

How to Handle Alternation of Expansive and Contractive States

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 187

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Week 1: Three States of Human Consciousness

Week 2: The Spiritual Meaning of Expansion and Contraction

Week 3: How to Handle Alternation of Expansive and Contractive States

Week 4: All Relationships Reflect and Accelerate Individual Growth

Week 1: Three States of Human Consciousness

These states are very specific grades of development, which I have not discussed before, but which become relevant in connection with the present phase of our work.

1. Living in Fantasy In the scale of development in this particular respect, the least developed state is that in which a person lives in fantasy. He may stand in life apparently quite realistically. He may hold a job, have a family and friends, and go through all sorts of activity. But his real life of pleasure lies in fantasy. PL 187

Mutuality, A Cosmic Principle and Law

A person who is willing to open up but is still afraid of doing so in an actual mutuality. The only way the bliss and pleasure of expansion and union can be experienced is in a fantasy situation. This leads to a very common, frequent fluctuation of the following kind:

- A person is convinced that this longing indicates his actual readiness for a real mutuality. After all, he experiences it so beautifully in his fantasies. The lack of it in reality is ascribed to his lack of luck to meet the proper partner with whom he can realize these fantasies.

- When a partner finally appears in his life, the old fear is still rampant. The soul movements contract, and the fantasy cannot be realized. This is usually explained away by all sorts of outer factors, which may even be true as far as this goes. The partner may actually have too many obstructions to realize the dream.

- Yet, does this very fact not indicate that something deeper must be at work in the person's psyche that makes sure to attract the partner with whom the contraction appears justified? For the deeper self always knows where the person stands.

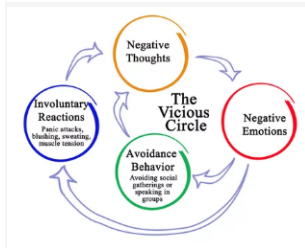
- And if the willingness is still lacking to face the true deeper issues, such subterfuges and excuses are very necessary for the preservation of the ego. But failure in the relationship always indicates that the self is not yet ready to put true mutuality into practice.

PL 185

This is more prevalent than you may realize -- even among you, my friends, at least in some respects. For instance, the preoccupation of the mind with would-be situations belongs to this category. Day-dreaming, playful thoughts of conversations and how they should or might have been; the living through of fulfillment in a concocted series of mind pictures -- all this belongs into this state.

And all of it uses up valuable life energy that cannot be regenerated. For if energy is misused, it does not renew itself. Thus the energy is unavailable for real living. Subsequently real living becomes more and more fraught with apparent danger, so that refuge into fantasy life is the only avenue of fulfillment. Vicarious living can also take place by overidentification with figures in books and plays. Escape into them is often due to this fantasy living rather than real living of the self.

PL 187



Energy is spent on day-dreaming to relieve anxiety, discomfort
 Real life has fewer energy resources to draw upon
 Real life becomes more of a struggle
 We react negatively to feelings of despair, fear, hopelessness
 Ref: [Vicious Circles](#) PL 50

Exercise 1a: Notice how often you (and/or others) use words like ‘maybe’, ‘should’, and ‘might’. Notice if/when this is a strong element of articles or media you are attracted to. These can be subtler versions of resisting the present reality or day-dreaming by imagining alternatives.

2. Living for the sake of impressing others. The second grade in this scale is to live for the sake of impressing others. Again, different forms of this manifestation exist.

You may do what you are doing -- either quite overtly and deliberately or in a more subtle and hidden way -- for the sake of gaining approval from others. You may express this state of consciousness by echoing opinions and values you have never truly examined and that are therefore not your own. You may put yourself into a tight little box of prescribed behavior and values that is not the true expression of yourself and that does not further your real self, your own pleasure, your innermost individual qualities, potentialities, and talents.

For whatever distorted and neurotic reasons you may be hooked on this level, it must be recognized and abandoned, just as the previous level. In spite of having recognized such attitudes in you, they may still exist on more subtle levels, and you should envisage this possibility and observe yourself from this point of view. Living for impressing others is much more permeating than you know.

PL 187

Exercise 1b: Notice where you behave differently while being observed vs. in private. Imagine that you had to log everything you eat & drink for an entire week, or use software that monitored physical activity, online / viewing habits, or work productivity.

3. Living for your own sake. The most developed and real state, in this particular triad, is when you truly live for your own sake, when you do and want things for their own sake.

Most individuals live on all three levels. These aspects interact and overlap. There may be some areas of health where you are on the third level, others where you are on the second, and still others where you are on the lowest first. The degree varies with people. Some are much more developed and live predominantly on the third, and only minor aspects of their personality remain undeveloped. With most people it is the other way around.

PL 187

Exercise 1c: How is it with you? Are you truly able to see and acknowledge where you are in this respect? Suggestion: ‘score’ yourself for 1 full day. Every time you notice yourself living in fantasy, Team Level 1 gets a point; are you impressing others? Team Level 2 gets a point, etc.

How We Create Our Own Reality

To the extent that you live in either of the first two spheres of consciousness, to that extent you foster an ongoing frustration in you. You perpetuate an ongoing negation of life and a negativity of feelings, thoughts, and attitudes. You contract and institute the vicious circle in question.

Hence a dearth of good experience may then impel you to seek substitute fulfillment in fantasy -- or in obtaining approval and envy from others. In both instances, it is a "would be" or "as if" life. In the "as if" life, you lose yourself. You lose the sense of hope, of real fulfillment and experience, which can only come if you first live through what is in you now, and invest all your energies into the reality of the moment.

Hope, of real fulfillment and experience can come only if you invest your energies into what and where you are now. really observe what is going on, and accept this momentary state without fighting yourself.

For the more you fight, even for the good, the more you contract. And the more you contract, the more you perpetuate the negative cycle. But *not* fighting must never mean giving in to resistance and fear. It cannot mean looking away from yourself.

This lecture, my friends, will prove to be of tremendous importance, help and material if it is truly worked with, really used, and not just glossed over. PL 187

Daily Review 1.0 from The Call PL 17

You can find out your true reactions about certain things, begin to pull off certain masks and pretenses, find out where you act against a *Spiritual Law* [PL 171]. It is like a puzzle you begin, when you cannot as yet see the picture; but if you are patient, you will succeed. Thus you will uncover your hidden anxieties and complexes which of course are responsible for your disease.

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.

If you follow this through for some time to come, really faithfully (not just once or twice -- that will not do you any good) but regularly and faithfully for some time, you will, after a while, see a clear pattern coming out of it. Pray for enlightenment and guidance every time you conduct this daily review, [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. After keeping logs for several weeks, see if you can find a common denominator.

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: The Spiritual Meaning of Expansion and Contraction

Expansion takes place when a positive, open, committed, honest, loving, giving attitude exists -- when the good feelings and thoughts create a corresponding attitude in life, influencing actions, behavior, responses, reactions, emanation, deeds, etc. Such an attitude brings forth desirable experience, fulfillment, pleasure, bliss, abundance in all respects of life wherever this attitude holds true. Such blissful, joyful life experience automatically creates open, expanding soul movements, which is the basis for the positive, affirmative attitude toward life -- and on and on goes a benign circle. PL 187

Exercise 2a: Spend some time learning to identify how your body, mind, and spirit feel during periods of expansion. If your current life is stressful, use memories (vs fantasizing).

Contraction takes place when a negative attitude toward life exists -- when fear, hate, spite, distrust, negation of self, of the truth of the momentary state, pretense, dishonesty, self-deception, false ideas, negation of the beauty of the universe, secret cheating, and self-rejection exist. Within the larger vicious circle, a smaller one, ingrown, is at work and at cross-purposes with the affirmative, conscious striving of the personality. The negative attitudes create self-hate, the self-hate increases hate for and distrust of others. And on and on it goes. PL 187



Negative feelings and experiences feel hurtful and must be avoided
Since feelings emanate from within, we are a danger to ourselves
Self-hate seeks to nullify and disempower the 'problem'
But since we can't trust ourselves, we can't trust or love anyone else
Ref: [Vicious Circles](#) PL 50

Vicious Circles of Contraction

These inner impurities have no adverse effect on the person if he is truly conscious of them, if he understands them in proper proportion to the reality of the vaster scheme of his inner life and of universal life. In other words, if he perceives them correctly, their effect is not negative, but turns into a positive one. The energy of these attitudes begins to transform itself automatically as a result of such awareness and proper perception.

But if the self is too vain and frightened to see itself as it is at the moment, if it either denies or exaggerates the implications -- again out of vanity and fear -- then the alternation of life movements will bring those hidden impurities to the surface.

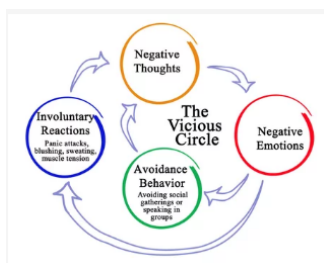
It is up to the conscious personality to make the best of these periods. But the automatic procedure is the following: those negative attitudes and destructive thoughts and feelings (that always negate the truth of life) are bound to create a contracted state of consciousness, of soul movement, and even of the outer body. In this state, the personality is unable to receive the abundance of universal life. He is closed in and must therefore remain poor. He cannot receive and is therefore deprived.

This impoverishment of his own good feelings and therefore of desirable life experience furthers bitterness, self-pity, accusation, spite. The negative attitudes bring more and more undesirable, painful life experience, against which the personality defends itself by closing up, by

building a protective armor -- which is the closed, contracted state. Thus a larger vicious circle becomes a self-perpetuating force in the person's life.

The negative life experience with its contracting movement is supposed to ward off negative life experience. Man makes himself more brittle and stiff, thus warding off life itself and instituting a state of constantly unfulfilled longing. This is why it says in Scripture that the poor will become poorer and the rich richer. This is one of the laws of life that the individual must discover in order to make the alternation of life movements a productive, growing process toward increasing transcendence of the opposites. PL 187

Exercise 2b: Learn to recognize when/where/how you contract. You may be able to notice a physical tightening in your abdomen, shoulders, or facial expression. Your voice may change pitch, speed up, or slow down; your mind may seem to freeze, or furtively seek a 'way out'.



Negative life experiences cannot be tolerated or processed
Contraction is used to protect and defend against the flow of life
Brittle, stiff defenses institute a constantly unfulfilled longing
The poor become poorer, attracting more negative experiences
Ref: [Vicious Circles](#) PL 50

Exercise 2c: Practice drawing diagrams of Vicious Circles of Negativity based upon your experiences and your observations of others.

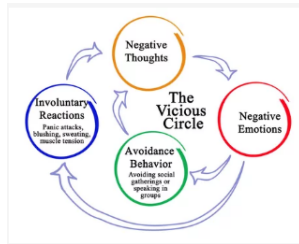
Positive Experiences may Require New Attitudes

In this world, in this sphere of consciousness, expansion and contraction create opposite experiences: pleasure and pain. Only when you transcend this sphere of being, when you transcend the level of duality, do expansion and contraction both become blissful experiences of different sorts. But this can only happen when you have mastered the negative experience or, to put it differently, when you acquire a new reaction and approach to both life movements. Contrary to what you may believe, the positive experience also requires a new attitude. And we shall discuss both here tonight. This new approach to both is to be learned on this level of duality. This is the quota the soul has to master at this particular stage of his evolution.

Let us begin with the contracting state, due to negation, which causes more contraction and so on. As I mentioned, the usual, *automatic reflex reaction* to negative experience is blind contraction, with its accompanying destructive emotions and thoughts. To be more specific, the personality invariably feels unjustly victimized, blames others or life, is resentful, withdraws his good feelings in revenge and spite. He is also fearful of what life brings him, for how could it be otherwise? One can never trust him whom one blames and spites, whether this be another person, life as a whole, or God.

PL 187

Exercise 2d: It is common to think or say someone 'got what they asked for'. Take this literally! How are they creating what they most fear? Practice finding opportunities to de-escalate negative interactions. Even if you 'only' think this (vs speak or act it out), be open to noticing if your energy has an effect. Allow that mild thoughts may create mild effects, and keep practicing!



Negation causes an automatic reflex reaction = contraction
 Contraction generates destructive emotions and thoughts
 Negative emotions and thoughts attract negative experiences
 We become fearful, seek to blame others, life as a whole, and/or God
 Ref: [Vicious Circles](#) PL 50

Step 1: Find the ‘Grain of Truth’

So I beg of you, my dear friends, consider the outer conflicts that come to you as an answer to your prayer. Instead of becoming defiant and hurt, turn inside, turn around, no matter how wrong you think others may be! Ask yourself, ask your Father in heaven, ***‘Isn’t there some grain of truth somewhere? By recognizing it, I will continue to learn and develop.’*** PL 43

In order to find the key to breaking this vicious circle, the conscious, volitional self must make a deliberate effort to remove the blindness that makes you believe the negative experience is coming to you without your having produced it. As long as you believe this, there is no way out. As long as you are unaware of the connection between the event and your own attitude that causes it, you must remain trapped in the vicious circle described.

Thus, the first step out is a *willingness to search for your own contribution* to the undesirable event, no matter what the appearances to the contrary may indicate. The moment you can truly accept this and can proceed from that premise, you already create a different pattern of energy and consciousness within your own psyche. PL 187

Exercise 2e: Practice finding and identifying the other’s truth, no matter how tiny and insignificant it may seem. This is easier once you assume it’s there in the first place!

Take a deep breath and access the deeper reservoirs of your faith. Searching for the Grain of Truth can de-magnify negative force fields created by suspicion, distrust, and defensive posturing. It can build bridges of trust and support with our brothers and sisters. It can turn an argument or disharmony into an opportunity.

Step 2: Observe Your Own Contracting Movement

The next step that must be learned in order to break the vicious circle when the negative, undesirable experience comes to you is that you observe your own contracting movement. As you do so, as you become much more keenly aware of your state of contraction, of your state of hardening and numbing yourself, of warding off experience from within and from without, as you observe all the feelings involved with their meaning (rage, hate, fear, guilt, blame, etc.) and all the tightnesses in body and soul and spirit, only then -- in this observance, in this acceptance of the tight contraction that is still automatic -- only then can you proceed to acquire a different reaction.

You can begin to want -- want, first! -- to not contract, but to remain pulsatingly open, even to the negative experience and the negative feeling. And you will soon see that this is far from dangerous. It does not make you more helpless; it makes you less so. What it will do is to make you more feeling. A plasticity of soul substance, a state of open vulnerability is required in order to let feelings and experiences be in yourself. First this must, by necessity, apply to painful experiences and feelings. If they cannot be borne, you are not equipped to experience joyful life.

PL 187

Week 3: How to Handle Alternation of Expansive and Contractive States

The idea that painful feelings and experiences are unbearable is a concoction of the limited, fragmented mind. It is not true. If you do not "make" something of it, if you do not project untruthful interpretations into the cause of these undesirable experiences and the feelings they evoke in you, they can easily be borne, sustained, accepted, fully experienced.

Let the painful experiences and feelings be in you! Go with them. Do not fight them. Accept them in the realization that somehow you must have created this condition. Thus the anger and resentment you feel against life will decrease.

Anger, fear, resentment, self-pity create tightness, brittleness, and numb you to all life experience, to the truth of your momentary state. Only when you truly encounter the negative experience, without aggrandizing or diminishing it, without any manipulation, do you truly master it. Only when you thus master it, when you no longer fear and flee from it, have you truly overcome, or transcended, the negative side of duality. And only when that is the case, are you indeed capable of accepting its positive counterpart.

I human beings try initially, until they learn on the long road of experience, to avoid undesirable experience. They defend against it and thus make themselves more prone to it. This puts them deeper into the painful duality that is so hard to overcome until this key is discovered.

PL 187

To accept life's occasional adversities does not mean to take a dark view of everything, quite on the contrary. The true and right course says: *"I expect life to bring me unhappiness as well as happiness, and I will not flinch from life's clouds and occasional necessary darkness. For only by going through this courageously, without struggling and kicking inside, will I be able to bear happiness when the time is ripe."* [Acceptance: Right and Wrong Way](#) PL 37

Exercise 3a: While sitting or lying down, recall a current or prior experience that triggers a visceral or energetic contraction. Then deliberately relax 'in its presence'. This process may alternate back and forth for a while; stay present with the feelings until you are able to allow their reality without fighting back or resisting. Saying the words from PL 37, above, may help.

Stepping into Self-Responsibility

Of course it takes considerable work on the path before you are really conscious of your fear and of your running away. Often many years of attentive self-search are necessary until this self-awareness is obtained. But when this is achieved, as is now here with so many of you, then the phase discussed here can truly be entered into. This requires attention to your innermost soul reflexes. When you do so, the negativities that create contraction will gradually diminish.

In this way, true transformation is initiated. It manifests by first no longer finding the pain so unendurable. You will swing with it, as it were, you will become it, you will ride with it, let yourself be carried by it without ever losing a realistic sense of proportion about it. No hopeless depression can ever get hold of you in this spirit. This builds great self-respect, my friends.

PL 187

Exercise 3b: Repeat *exercise 3a*, this time sustaining the painful feelings -- not masochistically, not self-rejectingly, not in the spirit that this is what you deserve because you are such a miserable creature -- but much rather in the attitude of *"I am indeed capable of enduring a little pain. Somehow, inadvertently, I must have created it. Therefore I will **not** create a **new** condition by denying what I have created."*

PL 187

The Process of Transforming Negativity Starts Within US

The ability to handle your self-produced pain gives self-confidence and strength. How can you not respect yourself in this spirit of courage and truthfulness?! While you are in the painful feeling in a fully accepting spirit, slowly -- and often even quite fast -- the feeling of pain transforms itself into pleasure; the feeling of hate and fear into love; the feeling of distrust into confidence and even into the knowledge that life is as good as you choose to make it. The thus gained self-respect will then make you want to make the best of your life.

Thus you meet negative experience no longer with a negative attitude which reproduces negative experience endlessly, but you meet negative experience with a positive attitude. Instead of contracting against it, you remain open, flexible, pulsating, plastic, alive, vibrating -- even though at first this means enduring a pain or some other unpleasant emotion. This is truly one of the most important keys -- but a key that is unavailable as long as you are unaware of the disturbances within yourself, the destructive thoughts and feelings.

In this new way, the negative feeling will become a tremendously positive, creative force. This must happen with growing frequency in order to transcend the cycle of suffering, so that you can enter into a new cycle of joy and peace. Every day you can come a step further on this juncture of your path:

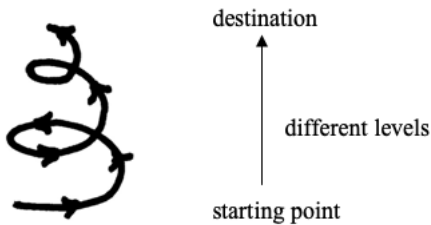
- You can look at your negations without hiding.
- You can acknowledge them.
- You can observe your negative attitudes and see their deeper meaning, their significance.
- You can also observe the cramping-up contraction and become intensely aware of this state of your being, which you still take for granted and thus do not even notice as an unnatural, painful, and unnecessary state.
- When you listen into your unfeeling numbness, you will detect painful longing and other undesirable feelings.
- As you allow them to simmer on the surface, you institute the process just described.
- When the painful feeling awakens in you, welcome it. It is your life, it is your energy, it is your creative substance. With that, a positive, benign circle will very definitely and solidly build itself.

Exercise 3c: Reflect upon this process. Find ways you can work with it, daily at first, so that it becomes a resource that you can rely upon.

Benign Circles & the Spiral of Development

Now let us talk for a moment about the positive circle or sequence. Off hand, it may appear as though there is nothing else needed for a good experience: all you do is enjoy it. But this is not true. There is much more to it than that. The more you handle the negative cycles in the above-mentioned way, the more frequent positive experience will become.

PL 187



Spiral of Development Ref: *Prayer* PL 36

A way of describing the process of moving out of automatic reflex (based upon unconscious images and beliefs) and encountering a new awareness-reality. If we embrace awareness (vs. contract from it) a spiritual evolutionary process leads us through ever-increasing understanding and awareness. Round and round, until we reach a moment of knowing – our ‘*Psychic Nuclear Point*’ Ref: PLs 214-215 Ref [Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution](#) PL 127

Circles of Expansion

The habitual reaction of the average human being to pleasurable experience is a momentary rejoicing. But, at the same time, there exist a number of other emotional reactions that are overlooked, and thereby the person loses out. So, my friends, begin to be as attentive and "*listening to yourself*" to pleasurable and fulfilling experience as you have learned to do to difficult and painful ones. You will soon note that, in addition to the welcoming joyful reaction, there are others present.

For instance, there exists a vague, mostly half-aware anxiety and apprehension about it. On one level, it is due to the fear of losing this good state again. On a deeper level, it is due to the inability of enduring a greater expansion of positive experience. This exists in exact proportion to your inability of enduring unwelcome feelings. This fear of not being able to endure the good feelings and experience is just as much denied as the negative feelings are. You simply look away from that part in you in which you react negatively to happiness -- and this is very regrettable because it causes you more unnecessary hardship.

As I said, becoming aware of this reaction should make you look at the opposite picture: your reaction to pain. As you react, are frightened of and angry about painful experiences and feelings, so are you unable to live in the higher climate of pleasure, joy, bliss, and finally even ecstasy. The higher vibration, the raised level of functioning of these higher realms of life experience, can be attained only when you go through the self-produced negation and negativity. Otherwise the climate is too heady, the altitude too high, so that instead of security it must bring anguish.

Exercise 3d: Whenever you find yourself in a joyful state, let your concentration and meditation be particularly concerned with observing your more vague and hidden reactions. Do you fear losing this state? And do you also fear remaining in this state? Admit these reactions with all the candor you have become more accustomed to in regard to your negative feelings. Observe your automatic soul movement in regard to pleasure and joy. Does it respond with involuntary contraction, notwithstanding your conscious desires and aims? This observation will afford you once again to become attuned to what is really going on. You will see the finely and easily glossed over reactions which sorely need your conscious awareness.

Towards both pleasure and pain, the same approach is necessary. First, is simple observation of the previously hidden reactions. There is a correlation: to the degree pain is avoided and denied, refuted and rebelled against, repressed and projected onto outer circumstances, pleasure cannot be wanted for its own sake, but only in order to avoid the pain. As you are aware of this, *which is the absolute key*, you can begin a new process. Do not push yourself into a state in which you are not yet capable of functioning. Rather, admit this -- and that will automatically increase your ability to live in this state. PL 187

Week 4: All Relationships Reflect and Accelerate Individual Growth

Greetings, blessings, and welcome, all of my friends here. First of all, I would like to say to this group of people, what an extremely wonderful thing it is you are doing. The long arduous years that many of you have spent and the hard work in overcoming the ever-present fear of and resistance to meeting the self have brought so many fruits. This has created such a light, such a strong center of light, in the universal scheme of things. It has ongoing effects all around. These fruits now begin to manifest as actual experience in your lives. The invisible effects already existed long before you were able to detect them. But now, effects become realities in your lives.

Many of you begin to feel and experience a change within yourselves that seemed impossible even to visualize not so long ago. Your lives are fuller, pleasure is greater, fear is lessening, security grows. You become more firmly rooted in the reality within yourself -- the divine reality. PL 187

Relationship represents the greatest challenge for the individual. For it is only in relationship with others that unresolved problems, the difficulties, and conflicts that still exist within the individual psyche are affected and activated.

The friction that arises out of relating with others is a sharp instrument of purification and self-recognition, if the self is so inclined. [*The Spiritual Meaning of Relationship*](#) PL 180

Exercise 4a: Not working directly with a group? See this from a larger perspective: as a human being, you are part of a group. In reading this study guide, you are part of a group (whether as a subscriber or someone who accesses spiritual teachings online). And since we are all divine beings, any group is – regardless of the degree of consciousness – a spiritual group. From any of these perspectives, see if you can receive the Guide’s compliments and encouragement.

Embrace the Healing Power of the Unitive

It is also manifest in what is beginning to happen to this group as a whole. The new gift I brought was made possible by this [*Venture in Mutuality – Healing Force to change Negative Will* PL 186]. The strength, the healing blessing that can unite with your self-generated new energy, is one such manifestation that will continue to grow and spread its light further and further.

An increasing benign circle is beginning to establish itself. The effectiveness of your work on the path generates new energy which, in turn, makes it possible for me to bring to you a greater influx of energy. This will then facilitate your efforts and make them increasingly more effective.

The new energy also showed in this very wonderful experience you had on the occasion when you combined all small working groups. This unification meant more than you can realize at this moment. You truly witnessed what it means to transform the energy of negative feelings (because they are met and not denied) into love. You have witnessed and been part of this process of transformation. In your individual pathwork, this was more and more frequently experienced by you in the recent months. But in the combined group experience you became part of the flow of self-perpetuating forces, without losing identity. You were moved by a vast force, by an inner volition that was not ego-directed. You were purified, uplifted, and strengthened by this process. It has to deepen your faith, your knowledge of the reality of the inner good life, of the spiritual realities I am striving to convey to you.

PL 187

This love that has been created by you here in this group is a tangible reality. It should be cultivated, my friends. Cultivate it. Realize how the law of brotherhood unites all of you. It would wither if you would not cultivate it. But it will grow, and will become forever more effective, if you treasure this newly developed state of your unity. The bond is as yet tenuous, the strings that hold you together with love are still tender and new. But they will strengthen as you pay conscious attention to this new process and nurse it with your appreciation of one another and by expressing your innermost needs to one another, as true brothers and sisters should do.

The help that you can give to one another will also heal yourselves by dint of your growing awareness of what you have to give and how you can help. You can truly sustain and give to each other, as you have spontaneously done during this significant group experience two weeks ago. And repeat such experiences at intervals. This is my advice. PL 187

Exercise 4b: Your communities may not feel as idyllic as the Guide describes. But you know this feeling; you came from spirit and you will be returning to spirit. Feel into the reality of this love.

The Importance of Self-Dialogue

Each time you come through a negative period of contraction in this self-observing way, your ability to endure pleasure grows. You become more acclimatized to functioning on a higher level of being. This is a very important concept to comprehend, my friends. Your reaction to pain, the denial of it, and the refusal to ride with it is the reason for its existence. It is intimately connected with your incapacity to live in bliss. Only as you see this meaning, can the meaning change. Thus the manifestation can change. Only as this happens can the dialogue go on: your conscious mind talking into the involuntary responses of your soul movements. This dialogue is an essential prerequisite.

Exercise 4c: The dialogue should consist of stating and acknowledging, in clear cut words, your contracting reaction, with all that this implies.

1) State the momentary state of how you make yourself brittle, how you deny what is, how you prefer to be numb. As you state it thus, you awaken this part of your soul substance. As you do so, the pain will no longer appear so frightening or so deep or so rejectable. You will endure it without the terrible cramp you inflict upon yourself.

2) Then the second aspect of the dialogue can begin, in which your conscious self also states the truth, but this time in response to the previously stated and admitted negation. You state the truth I am trying to convey to you: that you wish to experience what is; that you have the strength and the honesty to do so; that you no longer wish to deny life; that by feeling pain you prepare yourself to sustain pleasure; that you wish to increase your aliveness and courageous meeting of your own feelings -- thus of universal bliss. Such statements into yourself produce an ever increasing affirmation of life and feelings. PL 187

As you look onto those reactions and encounter them in the suggested way, the change in you will become more complete and more grounded in the reality of your divine existence. Focus on your actual reactions to pain and pleasure, and as you do so, your capacity to endure them will make the former obsolete. Lo and behold, the endured pain will transform itself, naturally and as if by itself. PL 187