowly, little by little, you can give stronger doses of truth, always asking for inspiration and guidance. If you do that, your spiritual friends will be around you and eager to help.

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Exercise 3b: Explore where you hold on to forms of negative energy. Can you sense how your energy affects others? Find the pleasure you derive from this. Notice the 3 elements of [Pride, Self-Will, and Fear](#) [PL 30] in your holding on.

Week 4: Positive and Negative Elements of Ambition

Original good quality: underlying factor was benevolence, harmony, a certain type of tolerance, a certain type of humility, by not having to stand out and shine, be better or higher than others. Ambition is often a price for what you desire.

Lack of Ambition

If you give in to your lack of ambition and then seem to be left wanting in one or more ways in life, you should realize you were not ready to pay a price that could perhaps only be paid by efforts that needed ambition.

Spiritually, a lack of ambition is a very grave hindrance. This sluggishness will prevent you from accomplishing your development, which alone can bring you true happiness and security. If you lack this happiness and you are the possessor of this trait, you should not bear a grudge because of your unfulfilled needs, but clearly realize your decision in this case:

-- On one side, to give in to the immediate comforts is choosing the line of least resistance. The disadvantage is that your conflicts, your hungers, your needs, and your insecurities will persist as long as you do not fight against the temptation of taking the line of least resistance (lack of ambition).

-- On the other side, the price is the hard work of overcoming a very deep-rooted laziness; which means constant fight, constant trying, etc. The gain is that you come out of the webs of darkness, loneliness, unhappiness, but not until after you have shown ample proof that you have really and wholeheartedly fought and succeeded in some measure.

Make your choice, for even taking the negative choice would be healthier in some ways than not seeing the issues clearly and somehow hoping to relinquish a tiny bit of your weakness while expecting results that you would only be entitled to if you were to take yourself in hand completely!

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Exercise 4a: Explore some quality you “lack”. Find your decision not to develop it.

If you somehow, emotionally and subconsciously, hope to attain spiritual development, and thus peace of mind, without making serious efforts to overcome this basic hindrance, this amounts to spiritual theft in some way. It means that you want to gain the harmony that can only be reached by paying the price, namely hard spiritual work.

The necessary spiritual work involves the overcoming of your greatest faults without exception. To understand this fault from this point of view will perhaps make it easier for you to overcome. Realize that you must put effort into anything when you want to reap the fruits, which, of course, you do.

You should not muster this effort because you are being told to do so, because you want to be a "good child," still doing it somewhat against your will. You must reach the state when you do it independently, responsibly, and maturely because you realize yourself that everything has a price. To fight within against this fact is not only a disrespect to God's wisdom and justice, but also foolish.

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Exercise 4b: Meditate upon this weakness from this angle: *"If I have no ambition; if it is so difficult for me that whatever I do goes against my grain and I must force myself to do it; if I cannot do it with enthusiasm and real will power; and if I still desire that which is rightfully mine if I were not to feel that way, my emotions want to steal something. I desire to steal the happiness or any other result I desire."*

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Excess Ambition:

As far as the opposite extreme, over-ambitiousness, is concerned, the original good quality is a strong will power, a readiness to pay the price in effort, a desire to work, to serve in the higher realms for others. (In lower realms the goal becomes the self.)

Use these positive aspects to cleanse this current of its exaggerated, distorted, and negative facets, which are a certain type of selfishness; a power drive; self righteousness; greed in a certain way (to have more, to be more).

Often people with overambition have such a strong desire current that they become ruthless in gaining their goal at the cost of others.

Again I say, it is not necessary that your acts be that way, but it is sufficient that you are that way in your emotions. You should understand that overambition creates a desire current that is unhealthy, that runs in a wrong way, and that therefore robs you of peace.

Desirelessness has to be achieved in a certain measure. It is not to be done completely because then it would again be the opposite extreme -- no ambition -- and there would be no balance.

Always, it has to be determined for the spiritual person particularly: for what purpose should he have ambition and where -- and on the other hand, where should the ambition cease and desirelessness set in.

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Exercise 4c: Consider how negative aspects play out in both distortions:

<i>Negative aspects</i>	Lack of Ambition	Excess Ambition
Selfishness		
Self Righteousness		
Greed		
Power Drive		

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