

# Pathwork<sup>®</sup> Steps

## Affecting and Being Affected

Pathwork Lecture 188

Transcript of 2020 Video Summary by Jan Rigsby

<https://youtu.be/1Rwif8vqT4> 31 mins

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The topic for April 2020, was Pathwork Lecture 188, which is Affecting and Being Affected. This time around, we're going to do dessert first. When I listed off the subtopics, the final one, the last one that I saw as a topic within the lecture, was living in Bliss. Living in contact with your innermost being, being the equivalent of living in Bliss.

What I found during the four weeks was that was the section that was least understood. It was wonderful that everybody got the other sections, but this section seemed to be misinterpreted.

My analysis of what happened is that Bliss unconsciously, was seen by many people as a solution, final resting place of goal, a finite point in space. *I want Bliss, full stop, period.*

The dilemma with this is that full stop period doesn't exist in the universe. It doesn't exist in human nature. It doesn't exist in human physiology, unless you're dead. So, there is no full stop. Life is defined by organic transition - aging, birth, growth, change, transformation, something. It's changing, it's alive.

The idea of finding a finite point in space and saying that's where I want to go, and that's where I want to stay is in effect the definition of death. I know it doesn't seem that way. That's because in my understanding, people don't think this through.

Now I am speaking to you with the virtual image of the Brooklyn Bridge in the background from New York City Center of the Coronavirus for many, many weeks now. It is my hope nobody else becomes the center and that this fades out. But I've been living in the middle of a pandemic. And so, death has been on our doorsteps, to go to the grocery store, meant to court death.

There's a potential here, a possibility here - I don't know any other way of expressing it - of lightening up about death, of accepting that it's around the corner, no matter what you do, no matter what you think, no matter what you hope. Death comes when death comes.

Why am I bringing this up in relationship to Bliss? Except for death, Bliss is going to be momentary, in the sense of, as you move, you're going to move into Bliss and out of Bliss, into Bliss and out of Bliss. That is how I understand the Pathwork lectures to present the concept of Bliss.

We yearn for it because it's lovely, and it feels so good and it permeates our whole being it expands and makes us feel one with the universe. But we can't stay there.

We can't stay there for many reasons. Number one, that's not the human condition. It may be true in spirit, but we don't live there. We live here. The New Age concept of Bliss and Nirvana, in effect becomes a substitute for heaven - the old religious fervor for when I get to heaven - *I want to get to heaven.*

My experience in life involved having parents who were World War II and depression veterans. And so, my father thought that when he was 65, he would retire. Fortunately for him, as he got closer to retirement age, he began to notice that when men of his generation retired, they died.

They died because they didn't have a life. They took away the one motivator, the one feeder of their challenges and their enthusiasm and their passion. When that was removed, they didn't have a substitute and they died.

So, my Dad built a life before his retirement. He was helped by a heart attack that warned him that it was not going to be a smooth road. He thought about it, he decided to make some changes, and so he'd be building his social and volunteer effort, retirement life, before he retired. When he retired, it was like stepping from one ice floe to another, and there was a continuation of purpose in his life.

I'm recounting that is my personal experience of you don't simply retire and find Bliss because you're not working. It's an illusion.

The invitation in this lecture, this last section, is to consider *what do you think is Bliss?* And to really flesh that out, to really define what would Bliss be.

What would it look like when I woke up in the morning, when I had lunch in the afternoon, in the evening when I relax? *What does Bliss look like if you're living in it?*

My perception is I'm retired. I'm older. I live a rather slow life, certainly not nine to five. Bliss is what you make of it and it comes and goes, I have a lot of Bliss in my life. But the way I keep Bliss in my life is I don't hold on to it. The Guide describes that paradox indicates a spiritual truth. This is an example of that. When you don't hold something, you're able to keep it.

It makes no sense in linear thought. But it makes sense in our experience. If we try to hold onto people we love, they become restless and annoyed and they want their freedom and they pull away. Holding on to people does not hold on to a specific example of loving experience. In fact, it can destroy a loving experience.

Holding on to one's children does not maintain family fabric; it creates resentment and resistance and hurls them off into the world.

Trying to hold on to Bliss destroys it. It's as if you were sitting and you had a waft of flavor moving through the air and you smelled it. And your mind went back to memories of home life, childhood, a wonderful day with another person, as you smelled this wonderful smell. But if that smell remained, you would naturally become immune to it; your cells would get tired of recording that information. It wouldn't be new information. It would be old information and not worth focusing on. The cells that are reporting that particular smell get tired, they get worn out.

That's why physiologically we can't hold any one given moment in time. The cells can't hold it. They need to move on. In our mind, we can fantasize about holding on to Bliss.

What I'm inviting you to do is to examine what that means. Once again, *what does it look like to live in Bliss 24/7? What do you do with your time? How do you interact with the world?* It becomes very obvious that as you interact with the world and others, you can't hold on to a

particular moment. You need to be in the now with that person. If you try to project Bliss onto the situation, you're projecting a concept onto the situation.

It's similar to the virtual background behind me. It's cute, I like it. It's fun. And it's not real. I don't believe it's real. It's certainly not moving. The clouds aren't moving. It's a picture. After a while you don't pay attention to the picture; it's novel at first, and then you ignore it because you've got the information and you're ready to move on. That's why you can't hold Bliss.

The human being is an organic creature that moves in time and space. We cannot fixate and get stuck on one given moment, no matter how pleasurable it is. The idea is to find ways to not recreate Bliss, that's a forcing current approach.

The idea is not to recreate or grab Bliss, but to be open to it, to breathe into it...*isn't this fun in the moment? Wow, that was a good time. I think I'll go over here because I think I will enjoy some moments of it.* Without a demand that the entire hour and a half experience, be totally Blissful.

To accept it in a movie, in a play, in a conversation with someone, in an hour and a half, just as a marker point, you may experience a few moments of Bliss. It is not possible to only go to that moment. You can't just play that five second, 10 second segment and get the Bliss because the Bliss came from presenting yourself to the other person, listening and interacting, feeling imagination, passion, interest, and all of a sudden having elements come together.

Same thing with a book and with a film. It's a reality that an entire novel can be summarized in one moment for one person that holds the whole story for them. Well, another person, they find the whole story in another moment, which is, by the way, a different story, a different theme, a different outlook, a difference.

The importance here is, what a piece of genius, what artistry, it is to be able to offer a work to people. Each one finds their moment of *Wow* in that presentation. Same goes for these kinds of presentations that I do. I don't know what their meaning is. I don't know what their purposes are. I'm invited to do them by others who say they are useful for them. I trust that I'm willing to be here; I'm willing to present' I'm willing to talk about the different subjects. Different people are going to get different things out of it, some will get nothing.

What I'm speaking off here is that when we talk about living in Bliss, it is important to find out what Bliss actually will be for you, that is sustainable. I am suggesting that is only sustainable if you allow it to be organic and real, moment by moment. It comes and it goes. Rather than chasing it, sometimes it's important to stand still and allow it to wash over you again. Rather than running and trying to recreate it in an artificial manner.

Now, isn't it interesting that that came last in this series of subtopics the way I read the lecture, and here's how the Guide got there. In the first section, what I read was *there is nothing to fear*.

Now, that's why I picked this lecture because I thought that during the time of a pandemic, it might be important to hear a voice that is antithetical to our reality. I believe in the Pathwork lectures, I believe that there is nothing to fear. That kind of statement is unpopular in a time when it seems obvious that we must run and hide and protect ourselves.

The Guide is speaking on a different level. The Guide is suggesting that yes there may be a pandemic, with the Guide spoke today. There may be a pandemic and it may mean that some people are leaving us. It may mean that trials are coming for others of us, challenges, difficulties. If we deal with it, just in that sense, some people are leaving, some are staying.

There will be challenges. There will be decisions we have to make that we're not used to. We will be uncomfortable in some given situations like every other crisis in life, every other difficulty in life. The invitation here is to look at the gift that that brings.

Now, we all have different stories about this pandemic. For the first time in my life, I live in an apartment building, second time in my life, but in my adult life, I've never lived in an apartment building before. During this pandemic, someone took advantage of it - I don't know how to describe it - someone started stealing packages. Now that we're all ordering online, someone started stealing packages.

It turns out that the police are too busy to make this a top priority. It's not that they're ignoring it, but you got to catch the guy. And they take the packages and throw them away or throw the cartons away and walk off with the silliest of items that we think we need... carpet cleaner, face masks, vitamin pills, medications that can't necessarily be used by other people.

This tiny act of law breaking has disrupted the entire 67-unit apartment building. We're all upset. Because there was a sense that we could normalize a little bit and get the items that we thought we needed, we could order them and receive them in a very common and straightforward manner. Now this one person who is breaking the social contract is having us all rethink how we're going to get through this, how we're going to get medications, how we're going to get small household items, and having to extend ourselves even further.

Let's go back to there is nothing to fear. This situation made me angry. I was surprised at how angry it made me. This was not fair. It was not right. It was a violation of our rights. He has no right to violate my rights.

There is nothing to fear is about being willing to sit with what happens I got angry. I harbored negative, very negative thoughts about this person. I was frightened. I was angry and frightened because I couldn't do what I wanted to do. Some invisible being that we couldn't catch was interfering with my life in a way that had no control over it.

I don't think of myself as an angry person or vengeful person, but those emotions are right there and they came zooming up.

Those of you who are quarantined with family members are finding that you're having to work out some difficulties in your family relationships. It is unpleasant, is painful, it is tiresome, but it does need to be done. And as we do it, we will not do it perfectly. I did not deal with my anger and feelings of vengeance perfectly. I had to work through them. But to work through them, I had to see them. Now I'm going to marry there's nothing to fear with Bliss.

To achieve Bliss, you may need to work through emotions that you didn't realize you had, feelings you were not aware of, reactions that you would not have assumed until a given situation came along.

There is nothing to fear is almost a mantra for believing that life has a purpose. But its purpose is not necessarily what we imagined. The purpose is not to have a clean and stress free and not make many mistakes and achieve goals. That's a human egotistical view of happiness.

The spiritual view of happiness is to find out where we are undeveloped and immature, where we've hidden our feelings, where we have not looked at ourselves honestly and to have those rise to the surface to deal with them. And then allow some of them gradually to dissipate. There is Bliss in this. There is Bliss in awareness of what we actually feel. There's a sense of relief. When we finally get, I didn't realize I was so upset until I get angry at this small thing.

So, there is nothing to fear is directly related to Bliss. And that's why when the Guide gives a lecture, he seems to go - it's like a sailboat tacking - goes back and forth. You say, *why is this in that lecture and he's going over here is going over there*. It is my view that it all ties together beautifully. Once you get each individual point, you understand how they all fit together.

So that was the beginning of the end, there's nothing to fear which led to living in Bliss. And in the interim, was the lecture affecting and being affected. There are many lectures that addressed this. They address it from different perspectives, different viewpoints using different examples. Like everything else in life, you need to hear it 53 times before you get it. Some people get it on the 35<sup>th</sup>, some people get it on the third, some people get it on the 53<sup>rd</sup>, and some people wait to the 55<sup>th</sup>.

Affecting and being affected is about the reality that what I am doing right now may look like what would be on a transcription. So, if I make a transcription of this talk, and you see all the words even with proper punctuation and cleaning up some of the oral mistakes that people make that don't look good in writing. Even if you saw the transcription that's not really what's happening. I don't honestly know what's happening, which is why I don't fully understand the value of these summaries. But I do understand that there is value in people communicating what they care about to others. And this lecture talks about this energy system.

If I speak to you about love, but I harbor hate, your intellect may hear the words of love. But the deeper part of you, your heart, your intuitive sense, will know something wrong. There's a disconnect. There's a dissonance between the words that you're hearing and the energy behind them.

The Guide is saying that this is what happens in interactions. When we speak to other people, and we speak with a conflicted set of feelings, we think we're giving them a rose. They perceive getting a bouquet.

The second part of this is it just because I offer you a rose doesn't mean you see a rose. Just because I offer you a bouquet and I have a certain understanding of that bouquet, when you receive it, you may only see the one flower or the fern, or I don't know what you're going to see. Affecting and being affected is about understanding that you are affected by energies in me that I may not even be aware of.

That's why people who are ignorant can be effective if their energies are congruent, if they are really loving, they can mumble and you'll still get the love.

But no matter how eloquent you are, if you've got a conflicting message between your words and your energy, people are allowed to choose which they listen to, which they receive, which they prioritize.

In affecting and being affected, the invitation is to take responsibility for the entire communication that we're doing. If I speak of peace and love, but I am also full of fear, I have to take responsibility if the conversation turns to more fearful things; I've contributed to that. The trick is, I may not be aware that I've contributed to that.

That's where we point and blame. *You're not listening to me. I wasn't talking about that, come back to my subject, come back to what I wanted to talk about.*

If everyone was aware of everything that was going on, they would simply turn to me and say, *Jan, you were really speaking of fear. It's an interest of ours. So that's the tack we're going to follow.* And if I were more aware, I would say *yes, I know and I was hoping to minimize that, but you caught me. I was including fear in my message.*

We don't have these conversations except in moments of true vulnerable intimacy. We can honestly say to someone, *you didn't mean that. I heard your words, but you didn't mean it. I heard you didn't mean it.* Or the other person is willing to say, *there's truth in. It may not be 100% true. But there's truth. And so, I will accept that while I wanted to mean something. There was a part I didn't mean. And yes, I was giving you the equivalent of a mixed message.*

Because this is hard to name. And even when we name it, we name it with a sense of vengeance or a sense of one upmanship or a sense of trying to avoid the issue in the first place by picking on something else - distraction. Because we're not clean when we address it. The waters just get muddier, and muddier, and muddier, until we can have a good conversation.

When people complain of lack of intimacy, the Guide suggests that we have to take responsibility for our part in that. Intimacy is a two-way street. We need to be open and willing to be intimate, and so does the other person.

I was teasing during one of the online meetings that I did many years of Bible study as a child. There were certain phrases that stick in my brain and one was the biblical admonition from the Old Testament: *Beat your swords into plowshares.* There's a poetry to that antiqueness of language that I it resonates with me and it sticks with me...to beat your swords into plowshares beat your weapons of warfare into tools of agriculture. So, you can plow the fields, feed your families, and live a good life.

But even as a child, I realized that dilemma, and that is who's going to do that first. *Which army is going to give up their weapons of destruction, and go off and plow the fields when the other army still has their weapons?*

This is what happens when we attempt to be intimate. We may try to force intimacy by being overly vulnerable, and refusing to put up defenses and then when the other person behaves, I want to say normally, they didn't take the invitation. When they behave normally, we react in horror - *you're not taking my invitation.*



Affecting and being affected is about learning where you were demanding that they accept your invitation. It wasn't a choice on your part to simply be a certain kind of person. It was a tit for tat and unwritten contract that you were throwing out that you wanted the other person to respond in a specific way. When people don't respond the way we want them to respond, we react as if they've done something wrong. They haven't done anything wrong. They're not interested in the way we're interested. They're not willing to respond in the way we expect.

And when I was a kid, you had baseball bats and you had to choose who was going to pitcher or play first, and you went like this on the bat, you choke the bat until somebody kept the bat at the top. That's what conversations can feel like sometimes, they feel like an escalating sense of competitiveness, or defenses. Until finally, it's capped off, it's cut off. *I don't want to talk about this anymore. You're not making any sense. You're too emotional. You're too intellectual. You're too overwhelming. You're too, your too, your too* This is a way of trying to discount the other person.

When you discount the other person, the other person feels discounted. And no one just lays down and says, *Well, I obviously have no value and you can step all over me.* So, there is an energetic back and forth that continues and clashes and creates more and more uncomfortable feelings, hurt feelings, negativity, becomes more defensive. This is how arguments escalate like a mushroom cloud. And that's what this lecture addresses - the idea that we are affected and we are being affected by the energy system of the other person.

Also, they are being affected by our energy system. The invitation is that at some point we need to take responsibility for what we're doing before we can hold the other person responsible for what they're doing.

Now, the question is always, *if I'm unconscious of what's going on, how can I take responsibility for it?* This is where being aware, being observant, being objective comes in. You may not know you're doing something. But you can notice effects. You can notice reactions; reactions that you don't expect. When you notice a reaction that you don't expect, you can backtrack and say, *where did that come from? What did they see?* If you've got a defense going - *I didn't do anything. They must be looking over my shoulder, somebody else must have done something.* You're passing the buck to somebody else instead of honestly saying *I wonder what they saw. Was it clean? Were they really inhabiting what I was saying? Or was I being superficial and holding back something, or did I have a hidden agenda, etc.* You get the idea.

What I wanted to go through was what this lecture was about. And I found that linearly, it might be boring, so I mixed it up. Did the last thing, the first thing in the middle. My intent here is to encourage you to read the lecture, because it's great. The study Guide is intended to make the lecture more accessible by delineating points that can get buried in the text sometimes.

Thank you for listening. I hope you stay safe and well, and that you find happiness with your family and your loved ones. Take care