

# *Pathwork™ Steps*

## **Reaching the Spiritual Center**

### **Struggle Between Lower Self and Superimposed Conscience**

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 116

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from [www.pathwork.org](http://www.pathwork.org)

**Week 1: Understanding Spiritual Matters Brings a Sense of Security**

**Week 2: Two Fundamental Attitudes**

**Week 3: A Battle Between Lower Self and Superimposed Conscience**

**Week 4: Childhood Origins of the Superimposed Conscience**

**Week 1: Understanding Spiritual Matters Brings a Sense of Security**

Those who have overcome the inherent resistance to face themselves and subsequently change, have made considerable progress. I think most of you are aware of it. You may not always be aware of it to the full extent and as to the significance of the continuous process of growth that you find yourself in. But I dare say that most of you will feel an extension of awareness, a raising of your consciousness in many respects.

Often, where life previously seemed hopeless because outside solutions beyond your control seemed ever more unattainable, you now begin to glimpse an occasional shaft of light with a more profound comprehension of your inner disturbances. You now understand why a certain unhappiness or unfulfillment is a result of inner error and confusion. This in itself is bound to bring hope and security. It eliminates the feeling of being an innocent victim of circumstances that are beyond your control. By understanding a little more of cause and effect in your own life, by seeing it in practice, a sense of security is instilled in you that this is not such a bad world to live in, after all.

Those thoughts may not be conscious, but it is an effect on the psyche after sufficient insight has been reached.

Some of you may find yourself in one of those phases before an important recognition when all seems doubly confused. At such times, your struggle is often very painful, until you have truly come face to face with an area that you rather wished to avoid. Then, as all of you have discovered, the feeling of liberation and strength, of hope and light is such a profound experience that its effect can never leave you.

But while you are engaged in this struggle, your overall view of your path may be befogged. It is difficult to evaluate at such times what you have accomplished, what remains to be done, where you stand, and to what degree you have fully comprehended your inner disturbances and deviations. Nevertheless, even in such a phase, you have by now sufficiently penetrated into the depths of yourself to have reached some degree of awareness of your progress and of what still remains to be accomplished.

To know specifically in what respect of your life you still feel unfree and obstructed, defensive and anxious, is of utmost importance. At certain periods, you may do well to gauge your progress, as well as to what remains to be done, by asking yourself, in what respect:

- you now understand your problems;
- you still feel resistant to change in spite of the understanding gained;
- are you still confused and in the dark and therefore need further insight; and
- have you truly resolved certain problems.

Such an occasional inventory, if I may call it that, is very helpful.

PL 116

**Exercise 1a:** Reflect back on the past few years. How has your interest and study of spiritual matters changed your life? Make a list, so that you can appreciate some of the subtleties.

### **Outer vs. Inner Search for Truth**

When man lives unto the day without understanding the relationship between himself and his life, he must be in despair. Whether or not he knows it, he goes through life searching for the answer. Only too often he seeks this answer outside; and there, as you know, it can never be found. Outside search can take on various forms. He may, through a conscious or unconscious insistence, expect that others bend to his will so that he may be happy. When this fails, he becomes angry, resentful, and often full of self-pity. However, none of these emotions may be conscious. Another form of outside search may be by looking for theories and answers in philosophy, religion, science. He may indeed find many valuable and valid answers from such sources. However, they will not truly help him unless he uses such answers as a guiding light to then start an inner search deep within himself. As long as knowledge remains only that, it will not do any good. It will fail to give substance and meaning to his life.

Man contains within himself all the knowledge, all the wisdom, and all the powers he can possibly need and use in order to live a satisfactory life. To know this and to move consciously into the right direction will help you to muster the strength to overcome the resistance that always stands in the way of your facing yourself in utter candor, painful as this may appear at times.

The aim of finding, understanding, and resolving your hidden conflicts and distortions is to bring you ultimately into contact with this innermost core -- with the treasure of divine love, wisdom, and strength that lies embedded in all of you. If this aim is clearly defined, there will no longer be a conflict between spiritual and worldly interests.

PL 116

**Exercise 1b:** As long as we are in human form, life will contain a mixture of inner and outer searching. Every day for a week, use your Daily Review to track inner searches for truth, vs. outer ones. At the end of the week, notice how you felt about the outcome of each kind of search.

### **Daily Review 2.0 PL 28**

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

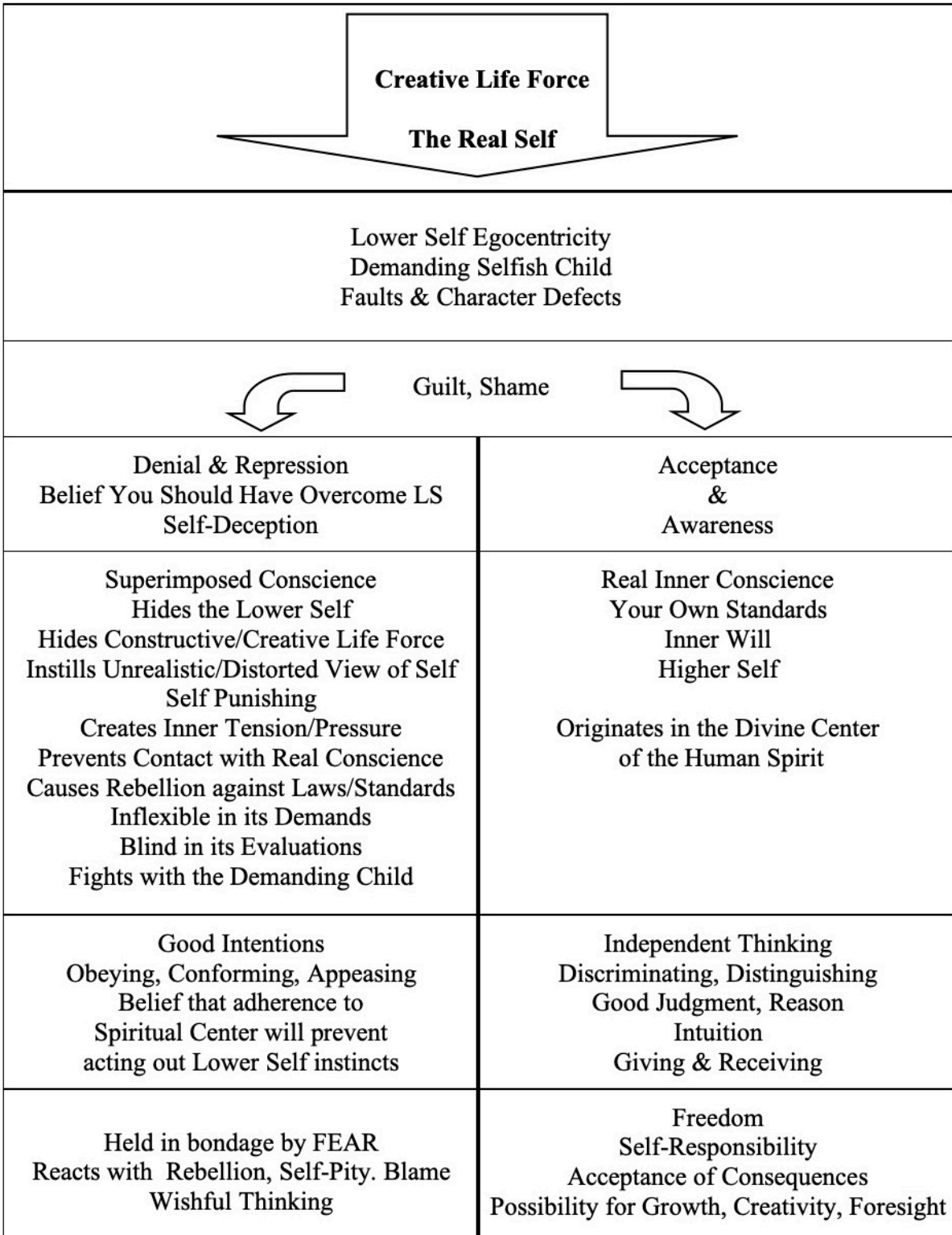
Track your daily experiences of disharmonies. Find a common denominator after keeping logs for several weeks.

### **Daily Review 3.0 from PL 56**

Learn to investigate your reactions, and ask yourself what the meaning and further significance of them may be. What do they imply? What lies behind the emotions you register in the most casual incidents of your life? What is the emotion you register just at first, and what is behind it?

*The Capacity to Wish: Healthy and Unhealthy Motives in Desire* PL 56

## Reaching the Spiritual Center PL 116 Chart by Tom Hubbard



## Week 2: Two Fundamental Attitudes

1. *One attitude is a search for God. He searches for spiritual development.* He wants to become a better person. His unhappiness and confusion lead him on to a spiritual search. As I have said before, he may often lose the true direction by collecting outside knowledge regarding spiritual theories and doctrines without taking the decisive step within his own soul.

But if the mind assimilates such knowledge only as a preliminary step toward transcending the mind, if it is recognized that the obstructions within the personality have to be understood and dissolved so that the spiritual center be reached, then he will no longer find a life in God as a contradiction to a life of personal fulfillment.

The goal of this path is in finding this center of your being, which is reality, which is God, and through which you find complete fulfillment -- not isolated, but in unity. If you look outside in order to alleviate your isolation, you must become more isolated. If you look inside in order to alleviate it, you may appear to isolate yourself from others through this process of apparent self-concern, but you will then lessen the isolation and separateness that often causes so much suffering and loneliness.

Since your inner spiritual self is the same as everyone else's spiritual self, the separateness is lifted the moment that you are no longer separate from your spiritual center. The real you is the other person's real self. There is no barrier between them. The barrier lies only in the covering layers.

2. *The other attitude is for life to be lived as happily and satisfyingly as possible.* I now do not mean a ruthless outlook, in which certain spiritually undeveloped people simply do not care for others. I mean those who have standards of decency, who do not wish to harm others yet are not interested in any spiritual pursuits.

PL 116

**Exercise 2a:** Honestly consider your goals for studying these materials.

Do the outcomes of daily events and interactions determine your happiness and satisfaction? Do you seek to change the outcomes, or would you be willing to 'transcend the mind' and perceive life from a different level of consciousness -- even if nothing in your life changed?

### Dualistic Thinking Promotes Misconceptions

Finding God within does not mean to forfeit personal happiness -- a misconception that is often held even by the unreligious person. Splits and divisions, contradictions, and "either / or's" are a product of separation, error, and confusion.

In truth, all is one. But let this not be mere theory. Experience it by uncovering the center of your own being where you truly realize yourself, and find that incompatibles become one. It is, as always, a gradual process. The more a person is unhappy and lost, the more does he feel empty and hungry -- maybe hungry for affection and understanding -- and the less is he in contact with this inner real self which has the power to nourish him constantly, to sustain and to guide him so that he can truly fulfill his life. The loneliness will be filled because he now understands the real reason for his loneliness.

PL 116

## **The Goal of Spiritual Awareness = Contact with the Spiritual Center**

It has been said by some of the friends who follow this path that certain facets of the work of self-confrontation resemble mundane psychology. This may be true to some extent. However, one of the major differences is the well-defined ultimate goal.

In mundane psychology, the goal is the resolving of inner conflicts so as to function better. As I have said before, this must inadvertently, as it were, bring man into contact with his spiritual center. But it is not a goal in itself. Our aim is just that -- and it must solve all problems along the way.

On this path, you are no more concerned with creeds, dogmas, and doctrines than a worldly psychologist is concerned with these dogmas with his patients. Any superimposed opinion, whether it be true or false, is a hindrance towards self-unfoldment. But on this path and with this particular guidance, we are concerned with the reality of this inner spiritual center.

When it is liberated, there can be no question of adhering to theories or creed. God becomes a personal experience that stands beyond proof and which does not need to be proven. This reality can be experienced only if all that stands in its way is removed. It is your personal misconceptions and confusions, your erroneous conclusions, that blot out this reality.

In the last analysis, all unhappiness and strife is the result of ignorance and misunderstanding. Every inner problem you uncover is always a distortion of reality. When you are governed by such distortions of your immediate, accessible reality, you cannot possibly grasp the extension of this reality on a wider scope.

This spiritual reality, always and only found by a personal experience within, never contradicts the accessible reality if the latter is profoundly penetrated. In order to do so, your personal attitudes, outlooks, and concepts must be questioned, stated, and restated. Your automatic, unconscious reactions must be investigated as to the meaning and significance of their underlying conceptions so that these conceptions can be lifted to the surface and be evaluated. By this process, you will understand your unrealism, and thereby come closer and closer to reality in its widest possible sense.

PL 116

**Exercise 2b:** Look at your attitude toward the existence of your Lower Self.

Are you shocked about certain of its manifestations? Are you impatient with yourself because of it? Do you feel it should already be gone, thus rejecting your state of being a human being? Do you also deny something in yourself that could be very constructive if you were to view it afresh and not be influenced by standards you have assumed without ever questioning their validity?

**QUESTION:** Is it true that we try not only to squeeze into our own idealized self-images, but we actually try to live up to the idealized selves of our parents as well? Is this correct?

**ANSWER:** It is absolutely correct. The child's helplessness and insecurity makes him strive desperately for acceptance by his parents. In doing so, he believes he has to adopt the standards of the parents. It does not matter to what degree these standards actually are those of the parents or whether the child merely believes them to be. So he begins a process of false, pretended,

superficial adherence to certain standards without inner conviction. Doing so alienates him from his real self, which thereby becomes weaker.

He also becomes doubly resentful and feels cheated when this mode of living and being does not bring the hoped for results, as certainly it cannot. As you all know, there is in all of you, to a greater or lesser degree, a desire not to give up being a child, despite the equally strong wish to grow up. This insistence on remaining a cared for child necessitates your holding on to these superimposed standards and conscience. With it, you hope to appease, coerce, and force, as it were, your parents (or the parent-substitutes) to belatedly give you what you missed. Thus you perpetuate the process until and unless you fully recognize it in all its intensity and various side effects.

QUESTION: Would it be possible to give us a specific example, as sometimes you have done in the past, of one of those instincts that is really constructive, but which we treat as though it were not?

ANSWER: One such example is the fact that people so often deliberately clog the channel of their own intuition. They are afraid of it because its message may diverge from the prescribed way. They wish to avoid confrontation and decision between these two sides. They fear the risk of disapproval by following their intuition. This is a very, very frequent occurrence. Another example is the sexual and erotic instinct, which in its nature is entirely creative and unitive if it be allowed to grow. Only in its immature manifestation is it self-centered. Society's emphasis on its sinfulness, as such, so often causes this creative instinct to remain self-centered, in hiding, and, if expressed at all, done in a self-centered way, while the person feels guilty and sinful -- often very much unaware of such emotions. If society's rules were at least directed to the real "evil," it would emphasize all kinds of self-centeredness as being destructive and the need to grow out of this separateness.

As long as mankind approaches any question -- whether of the type you have asked, or political, social, religious, or relating to any other human activity or attitude -- from the viewpoint of ready-made rules in which one thing is right and another is wrong, you still live under the yoke of the superimposed conscience which is supposed to make everything so easy and simple. You still are beaten down by the fight between the primitive little child in you and the superimposed conscience. If you were not engaged in this fight, such questions could not even be asked. Such a question is the expression of this very fight I mentioned.

**This world would be a very different place if more people were to do, whatever they do, wholeheartedly -- be it a human relationship, be it reading a book, or taking a walk, or going through a conversation.** This planet is such an unhappy place because people are torn; they do not do one thing without being divided in attention and motivation. There is rarely a full commitment in anything man does. He serves two, three, or ten masters at the same time, but never his own real self.

Man always wants to have everything cut out to perfection. He wants a guarantee without mistakes, until the end of his days. Since he knows perfectly well that this cannot be, he refuses a total commitment under the guise of being so "decent" and obeying all the moral rules of society. Whether these rules actually exist, or not at all, is overlooked.

PL 116

## Week 3: A Battle Between Lower Self and Superimposed Conscience

### Lower Self

The lower self is not only that part of human nature in which faults and character defects lie; it also includes something a little more subtle and less definable. The best way it can be described is as being in a general climate and emotional outlook of egocentricity.

Regardless of good intentions, unselfish acts, considerate attitudes, this inner world of egocentricity exists. The stronger the former, the more difficult does it become to find, acknowledge, and accept the existence of the latter. The more this childish, one-sided egocentricity is hidden in guilt and shame, the less can it grow out of this one-sidedness. You must become acutely aware of its often preposterous self-concern, to the exclusion of all else.

In this area of your being, you wish to rule supreme. You do not know another's interests, which you violate at any cost so that a small wish or a small gratification of your vanity overrules more important issues for other people. True, you do not often act by it, but in your wishes and aims, half conscious and half unconscious, you react from this lower self.

PL 116

### Misunderstandings result in Shame and Guilt

The problem is much less the fact of its existence, but rather the nature of your reaction and attitude towards it. Your shame and guilt are a result of one of those misunderstandings I mentioned which prohibit growth and unfoldment. This misunderstanding comes from the idea that you, of all people, really should have already completely overcome it, and no such childish, preposterous selfishness and self-concern should have a place in you. Thus you start an elaborate system of self-deception and pretense which brings you into vicious circles and inner conflicts destroying your happiness and self-respect.

Very few people are reconciled to the existence of this lower self in themselves. They may appear to be so, in their utterances, theories, and the knowledge they profess. But when it comes to certain facets of this lower self, they are not really reconciled to it. They do not really accept its existence. Only by doing so can it gradually be outgrown.

In denying its existence, you must overlook its manifestations -- how it is expressed in vague emotions which are instantly covered up and pushed out of sight. How can you overcome something if you are not fully aware of its manifestation in a most specific way? -- certainly not by a general theoretical knowledge of its existence!

Due to your shame and guilt of its existence (and the subsequent hiding of it) *you do everything to nourish its continuance*, with all its dire effects on your personality -- you prohibit the very thing you most want -- to grow out of it.

But what is more, due to this self-deception, more confusion results. Since all this is an unconscious process, in which discrimination and reason cannot enter along with the actual self-important and destructive impulses, you also hide some of the most creative and inherently constructive impulses and attitudes -- out of mere misunderstanding.

Impulses and instincts (which are potentially productive and life giving if they are allowed to grow in the sunlight of awareness) remain thwarted, and in their current form are actually destructive. They could grow into something beautiful, but are not allowed to grow because of the unconscious ignorance that their present form is ultimate and must therefore be ousted by denying their existence.

PL 116

### **Repression of Lower Self inhibits Growth**

Three distinct facets of repression of the lower self:

(1) the actual lower self aspects, in their distinct and extreme manifestations and character trends, as well as the subtle overall climate of egocentricity and self-concern to the exclusion of all other interests;

(2) repression of real creative and productive aspects and trends;

(3) repression of instincts which are, as yet, unproductive and self-centered in their immature state *but are destined by nature to **become** creative, productive, constructive aspects if given a chance to grow*. This chance is not given them, due to ignoring these facts and treating them in the same manner -- as though they were bad in themselves.

It is important to make this distinction and to realize that all three categories need acceptance and awareness, each for its own reason. Then it will often be found that the most valuable prize a human being has to offer to life is held in check, denied, and hidden.

Hence, a vast confusion exists in you. It is the confusion regarding the actual lower self trends which are *supposed to disappear by denying their existence* and pretending opposite intentions and wishes.

Through this confusion regarding the potentially vibrant life force, the opportunity to function in its beautiful, healthy way is denied. They are intertwined and mixed up, and the personality is thrown into despair because of this confusion. All this happens in a vague vacuum, in a no man's land between awareness and unawareness.

This is one side of the battle. Now what is the other?

PL 116

**Exercise 3a:** Begin to observe these subtle manifestations of the lower self in certain reactions and impulses. Observe how you tend to immediately push it away. Now look at the wishes and attitudes of such fleeting reactions. Pull them out into the open, and calmly look at them. Determine your harsh, intolerant treatment of yourself in this respect, your rigid, uncompromising, self-destructive severity which is way out of proportion.

### **Superimposed Conscience**

Man has two kinds of consciences -- the one emanating from his real self, the other being a superimposed conscience. [Ref: [The Idealized Self](#) PL 83 and [Q&A](#) PL 91] When religionists speak about conscience, they do think of the inner conscience, coming from the divine center of the human spirit. But they usually ignore the vast difference between it and this other kind of conscience. In eagerness to make man a better creature, he is coerced from the outside to follow and obey moral standards. Thus the superimposed conscience is strengthened, and thereby the inner, real conscience becomes more covered up.



The superimposed conscience is not a necessity in order to prevent man from acting out his primitive destructive instincts. For those whose inner conscience is not sufficiently developed to restrain them from committing destructive acts, the mere existence of social laws would serve as well -- and better -- than the superimposed conscience.

In the first facet of this inner struggle, it hides the lower self instead of bringing it out into the open, and thereby eliminating the possibility of its growing out of the infantile state. It *also* hides the most constructive and creative life force, and the impulses that would free this life force. It instills an unrealistic and distorted view of oneself and the way one believes one would have to be. It creates self-punishment and shackles, which prohibit every divine quality inherent in the soul. It certainly never prevents crime or destructive actions. Rather, the opposite is true. By repressing and hiding, forces that could easily be dealt with on the surface of consciousness germinate and accumulate, thereby creating such an inner tension and pressure that the person is often driven into acts he cannot help committing -- if only because he has too long used the superimposed conscience, instead of giving himself the chance to finally contact the inner conscience, which is part of this spiritual center we discussed.

And last but not least, whenever man rebels against laws and all standards of ethics and morals, he does so because of this harsh, superimposed conscience (which knows no mercy, is inflexible in its demands and blind in its evaluation). PL 116

**Exercise 3b:** This section ends with “Man never rebels against the real, inner conscience.” Consider all the ways you have rebelled over the years. Is this true for you? Consider if your rebellions were actually against your own inner tyrant, rather than what was mirrored back to you.

### **The Superimposed Conscience Induces Self-Rejection**

What stands between you and your inner, real self is the superimposed conscience. It is this superimposed conscience that induces you to reject yourself as a human being.

Between its demands, and the demands of this primitive self-centered child you still harbor within, you are torn apart in a raging storm. As long as this storm is not out in the open, you can never master it. You cannot possibly extricate yourself from these two unrealities. You cling to the superimposed conscience in the false belief that it alone can prevent you from acting upon the lower self instincts. Therefore, you can never come to a healthy, secure trust in yourself because you do not give yourself the chance. Thus you find yourself in one of these vicious circles we so often mention [[PL 50](#)].

Healthy self-respect and self-trust can come only from your real self, from which you alienate yourself further by clinging to the superimposed conscience.

PL 116

**Exercise 3c:** Notice any rejection of your Lower Self qualities.

Include any desire to be rid of them, which can be a subtle but effective rejection of the work required for self-development. Also, any sense that you shouldn't *have* to deal with them! Consider that this rejection (or desire to reject) comes from your superimposed conscience.

Spend some time contemplating what your real-self conscience might advise or counsel here. Hint: look for feelings of real love, vs. a forcing current to protect, uplift, or argue.

## Week 4: Childhood Origins of the Superimposed Conscience

... thus you find yourself in one of these vicious circles we so often mention [PL 50]. Because man has not found his real self, he clings to the superimposed conscience. And because he does so -- obeying, conforming, appeasing -- he blindly follows, sheep-like.

By never developing the independent faculties of thinking, discriminating, distinguishing, he becomes weaker, more dependent, and less able to stand on his own feet. But there is a tremendous difference between committing the act out of bondage and fear -- in other words, by following the superimposed conscience -- and following the voice of your real conscience in a spirit of freedom derived out of your own inner struggle, your intuition, your reason, *even if the result is the same*.

If you rebel against the superimposed conscience, you are no more free than if you obey it.

If you obey the superimposed conscience, and the result of such a decision is not to your liking, the corroding effects will be rebellion, self-pity, and putting the blame on life and the world.

If you obey your real conscience, you will take all responsibility upon yourself, and even a negative outcome will never throw you into despair. You will soon see that the pleasant or unpleasant result is not as vital as you may believe it to be because in both alternatives you have equal possibility for growth if your actions and decisions are derived from yourself and your own standards.

The fight between the superimposed conscience and the primitive, self-centered destructive child is a tragic one -- tragic only because of your lack of awareness of it. For it is so superfluous.

Of course, education has a great deal to do with it. When mankind becomes aware of these things and guides young people into the right direction, much harm can be eliminated. However, it is important to know that it is not only ignorance and misguidance in this respect that are responsible for this struggle within yourself, for you are not enmeshed in this struggle in every aspect of your being. There are areas in which you are quite free and function without clinging to superimposed demands, standards, or rules -- as they may actually exist or are believed to exist. It is noteworthy that you adhere to this superimposed conscience and do not accept your shortcomings or your lower self aspects -- whether real or imaginary -- **only in the realms where your personal, specific inner problems exist**.

When you consider them in the light of this specific struggle, you will understand how your inner problems and this particular struggle are connected.

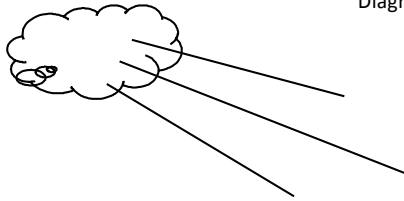
PL 116

**Exercise 4a:** Draw your own Vicious Circle, using the template below as a guide ([download additional examples from my website](#)). Don't worry about filling in every single step – focus on the dynamics that, like gravity in a roller coaster ride, keep you moving and then bring you up, up, and over...into another cycle, without seeming to have the time to examine what is actually going on. Using a clock face (the numbers 1-12 and their analogy to a roller coaster ride) allows us to see commonalities in differing circumstances and story details.

*Consider sharing these, by emailing them to Jan at [janrigsby@gmail.com](mailto:janrigsby@gmail.com)!!! She'll upload them – without identifying details – to her website so that others can be inspired by your work.*

# Vicious Circle Of Emotional Dependency

Diagram for Pathwork Lecture 50 & 83 2012 www.janrigsby.com



## Entry Point For Incarnation. . .

Positive Intent: To love and be loved.

Misconception: "I will not receive the love I need"  
"My love will not be accepted by others"



We do not examine our original intent to see if it has become fear-based, but throw ourselves into new attempts to earn love & acceptance through manifold acts of "service."

The craving for love & acceptance will not be denied, and we must try gain. Yet we are now filled with hatred & resentment of others.

Restrictive feelings are hidden away so as not to antagonize the source of life" - the others. Inactivating our own powers we become paralyzed and inactive.

Guilt comes up. (It is a combination of real guilt or not having faith in our own ability to love, and false guilt for wanting love so badly). We judge ourselves as not deserving.

Our frustration continues. The refusal of others creates rage, fury, vindictiveness, and cruel impulses.

Others resist us, and shrink back from connection with us.

Misconception manifests as distortion.\* Love sought through "service" to others focusing on "others" rather than relying upon *Universal Justice*.

When others accept the "service" the unfulfilled need is *not* addressed.

Need becomes "urgent." *Can be an exit point if we stop & look at fear-based way we tried to manifest positive intent.*

Forcing ourselves into greater acts of "service" - determined to "win" the love we need, want & deserve, we continue to seek it from "wrong" source.

We start feeling desperate, feeling that things are getting worse instead of better.

Bottoming out: we betray ourselves, our truth, our best. Our "~~forcing current~~" takes over: we insist that others "must" be, feel, and do what we need & desire.

*Difficult to exit a vicious circle between '6' & '9' - we are thinking dualistically and feel that this is a "life or death" struggle.*

*When we are in distortion, we are in our "blind spot." This is where we must painstakingly collect evidence through our own observations and the feedback of others so that we can become aware of our own misconceptions.*

## Recognizing the Superimposed Conscience using Childhood Hurts and Frustrations

Personality problems and deviations come from childhood hurts and frustrations -- real or imaginary. When you do not feel secure in the affection of and acceptance by one or both of your parents, you elaborately build a defense against this hurt, trying later to correct it. You have found it to be true that this *actual* childhood hurt need not burden you for life, *but your defense against it*, which you continue to use, destroys for you the possibility of fulfillment.

The parent one feels uncertain of, one is in awe or fear of (because one so desperately tries to win his affection) usually stands for this superimposed conscience. Not only social rules per se are incorporated in it, but particular rules of the parent in question as he may adhere to his own superimposed conscience. It may often be that you merely believed these standards and expectations were expected of you by the parent in question. It is the emotional atmosphere and climate which is so important in this investigation, and not the actuality.

You cannot possibly recognize the superimposed conscience in its full significance unless you view it in relationship to the attitude that you have and had towards your parents -- the specific emotions, the conditions and the parents' attitude towards you, as well as the resultant images and behavior patterns and defense mechanisms you developed.

Only by seeing this whole picture will the struggle between your superimposed conscience and your actual (and imagined) lower self take on a new meaning for you, and furnish you with the necessary insight so as to be able to resolve this struggle.

The general knowledge of this fight can never alleviate it, even if you have actually come to observe it, to be aware of it. It is essential that *you see it in relationship to your personal problems*.

The fight between your lower self and the superimposed conscience in your case may be completely different than the fight in this respect of another person, even though many of its aspects and manifestations may indeed be the same.

PL 116

**Exercise 4b:** Which parent were you in awe of? In fear of? Whose love did you yearn for, or strive to earn? Whose attention did you fear – and if so, why? Could it imprison or corrupt you?

Consider that your superimposed conscience took over this forcing current, to either move towards, or move way from, one (or sometimes, both) parents. Re-read the above section, and see if you can feel this struggle in your body, viscerally (your gut feeling) or as a push-pull dynamic.

### The Superimposed Conscience as an Inner Tyrant

As I have said before, in this struggle, you treat yourself with merciless harshness. You inflict iron rules upon yourself as exercised by the cruelest ruler and far beyond the unreasonable standards which may be exerted by society.

Your blind excessive standards make it impossible to reach this inner center, from which you could be nourished with constantly renewed vigor; realistic hopefulness, as opposed to wishful thinking; foresight; the ability to make mature decisions; self-confidence; the ability to love and be

loved; the ability to receive and to give; the ability to relate, so as to harmoniously create a life which is useful not only in one direction but in all important areas of living.

Many of you have found a profound sense of fulfillment in certain areas of life. But you are unfulfilled and lonely in other areas of life. This is too often rationalized by saying, *"This is just because I have this great fulfillment that I have to pay for it by forfeiting other areas of fulfillment."*

PL 116

**Exercise 4c:** Say the above sentence to yourself, over and over, focusing on an area in your life that you desperately want to retain as it is – and for which you feel a heavy price may have to be paid in order to keep any sense of happiness and fulfillment. Write down what you want to keep, and what you feel you have paid (or may need to pay in future) for it. Exaggerate a bit; use hyperbole in order to find the truth and bypass the excuses of your superimposed conscience!

Then ask yourself: what kind of God / spiritual reality would drive such a harsh bargain?

**But this is not true, my friends. Deep down inside of you, you know it.**

It need not be that you fulfill yourself in one area of living at the expense of another. There is room for all kinds of fulfillment in the healthy soul, for the person who truly reaches into the depth of his being -- not just partially, but opens all channels which have been clogged up heretofore. No facet of self-expression needs to suffer at the expense of those which have already been freed.

But you feel, deep inside, that you do not deserve all that. You do not even cultivate a concept of yourself in which you see yourself fulfilled in all directions. If you observe this in yourself, you will see how you shrink from such a visualization, how it seems overdemanding (and this despite the actual, childish overdemandingness that exists on another level). This proves that you have not come to terms with yourself in regard to this struggle.

Something in you says "no" when you visualize yourself as being fulfilled in all areas of living. This is due solely to your harsh, unforgiving, and unaccepting treatment of yourself because you are not reconciled with the self-centered child existing in you, which makes unfair demands that you cannot cope with because you push them out of sight.

You need to accept fully this primitive, selfish, destructive child in order to make it grow up. The only climate in which it can do so is in the full knowledge of all its manifestations. In the manner in which you accept it, without losing a sense of proportion about its "badness," to that degree will you be able to perceive, experience, and accept the highest faculties within yourself. You can only lose your sense of guilt about the former if and when you learn to look at the impulses coming from it and realizing that although this undesirable side exists, you need not act accordingly. At least, you do not deceive yourself about your own state of development, and you evaluate all its dictates without following them through. Then will you have a chance to win in this impossible battle. You will liberate yourself from the false conscience and therefore become capable of hearing the voice of your real conscience.

PL 116

Study Guide © Jan Rigsby: 2022

Guide Quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from [www.pathwork.org](http://www.pathwork.org)