

# Pathwork® Steps

## The Process of Meditation

Also referred to as ‘Meditation for Three Chairs’

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 182

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Also see

**Week 1: Meditation for Three Fundamental Layers of Personality**

**Week 2: Recognition and Following Through / Phases 1 & 2:**

**Week 3: Re-Orientation and Re-education of the Destructive Part of the Self / Phase 3**

**Week 4: Developing Complimentary Attitudes**

**Week 1: Meditation for Three Fundamental Layers of Personality**

*Note: The nickname for this lecture comes from a technique for co creating a sensory element by using a different seating position or chair for each ‘voice’ to speak from. Hand-held objects may also be used. Because the Ego speaks the ‘voices’, it may misidentify its own positive intention as the supra-conscious, or its own fears as the unconscious child level. In that case, the process becomes an exploration of the Ego’s misunderstandings, and two ‘chairs’ are used instead of three. The technique is similar to the modality of Voice Dialogue. jr*

### The Pathwork Meditation Process

There are many, many different kinds of meditation. There is religious meditation of reciting set prayers. There is meditation in which the main weight is put on increasing the powers of concentration. There is meditation in which spiritual laws are being contemplated and thought through. There is meditation in which the ego is made totally passive and will-less and the divine allowed its own flux. These and others may all have more or less value.

But my suggestion to the friends who work with me is much rather to use the available energy and time for confronting that part of the self that destroys happiness, fulfillment, and wholeness. For by-passing it can never create the wholeness the entity truly aspires at -- whether or not this aim is articulated. This approach includes to give voice to the recalcitrant aspect of the egotistical, destructive self that denies happiness, fulfillment, and beauty -- for whatever the reasons may be. That, too, must be acknowledged, for it is always there. When seeing the truth in yourself and wanting and committing yourself to this truth become second nature, you detect an ugly side in you which you were hitherto too resistant to see. But simultaneously you also detect this great, universal, spiritual power that is in you and that, in fact, you are.

### Three Fundamental Layers of Personality

Effective meditation takes place by the conscious ego level activating both the unconscious, egotistical, destructive self and the supra-conscious, superior, universal self. A constant interaction between these three levels must take place.

**Voice 1: Conscious Ego;** all the conscious knowing and willing man has at his disposal;

**Voice 2: Supra-conscious universal self** (Higher Self / Real Self), with its superior wisdom, power, and love and with its comprehensive understanding of events man is involved in.

**Voice 3: Unconscious, egotistical child level,** with all its ignorance, its destructiveness, its claims for omnipotence. (additional layers may be voiced as well)

**Exercise 1a:** Spend some time exploring how you are able to / might be able to distinguish the ‘voice’ of your Ego from that of your supra-conscious (Higher Self / Real Self / higher power). For instance, the supra-conscious would never be anxious, impatient, or fearful because it has a fuller understanding of our spiritual purpose and task than the Ego.

### **The Role of the Ego / Conscious Ego / Ego Mind**

The conscious ego must be completely determined to allow the unconscious ego self to reveal itself, to unfold, to manifest in awareness, to express itself. In order to make this constant interaction possible, a tremendous amount of alertness, wakefulness on the part of your conscious ego self is required. It is difficult *only*, and *exclusively*, my friends, because of the fear of not being as perfect, as evolved, as good, as rational, as ideal as one wants to be -- and even pretends to be -- so that the ego becomes almost convinced of it on the surface of consciousness. This surface conviction is constantly counteracted by the unconscious knowledge that this is not so -- **with the result that secretly the whole personality feels fraudulent and terrified of exposure.**

It is a significant sign of self-acceptance and growth when a human being is capable of allowing the egotistical, irrational, outrightly destructive child to manifest to consciousness; of acknowledging it with all the specific details of its expressions. This alone will prevent the dangerous indirect manifestation, of which the consciousness is not aware and with which it is not connected, so that undesirable results seem to come from outside. Hence, meditation must deal with this aspect if it is not to be a lopsided endeavor.

Another important aspect of this getting to know both the lowest and the highest in you is that you realize the function and capacities, but also the limitations, of the conscious ego. The function and capacities are the wanting on the conscious level with all your heart -- wanting to see the full truth of both the lowest and the highest in you, wanting to change and give up destructiveness.

**The limitation is that the ego consciousness cannot execute this alone and must turn for help and guidance toward the universal self** and wait patiently -- not doubtingly, impatiently, pushingly. The waiting must also include an open attitude about the way this help might manifest. The less preconceived notions exist, the faster the help will come forth and be recognizable. The help from the universal consciousness may come forth in an entirely different manner than your concepts may make room for -- and this might be a hurdle.

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**Exercise 1b:** When we observe the Ego, we activate a positive function of the Ego that can seem like another ‘voice’ –the Observer Self. See if you can notice this kind of noticing!

In The Undefined Self ([download the full chapter here](#)) Susan Thesenga writes: “This inner complexity can be likened to having a “cast of characters” within us, each with its own beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. Each character lives in a separate room of our psychic house, inhabiting a different reality. Or we might say that each of these levels of consciousness exists at a different frequency, available as different channels on a radio dial. When we are tuned into one station we may be unaware that an entirely different frequency is available with a brief switch of the inner dial. The ability to observe ourselves objectively and compassionately is the single most important skill to develop in walking the spiritual path.”

**Daily Review 2.0** PL 28 <http://www.janrigsby.org/files/PDF/028-DailyReview-Suggestions.pdf>

## Week 2: Recognition and Following Through / Phases 1 & 2

### **The interaction of the Ego must be threefold:**

**Step 1.** The ego must initially want it and commit itself to it.

**Step 2.** It must also ask for help of the universal self.

**Step 3.** It must reach in to let out the negative side (= start of Phase 1)

### **The Ego Leads in All Three Phases of Pathwork Meditation:**

**Phase 1.** Recognition of the unconscious, destructive egotistical self;

**Phase 2.** Following through the underlying misconceptions, the causes and effects, the meaning and the price to be paid in regard to the present destructive attitudes.

**Phase 3.** Re-orientation or re-education of the destructive part of the self.

**Exercise: Step 1.** The conscious ego must reach down and say, *"Whatever is in me, whatever is hidden that I ought to know about myself, whatever negativity and destructiveness it is, it should be out in the open. I want to see it. I commit myself to seeing it, regardless of the hurt vanity that may result from it. Wherever I am stuck in doing so, I want to be aware of how I deliberately refuse to see it and how I therefore overconcentrate on the wrongs of others."*

The ego-will alone may be incapable of accomplishing this. But the ego can and must meditate to request the higher powers to help. The universal consciousness should also be asked for help so that your consciousness understands the expressions of the destructive infant correctly, proportionately, without exaggeration, without losing a sense of reality (as you did in the opposite way before you were aware of its existence at all). This is why a person can easily fluctuate from an outer self-aggrandizement to a hidden inner self-demoting. When the latter reveals itself, the person could fall prey to believing this destructive self is the final, ultimate, sad reality.

The guidance of the universal self must be constantly asked for so as to give a full reality about the revelation of the egotistic infant.

**Step 2** The other direction must go toward the universal, higher self, which has powers that surpass the limitations of the conscious self. These higher powers should be called upon for the very same purpose of exposing the destructive little self so that resistance can be overcome.

**Step 3.** It must reach in to let out the negative side. [this becomes Phase 1]

### **Phase 1. Recognition of the unconscious, destructive egotistical self**

The egotistical infant's antisocial desires and claims, convictions and attitudes must be exposed in exact detail.

It seems hard to accept that there is something in you that is so very different from the way you want to be and the way you think of yourself as being. Meditation must constantly encourage this self-revelation, not only generally speaking but primarily as to the specific situations you are daily involved in in an unpleasant or unsatisfactory way. Paradoxical as it may seem, the more you can accept the mean little creature, the ignorant little infant in you, without losing your sense of self-valuation, the more you will perceive the greatness of your innermost being, provided you truly do not use the discoveries of the little self to beat yourself down.

The little self wants to seduce the conscious ego to stay within the narrow confines of neurotic self-beating, hopelessness, and morbid capitulation, which really always cover unexpressed hatred. The conscious ego must prevent this by using all its knowledge and resources. Observe this habit of self-beating, hopelessness, and capitulation in yourself, and counteract it, not by pushing it underground again, but by using what you know, by talking to this part of yourself, by bringing to bear on it all the knowledge of your conscious ego. If this is not sufficient, then request the powers beyond your consciousness.

When the infant reveals itself, the ego should again ask for help of the universal self to strengthen the consciousness for the further part of the work -- the exploration of the underlying misconceptions and the heavy price paid for them.

And then, again, the universal self must be allowed to help overcome the temptation to give in, again and again, to the destructive impulses. Such giving in does not happen necessarily in action, but in emotional attitudes.

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**Exercise 2a:** It can be useful to exaggerate the voice of the infant or destructive child. The active character of this form of meditation helps to draw forward energies that the Ego is usually able to suppress. Let your inner kid speak in a kid's voice! Notice what happens. If you are doing this on your own, you may find it helpful to use a recording device so that you can take notes later.

## **Phase 2. Following through the underlying misconceptions**

When the infant begins to express itself more freely (because the ego allows it, receives it as an interested, open listener) you must collect this material for further study.

This important aspect of meditation requires a great deal of time, patience, perseverance, and determination to remember at all times that wherever you are unfulfilled, wherever there are problems, wherever there is conflict in your life, you should not concentrate with woe on others, or circumstances outside your control, but reach into yourself and explore the causes imbedded in your own egocentric childish level. What reveals itself should be explored as to its further ramifications; its origins, its results.

Meditation is an absolute prerequisite here. It means the gathering of yourself, the calm, quiet wanting of the truth of this particular circumstance as to your causes -- and then the quiet waiting for an answer. In this state of mind, peace will come to you even before you fully understand. This truthful approach to life will already give you a measure of the peace and self-respect that was lacking as long as only others were made responsible for what you have to put up with.

**Exercise 2b:** What underlying misconceptions are responsible for the overt self-destruction, the hate, the spite, the malice, the ruthless self-will that come out? When the misconceptions are being recognized, guilt and self-hate diminish proportionately.

What are the results of the momentary satisfaction of giving in to these destructive impulses? When this is clearly worked out, the inner determination to be destructive weakens -- again proportionately to the full understanding of this particular cause and effect.

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### **Week 3: Re-Orientation and Re-education of the Destructive Part of the Self / Phase 3**

This infant is now no longer entirely unconscious. Its false beliefs, stubborn resistance, spitefulness and murderous rage must be re-oriented. However, this re-education cannot take place unless you are fully aware of every aspect of this destructive infant's beliefs and attitudes.

This is why the first part of meditation -- the revealing, exploratory phase -- is so fundamental. It goes without saying that this first phase is not something one 'gets over with' so that then the second and later the third phase can begin. It is not a sequential happening; the phases overlap.

Exploration, understanding, and re-education often go hand in hand; at other times they have to be used separately. The feeling for this must be cultivated; no rules can be made which relieve you of the need to feel into yourself to know what to use when.

#### **Personality Changes**

**First**, the conscious ego personality itself becomes stronger and healthier -- stronger in a good, relaxed sense. There is more determination, awareness, meaningful directedness; a greater power of concentration and one-pointedness in one's attention comes about.

**Second**, a much greater amount of self-acceptance and an understanding of reality takes place. Unreal self-hate and self-disgust go away. Equally unreal claims for specialness and perfection also go away. False spiritual pride and vanity, as well as false self-humiliation and shame, disappear. Through the steady activation of the higher powers, the self feels less and less forlorn, helpless, lost, hopeless, or empty. The whole sense of the universe, in all its marvelous possibilities, reveals itself from within, as the reality of this wider world shows the way to accept and change the destructive inner child.

This gradual change enables the person to accept all his feelings and let the energy flow through his being. When the small, petty, mean side is accepted without thinking that it is the total, final reality; the beauty, love, wisdom, and infinite power of the superior self become more of a reality. Realistic, well founded self-liking must be the result.

Re-education might very easily be misunderstood and lead toward a renewed suppression or repression of the destructive part that begins to unfold. You have to take great care by consciously and deliberately wanting to avoid this, and yet not allowing the destructive part to engulf you.

The best attitude toward the unfolding destructive part is one of detached observation, of unjudging, unharried acceptance. The more it unfolds, the more you must remind yourself that its truth, its attitudes are not the final ones, are not the only ones you have, are not the absolute, and, above all, that you have the power inherent in you to change anything.

For the denying, panicky, frightened, self-rejecting, and perfection-demanding attitude man usually has, makes every part of meditation impossible. It does not permit unfoldment; it does not permit exploration down to the causes of what might be unfolded; and it certainly does not permit re-education.

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**Exercise 3a:** If you have not yet heard your destructive child consciousness, list your objections, fears, and concerns about doing so. Can you relate to the part of you that resists unfoldment?

If you have worked through Phases 1&2, have you sensed any of the personality changes that are described? Notice what you remember about any resistance you felt to this process.

### **Re-education involves both Ego and Higher Self / Real Self**

Re-education also depends on both the efforts of the conscious ego with its instructions -- the dialogue the ego conducts with the ignorant child -- and on the intervention and guidance of the universal, spiritual self. Each in their own ways will effect a gradual growing of this infant. The ego must determine its goal to change the consciousness of the negative inner child; it must want this and commit itself to it. It must know that this is its task.

But, again, full execution of this task is made possible by the influx of the spiritual aspect of the deeper personality which must again be deliberately activated. The consciousness must again be in a twofold attitude.

One is of activity in that it asserts its desire, its goal, its dominion over defeating aspects. It leads the dialogue and calmly but firmly instructs the ignorant child. The other is a more passive, patient waiting for the final but always gradual manifestation of the universal powers, which bring about this inner change leading to new reactions of more resiliency, to good feelings where they were negative or dead.

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**Exercise 3b:** How does your active positive desire manifest? See if you can notice a more passive, patient, waiting energy as well. Does one pre-dominate?

### **Finding Indirect Manifestations**

Rushing and pressuring the resisting part is as useless and ineffective, as is direct refusal to budge. When the conscious ego does not recognize that there is a part of the self that actually refuses every step toward health, unfoldment, and the good life, a counteractive movement may be one of hurried, impatient pressure. Both derive from self-hate. When you feel yourself stymied and hopeless, it should be a sign for you to search for that part in you that says, *"I do not wish to change, I do not wish to be constructive."*

Yet, the incentive to change may be lacking when you are not fully aware of the damage the destructive part of you is doing to your life when it goes unrecognized. It is therefore another important aspect of this phase of meditation to look deeply and widely for recognition of the indirect manifestations. All this must be explored.

Where there is life, there is constant change and fluctuation. There is constant movement, even if this movement is temporarily paralyzed. Matter is paralyzed life-stuff. The frozen blocks of energy are momentarily hardened, immobilized life-stuff. Eventually this life-stuff can always be made to move again; yet only consciousness can do it, for life-stuff is filled with consciousness as well as energy. Whether this energy is momentarily blocked and frozen, or whether this consciousness is momentarily dimmed, does not matter.

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**Exercise 3b:** How does unexpressed hate manifest in your life? Perhaps it manifests by feeling undeserving and afraid, or by inhibiting your energies. Find your resistance to the process of manifesting your divine self, giving active and passive currents different voices.

### **Expressing Dimmed Consciousness**

Meditation must mean that the part of you which is already conscious and moving is geared toward making blocked energy and dimmed consciousness moving and aware again.

The best way to do this is to allow the frozen dim consciousness, to express itself. Here you need a receptive attitude, not an attitude that what comes forth is devastating and catastrophic. The panicky attitude toward one's own unfolding destructive infant does more damage than the destructive infant itself. You must learn to listen to it, to take in, to calmly receive its expressions without hating yourself, without pushing it away.

Only when such an attitude exists, can later the understanding of its underlying factors come. Only then can the process of re-education begin (phase 3).

When an accepting and understanding attitude exists, it becomes possible for the conscious ego to assert its benign dominion over the violently destructive and stagnant psychic matter. As I said many times, kindness, firmness, and deep determination against your own destructiveness must exist.

- You have to identify with the destructiveness, and yet you have to be detached from it.
- You have to realize that it is you, and you have to also realize that there is another part of you that can say the final word if you so choose.
- You have to widen the limitations of your conscious ego expressions by realizing that you can say at any moment,

*"I will be stronger than my destructiveness and not be hampered by it.*

*I determine that my life will be at its best and fullest and that I will and can overcome the blocks in me that make me want to remain unhappy.*

*This determination of mine will bring in the higher powers which will make me capable of experiencing more and more bliss because I can let go of the doubtful pleasure of being negative, which I now fully recognize."*

This is the task of the conscious ego. And then, and then only, can it also call into play the powers of guidance, wisdom, strength, and a new inner feeling of love and penetration of the universal self.

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**Exercise 3c:** A brief meditation is suggested in almost every lecture, often phrased as 'say this to yourself' or 'if you can say'. Try the meditation above. Does it have any effect?

## **Week 4: Developing Complimentary Attitudes**

An open, waiting, accepting, and positive attitude must also be acquired. It may not be possible to adopt it immediately.

Recognition of its absence can also be made into a constructive acknowledgment of where the self is at the moment. The constant paradoxes and opposites that you deal with in life will also vanish and conciliate themselves.

### **Involvement vs. Detachment**

If detachment is indifference because you are afraid to be involved and you are unwilling to risk pain and you are frightened of loving, then detachment is a distortion of the real attitude. And if involvement means merely an expression of a super tense will based on the fear of the infantile insistence to always have what you want immediately and unconditionally, then the healthy, productive version of involvement is inverted.

### **Desire vs. Desirelessness**

There must be desire in a human being, for only as you desire can you come to the fourth aspect of meditation, which is the expanding of your conscious concepts so as to create new and better life substance, hence life experience.

If you do not desire a better state of being, more fulfillment, you will have no material to create and model life-stuff. Visualization of a fuller state as opposed to a previous limited state, presupposes desire. Desire must exist in order to believe in the new possibilities and unfold into greater states of fulfillment and self-expression.

But if desire is tense, urgent, and contracted, it forms a block. Such desire implies *"I do not believe that it can be,"* which perhaps exists due to an underlying *"I really do not want it"* (for whatever misconceptions and unjustified fears or for the unwillingness to pay the price). Underlying denial creates too tense a desire.

### **Common Denominators of a Healthy Balance**

1. The absence of fear and the presence of trust. If you fear the frustration, the nonfulfillment, and its consequences, the tension of your soul movement will prohibit the fulfillment you want, and eventually you will even give up all desire. Fear induces a cramp and a denial of desire.
2. Expressing your desire in a state of confidence; in your ability to cope with both nonfulfillment and fulfillment, and therefore in the universe that is able to yield to you what you long for.
3. A sense of complimenting attitudes vs. competing paradoxes.

Thus a kind of desirelessness must exist, which expresses, in effect, *"I know I can and will have such and such even if it is not realizable right now in this or that form. I trust the universe and my own good will sufficiently that I can wait, and I will strengthen myself along the way to cope well with the nonfulfillment of this desire."*

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**Exercise 4a:** Say the meditation above. Explore bringing healthy desirelessness and detachment into your life. Notice what changes when you practice these.

### **Active vs. Passive Inner Attitude**

How can you be both active and passive in a harmonious way? The right inner interaction includes both these inner movements.

Meditation must include both. You are active when you explore inner levels of consciousness (both positive and negative); you are active when you commit yourself and struggle to recognize and overcome resistance; you are active when questioning yourself further to let the previously unadmitted destructive side express itself; you are active when you have a dialogue and re-educate the infantile, ignorant aspects of yourself; you are active when you use your ego consciousness to activate the spiritual consciousness; you are active when you create a new concept of life experience as opposed to an old, limiting one. When the ego deals with both other "universes" to establish connection, you are active.

But you must also learn to passively wait for the unfoldment and expression of both these other levels. Then the right blend of activeness and passiveness exists. The universal powers cannot come to fruition in a human being unless both active and passive movements exist.

When the three-way interaction within yourself takes place, there is always a harmonious blend between desire and desirelessness, between involvement and detachment, between activeness and passiveness. When this happens, the destructive infant grows up. It is not killed or annihilated. It is not exorcised. But its frozen powers resolve themselves into live energy which you will actually feel, my friends, as a new living force. This infant must not be slain. It must be instructed so that salvation can come to it by liberating it, by bringing it to a growth function. By working for this goal, you will steadily move closer to the unification of the ego level and the universal self.

### **The Importance of Attitudes in Re-Orientating / Re-Educating**

Your own sensitivity will grow day by day to feel what is needed at any given moment of your evolutionary path. Each day brings forth new tasks, exciting tasks, beautiful tasks. With patience and determination you can remold the distorted; but only after it has fully expressed itself. You can re-form, re-orient stagnant psychic energy by the willingness to be totally honest with yourself, totally constructive, loving, and open. If you find an unwillingness in this regard, then that must be confronted, explored, and re-educated.

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**Exercise 4b:** Begin each meditation by asking yourself, *"What do I really feel at this moment about this or that issue? In what respect am I dissatisfied? What is it I may look away from?"* Then you may request the universal spirit in you to help you toward the awareness of these particular answers. Then wait trustingly for what may unfold itself. Only when it unfolds can you have a direct confrontation, communication, or dialogue with it, and ask it further questions as well as instruct it. PL 182

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