

# Pathwork™ Steps

## Emotional Growth and Its Function

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 89

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### Week 1: Emotional Growth is Spiritual Development

### Week 2: The Mechanics of Resistance

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### Week 1: Emotional Growth is Spiritual Development

In order to know yourself on a deeper level, it becomes increasingly necessary to allow all emotions to reach surface awareness so as to understand these emotions and to mature them.

Most of you also know the great resistance you have to overcome. Some of you have tasted the difficulties you have to face in order to overcome this resistance. Some of you recognize your own resistance for what it is and consciously battle against it. You recognize the signs. You recognize the evasion and escape mechanism at work. But some of you are still so involved in the resistance itself that you are unaware of the obstructions you put in your way. Hence it is necessary that I discuss the mechanism of this resistance.

Let us first be clear about the unity of the human personality. A human being who functions harmoniously has developed the physical, the mental, and the emotional side of his nature. These three spheres are supposed to function harmoniously with one another, each helping the other rather than one faculty being used in order to subdue the other, as so often is the case.

If one function is underdeveloped, disharmony in the entire human structure results, and also a crippling of the entire personality.

#### The function of the emotional nature in man includes:

1. The capacity to feel.
2. The capacity to experience feeling is synonymous with the capacity to give and receive happiness. To the degree that you shy away from any kind of emotional experience, to that extent also do you close the door to the experience of happiness.
3. When functioning, the emotional side of your nature contains creative ability.

To the degree that you close yourself off from emotional experience, to that very degree is the full potential of your creative ability hindered in manifesting itself. Contrary to what many of you may believe, the unfolding of creative ability is not a mere mental process. In fact, the intellect and the mentality have much less to do with it than may appear at first glance, in spite of the fact that technical skill also becomes a necessity in order to represent the creative outflow and to give it full justice. Creative unfoldment is an intuitive process. And needless to say, intuition can function only to the degree that your emotional life is strong, healthy, and mature.

Intuitive powers will be hindered to the degree that you have neglected emotional growth and to the degree that you have discouraged allowing yourself to experience the world of feeling.

### 1. Principle: Law of Self-Responsibility

You create your own reality. [Finding Images – Summary](#) PL 40

Only you create your own happiness and unhappiness. [The Abyss of Illusion](#) PL 60

### 2. Principle: Law of Paying the Price

There is a price to be paid for each desired gratification. [Finding God's Will](#) PL 29

Every advantage has its disadvantage. [Images: The Damage They Do](#) PL 41

**3. Principle: Law of Cause and Effect** Every act has its consequence in the sphere of present reality. It is more difficult to see the same relationship between thoughts and subtle attitudes. The more developed person can perceive cause and effect on these less obvious levels. [Cause and Effect on Various Levels of Consciousness](#) PL 245

[Spiritual Principles](#) PC10

**Exercise 1a:** Will & Intellect ref: [PL 104](#) are often more active and organized than feelings. Consider how this triad plays out in your daily life; how emotional growth might be overlooked as an important part of spiritual growth. For instance, spiritual principles may seem to support the use of Will and Intellect because they need to be understood. This can become an excuse for not developing a fuller understanding and expression of our emotional connection with them. For instance: explore your emotional response to the spiritual principles listed in this study guide.

QUESTION: *I would like to ask, how about the prophets or other holy people? Were they grown emotionally? Wasn't it just love they gave?*

ANSWER: A faith in God and love, without emotional maturity is impossible, if we speak about real love, the willingness to be personally involved, and not about the childish need to be loved and cherished which is so often confused with love. For real love and real, genuine faith to exist, emotional maturity is a necessary basis. Love and faith without emotional maturity is mutually exclusive, my child. The ability to love is a direct outcome of emotional maturity and growth. And true faith in God - in the sense that I discussed it last time, in the sense of true religion as opposed to false religion - is again a matter of emotional maturity because true religion is self-dependent. It does not cling to a father authority out of the need to be protected.

**False faith and false love always have the strong emotional connotation of need.** True love and true faith come out of strength, out of self-reliance and self-responsibility. All these are attributes of emotional maturity. And only with strength, self-reliance, and self-responsibility is true love, involvement, and faith possible. Anyone who ever attained spiritual growth, known or unknown in history, had to have emotional maturity.

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### Daily Review PL 28

<http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/028-DailyReview-Suggestions.pdf>

**Exercise:** Keep a record of incidents that disturb you. Focusing upon subtleties may help us from becoming distracted by exaggerating or over-dramatizing a situation. Notice feelings of discomfort, where you suspect you may be uninformed, ignorant, unprepared, or unaware. Each week, see if you can relate with the sub-topic. Or, see how your perceptions of Emotional Growth may be at conflict with

All you need is a ½ page of lined paper per day. Create 4 columns. At some point during each day, jot down brief notes about each incident (limit:10 per day). Eventually, this can become a thought process. The Guide refers to Daily Review as 'spiritual hygiene'.

1. Two to three words to identify each incident (no details)
2. What feelings or emotional reactions came up
3. The judgments or conclusions you came to at the time

At the end of each week, read through your entries and complete the last column:

4. What do you notice today that you did not notice at the time? Are there patterns?
5. Using your preferred form of meditation (sitting, walking, or while doing 'mindless' chores) reflect upon your early childhood experiences and how they relate to your feelings in the present.

## Week 2: The Mechanics of Resistance

Man[kind] particularly neglects, represses, and cripples the growth of his emotional nature.

Most human beings look after the physical self. They do more or less what is necessary to make it grow and remain healthy. And a good portion of mankind, comparatively speaking, cultivates the mental side. In order to do so, you learn, you use your brain, you use your thinking capacity, you absorb, you train your memory, you train your faculty of logical deduction. All this furthers mental growth.

*But why then is there a general neglect of man's emotional nature?*

In the world of feeling, you experience the good and the bad, the happy and the unhappy, pleasure and pain. Contrary to mental registration, such emotional experience really touches you.

Since 1) man's struggle is primarily for happiness and since immature emotions lead to unhappiness, his secondary aim 2) becomes the struggle to avoid unhappiness. This creates the early, mostly unconscious conclusion: *"If I do not feel, then I will not be unhappy."*

In other words, instead of taking the courageous and adequate step to live through the negative, immature emotions in order to afford them the opportunity to grow and thus to become mature and constructive, the childish emotions are suppressed, put out of awareness, and buried so that they remain inadequate and destructive even though the person is unaware of their existence.

In every child's life, unhappy circumstances exist; pain and disappointment exist. The less concisely that such pain and disappointment is a conscious experience, and the more it lies in a vague, dull climate that you cannot even put your finger on and is just something to be taken for granted, the greater is the danger that unconsciously the resolution will be made: *"I must not allow myself to feel if I wish to prevent the pain and the experience of unhappiness."*

By such evasion, you do not experience life at its fullest. By withdrawing from pain, you withdraw from happiness, and most of all, you withdraw from experience. At one time or another -- you may never remember the conscious intent -- your solution was: *"In order to avoid pain, I'll dull my capacity to feel."* And from that moment onward, you withdrew from living, loving, experiencing -- from everything that makes life rich and rewarding.

In addition, the result is that your intuitive powers are dulled, as well as your creative faculties. You only function to a tiny degree of your potentials. The damage you have inflicted upon yourself with this solution, and go on inflicting upon yourself as long as you adhere to this pseudo-solution, is one that eludes your comprehension and evaluation at the present time.

Since this was your defense mechanism against unhappiness to begin with, it is understandable that unconsciously you fight tooth and nail against giving up what seems to you a vital protection. You do not realize that not only do you miss out on life's richness, life's rewards, your own full potentials, but you do not really avoid unhappiness, as already indicated. This painful isolation was not willingly chosen by you, and therefore it is not accepted as a price to be paid.

**Exercise 2a:** Spend some time considering where you have expressed something similar to:

*"If I do not feel, then I will not be unhappy."*

*"In order to avoid pain, I'll dull my capacity to feel."*

*"I must not allow myself to feel if I wish to prevent the pain and the experience of unhappiness."*

## **Living and Feeling are One**

**4. Principle: Law of Living in Truth (Facing Life)** To face life's reality means to face yourself as you are, with all your imperfections; embrace life whole- heartedly, without fear, without self-pity or being afraid of being hurt. [Initial Steps for Self-Search](#) PL 25

[Spiritual Principles](#) PC10

How can you receive what you yearn for - love, belonging, communication -- if you neither feel nor express the occasional glimpses of feelings that the still healthy part in you strives for? You cannot have it both ways, and the child in you never wants to accept that.

Since you "protect" yourself in this foolish manner, you isolate yourself, thus exposing yourself much more to that which you strive to avoid. Hence you miss out doubly. The love and fulfillment you must increasingly crave for makes you blame others, circumstances, the fates, or bad luck, instead of seeing how you are responsible for it.

If you want happiness, you must be willing to give it. How can you give it if you are unwilling and unable to feel to the degree of your capability? Realize that it is you who caused this state of unfulfillment, and it is you who can still change it, regardless of your physical age.

Another reason for resorting to this unsuccessful pseudo-solution is the following: as in everything else, feeling and emotional expression can be mature and constructive -- or immature and destructive. As a child, you possessed an immature body and mind and therefore also, quite naturally, an immature emotional structure. Most of you gave your body and mind a chance to grow out of the immaturity and to reach a certain physical and mental maturity. You allowed yourself the luxury to grow out of the immature state.

### **An example on the physical level**

An infant will feel the strong urge to use its vocal chords. This is an instinct with the function that certain organic matter grows through strong use of the vocal chords. While the baby screams, it is not pleasant. It is a period of transition that leads to strong healthy organs in this particular respect. Not going through this unpleasant time by suppressing the instinctual urge to scream would eventually damage and weaken the respective organs.

Yet the same is done with your emotional self. You stop its functioning as such because you consider the growing transitional period so dangerous that you proceed to atrophy its growth altogether. You do not only hinder excesses by your reasoning process, but you also hinder all the transitory functioning which alone can lead to constructive mature emotions.

Since this is more or less the case with every one of you, the period has to be gone through now. It just cannot be skipped altogether. Or if you do, your overall development will be lopsided and therefore your personality structure crippled.

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**9. Principle: Law of Fully Inhabiting a State of Consciousness in Order to Grow** "You have to reach a certain state, and fully be in that state, before it can be abandoned for a further state." [Function of the Ego](#) PL 132

[Spiritual Principles](#) PC10

**Exercise 2b:** Meditate on Guide's challenge: *"How can you receive what you yearn for - love, belonging, communication -- if you neither feel nor express the occasional glimpses of feelings that the still healthy part in you strives for? You cannot have it both ways, and the child in you never wants to accept that."*

## Managing Negative Emotions

**6. Principle: Law of Transformation of Negativity** "The strength with which your divinity can penetrate the ego structure and manifest depends on the degree evil has been transformed throughout the evolutionary development." [Transformation of the Lower Self](#) PL 222

[Spiritual Principles](#) PC10

If destructive emotions should govern you instead of your being able to govern them, without repression, it is a form of temper tantrum in which the psyche says: *"You see, you have forced me to do this, and now see where this leads to."* If such subtle hidden emotions can be detected, it will alleviate any danger of negative emotions taking on a power that the personality cannot handle.

In the second place, it is important that you do not feel guilty about the existence of such emotions which are probably incompatible with the image you have of yourself. If you learn to accept the reality of yourself instead of your mistaken self-image, the strength of negative emotions will abate. Yes, you will of course experience negative emotions, but you will never fear that they can lead you toward a lack of self-control.

Let me put it this way: the strong impact of negative emotions, to the degree of fearing that you are unable to handle them, is due not so much to their existence per se, *but due to the lack of acceptance on your part that you are not your idealized self*, ref [PL 83](#).

The negative emotions in themselves would be much less disturbing if you would not cling to the idealized self, struggling to give it up.

Once you have accepted yourself as you now happen to be, and have made the inner decision to part with the illusion of yourself, you will feel much more at ease. You will become capable of experiencing negative emotions in a meaningful way that is growth producing. You will derive insight from them even if you are alone at the moment.

I cannot give you rules to observe. I can only point to the reason behind this factor.

QUESTION: *That means that the emotions as such are not dangerous, but our disappointment in ourselves makes them so powerful or dangerous?*

ANSWER: Yes, that is right. But they need not be dangerous if you do not want them to be. The harm comes from your nonacceptance of your real self, from the blame you throw into the world for not allowing you to be what you feel you could be if the world would let you.

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### Week 3: Prejudices About Emotional Growth

When you mature your mental processes, you have to go through transitory periods too. You do not only learn, you are also bound to make your mistakes. How could you appreciate truth if you had not gone through error? By avoiding error, you can never gain truth. It strengthens your mental faculties, your logic, your power of deduction, and your range. Without being allowed to make mistakes in your thinking, in your opinions, your mental faculties could not grow. Strangely enough, there is much less resistance in human nature against the necessary growing pains of the physical and mental sides of the personality than there is against the growth of the emotional nature. In this respect, it is entirely overlooked that growing pains are necessary too, and that they are constructive and beneficial.

In this growing period, immature emotions have to express themselves. Only as they are allowed expression (so that you can understand their meaning and significance) will you finally reach a point when you will no longer need such immature emotions.

This will not happen by a process of will, by outer mental decision which thereby represses what is still a part of your emotional being; but an organic process of emotional growth will occur wherein feelings will naturally change their direction, their aim, their intensity, their nature. But this can only be done if you experience your emotions as they happen to exist in you now.

When you were hurt as a child, your reactions were anger, resentment, hate -- sometimes to a very strong degree. If you prevent yourself from consciously experiencing these emotions, you will not get rid of them; therefore you will not enable healthy mature emotions to follow suit, but you will simply repress these existing feelings. You bury them and deceive yourself that you do not have what you actually still have.

Since you dull your capacity to feel, you become unaware of what exists underneath. Then you superimpose feelings that you think you ought to have but which you do not really and truly have. You all operate, some more, some less, with feelings that are not genuinely yours. With feelings you think you ought to have, but do not have. Underneath, something entirely different is taking place.

Only in times of extreme crisis do these actual feelings reach the surface. Then you believe it is the crisis that has caused these reactions in you. You wish to ignore the fact *that the crisis only made it impossible for you to deceive yourself*. And crisis *reactivated* the still immature emotions. That the crisis itself is the effect of the hidden emotional immaturity itself -- as well as of the existing self-deception, -- just does not want to penetrate your mind.

The fact that you merely put the raw, destructive, immature emotions out of sight (instead of growing out of them), and then deceive yourself as being a much more integrated and mature person than you actually are, is not only dishonesty, hypocrisy, and self-deception, but it also leads you into more isolation, unhappiness, alienation from yourself, -- and unsuccessful, unrewarding patterns that you repeat over and over again.

The result of all this seems to confirm your pseudo-solution, your defense mechanism. But this is a very misleading conclusion.

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**Exercise 3a:** Feelings don't deny feelings. So why does resistance seem like a feeling?

Spend some time noticing any influences from Intellect and Will ref: [PL 104](#) that disapprove of your feelings, or advocate alternate explanations that invalidate them.

Notice any tricks of the Ego ref: [PL 199](#). These attempt to distract you from exploring the cause of uncomfortable feelings, such as a sudden sense (vs. a feeling) of fatigue, or an impulse to do something (suddenly remembering a task or chore).

The body can also twitch, go numb, or suddenly signal an urgent need to change positions if it begins to experience feelings that it has no experience processing, or are associated with past traumas (pre-emptively trying to protect us from overwhelm or the self-inflicted remedy of going into shock, that can be hard to release afterwards).

### **Fear of Immature Emotions**

Immature emotions earned you punishment as a child. Either in actuality or by expressing them, an undesired result occurred. Either you lost something you wanted, such as the affection of certain people, for instance; or a desired goal was made impossible when you expressed what you really felt, which then became an additional reason why you hindered self-expression.

Consequently, as you perceived such emotions to be undesirable, you proceeded to whisk them also out of your own sight.

[You come to believe that] your procedure is therefore valid, necessary, and self-preserving. You will rightly say that if you live out your negative emotions, the world will punish you in one form or another. Yes, my friends, this is true. Immature emotions are indeed destructive and will indeed bring you disadvantages. *But your error lies in the thought (conscious or unconscious) that to be aware of what you feel and to give vent to it in action are one and the same. You cannot discriminate between the two courses of action.*

Nor can you discriminate between:

- 1) a constructive aim in which it is necessary to express and talk about what you feel, at the right place, with the right people; and
- 2) the destructiveness of heedlessly letting go all control, of not choosing the right aim, the right place, and the right people, of not wanting to use such expression as would gain insight into yourself. If you merely let go out of a lack of discipline, without an aim, and then expose negative emotions, it is indeed destructive.

But if you distinguish between the constructive and the destructive aims, if you realize the purpose and then develop the courage and humility

- 1) to allow yourself to be aware of what you really feel and
- 2) to express it when it is meaningful,

you will see the tremendous difference between merely allowing immature and destructive emotions to come to the fore in order to relieve yourself of pressure and give them an outlet without aim or meaning; and the purposeful activity of reexperiencing all the feelings that have once existed in you and that still exist in you (even if you are convinced that this is no longer the case).

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**Exercise 3b:** What emotions are you afraid of? Allow yourself to fantasize how these might act out destructively. Then honestly ask yourself, do you really lack the self-control that is needed to manage these emotions? Could there be some negative pleasure in imagining a lack of control? Does your inner child enjoy having access to a destructive super power?

## Consequences of Awareness

**7. Lack of Awareness of One Area of Your Human Personality Prohibits Awareness of Another** Awareness unifies you. It is the aim of this Path's approach to spiritual reunion to help towards a reunification of everything that has ever split off. [Basic Principles of the Pathwork](#) PL 193

**8. Principle: Law of Consciousness Reflects Experience.** Working out of abundance, produces abundance, but working out of poverty and need, produces more poverty and need. [Function of the Ego](#) PL 132

[Spiritual Principles](#) PC10

As the first few tentative steps are taken, in the direction of becoming aware of what you feel, and expressing it in a direct way (without finding "reasons and excuses" and without rationalizing it) you will gain an understanding about yourself such as you never had before. You will actively feel the growing process at work, because you actively participate with your innermost self, not merely with outer gestures.

You will not only begin to understand what brought on many undesired results, but how *it is in your power to change it*. You will also understand the interaction between yourself and others; how your unconscious distorted pattern has affected others, in just the exact opposite way than you originally wanted. This will give you an inner understanding about the process of communication.

This is the only way emotions can mature. By going through the period that was missed in childhood and adolescence, the emotions will finally mature, and you will no longer need to fear the power of those of your emotions -- which you cannot control when you merely put them out of awareness.

You will be able to trust them, to be guided by them -- for that is the final aim of the mature and well-functioning person. As long as your emotions remain destructive and childish, they are unreliable.

When you discourage their growth, you must live by your mental faculties only -- *and they are secondary in efficiency*. When healthy emotions make your intuition reliable, there will be a mutual harmony between the mental and emotional faculties. One will not contradict the other. As long as you cannot rely on your intuitive processes, you must be insecure and lacking in self-confidence. You try to make up for this by relying on others, on false religion. This makes you weak and helpless. But if you have mature, strong emotions, you will trust yourself and thereby find a security you never dreamed existed.

QUESTION: *How can you be sure that I mean it when I say I love a person?*

ANSWER: The human being is not just cut out of one piece. There are very many contradictory emotions possible. Hate does not annul love. As you grow in the way of this path, little by little, the negative emotions will disappear. But while they are still present, you must forgive yourself. You need not expect of yourself that you must always love and understand. No one can do that. But it can gradually come, very gradually. Hurt will grow less, and therefore love will grow more.

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**Exercise 3c:** Are there any areas in your life where you seem 'lucky', where your 'guesses' tend to be surprisingly accurate? Instead, consider that this is an area where your intuition is allowed to operate, with very little interference from the Intellect, Will, and Ego, where your emotions are healthy.



## Week 4: Emotional Growth, Love, Spirituality

What has not been properly assimilated in emotional experience, but has instead been repressed, will constantly be reactivated by present situations that remind you (in one way or another) of what brought on such unassimilated experience in the first place. Such a "reminder" may not be factual. It can be an emotional climate, a symbolic association that lodges exclusively in the subconscious.

But as you learn to become aware of what is really going on in you, you will also become aware of such "reminders." You will also become aware that *often you actually feel very much the opposite of what you force yourself to feel.*

After the first painful release of negative emotions, you will find a certain relief in the realization that poisonous matter has left your system in a manner that was not destructive for you or for others. After thus having gained insight and understanding, new, warm, good emotions will come out of you that could not express themselves so long as the negative emotions were held in check.

You will also learn to discriminate between genuine good feelings and false good feelings that you superimpose out of the need to maintain your idealized self-image, ref [PL 83](#): *"This is the way I should be."* Because you cling to this idealized self-image, you cannot find your real self. And because this is so, you do not have the courage to accept the fact that a comparatively large area of your personality is still childish, incomplete, and imperfect. It falls considerably short of what you want to appear to be. For only in the mature emotions, the courage to make this maturity and growth possible, will you gain the security within yourself you so ardently hunt for elsewhere.

You constantly reach for false solutions in order to create an illusion of a security that can be pulled from under your feet at the slightest provocation because it is unreal. So, build your security. You have nothing to fear out of becoming aware of what is already in you, anyway. By looking away from what is, it does not cease to exist. Therefore it is wise on your part to want to look at, to face, and to acknowledge that which is in you -- no more and no less!

Only after facing what is in you will your much more mature intellect be able to make the decision as to whether these inner behavior patterns are worth keeping or not. You are not forced to give up what seems a protection to you. But look at it with the clear and lucid eyes of truth. That is all I ask you to do. You have nothing to fear from it.

After you have evaluated the childish emotions, you will hold in your hand the key to growing up and integrating into a whole and healthy human being.

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**Exercise 4a:** Notice areas of your life where you have closed your heart to others; notice how well or how badly your emotions function in that area (from your personal spiritual perspective, vs. more temporary earthly indicators such as success).

Alternately, notice where you experience disturbances, disharmonies, disappointments. Are you able to keep your heart open and receive help in those areas? If not, consider some small steps you could take in order to open your heart more fully in one or two areas.

## Emotional Growth, Love, and Spirituality

In the course of this work and of the considerable success you have accomplished in the hard work of self-facing, sooner or later, all of you will reach the point where you have to make up your mind as to whether you really want emotional growth, or whether you still want to cling to the childish hope that spiritual growth is possible while you neglect the world of feeling, by allowing it to lay dormant, without you giving it the opportunity of growth.

You all know, regardless of what religion or spiritual philosophy or teaching, that love is the first and the greatest power. In the last analysis, it is the only power.

Most of you have used this saying many times. But I wonder, my friends, have you realized that all along you have spoken just words, just words, while all the time you have veered away from feeling, from experiencing, from the world of emotional reaction and experience! Now, how can you love if you do not let yourself feel? How can you love and at the same time remain what you choose to call "detached"? That means remaining personally uninvolved. It means that you do not risk pain, disappointment, personal involvement.

Can you love in such a comfortable way? If you numb your faculty of feeling, how can you truly experience love?

How can you hope to gain spirituality -- and spirituality, religion, and love are one -- by neglecting your emotional processes?

Any spiritual development is a farce if you deny this part of your being. If you do not have the courage to allow the negative in you to reach your surface awareness, how can healthy, strong, emotions fill your being? If you cannot deal with the negative because it is out of your awareness, this very same negative element will stand in the way of the positive.

Those of you who will now follow this path and do what is so necessary will first experience a host of negative feelings. But after these are dealt with and properly understood, warm, mature, constructive feelings will evolve. You will feel warmth, compassion, good involvement such as you never thought possible. You will no longer feel yourself being isolated. You will begin to truly relate to others -- in truth and reality, not in falsehood and self-deception. When this happens, a new security and respect for yourself will become part of you. You will begin to trust and like yourself.

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**5. Principle: Law of Brotherhood** To be able to open up, to really open your heart to another person, brings a spiritual help that you could not receive by yourself. *Finding Your Faults* PL26

*Spiritual Principles* PC10

**Exercise 4b:** Allow yourself to see the kind of love you are actually willing to open up to today, without judgments. Notice where you have blamed the world for not receiving your love, when you were not actually offering any.