

## Fear of Bliss vs. Longing for It

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

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**Week 1: Fear of Bliss**

**Week 2: Three Levels of Fear**

**Week 3: Facing Our NO to Bliss**

**Week 4: Accepting Truth = Accepting Happiness**

### Week 1: Fear of Bliss

No matter how unhappy he is, something in man knows and remembers that this is not the natural way of being. **Indeed, if this inner knowledge would not exist, he could accept a state of frustration and lack with much less strain and disturbance.**

For the very nature of unhappiness is frustration -- the absence of something that should be there. And the very nature of frustration is not being in possession of something other than what one has now. Therefore each unhappiness implicitly holds out the promise or knowledge of an opposite state.

I know that it is extremely difficult to comprehend and to sense this fear of the most longed for, the most cried after state in life to him who is not yet deeply involved with the nature of the human unconscious. To him, this sounds truly preposterous, and he may first cast such an idea completely aside.

Of course, offhand, everyone is totally unaware of the fact that he does fear what he wants most. The further away the object of the longing, the easier it is to overlook the fear of it. But when it comes closer and man truly questions his deepest reactions, he will find *an inner movement that closes up, that shrinks from it*. This may be so subtle that it needs close scrutiny to bring it out into the open.

Every single human being, born in this place, in this sphere of consciousness, has to some degree this apparently nonsensical fear. At the same time, there is an inherent longing for man's true birthright, which is a state of supreme bliss, sublime joy quite indescribable in human language.

Once you find this, you have made a tremendous step in the direction of selfhood and liberation. For you are then in the incredible awareness of the reality of life -- that your attitudes, your hidden thoughts and emotions, and nothing else, create your fate and your state of existence. This discovery has a revolutionary impact on the individual.

Not knowing this makes the tension and suffering infinitely greater. Not knowing this, one feels a victim of hazard, and this increases fear, insecurity, and distrust, against which one thinks one must defend the self, thereby becoming still further alienated from the center of inner truth and reality.

One begins to displace and project the causes onto the outside world, with less and less relief. No matter how true some of the blames one launches against others may be, they never

remove the suffering. No matter how much one can bend others to comply with one's desires, this never removes the lack, the emptiness, the flatness one suffers from.

Thus humanity is ambivalent first of all regarding its basic state of experiencing life. All other ambivalence follows from this, the desire for and the fear of bliss, happiness, joy, pleasure supreme.

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**Exercise 1a:** Since it is hard to believe that you would be afraid of bliss, it will be important for you to find the truth of this for yourself. List moments of bliss that you have experienced (however briefly) along with examples of your goals, dreams, and aspirations.

- a. Include what you believe would *fulfill* you, societally, financially, among family and friends, and in your inner spiritual life.
- b. Include what would give you *pleasure* in each of these areas.
- c. Imagine what personal *expansion* would feel /look like in each aspect.

**Exercise 1b:** Probe with depth, honesty, and openness your most subtle reactions to fulfillment, to pleasure, to expansion.

- a. Notice where you fear stepping into this fulfillment, pleasure and expansion.
- b. Notice any belief that even the slightest amount of risk would be involved.
- c. *Feel* and *sense* whether you are too distrustful to step into a more fulfilled, more pleasurable, more expansive life. Feel your self-rejection, your fear of being judged for even reaching out to Bliss.

**Exercise 1c:** Act this out physically. Select an inanimate object to represent one of the goals, joys, or area of personal growth you seek.

- a. Walk towards it, one step at a time.
- b. Notice where you physically cringe back, preferring to stay in the *apparently* greater safety of gray life. Do this several times over a few days with each of the goals, dreams, and aspirations you listed, as it may take a while to become aware of small muscular contractions that indicate *'anything but this...'*

### 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 2.0 PL 28**

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

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

Daily Review				
DATE	SITUATION	REACTION	BEHAVIOR/ RESPONSE	JUDGMENT
	Facts/Circumstances of Disturbance	Feelings, thoughts, emotions	How You Acted (Exaggerated/Minimized)	Affirmed/Negated My Belief That...
10/01/20	Late for work	Fear/anxiety about job	Yelled at kids	I'm a bad mom
10/01/20	Fight re dinner cleanup	Felt let down by family	Didn't speak for hours	People are inconsiderate

Graphic created by Shakila F.

## Week 2: Three Levels of Fear

Bliss is frightening. In most instances, you are totally unaware of this fear. And you are equally unaware of the fact that you cut, in some manner, the movement, and stop it, and prevent the further expansion. This concerns, of course, your personal lives just as much as the life of the community and the venture in which you are all engaged in together as a whole. The movement is frightening as long as you feel undeserving of bliss.

Bliss in which you do not have the direct control of mind and will of the conscious level seems threatening and frightening. It is very often a condition in you that happens, as a conditioned reflex, where you cut the flow, you cut the movement, you cut the feeling of bliss.

You do this by, in one manner or another (and now we reach the next level of manifestation, an effect of this—by producing some negativity). You either interpret certain events in a certain way so as to feel justified in a stopping, resisting, angry halt, or you deny that the halt exists, or you create a situation in which you believe yourself unduly injured, misunderstood, and so on and so forth. These are the general patterns.

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**Exercise 2a:** Find your fear of Bliss. Notice where you cut off the flow of energy, cut the movement, cut the feelings when they become intense. Notice justifications and denials, any claims of being injured or misunderstood. Find these places with love and respect for your voluntary process of self-transformation.

### 1. When Desire is Stronger than Fear

With some human beings, the fear is much less than the desire. These will be relatively and proportionately fulfilled people whose life is rich, whose state of being is joyful, whose capacity to feel and experience pleasure is deep, whose attitude to life is trustful, positive, and expanding. *For these individuals, it will be comparatively easy to work on and overcome the remaining blocks, defenses, and fears that shut off further expansion into blissful being.*

### 2. When Fear is Stronger than Desire

Many human beings, however, fear happiness much more than they desire it. They will be basically unhappy people who must feel that life passes them by, that it is meaningless, empty, hollow, wasteful, that they miss out in some way. Their capacity to experience and feel pleasure is very limited; they are numb, lifeless, and caught in apathy. They are basically distrustful, negative, and withdrawn from life. The resistance to look for the cause of their suffering within themselves is great, and so are their defenses, their blocks, and their fear of expanding into a different state of consciousness and perception of life. They hang on desperately to the very state of their consciousness that is responsible for their complaints against life. This is their main predicament. *They are the majority.*

### 3. When Fear and Desire are Evenly Divided

Finally, there are many individuals whose desire for and fear of happiness is approximately evenly divided. They will find areas in their life in which they experience abundance, expansion, gratification, success, and fulfillment, but there will be other areas in which they experience the

opposite. The deeper and more honestly they would probe, the more it would become apparent that -- exactly as in a mathematical equation -- where they are happy, free, unafraid, there is fulfillment, and where they are afraid of the best in life, there is unfulfillment.

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**Exercise 2b:** Different aspects of your life may reflect different balances between fear and desire. Using the areas of life you explored in 1a, quantify the balance of fear vs. desire for each.

Do the descriptions about different levels of fear (1,2,3 above) match your experiences?

If not, consider if the actual balance is not what you think it is.

Compare your *actual* experiences with the other descriptions.

### **Fear of Bliss has Consequences**

As long as you are removed from the cause in you that closes you up against what you consciously wish most, and are most unhappy about not to experience, --

-- You must feel life is futile.

-- You must feel helpless and unable to do what is necessary to remove the pain of nonfulfillment.

-- You must teeter between self-pity and bitterness, between projection onto others and life for your misfortune on one hand, and distorted self-blame and a sense of not deserving the best of life on the other.

Knowing and experiencing your own rejection of pleasure is the beginning to remove this block. Yet, invariably, man fights this truth at first with all his might. It seems that he prefers to remain dependent on outer circumstances, although the acceptance of this great truth of his utter personal freedom is the most joyful of all discoveries along the path -- once truly seen, accepted, and understood in its full impact.

One then sees indeed that there lies the only way out. The beautiful reality of this independence cannot be conveyed to him who still battles it.

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**Exercise 2c:** Notice if you have experienced the consequences of Fear of Bliss, even though you are not conscious of that fear? Notice in what areas of your life you are subject to feelings of futility, helplessness, impotence about your own fulfillment; self pity, bitterness, projection / blame and self-rejection.

Rejoice in the knowledge and strive toward the realization of and the knowing of the truth that there is nothing to fear in life or in what is commonly called death, that there's only life abundant. And the only thing that can temporarily and apparently limit your life and your bliss is your own false belief. And you have nothing to fear by meeting these false beliefs so as to exchange them. Do not fear what is within you. Strive toward what is within you by using all the tools that are given to you. Do not neglect a single one, for every minute sooner you come to an inkling of this understanding is that more bliss that is waiting for you.

*Questions and Answers* PL 127QA

### **Week 3: Facing Our NO to Bliss**

Often when man senses that somehow there is more to life than he experiences, he puts such thoughts away and adopts a cynical, resigned philosophy of life. But you, my friends, who are here, must somehow sense that you can materialize more out of life than you do.

#### **Search for where you say No.**

The more strained, the more compulsive, the more urgent, the more impatient the outer striving for fulfillment is, the more certain you can be that underneath is just as rigid a no as the surface urgent yes.

The surface urge is just as much a hindrance as the inner no, because it consists of fear and distrust, born out of the unconscious knowledge that inwardly the yes is blocked off.

However, I want to make clear that the absence of urgency and strain toward fulfillment does not imply the absence of an unconscious block. This may merely imply a different personality structure; it may mean that the person has given up. When there is a painful, anxious urge, it can relax only when you find your own specific, your personal saying no to what you want most.

**Exercise 3a:** Invite your NO to come out and play! Start saying No, just for practice. Gradually sense into the pleasure and sense of power that comes from withholding and blocking,  
Notice where you feel an impulse to say NO that you are unwilling to make public.

#### **Denial is a way to avoid saying No**

I must come back once more to the difficulty of the personality when he is still in the state in which he ignores his own denial of his desires. I mentioned the helplessness before. I mentioned the frictions and constrictions when the blame for the lack is projected onto outside circumstances or other people, the deep entanglements and confusions that this creates. I must particularly stress once more the dependency that this creates.

If you ignore your own inner obstructions and believe that others or fate is the cause, you cannot help but live in a state of tension and fear in regard to others and life. This brings any number of disturbances and distortions too numerous to go into now. If you tie this up with practically all I ever said to you about human predicaments, conditions, and the dynamics of the soul, you will see that the determining factor is the awareness of one's own obstructions. You will comprehend the true meaning of self-responsibility.

**Exercise 3b:** Denial may be invisible, but it takes a lot of energy to sustain. Notice when and where you tense up so that you can control and regulate your energy, even if no conscious thoughts seem to be attached to the process. Invite those thoughts to chat!

What do they have to say? What part of you are they working with / for?

#### **Why we Reject Bliss**

Why does man say this mysterious no to the fulfillment of his deepest desires, the longing for the most intense bliss imaginable. What makes happiness apparently dangerous or undesirable?

To the extent you reject yourself, to that extent you cannot bear happiness; you cannot sustain feelings of joy, bliss, or pleasure. Reasons for self-rejection are basically two fundamental ones. All self-rejection must fall into either of these two categories or a combination of them.

**Self-Rejection #1: We reject our pretenses.** As you already know, there is a very exacting mechanism in you which, regardless of your conscious rationalizations and self-deceptive devices, knows with an inner wisdom exactly where you violate universal laws, where you cheat on life and perhaps try to get more than you wish to give -- where you play those hidden little games of deceptions, of dramatization and pretenses with others and yourself; where you do not dare to be your real self as you happen to be now; where you do not love but pretend to love, for your own ulterior motives.

**Self-Rejection #2: We reject the human condition.** The second reason for self-rejection is *imaginary* violation, according to illusory standards of perfection. Perfectionistic ideals are, as you know, extremely demanding, rigid, and strict. The adherence to them does not stem from an overdose of morality but implies a violation of real universal laws in itself. For the reasons are always pride, vanity, the need to control others, pretense, living for the sake of appearance and making an impression, and, last but not least, fear of standing up for one's own ideas, feelings, and opinions -- in short, not being true to the self, for one is greedy for admiration and approval by others. Whenever you do not accept your humanity, your present limitations, you violate a universal law. In doing so, the "climactic conditions" of the psyche, if I may use this expression, are incompatible with the state of bliss that you long for.

This may all seem very simple, but it is not as simple or easy as it may appear. For the hidden self, rejection and the hidden reasons for it are very obscure when one starts on such a path. Usually people are only aware of what they pretend to be, pretend to themselves. If they cannot bear certain emotions, which are locked away, they genuinely believe that whatever they feel and know about themselves is all there is to them.

Therefore it is not easy or speedy to find out how you really operate. It requires a new emphasis in a new direction, a new tuning in on and becoming aware of your emotional reactions you were so accustomed to glossing over and not paying attention to. The awareness of your violations of universal laws will also reveal, commensurately, the awareness of the rejection of happiness.

**Exercise 3c:** To the degree you feel that there is still something amiss in your life, or when you vaguely feel that you could have more feelings, experience more intensely, then proceed specifically in the direction outlined in this lecture.

1. Find what you do not accept in yourself, what you do not like and close your eyes to. Find that obscure, hidden, and yet available reaction which wards off pleasure.
2. Cultivate a purposeful willingness to see whatever it may be that still eludes you.

You will experience, step by step in the discovery of the areas where you push yourself away, that as you consequently cease doing that, you will become better equipped to sustain happiness, to "bear" happy feelings. You will develop this very fine awareness in which you first observe yourself in a very subtle inner soul movement, an inner attitude toward yourself when something good comes along, that you shrink away from it.

As you discover this, you will then weaken the rage with which you blame others, circumstances, people, life itself. And this already removes a poisonous atmosphere in your psychic organism that is totally alien to and incompatible with the bliss that is, by right, your inner home.

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There are generally two rationalizations that are taking place on the still outer level, on the so-called psychological level of behavior:

1. Transference situations, rebelling against authority, feeling the need to say no to an authority.
2. Ego involvement of requiring appreciation and praise -- and when this is not forthcoming, feeling very injured about it.

All of this are artificial creations; they are artifacts. They are resorted to for the inner reason that you feel and want to be disconnected from that part that says, *"I do not deserve it. And the fullness and abundance and bliss of the experience are, therefore, threatening to me."*

**Exercise 3d:** Ask yourself: *"Am I threatened by bliss, abundance, and movement? Can I connect with that feeling?"* Consider: *"If I can connect with that feeling, I can stop the justifications, and I truly want to know that this is what I am doing."*

Emphasize in your meditations, *"I would like to know, experience, and feel what I really feel"* -- about whatever the issue may be, whatever the mood of the day or the moment.

Beware of either talking yourself out of it by suspecting an irrationality, or talking yourself into it by building a case. Both imply a too active mind. Let the mind be passive and gently, gently let the feeling come up -- whatever it may be. The calmer you are and the more relaxed and intently you "listen" to the nature of your feeling, the more it will be the original feeling, not the cover, not the result of denying the original one

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The original state is not pain but *pleasure*, not suffering but *joy*, not deadness but *life*, not hopelessness but *forever expanding rich abundance of life*.

All these desirable facts of life cannot be forced into a self. If they are to be real and enduring, they must come naturally, organically, and spontaneously as a result of not flinching away from what is now, from what one really feels. This takes place as a very gradual process, gradual in proportion and to the degree the actual sensations and feelings are experienced, without either denying or exaggerating them (both amount to the same thing). Thus you awaken your spiritual center, which will fill your entire being. You will be filled with a sense of being safe, with strong, beautiful new feelings and also eventually with new knowledge, new insight, new perceptions and intuitions -- and even quite new faculties.

They will spring from deep within, filling you with the sense that they are truly you, not pretenses or faculties whose manifestations depend on others or on circumstances outside your control. You will gain understanding based on completely different dynamics than the understanding you produce in this artificial process of fitting any feeling you allow yourself into a superstructure of explanation and reasoning. Seeing these superstructures as spiritual forms, we see how most human beings go around with huge lopsided forms growing out of their subtle bodies, which cause such heaviness. They must be dissolved in the process of evolving.

[\*Evolutionary Phases of Feelings and Emotions\*](#) PL 165

## Week 4: Accepting Truth = Accepting Happiness

It is therefore one and the same: when the individual accepts the truth about himself, and accepts happiness. These two "acceptances" are interchangeable, interactive, and interdependent. And a third point, making it a triad ( part of this interactive nucleus) is the realization of the powerful creative substance which molds your life as nothing else does.

There is nothing hazardous about your life. There is no outside power that determines the extent of your fulfillment, the extent of your fruitful life experience or the pain, suffering, and frustration you have to bear.

It is not even necessarily a case of self-punishment, as it is currently interpreted. The violation of spiritual law within the psychic organism simply creates a climate ill equipped to "endure" blissful, joyous feelings.

Also, ignoring the truth, being oblivious of what you are and do and the ramifications of your attitudes, the fact that you are not in possession of the awareness of the power at your disposal that is contained in your mere thinking and feeling process, all this ignorance creates the obstruction.

For example, if you do not believe it is possible to be truly happy, it becomes indeed impossible. So the problem has to be solved in this respect by cultivating this inner knowledge. And this in turn is only feasible by losing the fear of self-responsibility and facing the entire truth about who you are at this moment.

Any truth of yourself and the nature of creation results in inner security, trust, fearlessness. Ignorance creates fear. Fear creates an inner atmosphere of closing, and your mind will not use the powerful substance to create more expansion, but rather more tightly shut defenses.

**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.

This fear of bliss is experienced by the soul who is still self-rejecting, feels undeserving and therefore creates negativity. It works both ways: self-rejection is at the bottom of this kind of creation, artificial creation that justifies a negative interaction and an obstruction of the movement.

There are, generally, two rationalizations on a still outer level, the so-called psychological level of behaviour. One is a transference situation, rebellion against authority, feeling the need to say no to an authority. And the other is the ego involvement of requiring appreciation and praise; and when this is not forthcoming, feeling very injured about it. All of these are artificial creations. They are artifacts. They are resorted to for the inner reason that you feel and want to be disconnected from that part that says, *"I do not deserve it, and the fullness and abundance and bliss of experience are therefore threatening to me."*



When you become doubtful and confused, when you fluctuate between what to do and how to do it, and you rationalize each alternative, I recommend a twofold way of handling them. Be aware of what I just explained, and ask yourself: *"Am I threatened by bliss, abundance and movement? Can I connect with that feeling? If I can connect with that feeling I can stop justifications, and I truly want to know that this is what I am doing."*

The second suggestion is to go much more often into your innermost being, into the will of God about this or that specific issue. Whenever you do so, you immediately (or almost immediately) arrive at beautiful feelings, and at a unification that eliminates the conflicts, quarrels, the forced injuries, and so on. You will very soon feel how unnecessarily you produce all that, in order to disconnect from the fact that you are frightened and feel undeserving.

But once you acknowledge this, you can immediately go into the next step and stretch beyond that limited stance and say, *"The will of God will guide me, and I can deserve, I do deserve. I want to give my most sincere good will to this particular issue as to all other issues. Therefore I can trust the movement where I am moved by a force that is greater than myself. I need not fear it. I do not need to control it."*

Speaking such words will create the commensurate energy. Open your heart and your mind and your vision to the beauty that surrounds you. This is not so easily done as said, for you all know, as you become more self-observant, how difficult it is to stand intense pleasure. And the pleasure of nature, the beauty of the universe as it surrounds you, a life of which you are a part, is intensely joyous and blissful.

*Q&As about the Center: Nature, Expansion, The Children* PL 243

### **Bliss, pleasure, and fulfillment require the greatest of all strengths.**

Bliss, pleasure, and fulfillment require the greatest of all strengths. Unhappiness requires much less strength than happiness. This strength can only be generated if the divine powers within the self are actually, deliberately, and concisely stimulated, activated, called upon to help you in a state of bliss so as to become better equipped to sustain it, to guide you specifically that you do not inadvertently, unconsciously by dint of the deeply imprinted mechanisms, close up against happiness.

This prayer is very necessary, at least as much as seeking contact with the divine powers when you are in upheaval and crisis. When unhappy, it is important to make a meaningful lesson out of the occasion so as to effect further growth. This requires contact with the innate superior forces. When happy, it is important to become compatible with the universal powers and sustain this state. This too requires help and guidance.

PL 170

**Exercise 4a:** Create a brief self-prayer that calls upon your inner divine powers. 1 or 2 sentences will be enough. Say it to yourself several times a day over several days. Notice how it affects you.

Notice any demand that such prayers be provided, approved of, or produce outer result

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