

Pathwork™ Steps

Longing for Bliss

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 170 Part 1 of 2

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

Week 1: Real Love is the Key to Bliss

Week 2: Bliss is Your Birthright

Week 3: Bliss is the Natural State of Being

Week 4: Distinguishing Bliss from Pleasure Using the Energy Centers

Week 1: Real Love is the Key to Bliss

The key to the universe is real love, not the binding love you often give forth. Real, genuine love lets free and can accept a no for an answer. False love is like a lasso that wishes to dominate and hold tight. It seems easy to pretend the latter to be the former, but the inner self cannot be deceived.

Where is there a lack of generosity in your feelings? Where do you postulate different laws and rules of conduct for others than for yourself? All of these violations go on constantly, inexorable and unbeknownst to your conscious mind, for you manage to shut out this truth, which is the gravest of all violations.

The pretenses are so much worse than the primary violations. The pretenses deny and falsify. It then becomes a double violation, which inevitably leads to the most painful of all mental and emotional states -- being in a double bind, from which there seems to exist no way out -- until this double violation is discovered and abandoned.

Let us say you are selfish, or you have a streak of cruelty, or you hate. If you pretend that your selfishness is the healthy version of self-assertion; or, if you rationalize it, if you feel the cruelty and hate only in secret, and act it out indirectly under a facade that seems the opposite, then you, in addition to these violations, become hypocritical. This hypocrisy may not be crass and on the surface, but its subtle nature does not make it less so.

If, on the other hand, you courageously and honestly admit to yourself what goes on in you, and look at it squarely, the violation is already overcome to a considerable degree. For in accepting the truth about yourself, you enter into a general climate of truth. You are on a platform from which the possibility exists to work yourself out of the particular violation.

But even while you struggle, seek further and deeper comprehension, meditate for guidance and help so that your feelings may change spontaneously.

In these endeavors, you are in keeping with universal laws. You accept your present state; you establish inner conditions that are compatible with bliss. If you have the honesty of saying, "*I cannot help but feel this way although I know I do not like it and I know it is destructive.*," in that moment, you not only are truthful, but you make room for change.

Anything that is contrary to the laws of love and truth must make the organism unprepared to sustain the powerful energy of happiness. For happiness is indeed a powerful energy. It requires

more strength than unhappiness. This strength can be acquired by everyone by facing the truth and shedding illusion about the self and life.

PL 170

Exercise 1a: Where is there a lack of generosity in your feelings? Where do you postulate different laws and rules of conduct for others than for yourself? Have the honesty of saying, "*I cannot help but feel this way although I know I do not like it and I know it is destructive.*" In that moment, you not only are truthful, but you make room for change.

Use the practice of Daily Review – whether thinking about the past 24 hours, or tracking disharmonies in a log book. Notice how frequently you experience the absence of loving feelings.

Consider how your lack of bliss may relate to your lack of loving.

Bliss: A state of deep knowing that all is well in the universe

Only when you are in the eternal *now* are you truly in bliss, are you truly safe, secure, fearless, and absolutely certain -- not as wishful thinking, but as absolute, realistic, justified inner certainty, as a fact -- of the beautiful meaning of life that is a continuum, that does not stop merely because certain momentary manifestations seem to stop.

That sense of eternity is the true bliss. For when there is no fear, there is complete relaxation. The word "relaxation" could be misleading and I hesitate to use it ... A completely fearless state, without contraction and tension, is the state that makes this personality susceptible to the ever existing bliss of the universe. This state is immensely blissful.

Deep in the heart of all human beings, the longing for this bliss can never be extinguished. And when man fragmentizes his consciousness, and creates the false reality of the three-dimensional world, inwardly he is still connected with the greater reality of eternal being and with the eternal now point. His manifest consciousness will constantly strive for this state, whether he knows it or not. This striving is in itself the motivating force to grow, to search, to move, to accept the temporary hardships which are self-created, and to walk through them as through tunnels so as to free the self from the obstruction.

Psychic Nuclear Points Continued – Process in the Now PL 215

Exercise 1b: Recall moments in your life where you felt you were in a state of bliss, even if only for a few seconds. We defend ourselves against disharmonious feelings by not remembering them. See if you can put aside your fears and disappointments for just a few moments, and allow yourself to remember...

Daily Review 1.0 from The Call PL 17

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. [The Call](#) PL 17

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

Week 2: Bliss is Your Birthright

Man unconsciously knows that a state of pleasure supreme is his birthright, and he constantly strives for it, whether he realizes this or not. That this striving goes in a wrong direction, as just mentioned, does not alter the fact as such. Once man learns to search in the proper direction, he will find what he seeks.

The entire universe is constituted in such a way that each created individual is capable of being in a constant state of bliss. Each created individual is made in such a way that this is not only a theoretical possibility, but it is man's natural state of being. It is the natural law. When an individual is not in a state of bliss, it is an unnatural, disturbed condition. It is exceedingly important for you, my friends, to really grasp and appreciate this fact.

When I speak of a state of bliss, I do not mean this for a vague future -- a future either in this life or for a future in a life beyond the physical state of existence. It is indeed possible right here and right now. Nor does this depend on

1. some complicated feat
2. a difficult state of perfection foreign to your present way of being
3. outer events or anything having to be different from what it is right in this minute.

Man is prone to think that if only this or that were different (within or around him), then nothing would stand in the way of his happiness. Total happiness is possible immediately, as you are now.

[Self-Liking; Condition for Universal State of Bliss](#) PL 150

Exercise 2a: Feel into the statements '*bliss is your birthright*' and '*each created individual is capable of being in a constant state of bliss*'. Walk around for a few moments and feel how your body responds. Think about what would change in your life if these statements are true.

An Ongoing Process of Making Things Conscious

Just as both the higher and the lower self can be conscious or unconscious or at any degree between these two states, so can the mask self. The mask self is the pretense, the hiding, the facade you present to the world, the idealized self image you want to be, and invest your energies into so as to make it "real." However, by masking anything of yourself, you inevitably also mask your higher self from yourself. This is why the path is, above anything else, a process of making things conscious. This self-awareness unifies you, unifies the split in you, unifies conflicts in you, and establishes your sense of self and your knowledge that the universe with all its bliss is yours.

[Resume of the Basic Principles of the Pathwork](#) PL 193

Creation is indeed a result of consciousness, and not, as generally assumed, the other way round. Nothing can be unless it exists first in consciousness, whether this consciousness is the universal spirit, the universal self, or whether it is the individualized self. It makes no difference.

[Consciousness](#) PL 175

Exercise 2b: Notice any energies – physical, emotional, or mental - that you used to protect yourself from bliss in exercise 2a. This is the mask self. Try the exercise again, and see if you can hold your consciousness open to the idea that bliss is not only possible, but a natural state that you deserve. Simply notice any remaining – or new -- arguments and defences against saying **YES**.

QUESTION: ...I made this remarkable discovery of being free myself, of allowing myself full pleasure. I have no more anxiety about that...

Exercise 2c: Notice where you use a forcing current (ref: [PL 77](#)) to gain or hold onto pleasure, or insist that you hold no anxieties about it, before reading the Guide's response.

ANSWER: Oh yes, you have.

On deeper levels of your being you still have the fear of pleasure. There still is anxiety about allowing yourself full pleasure and full freedom. This word must be properly understood. It is not license. Only one who is fully self-responsible is capable of utilizing the freedom creation has granted all beings.

For example, when people shift the blame for their present unhappy state on any other factor than their own unconscious processes, they are not self-responsible, no matter how subtly and covertly this may be done. There is a mechanism in the psyche that directly connects this displacement with the prohibition of pleasure.

As long as human beings separate earth from heaven, body from spirit, you cannot experience the true bliss of unity.

The blissful state of spiritual realization combines the spirit, the mind, the emotions and the body. In the middle of the body is the solar plexus. For years and years I have spoken about this. Right in that region, right in the body, all bliss exists -- not as something unphysical, but as something that must be felt within the body. If you expect spiritual bliss as something away from your body, you find yourself on a way of duality and error, of conflict and dissension.

A nucleus of energy will make itself known, right in the body. It comes from the real self. Its intense reality makes the truth of all these teachings a profound experience that cannot be denied or thought to be illusion. It is this truth and reality that is so reassuring and so hopeful, no matter what relapses may occur. When compressed energy dissolves and flows through a person's entire being, one enters into this blissful state.

Questions and Answers PL 156QA

If you are in shallow, unsatisfactory relationships which lack depth, gratification, and intimacy, where you reveal yourself only superficially (perhaps you only reveal an idealized self-image, which you think is the only acceptable part of you), again you have a good gauge of where you are within yourself. You do not even take a chance because you are unable to accept yourself. Hence you cannot believe that your true, genuine person can ever be accepted, nor can you accept others on the basis of where they are in their present state of development. All this excludes the possibility for mutuality.

The movement of opening up and taking in, the relaxed bliss of streaming into another energy field and accepting the emanation of the other energy field -- this bliss is unbearable and appears dangerous for him who hates himself. To the degree you contract each time a temporary opening has occurred, to that degree you can know that this happens, not because of your evil and your not deserving the bliss, but because you cannot accept the total forces and energies as they are in you now. Therefore you remain locked in them and cannot convert them.

Mutuality – A Cosmic Principle and Law PL 185

Week 3: Bliss is the Natural State of Being

Bliss is a necessity, for bliss is expansion. You cannot expand and utilize your own inherent potentials unless you are in a state of joyousness. Expansion and bliss belong together, as stagnation and frustration belong together. Expansion is a self-activating process that combines the masculine and feminine principles in perfect harmony. If bliss, and therefore expansion, are feared, fear of growth and change must also exist. So must there be fear of man's own inherent powers. PL 170

This is why in these gatherings as they are now -- a result of your development -- you first respond with crying to the pure influx of spiritual power. You are all gripped by this strong feeling, and it first elicits tears in you. It brings out as yet unexperienced residual feelings of sadness, longing, pain. But while you experience this, you already feel the liberation, the spiritual nourishment, the joyfulness, the exaltation, and the love that are poured forth.

Commitment: Cause and Effect PL 196

One day lived in a blissful state, in which you are alive and deeply in contact with your innermost being and thus with the whole universe, emanating joy and having truly deep and meaningful exchanges with others in which you do not have to ward off life from within and without, will make you know that on that day you have not defended against anything. But also, possibly you were fortunate on that day to come into the psychic circumference of strong, clear, liberated spiritual energy and consciousness.

Affecting and Being Affected PL 188

Exercise 3a: Recall moments of bliss in your life, where you felt an expansion of your being, strong feelings, or moments of perfect harmony.

If you have discounted or discredited these experiences because they didn't last, find any feelings of 'give me all or I'll call it nothing', or a resentment against spirit for 'taking it away'.

The Power of Bliss can Feel Overwhelming

The second major phase in the evolutionary progression is that the soul learns to acclimatize itself to universal bliss. To the degree evil exists (misconceptions, defenses, negative intentionality, refusal to experience one's self-produced pain), bliss is unbearable. But even when the soul is free from evil, at first it still requires strengthening to withstand the enormous power of the spirit. The blissful, pure energy is of such strength that only the purest, strongest can live comfortably in it. The truth of this principle can be recognized to some degree within the human development. It happens to all of you that you can no longer bear bliss, pleasure, ecstasy, happiness. You feel more comfortable in greyness. Power of the universal spirit is incompatible with the slow moving energy of evil, defense, unexperienced pain.

Commitment: Cause and Effect PL 196

Exercise 3b: Consider how you might acclimatize yourself to universal bliss.

From a certain development, on a spirit will want anything that helps most, even if to be able to remain and fulfill a task in one's own sphere would be more blissful. It is still the most blissful to help and work in the great plan according to God's will. Our bliss is in serving.

Turning to God PL 35

The Energy Centers

The time has come when it is absolutely necessary that in the approach to yourselves, you become aware of these energy centers. These energy centers are located at various areas in your body, corresponding to body areas. These centers are not actually in your physical body, but are in the so-called subtle body in areas that correspond to physical glands. Although the functioning of the glandular system is directly dependent on these centers, the centers themselves are not physical organs that can be discovered by x-rays or other physical investigation. They are of psychic reality; their physical reality can be determined by their effect.

These energy centers, located in various body areas, have each their own relation to mental attitudes. As the mental attitude changes from ignorance, fear, alienation, distrust, hostility, to an open, trustful, truthful, loving state, these energy centers open up. This is a distinct experience in the body because the unity between body, mind, spirit is at that point a very intimate one.

Therefore our approach at this stage must also be a unitive one that includes the total personality. You can see easily that there is a connection between the fear of pleasure and the energy centers. For if there is fear, these centers are by necessity cramped and closed, and the life force cannot go through them. While if you inwardly open up for pleasure, joy, happiness on all levels of your being, this open, relaxed attitude of "letting it be" eventually opens these centers if the degree of openness is sufficiently strong.

PL 170

More extensive materials are available today on the energy centers (chakras) than when the lecture was delivered in 1969. Brennan trained as a Pathwork Helper with Eva Pierrakos, and as a Core Energetic Therapist with John Pierrakos, before starting her own school and writing Hands of Light ©1983. The school offers online classes, in-person workshops, and a 4-year program on spiritual healing.. See <https://barbarabrennan.com/>

Additional references that might be useful:

Rev. Roslyn Bruyere, <http://www.rosalynbruyere.org/> author of Wheels of Light

Caroline Myss <https://www.myss.com/free-resources/>

[YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com/) offers hundreds of explanatory videos on chakras.

Understanding chakras is one way of distinguishing pleasure from bliss, in that. pleasure is experienced via the lower 3 chakras; the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of human life on the earth plane. Bliss is the natural state on the spiritual plane, and is represented by the upper 3 chakras which mirror the lower 3 on the level of the divine.

The 4th or middle chakra, the heart, represents the bridge between earth and spirit. In this sense, opening our hearts to relationship – both human and divine – is an opportunity to transition from pleasure into bliss.

Exercise 3c: Consider that all your relationships create a bridge between your human life, where both pleasure and un-pleasure are experienced, and your divine essence or spark, where bliss is the natural state of being, ‘a state of deep knowing that all is well in the universe.’

Study Guide © Jan Rigsby: 2021

Guide Quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999

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

Week 4: Distinguishing Bliss from Pleasure Using the Energy Centers

[Understanding chakras is one way of distinguishing pleasure from bliss, in that, pleasure is experienced via the lower 3 chakras; the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of human life on the earth plane. Bliss is the natural state on the spiritual plane, and is represented by the upper 3 chakras which mirror the lower 3 on the level of the divine. The 4th or middle chakra, the heart, represents the bridge between earth and spirit. In this sense, opening our hearts to relationship – both human and divine – is an opportunity to transition from pleasure into bliss.]

Excerpted from Light Emerging by Barbara Brennan

The 1st level of the Human Energy Field is that of the physical. If your first level is strong, you will have a very strong, healthy physical body and enjoy all the pleasurable physical sensations that go with it. This includes the pleasure of feeling your body, the feelings of vitality, of physical activity, physical contact, sex, and sleeping. It includes the pleasures of tasting, smelling, listening and seeing. This means you will most likely continue to use all the functions of your first level, thereby keeping it charged and healthy. Using it will tend to recharge it.

The 2nd level of the Human Energy Field is associated with your feelings or emotions about yourself. Every energy movement there correlates to a feeling you are having about yourself. If the second layer is strong and charged, you enjoy your emotional relationship to yourself. This means that you have a lot of feelings about yourself, but they are not bad. It means that you like and love yourself. You enjoy being with yourself and feel comfortable with yourself.

If both your first and second levels are strong and charged, you will love yourself and feel good about yourself when you are also enjoying all they physical pleasures that you body brings to you.

The 3rd level of the Human Energy field is associated with our mental or rational world. If your 3rd level is strong and charged, you will have a strong, clear mind that serves you well. You will have an active healthy mental life and be interested in learning.

If your 1st and 2nd levels are weak and your 3rd is strong and energized, you will tend to be someone who lives more in the mind than in your feelings or body. You will be more interested in problem solving by reasoning things out than by considering your feelings in any decision. This will automatically limit your life experience.

The first three levels of the aura represent the physical, emotional, and mental experience of our world in the physical body. The 4th level of relationship represents the bridge between the physical and spiritual worlds. The higher three levels represent our physical, emotional, and mental experience of our spiritual world. They are the templates for the three lower levels. Each higher level serves as a pattern for the corresponding lower level.

The 4th level of the Human Energy Field carries our whole world of relationships. From this level, we interact with other people, animals, plants, inanimate objects, the earth, the sun, the stars, and the universe as a whole. It is the level of the 'I-Thou' connection. Here are all our feelings about each other. The 4th level contains all the love and joy, as well as all the struggle and pain, of relationship. The more we interact with someone, the more energetic connections we make with that person. If you have a strong, healthy, and charged 4th level, you will tend to have a lot of strong good relationships with others. Your friends and family will make up a big and important part of your life. Love and your heart are foremost in your life.

The 5th level of the Human Energy Field is the level of divine will. The personal experience of this level is the most difficult to explain, because we lack the words in our vocabulary to describe it. This divine will exists within you and all around you. You have free will to either align yourself with this divine will or not. Divine will is a template or pattern for the great evolutionary plan of humanity and the universe. This template is alive, pulsating, and constantly unfolding. It has a powerful, almost inexorable feeling of will and purpose. To experience it is to experience perfect order.

If you are aligned with divine will, your 5th level will be strong, full of energy. It's pattern will fit the universal pattern of divine will, a pattern that can be 'seen' with High Sense Perception on this level. You will feel your power and connectedness with all that is around you because you will be in your place with your purpose and synchronized with all places and purposes. If your 5th level is strong, you know order as a universal principle.

If, on the other hand, you are not aligned with divine mind, the pattern of the lurid field on your 5th level will be distorted. It will not fit with the great universal pattern, and you will not feel connected to what is around you. It will feel as if someone is going to lay a trip on you and defend your place for you.

If your 2nd and 4th levels are weak, and the 1st, 3rd, and 5th are strong, you may very well overpower your creative freedom with a dictatorial form of order. Contemplation on the 5th level and meditation on the great evolutionary plan help greatly to align your life with its purpose and ease your development. It means surrendering to who you are, not to what seems right according to social norms.

The 6th level of the Human Energy Field is the level of feelings within the world of our spirit; it is the level of our divine love. Sitting in this level of conscious awareness brings a great calming effect to the body for healing. It contains the ecstasy within our spirituality. It is experienced as spiritual love, as joy, elation, and bliss. We reach this level of experience by silencing the noisy mind and listening. We reach it through meditation, through religious or fine music, chanting or reverie. Here are great feelings of expansion where we commune in brotherhood with all the beings of the spiritual worlds of various heavens as well as all of humanity, plants, and animals of the earth. Here each of us is like the halo around a candle. We are mother-of-pearl opalescent light beams stretching out from a central light.

If your 6th level is much stronger than all the other levels, you may use spiritual experience to avoid life in the physical. You may develop a childish view of life and expect life to take care of you as if you lived only in the spiritual world. You may use these experiences to make yourself special and prove that you are better than others because you have them.

The 7th level of the Human Energy Field is the level of divine mind. When it is healthy and we bring our conscious awareness to this level, we experience divine mind within us and enter into the world of the universal divine mind field. Here we understand and know that we are a part of the great pattern of life. Experiencing this truth of the universe makes us feel very safe. Here we know perfection within our imperfections. If your 7th level is stronger than the rest, you may have the problem of making all your creative ideas practical.

Light Emerging © 1993 by Barbara Brennan