

Pathwork® Steps

Affecting and Being Affected

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 188

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

Week 1: There is Nothing to Fear

Week 2: Affecting and Being Affected

Week 3: Dynamics of Positive and of Negative Intentionality

Week 4: Living in Contact with Your Innermost Being = Living in Bliss

I have been uncertain what subscribers would find useful as a monthly topic while the effects of the Covid-19 virus are still in motion. I invite you to find what speaks to you. The Spiritual Meaning of Crisis PL 182? Meditations PLs 68, 182, 194? Prayer PLs 9, 36? The Spiritual Meaning of Relationship PL 180?

All of the Pathwork Lectures teach that 'there is nothing to fear' is a spiritual reality. I chose PL 188 because it felt helpful to the process of changing false beliefs.

The Greek myth of [Pandora's Box](#) resonates for me here. What if our fears are not about our inner divine worth and nature, but are based upon an interim phase specific to this planet, where we have been given the opportunity to release the energy of the lower self? We open our hearts and experience pain and suffering. Like Pandora, we rush to close the container, fearing even more evil will emerge, unable to believe in the power of love, unwilling to challenge the illusion that negativity will prevail. And so we live in fear.

'There is nothing to fear' can be easily misinterpreted. It is not an invitation to be careless or unloving, or to blithely ignore the realities of cause and effect. Consider 'wearing' this attitude for a while every day. Invite fear to explain itself. Bring fears forward ([ref: PL 68, Thought Processes](#)) instead of letting them hide in the background.

Listen. Decide what YOU believe is real. Notice what aligns with who you want to be, what you aspire to accomplish, what you believe would be best for everyone.

Wash, rinse, repeat. Meaning consider this as an ongoing life process, like breathing, eating, sleeping, and waking. Releasing our fears allows more room for bliss.

jr / March 2020

Week 1: There is Nothing to Fear

Only a strong, healthy, robust ego can afford to let go of itself. Where over-control exists for some time and has exhausted the personality, man then often resorts to false means to liberate himself from the burden of over-control. He looks for a state of relief, and so he often inadvertently grabs for false and even dangerous means for relief in which he can experience the wonder and richness of the universe

The Longing for and the Fear of Happiness PL 142

There is Nothing to Fear

Greetings and blessings for all of you present here, my dearest friends. Our mutual aim is to truly find the core of your real being and to thus find your real existence. This real existence is light and beauty.

In this real existence there is nothing to fear.

The guidance I have given in all these years directs and helps you, step by step, to get through the maze of your illusions -- the maze of your illusory fears of life, of self, of being.

All those steps you undertake (in order to ward off the recognition of the experience of this illusory self) alienate you so much farther from your nucleus, your true existence in bliss, in which you know there is nothing to fear.

But you must go through the fear in order to find that it is illusion, and in order to choose whether or not you wish to continue living in this illusion -- or to give it up.

The latter requires some effort and willingness to change and chance some unknown modes of living and being, of reacting and acting.

PL 188

Exercise 1a: Say *'There is nothing to fear'* throughout the day for one week.

Notice if this changes your attitude in any way. Notice any objections, feelings or arguments. Notice where feelings of fear bring a sense of relief; *'That's the problem!'* suggests a solution is possible.

Chronic feelings of fear affect our outlook on life = our attitude towards any given situation. Attitudes (*'a manner of thinking, feeling, or behaving that reflects a state of mind or disposition'*) are spiritual choices, even though they are often approved, encouraged, and supported through childhood or societal conditioning.

Yet our attitude is the only aspect of life we can completely control. Try that out! Be happy despite anyone else's encouragement. Be sad despite anyone's efforts to cheer you up. Practice a sense of calm attentiveness.

The Common Denominator of all Human Fear

There is one common denominator, and that is that you fear the destructive and demonic aspects of temporary, distorted parts of your inner being.

This is what your consciousness, in its separation, cannot reconcile itself to. This is what it cannot accept, what it does not know how to accept. The consciousness is fearful to be overwhelmed by the destructive energies just because it has never accepted them.

Consciousness is too proud and too impatient, too much geared to limiting vision and thinking, in order to make room for all the opposites that exist within the human soul. And just because of the limiting tendency of consciousness, the opposites cannot be transcended.

Only by full acceptance of the distortion can this distortion transform itself back to its original state -- into the beautiful, creative force that energizes you and gives you so much more power and bliss. As I said in many different ways over the years, there can be no way into blissful reality unless you give up the wishful thinking that makes you unwilling to face the irrational, destructive aspects of yourself.

PL 188

Exercise 1b: Find the 'hook' that fear uses to insist that it is indispensable.

What am I afraid of?

Is this a realistic fear today, or is it a leftover from my childhood / family experiences?

What does fear give me? (i.e., a sense that I understand what is going on, feeling of being connected with others who are also afraid, motivation to work harder, excuse not to work at all)

Do I connect feelings of safety and security to an exaggerated sense of danger?

Do I use fear as an excuse for not being more loving, more wise, more courageous?

Do I fear being fearless? What is it about being fearful that I might long for?

How was fear used in my family to manage and manipulate?

Look Truth in the Face

When this truthfulness, this courage, and this humility are practiced and gradually become second nature, there is nothing to fear, and all unfulfillment ceases.

When you cultivate truthfulness and a total constructive involvement in which you give the best of yourself, your attention, and honesty; when this discipline is cultivated, then you have nothing to fear of letting go.

The cohesive factor that makes all danger impossible, that removes all threats, that combines the apparent opposites of discipline and letting go, is the ever renewed will to be truthful with the self; to face whatever the self is; to give one's very best self to life -- all one's honesty, integrity, and constructiveness, all one's most sincere and total attention. The more this becomes ingrained, the less there is to fear in letting go, and the less one needs to guard against anything. Thus a relaxed, spontaneous being is at one with the cosmic flow of life.

To the degree fear of the un-volitional processes of inner life still exists and to the degree they are still distrusted and their self-regulating reality ignored, self-deception must still exist; a will to be destructive and negative must still exist; a desire to cheat life must still exist.

The Self-Regulating Nature of Involuntary Processes PL 153

Exercise 1c: Cultivate this attitude every day: *"I want to look the truth in the face, whatever it is, under all circumstances at all times, and whatever the momentary difficulty may be."* PL 153

Daily Review PL 28

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

Week 2: Affecting and Being Affected

The topic of tonight's lecture is how you affect your surroundings from this destructive level of your being. How do you affect others? And, conversely, how are you being affected by others from their destructive parts. This is a very complicated and extremely important topic, which is not easy to comprehend.

I would say the only way you can truly connect with this topic and make something helpful for yourself out of it is when you have already gained a certain amount of insight and have accepted some of the irrational, ignorant, destructive part of the childish, primitive self within you.

When you come to the point when you no longer need to deny, project, and defend against this evil part; when you can clearly acknowledge it; then you can truly deal with the complications that arise out of human interaction on those concealed levels of your and other people's destructiveness and ignorance.

Conflict on the Primitive, Irrational Level Creates Guilt

First of all, I would like to mention here a very basic confusion and pain that all mankind suffers from. Whether or not individuals are specifically aware of this conflict, it always exists. Again, the more aware of it you are and consequently the better you can face it and deal with it, the sooner you will resolve it.

This conflict is the following: on the primitive, irrational level, you hate and want to destroy senselessly and hardly know any longer why you hate and want to destroy. On this level you are totally egotistical and therefore unwilling to accept any frustration, little or big. Here you are unwilling to deal with any difficulties, and therefore you cannot meaningfully and effectively assert your personality. Whatever the reasons may be, this irrational hate and wish to destroy exists in every single human being. You manage not to be aware of your hate and destructiveness, and that is the root of all emotional sickness and suffering.

As you progress through the discipline of self-facing, you become more aware, accept that aspect, and thus transcend it.

Hidden Guilt Creates Confusion

As you become thus aware, you also have to deal specifically with the confusion of your guilt. Hidden guilt is very devastating. It creates a vicious circle by itself that maintains the destructiveness. The guiltier you feel, the more you hide whatever makes you feel guilty and the less you become capable of dissolving and transforming it. This incapacity in turn increases the guilt. Alongside of this, the more you hide from yourself, the more you frustrate yourself and deprive yourself of the good that life is meant to be. Thus you become angrier, more hating, and more destructive.

Even if this does not manifest in overt acts, your so-called unconscious guilt leads you into manifest hating actions and attitudes that reject others and life and the goodness of being.

PL 188

Exercise 2a: Find your vicious circle ([ref PL 50](#)) around any hidden guilt based upon the description above. Draw a picture of it, like a roller coaster that keeps going because of the dynamics it creates, or a clock face.

Handling Hidden Guilt

There are two basic schools of thought that have existed throughout the ages on this earth sphere. The one says that you are not responsible for your feelings and un-manifest attitudes. You are only responsible for your actions and deeds. So, if you [only] hate and [only] wish to kill and destroy, to be spiteful and malicious, you do not need to feel guilty about it.

The other school of thought says that thoughts and attitudes are living realities and have their effect on others. That would then mean that a true guilt exists for these thoughts and attitudes.

Also, we must consider the question whether the hidden tendency to be destructive can leave deeds and actions totally unaffected. I just said that it is unthinkable for hidden hate not to manifest in some way, even if the personality refrains from active deeds. It is a deed, too, if one holds back from loving and giving. Every so often, the denied hatred manifests in an apparently harmless passivity that seems directed against the self "only." But the underlying seething hatred prevents positive deeds of loving and giving, it prevents one from contributing to life. So, in the final analysis, all acts and deeds flow from the underlying substance and energy of the person.

These two, apparently opposite schools of thought, or modes of approaching life, the world, yourself, and others exist in everyone and breed a great deal of confusion. Which is true? How do you handle this question? Before we can go any further regarding the mutual interaction on the destructive levels between human beings, this question must first be cleared up. How could it be that both alternatives are true, valid, and not mutually exclusive?

The Antidote is more Dangerous than the Poison Itself

It is absolutely true that guilt for your primitive destructive self is more destructive than the evil part itself. It is true that you must accept in order to dissolve.

It is also true that there is a vast difference between **an overt action of destruction** and the **mental and emotional existence of this aspect** in humankind. *This is true in spite of what I said before about the definite effects and influences of hidden attitudes.* Yet to assume a self-destructive, self-eroding guilt about them adds insult to injury; it makes matters so much worse.

In this guilt you annihilate yourself and become more destructive. You prohibit yourself from living. Nevertheless it is truly a reality that your thoughts and feelings, your wishes and attitudes have power.

PL 188

Exercise 2b: Before addressing how to reconcile these two apparent opposites in yourself, it is important to find them. Otherwise, the mind will minimize or deny them.

Find your hatreds. Their strength is based upon your unwillingness to find them. Of course these are primitive and irrational! Write down what you hate and why your target deserves hatred.

Then find the guilt. Write down why you are bad for hating.

Reconciliation: Affecting Others Affects Us

Now, the reconciliation of these two apparent opposites lies in one fact only, and that is your honest attempts to make your own destructiveness conscious without justifying it with the destructiveness or limitation of others.

The moment you do this, you inactivate destructiveness without denying or hiding it.

When you deny your hate and malice, your egotism and spite, you breed trouble -- for yourself and others. The denial of the demon in you creates very damaging effects. F

or example, in the denial, you need to blame and accuse so as to make others responsible for what you feel too guilty about facing squarely. You, who work so diligently on this path, have verified this again and again in how you fall into the temptation to build cases, to use others' actual or imaginary evil so as to deny your own. You distort and exaggerate in order to falsify. You deal with half-truths, for what you use as your case may at times harbor elements of actual evil in others.

It is untrue, however, to make them responsible for your misery. This is one of the most profound manifestations of denying self-responsibility and nurturing a dependent attitude. In effect, you say, *"I am dependent on the other's evil or on his freedom from it."*

It is not difficult to see the bind that this puts you in. If on a semiconscious level you express this message into life, on a deeper level of your unconscious you must pay the price and follow through.

You must then also express into life, *"My evil is responsible for the suffering of others."*

Thus, you fluctuate between infantile dependency in which you are under the illusion that you are helpless in the face of the other's wrongdoing and, at the same time, omnipotent in the responsibility that this attitude imposes upon you.

Others are victimized by your incompleteness.

Conversely, the moment you fully assume responsibility for your own suffering by looking for your own evil attitudes, your own distortions and destructive tendencies (regardless of how wrong others may be) you liberate yourself from guilt.

You will know from personal experience that, as you can be affected by others only to the degree you refute and ignore your own negativities, **so can others be affected by yours only to the degree they refute theirs.**

PL 188

Exercise 2c: Find examples in your life where you were negative, cruel, or hateful (in feelings, thoughts or actions), and then others took that reality as an excuse to continue or escalate their own negativity, cruelty, or hatefulness.

As in interim step, see if you can recognize this universal human dynamic playing out in popular stories or films. It can be useful to find a model of what we are looking for in ourselves ([ref PL 210, Visualization Process](#)) by seeing it in others first.

Week 3: Dynamics of Positive and of Negative Intentionality

Dynamics of Positive Intentionality: how you affect others from your positive, self-realized, purified levels of being (as well as from your negative levels). The clear, free, liberated, purified levels where you are constructive and creative, where you are in truth and loving, where you want to give of yourself and are, at the same time, strong and self-assertive and do not permit the other person's destructiveness to impinge upon you have a very strong effect on your surroundings.

This effect exists on all levels. On the overt, manifest level of actions, deeds, words, you will have a particular strength, direct influence for the good, and you will set an example although your strength will, at times, be misunderstood.

Those who cannot render you responsible for their suffering, when they pin their evil on you, will not be successful because you have learned to face your destructive self. This may, at times, cause resentments, but in the long run it will have a very purifying effect.

On the unconscious levels, the energies that emanate from you will have an even stronger effect. Your pure energy can penetrate the fog and murkiness and can disperse the poison. Thus it happens that such a free person can by-pass evil layers and reach directly beyond them, activating the best in the other person. This may give this other person an inkling of what he can be, so that he will no longer have to hide from himself.

Dynamics of Negative Intentionality: Your unrecognized, unadmitted, projected, denied destructiveness immediately affects the counterpart in others. Mutual accusation, self-righteous blaming, compulsion to build a case -- all these evasive tactics build and built the negative interaction, the strife and conflict, the pain and confusion.

PL 188

Exercise 3a: Look for dynamics fueled by **positive intentionality** in the actions of others. Being able to see them is a skill! Focus on intent, allowing that nothing is pure on the earth plane.

To whatever degree you are thus liberated, the effect is immense.

You affect the equally liberated levels of inner existence, of psychic reality of others so that a wonderful, marvelous energy is increasingly generated. This energy multiplies and multiplies and reaches out, uniting with other similarly constituted energy streams. It takes on more momentum. It seeps through the muddiness and murkiness and darkness that the negativities create. It can effectively penetrate the poisonous walls of separation created by error, ignorance, lies, illusion, malice, hatred. To the degree this liberated level is strong, to that degree it has power to dissolve evil -- in self and others.

And you now know what this strength in you depends on: the key of acknowledgment of irrational destruction in you. The strength depends on the degree you are doing this constantly.

PL 188

Exercise 3b: Notice any changes in energy when people work together well, even momentarily. Honor your perceptions without demanding immediate understanding. Reading energy is a skill!

The Key of Life

When you are in an in-between state, when it fluctuates because at times you use this key but in some areas you refrain from doing so, there will be a fluctuating battle between you and others on the unconscious levels.

Where your liberated state is still weak, it may succumb to the ferocity of accusation and blame of the other person -- perhaps purely unspoken and unconscious -- because this other person is still "strong" in denial of self-responsibility and has artificially aggrandized his self-righteous accusation. In other instances and relationships, your liberated true strength may have the greater effect and win over the already weakened negative self of others, whose projections and accusations may not be counteracted if you are yourself in the state of denial and accusation, but can easily be counteracted when you are freed to only a lesser degree by dint of using the great key of life under discussion here.

When two people's unconscious levels affect each other, all the varying, fluctuating states of both must be taken into account, at any given moment. The degrees and variations are as infinite as there exist human states of consciousness. Whatever becomes the predominant overall "result" is determined by whatever degree this key of life is used or not used by either or both. Warfare and mutual destruction is the final outcome of two entities (nations or individuals) not using the key.

The more you use this key and stop hiding behind the ills of others, the more you will strengthen your whole being and enable the real self to manifest, you will combine with the liberated aspects of others, you will affect them, you will encourage it in others, while it will transcend the negativities of others, helping them to experience their real self beyond those negativities.

Thus a new feeling of self is being born -- the knowledge that the negative self is not the only reality. This interchange will take place, not necessarily by what you say, but by how you affect their being. Also, what you say will have a different impact. How you say it, how you act, how you feel to others will be absolutely determined by your strength of meeting your own negativities. In that way you spread good.

Being affected by others

Most human beings, in their current phase of development, are still in the state of fearful defense against living, even when there is no cause for it and when they are in touch with those who are ready to give them love and help. Thus they spread evil by virtue of their being closed up to truth and love, to giving and receiving. But a number of developed human beings are no longer in this state and are free enough to give out the best of themselves, undefended. However, this does not yet make them immune to being affected by the destructiveness of others. They may be very easily affected by the unconscious negative thoughts and feelings, the polluted energy of other people, and are thus victimized and dependent.

True immunity comes only when this dependency no longer exists, when the other person's negativity can no longer affect you

PL 188

Exercise 3c: Assume that you say this (or something like it) at least 1x a week. *"I demand perfection around me so that I can remain in what I have gained, so that I can remain in my clarified, blissful state."* Become a detective! Your clues are your own demands, judgements, forcing currents (ref. PL 77). 'I don't understand' or 'I am confused' can hide an ultimatum: 'And I won't cooperate until I feel happy about doing so.'

The Vicious Circle of Dependency and Vulnerability

No matter how much you have done this, there are still unclear areas, for otherwise you would not be so vulnerable and so affected by the others' perhaps much more obvious ills. This means you must still return to this earth life and live in this sphere of duality, where you must battle with the opposites -- pleasure and pain, life and death, good and evil. You cannot transcend these opposites as long as the key of life is not used.

When you are so affected by others' negativities, you must truly explore what makes you so vulnerable. Defenses are built to ward off the pain of other people's cruelty, hostility, meanness, the unjustified demands they make upon the world, therefore also on you. You will not need to build your false defenses when everything reverberates and nothing comes through to you.

Dependency and vulnerability on the psychic level must be a correspondence to a psychological refutation of self-responsibility, and insistence to blame life or others for your misery. **There must be some area in which you are not honestly meeting yourself. For if you do --if you wholly and completely do -- the negative energy and emanation of others will be totally ineffective on you.**

Thus these defenses are to your detriment. They prohibit the good of life to come into you and the best of you to come out into life, filling you with the best there is -- your own good feelings. This is made impossible by these unconscious and debilitating defenses.

When these defenses are being abandoned, you can melt with life, melt with the psychic substances of others, where exchanges of love, exchanges of truth, can take place. This universal truth manifests with all individuals in their own unique way. This variety gives living a special excitement without disrupting deep inner peace. The flow of interchange enriches you so deeply that there are no words to describe it. It is the exact opposite way of living that accrues from being encased in your defensive walls which completely separate you and create great loneliness. These defenses create a very unhappy existence, a very dependent, limited, and suffering existence!

When you have not explored those levels of your being, you blame others for their evil because you shy away from facing your own. In this state you must be extremely vulnerable -- which might be rationalized by a prideful claim of being "so sensitive." But this sensitivity is not a sign of a unique individuality in the divine sense. It is a distortion in itself and not necessary. In this state, everything must hurt and penetrate you. If you do not avail yourself with vigor of the key I hand you again and again, you absolutely need your destructive defenses that shut you out of life.

PL 188

Exercise 3d: Why you would NOT honestly meet yourself? Make a list.

Consider that **not** honestly meeting yourself **increases** vulnerability and dependence. Holding others responsible for your happiness limits you to their capacity for spiritual progress.

Week 4: Living in Contact with Your Innermost Being = Living in Bliss

It is your task to find a mode of being in which you are adequately defended, not sickly defended; realistically defended, not unrealistically. This realistic and adequate defense against being adversely affected by the evil of others is the total meeting of our own evil -- the daily, renewed determination to do so.

The signs are always there; the helpful hints that life offers you are your gauges. They consist in your anxious, angry, confused reactions -- perhaps first you know not what. If you refrain from habitual pushing aside of what disturbs you and rationalizing it, you may first find that you are upset about what others do to you.

It may seem or be an injustice. But do not remain on that level where you talk yourself into it, convincing yourself that this justifies and explains your disturbance. When you resist this temptation and go beyond it, you are heeding life's lesson and sign.

One day lived in a blissful state, in which you are alive and deeply in contact with your innermost being and thus with the whole universe, emanating joy and having truly deep and meaningful exchanges with others in which you do not have to ward off life from within and without, will make you know that on that day you have not defended against anything.

But also, possibly you were fortunate on that day to come into the psychic circumference of strong, clear, liberated spiritual energy and consciousness. No unconscious destructiveness of others came your way.

Exercise 4a: Consider this possibility: *Negative influx is not directed against 'you' because you are 'you', but simply because you are another human being and represent "the enemy."*

When you believe that 'you are the legitimate target of negative influx, you operate in a dependent state; your reality is determined by another's needs, decisions, moods, and agendas. This inevitably creates an underlying sense of anxiety.

Seeing Evil does not Make You Evil

The capacity to acknowledge your own irrational self -- without totally becoming it -- renders you free. The need to concentrate on the ills of others is a destructive act in itself. It makes it impossible to really fight the evil in you.

The cleanliness of this knowledge makes you very strong and dissolves negative energy. When you hide your evil behind the evil of others, you invariably become weak and your fight is ineffective. Effective fight, healthy aggression becomes possible only when you no longer hide from yourself, from your own honest insight, when you no longer wish to cover up your destructiveness, when you cease to be hypocritical on this most subtle of levels.

PL 188

The Power of Honest Acknowledgment

These apparent opposite orientations are reconciled by the key I am constantly recommending to you: face your evil, your irrationality, your primitive destructive aspects **without losing sight that this is only a minor aspect of you.**

If you completely identify with this hidden part, it is impossible to live and assume responsibility for it. Yet, the more you hide it, the more you secretly believe that this is your real self, your only truth.

When you take it out of hiding, the wonderful reality dawns upon you that there is so much more to you than you have secretly given yourself credit for. In using this key, you cannot act out the evil, directly or indirectly. You cannot spread evil. The evil thoughts, feelings, and wishes can be dealt with in a direct and effective way when they are acknowledged. The moment you deny them, poison is emanated from you onto others, and it spreads in your own psychic and physical system.

This shows, once again, in a very clear-cut example that you can verify every day of your life if you truly look at your interactions in your relationships, that the key to life is the honest acknowledgment of your primitive, destructive part. This key will finally open the gates that make you capable of sustaining the bliss of the real world, which tries to communicate itself constantly to you and which you must ward off fearfully and/or blindly as long as these areas of your being have not been acknowledged, as long as you fearfully deny and resist your negativity.

The Power of Daily Review ([ref. PL 28](#))

Most days offer opportunities to do this. The many reactions of discomfort you register should be taken more into your field of vision. They harbor the clue.

Whatever your reactions to others may be, reactions that do not make you quite glad with yourself and others, they should be examined. These reactions and incidents that come to you are the reminders that the greatest therapist of all extends to you -- life itself.

Exercise 4b: There is something for you to see and find that you have not truly recognized: why are you so vulnerable? Heed the pain or discomfort that you suffer now, and decide with all the vigor and determination of your courageous self, *"I want to see that part in me that is responsible for being affected by another's evil."* Then you cannot fail to discover it and be more liberated and more secure than ever.

PL 188

Precisely because this path allows no escape, this path is a hard taskmaster. It dispenses with all sentimentality that encourages your weakness and self-evasions. But because of this, it keeps the promise it makes, as more of you begin to actually find out and literally experience. The finding of your real values is possible only when the courage is mastered to find your evil, distorted aspects. You must and will find your true capacity to love and be loved -- not as a concept, thought, or ideal, not as an illusion but as an actually experienced reality in your everyday life. These are not empty promises and far away ideals. These are the promises that life makes and holds for him who uses the key of life on this plane of existence. The more you do this, the less you will be in need to defend yourself against pain and therefore against the bliss of life, the gift of life, that comes to you at all times

Study Guide © Jan Rigsby: 2020
Guide Quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999
Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org