

Pathwork™ Steps

UNITY AND DUALITY

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture 143

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There are two basic ways for man to live, two basic approaches to life and to himself. Or to put it differently, there are two fundamental basic possibilities of consciousness in the human being. The one is the dualistic, the other is the unified plane of consciousness.

The majority of human beings live predominantly on the dualistic plane. The dualistic plane means that man sees, perceives, and experiences everything in opposites. It is always either/or, good or bad, right or wrong, life or death. In other words, practically everything man encounters, every human problem and predicament, is determined by this dualistic way of perceiving life.

The unified principle combines both opposites of the dualistic plane. By transcending the dualistic plane of consciousness, it is found that the painfulness of it no longer exists. Few human beings transcend the dualistic plane and experience only occasionally a taste of the wide, limitless outlook, the wisdom and freedom of the unified plane. ... In the unified plane of consciousness, there are no opposites. There is no good or bad, no right or wrong, no life or death. There is only good, only right, only life. Yet it is not the kind of good or the kind of right or the kind of life that comprises but one of the opposites of the dualistic planes. It transcends it and is of a completely different nature.

There is a part in man -- regardless of how asleep, of how unconscious, and of how ignorant he may be of it -- there nevertheless is in man such a thing as a unified state of mind, or a real self, which is and lives in and expresses and manifests the unified principle. ... However, this longing is misinterpreted by the personality. It is misinterpreted partly because it is an unconscious yearning for what may usually be termed as "happiness," "fulfillment." ... The misinterpretation of this longing exists partly because the knowledge of it is lacking. It is only a vague feeling deep within the soul. But even when the theoretical knowledge of such a state exists, it is still mostly misinterpreted for yet another reason. And that is the following reason, my friends. When freedom and mastery, unification and its resulting bliss, and manifestation of the unified state of consciousness are striven for and attempted on the dualistic plane, tremendous conflict must ensue because it is an absolute impossibility to accomplish.

When the vague longing for or the precise theoretical knowledge of the unified plane of consciousness is misread and therefore striven for on the dualistic plane, the following must happen. When man knows and senses that there is only good, freedom, right, beauty, love, truth, life without a threatening opposite, and when he tries to apply this on the dualistic plane, he will immediately be plunged into the very conflict of opposites he needs to avoid. He then fights for one of the dualistic aspects and against the other. Such a fight makes the transcendence impossible.

Every conflict snowballs into intricate subconflicts, or subdivisions of the primary dualistic split. Since all this is a product of illusion, the more the conflict goes on, the less can it be solved -- hence, the more hopelessly enmeshed man becomes in it. ... The more the man proves his friend wrong, the more friction exists, and the less does he obtain what he thought he would obtain by proving himself right and the other wrong. He believes that by proving himself right and the friend wrong, the friend will finally accept and love him again, and all will be well. When he does not succeed, he misinterprets that and tries harder, for he thinks he has not sufficiently proven his right and the other's wrong. The rift widens, his anxiety increases, and the more weapons he uses to win his fight, the deeper he gets into difficulties until he actually damages himself, the other, and acts against his best interest.

Thus a new duality develops out of the first. The first is who is right and who is wrong; "Only I must be right, otherwise all is bad." The second is either giving in and assuming a wrong that he cannot admit, for it is a total right or a total wrong, or continuing this total fight. Admitting a wrong means death, in a sense. So he is faced with the alternatives of admitting a wrong (that means death in the deep psyche) in order to avoid dreaded consequences and the possibility of a real risk -- putting the life at a grave disadvantage (also death, in the deepest sense) -- or insisting on his total right. Any way he turns, he finds death, total disaster, loss, annihilation. The harder he fights for, and against, the less there is to fight for, and the more against him all alternatives become. The illusion that one side was good and the other bad has brought the inevitable next step on this road of illusion, which is that all is bad. That is the fate of all dualistic struggle, leading into further traps which are all products of illusion.

When the road to the unified principle is chosen, soon what first appeared as one good and one bad ceases to be so, and one inevitably encounters good and bad on both ends. And when this "road" is pursued still further, there no longer is any bad, but only good. The road leads deep inside into the real self, into truth that surpasses the fearful little ego interests.

This simple act of wanting the truth requires several factors, the most important of which is the willingness to relinquish what one holds on to -- whether this be a belief, a conviction, a fear, a cherished way of being. When I say relinquish, I merely mean questioning it and being willing to see that there is something else beyond this outlook and that conviction.

The unified plane is the world of the divine center, of the larger self.

The only way you can truly enter into the unitive state of life, in which you can truly be master, is by no longer needing to triumph, to win, to be separate, to be special, to be right, to have it your way, by finding and discovering the need in all situations, whatever they are, whether you deem them good or bad, right or wrong. Needless to say, this does not mean resignation, nor does it mean fearful giving in or weakness. It means going with the stream of life and coping with what is as yet beyond your immediate control, whether or not it is according to your liking. It means accepting where you are and what life is for you at this moment. It means being in harmony with your own inner rhythm. This will open the channel so that finally total self-realization takes place. This means that all your expressions in life are motivated and lived through by the divine principle operating in you and expressing through your individuality, integrating your ego faculties with this universal self. This enhances your individuality, it does not diminish it. It enhances every one of your pleasures, it takes nothing away from you whatever.

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Pathwork™ Steps

Unity and Duality

Worksheet for Pathwork Lecture 143

1. *“When... the unification of consciousness is striven for and attempted on the dualistic plane, tremendous conflict must ensue because it is an absolute impossibility to accomplish.” (PL 143)*

For a week or so, keep awareness of how many times you make a statement and then add ‘but...’ and contradict, diminish or negate what you have just said.

Ask yourself why you might say something and then say it’s opposite or offer a rebuttal- especially if there was no disagreement to your statement.

Consider inserting ‘and’ where you have been saying ‘but’. So you notice any difference in your attitude or feelings when you use the word ‘and’ and allow both statements to exist?

Jot down the feelings that come up in your journal or daily review.

2. *“The moment an individual is more bent on the truth than on proving his right, he contacts the divine principle of transcendent, unified truth. If the desire to be in truth is genuine, the inspiration must come forth.” (PL 143)*

The next time you feel threatened or conflicted, ask yourself ‘*what might be the greater truth of the matter?*’ Notice any feelings that come up when you ask this question. Are you open to new possibilities, or do you prefer to hold on to your current point of view?

Repeat this exercise several times in different situations. Can you sense any patterns?

3. *“The ego thinks ‘as long as everyone around me thinks that I am special’ - especially good, or smart, or beautiful, or talented, or happy, unhappy or even bad, or whatever the speciality you have chosen for your own personal idealized self-glorification- then I will receive the necessary approval, love, admiration, agreement that I need in order to live’, This explains why some people’s idealized self image is destructive and negative. They feel more confident in making themselves noticed than through positive specialness.” (PL 143)*

Where or how are you ‘special’? Although you may have many areas where you are special in a positive sense, see if you can find a place where your specialness is not completely real – where being ‘special’ is intended to obtain approval or gain an advantage, even in a subtle way.

Examine your feelings around letting go of what makes you ‘special’. Try out - in your everyday life - letting go of a token aspect of your negative specialness, some part of you which does not represent your Real Self.

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CONFLICTS IN THE WORLD OF DUALITY

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture 81

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

Choosing between everyday alternatives that confront you often generates confusion in you. These are not crassly "good" or "bad," and they both stem from the same basic struggle in the human soul.

Modern psychology has recognized the same fundamental problem. It calls it the life instinct versus the death instinct, or the pleasure principle versus the reality principle. In connection with the reality principle, however, there also exists a confusion. It is so often not clear which stands for God and which for the Devil. Is the pleasure principle selfish and therefore destructive? Can you indulge in it without hurting others? And is the reality principle duty, responsibility, work, achievement, and therefore constructive?

In all the conflicts you have managed to become aware of in the course of the work you are doing on this path, the underlying conflict is always related to this world of duality. Behind your images and misconceptions, you always find conflict. In one way or another, you always find that you are torn between two (and sometimes more) attitudes, ways of life, alternatives. By stripping them of their superimposed motivations, at the core you are bound to find the basic opposites.

Life on earth contains physical death. Even if we remove many of life's miseries as unnecessary and as created out of confusion, physical death still remains. And physical death remains a mystery. It is unknown and therefore frightening, in spite of religious faith. It seems to be an end and, as such, is in crass opposition to man's longing for life.

Since the word "happiness" implies so much vague and faraway spirituality, let us choose another word. Let us choose the word "pleasure supreme," on all levels of your being. Your deep-rooted longing for this "pleasure supreme" is constantly in conflict with reality as you know it on earth, and this is the result of your inability to come to terms with death.

Modern psychology claims that this deep-rooted longing stems from man's desire to return to the mother's womb when he lived in a state of being, without worry, responsibility, and hardship. The more he grows, the more is he faced with these realities of life and therefore the stronger does the struggle become. But in truth, this longing goes back further. It stems from the fact that man has imbedded in his spirit the vague memory of a life in another state of consciousness when he knew nothing but "pleasure supreme," bliss supreme, without any opposite. Gradually, by stages and to a degree, you can recapture this stage even while you are still an incarnated entity.

... there are two major ways of the unconscious attempt to cope with death. Both are based on negation -- one by evasion, the other by deliberately going into it. In both alternatives, you tensely struggle against it. You struggle no less when you deliberately choose death out of cringing fear, in a negative spirit of weakness, but it is altogether different in the face of healthy acceptance, out of strength.

When I use the word "death," I do not mean merely physical death alone. I mean all the negative aspects of life, everything that opposes your pleasure drive. It even means more than unhappiness. It also means loss, change, the unknown. The unknown may contain something better than the state you are in, but by the very fact that it is unknown, it becomes terrifying. All that signifies death in little ways. There is no human being who does not die many deaths every day.

Now, your attitude towards death, in all its aspects, determines your ability to live and to experience pleasure. The healthier your attitude towards death is, the more the life force can flow through you. That means the healthier and more enduring is the gratification of your pleasure drive.

The first step is for you to detect how tremendously you struggle against death. You must become fully aware of it, just as you need to become fully aware of the constant longing for pleasure supreme. Both may indeed be very hidden. Find which of the two attempts you have chosen to cope with death, either evasion or that which you fear and which you incline to out of fear itself. Both are always present in each human being, but one may be predominant. In the latter attempt, you sabotage the happiness that you could have because you are so afraid of losing it again or of not getting it to the extent of your desire. This happens in the spirit of "it is unavoidable anyway, so I might just as well get it over with." A crass example of this procedure is suicide.

On the one hand, you dimly sense that in acceptance lies solution. And yet, you also sense in acceptance lies annihilation. That confuses you, but as long as this confusion is not brought out into consciousness, you cannot begin to find your way out of the maze.

The more we look into this subject, the more do we find that the solution lies in facing the unknown, in confronting the fear of it, and in learning the strength to die. He who knows how to die, knows how to live.

Seek, and you will find an area of your being that clings to life only in order to avoid death. This motivation contains negation, and thus the life force is negated too. But if you face and come to terms with death, your embracing of life will be done in positive spirit, and that alone will solve the problem of duality, since duality arises out of negation.

Many aspects of civilized life stand in the way of the supreme bliss that could be had to some degree, even on earth. But they are a direct result of the inner duality, which in turn is an outcome of the inability to die. Civilized life constantly imposes on you the alternatives between pleasure and unpleasure. For instance, let us consider work -- work that is not always according to your creative abilities and inclinations and therefore not according to your liking or pleasure. Moreover, conditions of working with all their "musts," all their various aspects as a result of political, economic, and sociological factors which again are a result of the inner duality -- these necessitate a struggle for living that encourages ambitiousness, drives, compulsions. In addition, they often confront one with rather unnecessary obligations -- they may be necessary within the framework of your present life on earth. All this creates a reality principle that stands in crass opposition to the longing for and fulfillment of the happiness that could be yours.

There is often conflict wherein the gratification of an instinct towards wish fulfillment may at the same time prove damaging to another person. It may make you selfish. Thus, you have to decide between your pleasure, which is divine purpose, or unselfishness, which is divine purpose as well. How is one to cope with this duality? ... This wider vision will be attained by a reflection on the time element. Instant gratification -- the child's way -- often poses the alternative between one's own pleasure versus that of the other. However, in a wider range of vision, this ceases to be true. The more mature a person is, the better will he be able to connect cause and effect even if they do not stand close together. Time is a product of your world of illusion; therefore the length of time existing between cause and effect makes a great deal of difference in your comprehension and evaluation. The more a person spiritually and emotionally matures, the more does he outgrow illusion in all aspects, and although he is still in time, he begins to sense its illusory character. Practically, this manifests in his ability to see cause and effect even if they do not follow in direct succession. If they do follow one another in direct succession, even a very small child begins to connect it and learns from it. The process of growth is therefore determined also by the ability to connect cause and effect even when separated with respect to time.

When your longing for happiness is not instantly fulfilled, this, too, appears as "death." It often feels like bleak misery, and in that sense it is apparently death to you. When you give up instant gratification in the attitude of nevertheless wishing to obtain what you seek in principle, this corresponds to the healthy way of coping with death. The giving up only of the wish itself corresponds to the unhealthy acceptance of death.

Once you overcome this conflict, the pathway will be smoothed towards the real strength of living which lies in the strength of dying.

Notes from the January 3, 2009 Teleconference on PL 143

Dualistic Plane = Illusion of 'real 'life' on earth = Opposites

Choices exclude one another: each is 100%

= OR = 100/100, my way OR your way.

Unitive Plane = World of our divine center, our larger self = Oneness

Choices include each other: everything is possible

= ALL = 100, our way together.

Middle way = enlightened consciousness while in still human form

Some choices exclude in the moment / in our perception

Some choices include

= AND; Sometimes / maybe = 50/50

100/100 = Sphere of the Individual Self = ISS = OR

50/50 = Sphere of the Universal Self = USS = AND

100 = Sphere of Spirit or Sphere of God = ALL

Earth does not represent the Unitive Plane

Designed to foster the Illusion of Duality

Our Job:

- Address the real life issues of LIFE / DEATH, mine/yours, right/wrong
- Differentiate between real life issues and deeper truths
- Bring in a higher consciousness
- Transform and purify our distortions

Duality creates conflict

- Because it is not real
- Because we remember the Unitive and demand it

Notes from the January 3, 2009 Teleconference on PL 143

Working with Duality:

1. Find your dualities; crank up the contrast and define issues in terms of Life or Death. Assume that what you want represents Life, even if it may seem destructive to others. Assume that anything you want to avoid is death.

Life; right, now, pleasure, order, control

Death; wrong, never, unpleasure, helplessness

2. Find distortions in your belief systems. Notice the little things that you care about, and exaggerate what you might be avoiding. Notice what you retract from or avoid, and exaggerate what it is that you might be looking for instead.

Life; knowing, happy, rich, approval, 'on time', full tummy, nice house

Death; not knowing, unhappy, poor, shame/disgrace, late, hungry, ugly house

3. Practice considering that your fear of 'death' might be an attachment to duality.

“When the road to the unified principle is chosen, soon what first appeared as one good and one bad ceases to be so, and one inevitably encounters good and bad on both ends. And when this "road" is pursued still further, there no longer is any bad, but only good. The road leads deep inside into the real self, into truth that surpasses the fearful little ego interests. “

“This simple act of wanting the truth requires several factors, the most important of which is the willingness to relinquish what one holds on to -- whether this be a belief, a conviction, a fear, a cherished way of being. When I say relinquish, I merely mean questioning it and being willing to see that there is something else beyond this outlook and that conviction.” PL 143

From AD 6, Stages of commitment: Question 5 from the First Stage:

“If you feel threatened in the process of removing a fixed prejudice, are you willing to understand the dynamics behind this fear in the process of your pathwork, even before you may actually dare give up the prejudice or fixed belief in question?”

Notes by Jan Rigsby

Be a street Santa; Give to the homeless.

By Jan Gurley From the Los Angeles Times: Opinion December 17, 2008

Check out the gift guide (second article)

It's hard this time of year, no matter who you are and how you live, not to feel like a Scrooge as you wend your way past the homeless, the sidewalk bodies, heading to your job, the next holiday party, your own warm home.

So instead of walking head down, instead of expending emotional energy blocking out the background "noise" of human suffering, take a moment -- and just a little effort -- to give a gift to a street person this Christmas. It is a simple, profound act of power, kindness, rebellion and joy.

Think about it. When you personally give a gift to a homeless person, you aren't playing Santa -- you are Santa. I'm a doctor who treats the homeless, and I can promise you, no one else is likely to drop off a present out of the blue to the huddle of human misery you pass by every day. You will be the Santa of their holiday season. Wear the red trousers with pride!

It's easy. No one on Earth is easier to buy for than the homeless. Wherever you shop, practical, sturdy presents are widely available and cheap. It's the opposite of the person-who-has-everything dilemma. Imagine it -- a pair of mittens from a big-box store can transform someone's day. Men's large sweat pants are a good idea -- gender and size neutral. Bungee cords or duct tape are good for transporting -- daily -- your life's possessions. A fleece throw (try Ikea) or a heat-retaining foil blanket could actually save someone's life on a cold winter night.

You don't even have to wrap your gift. In fact, giving a bright, shiny present to a homeless person makes him or her a target for assault or robbery. There's a real reason why homeless people quickly whisk away valuable donations of all kinds -- the streets are not safe. A discreet drop-off in an old plastic bag is the best way to go -- easy for you and good for your giftee. If you want, you can include a simple gift card inside ("From Me, to You").

And in case the homeless scare you, don't worry, you don't have to engage your giftee in an awkward conversation. Just approach briskly, pause briefly next to the cardboard/blanket/cup on the sidewalk, give the giftee a short "howdy" nod and drop your present in midstride. Keep in mind, though, that when you drop and go, it's important to make eye contact to let your giftee know your present is intentional. Otherwise you might get chased by a homeless person who's trying to return your "dropped" package.

Then, after you've turned the corner, sneak a look back. What you'll discover is that humans, even if we're left out in the open, with voices running through our heads, all deal with presents the same way. In the end, opening a gift is a universal act. The sight of someone sitting on the sidewalk, hunched and pyramid-shaped in an effort to stay warm, pulling items out of your bag as a huge smile blooms -- it will warm your heart for days.

So give personally, give simply, give quickly and cheaply. It will take care of that piercing noise of misery that's reaching painful levels right about now, against the jingle of frenetic holiday consumer cheer. It will have a positive effect on the quality and longevity of your life. (Scientists have proved it: Altruism is good for you.)

When you take the trouble to give a gift to a street person, without waiting or asking for thanks, it loosens that hard knot we all carry inside when we see the homeless. It gives us back a small bit of our battered compassion and connects us with those around us. It can even get us through some tough times of our own.

Jan Gurley is a physician who sees patients at the Tom Waddell Clinic for the homeless in San Francisco. Her writing has appeared in Salon, Britain's Daily Mail and the San Francisco Chronicle Sunday magazine. A version of this piece also appears on her website, docgurley.com.

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Gift guide for street people

Leave the tags on, keep the colors neutral and remember the socks.

By Jan Gurley From the Los Angeles Times: Opinion December 17, 2008

What to buy the guy who signs on the corner or the woman who panhandles by the bus stop? A few basics:

1. Earning power is primo. One of the best possible presents is something that helps a homeless person earn some cash. Consider buying a harmonica for the a cappella singer who starts to sound hoarse by the end of rush hour. If your neighborhood, like one I know in Berkeley, has a street person who paints tiny abstracts on rocks to earn some bucks, a set of acrylics or a handful of Sharpies would be welcome.
2. Hats, scarves and gloves. Clear winners, at prices from \$4.99 for men's items at Target, and try the 99 Cent stores and discount drugstores too. Remember, though, that the streets are not a good place to attract attention. Choose neutral colors that won't show wear and tear (navy, brown, black). And if you're giving any clothing item, it's nice to leave the tag in place. Lots of homeless people have gotten unfortunate cases of lice and scabies from accepting used articles, so it's reassuring for your giftee to know that what you're giving is new.
3. Rain gear. Keep in mind that street people carry everything everywhere. For that reason, umbrellas aren't as good a gift as the ultra-useful, ultra-cheap rain poncho -- spend enough, though, that it will last for a while.
4. Bags. Carrying everything you own is not easy, especially when almost all of it is packed in finger-creasing, thin white plastic bags. Select from the fine selection of collapsible, sturdy, Earth-friendly "reusable" bags from grocery stores and drugstores at truly affordable prices. My favorite is the Ikea large blue bag -- it has a set of wide, durable shoulder straps (good for carrying heavy items) plus a second, hand-length set of straps; it's only 59 cents, and it's made of weather-resistant tarp-like material, which means it also can be used as an impromptu shelter.
5. Outdoor supplies. Head for a camping store. Bungee cords (I found them at five for \$2.99), sturdy metal clips (three for \$2.49), duct tape (\$1.99 a roll) and heat-retaining foil emergency blankets (\$2.99 each) are all cheap, useful things to toss in a gift bag. Stay away from knives (including multifunction tools) and anything with an open flame (like camping stoves), both of which can get the urban camper in trouble. Polartec-type throws are really nice gifts (a good choice: Ikea, \$3.99), but avoid cotton or fluffy blankets, which turn into a soggy wad in the rain.
6. Foot care. Foot problems top the list of miseries that plague people living on the street. Trench foot has actually made a resurgence in this country among street people. You may be asking yourself: Why do homeless people wear the same shoes/socks all the time? So they don't get stolen. Packs of multiple pairs of athletic socks, from discount stores, can be broken apart to extend your gift giving to more recipients. Manicure sets and sample-sized foot lotion are available at a wide variety of department stores and drugstores.
7. First-aid kits. Buy the small, prepackaged kind: wipes, Band-Aids and sample sizes of over-the-counter medicines like aspirin or acetaminophen. Steer clear of other over-the-counter medicines as gifts, because many people on the street have health conditions that mean they shouldn't be taking one or more of these medicines on a long-term basis. Another approach is to give a drugstore gift card in \$5 to \$10 amounts, as long as the store is nearby.
8. Treats. Candies or chocolates that are individually wrapped (street people, just like you and me, wonder about who's been handling unwrapped food before they eat it) are a nice addition to a gift bag. Coupons to local restaurant chains (Subway, Burger King, others) are wonderful gifts, but be aware of which places are likely to welcome a street person.
9. Deluxe options. There's no easy answer to the question of whether it's better to give one surprising, fabulous gift to one person, or to give lots of great, smaller gifts to many people. What is absolutely true, however, is that you can buy some truly deluxe, practical gifts for the homeless for what is, after all, not that much money. Metal picking-up-trash tongs from Target (\$19.99), a \$40 sleeping bag from a variety of sporting-goods and big-box stores, a collapsible rolling metal cart (\$19.99 from Ikea).

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