

Displacement, Substitution, Superimposition

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL

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

Week 1: Hidden Emotional Needs Create Disturbances

Week 2: Avoidance Creates a Vicious Circle

Week 3: Displacement: Shifting Needs into Other Channels

Week 4: Multiple Needs Often Overlap

Week 1: Hidden Emotional Needs Create Disturbances

Tonight I should like to discuss a subject that has come up before, here or there, but which is not fully understood in its deeper significance by any of you. This is the topic of displacement, substitution, and superimposition of feelings and needs.

Whenever a person is confused in a situation or negatively involved in a relationship, and cannot come out of a disturbed feeling in spite of certain recognitions, it is an absolute sign that certain emotional needs or specific feelings have been shifted into different channels, or superimposed by other feelings.

No matter how deep a problem, how severe a fault, it could never create a deep, abiding disturbance if the person were completely aware of it in its original form -- without displacing, superimposing, or substituting feelings other than the genuine ones.

PL 121

Exercise 1a: Consider faults or problems that you are easily able to admit to yourself or others. Do you have similar feelings of directness and clarity in all aspects of your life?

Each emotion, each feeling, each thought, each attitude, each need, is an energy current. There are many different types of energy, corresponding to the type of feeling or need, etc.

A full, rich life in the integrated individuality expresses different needs, feelings, outlets -- not just a few. The more integrated a person is, the less do these various needs interfere with one another, and the less friction do they cause within and outside the life of the person. The healthy life requires fulfillment in many directions, and it is possible to attain this manifoldness for which the entity is destined by nature.

Exclusion of certain fulfillments at the expense of others is the result of erroneous unconscious concepts, limited understanding, and lack of self-awareness. In the healthy psyche, one type of self-expression supports and strengthens the other rather than causes conflict.

PL 121

Exercise 1b: How would you describe the flow of feeling energy in aspects of your life where you feel fulfilled? Do you have a sense of 'branching out' freely? Do these aspects feel strong?

Dynamics of Superimposition, Displacement, Substitution

One's own wavering uncertainty, fear, guilt, and shame about the existence of a feeling one believes one should not have (while actually suffering the thwarting of its needs and resenting the "necessity" to do so) creates an unhealthy climate that makes the very healthiest emotional need into something bad. This fact requires hiding, denying, repression by **superimposition**.

Since the existing energy does not dissolve into thin air but seeks an outlet, like a stream, the original energy converts into a different type -- **displacement**.

Or it changes into its opposite due to the feeling that the original emotion or need is unacceptable -- **substitution**

It is very important to become aware of what may seem like two contradictory needs and to realize that they are not necessarily contradictory, but a part of a full life.

Superimposition

Displacement and superimposition result in a conflict between the need for vocational self-expression and the need for mutuality in a love relationship; between the need for solitude and the need for companionship; the need for physical and mental activity; the need for sexual expression and creative expression; the need for self-assertion and the need for flexible adjustment; the need for ego gratification and the need for unselfishness.

These and many other apparently contradictory needs and self-expressions can harmoniously live side by side in healthy interaction *only* if there exists no confusion as to the rightfulness and fundamental genuineness of these different forms of expression, so that no superimpositions and displacements occur.

What appears as contradiction to the conflicted blind person is no contradiction in reality, but merely a proof of the richness and manifoldness of creation. It is the belief that a need or feeling is necessarily wrong that eventually makes it wrong. PL 121

Exercise 1c: Find examples of each in your life where you displace, substitute, or superimpose. Use the template for the [Vicious Circle](#) PL 50 (below) to track the energetic and emotional dynamics of these behaviors.

Daily Review 1.0 from The Call PL 17

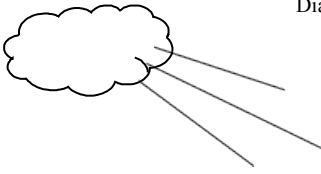
You can find out your true reactions about certain things, begin to pull off certain masks and pretenses, find out where you act against a [Spiritual Law](#) [PL 171]. It is like a puzzle you begin, when you cannot as yet see the picture; but if you are patient, you will succeed. Thus you will uncover your hidden anxieties and complexes which of course are responsible for your disease.

Let the whole day pass in front of your eyes, in your memory, and think of everything that has happened that has given you in some way a disharmonious feeling or reaction. No matter how wrong the other person may have been, the moment you have been touched by it, there must be something wrong within you. At first these incidents will appear entirely unconnected and isolated; they will be meaningless for you at the beginning. But later on, you will begin to sense -- at first, and then clearly understand, a pattern.

If you follow this through for some time to come, really faithfully (not just once or twice -- that will not do you any good) but regularly and faithfully for some time, you will, after a while, see a clear pattern coming out of it. Pray for enlightenment and guidance every time you conduct this daily review, [The Call](#) PL 17

Vicious Circle Of Emotional Dependency

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

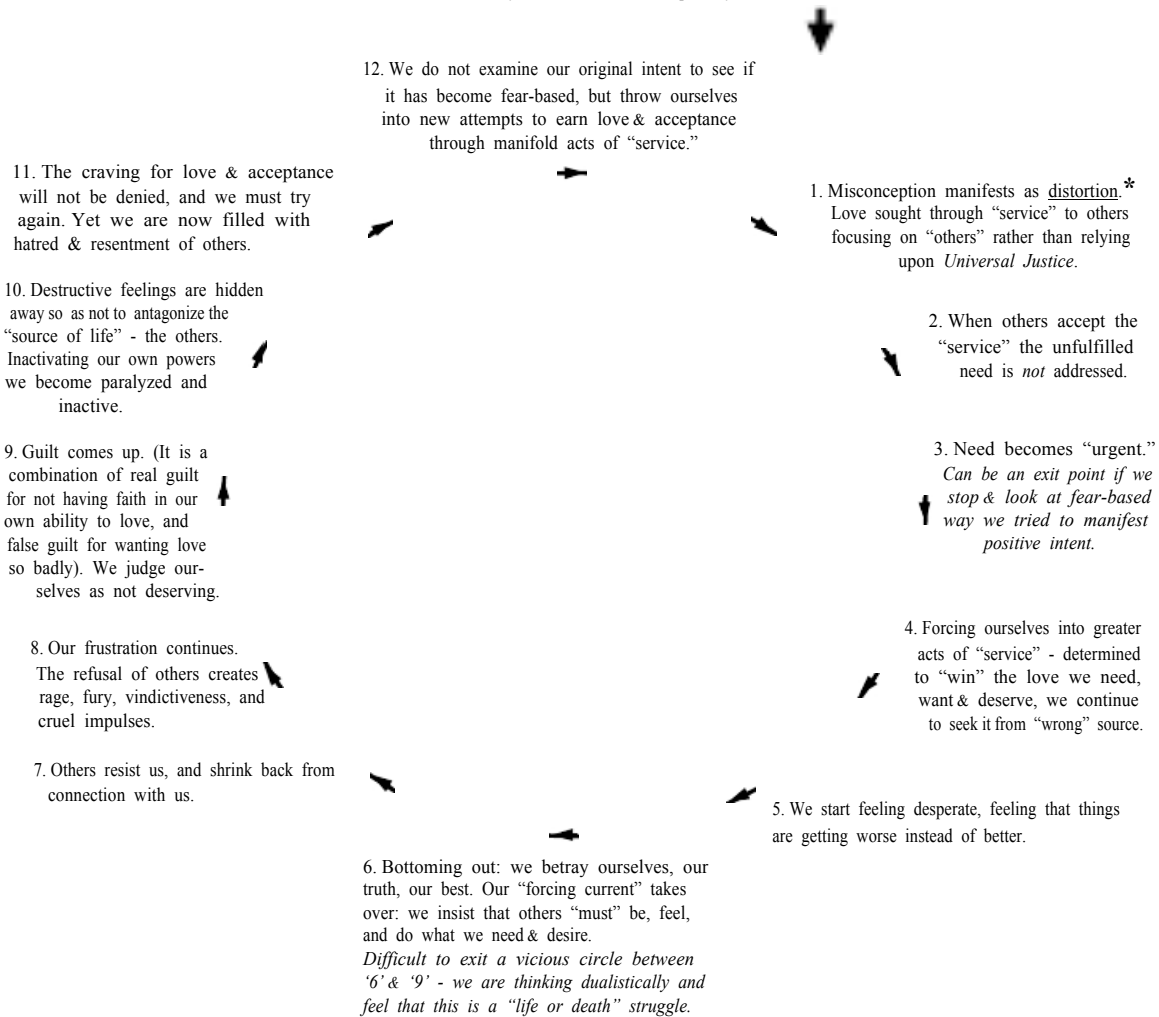


Entry Point For Incarnation. . .

Positive Intent: To love and be loved.

Misconception: "I will not receive the love I need"

"My love will not be accepted by others"



**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.*

Week 2: Avoidance Creates a Vicious Circle

QUESTION: *Due to my childhood, there exists in me a childish greed which manifests now by a need for special consideration. Do I displace or superimpose this original need?*

ANSWER: Yes, you are very right. You so completely denied this childhood greed until recently that you go way overboard by denying yourself every gratification and fulfillment. You feel extremely guilty not only due to this still undeveloped part in yourself in which the childish greed exists, but also due to the legitimate, rightful desire to receive. You feel just as guilty about the one as about the other. Therefore you go way overboard in denying yourself any gratification.

The fact that you can now even ask this question indicates a tremendous step forward for you and a vast new opening of insight into yourself, of clarification. This will prove of more crucial importance than you even realize at this moment. It is indeed a threshold.

PL 121

Exercise 2a: Unpleasant childhood experiences that are recreated later on are ‘spiritual gold’ because these indicate where underlying beliefs are still active. Daily Review journaling can be a way of tracking smaller patterns, while keeping entries brief and organized so that they can be easily reviewed later on and compared. (a science trick: dragging a magnet through beach sand collects particles that are otherwise unnoticeable). [Vicious Circles](#) are another tool for noticing emotional dynamics that stay the same even though the details / triggers change.

Substitution: Compulsion to Give, Guilt for Receiving

The following conflict regarding giving and receiving frequently exists. There is the compulsion to give and the guilt for receiving. These two emotions may be comparatively easy to recognize. In connection with this factor, the person feels unfairly treated, exploited, victimized, resentful, while still being unable to stop the compulsion to give and the guilt for desiring to receive. He is faced with the unsatisfactory alternative of either giving and resenting it, or receiving and feeling unfree, inhibited, and guilty about it. He cannot find his way out of this predicament.

If such is the case, you may be sure, my friends, that you have neither faced an underlying selfish, one-sided greed, nor have you fully understood that this greed is merely the result of a confusion which ignores the fact that you are entitled to receive something. If this is worked through, your giving will be freer, and so will be your ability to receive.

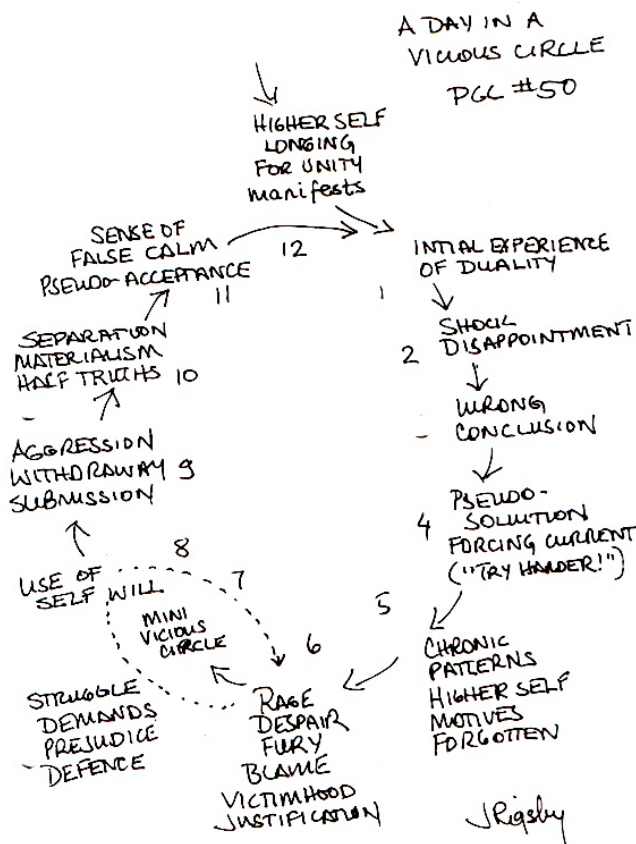
If the original fault were fully conscious, there would be comparatively little disturbance. Let us apply this truth to this particular facet of the human psyche. If the person could clearly see the childish, greedy selfishness expressing, *"Since I am so selfish that I want everything for myself, I do not deserve to receive,"* the conflict would cease even before the greedy selfishness entirely disappears. The mere fact of being aware of it, its consequent conclusion and self-denial, would enable the person to reason, to understand that although the hitherto hidden one-sidedness is unfair, the subsequent measure against it -- complete self-denial -- is equally unfair in the opposite extreme.

Whether it concerns the aspect of giving and receiving or any other natural, legitimate need and self-expression, hidden one-sidedness often creates overt one-sidedness in the

opposite extreme. This form of substituting the disapproved need or emotion with its opposite is very frequent and at the bottom of many a conflict which, in spite of various recognitions, does not dissolve. PL 121

Exercise 2b: Using the diagram (below) of the Vicious Circle PL 50 as a sample, recall a recent dynamic where you felt you needed to compensate for something in you that was missing.

The most prevalent denial due to false guilt is in the area of receiving.



Anything you wish to attain for yourself often causes a vague feeling that this is wrong. Just because the need to receive is completely disapproved of and denied, its counterpart, the need to give -- as part of a rich, healthy, fulfilled life -- cannot grow into maturity.

Denying the need to receive causes the psyche, in this respect, to remain childishly selfish so that a one-sided greed exists.

This may then be superimposed with a false, compulsive giving which, just because it is superimposed and not the result of natural growth, brings disharmony, resentment, self-pity, unjust exploitation.

A good example is what, in a different context, I discussed about man's need for sexual expression.

Due to false guilts, the sexuality remains selfishly childish, is therefore unable to melt with the need to give and receive love and affection. Consequently, the need for sex is denied and superimposed with substitute needs.

Feeling erroneously guilty about the natural need to receive automatically impairs one's capacity to give -- no matter how forcefully and artificially giving may be practiced in order to squelch the gnawing guilt. This impairment encourages the false assumption that wanting to receive is wrong, increasing the denial, the displacement, the substitution.

To recapitulate, unfree, compulsive, problematic giving is often the result of denying a need to receive. The latter may be overgrown and disproportionately strong just because it is thought wrong and bad. It has to be specifically ascertained in each individual case and in

what particular respect of one's personality this holds true. By unrolling this whole process, taking cognizance of it, a great deal of relief is given to the soul. PL 121

Exercise 2c: Do you ever feel guilty about receiving? Notice what specific circumstances trigger this behavior more frequently. What are the reasons you tell yourself it is wrong to receive? Notice if this behavior develops into a vicious circle (ref drawings above).

Example: Frightened of Love → Substitute with Expression of Talent

You ignore the fact that there is room for both, and for many more forms of expression, in your psychic life. Hence, your fear to acknowledge the original need forces you to abandon what is, in itself, an equally legitimate need.

You may still lack the necessary information about your inner misunderstandings and misconceptions responsible for the fear of love. Hence, you fear that you are forced to plunge yourself into it when you recognize the existence of the need.

Therefore you battle against recognizing the displacement, or if you do, you do so only in a flat, intellectual way. You also ignore what harm you inflict upon yourself, apart from the perpetual starvation you expose yourself to. The harm, for example, is that any unfulfillment, hurt, rejection, disappointment causes in the displaced area an infinitely deeper suffering than the suffering connected with the original need.

If you are fully aware of your psyche's expression: *"I am still afraid of love. I do not yet fully understand why, and therefore I am not ready to love and be loved. But I know that love is a universal need. What does its denial do to me? How do I really feel this lack? How many of my emotions involved in my substitution actually belong to the need for love?"*

PL 121

Exercise 2e: Speak the above phrase. Substitute words that reflect your own feelings.

Then your growing peace, insight, and ability to cope with issues you could not previously cope with will prove how essential it is to live in truth. You gain full possession of yourself even though you may still shirk love, if not truth. You will prevent needless real guilts and unnecessarily putting yourself under the power of detrimental influences which merely encourage that in you which is so harmful.

I do not mean to imply that the pleasure principle can be displaced into another outlet in its original form -- of course not. It transforms itself. A hankering after luxuries may be such a transformation, or a craving for food or drink. Full awareness of this will lessen the intensity and strain, even if the displaced need has to find some outlet until it can be fulfilled in its natural way. PL 121

Exercise 2d: Feelings are a form of expressing ourselves. When bundled as emotions (like single muscle fibers bound together) their life force is magnified so that they can manifest (as being expressed vs. acted out or gratified). What emotions do you avoid, minimize or repress?

Week 3: Displacement: Shifting Needs into Other Channels

In addition to substituting the opposite trend for the one that is denied, another current form of displacement is the shifting of need into another channel. Wherever there is an exaggerated involvement, an involvement which disrupts inner and/or outer peace, an involvement that leaves other important functions in life unfulfilled, one may be sure that such a shift has taken place.

The resultant inner friction may only gradually become noticeable after extensive progress in self-awareness. Tension, frustration, discontent, unexplainable hostility, overreaction to the degree of even seeing that the intensity of feeling is not commensurate with the occasion, yet being unable to prevent it, or numbness and impoverishment of feelings in other areas are frequent indications of the inner friction -- the result of denying a rightful need. Outer friction with one's environment is often a further result.

There are many reasons possible for denying or ignoring the rightfulness of the original need, but whatever the specific circumstances, early influences, personal images may be, it has to be recognized that this original need *does* exist even though one fears to acknowledge it. At certain periods during one's life in the past, the need may have clearly manifested. It may now manifest in the displacement area.

If you are truly desirous to know the truth about yourself, it will not be too difficult to synchronize the feelings of the original, denied need and the feelings in connection with the substituted needs. Doing so brings immeasurable relief and peace.

Shifting original needs into different channels may take various forms, apart from the example cited above. Fear of love may, in other personalities, create an overemphasis, an exaggerated need for purely sexual expression. A compulsion for sex may also be a denial of one's need to assert oneself or of one's need to execute a creative talent. An unbalanced, one-sided need for spirituality and seclusion may be the manifestation of displaced needs in any of the aforementioned respects: fear of love, sex, self-assertion, vocational expression. The fear, I repeat, is the result of ignoring that all these, and more, needs are, in healthy interaction, natural and universal and therefore not any cause for guilt and denial.

PL 121

Exercise 3a: Repressed, unwanted, or unconscious dynamic inner forces don't dissipate; they often find ways to be expressed in other areas of life, masked behind other dynamics. Consider how the emotions you found in Exercise 2d might be expressing themselves.

Ego Gratification is Generally Ignored

The most enlightened people are under the impression that to have a need for it at all indicates neurosis, disturbance, immaturity. In the well-functioning personality, the need for it is acknowledged, but it is not exaggerated at the expense of other functions and expressions of the self. Lack of ability to give the ego its necessary gratification is a result of ignoring its healthy, unexaggerated existence. Being dependent on others who fall short of fulfilling this need is the sign that the self disregards its rightful place in the overall scheme. However, if you are able to acknowledge, "I do need some measure of approval, some degree of gratification of my ego," chances are, provided you do not feel guilty about it, that ways will

begin to open affording you this fulfillment. And it will certainly be infinitely easier to find certain factors within yourself which prohibited the fulfillment of this need, certain destructive behavior patterns you could not see before you can guiltlessly acknowledge this need.

Let us take one more example and assume your main problem is a difficulty to make the best of yourself. In the course of this work, you have found and dissolved the idealized self-image, the pseudo-solutions, etc. Hence, the small, precarious success you had before is temporarily lessened. You now find it harder to assert yourself because the defenses no longer work, while you have not yet found the clarity of acknowledging your real needs without the fear of imagined dire consequences and false guilt. You now understand that your previous limited accomplishments were no satisfactory solution. They were fraught with tension and anxiety, and in the end, ventures always failed without your really seeing why. Now you know.

But you are not yet in a position to express your abilities and talents without conflict and uncertainty. It takes a little more insight and understanding before you can do so. In this interim phase in which you find yourself more frustrated than before, the respective needs are left without any outlet. Unconsciously you seek a substitute channel. PL 121

Exercise 3b: Draw a Vicious Circle of the self-realization cycle described above.

Need for Vocational Self-Expression

Again, it is important to recognize various needs connected with this one issue of vocational self-expression. Apart from the need to earn a living -- which is the most obvious and most readily recognized -- there are others: the need for creative accomplishment; the need for ego gratification and self-esteem; the need for carrying responsibility and coping with challenge; the need for the pleasure of accomplishment; the need for self-assertion; as well as the need for cooperation and interaction. Provided one need is not disproportionate to others, all of them have their rightful place and should not cause guilt.

By not acknowledging these needs, they are displaced into a relationship or a side activity. As in the former example, the fact of doing so cannot harm, provided you are fully aware of it. This prevents you from undue overreaction, tension, frustration, and the inner disorder and imbalance which is always the result of lack of self-awareness. PL 121

Exercise 3c: Even if your vocation meet the needs described above, there will be times when some or all of these needs are not met. How do you compensate, temporarily or routinely?

It is of utmost importance, my friends, to ascertain all your needs, to what extent they are fulfilled, to what extent unfulfilled. Think about the variety of universal needs, and then look inside to see if you have given all of them a rightful place. Ascertain about which particular needs you feel guilty and ashamed. Ascertain which needs must remain unfulfilled due to your personal images, main problems, unresolved conflicts, pseudo-solutions, and idealized self-image. Look further into the possibilities of your personal displacements: in what way and to what extent of substitution by the opposite or of shifting the need or the denied feeling into a different channel. Then look at it from the opposite approach -- regard your present negative involvements, disturbing emotions, impasses you cannot extricate yourself from because the available alternatives of inner and outer reaction are equally

unsatisfying. What possible real needs are at the bottom of such a nucleus? What needs have grown disproportionately strong due to denial and false guilt?

The value of such an approach to yourself cannot be measured, my friends. I can see that for all of you it is of utmost importance to undertake this step. Many a lingering negative situation -- interrupted on the way toward having gained some understanding, but being unable to come out of it -- is the result of ignoring this vital step. After extensive insight has been made, your permanent personality problems and unfulfillments often require only the final approach of this subject before a true, liberating transformation can take place. It is also the best way to increase your ability to accept yourself in a spirit of realism. PL 121

Substitution and Superimposition Create Various Layers (vertical)

1. A Real Need yearns to be fulfilled.
2. We feel guilt for having the need and deny it exists / refuse to fulfill it.
3. To prove the denial or lack of need, we emphasize its opposite (*I have no needs*). It becomes compulsive to avoid feeling the original need AND to deny the denial.
4. We feel trapped, feel dissatisfied, and become resentful.
5. We feel guilt about our resentments!
6. Confusion ensues, as these powerful emotions cannot be dealt with unless we admit the deception, stop the denial, and honor the original Real Need.

Displacement can be seen as Horizontal

1. Feelings disturb us → 2. We find something else to focus on / move away.

If you are afraid to be rejected in love and subsequently displace the respective energy current into the channel of vocational success, the slightest real or imagined rejection in that field hurts infinitely more than a real rejection in the original area.

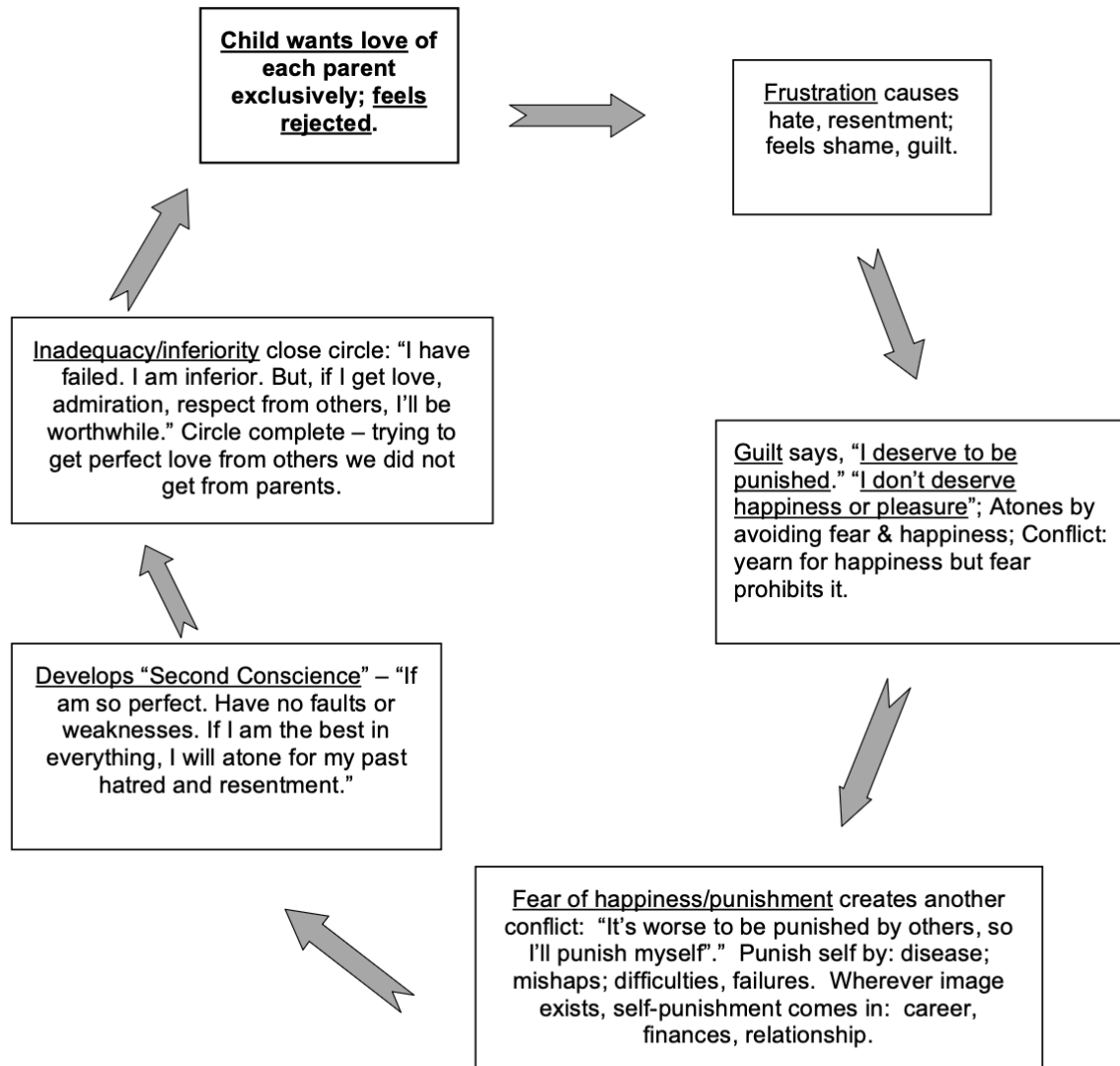
Discussing such a topic must, perforce, happen in an oversimplified way. When it comes to the dynamics of the human psyche, there are many details which must be taken into consideration, and it ceases to be a question of clear-cut denial or admission. It is often somewhere in between -- a half-measure which is no more satisfactory than a complete lack of awareness of these processes.

If you find yourself in an involved situation and you now examine yourself from the point of view under discussion, the mere fact that you acknowledge your needs, even though you may not yet be able to distinguish between distorted and healthy needs and emotional attitudes, acknowledge them for better or for worse. This is bound to relieve the involved situation of surplus intensity and painfully twisted and conflicting emotions. You may try with all your might to understand a painful and involved situation by analyzing yourself and the other person, but as long as you do not find peace, you may be sure that something has been displaced. PL 121

Exercise 3d: Compare your emotional experiences with these descriptions of how emotions generate oppositional forces (vertical 'stacking') vs. just changing the subject (horizontal).

The Great Vicious Circle of Immature Love

Lecture #50



Way out of this vicious circle is:

- See as the child, you were justified in having feelings, attitudes, needs, etc., which are now obsolete.
- Learn to be tolerant of your negative emotions – understand them.
- Discover where you deviate in your emotional tendencies, requirements, and desires from your conscious knowledge.
- Let emotions come to the surface.
- Think them through, considering how and why they are wrong.
- Face them – their ignorance, selfishness, immaturity – without being ashamed.

Week 4: Multiple Needs Often Overlap

It does not suffice to be generally aware of the unfulfilled need of a mutual relationship, the need of a mate. It has to be specifically recognized that several needs are imbedded in this expression. For instance, apart from the pleasure principle, there is the need for being needed and important; the need to give and receive; the need to be protective or protected, or both; the need for ego gratification. All these are legitimate needs, provided they are not overgrown and one is not disproportionate to another.

For example, if the need for ego gratification in a partnership is disproportionately stronger than the need to give and receive love, affection, pleasure, such an imbalance has to be recognized and the reason found. But even if all these various needs in this one form of expression are healthy in interaction, but are ignored in such a temporary phase, the entire nucleus of needs might be blindly shifted into another outlet.

All these needs might experience a measure of fulfillment in the new, transferred area -- in a different form, of course. Being fully aware of the substitution will make the shift harmless, even healthy and necessary. But ignoring the process must create untold and unnecessary hardship and confusion.

If a boss, an employee, a person you work for, a friend, or a group of people, or an activity or interest are supposed to furnish you with all the unfulfilled needs of the missing mate, you must become overintense, anxious, hostile, insecure. Every little slight or apparent slight will hurt much more than if you were aware of what goes on in you. Such awareness will make you joyfully accept those fulfillments that can be substituted for, but will not make you expect what cannot possibly be expected, therefore avoiding disappointment and frustration.

PL 121

Exercise 4a: Take an example that you have found so far, of substitution, displacement, or superimposition. Are multiple needs present? Explore each one separately.

Displacement and Substitution Also Apply to Temporary Situations

It is of equal importance to be aware of situational displacements; otherwise, a permanent denial of a need and substitution may come into existence. Such temporary displacements may occur, particularly in the course of this pathwork, as an interim phase.

Let us again take an example. Suppose you have a problem in regard to a partnership relationship, a difficulty in relating to the opposite sex. Let us further suppose that, before you have started and progressed on this path, in spite of the existence of this problem, your pseudo-solutions, your idealized self-image, your defense mechanisms have given you some measure of fulfillment. Of course, such fulfillment was limited, problematic, fraught with tension, and, in the end, disappointing (for it cannot be otherwise if one attempts to solve a problem by false means), but, nevertheless, there was some measure of fulfillment.

Progress in this work has begun to dissolve to a considerable extent the pseudo-solutions, the idealized self-image, the defense mechanisms, but the original problem may not yet be fully worked through and understood on the deepest levels of your being. Nor are you quite conscious of your needs and their rightful place in your life. Hence, you find yourself,

in the interim, in a transitory stage which may even confuse you because you know you have grown, while experiencing a greater emptiness than before, in this specific area of your life. You do not quite know why this is so. Your needs are now less fulfilled than before, but since you do not concisely acknowledge this fact, the energy current shifts into another outlet.

Not being aware of the original need and its present unfulfillment is bound to cause it to attach itself to another situation. Perhaps it produces a tight overinvolvement with your work where there are, now, too many intense reactions. Or perhaps it produces an overinvolvement with a specific friendship into which all the feelings and needs are shifted. PL 121

Exercise 4b: Temporary issues can disguise patterns. (Drum roll...) DAILY REVIEW is a tool to uncover patterns. whether it is done during a few moments of reflection once a day or by keeping brief notes (vs. lengthy descriptive text).

Transference as a form of displacement or substitution

Displaced needs are also a sort of transference of them, just as one may displace or transfer the feelings one originally had for a parent to another person [ref: [Transference](#) PL 118]. It is necessary to determine a negative feeling toward a person, which is persistent and cannot be resolved, by finding that you originally felt in a similar way toward a parent but did not dare to acknowledge this.

The moment you now feel the original feeling toward the parent in connection with that new person, the negatively involved situation must clear up, while you have grown considerably in this process of facing the truth within yourself. This is the identical mechanism with displaced feelings and needs.

Look at your present activities and relationships in this light. Ascertain any possible overreaction, lingering or frequently recurring anxiety, and other negative emotions. Then examine and deeply ponder the needs behind them. It will then become possible to find and clearly determine the displacement. It is particularly important to then ascertain to what degree you feel you ought not to have these needs and whether or not they are distorted due to denial.

It is essential to verify the various layers of a superimposition and substitution. The more these various layers are emotionally experienced and understood in their true significance, the sooner can fulfillment occur. However, even frustration of needs does not hurt half as much, in actuality, as the fact that, consciously or unconsciously, one thinks that frustrated needs are painful. This is one of the predominant reasons for repressing needs, thereby believing that they cease to exist. Thus the imagined pain of frustration is supposed to be eliminated, while, in reality, the displacement and substitution results in much more severe and bitter suffering than would the relaxed admission of an unfulfillment.

PL 121

Exercise 4c: Everyone transfers initial childhood experiences of love, loyalty, and authority onto others to some degree. Find some healthy examples.