

# *Pathwork™ Steps*

## **Main Image, Repressed Needs**

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 93

**Week 1: Overcome resistance by making your work personal**

**Week 2 How an image comes into existence**

**Week 3: Repressed Needs**

**Week 4: Defense Mechanisms**

**Week 1: Overcome resistance by making your work personal**

The child in you resists growth. It desires to remain immature and burdened with the unworkable wrong conclusions and destructive defense mechanisms. Without these pseudo-solutions and defenses, a part in you believes itself lost, threatened, endangered. To let go the very "protection," or that which seems as such to you, causes the psyche to resist.

Relapses occur not only because it takes considerable time until a new habit can form in your emotional reactions, but also because you cannot do so before you gain a fuller view and understanding regarding the totality of your conflicts. By this, I do not mean a general, theoretical understanding, but a real inner, specific, and personal understanding.

Such inner understanding comes only after a great deal of deep insight and of growth and change regarding particular areas. All this is necessary before the nucleus can be affected. Use these words as guiding directives so as to gain personal, emotional understanding from them. The link must be made with your own findings, attitudes, and images.

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John Locke described the human mind as a 'tubula rasa (blank slate), but his take has been rejected by modern scientists. In [From Mating to Mentality](#) (2003), a group of cognitive scientists describes the human mind as more like a coloring book, or a 'graffiti-filled wall of a New York subway station' than a blank slate.

[A theory of human nature](#) Aeon Essays

Nature could have evolved in another way and not stumbled upon feelings. But it didn't. It is true that humans still make good use and greatly benefit from automatic controls: The value of glucose in the bloodstream can be automatically corrected to an optimal range by a set of complex operations that do not require any conscious interference on the part of the individual. However, there is a supplementary mechanism that involves mental experiences that express a value. The key to the mechanism is feelings. Importantly, feelings are not an independent fabrication of the brain. They are the result of a cooperative partnership of body and brain, interacting by way of free-ranging chemical molecules and nerve pathways.

[Biology Runs on Feelings](#) Antonio Damasio, Neuroscience Magazine January 2018

Each and every living instant -- I do not care whether it is beautiful or ugly, easy and lighthearted or difficult and heavy -- contains the potential to be in bliss, provided you penetrate the now to its deepest level. Each instant contains ultimate truth if you but want to turn into the right direction.

[Two Basic Ways of Life: Toward and Away From the Center](#) PL 168

**From PL 93:** Only if you have a full understanding of how this is so in your own individual case, will your confusion disappear, and then also your depression and discouragement -- an understanding that is not general, not theoretical, not in principle, but specifically as to how it applies to you!

**Three major aspects of our work so far:**

**1. Images.** There is always one main image which concerns the most important unfulfillment in your life. Therefore you go through repeated disappointments. In connection with the images, we deal with the various wrong conclusions and pseudo-solutions which constitute a part of the main image.

*Prior study guides for reference:*

- PL 40 Finding Images – A Summary  
2018 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/040-FindingImagesStudyGuide2018.pdf>
- PL 52 The God Image / PL 46 Authority  
2009 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/046-TC-Authority-2009.pdf>
- PL 57 Mass Images  
2015 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/PRS11-MassImagesStudyGuide.pdf>
- PL 60 The Abyss of Illusion  
2014 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/060-PRS20-AbyssStudyGuide.pdf>
- PL 83 The Idealized Image  
2008 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/083-TC-ISI-Mask-2008.pdf>  
2013 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/039wsjr%20FindingImages.pdf>
- PL 118 Parents and Images; Transference  
2008 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/118-TC-Transference-2008.pdf>  
2014 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/PRS11-ParentsImages-StudyGuide.pdf>

**Exercise 1:** Your Main Image will be reflected in the greatest unfulfillment during this lifetime. If you are not able to identify this, ask others who know you well. Asking others for help can bring up feelings of vulnerability, of not having meaningful relationships, or fears about being judged. These may be clues to your main images! Explore these feelings if you are not comfortable asking for help.

**2. Repressed needs** and, in connection with them, repressed emotions, positive and negative.

*Prior study guides for reference:*

- PL 72 About the Fear of Loving  
2009 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/072-TC-FearLoving-2009.pdf>
- PL 92 Real and False Conscience / Read and False Guilt  
2014 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/PRS15-Guilt-StudyGuide.pdf>
- PL 192 Real and False Needs  
2014 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/192-PRS23-RepressedNeeds-StudyGuide.pdf>

**3. The defense mechanism** you develop in order to obtain what seems to you a protection. In this category belong the attitudes of submissiveness, aggressiveness, withdrawal. These three aspects, as well as the idealized self-image, form a part of your defense. But it is more than all of this. The basic defense is a general inner climate that you have to come to feel. You have to recognize its presence in order to become fully aware of the damage it does to you. You have to acutely feel it almost as though it were a foreign body before you can convince yourself of its destructive influence, causing many unnecessary unfavorable results.

*Prior study guides for reference:*

- PL 77 Self Confidence / Forcing Currents  
 2013 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/077-SelfConfidenceStudyGuide-2013.pdf>  
 2016 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/077-SelfConfidence-FC.pdf>
- PL 101 The Defense  
 2008 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/101-TC-Defense-2008.pdf>  
 2014 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/101-PRS19-DefenseStudyGuide.pdf>
- PL 201 Demagnetizing Negative Force Fields  
 2008 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/201-TC-Demagnetize-2008.pdf>
- PL 236 The Superstition of Pessimism  
 2017 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/236-SuperstitionPessimism.pdf>

**Resistance to change is one of the greatest hurdles to be overcome.** It can be rationalized in many ways, but whatever is the conscious "reason" for such resistance, deep down you all battle against giving up the "glory" of your idealized self. That, especially, you fear above and beyond anything else.

You think or feel you have to hold on to it for dear life because, after all, it was chosen as a "solution." And since this process of choice was unconscious, the same unconscious reasons still make you hold on to the belief that perhaps, after all, it may still turn out to be a "solution" and bring you safety and security (distortion of the instinct of self-preservation), as well as happiness and pleasure (distortion of the instinct of procreation). This is always the underlying force of your resistance, no matter what the outer rationalizations are.

Unconsciously you hold on to that which was chosen as salvation and safety, the pseudo-solution. That makes change, growth, and liberation so extremely difficult.

[Distortions of the Instincts of Self-Preservation and Procreation](#) PL 85

**Q:** On the one hand, I am frightened, and on the other I feel an inner peace. So I don't know what to do. I feel both ways, often at the same time. I can translate my emotions very well, but I still need help in this respect. I think one part of my problem is that there is too much passivity in me, and that generates a certain fear too.

**A:** You have now reached a point where finally one part of you is beginning to want to give up childhood. When this is predominant, you feel the peace you describe. On the other hand, a part of you still holds on frantically to childhood, fears adulthood with its responsibility and what seems like activity to you. This struggle is now coming to the surface and to a head. Your protection and defense is in retaining childhood, and as I said, a part of you is afraid of giving up this protection. For you, the key question at this point is: "Why am I afraid of no longer being a child?" The inner peace is the result of your work, which makes you, at least partly, prepared to give up childhood.

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### Daily Review PL 28

**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.

**Link to previous study guides on developing your own personal version of Daily Review:**

[http://www.janrigsby.com/pathwork1\\_49.html](http://www.janrigsby.com/pathwork1_49.html)

<http://www.janrigsby.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/028-dailyreview-suggestions.pdf>

## Week 2 How an image comes into existence

The childhood hurts and frustrations, which every child experiences at least to some degree, cause unhappiness and discontent. The situation that brings this about leads the child to jump to the erroneous conclusion that every similar situation is bound to bring a similar result. Thus what once was a reality now turns into illusion because it is untrue that such a generalization can be made. **This generalization freezes into a rigid, preconceived idea. This then is the image.**

But a part of the image is the supposed remedy. Since the image is unreal, so must be the remedy. Since the image is an inflexible, rigid mass in the soul substance that should be fluid and dynamic, so must the remedy be unrealistic and therefore disappointing. All the more disappointing is the fact that **what happens in reality is the very opposite function** to that which it was supposed to fulfill. It goes without saying that this entire process is unconscious until you have succeeded in bringing it into your consciousness.

This predicament then results in further negative chain reactions. **The defense mechanisms become stronger and stronger in every possible respect.** The more this is so, the less it is possible to avoid the hurts that you have (unconsciously) labored so hard to forego. And so long as it is unconscious, you have no way of stopping this destructive process so entirely opposed to your own best interests.

### Repressed needs

In connection with that original hurt that caused you to form an image, you begin to repress. You not only repress this hurt so that you are no longer aware of it, but rather experience it as a vague, general climate, but you also repress many of your needs. This is so because the experience leading to your having formed an image was so painful and also so humiliating that you did not wish to face it. Also, the experience makes you believe that these needs cannot be fulfilled, and therefore you believe it possible to tear out your needs simply by not acknowledging them. **However, your pseudosolutions are supposed to bring you the fulfillment you often simultaneously deny, without any risks of being hurt or being humiliated again.** Since this cannot be so, your defenses become stronger, and thereby fulfillment becomes less possible. During this process, you go on repressing your needs, your hurts, your disappointments. Oh, you may experience them to a certain degree, but rarely with the full impact and almost never with the understanding of what really hurts you and why.

This repeated pattern not only proves the image right, but it also proves that your defenses against it do not work. This increases the original hurt of the experience having brought the image into existence. This is all the more confusing because a part of the image works. The best way to explain this is by way of an example.

Let us suppose a male child has had a cruel mother, in that the child experienced an acute lack of affection, warmth, and understanding and was therefore frustrated. The image will form: *"Women are ungiving, women reject and do not give love."* Therefore fear, apprehension, and anxiety exists toward women when the child becomes an adult. This may outwardly be overcome, but if the emotions are examined, this will be found. But since the basic need for the opposite sex and the basic need for warmth, love, and affection cannot really be torn out, a

remedy against this image will come into existence. **Due to the unreal premise that all women are the way the mother was, so must the remedy be unreal and not effective.**

Let us further assume that the same mother was quite demanding as far as work in school is concerned. She expected a high standard from the child. And when this child actually was successful, she approved. She was not withholding in her approval. She was then liberal with praise. Thus some kind of gratification could be had by the child, provided he struggled hard enough to be successful. This will further create the impression and add to the image the following conclusion: *"Although women do not give the love and comfort my soul really craves for, **I may get the next best thing.** I may have some importance by being successful in my work."*

Needless to say, such thoughts are not really uttered, even unconsciously. For unconsciously there is no clear-cut distinction between receiving love and receiving approval. It is only vaguely felt that something favorable came forth by being ambitious, while nothing favorable happened when not. And even when the approval came, there was no conscious lack of something. It was rather the inner climate that what one yearned for could be had to some degree if one makes efforts in these certain directions. The real need for being loved was already repressed by the time the image came into existence.

Hence, **the main image**, in a case like this, would be: *"I have to be successful in order to be loved,"* and *"Approval for my professional work is one and the same as being loved."* Images of this or similar sort are quite frequent.

### **Underlying Images**

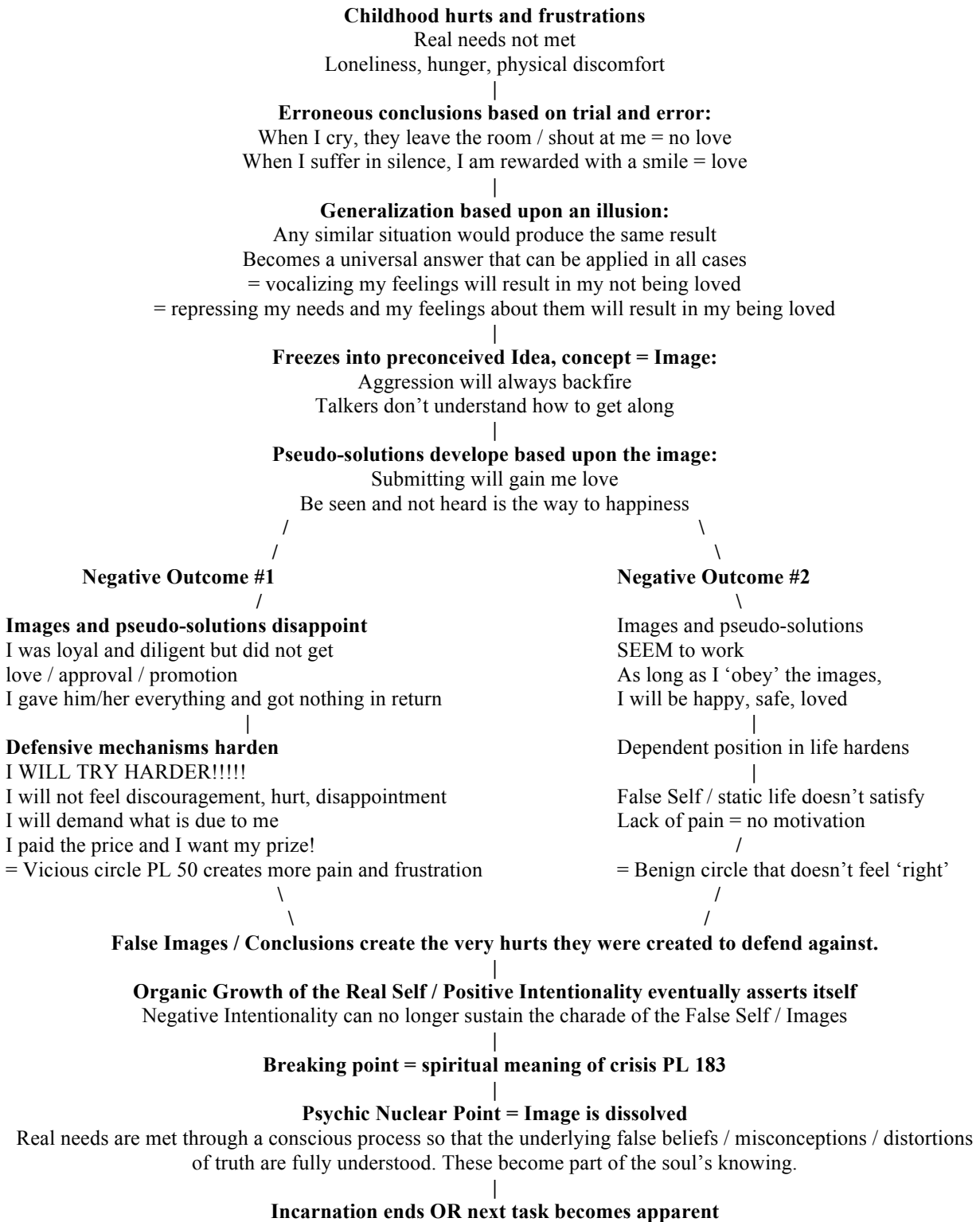
But let us now examine a little further what this means. Due to such an image, if there is no strong second image present, counteracting this one, such a person will actually be very successful. He will be ambitious and will use all his resources in order to satisfy the image claim to receive approval and success. **This image claim will be granted. But the underlying claim,** that approval is tantamount to love, cannot be granted because here lies the wrong conclusion.

The actual image of striving for success is not in itself a wrong conclusion. It may be a waste of too much energy on one aspect of life at the expense of another which may be more important for happiness and peace. But in itself, there is no error, no untruth involved. It may be an imbalance when the entire life and its needs are considered, but in itself it is not based on a wrong assumption. Therefore it will work out. The claim for success will be fulfilled. Whether or not the overemphasis brings unbalance to the life of the person, in the claim itself there is no logical error. But the unconscious aim and claim for gaining love through success cannot be granted **because approval and love are not the same.** To believe it (consciously or unconsciously) is a logical error, a misconception, and therefore it cannot work. By gaining the one, you do not gain the other. **If you gain love and success, it is due to a logically correct attitude towards both.**

This then is where the image does not work. This is why the constantly frustrated needs grow and are repressed because the personality is not willing to face (a) the longing and pain of the unfulfillment and (b) the erroneous image conclusion. The unfulfilled need for love, warmth, companionship, union is contained in the unpronounced claim of the main image. There you clearly see one link between the main image and the repressed needs.

# Images, Repressed Needs, Pseudo-Solutions

Chart for PL 93 Main Images, Repressed Needs by Jan Rigsby



## Exercise 2: Which negative outcome feels most familiar to you?

### Week 3: Repressed Needs

The repressed need for love is in itself a healthy and legitimate need. But the need for approval at the expense of gaining love is an unhealthy need.

Now why do I say "at the expense of?" Because if you concentrate on being successful, on impressing others, on receiving admiration -- which all falls under the category of approval -- you are bound to pursue the very behavior pattern that will push love away from you.

Now let us go to the next step, with the same example I have chosen. Such a person may be aware of a drive for success. But he is unaware of why this is so important, where it stems from, and what the frustration and need behind it really mean. And therefore each time he reaps success without the unpronounced inner claim for love, it is not only a new frustration, it is the same hurt from childhood, experienced all over again, but it increases inner insecurity and inferiority.

He originally deduced that if he were more loveable, his mother would have given him more of what he needed. He, as a child, could not evaluate that his mother might have been incapable of feeling or demonstrating love.

And now he is incapable of deducing that he himself forfeits love, not because he is unworthy of it, but because his very defense against being hurt is arrogant, rejecting, superior, and fearful. All these are feelings which do not inspire love.

Only by unrolling this entire process can the painful inferiority feeling disappear. It is this very inferiority, this very feeling of being unlovable that the soul resists to face. He fears what he will find will be "I am unlovable," so he represses. And while doing so, he not only represses this painful factor, but he also represses the entire process of image, needs, false claims, destructive defense mechanisms, together with all the traits of the idealized self-image and of the various pseudo-solutions.

But only by courageously going in and through this process will he find that he is actually not at all unlovable, but **he makes himself so by his defense mechanism.**

This realization is one of the most important ones on the path. It holds true for everyone in some way, whatever the images are, whatever the idealized self-image is, whatever the various pseudo-solutions are.

The crisis and struggle preceding this important breakthrough is also based on the still unconscious confusion that the very means that are supposed to get love and acceptance actually do not bring it. Therefore the unconscious belief of one's own unworthiness increases, and this is even more difficult to face.

**If only you go through it, you will be relieved to see it is not you who is unlovable, but the various devices you use for your protection.** This recognition is of untold value and will give you incredible strength.

**Q: Would you give an example of how to relinquish a need?**

A: Let us take the case I used tonight as a hypothesis. The real need of this person is to be loved, to love, to have a real meaningful relationship. He is unaware of this need. The childhood experiences with their effect on this particular personality have prohibited the unfoldment of the personality which would bring about fulfillment.

He has repressed knowledge of this need. Instead, he pursues success, approval, impressing others. This then has become a superimposed, false need, covering up the real need. To begin with, he is not fully aware of his need for approval.

But let us assume such a person follows a path of this sort. He will first become aware of the tremendous drive for success, surpassing his rational explanation for it. He will slowly realize that a stronger force urges him on and on.

First he will not understand it, but as he is more willing to examine his emotions, he will see that his need for approval exists. To stop at this point will not yield relief and liberation. It is only a part of the way.

But by going on, he will ask himself why he needs success so badly. The answer will be that approval is very important for him. Why is it so important? By consulting his emotions very honestly, without resistance, he will finally see that his need for love has been denied as a child, and he has gone on denying it himself by way of the image with all its by-products.

**The awareness of this real need, once it is truly felt and experienced with its full impact, will automatically diminish the drive for ambition, success, approval, impressing others, being glorious, special, and so on and on. He will do what he really wants and distribute his forces and resources in a more harmonious way.**

This does not by any means imply that he will all of a sudden neglect a healthy interest in his work. But harmony will gradually establish itself, and the inner aim will be directed towards that which he had neglected for so long. He will come to see how he sabotaged the fulfillment of his real need by the pursuit of the false need. He will clearly see the behavior pattern of the false need and how it damaged the real need. Therefore he will begin to change in that respect.

**This is relinquishing in the real sense.** One grows into it by insight, by full understanding of all the factors involved, and then no longer having to hold onto the false needs and the destructive defenses. But it can never be done by an action of will. If you find yourself beginning to recognize that similar trends exist and try forcefully to relinquish this need, it will do you no good. You will either not succeed, or the anxiety may be so great that you produce other destructive trends of which you are unaware.

But to go through the slow process described just now, organic growth occurs, and the relinquishing happens in a natural way.

**Q: If a person has a number of real needs, as everybody has, and a number of artificial or false needs...**

A: Observe

- your emotions with their inner, unpronounced claims,
- the behavior pattern resulting from it,
- your reactions to others and how you affect others;
- the way you act and react,
- which needs are fulfilled and which remain unfulfilled,

you will gain a clearer picture about the process under discussion tonight.

Become aware of your emotions, your needs, and your defense, how they make you behave inwardly and therefore also outwardly. Be it only ever so subtle, you will clearly see the answer. In order to do so, a great deal of inner awareness has to be cultivated.



Allow your emotions to come to the surface, and learn to cope with them.

Understand their deeper meaning and their reason for being.

When you feel your defense coming up, and when not, what is the difference in your perception, experience, ability to communicate with or without this defense -- all this will reveal your inner life to you.

And this will help you to relinquish false needs and replace them with constructive behavior patterns, fulfilling your real needs.

**The search in this direction is not easy.** There are so many factors, so many simultaneously contradictory aspects to unroll and to see. There may be a moment's insight that only eludes you again. And when you then try to feel it by memory, it no longer works. It is no longer meaningful. It has to be found again until it takes a stronger hold of you. **Only by repeatedly observing this destructive defense**, how it feels in you, what it makes you do, feel, think, how it makes you react, how this affects others, only then will you see and truly understand. **Only then will you gradually let go**, become free of it, and only then will your true, "undefended" self manifest. It may often act completely against your known outer rules, your principles, your established patterns that you have become so used to. It takes a great deal of struggle until you let your real self act, unhampered by your outer levels which are so unreliable, as your life has shown you in your trouble.

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### Exercise 3: Finding Repressed Needs

#### Working from the present (what you observe to be true NOW):

1. One of my character flaws is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Whether or not it bothers others, I can't give it up because I would lose / be unable to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. This character flaw enables me to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I see this flaw in (circle) one / both of my parents/caretakers, one / more than one of my siblings and/or one / more than one extended family member / social group.
5. This character flaw enables them to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When anyone else demonstrates this same kind of character flaw, I feel like / react like \_\_\_\_\_.

#### The work from the past forward (what you remember about your early childhood experiences and how decisions made then are active in your life TODAY):

1. When I was \_\_\_\_\_ years old, I felt frustrated and hurt because I did not receive \_\_\_\_\_ from my parents or caretakers.
2. To get my needs met I had to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If I behave differently, \_\_\_\_\_ will / won't happen.
4. In my family, I have observed these others acting out in a similar way: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Over the years I have improved this 'solution' to include \_\_\_\_\_.
6. What I had to give up / submit to was \_\_\_\_\_.

## Week 4: Defensive Mechanisms

You struggle between two alternatives, either of which could be either healthy or distorted. You will find the answer only if (and when) you have found your **point of relinquishing**, and if (and when) you are utterly aware of **the hardened mass of your defense mechanism**.

Your innermost self, which knows so well, which will never lead you astray, cannot function **so long as it is encased in the hardened, brittle structure of your defenses**.

Let us examine for a moment the difference between submissiveness, appeasement, and the unprotected, vulnerable real self which should be out in the open.

This does not mean more hurt, but less, my friends. When you appease or submit, when you give up or allow others to take advantage of you, you do so only because you cannot **relinquish the claims of your needs** and just because **you are unaware of them**. You bow down to your inability to give in, to lose. That robs you of the dignity of your real self.

Your real self **can** lose. It may be painful, but never as painful and bitter as the struggle of straining towards the impossible.

You will not forfeit your dignity because you do not **have** to “have”. And you do not have to “have” if you can face your needs, and face the fact of how you forfeited their fulfillment by the very process I am describing here.

The stronger your tendency is to submit, the more self-contempt do you beget, and therefore the stronger is the pull into the opposite direction of arrogant aggressiveness, superiority. Whether you outwardly manifest it or whether it smolders hidden, it has its effect on others, and it rejects. However, you confuse it with the dignity that is lacking in your tendency to submit.

**Your submissiveness is an outcome of your repressed needs, of your denial and shame of them. Your aggressiveness is a defense not so much against outer hurts, but against your submissiveness.**

Even if the pseudo-solution is submissiveness, which seems so opposite to the arrogance of the aggressive success seeker and the pseudo-solution that denies needs, it will always be found that deep within this submissiveness lies as much arrogance and superiority as in the other pseudo-solutions. It is clothed in a seemingly more acceptable cloak, but it contains as hardened a defense structure as the extreme opposite.

This defense structure is an invisible but very real wall unconsciously perceived by everyone, which prohibits love although it begs for it. Only upon close analysis of the various emotions and feelings contained in it, will it become clear that the submitter rejects as much as the aggressor.

In this conflict, you find yourself ensnared.

You cannot give up the defense that keeps you chained to both these tendencies. Or if you

are so confused between these two ways, you may resort to withdrawing from life, from love, from reaching out towards life and towards others.

Again it is not so much that you withdraw because you fear others, but because you cannot cope between these two artificially constructed attitudes that unconsciously, at one time, seemed to be the solution.

All I told you now should not be mere words to you. As long as they are, they will not do you any good. Therefore it is necessary that you begin to link up these elements by reconsidering, once again, what your main image is. Some of you have not even found it yet. If you have not, **consider your main problem, unhappiness, unfulfillment**, and then proceed to find it. It will now be much easier to do so with all the preliminary work you have gone through.

Once you see the main image, determine the part that **did** work out because of its **correct** premise, in itself. **And then consider the hidden claim -- and that it did not work.**

Consider the needs involved with this image. Even before you will feel them, you will know these needs must be there once you realize the image with each of the fulfilled and unfulfilled claims. This will enable you to set out feeling them, and you will become aware of them in due time. You will acutely feel the real, as well as the superimposed unreal needs.

Simultaneously, train yourself to feel your defensive wall in yourself. Observe it in action. Feel its existence. It is there if only you pay attention to it.

#### **Exercise 4:**

Last but not least, **begin to notice the difference in your behavior and reaction when you feel the defensive wall in you and when you do not.** This will bring into clear focus the effect you must have on others. Without the awareness of this difference, you cannot know the effect of your defense. When you realize the effect you have on others due to this defense mechanism, you will then be able to close the circle and see that **this defensive wall breeds the very unfulfillment you wanted to avoid through the erroneous image conclusion.**

You all get what the image demands, as long as there is no logical error contained in it. After establishing these facts, apart from the other part that is based on a misconception, you may change your inner weight and focus because you will recognize that it does not bring you what you really want.

Those of you who are aware of their main image, without the links I now showed, will not yet really benefit from this awareness. It will not be a live knowledge that has an impact on you, that enables you to go through an inner change. In order to do that, **you need the connecting links in your personal inner history.**

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