

## **Reawakening from Deliberate Anesthesia through Focusing on Inner Voices**

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 220

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from [www.pathwork.org](http://www.pathwork.org)

**Week 1: Early Phases of Awakening; Birth to 25**

**Week 2: The Spiritual Purpose of Anesthesia**

**Week 3: Focusing on your inner voices**

**Week 4: Tools for the Learning Process**

**Week 1: Early Phases of Awakening; Birth to 25**

Greetings. Loving blessings are pouring forth for every one of you here. Welcome, my dearest friends.

Let us continue with this specific series of lectures. And keep in mind, my friends, that they are a sequence, one leading to the next on the spiral of your evolutionary process commensurate with your increasing awareness.

In this particular lecture I will again speak about *the phenomenon of consciousness*, particularly in connection with the evolutionary process and the meaning of individual life. This will be focused in a very particular way, as you will see.

PL 220

**Exercise 1a:** Download [a list of the lecture titles](#), and see if you have a sense of what sequence of lectures the Guide is referring to. Which lectures (before and after #220) might he be referring to? Just looking at those titles, what do you imagine might the overall theme of these lectures to be about?

**Exercise 1b:** The Guide said that the topics were determined the very evening a lecture was presented, after consulting with the Real Selves and spiritual teams of those attending, as to what would be in their highest good. Consider the advantages and disadvantages (or, positive and negative intent) of **a**) following the original sequence or **b**) intuitively choosing what is most appropriate for you to read.

### **The Process of Awakening**

All the knowledge is in you. I have often said this, but very rarely is it truly understood.

As you are born into this life, a process of anesthesia sets in. There is a very specific reason for this. You awaken, as you come out of infancy, with a limited consciousness. That is, the awakening is partial and gradual. As you grow physically, mentally, and emotionally in this lifetime, you grope and rediscover knowledge.

At first you do this only in a very limited way, geared only to material life. You learn to walk, to handle objects, to speak. You learn reading, writing, numbers, and certain basic laws of outer life, of the life of matter that surrounds you and that you must learn to handle.

Once that basic material knowledge is mastered, or reawakened, deeper knowledge is reacquired, provided that the growth process takes place as planned. When a person is in an intensive growing process, this will be so in ever increasing depth and scope.

However, if the person has stopped his movement, his life train, he will also prevent the reacquisition of knowledge that he potentially possesses.

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### The Purpose of Anesthesia

Inevitably, here you will have to ask your first question: *"Why does anesthesia set in? Why is it handled that way?"* The anesthesia actually sets in quite a while prior to the process of birth. When, in your spiritual reality where the total entity that you are truly belongs, you have decided upon a reappearance in this dimension, you will be deliberately anesthetized. After all plans have been thoroughly discussed and assimilated, you will lose consciousness.

A person who undergoes an operation on the material plane goes through a similar process. In fact, the process of anesthetization is "copied," remembered, rediscovered. Only its purpose on earth is to prevent pain during the necessary operation. In the case of the incarnatory process, the reason is a different one. I will talk about this shortly.

Before the spiritual self takes possession of the human body in the birth process, the entity is already in a sleeping state, in an anesthetized, unaware state. When the birth process takes place, there is an awakening to a very slight degree -- that is, in relation to its actual state. The limited part of the entity that takes possession of the infant body finds itself awake to some extent, to the extent of certain physical functioning, of physical sensations and certain very limited functions of perception and awareness, but these cannot be properly assessed, interpreted, and assimilated. That comes later. So the state of awareness after birth is increased, as compared to the state before birth, but it is still a very limited state of awareness.

The process of becoming more aware and awake is a very gradual one as growth and expansion in life proceeds. The first years -- I would say perhaps, roughly, the first 22 to 25 years (although this cannot be generalized), are primarily geared to acquiring outer knowledge.

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**Exercise 1c:** Gradual increases in awareness may go unnoticed by the conscious mind, while sudden shifts of consciousness can be disorienting. We may remember these as traumatic events (destroyed expectations, betrayal), or inspirational and pleasurable (Aha! moments of insight).

Review some difficult memories, and imagine how you might be able to interpret them differently if you had more time to ease into an expanded awareness and understanding of life.

### Daily Review 2.0 PL 28

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

Track your daily experiences of disharmonies. After keeping logs for several weeks, see if you can find a common denominator.

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 created by Shakila F.

## Week 2: The Spiritual Purpose of Anesthesia

After the first 22 to 25 years -- provided the process is meaningful and organic -- the focus should go into acquiring inner, spiritual knowledge, knowledge that transcends the physical reality. This can take place first on a psychological level, for psychological knowledge deals with the laws and processes of the inner self. Of course, it overlaps. With certain individuals who are highly developed, who are more capable of spiritual fulfillment, the awakening to inner reality occurs often, though not always, in an earlier period and coincides with the outer learning.

And that is of course what life is all about. For all these are necessary: the groping process, the process of trial and error, searching, often being confused and not knowing and dealing with the not knowing in the most constructive way, finding the often precarious balance between patience and humility for the grace of knowledge to communicate itself, on the one hand, and between serious commitment, endeavor, focus, consolidated will, and healthy aggression extended toward this process, on the other.

In this process lies the key. When the lessons of these endeavors are being absorbed by the soul, the reacquisition of knowledge will come much more easily in a future lifetime, if I am to use your terminology regarding time.

PL 220

The higher the state of consciousness, the more do time, space and movement unify. Movement is the bridge between time and space. The world of thought is of finer substance than the physical world of manifestation. Hence, movement of thought requires less "space" and less time to reach its destination than a body moving from one place to another.

[Man's Relationship to Time](#); Path to the Real Self, Chapter 28 / PRS28 (also see PL 112)

**Exercise 2a:** Take some time to feel into the words above, on a sensory, experiential level.

Does the Guide's description of life-learning match your experience? Notice any protests about this being a process. Admit what you expected or wanted, such as a fantasy that lessons would be handed to you on a proverbial 'silver platter', without any effort on your part.

### Why anesthetizing takes place

Whether a soul has already gone through the process described, and thus spiritual knowledge, understanding, and perception are natural even in the limited state of the human embodiment; or whether this has not yet taken place at all; or whether a soul is within this very process and continues its life after life -- in all these instances to begin with, the manifest personality *does not know what it knows*.

Knowledge, to whatever degree it exists, is blotted out, "forgotten," as it were. Whatever state of development you may be in, you start off with a clean slate, you start off knowing nothing, whether you are highly developed or whether the process is still on a lower scale. So, to begin with, the knowledge that is in you is apparently not in you.

Now, why must that be? Here, I must recapitulate a recent lecture I gave about the evolutionary process [PL 218]. I discussed how the "mass" of consciousness spreads, filling the void. As it does so, particles of consciousness lose themselves. The essential divine consciousness, in its beauty, wisdom, and benign power, functions in a limited and distorted way.

That isolated particle must seek its way to unite again with the forward rushing, spreading movement of the divine state of life that inexorably fills the void. In this process, the separated particles -- individual entities -- must find the way back on their own, by dint of reawakening the divine potentials that are always present, even in the most separated aspects.

I bring back this analogy again and again ever since I gave that lecture, in order to make you understand the topic in question. In this particular case, that part of your soul that is still separated must forget whatever it has known in a more awake state in order for the undeveloped part to find its own way.

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**Exercise 2b:** Consider how motivating an illusion of separation can be; feeling isolated, becoming conscious of wanting – and needing – connection, and struggling to attain it. Recall times when you felt ‘something is missing’ and worked hard to figure out what that was about.

### **Developed aspects may retard the growth of undeveloped aspects**

Now let me try to make this clear. Let us suppose you would consciously know now all that you deeply know. Then the undeveloped aspects in you would not find, under their own steam, their innate essence. These aspects would be swept along, as it were, by the already knowing aspects, by the already developed aspects.

They would therefore always be unreliable. They would essentially (although not necessarily manifestly) blur the beauty, the vitality, the creativity, and the wisdom. They would be swept along in the surge of the total glory of God consciousness, but they would not be totally infused with it. Purification and evolution mean that every smallest aspect of all that is must be infused with its own essence.

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**Exercise 2c:** Notice examples in your life where strong elements overshadow weaker ones.

### **Practical applications**

Let us apply this somewhat metaphysical, philosophical, and general explanation to your present state, to your everyday life and struggle on your path.

On your path, you constantly discover aspects of negativity, of irrationality, of childishness, of selfishness, of destructiveness. These aspects also flare up at an early state of your development by themselves, without provocation from outside. They are so strong that you initiate them regardless of what the outer situation is like.

But as your development proceeds, this is no longer the case. The negative aspects cease to manifest by themselves. They need outer provocation. You respond [with the negative aspects, of irrationality, childishness, selfishness, and destructiveness] to the initiating negativity of others around you. However, you do live in the world of matter in which, even under the best of circumstances, life is not easy. Matter obstructs and frustrates, so that the very fact of living in this dimension of reality (which is your production, of course) is always a challenge.

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## **Becoming affected by our negativity motivates us to transcend it**

Imagine that you would live under circumstances so sublime and favorable, so desirable and bliss-producing that even the worst in you could and would not find occasion to express itself. It is easy to see that then, it would remain dormant and unexposed, and thus could not go through its necessary process of purification.

You are often convinced, and partially rightly so, that if others would not do this or that, you would be fine, you would stay in a state of harmony and bliss. The blurred areas in you would, however, continue to smolder because without their manifestation you would not know of their existence. They need exactly the triggering off, the exposure, and the provocation.

By the same token, if you would consciously know all you know, just as if there were no provocations from outside, the undeveloped aspects would not flare up and would not acquire their own ingrained knowing. They would merely be affected by what the already developed aspects know.

**Exercise 2d:** Imagine that you were born with full knowledge of your positive and negative aspects. Would you actually work on the negative ones? Notice real-life examples, such as onerous tasks that you never get around to doing, unless something negative or unpleasant will happen.

## **Perfection is not necessary for happiness**

You have also experienced on your path that when you successfully work through those blurred areas, you become absolutely safe no matter what others do or fail to do, no matter how they react. You remain essentially whole and essentially unaffected. So you no longer depend on perfection in order not to face your imperfection. The effect of others' destructiveness will not make you lose your bearing or make you uncentered if your blurred areas have been purified, clarified, cleansed, eliminated.

Out of the darkness, light is being developed, because even in the darkest and most ignorant part there is the essence of knowledge and light.

That essence must come from within itself rather than from that aspect outside of itself that already possesses wisdom and light. So then, when the knowledge and light are brought forth from within your own limitations and blurred state, purification is thorough, reliable, and real. Then true independence from surroundings is being established, and thus true freedom. Then each particle, each aspect of consciousness has brought forth its own "minuscule Godness".

And that is the meaning of the anesthesia with which you enter into life. Your struggle for your essential light gradually and surely diminishes the anesthesia, and awakens you to who you really are.

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Offhand, it seems a paradox to be capable of joy only if you accept imperfection, to be capable of growth only if you accept your own imperfection. But if you really think about it, you will see that this is so. **If you attempt growth rather than perfection, you will live in the now.**

[Perfectionism](#) PL 97

### Week 3: Focusing on your Inner Voices

As channels open, a new focusing can set in. You can begin very deliberately to listen into the inner universe from where all wisdom flows into your outer being.

This is a gradual process, yet it is also often sudden in its manifestation. It is a process that is interrupted, that seems to disappear at the beginning of its initial manifestations so that the experience seems to have been a dream. It is a state that must be fought for in a positive, relaxed sense. It must be gained and regained, as it is lost over and over again.

This focusing must be done quite deliberately, after a certain stage of development and purification. The focusing will yield to connections, to listening and "hearing."

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The power of the word is no less when it is inarticulate. There always is an immense power in the word. The word that is not uttered by the voice, that is not heard by the ear outside, is not necessarily less powerful than the uttered word, pronounced with the vocal cords. The power of these words is an indirect one, in that these words create fog that separates the consciousness from the words spoken within that do have the power either constructively or destructively. By observing and identifying them, you will gain a better understanding of how you create your life and what your creative process is. See the powerful words you speak behind that curtain, that fog of separation.

[\*The Power of the Word\*](#) PL 233

**Exercise 3a:** If you are new to the work of discerning inner voices, I suggest looking at materials on [\*The Process of Meditation\*](#) PL 182 (also known as *Meditation for Three Chairs*) and also some self-taught aspects of [\*Voice Dialogue\*](#), developed by Hal and Sidra Stone. **As a first step**, you may need to hear some pent-up complaints from various levels of Ego and Child Consciousness, that can drown out the inner divine voices!

#### **Example of a [\*Meditation for Three Chairs\*](#) process from PL 182:**

1. Using an example of disharmony from your current life, invite the Higher Self in. You may or may not feel it; just have faith that it always accepts such an invitation!
2. Let the Adult Ego explain and outline its view of what is going on / what happened.
3. Let your kid speak! Invite it to answer the following questions about the disharmony or incident: encourage the irrational, emotionally reactive answers — act them out a bit to support the kid, shake your fist and make faces.
  - What do I want? Why does getting this feel so important?
  - Is it really that important, or is there something else bothering me?
  - What would happen to me if I don't get it?
4. As the Adult Ego, sit and reflect on what you have heard.
  - What are the grains of truth in your kid's perspective?
  - Have you avoided any and all compromises, frustrating the child so that it becomes even more active — or worse, goes underground and tries to steal what feels like a real need?
  - If you accepted your Child Consciousness as an aspect of your real self (instead of a nuisance or an embarrassment), how might your attitude change?
  - Notice how the Child Consciousness reacts to the possibility of partnership, without making any promises to it.

*Based upon Moira Shaw's Exercises for Self-Confidence PL77*



**Exercise 3b:** As a second step, you may need to learn to discern the different aspects of the Ego Mind / Ego consciousness, which can have hidden and/or contradictory agendas.

Only after you have gotten to know these more conscious, active voices will you be able to 'hear' the stillness of the inner divine voice, that waits to be invited.

### **Outer factors interfere with listening to inner voices**

Now, the state of consciousness of humanity as a whole makes such focusing quite impossible. Their still unresolved problem may be fear of ridicule and disapproval from the world around them; and the courage is lacking to establish the inner self as the center of individual life. The whole of humanity is conditioned in such a way as to focus only on certain phenomena outside and inside, at the exclusion of other aspects of reality -- until only that which is in focus seems real. This limitation of perception is the result of a conditioned reflex in focusing, which, in turn, is the result of the aforementioned anesthesia.

At the beginning of such a path, if you were to listen into yourself, you would probably hear nothing. You would be convinced that there is nothing but emptiness. Or, perhaps, you would hear occasionally the voice of the childish, demanding, negative self. And then, of course, you are being convinced that this is your final reality. This frightens you, and you avoid facing the negative self even more until, perhaps, you learn with outer aid to make room for deeper, as yet unheard levels of inner reality.

**What is the negative, lower self?** It may manifest under a clever disguise. The deliberate focusing away from the divine voice is due to the strength and the power you give to the negative self, that does not want any other rule and law but its own. The negative self does not want to know itself, yet the divine voice leads the negative self to know itself. That is the first step for the negative self to purify itself.

Only as you question and challenge this negative voice; as you deal with it on a level of self-confrontation; as you identify it without being identified with it [[PL 195](#)]; as you learn not to allow it to control you, not to act it out -- even though you recognize the existence of this voice of selfishness and meanness. Only as this attitude becomes consistent in deed; as confrontation between the lower self and the conscious, reasonable ego self (with its goodwill) takes place constantly; only as you do all this again and again will you eventually find your focus on another level of consciousness, which you will suddenly discover has always been there.

In one of the basic lectures about meditation [[PL 36 & 194](#)] I spoke about both aspects: impressing and expressing -- instructing, claiming, conditioning, recreating, on the one hand; listening, hearing, and receiving, on the other. Now the time has come when you can safely focus more deliberately on expressing. You can discover it by focusing on it. You can awaken out of your dream state, out of your anesthesia, my friends. You can become truly alive and know the aliveness that is in you.

You can deliberately learn to shift your focus, and you can now spend time in your meditation to learn this differentiation. PL 220

**Exercise 3c:** What do your family, friends, and colleagues think of your spiritual work? Notice any inner voices that speak for these outer influences; an inner social critic, concerned loved one, or 'voice of reason' that causes you to doubt this work.

## Week 4: Tools for the Learning Process

QUESTION: Most of my life I have been listening to my negativity. Going from that lower voice, which has been such a large element in my personality, to trying to listen to the other part, let's say the sweet part of myself, the child's voice that was squashed, I am afraid that I will then not deal with the negativity, that I will go overboard and be false and not go into the negative parts.

ANSWER: That is always the danger, that is always the difficulty in the groping. Exactly that element of wishful thinking that the positive voice is now the only reality in the self must be taken into consideration, and then self-deception will no longer present a danger. PL 220

### Divine voices vs. wishful thinking of the Ego

Language in any shape or form is a conglomeration of symbols. What else is language? When you say the word "table," it is a symbol for the object you use, that you know as such. The same applies to the language of your personal unconscious mind. And it is just as possible to learn its language as it is to learn any other language.

But it takes as much time, effort, and practice. It no more comes to you by itself than your suddenly learning a new language without organized effort. Only it is infinitely more rewarding, more essential for your personal life to know the language of your unconscious than the knowledge of a dozen foreign earth languages. *[The Language of the Unconscious](#)* PL 124

Messages of the unconscious come forth through the major problems in life; through repetitive patterns; illness; any unfulfillment or lack. Once it is understood that these occurrences are a message that something is off within the psyche, that a distortion and misconception must somewhere exist, the first step towards elimination of the problem is taken. Yet they are not really hidden. It is merely a question of learning to focus attention on them

Messages or signs appear through:

- night dreams and day dream phantasies
- projection
- strong reaction to others and to general topics
- compulsion
- material derived from "bad moods"
- from allowing emotions to romp freely from one "irrelevancy" to the next  
(also called free association)

All these offer excellent clues for getting to know your hidden self.

*[The Language of the Unconscious](#)*, [Path to the Real Self](#) Chapter 8 / PRS 8

### Discerning the differences

It is possible to hear the divine voice in many areas, yet the negative self still exists. The ego's block against recognition of the latter makes it impossible for the former to come through in regard to those specific areas.

If, however, the ego specifically requests wisdom from the divine part of the self, in order to more deeply recognize and find the best way to deal with the unpurified aspects, the divine voice will be heard, and can be applied to where it is indeed most needed.



On this path, you have a number of good tools to help you avoid the danger of overlooking the undesirable aspects of yourself even when you begin to awaken the wisdom and the splendor of your divine reality. You learn:

- again and again that one does not eliminate the other [[Unity and Duality](#) PL 143];
- to deal with apparent contradiction [[Yes- and No- Currents](#) PL 125]  
[[Identification vs. Identifying With](#) PL 195];
- to keep a record of your disharmonies in your [Daily Review](#) [PL 28];
- the power of repeated *impressing* in meditation; that you do want to be aware of every aspect your inner path wants you to be aware of, at any given phase [[Mediation](#) PL 194].

By using all these tools, you can strengthen your determination to see and observe the undesirable and yet elicit the glory of God in you, listen to it, get to know it.

PL 220

**Exercise 4a:** Another good tool is to pay heed to your reactions. Assess them according to how you feel. If you are truly in joy and brightness, if you are free of anxiety and in a happy state, then, in that particular moment, you are truly in touch with your divinity. And your inner path does not invite you at that particular time to deal with anything else.

But maybe the next day something blurs the picture. Some unhappiness comes to you -- doubts, heaviness, anxiety. That is the sign that there is something you are overlooking. Your life manifestation is an inevitable and reliable gauge that shows whether you are overlooking what should be dealt with and are living in self-deception or whether you are truly following your path according to your plan. PL 220

**Exercise 4b:** Examine your state of fulfillment in your relationships, your partnership, your work, your pleasures, your inner state of joyousness and peace and your outer state of fulfillment and abundance. *These are gauges.* To whatever degree there is unfulfilled longing, you know that there is something that you do not focus on. PL 220

**Exercise 4c:** Humbly ask the best in yourself: *"What do I need to see in myself? Where am I still blind? What can you tell me?"* PL 220

### Hearing the response of the inner voices

If you really want the truth and you open yourself, it will instruct you in the most marvelous way. Nothing can strengthen your faith more in the truth of God's existence than this connection with God. Then you create a unification. The teaching you receive from within you will be a tremendously strengthening and unifying experience so that listening to the beautiful voice will not get you away from the unpurified part, but rather it will bring both parts together so that the negative part will transform itself and become part of the Godself.

You see, the manifestation will be exactly a result of your intention. If you want to use the voice of beauty in order not to deal with the ugliness, you will hear only beauty. You will hear what your ego consciousness is ready to receive.

The divine voice cannot manifest in any other way. The divine voice will not lead you astray and away from where you should focus. This happens, or seems to happen, only when the ego has a strong intentionality in this. It will not tell you beautiful stories about your already purified part or about generalities. It will much rather point with love and firmness to exactly where you have to go. But your ego self must *want* that and must *ask* for it. PL 220

## The learning process

Only by experience, by selection, by assessment, and by trial and error can you learn to understand the laws here. There are certain rules, in broad outline. Yet every person is different, has different leanings, may have different weak points of wishful thinking. And you will be tested in terms of the extent to which you really have to grope and learn and question yourself.

The most valuable treasure a human being can possess -- the connection with the divine voice -- cannot be handed ready-made on a silver platter. It must be earned through the groping process. You must learn to question yourself about the extent to which wishful thinking may possibly be coloring the reception.

On the other hand, beware of the equal danger of the opposite.

- To what extent does the fear of wishful thinking color the reception and obstruct the truth that would only be too welcome?

- If the voice says something that is so desirable that you do not dare to believe it, it may still be true. But you must test it out and explore your inner self as to whether there exists any desire to cheat, to avoid something that is necessary for you, and so on.

Only experience in a deep, inner way will teach you and give you the security. You must try again and again. You must listen, give it attention, take it seriously, but also not be gullible, and realize that tests must come in order for you to learn what needs to be learned.

If you discover the voice only after the fact, that too is all right. It is then up to you to deal with it, to think back how it was that you heard it. You can meditate for enlightenment, and slowly you will learn the process. If there were hard and fast rules, that security would not come. It can come only through the process of groping, learning, making mistakes. Eventually the inner knowing will come. You will have the feeling deep inside in your center where it will feel right and good, and you will know that this is it, and you will learn to trust it.

You who work on this path create so much blessing for yourself, so much light. More and more you will awaken from your sleep so that you will never have to fall asleep again. Rest will not impair the awareness of a joyous, peaceful, exciting, blissful universe in which you live and which lives in you. You are blessed.

PL 220

**Exercise 4d:** Practice! Don't wait for something dramatic or momentous. Ask your inner voices for help in navigating the most mundane aspects of life. Get to know them, so that you can immediately notice when Ego, Child Consciousness, or negativity inject themselves.

**Exercise 4e:** Be still and know -- that deep within you is the nucleus of God that will speak to you. And you will help it if you say words such as:

*"Let go; let go of the mind and its preconceived ideas and its ingrained negativity. Let go of the habit, and let God. Let in new attitudes, new feelings."*

*The Roscoe Lecture* – Inspiration for the Pathwork Center PL 209

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