

Pathwork™ Steps

What does Commitment Mean to You?

Commitment – Cause and Effect

Summary of Pathwork Guide Lecture #196

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

Wherever peace, fulfillment, light, hope, and trusting closeness to your intimate friends are lacking, let this be a gauge that something in you is amiss. This gauge is so exacting! The only reliable and realistic gauge for your fulfillment of your life plan is how you feel about yourself, about your life, and about those around you.

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.

Here is where cause and effect come in. When the effect is not being recognized as the result of the cause set in motion -- the cause being a half-commitment only -- a split in consciousness exists with all sorts of negative chain reactions. The resulting confusion will first breed a sense of helplessness and injustice. If you are not aware of the fact that you commit only a part of yourself to a venture, while another part says no, and if you then disregard the fact that the undesirable result is caused by this fact, you cannot help feeling embittered. You cannot help feeling that the world is a haphazard place without rhyme or reason. Thus you will become frightened, defensive, distrustful, grabbing, anxious, ruthless, and instead of changing the counterforce that eliminates full commitment, you will use the energy to push others aside. Or you will withdraw into failure and passivity.

Disconnectedness between cause and effect regarding commitment creates the need to seek adjustment in the wrong manner. Whenever there is lack of commitment, there must always exist negative intentionality as well.

I would suggest that you all explore what makes you most unhappy in your life. What do you suffer from? Then look into yourself and ask yourself: what is your intentionality in this respect? And when you can verify that there is a voice in you that says, "No, I do not want to give all my best," then you will find your suffering explained. You can draw the link between cause and effect.

Are you frightened? Are you insecure? Do you feel inadequate? Do you feel an unexplainable anxiety and tension? Do you deplore your weakness?, your lack of self-assertion? All of these are effects, my friends, effects of some negative intentionality that is deliberate on a

level that must be totally admitted and brought out into the open. ... But positive intentionality requires commitment -- total, unequivocal commitment. If you are unwilling to invest of yourself in that way, you seek the result through illegitimate means.

When you can truly see cause and effect relationships in your life, not only will you be motivated to want to give up negative attitudes and intentions and to institute positive intentionality, you will also gain awareness and emotional and spiritual maturity. Maturity is to a great extent the ability to put cause and effect together. The ability to put cause and effect together also indicates the degree of awareness an entity has reached through his development. ... But if he cannot bring the cause and effect relationship together, he will go around in a circle, not in a spiral which is the movement of the path.

The more cause and effect can be linked, the more maturity exists; the more awareness exists, the more positive attitudes and positive intentionality will be fostered and proportionately, the greater the peace and rich fulfillment. Universal, ever available abundance becomes realizable in equal proportion. Lack of peace and fulfillment always connotes lack of awareness; lack of maturity, lack of awareness of cause and effect relationship, linking up to negative intentionality.

When misconceptions can, on the innermost level, be exchanged for truth; when negative intentionality is being exchanged for positive intentionality; and when the individual no longer defends against experiencing pain, the substantial step of initial purification has been accomplished.

Negative intentionality is a defense against experiencing pain. Misconceptions are a result of both. It is every individual's task on the evolutionary road to eliminate evil, to transform it back into its original state: pure energy and loving, truthful consciousness.

Evil has produced pain, and the fear of and defense against pain produces more and worse pain, as well as more evil. This is an unbearable, twisted, bitter pain that stems from a forcing current that says, in effect, "You see, don't do this to me, life."

False, defensive pain contains bitterness, self-pity, resentments; thus it destroys peace. Real pain is peaceful because it assumes full self-responsibility without self-manipulation. It neither says "Poor me, it is all being done to me," nor does it say, "I am hopeless, I am so bad that I can never exonerate myself." Both these attitudes are untruthful -- and therefore part and parcel of evil. Undefended, real pain opens doors, brings light, and exposes the core of the self with its resiliency, creativity, and depth of feeling and knowing. This state brings the end of fear.

The second major phase in the evolutionary progression is that the soul learns to acclimatize itself to universal bliss. To the degree evil exists (misconceptions, defenses, negative intentionality, refusal to experience one's self-produced pain), bliss is unbearable.

Investigate what you really dislike in your life and in your state. What would you like changed? Another hallmark of maturity is one's attitude toward responsibility. You can never be free when you do not feel responsible.

The physical level of action is only result. The inner level and inner reality is cause and thus determines. This is why an apparently good action has often disastrous results. It is so when the parties involved act right, but this action is undermined by covert negativity.

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Worksheet for Pathwork Guide Lecture #196

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1. Why do some people fear commitment? Why do some people desire it?
2. What is your attitude towards commitment? Do you hold the same attitude in all aspects of your life activities and relationships, or do you have different attitudes towards commitment under different circumstances?
3. Consider an area in your life where you feel unfulfilled, unhappy, or feel that you are suffering. For just a few moments, consider the possibility that your lack of unfulfillment may be caused by negative intentionality, even though you may never have noticed it before.
 - a. Notice if there is any part of you that says 'No, I do not want to give all'?
 - b. If you have ever failed in this endeavor, or felt hurt or discouraged, resistance may feel justified or reasonable. What justifications or resistance come up for you as you consider that you may be responsible for your own unfulfillment?
 - c. What would total, unequivocal commitment in this area look like? Equivocal means 'two or more interpretations, often intended to mislead'. Do you sense different interpretations, leading to opposing conclusions?
4. Take a few moments to reflect upon painful experiences in your past. Select a memory which brings up feelings of pain.
 - a. How have you kept yourself from feeling these feelings?
 - b. What are your attitudes towards the people and events?
 - c. What are your interpretations about what happened?
 - d. Notice if any energies or thought processes focus upon not feeling pain.
5. Allow an experiment. Create a quiet, uninterrupted, unhurried space for yourself. Simply feel the pain from the experience you chose for exercise No. 4 for two minutes. *Set a timer so that you know that this will only last for only 2 minutes.* Try not to 'think' or figure things out; just allow the pain to exist. It may expand or contract, flow or evaporate. Just notice and allow.

Notice your feelings afterwards. Is the pain as intense as it was at the beginning of the exercise? If they are, jot down your thoughts about the pain or the incident. Some experiences are so intense, they may not seem to respond to such exercises. You may want to try the exercise again with something less intense, or with the same experience at another time.

6. Repeat this exercise, but this time select a dream, goal, or desire that has seemed out of reach or impossible to attain. *Set a timer*, and imagine for two minutes how you would feel if you had your heart's desire. If it is hard to visualize, consider something that might actually manifest that you could hold in your hand or your lap, which would represent the fulfillment of this dream.

Were you able to stay present to bliss for the entire two minutes?

"if he cannot bring the cause and effect relationship together, he will go around in a circle, not in a spiral which is the movement of the path." PL 196

7. Circular arguments can result from making false connections or accepting false premises, so that the actual cause(s) remain unnamed and therefore unaddressed. Misidentifying facts or focusing only upon effects can also keep us from understanding or addressing underlying causes.

The Vicious Circle worksheet (attached) can help us see patterns of circular thinking. Exits are possible when we reconsider what we are doing and thinking and consider other possibilities and options. See if you can use it to trace an issue which never seems to resolve.

8. A fan wrote this on the message board of an athlete who was convicted of an ethics violation: "I want my money back from Nike for all of this useless garbage that I have spent my hard-earned money on for the past 10 years! They put this person out there and we bought it, and now it turns out he is lying."

- a. What action had they taken?
- b. What expectations might they have had when they made the purchase?
- c. How does a sponsor's personal behavior relate to the purchase of goods?
- d. What might this fan perceive as the cause of his anger? What other causes might explain his anger?

9. Rehabilitation therapy classifies anything which numbs sensation and awareness as a drug. Trauma and intense emotional reactions (both positive and negative) also release hormones into the bloodstream. When sensation and awareness are numbed, a disconnection can occur between cause and effect. Notice if any activities or emotions block out, numb, or distort awareness of what is going on for you in your life.

Pathwork™ Steps

The Vicious Circle of the Idealized Self Image

“The idealized self masks the real self. It pretends to be something you are not.”

Pathwork Guide Lecture 83

Draw a simple clock face and write in the numbers 1-12 in a standard pattern. Add 2 curved lines, connecting 3 back to 12 and 8 back to 6. As you go through this exercise, use the examples as inspiration to find a Vicious Circle issue in your own life. Except where noted, quotes are from PL 83.

0/12 = The starting point. We are inspired by our Higher Self and our connection to the Divine. This place is never specific, because the Higher Self is not attached to how things manifest. *Challenge any statement here that feels as if it is already ‘in motion’ or which may harbor an agenda or hold onto fixed idea.* Example: “I want to be good, generous, kind and loving in my interactions.

1= We attempt to manifest this HS desire. This may be somewhat specific, but it does not have a forcing current or agenda yet. The destructive element here is engaging in dualistic thinking, thinking in terms of ‘or’ instead of ‘and’. “My friend could use some help” contains “or unhappiness will result”.

“When man knows and senses that there is only good, freedom, right, beauty, love, truth, life without a threatening opposite, and when he tries to apply this on the dualistic plane, he will immediately be plunged into the very conflict of opposites he needs to avoid. He then fights for one of the dualistic aspects and against the other. Such a fight makes the transcendence impossible.” Unity and Dualit PL 143

2= We experience some resistance. In a Benign Circle, we might re-examine our inspiration and how it started to manifest, adjust based upon feedback, and try again. In a Vicious Circle, we decide to push forward without challenging our premise. “I wasn’t able to help this time, but I can figure something out!”

“practically everything man encounters, every human problem and predicament, is determined by this dualistic way of perceiving life.” PL 143

3= There is a growing sense that something has gone wrong. Depending upon our personality type and history, we start to question ourselves or others. “I am failing” “I can’t do this” “He/She doesn’t like / understand me” This is a primary exit point for the Vicious Circle, before we have become invested or attached and before feelings have become strengthened into emotions.

“Unhappiness and lack of belief in oneself are interconnected. Hence, the creation of the idealized self-image serves the purpose of obtaining the missing self-confidence.”

4= A decision is made to push forward. We assume that the fundamentals behind both our inspiration and our methods – the Ideals that make up our Image – are valid. “If I only...” “I can’t quit now” “Maybe another way will work...”

“And when you try to hide your reactions to your own ‘failure,’ you take to special means in order not to become aware of your ‘failure.’ PL 143

5= Discomfort increases / resolve hardens. We feel forced to choose: give up, or commit further.

“You knew perfectly well that you were not as good and as perfect as the world seemed to expect you to be. This truth had to be hidden as a guilty secret, and you started to build up a false self. This, you thought, was your protection and your means of attaining what you desperately want -- life, happiness, security, self-confidence. For, whenever you fall short, as you are bound to, you feel so impatient, so irritated that such impatience and irritation can snowball into fury and wrath at yourself.”

6= The Idealized Self Image is now in charge. The seduction of the ISI is that it represents our ideals. We have no argument against it – it is ‘good’. Any protest must be ‘bad’.

“Since the standards and dictates of the idealized self are impossible to realize, yet never giving up the attempt, you keep and cultivate within yourself an inner tyranny of the worst order. The original insecurity, supposed to be whisked away by the establishment of the idealized self, steadily increases. It snowballs, and becomes worse and worse. The more insecure you feel, the more stringent the demands of the superstructure, the idealized self, the less are you able to live up to it, and the more insecure do you feel.”

7= We sense the pretense. It is here that negativity’s most attractive aspect – that we do not have to feel uncomfortable or unpleasant feelings – is revealed as a lie. We cannot remain in stasis or contraction. Eventually, some expansion will occur. This process may take days, weeks, years or lifetimes, but it is inevitable and uncontrollable. Living is a verb; life is defined by movement.

“Sense of failure, frustration, and compulsion, as well as guilt and shame, are the most outstanding indications of your idealised self being at work. These are the consciously felt emotions of all that lies hidden underneath. Thereby, further vicious circles come into existence. ...the more you take out of that live-center in order to invest into the robot you have created, the more estranged you become from the real self, and the more you weaken and impoverish it.”

This is another place where we can exit the vicious circle, by becoming more conscious of what is really going on. Going forward from this place by simply expanding our efforts continue the circle.

“You will gain an objective view of yourself in this respect, and this view will liberate you. You will fully assume responsibility for the faulty attitude, being willing to take the consequences upon yourself.”

8= Our imperfections and mistakes are used against us – by ourselves. Under the tyranny of the ISI, we may succumb to its apparent perfection.

“Thereby, further vicious circles come into existence. ...the more you take out of that live-center in order to invest into the robot you have created, the more estranged you become from the real self, and the more you weaken and impoverish it.” PL 83

9= We feel the need to choose ‘good’ over ‘bad’, plunging further into dualistic thinking and energizing the choices we have made.

“The more you try to identify with your idealized self-image, the harder is the disillusionment whenever life brings you into a position when this masquerade can no longer be maintained.”

10 and 11 = We move forward within a forcing current, moving past the point on the circle where our original intention came in, remembering our longing but blinded by our ISI’s version of how we should manifest it.

“Needless to say, you also have to recognize most particularly and in detail what your specific demands and standards are; and further, you have to see their unreasonableness, their impossibility.”

Based upon the specifics of the situation or circumstances, a decision is made, blame is assigned, fault is determined and our resolve is hardened.

“First will come changes in your reactions to life, to incidents, to yourself and others. This changed reaction will be quite astounding enough. But little by little, outer things are also bound to change. Your different attitude will cause new effects.

You cannot approach this most important part of your inner work by a general concept. As usual, your most insignificant daily reactions, considered from this viewpoint, will yield the necessary result. So continue your self-search out of these new considerations, and do not be impatient if it takes time and relaxed effort.

The difference between the real and the idealized self is often not a question of quantity (as regards the goodness or badness of a trend) but rather one of quality.

Another important consideration is the time element between these two selves. The idealized self wants to be perfect (according to its specific demands) right now. The real self knows this cannot be and does not suffer from this fact.

Then you will truly experience the following words. The more egocentric you are, the less can you have of self-confidence. The idealized self believes just the opposite. Its claims for perfection are motivated by sheerly egocentric reasons. And this very egocentricity makes self-confidence impossible.”