

Pathwork™ Steps

Self-Confidence: Its True Origin and What Prohibits It PL77

Study Guide for Online Meetings August 2013

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

“Only extensive work on this path will eventually bring you into the position of knowing without a shadow of doubt, without any wavering or guilt, without any need to get allies to confirm how right you are, when to assert yourself and when not to. You will act freely because you so choose, and you do so without inner compulsion in either direction.” PL86

An inexpensive way to keep flies out of a restaurant is to use positive air pressure. Air is sucked in, pressurizing the room slightly, like a balloon. The air flowing out of the open doors or windows feels like a current of water to flying insects; they aren't strong enough to overcome it.

A forcing current can act like an artificial positive air pressure, directing consciousness into defensive directions (patterns) and discouraging intuitive exploration. Unless we have a reason to struggle against it, we are likely 'go with the flow'. It is a universal experience to 'go along with the group' at some point in our lives, and realize afterwards that our actions were contrary to our personal beliefs or principles.

The Pathwork Lectures support us in to become aware of the intuition and feelings of our Real Self and make a conscious choice to align with it. *“Your real self, your real feelings, are one and the same as creation, God, life, fate, the cosmic life force, the stream of life, or reality.” PL77*

What undermines self-confidence is a sense of disconnect between our personality and our Real Self. *“When your real being, your real self, your intuitive nature manifests, there is no uncertainty in you, no doubts as to your right reaction or action, and no wavering. Your instant and spontaneous reaction is of such a nature that you know deep down, through and through, "This is right, this is so." That has happened to all of you at least occasionally.” PL77*

The process of knowing the Real Self begins with awareness. Forcing Currents are based upon misconceptions. Awareness of our Forcing Currents will lead to awareness about our misconceptions. *“You will clearly distinguish between the real feelings underneath and the compulsive manipulations, drives, and impulses which you confuse with your feelings. The real feelings are calm. They do not mind being patient. When they express themselves, there will be no doubt, no wavering. Since they are one with the stream of life, they will carry you in the right direction, and you will have no doubt about it if you are but willing and patient enough to trust them.” PL77*

A forcing current 'locks on' to a specific explanation, prejudice, or pseudo-solution. As a result, we no longer keep an objective outlook. The case is closed, the question has been answered, and we move on. If the process felt painful or difficult, we are especially reluctant to re-experience it without a good reason. The body intuitively retracts from emotional danger as strongly as it does from physical danger. 'Turning one's head away' avoids awareness. Discrepancies go unnoticed, and even if they are brought to our attention we may feel that we have already resolved the 'puzzle' and dismiss them. We may even respond with irritation or anger at the idea that we should 'open up' a painful emotional issue and look at it again.

Most significantly for emotional process work is the loss of information. It is very difficult to work in areas where we have no awareness.

Evil can be described as a conscious decision to act with negative intentionality, to know and not care. For example, if a crucial piece of evidence is deliberately destroyed, assuring that the guilty will go free and/or innocent people will suffer.

The phrase ‘banality of evil’ describes how ordinary people can co-operate with evil and still believe that their actions are normal and acceptable. That is, the Adult Ego does not actually have to generate its own negative intentionality yet still facilitate evil acts. For example, if evidence is not looked for because we have already decided that someone is innocent or guilty. In crippling our conscious awareness, we become incapable of recognizing connections between cause and effect.

‘Attitudes’ of submission, aggression, and withdrawal manage to cripple our real feelings:

“These attitudes are various manifestations of the forcing current. They are your weapon or remedy. You manufacture them as a weapon against the hidden belief that you must get what you want in order to be happy.

Still another way is to cripple your real feelings. In this attitude you never allow your feelings to function freely or naturally. Either you whip them artificially into a more dramatic state than they would naturally be in - - you exaggerate them, overdramatize them for reasons that seem to you expedient.

“Or else, if you fear to be defeated, again you do not allow either your natural intuition or your real feelings to guide and carry you safely through the stream of life. Instead, you artificially cramp, prohibit, and squash your natural feelings.

“The first requirement is to feel its existence. Just verify it. And then ask yourself specific questions.

- What do I want?*
- Why does getting this feel so important?*
- Is it really that important, or is there something else bothering me?*
- What would happen to me if I don’t get it?*

Consider this alternative with a fresh outlook that perhaps the urgency of it is imagined. Sometimes it may be necessary to deviate from the direct approach and concentrate temporarily on something else that appears to have no bearing on the subject, but in the end you will see the connection. The work itself guides you in the proper direction” PL77

Pathwork™ Steps

FORCING CURRENT

from Self-Confidence: Its True Origin and What Prohibits It PL 77

“After some constructive work and valid insights have been attained, you are bound to become aware of this compulsive current, and feel it distinctly, almost as a separate foreign substance within yourself. You will then understand that all your wrong conclusions and images are a product of this basic current which I have also called the forcing current. This forcing current, in turn, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding about life.” PL77

1. The Forcing Current is a defense using WILL level of the human personality structure PL43. It is created by the WILL (self-will, little ego) to deal with the 100/100 misconception:

Happiness OR Unhappiness

2. Forcing Current is the WILL’s demand that our divine gifts (Wisdom, Courage and Love) manifest -- as Love, Power and Serenity PL84:

<u>Personality</u>	<u>Essence</u>	<u>Pseudo-solution</u>	<u>Distortion</u>
Reason	Wisdom	Proof = Serenity	→ Withdrawal
Will	Courage	Victory = Power	→ Aggression
Emotion	Love	Connection = Love	→ Submission

3. The WILL manipulates feelings as part of the FORCING CURRENT:

Reason	-	Constriction
Will	-	Constriction AND Exaggeration
Emotion	-	Exaggeration

4. Your faults are the effect of your Forcing Current, not the cause:
a compulsive behavior pattern - ‘the will to be happy’.

5. The Forcing Current separates you from your Real Self.

Result = Lack of confidence.

Based upon worksheet by Moira Shaw
Full text all lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

Pathwork™ Steps

THE DEFENSE MECHANISM

From *Self-Confidence: Its True Origin and What Prohibits It* PL77

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

GENERAL MISCONCEPTION

(dualistic illusion: the basic misunderstanding about life)

“In order to be happy my will must be done.”

|
|

SPECIFIC MISCONCEPTION

(fear)

“I can be happy only if everything happens the way I want it.”

and

‘If everything doesn’t happen the way I want it I will be unhappy.’

|
|

FORCING CURRENT

(using it will function as a defense – a harsh, tense, rigid, wavering current)

“I want, I must have.”

|
|

WEAPONS AND REMINDERS

Attitudes

(compulsive behavior pattern)

submission/aggression/withdrawal

Manipulation of Feelings

(compulsive emotional pattern)

exaggeration/constriction

©Maira Shaw

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

Pathwork™ Steps

Self-Confidence: Its True Origin and What Prohibits It

Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture 77

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

What is self-confidence? When your real being, your real self, your intuitive nature manifests, there is no uncertainty in you, no doubts as to your right reaction or action, and no wavering. Your instant and spontaneous reaction is of such a nature that you know deep down, through and through, "This is right, this is so." That has happened to all of you at least occasionally.

The ultimate aim of this work of self-search is to free you from these superimposed layers so that your real self can take the reins and govern your life. You know your real self. It is not far away. You have nothing to fear from it. In fact, it is right close by, right under your nose, so to speak; only most of the time you do not realize it.

Your real feelings come from your real self which is right close by, right underneath this tense, compulsive emotional behavior pattern of yours.

Now, let us see what causes all your conflicts and deviations? Broadly speaking, it is your desire to be happy, or to be loved. In order to be happy, to be loved is a necessary requirement and therefore constitutes a major part of your compulsive drives. Then there exist the subdivisions, such as the desire to be approved and admired. This may take the place of your desire to be loved.

But there is also a second aspect. The child in you imagines that you can only be happy if your will is done. So you grow from childhood with this deeply hidden, rarely consciously felt conviction: "In order to be happy, my will has to be done. Unconsciously, you feel that getting your will is a matter of life or death

Thus a current is set up, flowing in two directions. One calls for your pushing ahead, trying to force life, people, circumstances to succumb to your will; to conquer the reality in which everything cannot go according to your desire.

The other direction of this current is that your fear of not getting what you want - - or even the conviction that you never will - - causes you to adopt other means which are so defeatist and negative that again you sabotage that which you ordinarily could have.

Your real self, your real feelings, are one and the same as creation, God, life, fate, the cosmic life force, the stream of life, or reality. In reality, you are not unhappy if you do not always get your will; you are not unhappy if everyone does not love and admire you; you are not unhappy if others do not always agree with you or have faults other than those you could tolerate.

Is it surprising then that you lack self-confidence? Your innermost self knows perfectly well that on the level you function, you cannot trust yourself. Only if you free yourself of this idea that you always have to get your will in order to be happy, will you be free of the "I want" current. In reality, it does not make you unhappy to wait and occasionally to give up. This unhappiness is imagination. It is crass illusion.

While in unreality, you know but two alternatives which are both equally wrong. The one is "I can be happy only if everything happens the way I want it when I want it." The other alternative is "Since I have seen that so many times I cannot get what I want, I can never get it, therefore I can never be happy." Thus you operate on a level of illusion. As long as you remain in this illusion, you cannot hold on to reality, which alone is secure, and is bound to fill your entire being with security. The only safe and secure stronghold is the constantly flexible truth of the life stream, which is eternally independent of small wish fulfillments.

If you cannot trust yourself, you cannot trust life, the world, or God. So, my friends, once you have established this inner reality by removing the untrue premise and forever taking leave of it, you are bound to trust yourself, and therefore the life stream

Find this harsh, tense, rigid, and, at the same time, wavering current of "I want." Find also all the means you resort to, either in order to get it or to "protect" yourself from the horror of not getting it. ...the forcing

current is the outcome of the basic misconception "I must get what I want in order to be happy."

In submissiveness, you cling, and hope for the love of others. In order to obtain it, you forsake your own self, your own opinions; you do not stand up for yourself. You always put yourself at a disadvantage, thus losing your dignity and self-respect. All this is covered with the rationalization of unselfishness, sacrifice, and your ability to love. In truth, you just use the forcing current in the most blatantly self-centered way. It simply tries to make a bargain and says, "If I submit to you, you must love me and do my will."

There is another attitude, often chosen when a person is more inclined to be hopeless of ever getting from others what he considers necessary for himself. The only hope he sees is that he uses all his power, all his selfish, ruthless drives in order to defeat the enemy who always stands in his way. Thus he becomes hostile and aggressive because he thinks the entire world is hostile, and his hostility is the only means of getting some of the happiness he desires. Needless to say, that the opposite effect is the result. He is bound to antagonize people so that they, in turn, actually do become hostile to him.

In withdrawal, the person is convinced of never attaining happiness. This seems such a tragedy to him that he protects himself from such disaster by pretending he does not want anything from others, life, or the world. He withdraws into isolation, thereby never experiencing the defeat he dreads, but never realizing what a dreadfully poor bargain he has contrived to make with his life.

You manufacture these attitudes as a weapon against the hidden belief that you must get what you want in order to be happy. These attitudes are various manifestations of the forcing current.

Still another way is to cripple your real feelings. ...you never allow your feelings to function freely or naturally. Or else, if you fear to be defeated, again you do not allow either your natural intuition or your real feelings to guide and carry you safely through the stream of life. Instead, you artificially cramp, prohibit, and squash your natural feelings.

How can you have self-confidence if the only thing that can truly give it to you - - your real self, your real feelings - - is not allowed to function and to express, and if, instead you, use substitutes that are unsatisfactory, unsafe, and leave you in a state of inner frenzy?

There is only one way to find this real self of yours that you are so ardently looking for in this work. First find and become aware of this forcing current, this current of "I want" on one hand, and "I fear that I will not get what I want" on the other. Once you are clearly aware of this current in you, not as a generality but how, in what particular way, it manifests in you, you will be able to let go of it.

The first requirement is to feel its existence. Just verify it. And then ask yourself specific questions. What is it that I want? Why?

Moreover, why does the attainment seem so important? Also, consider whether it is really as important as you now think.

Ask yourself, what would happen to me if I do not get it.

After realizing the precise wishes and their discrepancy to your actual needs, and if the intensity still remains, you will have to find if the desire stands for an imaginary protection against an imaginary danger. Unless you are aware of this, you cannot let go of the "weapon" of this forcing current.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough that in this work, you cannot get any real results by absorbing this general knowledge. In other words, it does not suffice that you know, and even feel a little, that you have the forcing current in you. You have to find the exact, specific way in which it works, what the issues are, in what way you try to overcome the obstacles to the childish concept of happiness. This may not only vary with each person, but it also varies with the same person each day.

If you work in this way, you will find the answer.

Self-Confidence: Its True Origin and What Prohibits It

Pathwork Lecture 77

Explore your understanding of the concepts through film

Film suggestions are intended to allow for different tastes; comedy, drama, classics, and short films. The concepts can even be noticed in trailers and individual scenes. YouTube links may change as full movie copyrights are enforced.

Which characters are in the grip of Forcing Currents? How is their Self-Confidence undermined by their denial of their Real Self? Where are defense mechanisms used? What qualities underlie those characters who exhibit self-confidence?

Bluebeard's Wife (2005) 5 mins Short Film

When faced with evidence that her husband may have committed a terrible crime, a woman is forced to make a choice. Will she risk the stability of her suburban life to find the truth, or is ignorance truly bliss? Director: Writer: Bobby Webster Stars: Joan Barber, Norm Golden, Isabel Irene Bass

<http://www.talktalk.co.uk/video/2419/film/short-film-bluebeards-wife.html#2419>

Day Night Day Night (2006)

A nameless 19-year-old woman's (Luisa Williams) last two days of life are filled with tiny details and agonizing pressure as she prepares to execute a suicide bomb mission in the middle of Manhattan's Times Square. Director and writer Julia Loktev's existential character study is a 2007 Independent Spirit Awards Best First Feature nominee. Notice how her commitment to her cause (eternal life via death) is affected by her growing awareness -- minute by minute -- of life's potential for joy.

Part 1 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReDIQtv-Vbg>

Defending Your Life (1991)

An intelligent comedy directed and written by Albert Brooks and generally regarded as Brooks' best film., this delightfully offbeat romantic comedy shows it's never too late to change your life - even if you're already dead. Brooks plays an advertising executive who dies in a car accident and finds himself in Judgment City, where he must defend the cowardly, self-involved life he led on Earth. Co-starring Meryl Streep, Several segments on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GNjHFUz6yk>

Mister Roberts (1955)

Military comedy-drama co-directed by John Ford and Mervyn LeRoy. Stars Henry Fonda as an officer who's yearning for battle but is stuck in the backwaters of World War II on a noncommissioned Navy ship run by the bullying Capt. Morton (James Cagney). Jack Lemmon plays the freewheeling Ensign Pulver. Several segments on YouTube.

Pieces Of April (2003)

The dysfunctional Burns family is heading into New York to have Thanksgiving dinner at the apartment of their punkish daughter April (Katie Holmes). April, who has hopes of an opportunity for a rare reconciliation with her difficult, dying mother (Patricia Clarkson), has to contend with a broken stove, a daunting menu and an AWOL boyfriend. Directed by Peter Hedges

Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvA6-W8ZQ0U>

Part 2/8 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9e3PET7kOw>

The Best Little Boy in the World — That’s Me

By ADAM D. CHANDLER

AT 20 years old, strapped to a polygraph machine, I quietly confessed that “I might be, um ... homosexual.” Technically, I was lying. There was no “might be” about it.

The machine’s operator, who stood between me and a summer sinecure at the National Security Agency, broke character with a compassionate squint.

“Could your sexual orientation be the basis of a bribery attempt against you?”

I assured her that no one would find out. I got the job.

That was eight years ago. It was the first time I had ever revealed my sexual orientation. And it was the only time I’d done so, until now. Not even my closest friends know.

That a prestigious position was on the line at the time is telling, at least according to [a recently published study](#) by John Pachankis and Mark Hatzenbuehler. They have substantiated what’s called the “Best Little Boy in the World” hypothesis, first put forward in 1973 in a book by Andrew Tobias, then writing under a pseudonym. It’s the idea that young, closeted men deflect attention from their sexuality by investing in recognized markers of success: good grades, athletic achievement, elite employment and so on. Overcompensating in competitive arenas affords these men a sense of self-worth that their concealment diminishes.

Biographies do not commonly lurk in stuffy academic journals, but there was mine, in that study in the latest issue of *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*. It might as well have been subtitled: “The Adam Chandler Story.”

You see, I’ve been in the closet a long time. I slipped up when I asked for a Barbie for my fifth birthday — I wanted only to practice styling her hair, I obliviously assured my parents — but I wised up fast and made a beeline for the closet’s precarious comforts.

I copied how the boys at school sat in their desks, with their knees apart. I observed how they wore their backpacks, using only one of the shoulder straps. I selected an unimpeachably staid wardrobe. And I studied. Boy, did I study.

I tore through middle and high school, craving perfect scores like a junkie in need of a fix. In college, I wrecked the curve for my straight classmates. Each semester, I petitioned the dean to overload my course schedule and sought the presidencies of student groups I had joined just days earlier. By the time I reached Yale Law School, where once-closeted academic superstars are like the hay in a haystack, coming out wouldn’t even have provoked a yawn. No matter. I built a wall of casebooks, hunkered down and ignored the growing hole in my social development.

Dr. Pachankis and Dr. Hatzenbuehler would not be surprised to learn that more than half the men in my randomly assigned “small group” seminar at Yale were gay. Deriving self-worth from achievement-related domains, like Ivy League admissions, is a common strategy among closeted men seeking to maintain self-esteem while hiding their stigma. The strategy is an effort to compensate for romantic isolation and countless suppressed enthusiasms. And it requires time-consuming study and practice, which conveniently provide an excuse for not dating.

Best of all, it distracts: “What Barbie? Look at my report card!”

The phenomenon itself is not necessarily good or bad. It just is. Parents cannot turn their kids gay to improve their grades, just as gay kids would be foolish to remain closeted in hopes that it will get them into Harvard.

But the study does show that the longer a young man conceals his sexual orientation, the more heavily he invests in external measures of success, potentially leading to undue stress and social

isolation. Perhaps that explains why I recently moved to Washington, D.C., America's most populous closet, where esteemed work abounds, promotions are frequent and ambition is in the water supply.

Another of the study's findings is that boys who grow up in more stigmatizing environments are more likely to seek self-worth through competition. I spent my first 18 years in a rural, religious town in North Carolina, a state that recently passed a constitutional amendment barring same-sex unions by a wide margin. Now here I am, a metal detector scanning for golden prizes. That's no coincidence, the research suggests.

Like "Girls" to a 20-something Brooklynite, this paper reached out, stared me in the eyes and announced, "I've got your number." I had assumed that my secret was safe, that I had made myself illegible. But every merit badge turns out to have been a clue. The study helped me see that by now someone had surely figured out the truth. The jig was up. And to my surprise, I felt relieved.

But seeing your reflection in an empirical study has its drawbacks. The flip side of discovering you're not alone is the melting of your presumed snowflake uniqueness. Now I'm a statistic, another data point, just an ordinary overachieving closet case.

That's bad enough. What's worse is that the biography is half finished. They haven't told me what's on the other side of the closet door. Once I'm no longer harboring my secret, will I lose my drive? Or will my lifelong trophy hunt expand to include a search for a trophy husband?

I don't know the answers. But I'm ready to find out.

Adam D. Chandler is a lawyer for the federal government.

Reviewing Concepts

1. Which expressions in the above article might reflect Child Consciousness, Adult Ego, or Higher Self from The Process of Meditation PL 182?
2. What statements reflect Dualistic Thinking as described in PL 143, where only two, opposing alternatives are considered? What might be the 'middle way', even if it is only an internal thought process?
3. The Personality Types outlined in PL 43 are outlines; in real life, people are mixtures of these types. We can be one type at work, another at home, yet another while on holiday or out with friends. How do you see defense mechanisms of submission, aggression, or withdrawal used by public figures? Friends and family members? How do you use them?
4. Can you detect a shift in direction, towards or away from center?

The direction toward the center is an infinite process. There is no stopping, no end result, no goal. It is forever new, increasing with expanded vistas and possibilities of blissful ways of being and of self-expression. Fearlessness results when the individual knows that all good can be had and need never end as long as it is chosen.

The other direction, away from the center, is finite. The more the individual moves into this direction, the more he is in despair - - not only because it is the wrong way, the way that leads to destructiveness and unhappiness, but also because an end is feared. But the perception that there is an end is correct in that there is a limit after which no further way out exists in the direction one has taken. This direction truly leads to an end. There must come a breaking point, a collapse, because this direction leads to an entrapment from which there is no way out. Seen in this light, it is actually a blessing to arrive at this breaking point. Only when this breaking point has been reached can the other direction be found. Only when the entity recognizes, "I am in a state from which there is no way out, the old way is wrong," can the other way be found - - not otherwise." PL 168