

The Universal Functioning Principle Of Growth Dynamics

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 178

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

Week 1: Inner Life Force Propels Growth

Week 2: Four Phases of Growth, as a Cumulative Process

Week 3: Negative Creations and Directions

Week 4: The Unified Theory

Week 5: Mastering Misconceptions; Cause and Effect

Week 1: Inner Life Force Propels Growth

Greetings and blessings for everyone here, for every single individual who attempts, who searches, who gropes, and who struggles for inner unity. Everyone who is here is motivated, consciously or unconsciously, by this inner urge.

This urge is a pull of the life force. The life force contains this push, which motivates people into certain directions. They may not even be aware of the deep meaning of this inner push, nor even that it exists. Many people experience a vague inner urgency but do not know its meaning. This urgency can be consciously experienced by everyone at one time or another.

Anyone who finds his way toward a committed path such as this, in which the deepest problems are sought to be resolved and the dormant potentials realized, has made this urge quite conscious.

Others are still grappling with the vagueness of this urge, without really knowing what the inner unrest signifies. Individuals who steadily disregard the clamoring of this inner voice, contained in the life force itself, often come to deep crises in their lives. Many a crisis can only be properly understood when this deepest urge is recognized.

PL 178

Exercise 1a: Reading this study guide is *de facto* evidence that you are searching for something. Spend some time recalling as many incidents as you can of this urge, this push, to understand... something....

Collect these remembrances into a brief timeline. Notice how far back it extends, how the urgency increased over time, and the variety of experiences this need has attracted / created / propelled you into.

Exercise 1b: Daily Review PL 28 is a way to remember events that, by themselves, don't seem particularly important or relevant. It can be written or done whenever you have a few moments for self-reflection; meditating, bathing, walking/commuting, or while doing simple or routine tasks.

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

Dynamic Growth = the spontaneous unification that occurs in the process of growth.

All life is to some degree a growth process. Again, it is either quite deliberate and committed, or it is a haphazard, unconscious attempt, obstructed by the opposite blind forces that pull backwards into a state of stagnation.

Let us first get a concept of the real meaning of growth. Usually people do not think profoundly enough when they speak of such things as growth, life, death, love, pleasure, etc. The concepts have become flat. This is why we must restate and restate certain terms, to fill in the meaning.

Growth is not merely an event in which an organism becomes bigger. Growth is of course also an expansion, but in a particular sense. It implies mastering something that one was unable to master before. Something either inside the self or in its surroundings that presented an obstruction before becomes part of the realm of the self after the obstruction is mastered.

PL 178

Exercise 1c: *Uncovering subconscious thoughts, opinions, beliefs about growth.*

What does growth mean to you? Make a list, or use the technique of a word cloud (see below) of what comes into your consciousness.

Spend at least 15 minutes on this, without interruption or distractions. Include thoughts, feelings, images, memory fragments. Also include any comments about growth that float into this thought process (and note the source of that 'voice': parent? Schoolteacher? Pastor? The opinions of current or past companions? An immature aspect of you?). No matter how bizarre or unrelated these may seem in the moment, all of these may form a cumulative impression about growth that influences your conscious thought process

Word Cloud

This technique is often used to discover common interests or themes in groups. It encourages free-association. As an example, I entered the lecture text from the 1st section of this study guide into the sample text box, and got this result. Doing this on your own, write one word, then others as they 'pop' into your consciousness, varying the size and placement to match your feelings:

These two samples were generated by AI software on 2 different sites:

<https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatewordcloud> and

<https://www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/>

by entering the 4 paragraphs / 190 words from the 1st section of this study guide. Try writing a few sentences, and notice what associations are created. Then, create your own word cloud!



Week 2: Growth as a Cumulative Process

This lecture can only be fully understood as a sequence of all lectures given this year [PL 178 was given in December 1969, their 'working season' began in September] I shall briefly recapture these various steps. Offhand, these topics may appear to be unconnected with one another. Yet, when you follow through with a deeper understanding, you cannot fail to perceive the link and the organic sequence between them. [Download the lectures at www.pathwork.org]

1. *Consciousness PL 175*: In the first, we were dealing with the creative process itself, with the creating of positive or negative life circumstances that every human being deliberately or unintentionally follows through by his very being -- by what he believes, thinks, wills, feels, aspires. I have shown that living and being inevitably means creating, for the life substance is constantly being molded by every expression of the conscious and unconscious being of an individual.

In relation to this particular lecture on the dynamics of growth and unification, it is self-evident that the person who ventures forth into life in the spirit of overcoming disunity creates an altogether different life than he who contents himself in narrow confines.

2. *The Overcoming of Negativity PL 176*: In the second lecture, I discussed the importance of man's negativity and how it creates misery, failure, discontent -- yet how difficult it seems to abandon it since the creative process is holding a fascination over the person.

In connection with the present lecture, I have discussed the creation of negativity and a narrowly confined life that continually turns and revolves around itself, negativity that creates disunity rather than unity, pain rather than pleasure. In connection with the dynamics of spontaneous unification and growth processes, it is up to an individual's inner commitment and decision to create a wider life, a unified life, bliss and pleasure rather than a narrow life, disunity, pain.

3. *Pleasure – The Full Sensation of Life PL 177*: With regard to the third lecture on pleasure and its importance in creation, it is self-evident, when considering the content of this present lecture, that pleasure is possible only in a unified, expanding, ever enlarging state.

These words are only a blueprint from which you can work and attempt more and more spontaneous unification out of disunity, and more disunity after a limited unity that brings further, wider, and more differentiated disunity to work through and to mend so as to obtain wider, deeper, and more undifferentiated unity, and so on and on -- so that your life expands and you become more and more master where you are now weak, helpless, dependent; so that you become more and more blissful where you are now in pain; so that you become more and more in truth where you are now in error. Error, pain and suffering, helplessness, stagnation, and disunity are one unit. And pleasure, growth, unification, and expansion are another.

May you make your choice over and over again. Commit yourself to your choice over and over again -- to that which is truth, to that which is love, to that which is growth. Be the God you truly are.

PL 178

Exercise 2a: Consider the relevance of these topics to the dynamics of growth, whether or not you decide to review them in depth. [Study Guides: <https://www.janrigsby.org/pathwork-lectures-150-199>]

Voluntary and Involuntary Functions

All growth function must combine the voluntary and the involuntary functions. If the emphasis is not equally distributed, growth cannot really proceed harmoniously.

The finished product of growth appears effortlessly. It is a manifestation of the involuntary faculties, which respond to the voluntary ones. The voluntary faculties do require effort in many ways. Effort in persistence and perseverance, in groping and searching, in trying out forever new modalities until they all fit, in self-testing, in removing defenses and vanity, in mastering courage and truthfulness with the self. All this is effort.

Discovering a new dimension of life cannot occur without birth pains, which are primarily sustained effort in order to test different approaches and new ways to finally accomplish the unification. I speak of birth pains not merely allegorically, for each new unification is a little bit of a spiritual rebirth. For birth is always a rediscovery of the self, the self in a new form with more faculties revealed and activated. Every new skill attained is, in a sense, a rebirth. It is the discovery of a new realm of life through the discovery of a new faculty in the self. It bridges the previous chasm which was caused by the lack of that skill.

PL 178

Exercise 2b: Everyone has experienced effortless change, vs. change that required significant effort. Recall different examples of these, and consider – what made them so different?

However, after the effort has been made, when actual unification of the result of growth finally occurs, it happens involuntarily. It seems to happen by itself, as it were. It seems to have nothing to do with the previous efforts. This can, in fact, be so deceptive that people can be deluded into believing it would have happened anyway and all the effort could have been spared.

Yet when the result is *expected*, as direct visible manifestation of the voluntary faculties, such expectation becomes frustrating and discouraging. It applies to meditation, which must combine the two sides, and to the most mundane acquisition of a new skill.

The effort of the voluntary faculties also includes a right attitude towards the voluntary and the involuntary functions. This balance must constantly be groped for. The groping itself must be tested out; it must attain the right balance between poised effort and discipline, while yet being relaxed. Each step of growth, each victory over conflict, confusion, ignorance, and helplessness represents a new skill and mastery over life, a new unification, first of all within the person and consequently between the person and life.

The voluntary and involuntary functions are, in reality, not separate. They are separated only due to your own splitting off in consciousness. But in reality, it is all one and the same -- one and the same consciousness, one and the same faculty of power, of intelligence, of creativity, of knowing, of flowing. That is the reality. Yet in your present state of awareness and in your human limited frame, you seem to be dealing with two entirely different faculties and two entirely different "brains": the inner and the outer, the conscious and the unconscious, the directly available and the indirectly available.

PL 178

Exercise 2c: What kinds of skills and tasks do you expect / have you expected to be effortless?

Learning to Trust Involuntary Processes

When one's universe is being enlarged by attempting unifications of painful disunity and conflict, trust in the involuntary functions is essential. This trust can be gained only slowly.

For everyone starts out by not having experienced it yet. Thus you must give yourself the opportunity to experience it. All the necessary effort will be wasted if the involuntary functions are not allowed to manifest. They cannot manifest or be recognized when the consciousness does not make room for them, and then pay attention in a relaxed, calm, patient, and trusting way. This is a vital part of the growth procedure.

When you realize that your efforts cannot bring a direct result, but an unexpected, spontaneous, dynamic one, perhaps when you least expect it, and you wait with an inner readiness, then harmony between the voluntary and involuntary faculties will establish itself in principle.

Hence, the harmony between the voluntary and involuntary faculties exists primarily in making room for both in your attitude, awareness, expectation, outlook, and activity. It requires your intuitive groping for how and when you combine and alternate these two functions.

PL 178

Exercise 2d: Recall some examples of 'spontaneous' change or results. Include minor incidents, such as straining to remember a name or song title, or realizing where you mis-laid an item.

Four Phases of Growth

Each phase of a human being's life signifies a new venturing out into new territory that has not been mastered before. The same applies to an entity's overall evolution, from one incarnation into the other, and later on into further stages of being and creating. The sequence is always the same:

	Four Phases of Growth	Example: a baby learning to walk
1	The inability is taken for granted and not even recognized as such	before the particular difficulty has been recognized as such, there is an unconscious helplessness and a sense of limitation. A child must envision walking before it can desire to do so.
2	It is recognized as an obstacle that could be overcome	the problem is recognized as a problem; eventually the baby recognizes that walking confers advantages, and that to get those advantages, their own body must be engaged / enlisted / managed
3	effort is taken to do so	the entity decides to do something about it, and envisages the possibility of resolving the disunity. He begins a path of struggle, of searching, of groping, of testing his faculties in various ways
4	Victory; the new possession of new faculties	a new unity will be attained, that grants a new power -- of life, and over life. Territory that was alien and inaccessible becomes home ground; they feel comfortable and at ease with themselves and life

This is growth. The possession of new home ground also gives a new security and peace. For the new power eliminates the old helplessness with its accompanying insecurity and fear.

PL 178

Exercise 2e: Apply these phases and stages to your experiences of growth and mastery. Notice what you have been able to learn quickly and easily, growing without much obvious effort, vs. what topics or life areas seem to take forever to master, and cause intense personal discomfort.

Week 3: Negative Creations and Directions

Negative creation is an ongoing process in every human being. For, if you were free from negative creation, if you were not negatively involved with creation, you would not be human; you would not live on this plane of consciousness, which expresses a certain degree of development.

Man creates constructively to quite an extent. But to varying degrees, negative creation is still ongoing in his psyche. This means that it is man's task on this sphere to struggle out of it and to free himself further and further from the ensnarlment of negativity.

There is no greater difference conceivable than between human beings -- **who know** that they create their own fate, that they wish to be negative, and no matter how undesirable it seems, they still want to retain this attitude of being negative, -- **and those who are ignorant of this fact.**
[The Overcoming of Negativity](#) PL 176

Exercise 3a: Even if you do not agree that you create your own fate, consider what that means in terms of having free will. That is, is *anything* possible if you cannot create your own fate?

A Four-Step Process for Overcoming Negativity

1. Find and determine and acknowledge and see and accept and observe your own negative attitudes, the destructive feelings, the subtle lies, the intention to cheat, the life defeating spiteful resistance to good feelings. All of these are negative creating.

2. Question, deep inside, your reaction, your feelings, to this negative production, whatever it may consist of in your particular case, as to its deliberate, chosen intent on your part. This acknowledgment is essential. Without it, you cannot grow out of suffering, nor can you reach the spiritual selfhood you long for. I would say one of the most difficult inroads on this path is to reach step two: to be fully aware of your own negative creating by destructive attitudes of your own choosing.

3. The exact consequences and ramifications of your negative production must be painstakingly worked through without taking any detail, any effect, any side effect for granted or glossing over it. The realization and precise understanding of its harmful effects on you and on others must become very clear. It must be seen that you cannot harm yourself without also harming others, no more than you can harm others without also harming you. This is not a law of retribution of a vindictive authority up in heaven. It is so because you are all, we are all, they are all, everyone is, the one universal self.

4. The actual process of recreation of soul substance. The more insight you have into the absolutely losing game you play with life when you hold on to the false role that covers up destructive attitudes, the more you will be motivated to give up all of this. Your will will be strengthened. This will lead you to the fourth step, which is the actual process of recreation of soul substance. By meditation, by prayer, by formulating deliberate thoughts of truth about this entire matter and impressing them onto your destructive psychic material, recreation begins and continues the more adept in it you become.

[The Overcoming of Negativity](#) PL 176

Exercise 3b: Use the 4 steps (above) to explore negativity in your current life circumstances. Notice if you feel more willing to claim responsibility if you feel able to change something.

Obstructions to Step 4, The actual process of recreation of soul substance

Let us assume you have already painstakingly gone through the suggested four steps in my lecture about negativity. When it comes to the fourth step, you are often obstructed by your vagueness with which you approach the spontaneous manifestation of the involuntary powers in you. Your not really believing in them weakens your assertion and your affirmation to want to have the positive attitude as opposed to the negative one. Or you want to give up your fear of and resistance to pleasure and give up the roles and pretenses that stand in the way. This wanting must be affirmed in calm trust, in firm conviction. At this point, the voluntary must make room for the involuntary until the indirect manifestation, the spontaneous unification will occur. You will let it happen by a relaxed and determined wanting it. This is the marriage of the voluntary and the involuntary, the active and the passive principles.

PL 178

Exercise 3c: While reviewing Step 4, use this meditation from PL 140 Transition to Positive Pleasure: *“I want to give up the negative. I want my pleasure to be attached to a positive situation. I want to be constructive. I want to give my attention to this situation and be governed by the most constructive forces.”* Verbalize how this helps— or, what your objections are about.

He said, “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams

If growth is seen in this light, a lot of fear and hopelessness and wasteful effort will be eliminated. You will have a more consolidated effort. At the same time, you will be less impatient with the time element that is involved in order to create the unifications where now disunity exists.

PL 178

Mastering Obstructions

By traversing the self-imposed narrow fences, you make more and more of the universe your own, thereby fulfilling your destiny.

When an obstruction is not mastered, a disunity is present, either within the self or between the self and the outside world. When growth has taken place, the disunity becomes unified. Hence, growth is always a unifying process. It always implies bridging a chasm, mastering a conflict, resolving a contradiction or an apparent contradiction. This applies to all levels of being.

Let us take a very simple example on the surface level of physical mastery.

When an infant begins to stand up and learns to walk, there is for this infant a disunity between its physical powers, the laws of gravity, and the world around. There seems to exist a contradiction or a split between the world and itself, as long as the ability to walk has not been acquired.

Once this has been accomplished, the disunity has disappeared. What was first a disparity has now become an extended field of operation of the entity in question. Its realm has been increased, it now possesses a new "piece" of the world it has not possessed before.

Thus the efforts of growth have brought expansion, increased range of being, more power and unity where, before, there was before limitation of power and range of being, as well as disunity.

Not learning to walk renders the entity helpless, dependent, and prevents bringing out its dormant potentials to walk and thus conquer the world in this particular respect. It creates a specific unhappiness, weakness, pain, and limitation, which are all overcome when the ability to walk has been acquired.

Exercise 3d: Come up with examples of your own. Do you remember learning to read? Multiply? Mastering fractions? Later events could include riding a bike, driving a car, operating complex machinery or gaining a mastery in any endeavor.

Reflect upon the changes in your attitude before gaining mastery vs. afterwards.

Apply this perspective to learning Pathwork concepts. Notice if you have internal demands about when mastery 'should' be achieved, and if you have specific expectations.

PL 178

Spontaneous Unification Occurs in Stages, Over Time

Along this road, the first appearance of effortless spontaneous unification will not remain so once and for all. It will disappear again because the unification has not yet been made total. New material, new aspects must still be sought, new attitudes must still be acquired, new mastery deepened and widened. Hence, more voluntary effort must follow suit until the second appearance of this specific unification spontaneously manifests. And then it must alternate again until the third, fourth, fifth appearance of spontaneous unification, of effortless, involuntary functioning is being made, until very gradually the new skill has become second nature and is incorporated into the personality.

Whether the acquisition of a new mastery applies to physical, mental, emotional, spiritual skills, it always means the overcoming of a rift, an imaginary rift, but nevertheless a deeply experienced and painful chasm. It always means that the illusory duality or disunity is finally bridged, has mended into its natural and real state.

Disunity is always painful, unpleasurable. Pleasure, which was the topic of the last lecture, always depends on unity. Expansion into life means a constant forward movement through which a hitherto alien and apparently hostile world becomes one's own home, so to speak. Each unification means you have made an apparently foreign aspect of the world your own world so that you have found new ease, new comfort, new experience in comfort, ease, and peace in the world through your efforts of unifying the rift.

It is exceedingly important to understand all this, my friends. You have often used the terms expansion, growth, experience, and so on, quite freely. But, as is so often the case, words are being used without the full understanding of what they convey on a deeper scope.

PL 178

Week 4: The Unified Theory

I frequently spoke in these lectures about the dualism of this earth sphere, or rather of this state of consciousness, as opposed to the unified principle of ultimate reality. This is what I meant:

*All of life is a progression to attain further unity
and eliminate more and more areas of disunity.*

Each new state of acquired unity is a safety zone, a new margin, a new home base, so to speak. As growth continues, hitherto undiscovered disunities are detected within this new home base. The entity then proceeds to venture forth into new territory again by attempting, groping, and struggling to unify the discovered disunity. And so it goes on until total unity is found.

It may even appear safer to remain in the old disunity than to venture forth into a new unity. But this appears to be so only because of the effort that is necessary.

If effort is perceived as something inorganic, something that "should not exist," it is experienced as malignant and undesirable. If it is perceived as a movement of life, it is experienced as challenging and pleasurable. In that attitude, the right distribution of effort and effortlessness, the right balance of voluntary and involuntary faculties will reveal itself.

PL 178

Exercise 4a: Express your attitude / relationship with 'making an effort' on the earth plane. Then use the same language and phrasing, substituting 'achieving unity'. Notice if you feel the same way towards both. Consider how being unenthusiastic about (or actively resistant to) unity might make you more receptive to dis-unitive ideas and thoughts (i.e., negativity).

Spontaneous Unification Feels Effortless

When the involuntary faculties finally manifest, the new skill has become, sometimes apparently quite suddenly, an effortless, natural part of the personality.

This applies to all levels of the person. On the physical level, anyone experiences the difference between the phase of the voluntary effort, the hard labor of practicing, learning, trying, and the naturalness when the skill suddenly becomes second nature. This can be noticed in a sport or on the mental level when a new attitude or new emotional responses have been acquired.

For example, when you first deal with a specific destructiveness, a particular negativity, it is impossible to change this at will. Instead, you must use your will in order to grope for a deeper understanding and recognition of the problem, for seeing its origin and its effects, for facing the results, for even really to want to change. All this is volitional.

Then, suddenly you register a new way of reacting in which you spontaneously react in a new constructive, positive way. This is spontaneous unification. Then it is no longer necessary to put laborious effort of thinking and willing into the new skill, the new attitude, the new reaction, the new feeling, the new activity.

When you are torn by apparent futility, by the pain of equally undesirable alternatives at your disposal, which make life itself futile and undesirable, you are in a state of utter disunity (in

the particular respect of your pain and your conflict). Your assumption that there is no way out is a denial of the growth process that life is at all times.

On the other hand, your willingness to find a solution is a commitment toward life and toward a new area of expansion of your personality. It is the readiness to find new mastery over present helplessness and constriction.

PL 178

Exercise 4b: Have you experienced such moments of unity? If not, is it possible that you may have learned to enjoy the process of striving as a way of feeling alive, or ‘getting your way’?

Suggested Steps to Achieve Spontaneous Unification

1. The greatest difficulty is always the first step when you do not even know what your specific disunity is or, rather, what the specific disunities are. For there are of course many disunities in various respects. The voluntary faculties must consolidate in order to find, state, face, and confront the specific disunity of the moment to overcome, to name it, as it were.

2. Then the inner commitment and investment toward overcoming it is part of the volitional faculties. Part of the voluntary faculties is always to make room in your mind that a particular unity potentially exists where there is now a particular disunity.

3. Only after this step does an alternative process develop in which the involuntary yields recognitions, inspiration, guidance, revelation, point by point adding more to the puzzle, until it all fits together. In this alternation, every new insight requires new commitment, new search, until the next organic step reveals itself. So it goes on.

This is really a description not only of the process of spontaneous unification, of dynamic growth, but of the path itself, which is all that.

4. It is necessary to affirm that this unity, which still eludes you, can be attained and that, in fact, you will attain it. The amount of investment will determine the outcome. It is often true that the desire is affirmed in principle, but when it actually comes to some of the more difficult steps of the voluntary part of dynamic growth, they are not chosen. Unpleasantness, or apparent unpleasantness, is shirked. The self does not wish to expose itself where vanity, appearance in the eyes of others, is challenged. Here, cherished prejudices and illusions are, and must be, challenged. The areas of stagnation must be stirred up, and the total personality must cooperate and invest into this process if spontaneous unification is to occur.

This investment of the mind and will, of the emotions and attitudes, as far as emotional, psychological, spiritual growth is concerned, corresponds to sustained practice when physical, or purely mental, new skills, are attained. The latter are, in themselves, also unifications where previously disunity existed.

PL 178

Exercise 4c: Re-write these steps in your own words, as a practical step-by-step example of how you have experienced this process in the past. Then, address a current disharmony and explore how you would use these steps to achieve a break-through.

If you are unwilling to explore this process, would you be willing to consider that there may be a desire to retain the disharmony? Rather than judge this as ‘wrong’ or ‘bad’, see if you can determine why you might not be ready to release the struggle.

The Dynamic Cycle of Growth

To recapitulate: effortless spontaneous growth and unification can occur only as a result of effort and struggle. This requires a forward movement into life. This movement must be poised and relaxed; effort must be exerted, but it is a disciplined, relaxed effort (because there is no reluctance) rather than a tense or rigid one (which reveals unconscious reluctance). The relaxed and determined movement into life to accomplish further and further unifications is pleasurable in itself, although difficult, challenging, and often even taxing. Each accomplished unification brings further pleasure, and each further pleasure leads on to more unifications. And so it goes on endlessly, the stream of life. Unification brings (and IS) pleasure -- when it is no longer believed to be something that should be already "over with."

The whole cosmos will thus be unified into the self, and the self into it

Rigid movement that covers hidden reluctance is painful. Instead of denying the hidden reluctance, you must focus on it. When relaxed effort feels impossible, you should search for and determine the unconscious reluctance to move forward. Therefore growth dynamics is also, apart from unifying disunity, mastering ignorance and negativity.

PL 178

Exercise 4d: Explore rigid movement vs. intention. Force yourself to walk across the room, as if you were having an internal argument and one part wanted to stay still. Then, decide to walk as if these two 'sides' were in complete agreement. Notice how you sensed the difference.

See if you can notice rigid movement in other circumstances, even if there is no physical activity involved. For instance, when you feel forced to chat with someone, or are interrupted.

Consequences of Prioritizing Outer over Inner Growth

Many people are active in forever increasing their physical and/or mental skills. This is also valuable. It is a movement toward life as well. It also represents mastery over disunity. The attainment of the skills affords a new pleasure and self-mastery.

Not knowing what one is particularly interested in represents a limitation.

The steps leading to this new mastery are in essence the same as those which are necessary when the inner universe is being discovered and enlarged. But when they are sought as a substitute for the inner growth, they must miss their mark, and they can often become an exaggerated activity.

Real spiritual growth and mastery (dynamic growth on the inner level, spontaneous unification of emotional, psychological, and therefore spiritual rifts) hold the inner balance and harmony, out of which grow organically, naturally, effortlessly, and spontaneously the intuitive guidance and knowledge toward outer unifications.

When inner growth is the center of one's being, everything else falls into place without the pendulum swinging from one extreme to another. Unessential goals will fall away.

PL 178

Exercise 4e: Recall times when you got caught up in a form of Ego Development that did not have a spiritual component. Contrast this to your work in activities that had both inner and outer value.

Week 5: Mastering Misconceptions; Cause and Effect

Misconceptions always lead to more splitting, division, disunity. But they stem from an erroneous attempt to find unity.

Neurosis in itself an erroneous attempt to find health and well-being. In its own blind way, it makes peace with something traumatic and painful. On your path, you have found again and again those misconceptions that equate, for example, love with pain and danger, pleasure with humiliation and shame, self-assertion with unacceptable aggression, and many others. Thus a vital aspect of living must be denied because its apparent by-product is too undesirable. These are typical examples of false unifications that must be split again -- disunited -- in order to find harmony, fullness, wholeness, and real unification.

As a result of misconceptions, negativity, and destructive attitudes, all forward movement appears dangerous. It must, indeed, often rend in order to unify. It must stir up what has found a temporary, costly, wasteful, and limiting "peace." It moves out of an apparently safe place into danger. The stagnating, restricting, limiting life, in which one does not dare to venture forth, seems safety.

When we speak of resistance, this is what is always in one form or another behind them: more hidden and irrational feelings, attitudes, and responses.

If you really question them with an open mind and in a very simple fashion, you will find that resistance to growth is fear, and that the insistence to stagnate and remain as you are (even though you dimly know that this means sacrifice of happiness, pleasure, wholeness, love, expansion) is due to the idea that this is the only way you can be safe. In other words, the misconceptions that further stagnation are illusory safety in a limited way of life.

Ignorance and non-mastery seem to be security. Seeking a tiny point where you have your basis of life, your frame of reference, your movement, your being with a narrow circumference amounts to an abdication of your universal destiny. This contenting oneself with the limiting fences is life and growth denying. It denies pleasure. It makes do with a very unnecessary waste of the most valuable spiritual power man possesses in his deepest soul.

Challenge, effort, and mastery are the privileges man has. But in order to unfold these powers, this privilege must be freely chosen. Then growth becomes adventure and pleasure.

In view of this truth, it is a sin against life to not grow. This may appear a crass statement, but it is nevertheless true. Since you are an expression of the divine, since you are God, it is your birthright and your destiny to fulfill yourself by making more and more and greater and greater unifications, to acquire more and more spiritual skills in order to bridge disunity, to do away with disunity, to create bliss by more unity in forever new areas.

PL 178

Exercise 5a: Unfulfillment is the EFFECT of not feeling able to fully commit.

Choose an important unfulfillment in your current life. Identify the nature of the YES and the NO to gaining this fulfillment; that is, what is the split in your beliefs (such as a misconception that success is dangerous) that prevents you from fully embracing your goal and doing whatever is necessary to achieve it? (Note: sometimes, it's the goal itself that was misconceived)

Cause-and-Effect in The Spiral of Development

When cosmic truth is ignored, disunity must exist to whatever extent ignorance exists. It is every single entity's fate to bridge over this ignorance by struggling toward these unifications step by step. They are most difficult on the most hidden, innermost, emotional levels since emotions cannot be directly willed nor can they always be even quite conscious.

It therefore requires a search, for determining the disunity, before the work of unification can begin. Human beings go through several stages in their overall evolution. When they are more primitive, they must deal with the outer levels. Later their task lies in the unification of the inner world.

PL 178

Commitment exists in every imaginable undertaking. To the degree you are committed, what you do will be pleasurable, free from conflict, fruitful, and rewarding. It will be one-pointed in direction; it will have depth and meaning; it will be successful; and it will bear the stamp and feeling of blessedness.

Disconnectedness between cause and effect regarding commitment creates the need to seek adjustment in the wrong manner. Whenever there is lack of commitment, there must always exist negative intentionality as well. Wherever peace, fulfillment, light, hope, and trusting closeness to your intimate friends are lacking, let this be a gauge that something in you is amiss. This gauge is so exacting!

[Commitment: Cause and Effect](#) PL 196

The Stages of Commitment were adopted by the original Pathwork community in 1978. A year later, they suffered a double loss when Eva Pierrakos died and the Guide was no longer available. Having a clear set of commitments for both members and leaders (Stages 1 through 4) may have helped the Phoenicia Pathwork through that difficult adjustment period.

[Stages of Commitment to the Pathwork](#) AD6

Stage I: A commitment to the self, to one's own spiritual growth through the light of the Guide's teachings.

- 1: Are you fully aware that the Pathwork is a spiritual path and not an individual therapy?
- 2: Although at this point of your commitment, your involvement may be only on a more or less individual basis, are you willing to allow for the fact that you are entering a spiritual community whose aim goes beyond personal development?
- 3: Since this work is based on the teachings in the lectures, do you commit yourself to study the lectures carefully and, when not understanding parts of them, to allow yourself to be helped in this understanding?
- 4: Do you commit yourself to allow for any eventuality as far as the reality of creation is concerned? You do not have to believe anything, but you need to remove a tight No in you that may barricade experience. Are you willing to let yourself experience, without preconceived ideas, whatever is real?
- 5: 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?

Exercise 5b: Consider your own commitment to your spiritual growth.

How might you re-write these to reflect your desires, and what you are willing to do to achieve them?

Read your personal commitment to yourself. Consider reading it to a trusted friend.

Notice if it feels like a full-throated commitment, or if it reflects any uncertainty on your part.

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