

# Pathwork<sup>®</sup> Steps

## Prayer and Meditation

Pathwork Lectures 36 and 194

<https://youtu.be/zPt9eZxKumo>

Transcript of YouTube Video by Jan Rigsby xx mins

This is an introduction to Pathwork Lecture 36, and also Pathwork Lecture 194, on Prayer and Meditation.

The Pathwork approach to prayer and meditation: Prayer. The first versions of prayer that we learned from childhood are supplicant prayer; meaning, *“help me, do it for me, give it to me”*. Nothing wrong with those prayers.

Pathwork is emphasizing a more mature version. What they're suggesting is, *“God, be with me. Inspire me. Help me to feel supported. Help me to see the best way, the right way - more important, more deeply, etc. God - help me to do what I need to do. Help me to find the strength and courage to attain my goals, and also help me understand my limitations, and the earthly compromises that need to be made.”*

Now in meditation, Pathwork promotes or supports a more active meditation than what is traditionally understood as just sitting.

I don't think that's true. I don't think that meditation is just sitting. But that's the way it was explained to me; that it was that simple, just to quiet your mind. Pathwork suggests that instead of trying to quiet a mind - that may not be ready to be quiet - that in our initial meditations, or in this form of meditation, that we sit and notice what happens. For most of us, what happens is that we have lots of thoughts, tumbling to the surface, it's a very crowded interior life, blah blah blah....

So the guide differentiates between foreground thoughts and background thoughts. Foreground thoughts - this is from Pathwork Lecture 68 - foreground thoughts are conscious, deliberate thoughts. You can control them.

Background thoughts, which can bubble up when you're trying to be quiet, are involuntary. And what they are, the way I understand it, is - it's if they're fragments. Now those of you who use computers a lot know about fragmented files, lost bits and pieces. And in our lives, there are lots of memories where there's bits and pieces that are not resolved. So they just float to the surface - flotsam and jetsam. They just flow to the surface of our mind, without our being able to say *“Go away! I'm busy now. I'm trying to concentrate.”*

These background thoughts, these involuntary thoughts - Pathwork Lecture 194 says they're valuable. Go ahead and collect! Collect them in the sense of: allow them to surface, and just notice them, rather than going after them, trying to figure out what they're about, becoming concerned about them. Simply allow them.

One of my teachers drew a beautiful diagram of vessel. As you sit in the vessel, there's a lot of bubbles, a lot of bubbles in the vessel. And then as you just sit and notice, the bubbles begin to rise, and they inevitably float away, until you can hold an empty vessel. Which is what a lot of us think meditation is supposed to be about. Simply being empty, and being in communication with your own self.

But in order to get there, it's important to go ahead and acknowledge that we have a lot of fluff and nonsense, and other bits and pieces that haven't been resolved; that they act like little kids, asking for our attention.

Just sit and allow those to come forward, not getting involved with them.

Now later, if you want, you can write them down, and you may need to process these thoughts, These thoughts, these bits and pieces, are coming from your unconscious. They're a little bit of a burp! They're saying "*I'm not fully resolved.*"

You can notice them without becoming attached to them. And that's the difference. To allow them to come up, to notice them, and not follow through on them. Or to have a dialogue with yourself which is also a form of meditation.

So the Pathwork meditation techniques that are taught, in about four or five lectures, are about what I would call active meditation. It can be seen as similar to walking meditation, sometimes a meditation – meditative - activity, because it requires hand eye coordination. It occupies enough of your brain so that those thoughts aren't noticed. So you feel clear, because your brain is occupied with some kind of activity; knitting, walking, or riding a bike. I used to do some dancing, and I found that because the dancing was somewhat 'rote' - it was very rhythmic dancing - once I got into it, I could lose myself in the rhythm. And I found that I wasn't - I was present, but I wasn't having to work at anything, even though I was in motion. It created an emptiness. It was quite beautiful. It was almost as beautiful as being in an empty sanctuary. And during the silence, interesting juxtaposition.

So that's a small summary of the lectures on prayer and meditation, which was the topic from May 2016.

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