

Pathwork™ Steps

The God Image

Review for Online Meeting on PL 52 May 2024

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In the Bible, it is said that you should not create an image of God. Most people believe this statement means that you should not draw a picture or make a statue of God. But this refers to the inner image. You are bound to have images on those subjects that are most important in your life.

At an early age, the child experiences his first conflict with authority. The child also learns that God is the highest authority. Therefore it is not surprising that the child projects his own subjective experiences with authority onto his imagination about God. Hence an image is formed, and whatever the child's and later the adult's attitude toward authority is, his attitude towards God will, most probably, be colored and influenced by it.

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Exercise 1: Explore Your God Images

1. What were / what are your parents / parent substitutes like?
2. What kind of authority were / are they?
3. What emotional reactions did you have towards them?
4. Who was the stronger influence in your life?
1. Who was the weaker influence in your life?
2. Who left the stronger impression on you?
3. What was the climate in your home like? Was there Fear? Frustration? Indulgence? Anger? Laughter? Physical affection?
4. What is your emotional reaction to authority today?
5. Draw a picture of God. How does this picture exemplify your home life as a child, and your relationship to authority.
6. What was totally unjust in your life?
7. What was the effect of this injustice?
8. What was the cause of the injustice?

Childhood Experiences of Authority are Projected onto God

Practically everything the child enjoys most is forbidden. Whatever gives most pleasure is prohibited, usually for his own welfare; but this the child cannot understand. It also happens that parents do so out of their own ignorance and fear. But the child is thus impressed that everything most pleasurable in the world is subject to punishment from God -- the highest and sternest authority.

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Exercise 2: practice out loud, on your own or in group: write down or record your answers.

9. Finish this sentence, repeating the first 2 words over and over and saying everything that comes into your mind: God is ____ God is ____ God is ____
10. Do the same with these sentence beginnings: I love God because ____ I hate God because ____ What God did to me was ____ What I did to God was ____
11. The person who reminds me most of God is ____

God Image and the development of our relationship with God

Summarized by Gary Vollbracht 11/05/04 from Surrender to God Within

Stage	Features	God Image	Prayer/Worship forms
0	Unconsciousness , present moment, but no sense of meaning or connection	None	None
1	Wonderment , feeling part of all that is in some sense	None	May have religious experience, sense of oneness with nature
2	Surmise a supreme intelligence must exist	Creator, Controller	Worship the Creator, Controller
3	We create mythology, symbols, and superstition	If we include the idea of God, we imbue God with authority – the punisher and rewarder, the creator and one who controls. We may fear this authority – a carryover from how we experience parental authority.	We create ritual for blessings, protection, forgiveness and for other ways of relating to the cosmos. There are aspects of magic. If the idea of God is included, we worship God as supreme. We pray to God – making requests for protection and blessings.
4	Age of reason . We create abstractions, concepts, and dogma concerning the nature of God and the cosmos.	If God is included in our ideas, God is still the creator, controller, rewarder, and punisher. We create dogma about how all this works. We may introduce the mental idea that God loves us, but it is not usually felt emotionally.	We further develop forms of worship and prayer that embody the dogma we have created. We develop more sophisticated prayers and look more to logic and understanding than to magic and the mystical. But we are still requesting, etc.
5	Atheism – a collapse of all our mythologies, superstitions, dogmatic mental constructs and worldviews that had so neatly defined our relationships to the cosmos, the divine, and each other.	There is no God, no rewarder, punisher, creator, or controller.	No worship or prayer life, but we may meditate. Age of materialism and, later, humanism.
6	Openness to the <i>possibility</i> of transpersonal , the mystery beyond our intellect	God May Be. To say more is to say more than we know, and <i>knowing</i> is <i>not</i> in dogma, superstition, or words but more from <i>heart experience</i>	Active self-awareness, meditation, daily review looking for motivations of our actions and causes for emotions. We become <i>seekers</i> .
7	Living in the present moment and conscious and aware of the mystery, the transpersonal and the connection of all that is	God IS.	Prayer is a feeling of being in the eternal now, an awareness of the reality of God. Awareness of self-essence as an aspect of God. No words.

Exercise 3: Circle (or just notice) what phrases in the chart above feel descriptive of yourself, your process, or where you are now. We are often working on several developmental levels at the same time, yet notice if one seems to predominate.

All this forms an image which makes, if properly analyzed, a monster out of God. This God, living in your unconscious mind, is really more of a Satan.

It is very important, my friends, to find out what your God image is.

It is basic and determines all other attitudes, other images and patterns throughout life. Hence you should all examine this attitude that may be deeply hidden within yourself. Do not be deceived by your conscious convictions. Rather try to examine and analyze your emotional reactions to authority, to your parents, to your fears and expectancies. Out of that, you will gradually discover what you feel about God rather than what you think. The whole scale between these two opposite poles is reflected in your God image, from hopelessness and despair in the emotional conviction of an unjust universe to self-indulgence, rejection of self-responsibility, and the expectancy of a God who is supposed to pamper you.

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Exercise 4: The God Quiz by Gene Humphrey. Write out your own answers to the following questions before reading the answers. Allow your first impulses, your emotional reactions, your fears and prejudices to reveal themselves! Answers were derived from Daily Review PL 28, and may be found at the end of this worksheet.

Don't peek!

1. What is 'God'?
2. Where does God live?
3. What do I have to give up in order to find God?
4. What difficulties do I have to undergo to find God?
5. What will it cost me to find God?
6. What help do I need to find God?
7. If I need to sacrifice in order to experience God, how much will this hurt?
8. Should I only present Big Issues to God because he is so busy?
9. How long will it take?

052 God Image cartoon Daniel Kanhai →



Right and Wrong Shame from PL 31

'Right shame' leads to repentance, true self respect, humility -- **Is Active**. Incentive for self development – accepts self humbly in present moment.

Ref: [Spiritual and Emotional Health through Restitution for Real Guilt PL 109](#)

'Wrong shame' leads to guilt complex, sluggishness, lack of self-respect. guilt complex – destructive/negative – **Is Passive**. "I am so bad; I am hopeless;...nothing can be done." Wallow in self pity – attitude unreasonable/unjust – demand/expect respect from others – do not respect or love yourself. Wrong shame comes *from* pride and *further*s pride; "I should be better than I am". Promotes fear; "No one else must know the truth fully". Actively manipulated by self-will in order to secure some form of 'win' and avoid any sense of 'loss'.

[Pride, Self-Will and Fear](#) PL 30

Shame of the Higher Self PL 66 Worksheet
by Sahra Aschenbach, for the Pathwork Teachers Helper Database

What are the causes of wrong shame?

- ❖ The child feels rejected by one parent (who may also have loved the child)
- ❖ The child wants more love and approval – “...exclusive love and acceptance”.
- ❖ The child is confused by parent’s withdrawal of love / approval⇒ parent seems unloving to the child.
- ❖ In the child’s mind, rejecter becomes most desirable⇒ therefore, to be unloving (like the desirable parent) becomes a desirable state. The image in the “adult’s unconscious” is: “- if I am unloved, I will be desirable and my love will be sought. (Since) I do not reject my rejecter ...”I will no longer be rejected”
- ❖ Rejecter seems cold, aloof, and free from emotions ⇒ child becomes like the rejecting parent. Adult, in the deep unconscious, finds it shameful to demonstrate all that which the child yearned for.
- ❖ The child who learned for love and affection and was rejected felt deeply humiliated and formed the (unconscious) image: “to love is humiliating”

Find examples from your own life.

- ❖ If rejecting parent is also the “superior” parent and the loving/giving parent is “subdued and dominated / despised” by rejecter, the child witnesses the rejection of the loving parent by the rejecting one.
⇒ child assumes that the loving parent is weak, while the rejecting parent is strong!
- ❖ In adult life (unconsciously), “love becomes weakness, and aloofness from love a sign of strength.”
- ❖ **Child’s wrong conclusions are:** ⇒ rejection and aloofness = strength. ⇒loving and giving = weakness. ⇒ the dependent, wanting and needing parent is inferior.
⇒ the parent who rejects his/her needs and wants is superior.
- ❖ **Child’s forcing current is:** ⇒ I must be accepted by the “desirable rejecting parent.
⇒ I must not be like the needy, weak and dependent parent.

Betrayal: the most dominant conflict in your soul: The real betrayal is that you abandon the very thing you long for. How so?

- ❖ You abandon the very thing you long for
- ❖ You betray the parent who was the “weaker” one (who might have loved and cherished you in a much more satisfying way) for the parent gave you less and whose acceptance / approval you sought.
- ❖ You betray the best, the noblest, the highest in you by prohibiting the unfoldment of your love capacity.
- ❖ You consider the act of true giving weak, deserving of contempt.

This self-betrayal is the source of your deepest guilt, sorrow, and suffering

- ❖ It is your main guilt.
- ❖ It weighs you down and darkens your outlook on life.
- ❖ It eliminates self-assurance, self-confidence and self-respect.
- ❖ It is responsible for your deepest inferiority feelings.
- ❖ It blocks self-trust.

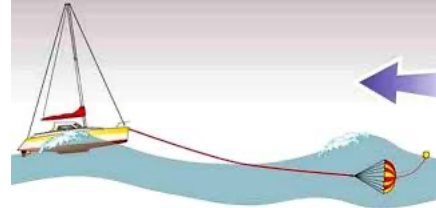
Sahra Aschenbach for the Pathwork Teachers Helper Database

Why it is important to uncover unconscious beliefs:

It is impossible to harmonize both currents because they flow into opposite directions. These crossing currents cause more conflict in man than he is readily aware of. Would he recognize the basis, he could work on resolving the conflicts. When he becomes aware of these crosscurrents, after a while he will be able to decide for one of the two directions.

[World Weariness vs. Prayer & Love](#) PL 4

A practical example of how unconscious beliefs can thwart what we consciously think and believe: illustration shows a sailboat that is dragging a drogue or sea anchor. This can completely negate the power of the wind, leaving the boat stalled ('stuck').



Answers to The God Quiz from [Daily Review](#) PL 28

Worksheet by Gene Humphrey

- 1. What is 'God'?** "Everyone seek happiness, love, and security – and that is God."
- 2. Where does God live?** "He cannot be found outside of yourself, neither in some building, nor up in the sky...He can only be found within yourself. "
- 3. What do I have to give up in order to find God?** *Illusion.* "In order to find God, you have to (1) recognize your hidden emotions and evaluate them, after you have clearly seen them, in the light of Divine Law; (2) acknowledge your true reaction instead of making yourself believe you react in another way and for different reasons than the real ones; and (3) clearly see your faults."
- 4. What difficulties do I have to undergo to find God?** "You can only find God within yourself by going through your Lower Self. That is the only way. If you have a treasure hidden under a great deal of dirt and soil, the only way you can get to the treasure is in digging up the dirt. You cannot shirk handling this dirt. There is absolutely no way to get the treasure out unless you are willing to face and handle the mud first."
- 5. What will it cost me to find God?** *Honest and the willingness to sacrifice your self-will.* "There is one wonderful, sure, and fast way to experience God and His reality, as well as the reality of God's Spirit World, around you so strongly that all doubts will dissolve like snow penetrated by the sun – Sacrifice, my friends! If you are capable of sacrificing something for God, you will have that experience."
- 6. What help do I need to find God?** "You cannot find God unless you overcome your imperfections. But .. you certainly can not overcome your imperfections by yourself alone, no matter how strong you are and no matter how good you will may be. You do need God's help." *It is a collaborative effort!*
- 7. If I need to sacrifice in order to experience God, how much will this hurt?** "You can, strangely enough, only receive this knowledge if you are prepared to sacrifice for Him... The question will never settle itself for you as long as you are not willing first and foremost to put your self-will aside for His will."
- 8. Should I only present Big Issues to God because he is so busy?** "Every decision, no matter who small, every deed or attitude of yours stands in direct relationship to one or more spiritual laws. There is no problem with which you cannot go to God, no matter what it is. Whatever you take to God in a sincere way, He will understand and help you, provided you are asking for this help and trust Him more than yourself."
- 9. How long will it take?** *Daily Review* "will not take more than ten to fifteen minutes every day and that should certainly be possible for each one of you."

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