

Pathwork™ Steps

The Self-Regulating Nature of Involuntary Processes

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 153

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Week 1: Overexertion of Ego Creates Unbalance

Week 2: The Role of Images in Unhappiness

Week 3: You Already Trust Involuntary Processes!

Week 4: Fear of Success / Fear of the Abyss

Week 1: Overexertion of Ego Creates Unbalance

Self-realization means to bring out into reality all the dormant potentials. It means that man integrates his ego with as yet involuntary processes.

The ego consists of the outer reasoning faculty and the will faculty. The involuntary processes comprise feelings, intuition, and, what is more, certain manifestations which operate according to the most meaningful and lawful foundations of life. No one who has not approached the threshold of self-realization can grasp the wonder and beauty of this part of creation.

Man's battle is in the holding on to his ego faculties. This is because he desperately fears the involuntary processes. He fears everything about it, either consciously or unconsciously or both.

He fears the spontaneity of his feelings. He may ignore this fact because he believes something is a feeling when he merely registers a sensation or a reaction to his surroundings.

Something that is not spontaneous and involuntary, something that is directly rather than indirectly governable by the ego processes cannot rightfully be called a feeling.

Why does man fear the involuntary processes? Why indeed does he so often fear them more than practically anything else in life when the best in life is a result of the involuntary creative process? Nothing that is really worthwhile, really meaningful and fulfilling, of lasting value can ever be a product of ego function, of direct ego control.

Why is man bent to destroy, to dominate, to deny, and to manipulate creative life -- that is, the involuntary processes -- and substitute them with the much less adequate, much less wise, resourceful, and creative ego faculties, which are but separated particles of the greater consciousness, operative through the involuntary functions.

This overexertion of ego control and the denial of involuntary processes create a tremendous imbalance in the personality. It creates sickness or, if one prefers the expression, a neurosis to a greater or lesser degree, depending on how much the ego controls creative life within.

Man proceeds from the premise -- often quite consciously or at least semiconsciously, not

ever completely unconsciously -- that the healthier he is to be, the more control he ought to exert over his involuntary processes. This misconception makes him go off in a direction that is most opposed to inner balance, to the realization of his best potentials, to rich fulfillment of life on all levels of his being, to healthy well-being. If he is to attain all that, he must reverse the direction.

The more he is bent to overcontrol and to dominate the inner involuntary processes, and the more he fears the latter, the more conflicted and unhappy he becomes, and the emptier his life must be. In fact, he becomes but a shallow, lifeless shell, held together by rigid guards he does not ever dare to relinquish.

He gets into a vicious circle. The more he presses into the wrong direction, the more he loses himself and his life; the more problematic his life becomes, the less capable he becomes of coping.

Since he believes that this is a result of insufficient ego control, he tries to increase rather than decrease it, thereby getting deeper involved in this vicious circle.

The only way to reverse it is, as mentioned, to let go of the rigid vigilance which rules out all inner creative life, and to use the ego faculties in another way.

PL 153

Study guide for **The Vicious Circle** PL 50:

<http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/050-PRS21-VCircle-StudyGuide.pdf>

Daily Review PL 28

Exercise: Keep a record of incidents that disturb you. Focusing upon subtleties may help us from becoming distracted by exaggerating or over-dramatizing a situation. Notice feelings of discomfort, where you suspect you may be uninformed, ignorant, unprepared, or unaware.

Each week, see if you can relate with the sub-topic.

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

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

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

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

Week 2: The Role of Images in Unhappiness

Man bases certain assumptions about life and his relationship to it on false ideas. These false ideas are often unconscious and form the images we talked about. These misconceptions, deeply lodged in the soul substance, compel man to act upon these premises. Since the premises are false, the ensuing actions and emotions are bound to be destructive and are geared to defend something that does not exist. Hence, the results must be opposite from what he really wants. In short, he acts against his interests. A person who is as yet unaware of what he really believes, and also of life's laws, ignores these connections and thinks the events have nothing to do with his ideas. **He ignores the creative power in himself and that it is set up so that it actually works negatively in him.**

The Pathwork process is aimed at bringing out these unconscious ideas and images. Once you find that you harbor deep inside of yourself equations and assumptions that are completely contrary to your conscious reasons and intelligence, you begin to perceive that you have instituted, with these assumptions working on the creative life energy, involuntary processes that are destructive.

The conscious mind is an instrument of the unconscious perceptions and connections that actually exist, but is only able to translate them hazily. That is, the more a person is conscious of the inner, heretofore unconscious processes, the more exactly he will understand the "messages" coming through. But when an individual is still driven by unconscious images and is thus also driven by the negatively operative involuntary processes, he cannot help but fear them.

So, on the one level, the fear is explained by the fact that much of his involuntary processes lead him into negative experience due to the presence of unconscious false ideas. He merely fears these self-perpetuating, involuntary forces.

The person who follows a path of self-confrontation is bound to discover his ingrained, heretofore unconscious assumptions about important aspects of living. Gradually he begins to dissolve these images through recognition and through installing truthful ideas into the soul substance. He begins to observe the power of these images, of the energy involved in them, of the automatic, involuntary nature of these energies. Little by little, through this understanding and observation, you can recreate correct assumptions. They will then begin to work constructively for you. You proceed to set off new energy currents which go according to a vaster law. You never need to fear them.

PL 153

The fusion of consciousness and energy is of such a tremendous power that this fusion creates an electro-magnetic energy field, as it were. This field contains every conceivable seed, or possibility, of creation. **Every conceivable attitude or concept about life creates such a force field.** The magnetism of this field is so strong that ensuing action and events are inexorably set in motion, and these actions and events continue to perpetuate the same power of this specific force field. **The force field of a specific attitude to life is also ruled by laws of attraction -- like attracting like.** Thus you who have created various force fields as a result of your attitudes, ideas, concepts, and approaches to life attract or repulse events, people, happenings, actions of others and yourself. You set up continuous chains of action and reaction, **of which you often lose track.** That is, when the event occurs in your life, you no longer know by what specific belief and consequent action you have created it.

Demagnetizing Negative Force Fields PL 201

What is the Idealized Self Image (ISI)?

Worksheet By Kim Rosen for The Pathwork Teacher Helper Database
Based upon Pathwork Guide Lecture 83 and the research of Bert and Moira Shaw

ISI is a false self designed to insure happiness, security, and self-confidence.
ISI can hide OR glorify negativities – or both.
ISI can be aloof, invulnerable, and/or ‘good’.
ISI makes tyrannical demands that we believe our lives depend upon fulfilling.
Causes feelings of failure, frustration, compulsion, false guilt, false shame, false needs.

Dissolving the Idealized Self-Image

1. Recognize in detail the ISI’s demands.
2. Understand what it was designed to insure – your particular type of happiness:

<u>Reason Type</u> *	<u>Will Type</u>	<u>Emotion Type</u>
Being accepted	Being seen	Being loved
Being aloof	Being powerful	Being in harmony
Being in control	Being invulnerable	Being “good”

Understand what it was designed to avoid – your particular type of Unhappiness:

<u>Reason Type</u>	<u>Will Type</u>	<u>Emotion Type</u>
Being rejected	Being dismissed	Being unloved
Feeling pain	Feeling helplessness	Feeling rage
Experiencing chaos	Experiencing defeat	Experiencing badness

3. Recognize in detail the damage it’s done: that is creates exactly the experience it is designed to avoid.
4. Welcome opportunities to let False Self die; opportunities to let go of being aloof, invulnerable, “good”.
5. Risk feeling all feelings especially your own particular unhappiness:

<u>Reason Type</u>	<u>Will Type</u>	<u>Emotion Type</u>
Pain of rejection	Defeat and helplessness	Rage and badness
Hurt / chaos	Being dismissed, unseen	Having negative feelings, being unloved

* Referencing Three Personality Types: Reason, Will and Emotion Pgl 43
Full text of all Pathwork Guide Lectures may be downloaded at www.pathwork.org

Week 3: You Already Trust Involuntary Processes!

At this juncture, you may have arrived at understanding these precepts in theory: that the involuntary processes need not be destructive, that they are only destructive according to your hidden misconceptions. Yet, in actuality, you still fear the self-perpetuating, involuntary forces. You still believe you need to guard against them.

How can you begin to trust the involuntary processes? How can you be sure that, even after dissolving the false assumptions which formed certain images, the free-flowing energy then available is not leading you into danger and destruction too, once you let go of the sharp ego control? Unless you trust the involuntary processes, the exaggerated ego control cannot be relinquished, and you can never convince yourself of the benign nature of these creative forces within you. Productive, creative involuntary processes cannot become operative as long as you do not encourage them, as long as you do not wish them and give yourself to them. If you do not let go and permit them to happen and get your whole being to want this, you can never experience the proof of the reliability of the involuntary creative processes contained in every human soul.

It does not suffice to merely hear these words. They need to be taken very seriously by giving them a great deal of attention with your innermost being, with the best intentions and will, by opening yourself completely, by letting go of the defenses that make you so tight and so rejecting of new ideas that seem to threaten you. When ego control is too tight, such words may indeed seem threatening. That which is salvation appears like your undoing.

You have fought against this direction all your life. Now you are being told to do the very opposite from what you thought you needed to do. You cannot imagine that it will work.

Now, my friends, the only way these involuntary processes can be trusted is when you realize that they are self-regulating, as perfectly and as completely as many of your biological functions which you take for granted and whose self-regulating nature you never even bother to think about.

It would not occur to anyone to want to regulate his blood stream, his nervous system, his heartbeat, the functioning of his liver or any other inner organ. They do their work perfectly by themselves. It would not occur to you to try to control and govern them by your outer reasoning processes and by your outer will. Were you to attempt such a thing, it would only create harm, for the pressure you would exert with the wasted will power, the wasted energy, would eventually negatively affect the good functioning of your body.

The attempt to control something that is not amenable to ego control can only create imbalance, pressure, tension, anxiety, and finally manifest negative effects. This applies not only to the body, but to all levels of the personality.

When you begin to think about it that you do not have to exert any will power, any pressure with your outer ego faculties in order to have your biological functions work in their own perfect way, you will then be able to see that the same applies to other levels. The same fact of self-regulation exists in nature in every possible respect.

PL 153

The Ego's Role in Involuntary Processes

But you do have to use your ego so as to nurture and cultivate healthful habits in order to maintain the involuntary, self-regulating processes. This is the ego's task. It has the possibility to choose healthful habits for the body. The ego has the possibility to choose to take care of the body so as to maintain health.

PHYSICAL HUNGER	EMOTIONAL HUNGER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Comes on gradually→ Hunger can wait→ A variety of foods sound good→ Stops when you're full→ Eating doesn't make you feel bad about yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Comes on suddenly→ Feels like you must eat now→ Craves specific comfort foods→ Doesn't stop with a full stomach→ Triggers feelings of guilt, shame & powerlessness

via HelpGuide.org

<http://sublimereflection.com/physical-vs-emotional-hunger/>

The same relationship, my friends, exists between the ego and the involuntary processes of the emotional life, of the creative functions within, of the direction one's life is to take as a whole. These involuntary processes are just as perfectly, meaningfully regulated according to lawful procedures as the biological ones.

If the ego does not interfere, self-regulation occurs effortlessly and naturally. Again, the ego has its role to play. Its task is to choose healthful habits regarding the activity of the mind so as to set the proper direction. It can determine to accept oneself where and how one is now and give up the **idealized version of the self** [ref PL 83] one tries to enforce. These are the healthful habits necessary so that the involuntary processes will be indirectly affected and can work in a reliable way. Then their self-regulating nature can reveal itself.

The temptation to evade the truth of the self must be as rigorously overcome as the rigor of ego control must be relinquished. This is how balance can be reestablished in the personality.

As the body always responds favorably when it is treated constructively, so does the level where feelings and intuition create conditions and experiences of life. When the ego no longer dominates these involuntary processes, intuition will give a new security and help to cope with life.

When the self-regulating nature is experienced, the involuntary processes integrate with the ego functions. Then and then only can life be truly fulfilling and rich. A new freedom exists to receive what comes from within. One is being lived from within, as it were. This is self-realization. And then one can see how these involuntary processes are in their health, as trustworthy and as self-regulating as a body functioning in health. An integrated full life is absolutely impossible if these involuntary faculties are not allowed to be.

PL 153

Week 4: Fear of Success / Fear of the Abyss

Once you allow the negative material fully into your consciousness, you must soon see the power of constructive material in you. And then you will discover what I also keep mentioning, that man is even more afraid of the positive power in him than he is of all the negative feelings and desires put together. Anyone who goes deeply enough in his path of self-confrontation cannot help but find out this truth, no matter how preposterous and illogical it may seem at first hearing.

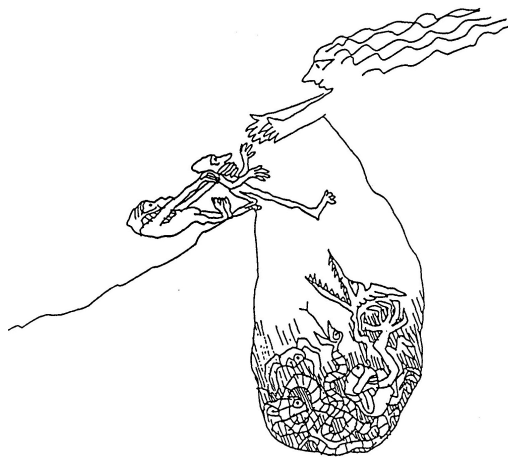
If you fear the constructive forces in yourself, it is so, again, because you ignore the self-regulating nature of the cosmic flow that any constructive feeling is. To let yourself be carried by it seems risky, even dangerous. In this particular phase, your vague or perhaps even distinct fear, once it is conscious at all, is, "Where will it carry me? Where will I go from here? What will it make me do? I will lose my individuality, will lose control."

The good feelings seem to be even more threatening than the negative ones regarding the loss of control and individuality. Also the fear may exist that the good feelings may be directed to someone who is not worthy of them, who does not reciprocate in kind, who will reject and hurt and take advantage.

Growth is stopped when feelings are stopped. The choice of love objects who are unfulfilling and frustrating, or even produce pain, expresses the torn state of the individual's inner direction. He wants the feeling, and he does not want it; he desires fulfillment, and he fears it. The difficult experience is never a proof that feelings are not trustworthy, but only a proof of conflicting wishes and of ignoring the fact that feelings, intuition, spontaneous thoughts and inspiration, creative processes undergo their law of growth as any other part of the human organism.

But man fears the total surrender to the involuntary processes, so he cannot find out the perfection of the self-regulating law. This feeling is, again, due to ignoring the self-regulating nature of the creative life processes. Recognition of this must help you to come again a step nearer to the real life that leads itself from within yourself.

PL 153



the Abyss of Illusion

The more unconscious such attitudes, convictions, and erroneous conclusions are, the more powerful they are.

Your subconscious affects the subconscious of another person. According to the level you give out, you affect that particular level of the other person. What comes out of your true inner being, your real self, will affect the real self of the other person. What comes out of any layer of your mask self will affect the similar or corresponding mask self or defense mechanism of the other person.

When you cannot let go of your self-will, when you cannot accept the imperfection of this world, when you cannot have life and people according to your very own way, even if yours may be the right way, it seems to you that you have fallen into an abyss. The Abyss of Illusion PL 60

The abyss can only disappear if you let yourself sink into it. Then and then only will you learn that you do not crash and perish, but that you float beautifully. You will then see that what made you tense with fear and anxiety was as illusory as this abyss.

The Abyss of Illusion PL 60

As long as this act of testing the abyss is not committed, one takes the fear seriously, regardless of how much reason knows differently. The fearful emotions win out over reason, in honoring the matter of the fear, in acting as though the abyss exists, in refusing to step from the edge. The more one hides from the fact that he, indeed, takes the fear seriously by refusing the act, the more do the fears grow -- or, the deeper the abyss becomes in imagination, in the built up form.

The Abyss of Illusion: Chapter 20 of The Path to the Real Self by Eva Pierrakos

The mature concept of happiness is: "I am independent of outer circumstances, regardless of what they are. I can be happy under any circumstances because even the disadvantageous or unpleasant events will have a purpose, bringing me that much nearer to complete freedom and infinite happiness."

Thus even difficult times will have the power to make you happy.

The Desire for Happiness and the Desire for Unhappiness PL 58

Exploring fear:

1. Fully verbalize your feelings, making sure you complete your sentences: "If ___ happens, then ___ will happen which will cause ___; I am afraid that ___ will cause me to lose ___ and then I will actually be ___ or feel ___". Do you experience any pleasure about the feelings? Does fear make you feel safe, responsible, or caring? Does it create feelings of camaraderie with others? **Scrupulous honesty** is needed to find the truth.

2. Notice every conceivable negative outcome you are imagining. Most fears lead to a logical absurdity, and by seeing how silly they are we can dissolve them. Some fears have a grain of truth, but we would rather exaggerate the alternatives than give up the fear -- because we like having a rationale that holds us back from taking any risks (and getting any rewards!)

Example: I'm concerned because it might rain, and I haven't got my umbrella, and I might get wet, and then I would look foolish walking down the street, and then I would have to explain to others why I got wet, and then they might think poorly of my judgment, and then I might get fired / divorced / abandoned / cast out of society, and then I might die of hunger... *(by imagining the 'worst case' scenario, we may be able to laugh off some of our concerns).*

Example: I'm anxious about my performance review, because I don't know how to handle criticism or not getting a raise that I want / deserve. *(by expressing precisely what you are anxious about, you may realize what preparations might be valuable to take -- like practicing receiving and rebutting criticism, or what research might strengthen your position).*

3. Practice moving through fear as if it were fog. Notice what aspects of fear dissolve, and what remains. When there is a grain of truth in fear, it is easier to find and address the part that is true when it is freed from exaggeration and emotion.

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