

Pathwork™ Steps

Basic Principles of Pathwork Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 193

Week 1: Pathwork Approach and Aims

Week 2: Accessing All Levels of the Human Personality

Week 3: The Level of Experience

Week 4: Useful Concepts in the Pathwork Process

Week 1: Pathwork Approach and Aims

There are two Basic Approaches to Human Spirituality:

1. To emphasize, concentrate, and focus on the divine possibility within, until this possibility becomes a reality. Many movements exist which have practices and teachings and exercises that help actively and effectively toward this end. All energies and concentration are directed toward cultivating and enhancing, manifesting and expressing the divine reality within.

However, this does not necessarily mean that the other fragmentary levels of consciousness are thereby automatically eliminated and incorporated into the divine center. It is quite possible and, indeed, a frequent occurrence that such practices genuinely bring out the real higher self, yet leave the undeveloped aspects of consciousness intact.

Many entities have such an intense longing to realize their divine, inherent nature that they forget, while in the body, that they came to fulfill a mission in the universal plan. This mission is the purification and growth of undeveloped "cosmic matter."

In order to do this, the second approach must be adopted.

2. Shedding the light of conscious awareness and experience on the inner distortions, the ugliness, the darkness, the evil, the suffering, as well as on the inner truth, the beauty, the love, the goodness, the joy.

This requires one to develop a fine sensitivity so that the organic rhythm and alternation that each individual path expresses can be perceived: to know when to focus more on the one aspect, when more on another; when to concentrate on the higher self so as to strengthen its staying power and make it possible for it to give further guidance; when to pay attention to the lower self with its hidden evil, its dishonesty and cheating, its camouflaged hate and malice; when to focus on the specific devices of the mask self -- how it masks itself, what defenses it uses in order to keep the lower self hidden, etc.; and to know when the moment is here to experience feelings that have been avoided.

The fine alternations must be sensed both by the person and by the helper, for everyone has a different rhythm. Do not overlook the fact that it is possible to get in touch with the divine self genuinely and then use it to camouflage the split off, distorted aspects of consciousness. The divine is neutral and will follow the will direction of consciousness in its immutable way.

Our approach to spirituality and to the realization of the spiritual self is the second of the two ways.

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Exercise 1a: Spiritual work is similar to a cleaning task; specific 'layers' of negativity can be very responsive to conscious positive intent, while 'stuck on' layers (misconceptions and false beliefs that we have become attached to or hide behind) can be more resistant to our outer will. Reflect on spiritual work that you have done. Were some tasks easier, while others may have been harder to identify and address?'

Pathwork Aims

The aim of this approach to spiritual reunion is to help toward a re-unification of everything that has ever split itself off. Our path is a taxing path, but it is reality. It does not lead to illusion and to splitting off. It brings out into concrete experience what may still smolder underground un-manifested, what is bound to reach the surface and create experience at one time or another. It is always easier and quicker to transcend a state when we have deliberately confronted it, when the self accepts his present inner state and wants to go through it -- rather than when confrontation [comes from outside influences]. An entity who chooses such a path incorporates himself into the divine plan.

A. Developing awareness. Lack of awareness creates misconceptions. Misconceptions create negative energy and feelings. Negative energy and feelings create suffering. This chain must be reversed and can be reversed only when awareness of the mask self, of the lower self, and finally of the higher self can be attained through various processes and approaches.

B. Working with all levels of the human personality -- each level in a different way: the level of mind and thought; the level of will; the level of feelings; the level of physicality and physical expression; and the level of experience.

C. Unification. Only when the lower and mask selves are entirely conscious and their exact manifestation understood can misconceptions be corrected. When all these levels are conscious, when their inevitable divergence from each other is faced and accepted, the mask and lower selves dissolve, and a unification process can begin. The aim is to unify all these levels so that only the true higher self manifests and expresses itself.

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It is extremely difficult to visualize the new state to be grown or moved into unless an example of some sort exists. Visualization is quite essential to the creating and recreating work you do in meditation. Unless you can visualize the state you are to grow into, it is hardly possible to reach it. Therefore, an example or a prototype provided by a figure who already has attained the desired state is essential if you are to print the proper concept onto your mind. This "map," or "blueprint," is the first step. It is the idea that later materializes. Without the idea, materialization is completely impossible.

[*Visualization Process For Growing into the Unitive State*](#) PL 210

Exercise 1b : Who do you admire? Admiration can be a message from your Higher Self.

What do you sense would complete your being, help you perform your life task?

How (where, with whom) have you already experienced this quality? Use techniques from [Daily Review PL 28](#), Or, for a week, jot down brief notes about what people, thoughts, acts, or observations you find inspirational.

Week 2: Accessing All Levels of the Human Personality

The levels to be worked with on the path are the following aspects of the human personality: The level of mind and thought; the level of will; the level of feelings; the level of physicality and physical expression; and the level of experience. When all these levels are conscious, when their inevitable divergence from each other is faced and accepted, a unification process can begin. When the lower self is understood, accepted, and dissolved, when the mask is dispensed with, then unification in the spiritual reality of being can take place in a realistic way.

All levels must be dealt with in the conscious and in the unconscious. These two approaches vary from personality aspect to personality aspect. You have to work differently with the level of mind than with the levels of will, of feeling, and of the body.

1. The Level of Mind and Thought

The level of mind must deal with the concepts, that is to say the misconceptions. Thoughts and thought processes that are directed into an erroneous channel affect all other levels. They always create vicious circles [Ref: PL 50]. These vicious circles entrap you, they put you into a hopeless situation. But the moment the vicious circle is broken, you are liberated from the entrapment.

It is therefore imperative to clearly see, understand, and give up these components of attitude and behavior that create the vicious circle. This always means to basically change a concept, a thought process, an approach to reality. The misconception must be recognized as such: why it is one, how it exists, and in what way does it lead into a vicious circle. All this must be clearly perceived, understood, made conscious, and eventually emotionally experienced.

It is not enough to have a theoretical understanding of these inner processes. Only through the emotional experience can the misconception be replaced by a true conception. Misconceptions can be quite conscious, but you do not necessarily know that they are misconceptions. Therefore your conscious beliefs must also be tested and investigated.

Misconceptions can be vaguely conscious in a nebulous way when your actions and reactions testify to the fact that you are governed by misconceptions, but you have not concisely specified what these are and what their consequences are. Or misconceptions can be unconscious. In that case, the Pathwork must deal with making them conscious. This can only be done by examining the life manifestation.

One's life does not lie. It expresses exactly what you really, inwardly believe. You may consciously claim that you are a loving person and indeed believe in love. But if you suffer from a loveless life, it testifies clearly that somewhere inside of you, you do not believe in love, do not want to love, and have your "reasons" (i.e., misconceptions) for not loving. Hence, unconscious misconceptions can only be unearthed by looking at the person's life, his suffering, his frustration, his unfulfilled longings.

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2. The Level of Will

In order to work on the level of will, you have to understand first of all that there is an outer and an inner will [[Ref: PL 64](#)]. To put it differently, there is a voluntary and an involuntary will action. These two levels of will also have to be scrutinized, understood, and made conscious. Where distortions, misconceptions, negativities exist in a psyche, the will forces are out of balance. Where the will should be active, it is often paralyzed and stagnant. Where it should be receptive and passive, it is tight, forced, and active. Thus, a reestablishment of balance must occur as the purification proceeds.

On the level of mind, you must come to distinguish in what areas you must act, initiate -- in short, use your inherent capacity to will. This may apply to actions or to an attitude expressed toward life -- will action also applies to attitudes.

You must also discern in what areas to momentarily accept your limitations of will and let go of the forcing current of an overactive will. This reestablishing of will currents cannot be done by the outer will. If this is being recognized and the pressure of the outer will relaxed, the inner will can come to the fore and begin its functioning.

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It may be very easy to believe that this commitment is what you want on a merely conscious level. There you may be full of good will and really mean it. But unless you have gotten in touch with the contradictory levels where you do not wish that commitment, where instead you only wish it on your ego-terms, then you want to balk.

Unless you acknowledge this level of your contrariness, fear, self-will, and pride, your conscious commitment will always be blocked and never quite "take." Unless you own up to the contrary ego-level hidden behind the good will, you may not even understand why certain results are still lacking in spite of your conscious commitment to truth, to God, to love.

[*Visualization Process For Growing into the Unitive State*](#) PL 210

Exercise 2a: Find an aspect of your life where effort is required to attain a goal or overcome a personality flaw, but where you have been unable to commit to the work. Consider that a contradictory belief may be present.

Be creative! Imagine you are thinking about someone else – what common contradictory beliefs are likely to exist?

3. The level of feelings.

Again, where there are misconceptions of the mind (whether they be conscious or unconscious) and where there is an imbalance of the inner and outer will level, feelings are destructive, stagnant, painful. The energy of the feeling body is paralyzed and blocked. Therefore it is a substantial aspect of any process of unification and purification to experience the feeling level -- or the feeling body, if you will -- and let out the paralyzed blocks of feelings, whatever they may be. They must be dealt with on the conscious level in order to be rechanneled constructively (destructive feelings can certainly be constructively expressed).

If this is not being done, negative, painful feelings will stagnate on an unconscious level and prohibit the personality from healthy functioning, from good feelings, from the vital energy

flow which is the nature of universal life. This inevitably leads to an indirect and destructive acting out of such feelings, of which most of the time the personality is entirely unaware. He sees no other alternative than acting, reacting, and being the way he is; and he overlooks the fact, that is often crystal clear to his environment, that he acts out negative feelings.

In dealing with the feeling level, you have to learn how to get in touch with feelings that are locked up in you. This, too, may be discernible only indirectly -- by the manifestations of your life, by your life experience.

The experiencing and expressing of feelings that were deemed to be unacceptable and/or unbearable, and the ability to sustain them, to handle them, is the only way a person can lose fear, anxiety, and tension. As long as he hopes against hope that his life should be free from painful feelings, he hopes for an illusion. And deep down he knows it, yet clings to it. Hence he is afraid and feels shaky and inadequate. But when his own feelings can be experienced, no matter what they are, he becomes automatically secure, unafraid, and therefore relaxed. And this state of being relaxed and loose in mind, will, feeling, and body is the indispensable prerequisite for pleasure and thus for fulfillment.

The refusal to experience painful feelings rests on the misconception that they will annihilate you or that they will prove that you are no good. This misconception must be challenged and replaced. If it is not, you will not allow yourself to experience painful feelings. The refusal to do so also creates a tight will current so as to ward off what you believe to be annihilation. Hence, the will must be relaxed so that it becomes possible for you to experience what is already in you and what must paralyze all your best functioning unless you go through it and thus transcend it.

4. The level of the body, of physical expression.

Since it is impossible that an attitude existing on one level does not also manifest on all other levels, every misconception, every distortion and imbalance of the will functioning, and every refusal to feel what is there, inevitably also creates a physical manifestation or bodily condition. It therefore hampers not only the person's spiritual unfoldment, but equally his physical life experience. The physical body expresses conceptual error, will-imbalance, and stagnant, denied feelings by muscular blocks. The tensions and energy stagnation caused by distortions on any of the other levels can affect the body by distorting it, by creating all sorts of symptoms and, when neglected long enough, physical illness.

Where energy is blocked, consciousness cannot penetrate. Every cell in the human body is conscious -- a consciousness unto itself. Creation is an ongoing process of a happy fusion between energy and consciousness. They interact.

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Exercise 2b: Notice correlations between your body and your feelings.

For example, anxiety causes muscular tension, restricts blood flow, deadens sensation, and so relieves a bit of anxiety by shutting down the ability to feel. Anxiety can also be relieved through exercise, by acting out, and by distracting ourselves with excitement.

Week 3: The Level of Experience

A very important aspect of this work is yet another level of self, beyond the physical body. This is generally not recognized as a level of human personality in human thinking. This is the level of life experience.

Generally, life experience is perceived as a separate "entity" as it were, as if the human entity were put into a fixed life. It is overlooked that every person's life experience is as intrinsic an expression of his inner being as his body is. The life experience is totally symptomatic and conclusive of the inner state of the manifest personality. Our path uses this most important tool and truth in order to determine the inner state.

This more truthful and comprehensive vision does away with the fallacy of man's helplessness. The truth leads to man's assuming self-responsibility in every conceivable respect. Most human beings are loath to accept this. They had rather see themselves as helpless, innocent victims with all the suffering and hopelessness that go with it than accept the hope, light, and freedom of self-responsibility. This indicates the emotional immaturity of mankind as a whole.

It also indicates the sense of guilt that is attached to admitting fallacy and distortion. Paradoxical as it may seem, the more helpless you pretend to be vis-a-vis your life experience, the less an inner, healthy, relaxed will functions; the stronger the tight self-will of the little, ineffective ego becomes in order to ward off the imagined "unjust" life experience. What a waste of valuable energy!

It is an intrinsic aspect of this work that you eventually shed the illusion of your being an innocent victim and avail yourself of the key to freedom: self-responsibility.

Whoever commits himself to the path will experience that there is a living, organic reality in the path. It manifests, instructs, and shows you that whatever you experience has a meaning for you. That is why it should at all times be cultivated. Then this voice will speak louder and clearer, as you ask it. Ask it with a truly open attitude, an attitude that is willing to listen to a consciousness that is you, and yet it is greater than your conscious you. Then you will see that this greater you is real and the little consciousness is only a separated particle. When this begins to happen, unification is beginning to set in.

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Exercise 3a: Ask yourself:

What do I want?

What will I receive on this path?

What is the purpose?

What must I lend myself to, what must I relinquish when I walk this path?

What if I decide against it?

When your desire to perfect your inner self and face your truth is sincere, then you will receive spiritual help, ever expanding as you go on being guided to outside help and through your own recognition and perception, which are answers and hints.

Decide! Asking for Help and Helping Others PL 7

Spheres of Consciousness

Man consists of different levels of consciousness. Each level of consciousness represents a conglomerate of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. These levels of consciousness are often at total variance with each other. These levels of consciousness express different states of development in the evolutionary movement. In the spiritual world they are expressed as spheres. Your state of consciousness always creates its own world with its own laws, its own value system, its own philosophy, its own reality, its own mores.

Each world (state of consciousness) has a different degree of awareness of the cosmic, ultimate reality and therefore also different degrees of limitations. These limitations determine the extent to which the abundance of the universe can be experienced. In fact, the various levels of consciousness draw you into their corresponding worlds. They do not exist in space and time, but in a reality that transcends both. Thus they can overlap.

Time, space, and movement are limited conceptions of the human mind -- of this particular state of consciousness. Thus, in a reality that transcends the human, physical one, two or more worlds can easily exist in one and the same space.

An entity who is not yet unified and has not yet realized his ultimate nature expresses these different levels of consciousness and is thus drawn into their corresponding "worlds," either alternately or simultaneously. While in the body, this manifests in different moods, different perceptions, and experiences.

When you are drawn simultaneously into two conflicting worlds of your own making, you will experience conflict and confusion. When out of the body, this phenomenon manifests as being drawn into the actual environment the respective level of consciousness has created.

The less self-awareness exists, the less does the entity realize that the world he experiences at any given phase of his evolution is not the ultimate one and not the only one of his own creation. The illusion of these perceptions can only be eliminated by the arduous path of bringing all your inner worlds into awareness.

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There are many human beings who "bathe" in their faults. They moan about their faults, saying; *"I am a sinner; I am so bad; I just cannot overcome my faults. How terrible that I have this or that fault."* And every time they think of them, they give over to such unproductive current or vibration, and the guilt feelings grow. Such a human being thinks he is humble, while, in reality, he wants his own comfort by telling himself it is hopeless. It is as extreme as the opposite attitude which pictures perfection.

Decide! Asking for Help and Helping Others PL 7

Exercise 3b: What spheres of consciousness do you live in?

Take the risk of verbalizing your feelings, any sensations or images. Bringing spiritual reality into human thought and language isn't easy. It takes practice.

Week 4: Useful Concepts in the Pathwork Process

Higher Self, Lower Self, and Mask Self

[Ref PL 14 & [PL134](#)]

The human condition can best be expressed by the following levels of consciousness: the higher self, which is the God consciousness; the lower self, which is the demonic self; and the mask self, which hides the demonic. Their overlapping, their canceling each other out, the confusion they create, and their indirect effects and chain reactions are to be explored, understood, and mastered. That is the path.

All these aspects of the personality can be conscious or unconscious to varying degrees. The less awareness of any of these states a person has, the more conflict exists in his life, the less he is equipped to deal with life, himself, and other people, and, certainly, the farther he is removed from the realization of his ultimate, divine self.

Lack of awareness comes from being split off from the reality of one's real, higher, divine self. But one is also split off or, rather, unaware of the lower, as well as the mask self. This creates misunderstanding, illusions, misconceptions. It is one of the aspects of this pathwork to find these misconceptions and correct them.

It is one of the immutable spiritual laws that lack of awareness of one area prohibits awareness of another. So, for example, if you manage to stave off awareness of your lower self and your mask self, you will not be aware of the already manifest higher self. You may pay lip service to the fact that you must be an expression of a higher, divine consciousness, but you cannot possibly feel it unless you make yourself feel your lower self and the mask that hides it.

Mask Self / Idealized Self Image

[Ref [PL 83](#)]

The mask self is the pretense, the hiding, the facade you present to the world, the idealized self image you want to be and invest your energies into so as to make it "real." All of these various expressions indicate the mask self. The mask self is a defense against exposing who you really are at this point in time. However, by masking anything of yourself, you inevitably also mask your higher self from yourself. The more you try to show only your good side -- what is genuinely there in the higher self, but not in the mask self -- the more your higher self is masked. Again, you can be conscious of this or not.

At times, you may be acutely aware of your faking, your falsifying yourself -- and this is so much more preferable to the unaware state. At other times, because you have identified so much with your mask, you are oblivious of wearing one. When you are unaware of your mask, you feel ashamed and uncomfortable, but you don't face this fact because you don't wish to experience and deal with such feelings. Thus a further process of splitting off sets in, in which you lose track more and more of who you really are. This is the state of lostness that many individuals wish to cure by some magic -- drugs, pills, formulas -- even meditation. They also turn to therapies that encourage the helpless state of sickness and overlook the potent factor of will that must be used if rightly understood and applied.

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This path is, above anything else, a process of making things conscious. This self-awareness unifies you, unifies the split in you, unifies conflicts in you, and establishes your sense of self and your knowledge that the universe with all its bliss is yours.

Three Levels of Reality

[Ref [PL 162](#)]

It cannot be denied that to expand the consciousness of the limited mind represents a tremendous difficulty. For man has only this same limited mind at his disposal when he starts out. Thus this limited mind must transcend itself in order to realize its unlimited power and scope. The path therefore constantly requires that the mind bridges the gap of its own limitations by considering new possibilities, by making room for other alternatives for the self, for life, and for expressing the self in life. This demands making the effort of coming out of an old, set, and apparently comfortable model. But this comfort is the greatest illusion.

Duality / Dualistic Thinking

[Ref: [PL 81](#) & [PL 143](#)]

The overall state of consciousness of the human condition is one of duality, or the opposites. The confusion created by the dualistic perception of reality must be straightened out on all levels and in exact detail. This means conception, and finally perception, change. The unification of the fragmented self cannot take place as long as the world is perceived in a dualistic form. It is one of the most important marks of evolution and growth when this is experienced and no longer a mere theory.

Visualizing New Possibilities

[Ref: [PL 198](#), [PL 210](#)]

The process of expanding the mind and of transcending its own momentary limitations can only be a conscious and deliberate effort toward this goal. The effort is not a labor of the will and mind, but an opening process that first considers, as I said, new alternatives, which can eventually become a reality. When man experiences himself only as this cut off, powerless ego and when he consequently tries to put all the energy and power at his disposal into this ego, he must fail. But when he allows that he may indeed be an expression of an as-yet unmanifest deeper, wider, wiser, and more loving divine self, this divine self is thereby sufficiently freed to manifest. Hence this person bridges the gap from ignorance and alienation to an open state of mind that questions, waits, considers, probes for an actual experience of the ultimate truth. Such an experience is called faith.

Meditation and Prayer

[Ref PL 9, [PL 64](#), [PL 182](#), PL 194]

When the mind remains within the fences of its present limitations, transcendence cannot occur. The attempt to transcend the momentary limited mind and to experience the divine consciousness is called meditation. The process of making aware of and dealing with the mask self and the lower self will greatly speed up if the higher self is called into play and directed by the conscious mind to give specific guidance. Since our path deals with the harder of the two roads, it is obvious that our approach to meditation is different.. You have to release blocks in order to meditate, and you must meditate in order to release blocks. A spiritual block can exist by either adopting a false, escaping, separating spirituality, or by negating the greater reality altogether. In both instances, misconceptions must be eliminated in order to free the channel for the real spiritual influx.

Summary

Effective pathwork takes place on all these levels and with all these approaches. As I said, there is no outer rule that can determine when to change from one into the other. It is different with everyone.

The path must be allowed to express itself from within, as a living, organismic reality. All the various avenues offered on this path fulfill important functions in order to work on one or the other of these levels.

It is necessary to again and again and again attempt getting in touch with the higher self, the divine consciousness that is ever present, immutable, and immediately available within you.

When this is done for the purpose of making distorted levels of soul substance conscious and re-orienting them so as to unify all split off soul substance, meditation takes of course a different road from the kind of meditation that is used for the sole purpose of realizing the divine self while disregarding the dark aspects of the self.

It is a current illusion and wishful thinking that this latter approach automatically deals with the dark side of human nature. This cannot be so. You cannot overcome what you have not consciously and fully experienced. This wishful hope with which you are all familiar is nourished by the fact that it is indeed possible to realize the already potentially present part of the Godself.

This is why it is often true that entities who have led a difficult and apparently unspiritual life while in the body, after having shed the body have done more toward the universal process of evolution than some others who have led an extremely spiritual life, who may even have been so-called Masters, but who have cultivated their beauty and disregarded their ugliness. They have thus failed to unify and so have unwittingly perpetuated the dualistic state of consciousness in which this earth finds itself.

When the blocks to spiritual influx begin to be eliminated, the whole process can be speeded up -- the process of awareness, liberation, healing, and unification.

Just as the mind level can be conscious or unconscious, so can be the will, the feeling, and even the body level. It is therefore imperative that the degree of consciousness be increased on all levels; that you connect, for example, a physical symptom (a pain or a tension) with the mental attitude, the thought, emotion, and the will that correspond and motivate the specific physical manifestation. For instance, when you begin to sense that a specific bodily tension is a feeling of hate and rage, is an overactive outer will that is prevented from hitting out, is a specified misconception, **then you unify all levels and increase your scope of consciousness on all levels.**

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