

Pathwork™ Steps

Obstacles on the Path: Old Stuff, Wrong Guilt, and Who, Me?

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 49

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Week 1: Old Stuff and “Who, Me?”

Week 2: Images Expressed as Emotional Reactions

Week 3: Misconceptions about Evil and Guilt

Week 4: Emotional Maturity, Positive Thinking, Acceptance

Week 1: Old Stuff and “Who, Me?”

Greetings, my friends. We, in the spirit world, are so happy when we have the opportunity to help human beings. And there is really only one help, and no other: it is to find that in yourself which obstructs your own happiness, the law of the divine.

QUESTION: Would you please explain what is the reason for many people's tiredness, especially in spring? ANSWER: Tiredness is always a sign that the life force has not been utilized as it should be in the organism of the soul.

Tiredness results from suppressing the destructive forces of the soul, not allowing them into consciousness where they could be handled properly and directed into the right channels until they can truly dissolve. If hostilities and aggressions are suppressed, if fears are suppressed and not faced, if hatred is put away because you feel guilty to hate, and because it does not correspond to your ideal -- all this causes destruction of the self, and may in one organism create one kind of symptom, and in others other kinds of symptoms. Tiredness is one such symptom.

Spring is the season of revival of nature. The life force penetrates everything that grows: plants, trees, grass, flowers, fruits, vegetables, the animal world, even the mineral world. And it should be the same in the human being. If the human being were in tune with the universe, if the soul were in a state of healthy growth and in no way stagnating and static, spring would revive and strengthen such a person, too.

But it cannot do so where such obstructions exist. An obstruction is created by an element that is foreign to the divine life force.

Self-deception amounts to untruth, and untruth is hostile to the life force. Suppression is always self-deception, therefore the life force cannot regenerate you when such self-deceptions or suppressions exist. On the contrary, it will affect you adversely because of a sort of short circuit; two opposed forces clash. The life force wants to come into you, and out of you, for deep down in your soul, behind your soul exists the whole universe and therefore a fountain of life force. But it cannot fill your being, because of the opposing forces which do not permit entry to the life-force.

Without suppressions and self-deceptions, spring would revive you. So let that be a yardstick for you. Such a symptom should be an indication for you that you are still suppressing knowledge and recognitions from yourself. Let it be an incentive that you set out twice as vigorously to break down your resistance to face yourself. For only then can you truly become whole and healthy in body, soul, and spirit, in your emotions and in your mind. Be grateful for any symptom that shows you where you are, whether it is this or something else.

TRICKS OF THE EGO PL199

Worksheet by Andi Kiva for the Pathwork Teachers Helper (PTH)

*“The tricks of the ego are every conceivable negativity known to mankind: any fault, any violation of integrity, truth, love and divine law. They can be summed up in the triad of **PRIDE**, **SELF WILL** and **FEAR**. The searchlight must be ruthlessly turned onto the little self. Use the healthy part of the ego to shed light on the unhealthy part. Then transcendence takes place in the safest possible way”.*

PRIDE Creating artificial conflict between self and others. Better/worse than	Maintaining a separate state by the trick of creating an “I versus you” and a spirit of one-upmanship. “I’m better than you, I must outdo you”, etc. creating separateness
PRIDE Living for the sake of appearances	Trick is in believing its more important to create an impression, and appearance, rather than rely on truth, real feelings and interests.
PRIDE Shame of exposing real feelings and spiritual self	Ego trick to maintain the limited state by creating attitude of pretense, false shame of exposure, mask, embarrassment.
SELF WILL Stubbornness, resistance, spite, defiance, rigidity	These cause stiffening up against change. Stating “I will stay where and as I am”. Trick is to make this rigidity desirable and to make open, flexible movement appear threatening or humiliating.
SELF WILL Negative intentionality	Whatever the negative intentionality is, it indicates spite which always blurs the real view and falsifies the situation so that all desirable life experience is denied
FEAR / SELF WILL Laziness, tiredness, passivity	Trick is to make it appear as if movement was undesirable and exhausting. In actuality, the stagnation is more exhausting as its holding back the natural inclination towards growth.
FEAR Instinct of self-preservation is displaced	The FEAR of losing ones present state of awareness, the ego trick displaces the instinct of self-preservation, using it in the battle to preserve the present awareness
FEAR Worry, anxiety and apprehension	Trick of the ego is in making movement appear threatening.
FEAR Distrust and suspicion	Ego trick that creates suspicion and lack of trust, creating wish to remain unmoving and in present limited state.
Creating fear of positive states	Ego trick of maintaining “safety” by denying pleasure, bliss, joy, expansion, creative movement, etc. Ego creates fear of these states.
Inattentiveness, lack of concentration, abstractedness, absent-mindedness	Trick is to deny the one pointed focus necessary for the ego to transcend itself.

Exercise 1a: Make a list of Ego Trick feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that you regularly experience, even though you may never have considered them as ‘tricks’. Notice when and how they manifest. Consider what you might not see, hear or think because of these distractions.

Week 2: Images Expressed as Emotional Reactions

Without exception, there are certain common traits in all images. Only the proportion from one trait to another or the degree of each varies with each individual.

In every image you will find inferiority feelings, guilt feelings, hostility, hate, aggression, ignorance, resentment, childish selfishness, fear, and a few other obstructive forces.

In the more primitive person, all these traits manifest outwardly and are directed towards the outer world. As the human being develops from incarnation to incarnation, he finally realizes that it is considered bad and wrong and therefore a disadvantage for him to show these feelings openly. Thus he keeps hidden what belongs to the destructive forces, thereby creating obstructions and conflicts way down in the depth of his being (contrary to the surface manifestation of the more primitive person).

When these errors of selfishness and egotism exist on the surface, the repercussions will occur outwardly and directly. The destructive forces will be directed openly towards the other person and therefore bring an open result.

On the other hand, if the destructive forces are kept under lock and key, they fall back upon the self and affect others only indirectly, thereby bringing an indirect consequence. The latter alternative was chosen (unconsciously) in error, recognizing that the open and direct way is wrong but not as yet recognizing that the second alternative is equally wrong, that it brings you equally disadvantageous results.

The only solution is that you learn gradually to rid yourself of selfishness. This happens first by recognizing where your emotions are self-directed in a completely wrong way deep below the surface of your consciousness, and then by learning how harmful selfishness is -- harmful not only to people you come in contact with, but harmful to yourself, and no less harmful if it is hidden and covered by apparently quite opposite reactions you may display on the surface.

As long as you try to push these feelings away because of an outer or inner "must," you cannot succeed. This "must" indicates not only forcing yourself -- and, as you know, emotions do not respond to compulsion -- it also indicates an impure motive. In other words, you want to do away quickly with undesired and unadmired tendencies because they do not make you appear in a good light. Such a motive is the proof of the same selfishness you want to do away with. Therefore such a motive cannot succeed, without the forcing element.

But if you want to rid yourself of self-centeredness because you sincerely consider the other person, because you wish to bring happiness and love into your surroundings regardless of your own possible hurts, then the motive is pure, and you will eventually succeed. With the help of God, you will truly free yourself of the chains of the error of egotism which is so destructive. You will not just bury these feelings and look away from them.

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Exercise 2a: Apply all this information on images to the recognitions you have made and are continuing to make; to an emotional reaction of yours which, at first glance, seems to have nothing to do with all this; to something you have found out about yourself on this road. PL 49

Two Oppositional Forms of Emotional Reactions:

The two possibilities seem to contradict one another; yet you may experience both alternatives. So beware of both these alternatives, my dear friends. Your reaction to your own recognitions is of utmost importance. For only in that can you determine your progress, your success.

1. *"I know this already. It is nothing new."*

It is often difficult to recognize something within yourself because, on a surface level, you have known the same thing all along, and therefore you are tempted to put it away quickly, saying, *"I know this already. It is nothing new."* Beware of this danger, my friends.

The majority of your findings will deal with trends and tendencies you have known already in a vague way. But if the labor of your search shows you, again, the trend you have known already, it means that you have not used this knowledge properly; you have not applied it to all levels of your being; you have not assimilated it completely; you have not made connections with this knowledge to other trends; you have not realized the full significance, meaning, and consequences of this trend. Therefore you have to continue to work with this recognition.

Hence you have to rediscover it all afresh as though you would deal with something you have never known before. Only then will you be able to make connections with it and establish the chain reaction this wrong attitude has caused within yourself and then reaching outside of yourself, thus falling back on you from inside and outside.

Treat it as though you have discovered it for the first time. It may seem like a letdown, because you were all prepared to find something completely different, yet you come across the same thing. This may seem like an anticlimax. Do not think that way! If this is what you find, it is what you have to find, all over again.

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Exercise 2b: Notice if you sense yourself or others saying *"Oh, but this I know already"* when you encounter a behavior, reaction, or obstacle that tends to recur. Consider that this is brought to you by our own subconscious! Hear a deeper truth: *"You will find me as often as is necessary. If you find me again, it means you have not used this knowledge to the full extent."*

2. *"This is all nonsense, this cannot be true"*

The other danger of a standstill or stagnation on this path is the exact opposite. You have formed a certain picture about yourself. You are known to yourself, to your friends and family to be such and such a person with certain predominant qualities and faults. It may happen that you find in your subconscious a few traits that are so completely contrary to what you otherwise are that you say, *"This is all nonsense, this cannot be true,"* and you put it away again.

You are so convinced of being the opposite of this insight that it simply does not make sense. You overlook the fact that both can be true. It is so difficult for you to accept this revolutionary news within your soul because you are used to thinking in terms of "either/or." If you are what this recognition shows you, you believe the outer and known trend must be a fake. Therefore you cannot accept this new finding. But you should understand deeply that it is possible to be split in one particular trend; that you can have in some respects the quality already known to you; and that

in other realms of your being -- there where you have your obstructions -- you can have the exact opposite.

Example 1: Let us assume that one of your foremost qualities is generosity. You know how generous you are. All who have ever been in contact with you know it. Yet all of a sudden you find there is a stinginess, an avarice in you, let us say emotionally and not factually. And if you ask your friends who know you best, *"Is it true, am I stingy?"* and they will of course say *"No, you are quite the opposite."* And they do not say so just because they are polite. They really know you as a very generous person. You have displayed it in all your deeds and actions.

Yet deep down, there is this one corner where you are most ungenerous. *So both are true.*

Example 2: Let us assume you are known to be a very courageous person. It may be your outstanding quality that manifests in many realms of your life. You are convinced that there is no trace of cowardice in you. But when you do come across a streak of cowardice, you may have a reaction of rejecting this finding, because it seems to you impossible and senseless.

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Exercise 2c: Notice your favorite ways of dismissing your own observations.

The Difference Between... Feelings and Emotions

Emotional Reactions

1. Come from misconceptions reactions to 100/100 (illusion) life or death reactions
2. Have to do with thoughts coming from images (wrong thinking).
Guide: "unthought thoughts"
3. Are from the past: are history, transference reactions
4. Are charged, stuck: even when expressed, don't change.
Come back, again and again
5. Have unhealthy desire within them (to get rid of one side of duality)
6. Are not based on reality, subjective
7. Are destructive
8. Are personal
9. When in emotional reaction we are defended
10. Need to be experienced and expressed but not to others (acting out)
11. Rage at somebody
12. Are pleasure or unpleasure
13. We think emotional reactions are about others (blame)
14. Creates hard pain
15. Are superficial conditions in soul
16. Are distorted

Feelings

1. Are in reality 50/50
accepting human condition
2. Are not about thoughts:
they are spontaneous experiences
158 "feelings are soul movements"
3. Relate to the present
are in the immediate now
4. Are flowing, relaxed. Pass through us,
change from one moment to the next
5. Come from healthy desire to accept 50/50 responses to the human condition
(50/50 plus memory of perfection)
6. Are based on reality, objective
healthy detachment
7. Are constructive
8. Are impersonal
When in real feelings we are undefended
9. When in real feelings we are undefended
10. Are real responses to life and need to be experienced and expressed
11. Rage at the Human Condition
12. Are pleasure and unpleasure
13. We are our own real responses to life, to both the negative and positive
PC10 Law of personal responsibility.
14. Allow soft pain
15. Are permanent in essence
from real self --part of eternal spirit
16. Are in truth

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He who cannot love is immature.

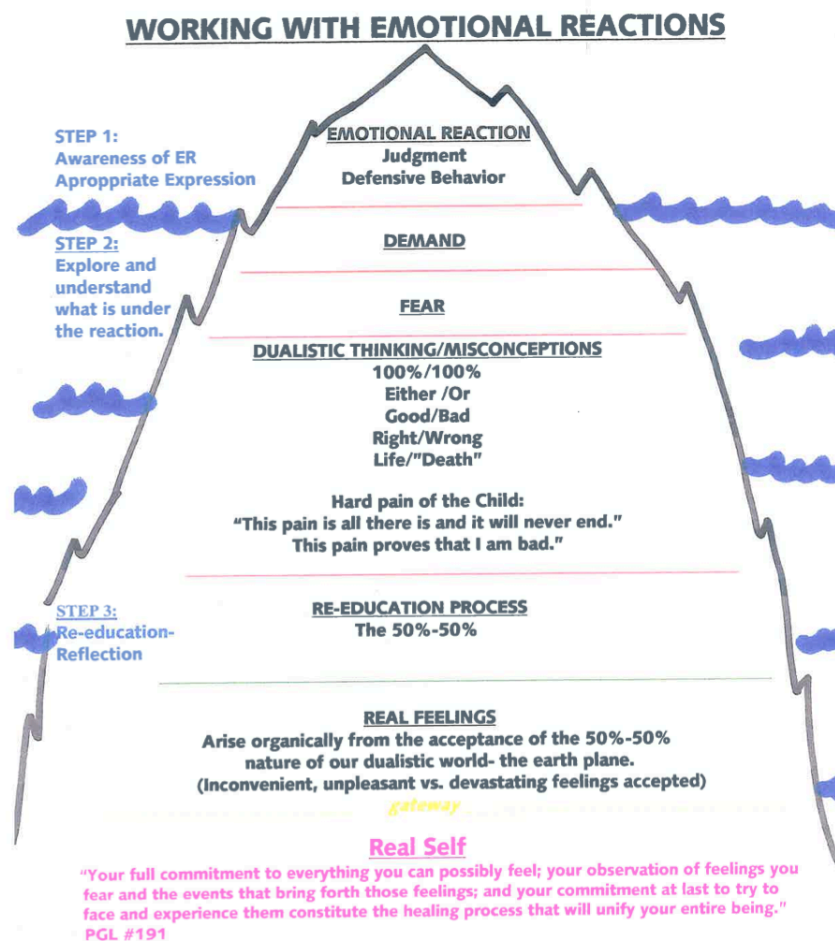
He who cannot love is immature. And immaturity causes unreality. Unreality, being untrue, must perforce cause unhappiness and conflicts, darkness and ignorance. Thus maturity is really the ability to love.

The child in you requires an unlimited amount of love. This child is as unreasonable, as void of understanding, as demanding and one-sided as all immature creatures are. Its impossible wants are to be loved by all, to be loved totally, to have every wish gratified instantly; and, to be loved in spite of its unreasonableness and selfishness. In this very factor lies the answer to why you are afraid of loving.

About the Fear of Loving PL 72

<https://www.janrigsby.org/Pathwork-Lectures-50-99.html>

If one is so concerned to have the proper attitude to guard against a failure or a disappointment, it is an indication that failure and disappointment is greatly feared. And if it is feared in such a way, there lacks a certain healthy resistance. I mean this in the positive sense -- as you resist disease, for instance, not the resistance that should disappear when you search in yourself. ***Fear is disease.*** PL 49



Adapted from Lorraine Marino -Guide teaching : PGL #191

Week 3: Misconceptions about Evil and Guilt

Two Kinds of Guilt: Absurd /Unjustified, and Justified

There is no person who has no guilt. There is no image in which guilt is not somewhere interwoven.

It is often true that unconsciously a person uses the absurd, the unjustified guilt as a shield, and hides the true guilt behind this unjustified guilt.

Why? Because deep down you know that what you blame yourself for is ridiculous. It is as though you want to say, "*You see, I declare myself guilty, but I have no reason.*" In fact, the true guilt may be infinitely smaller or less than the absurd guilt you use as a wall to hide behind.

What are absurd guilts? Most of all the guilts you all feel, because you are not perfect. It is commendable to want to become that. It cannot be recommended enough that you should try to replace hatred, resentment, and aggression with love and unselfishness. But before you can do that, you have, first of all, to acknowledge your present state of development, your present inability to feel different, not wanting at once to be more than you are at this moment.

If you feel guilty because you are still what you are, you obstruct the very goal you want to attain. It is an unjustified guilt to blame yourself for not being perfect now. This unjustified guilt extends into all areas of the human personality.

Example: sexual drives. Everyone feels guilty about them, if not on the surface (because of enlightened intellectual influences), then certainly way down deep in your emotions.

That again is unjustified, absurd guilt. It may be true that your sexual drives do not go into the right channel, because they do not merge with love; this is due to the very fact that you have felt guilty about them, and thus are suppressing their existence as much as you could. Hence your sexual drives could not mature with the rest of your personality, and integrate with warm, loving, giving, unselfish emotions. They remained childish, in their self-directedness and egotism.

Your unconscious misunderstandings lie, therefore, in their direction and separateness, and not in their existence as such. And the "existence" is certainly no reason for feeling guilty.

Your further misunderstanding lies in the fact that you want to eliminate that which seems sinful to you. And because you cannot do so, you feel guilty. The exclusive remedy would be that you cease to be afraid of love, a fear which is selfishness. If you allow yourself to love, sex will merge with it, and there will no longer be a reason to feel guilty about it.

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Exercise 3a: What are your feelings about your sexual drives?

Try to understand how confused your unconscious thinking is. You feel guilty about a God-given force, instead of feeling guilty about your fear of loving, which is nothing but selfishness and separateness.

Practice combining your sexual drives with the one and only reality and remedy in the universe -- love. This can only come by development of the soul, by the very road you are taking.

Justified Guilts

Justified guilts are when you hurt other people, in your ignorance of believing selfishness is your protection; when you hurt them actively or passively, by commission or by omission. That is a justified guilt.

Differentiate clearly, my dear friends, between the guilt of being imperfect at this stage -- this in itself should not make you feel guilty -- and the hurts you inflict on others, no matter how unintentionally, out of this imperfection, blindness, and ignorance, which is a justified guilt that you should meet squarely and courageously. There is a world of difference, although a fine and subtle one, between the two directions of guilt indicated here. Please think about this. It is so important.

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Exercise 3b: Say to yourself: *"I could not help it in the past. I was ignorant and blind and selfish. I was too much of a coward to dare to love and forget my own little ego.*

I admit that I have hurt other people by this attitude, and I am now willing to find out how. It makes no difference whether this hurt was inflicted by deeds, words, thoughts, or emotional reactions -- by what I have done or left undone. I truly want to change, and with the help of God I will succeed. In order to do so, I must see clearly the direct or indirect hurts my attitude has inflicted upon others."

Then, think about it. Ask God to give you the insight to understand this hurt inflicted on other people. Have the courage to shoulder it without the pride of destructive, wrong guilt feelings which would make you exaggerate your own "badness" and would make you feel hopeless about yourself. PL 49

Evil Influences

When you hear the word "evil" or "the satanic forces," you automatically picture something very specific and often drastic. Let us establish once and for all what belongs into the category of the forces of darkness or evil.

It is not only the manifest cruelty and wickedness in their extreme form; it is all ignorance, all error, all deviation from truth in every possible form, manner, or shape. For truth is God.

On this path, in the work you are doing, you find in your images a rigidity, an obstruction. You call this rightly an immaturity. In this part of your personality, you remained as you were as a child. In lack of knowledge, mature insight, and wisdom, the forces of evil could get hold of you *without deliberate intention to be "bad."* Evil and destruction can work in you through the basic error that self-seeking, egotism, and selfishness will protect you from hurt, will bring you reward.

If you can detect this basic error in your images, you will have made a great step forward. .

No matter what names or designations you choose, finally you will have to bring it to this common denominator: *"In my ignorance I believe -- perhaps unconsciously so far -- that selfishness will bring me reward, will protect me from hurts."*

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Exercise 3c: Consider problems that you have in / with life from this angle: *"In my ignorance I believed, perhaps unconsciously so far, that selfishness will bring me reward, will protect me from hurts. In what way was I selfish? In what way was my conclusion wrong from this viewpoint? What is the right conclusion?"* After you have found your thus far hidden emotions, reactions, and various tendencies, you will be able to make a change in your personality -- which will eventually change your life. PL 49

Three possible wrong reactions, and how to work with them:

As you recognize the hurts you have inflicted on others, notice [what your justifications were, that allowed you to take such action and not recognize the harm they felt:]. You may alternate between these three modes of reactions:

1. **Hopelessness with yourself** -- the negative, destructive guilt feelings which make you despair with yourself;
2. **Self-justification**, blaming others for their real or imagined wrongs that "forced you to react that way"; or
3. **Simply looking away**, being afraid of facing up to your respective imperfection (which may not fit into the picture you have of yourself).

Then, find the right way:

- Feel *with* the person you have hurt, then
- Take this guilt upon yourself,
- Wishing to become different
- By desiring to *give up your fear of loving*.

This is healthy and constructive. The hurt you feel, at the moment you realize the hurt you have unwittingly inflicted, is healthy -- because it will give you the incentive to lose your fear, and your selfishness:

- When (not before) you have a certain basic understanding about your images and image conclusions, then separate (for your own clarification) unjustified from the justified guilts.
- Then, find where you might have hurt others by your wrong conclusions, directly or indirectly, in fact or in possibility.

If you have the courage to be truly sorry for the hurts you have inflicted on others unwittingly (not intentionally, but out of your wrong image conclusions); and if you can take that upon yourself and face it, it will give you more strength than you realize now.

It will foster a healthy and constructive attitude within yourself. It will set the life force in motion in your soul. For among many other things, life force *is* truth and courage.

Exercise 3d: Say to yourself; *"This is truth, and it needs courage to do that."*

The life force will then seep through all these devious channels and affect them, so that slowly but surely you will dissolve all the destruction of the "forces of evil" raging in you due to your ignorance, due to your emotional immaturity.

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Week 4: Positive thinking vs. acceptance

Both of these attitudes can be right or can be distorted in misunderstanding to wrong extremes. Positive thinking in its right understanding means the knowledge that everything must turn out good, finally, because the divine is the absolute truth which cannot be conquered by destructive forces.

But that does not mean that you can simply do away with the effects of your own past, and present errors on whatever level of your personality they may be. They have to be accepted and gone through. That is the most positive and constructive attitude. It indicates a lack of fear of life's risks, and is therefore healthy. It indicates the humility of accepting yourself, as you are, at this point, where you cannot expect a perfect life -- because you are not perfect yet. It also indicates the courage to face yourself, and to face life, as it is.

It does not mean in any way that you are pessimistic, and look forward to negative happenings -- if they are unnecessary. "Positive thinking," as it is often abused, does not want to face that which is now. It can be successful only where perfection already exists, basically and inwardly, to some degree; but otherwise it must fail, and therefore bring disappointment. It is in so much a hurry that it believes that, by a mere formula one, can whisk away the deep-rooted personality problems that need patience and perseverance to dissolve.

On the other hand, acceptance can also be abused and misinterpreted. In its healthy form, it merely shoulders the imperfections one cannot change at once and by a mere act of will -- and therefore their outcome, consequences, and outer effects. It means the humility and patience to be willing to go through, taking the unpleasant result as a healthy medicine.

But acceptance in its sick sense often fosters masochistic tendencies -- hopelessness, and therefore the self-deception of indulging in an acceptance that is not only unnecessary, but sickly. It fosters wrong guilt feelings, and thinks to punish the self for them. Therefore you must differentiate between the right and the wrong kind in both these basic religious attitudes. The wrong kind of "positive thinking" is self-will and impatience. The wrong kind of acceptance is fostering martyrdom.

One extreme always creates another. Thus the healthy way is the middle path. It accepts the effects of one's imperfections and goes through them in a spirit of courage and humility. It pays the price. In that, you will find a happiness and peace. It gives you peace to bear your cross that is always caused by your self. That you have to accept. You cannot change your emotions in a hurry as the wrong interpretation of "positive thinking" tries. Eventually your emotions will begin to change, but only after you have accepted them.

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Exercise 4a: Spend some time observing your attitude when you encounter conflicts during the day, perhaps using the Daily Review format. After a week, 'score' each entry in terms of whether your attitude was positive or negative just before the event, or one of passive acceptance. Could your initial attitude have contributed to the conflicts, or intensified any reactions?

Daily Review 3.0 from PL 56

Learn to investigate your reactions. 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

The Importance of Attitude

QUESTION: In other words, even though one accepts a situation, whether or not one expects failure or success in an undertaking, the expectation has no bearing whatsoever? -- whether one goes into an undertaking with an attitude of hopelessness or not?

ANSWER: One's attitude always has a bearing.

It is not so simple as to say an optimistic attitude will bring you a good result and the pessimistic a bad one. As long as you are not clear about yourself, you can have a positive and optimistic attitude consciously; but subconsciously, it may be the opposite.

This may be for various reasons, one of them being that you do not quite know what you really want. Then this conflict may manifest in a way that you do not understand the reasons, thus being disappointed and losing courage. On the other hand, some people constantly assume a negative attitude, because they are so afraid of disappointment that they try to avoid it, by being guarded in that way. So both in a positive or in a negative attitude, something may be hidden that is not yet recognized on the surface.

The important point is not so much what you consciously think; it is much more important what you unconsciously feel. A mere thinking formula can never be truly effective. The only answer is understanding your inner self, your subconscious reactions, your inner conflicts and problems. Only in that way will you finally have the right attitude about anything, whether it concerns a forthcoming venture or hope or anything else in your life.

Until this is done, the recommended attitude would be one of neutrality. Let go of your self-will, without being optimistic or pessimistic. Just wish to learn from anything that happens to you; let whatever happens to you be an indication of where you can tackle your problems.

Consider any manifest happening as a reflex of your unconscious reactions, still out of your reach. If you observe your emotions, you will finally break through into yourself, and get the recognitions you need for a more thorough self-understanding.

Whatever happens to you now is mostly a repetition and a pattern of your image conclusions and will furnish you with the **key** to your life -- if you train to focus your attention rather in that direction, while thus far the whole personality may have battled against these recognitions.

Nothing can truly solve your life problem -- no outer teaching or philosophy, no miracle key -- unless you understand your unconscious motives and trends. All outer measures may sometimes seem effective, but truly your life problem can only be solved when you overcome your resistance to go into yourself, to put away the walls of defense.

Exercise 4b: Spend some time considering: What do you defend? Why do you have to defend yourself? Ask yourself such questions when you feel this resistance and this battle in you. Once you know your unconscious mind, you will just naturally be, you will take life as it comes. And you will have successes and failures; life should bring both. You will be equipped to meet both. Both will make you strong.

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