

Identification & Intentionality PART 2 of 2

Identification of the Spiritual Self to Overcome Negativity Intentionality

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 195

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

Part 2 of 2:

Week 5: Identification Develops the Observer Self

Week 6: Can't / Won't: Overidentification with the Ego

Week 7: Negative and Positive Intentionality

Week 8: Spiral of Development as an ongoing process

Week 5: Identification Develops the Observer Self

Identification, like everything else, can exist in a most positive and constructive way; and it can exist in a most negative, obstructive, and destructive way. The difference between these is not determined by whether you identify with one or the other of the various personality aspects -- as if one would be good, the other bad. Any identification with any aspect of yourself can be desirable, healthy, and fruitful, or the opposite.

You might think, for instance, how can it be destructive to identify with the higher self? Or, conversely, how could it be desirable to identify with the lower self? I say it can be either.

Over-Identification with the Higher Self

If you identify with the higher self, your spirit, without truly being aware of the lower self, the mask self, your defenses, your dishonest devices, and your negative intentionality; identification with the higher self becomes an escape and an illusion. This is not at all truthful. Neither is it ever a real experience under these circumstances. It is much more like paying lip service to and having a mental belief in a philosophy.

It is all very well when you know that you are a divine manifestation; that you have potentially limitless power at your disposal -- power to change yourself and your life; that you are the spirit of the universe manifest. This is true. And yet it is a half-truth when this kind of identification **overlooks the part that needs your scrutiny and candid attention.**

Identifying Develops the Observer Self

By the same token, identification with your lower self can be desirable or undesirable. Perhaps we can best put it this way: if you identify with your lower (or your mask) self, it is one thing; if you identify it, it is another.

When you are identified with the lower self, you believe that this is all there is to you. When you identify it, you observe it, admit it, tackle it, but you do not believe that this is all there is to you. If it were, you could not identify, observe, evaluate, analyze, and change it.

For that part of you which is doing all this watching is certainly more in charge, has more power, is more active and real than the part that is being observed, evaluated, changed, etc.

The moment you identify something -- good, bad, or indifferent -- the identifier is more YOU than what is being identified. The observer is more real (and in charge) than the observed. This is the vast difference between identifying and being identified with. When the mask and lower self, the negative intentionality, the dishonest games are being identified, real feelings can be felt and honestly experienced. Pain need no longer be denied.

This is so because the energy that is no longer being invested into denying what is, will bring you what is. And when you can truly feel your feelings, you can then identify with the spiritual self. **The lower self should be identified; the spiritual self identified with.** The ego makes the identification, but gives itself up voluntarily so that it is integrated into the spiritual self.

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Exercise 5a: What part of yourself do you identify with? Such identification is not something the conscious ego chooses. It is much rather something that, once again, must be discovered by your observing mind. In what way are you a) identified with b) what part of your being?

The Observer Self, Chapter 3 of The Undefended Self by Susan Thesenga

How do we begin the inner journey of self-transformation? If we are to meet our wounded child and release our negative ego, discard our mask and transform our lower self, who does the work? Which self works on these other selves?

The parts of ourselves that are already developed take on the task of welcoming into consciousness and transforming the other parts. The mature parts of ourselves become the “helpers” to the undeveloped parts. All our helping selves guide us on our evolutionary journey toward maturity and wholeness. We do need the help of outer teachers, healers, therapists, and guides, but we must remember that the goal is to awaken the inner teacher/healer who is ever-present and ready to guide us.

Even if we do not feel mature, and even if we cannot contact the inner teacher, anyone can, with practice, develop an observer self. The observer self is made up of tools: objectivity and detachment (the microscope of the scientist) along with love and compassion (the first-aid kit of the friend) toward our many other selves. The observer stands “outside”, as it were, of our selves and our lives, and notes what is experienced. This stance is a place we can plant ourselves psychically and from which we can view all the rest of our lives. It is a place we can identify with while we are learning to notice and name other parts of the self. The ability to observe ourselves objectively and compassionately is the single most important skill to develop in walking the spiritual path.

[Chapter 3 of The Undefended Self](#) may be downloaded from my website, courtesy of Susan Thesenga

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

The Guide describes Daily Review as ‘spiritual hygiene’. Think of the written version as a bath or even a spa experience, and a thoughtful process (while driving or doing chores) as a quick shower. Both work!

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 by Pathwork Steps participant Shakila F.

Week 6: Can't / Won't: Over-Identification with the Ego

If you *exclusively identify with the ego* -- the conscious, willing, acting part of the person -- it is automatically impossible to bring about a change that is *not within the province of the ego to bring about*.

Inner change of the deepest attitudes and feelings of an individual cannot be brought about by the very limited functions of the ego. One must obviously be identified with a deeper, wider, and more effective aspect of the self in order to believe in the possibility of change at all.

This change comes by the ego committing itself to **wanting** the change, by **trusting** in the processes of the involuntary spiritual self to bring it about.

If there is no identification with the spiritual self, obviously such trust and positive expectation -- free from pressure -- cannot exist.

And if it does not exist, the person cannot even want it, for the conviction of failure would drive home the powerlessness of the ego in too unpleasant a way.

Thus it is preferable for the limited ego to say, "I do not want," rather than to say, "I cannot." On a superficial level, the exact opposite situation exists: the "I won't" is denied with an "I can't." On a deeper and more subtle level, it is reversed simply because the ego does not want to admit its limitations, and yet the self has not found the way to identify with the spirit.

PL 195

Exercise 6a: Notice where you use "Can't" or "Won't" in your daily life.

Notice the circumstances and situations you use them for.

Notice if you tend to use one more than the other.

Switch them up! Imagine using one for the other. What changes?

"Can't" implies incapacity / lack of ability / finiteness. There are no options. Where do you use "Can't" to stop a discussion or alternative?

"Won't" implies the presence of self-will / decision making / commitment. "Won't" is flexible because it is based upon a decision, and implies self-responsibility for that decision.

Notice if you tend to avoid "Won't" so that you aren't identified as the decision maker.

Exercise 6b: The Ego is terrified of making the 'wrong' commitment; it is committed to not being committed!

Notice where you avoid making a commitment by using EITHER 'I Won't' or 'I Can't'.



Credit: [Mind/Body Medicine](#) and suggested by Pathwork Steps participant Therese R.

Commitment – Cause and Effect

What does commitment really mean? If you are committed to give your best and your all to whatever it may be, you will concentrate on all angles of the subject. You will not shy away from investing all your energies, all your attention. You will use your available faculties of thinking, of intuition, of meditation. This requires a wholeness of approach that can only come when the will is unbroken by negative counterforces. In other words, in order to be fully committed, no negative intentionality must exist.

Commitment exists in every imaginable undertaking. To the degree you are committed, what you do will be pleasurable, free from conflict, fruitful, and rewarding. It will be one-pointed in direction; it will have depth and meaning; it will be successful; and it will bear the stamp and feeling of blessedness. If you give an undertaking your all, and not half of it, how else can it be but rewarding and satisfying? But this is comparatively rare. Usually man gives only half of himself to an undertaking and is then confused, vexed, and disappointed when the result is accordingly incomplete. [Commitment – Cause and Effect](#) PL 196

The origin of this Negation

It is often the only way a child has to preserve its selfhood. If the inner resistance is not maintained, the personality feels threatened: the child equates giving up the resistance with capitulation of his individuality. Many of you are aware of the inappropriateness of transporting a once valid position into the present, when it is no longer valid but downright destructive.

It may seem almost inconceivable to him who has not yet made this self-discovery that one can admit to a downright senseless, wasteful attitude that does nothing but bring undesirable results, and yet insist on maintaining it.

Why does this apparently senseless refusal exist even though you know it only causes you and others pain, that it makes you miss out on living fully and in joy, that it causes severe guilt and self-punishment? A powerful reason must exist that obviously goes beyond any of the aforementioned causes -- true as they are in themselves. Many of my friends are stuck at this particular point. They need help to get beyond it.

In order to deal with this bottleneck, the question of identification has to be focused on. This lecture hopefully will help you further to understand this resistance.

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Exercise 6c: What truly prevents you from saying, *"I do not want to hate, I want to love. I do not want to withhold any longer, but want to give the best of myself to life. I do not need my spitefulness and truly desire to give it up. I want to reach out and give to life and receive equally the best life has to offer?"*

Importance of Identifying with the Spiritual Self

When giving up negative intentionality, the person experiences himself already as something more than this lower self that should be dissolved. That is, its energies are being dissolved in their present form and being reconverted, altered, and channeled in a new and better way. But when the senseless refusal to give up negative will exists, it is so because the person is completely and totally identified with this aspect of the self. PL 195

An Inner, Inarticulated Feeling or Climate of Despair and Chaos

It is not true that either the person is being entirely identified with the lower self or is no longer being identified with it at all. **It is invariably a combination.**

Some aspects of the self are free, and there a deep spiritual identification may be sensed. At the same time, the as yet unidentified lower self aspects, the as yet unfelt feelings create, in part, a fearful submersion into the lower self, which the self believes to be its only reality. Also at the same time, a third identification with the ego as the only valid, reliable function can exist too. This is the way people are split -- also in regard to identification.

When a secret, albeit partial, identification with the lower self exists, giving it up is like self-annihilation. To that part of the self that is destructive, cruel, hateful, spiteful, etc., this seems the real self. The other seems unreal -- perhaps even phony. This seems true especially when an actual phony veneer is used to cover up the reality of the lower self. Giving up hate, spite, negative intentions seems like giving up one's very being. That apparent self-annihilation cannot be risked even if the promise beckons you that joy and fulfillment accrue from this sacrifice. At best this joy, if it exists at all, appears to exist for someone other than the familiar you. What good does joy, fulfillment, pleasure, self-respect, abundance do if they are to be experienced by someone other than you?! This is the inarticulate feeling or climate. PL 195

First Steps

The first is to make the initial commitment to find out the truth about yourself. This includes the mental observation and admission of your real thoughts and feelings, the experiencing of all feelings, and owning up to them on all levels.

The second is, how are you going to extricate yourself from your identification with your lower self? When the self experiences itself as real only in the lower self (to whatever degree this may hold true), it cannot give itself up. The refusal to do so is the misplaced will to live. You live in the illusion that beyond your most negative aspects, nothing else exists -- of you, that is. **You feel real and energized only when the negativity and destructiveness manifest**, no matter how much the environment curtails it and forces you to experience this energy only inside of yourself. The outer deadness and numbness seem the result of having "given up" the evil. But it has not been given up at all. Nor do you have to do so. The same energy will be reconverted and need no longer be denied. My friends, let this sink in: your resistance to giving up what you hate most in yourself, what you know is most hateful, is due to a false identification. PL 195

Exercise 6d: Take an inventory of **how** you expend your energy **every day** for a week, as if you were tracking financial expenditures. How much energy do you spend participating in negative interactions, or just 'treading water'? How much energy you spend investing in yourself and others, expanding your positive impact on the world?



"Oh, not much. Just sitting here sifting through an old scrapbook of past injustices and imagined slights."
The New Yorker

Week 7: Negative and Positive Intentionality

Negativity includes faults, hostility, distorted reality, envy, hate, fear, pride, anger, or whatever. But when we speak of negative intentionality, the words take on a different meaning. It is expressly the intention *to hold on to the state of negating* of life and self.

The mere word intention connotes that the self is in charge; makes a deliberate choice; intends to do, act, be. Even when you own up to the worst destructive, cruel, brutal attitudes, there is always an implication that you cannot help being the way you are.

When you ferret out your negative intentionality, you can no longer deceive yourself that negativity "happens" to you. You must sooner or later come to terms with the fact that your life is the result of your choices.

And choice implies the possibility to adopt another attitude. In other words, you truly discover on a deep level that you are free. Even your narrow confines are the result of a freely chosen course you follow -- and will continue to follow -- until you choose to change this course.

To the conscious mind, such negative intentions may appear unthinkable, but whoever hears or reads these words and has not verified them should rest assured that negative intentionality indeed exists.

To deal with this extensively and profoundly takes considerable struggle, effort, patience, and inner overcoming of resistance. I do not talk about a vague hint of a recognition here or there that is then left to itself. In fact, truly dealing with the negative intentionality is a major crisis in a person's life and signifies a basic transition. It is not something that he can easily come by.

At this point, many of you are puzzled about yourselves. You do not understand why you do not want to budge from this extremely uncomfortable and undesirable inner position. You know that there is a beautiful world outside waiting. And if you deny this fact, that too is a means to justify your position: if it does not exist anyway, if all is dismal anyway, then there is nothing so strange about your state. So you often make yourself believe in a terrible, senseless universe. Or, if this is not so, your belief in the good and beautiful universe cannot be brought to bear on the negative intentionality.

The way you are bound and frozen into this position of resistance to give up the negative intentionality is not only obstinate and spiteful. That would be too stupid. But the obstinacy and spitefulness harden your position so that your fear of annihilation in giving up the lower self increases in strength, and a negative self-perpetuation is set in motion. You then live in this small, self-enclosed world in which the worst of you seems your reality.

PL 195

Exercise 7a: How are you going to find your way out of this? The first thing to do would be to question yourself:

1. is this really all you are?
2. Is it true that your reality ceases to exist when you give up the negative intention and will?
3. Is this all there is to you?
4. Notice any difference between 1 & 3. Verbalize what is different about these, and why.

The Effect of Commitment

The mere fact that you raise these questions honestly will already open a door. Even before answers will come -- and eventually pour forth -- the fact that these questions are raised will permit you to come to the second stage in this progression. In that stage you realize that that which asks the question is beyond that which you assume to be you. Thus you already establish a new bridge. From there on, it will not be quite so difficult to find a voice in you that answers in a new way that is beyond the limited scope of the lower self, which you used to protect so jealously.

Reach out with tentative questions -- questions asked with good will and good faith. This is the very first step to find your way out of your prison and unnecessary suffering. When you do this, you are no longer identified with the lower self that knows nothing but these confined walls, that derives its identity, or reality, from being negative. Instead, you come to the point when you can identify it and be its observer. The observer then becomes a first extension of the familiar self-experience.

Let us assume, for example, that you have grown accustomed to experience yourself as haughty, cold, and contemptuous. Giving up this attitude seems like dying, but dying into what?: your true self, where your real feelings, and hence your real being, are.

If you are willing to feel your feelings, regardless of their nature, you will know who you are. If you are not, you must remain that hard, stiffened, limited "self." Here lies your choice.

It cannot be claimed that when you give up your negative intentionality, you will instantly experience universal bliss -- or even earthly bliss. You will experience your real feelings, some of them quite painful. But the pain will be so much easier to bear than the position you maintain. And in its flowing nature, it will carry you into new and better states, like the river of life itself.

The commitment must always be to the self -- what it really feels and thinks and is. If commitment to the self is the aim, then you cannot realize anything else but yourself. You will experience new depths and scopes of feelings. You will even welcome the pain, for it is real and flowing. It is moving and so totally yourself.

The first answers you will receive to your questions may not even come from the deeper, spiritual self as yet. You may not experience magical revelations, visions, and mystical inspirations. The first answers may come from your conscious mind. Your ability to formulate new possibilities and answers, to use knowledge of truth that is already integrated into your consciousness will feel safe and very real. At the same time, it will give you a new key to use the equipment at your disposal in other ways than in the old groove.

Such thoughts may take into consideration that trying out a positive intentionality could be interesting and desirable for you. You could play at first with forming new thoughts, weighing new possibilities and alternatives in the way you set your thinking apparatus. This is an exciting endeavor and one that does not in principle oblige you to a course. It merely means giving a new scope to a very set mind. You can always exert your right to go back where you were; you are never coerced by life or anyone else. It is always your choice. This knowledge will make less final the apparent "risk" to try out a new thought direction. Just investigate how it feels to set a positive intentionality in motion. As you avail yourself of this new freedom, you bridge another gap toward a greater expansion of the self. Little by little you can become calm, listening into

yourself and perceiving the ever present, ongoing voice of truth and God. This will increase in intensity and frequency, until you realize that you are everything that exists. There is nothing you are not, my friends. This may sound very far off, but it is not as far away from you as it may now seem.

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Exercise 7b: How do you experience yourself? Use the list you made in Exercise 7a.

We are not brick walls, where parts can be taken out at random and replaced. When one part of us transforms, our entire being is affected, in ways we may not be able to extrapolate in advance. This correctly translates to a sense of death, or dying off. See if you can see this from a slightly more expansive perspective, where a dying off is necessary before new growth can come forward. Playfully imagine what your 'new growth' might be, especially if you will be able to receive more nourishment and support by identifying more fully with your spiritual self

Awareness of Negative Intentionality

However, we must be clear that, important as it is to discover the existence of the negative intentionality in you, **that does not mean the same as giving it up.** You who have arrived at this point have found this to be only too true!

It is possible to fully recognize and admit negativity and yet not be at all ready and willing to let go of it. This is not necessarily true of all recognitions and insights. Sometimes it happens that realization of a destructive or distorted attitude automatically eliminates it. But this is not always true. With this particular aspect, it becomes evident again and again in almost everybody's work that, in spite of knowing how senseless and destructive negative intentionality is, more than just recognizing it is required to be able to change the mind, the will, and the intention.

Of course, we have already gone into many of the reasons and motives, beliefs and misconceptions why this is so. We have worked on many of them. There is the fear of the unknown, fear of being hurt and humiliated, fear of and refusal to experience pain -- past and present. A negative attitude is thus a defense against real feelings. The holding on to negative will direction is also due to a refusal to assume responsibility in life, to deal with "un-ideal" circumstances. It is an inner insistence to "force" the "bad parents" to become "good parents," as if one's own misery were a weapon. This misery is then actually used as such. Negative intentionality is also a means to punish life (the bad parents). All of these feelings, reactions, and attitudes have been amply explored, verified, and worked through. Yet many of you still insist on holding on. Why?

It is often the only way a child has to preserve its selfhood. If the inner resistance is not maintained, the personality feels threatened: the child equates giving up the resistance with capitulation of his individuality. This too is recognized by most of you, and you are aware of the inappropriateness of transporting a once valid position into the present when it is no longer valid but downright destructive.

It may seem almost inconceivable to him who has not yet made this self-discovery that one can admit to a downright senseless, wasteful attitude that does nothing but bring undesirable results, and yet insist on maintaining it.

PL 195

Week 8: Spiral of Development as an ongoing process

This section was inspired by [The Spiral of Development](#), worksheet by Dottie Titus

He who makes himself available to new possibilities in concept, perception, and inner attitude will experience the richness of the universe, the richness of his innermost being. New action streams forth from that, as well as new outer experience.

He who stays confined within his old possibilities only, must stay in an unsatisfactory condition no matter how developed he may be, perhaps, relative to others.

There is no standing still. If you stand still, you confine yourself. Only when you expand forever more, can you truly become yourself.

PL 195

Three Cosmic Principles PL 55: Positive and negative aspects and qualities

Expanding Principle:

Positive

Activity
Creativity / Growth / Building
Forward Movement
Outgoing Quality
Search for Union
Search for the other 'You'
(therefore unselfishness and
lack of egocentricity)

Negative

Aggressiveness
Hostility / War
Over-activity
Quarrelling
Destructiveness
Cruelty
Impatience
Thoughtlessness

Restricting Principle:

Positive

Equilibrium
Introspection
Thoughtfulness
Caution
Patience
Self-search
Assimilation vs.
unassimilated growth
Balances and harmonizes
outward movement

Negative

Regression / Going backward
Holding up progress
Going in the wrong direction
Dishonestly
Hypocrisy
Cowardice
Avarice
Selfishness
Egocentricity
Separateness

Static Principle:

Positive

Preservation
State of being
Timelessness
Passivity (healthy)
Motion in motionlessness
Gathering: of new momentum
for the preparation of new cycle of Expansion, Contraction, and Stasis

Negative

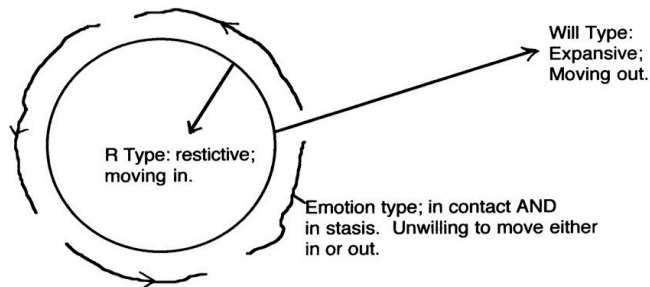
Stagnation
Putrefaction
Lifelessness
Inertia

[Three Cosmic Principles: Expanding, Restricting, Static](#) PL 55

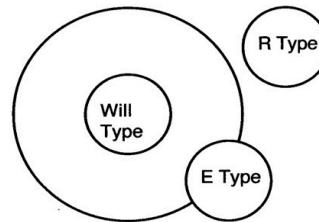
Relating Cosmic Principles PL 55 with Personality Types PL 43

Expanding Principle: Outward Movement relates to WILL Type Characteristics
Restricting Principle: Inward Movement Relates to REASON Type Characteristics
Static Principle: State of Rest Relates to EMOTION Type Characteristics

Reason, Will and Emotion Personality Types and their relationship to the Restricting, Expanding and Static Principles



In a group of people, types would tend to converge like this:



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A beautiful golden force wants to work its way through the clouds. The clouds disperse more and more. To whatever degree you take a step toward merely wanting it, the clouds become thinner. To whatever degree you hide behind negation and doubt (which are the strongest defenses against coming out of your hole) the golden sun and force cannot come through. But it is there.

Do not believe that you have to become a different person. You become the best that you already are. When you become it, you will recognize it, you will experience its familiarity, and you will feel how safe it is, how much you it is! It is the best of you.

You do not betray your reality, you do not become something that you need be ashamed of. Try to believe this.

Let go a little. Let the light come into you, and accept that reality is not all dismal. It is indeed a beautiful reality. The universe is full of love. Truth is love and love is truth. The freedom of your own spirit will be found in truth and love. Be blessed, all of you!

PL 195

The Spiral of Development

For quite a long period at the beginning, it seems as though you are going around in circles, always encountering the same scenery and apparently not moving from the spot you have started from. This may be discouraging if you would not know that **this is an illusion**. It just seems that way.

Actually when you move in this circle, you are going on what I refer to as "the spiral" which is inevitable on the path. All your faults, errors, ignorances, and the resulting complexities create one big vicious cycle in your soul. This cycle consists of various points, namely these individual faults, etc., which affect and interact with one another and thus cause a chain reaction.



In order to break this vicious cycle, you have to understand thoroughly the individual points constituting your vicious cycle. You have to concentrate on one after the other so as to find the link of cause and effect within this cycle. The whole cycle cannot possibly be completely understood after having made the round once, so to speak.

When you have completed the first round, you start all over again. But each time you start the cycle anew, you gain a slightly profounder understanding of the various highlights and individual points in the cycle until you clearly see the whole cycle in your mind and understand the interdependence of all your negative qualities. Then you will cease seeing the latter as being unconnected. But until this point, you have to repeat the round quite often.

Every time you conclude one round of the cycle and start the next round, you follow the upward winding spiral. At the beginning, the upward slant is so slight that you do not even notice it and are under the impression you are repeating the same round. But later on, you will clearly feel that every time you start anew, you have gained a profounder insight into your problems, and you will not be discouraged anymore by an apparent standstill.

Prayer PL 36

It is not endless. The spiral movement becomes smaller and narrower.

Claiming the Total Capacity for Greatness PL 212

This is not merely a question of going to a deeper level of the same problem. The deeper level brings new material to the fore that could not have been handled before, and it may also bring a feeling of hopelessness about self-purification. *'Will it never end?'* I want to warn you about this feeling, and tell you that it is a good sign of deep progress. There comes a point when a particular spiral has truly resolved itself. An entirely "new" aspect is coming to the fore, an aspect so strange and unfamiliar that it seems at first somewhat frightening. *'Is that really me?'* you ask.

The Birthing Process – The Cosmic Pulse PL 255

Each round of the spiral is a new layer, and at the entrance of each round a new and deeper commitment needs to be made. The rounds or circles are not closed, they have openings. As you discover a new opening, you need to make a new commitment, on a yet deeper level: to let go and to let God; to give all of yourself to the truth -- to the truth of being -- to no longer hide from your truth.

Anatomy of a Contraction PL 235

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