

Leadership – The Art of Transcending Frustration

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 237

Week 1: Conflicting Attitudes about Leadership

Week 2: Leadership As Giving

Week 3: Abilities Needed for Inner Leadership

Week 4: The Art of Transcending Frustration

Week 1: Conflicting Attitudes about Leadership

You often experience that life or people actually give to you the best and most longed-for gifts, but you find yourself unable to take them in.

However, opening up works in two directions -- not only toward the outside world. When you open up, you also make it possible to let out what comes from the deepest levels within. Because the negativities are in themselves a more subtle protective layer and bar the perfection of your inner being, they must surface first. But beyond them, the most positive, creative reality that you are can and will emerge when you commit yourself to be fully open and undefended.

You erroneously assume that in this open state you cannot protect yourself against abuse. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Only when your higher self functions; when you are free from self-serving, selfish attitudes; when you are true to your inborn integrity and decency; when you follow the divine laws of the universe -- which are laws of justice, truth, wisdom, and love -- can you be strong enough for real, genuine protection, assertion, confrontation. Only then can you be free from guilt and therefore from anxiety and insecurity, from confusion and fear, which are the only reason for not being able to defend yourself against abuse.

When you speak and think of opening up, of dropping your defenses, conceive of this act not only as directed toward the outside, but primarily as an opening inward. Have the courage and faith in your deepest perfection so that you can trustingly allow the overlays of the lower self to emerge in order for you to deal with and transform them.

Anyone developed enough to be capable of pursuing such a demanding path as this is also capable of immense fulfillment and joy -- and of leadership! In this path we are creating new leaders in many fields, in many directions, in many ways. The purification you undergo makes you truly capable of genuine leadership in the best sense.

PL 237

Conflicting inner attitudes towards leadership:

- Wanting to be a leader → Fear that we are not good enough, don't want to assume the responsibilities that go with leadership, refusal to fulfill prerequisites → Envy of leadership in others
- Competitiveness → Dualistic thinking: them vs. me → Fear of losing out, 'they' will take it away from me → All conflicts devolve into Life vs. Death choices
- Lack of faith in spiritual law (justified by experiences on the earth plane) → Fear of spiritual punishment and deprivation → Justify our own feelings and thoughts vs. being open what is in the highest good for all → Demand that our human experience directly reflect what we want

Conflicting inner attitudes towards followship:

- Leader must be strong, powerful, and benignly disposed towards me.
- Leader must fulfill my desires, without asking me to examine whether they are fair.
- Leader must give me privileges without demanding from me what I do not want to give. Model is of a 'super-parent'.

Exercise 1a: Authority is defined as 'the power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge'. It is also 'power assigned to another'.

For one week, focus on your attitudes towards authority of any kind; real or imagined, inner or outer. Notice any discrepancies.

PL 237

Exercise 1b: Law is defined as 'a rule of conduct or procedure established by custom, agreement, or authority'. It is also 'a set of / a body of rules or governing principles'.

Notice your attitude towards the underlying laws that enable authority: natural (i.e. gravity), spiritual (i.e. the concept of Karma) or human (as an ideal and in practice).

Daily Review PL 28

Exercise: Keep a record of incidents that disturb you. Focusing upon subtleties may help us from becoming distracted by exaggerating or over-dramatizing a situation. Notice feelings of discomfort, where you suspect you may be uninformed, ignorant, unprepared, or unaware.

Each week, see if you can relate with the sub-topic.

All you need is a ½ page of lined paper per day. Create 4 columns. At some point during each day, jot down brief notes about each incident (limit:10 per day). Eventually, this can become a thought process. The Guide refers to Daily Review as 'spiritual hygiene'.

1. Two to three words to identify each incident (no details)
2. What feelings or emotional reactions came up
3. The judgments or conclusions you came to at the time

At the end of each week, read through your entries and complete the last column:

4. What do you notice today that you did not notice at the time? Are there patterns?
5. Using your preferred form of meditation (sitting, walking, or while doing 'mindless' chores) reflect upon your early childhood experiences.

Week 2: Leadership As Giving

As long as you do not fulfill the natural prerequisites for leadership in your own right, in whatever fashion, you have no right to envy and resent leadership in others. If you do not first assume leadership for your own life, naturally you will need a leader who takes on the governing of your life.

No one can exist without leadership. You are then like a boat without a rudder. Someone must lead your life, someone must govern it, so if you do not choose to do so, others will have to do so to a degree. On a neurotic level, you will ask for it in ways that cannot be given you. But you will also ask for the freedom and the privileges which only self-leadership can confer. So you want others to lead you where it is convenient for you, but you will also resent them for it. Thus you are torn apart by many conflicts.

You can start with your own life and from there go on to take the full responsibility for your planetary citizenship, for being a bringer-in of the new age. This leadership can take many different forms. But it must begin in apparently invisible, unnoticed attitudes toward yourself and your immediate environment. It must begin with very simple little steps, above and beyond the self-responsibility we usually talk about and work with again and again.

PL 237

Exercise 2a : Notice any desire or demand for a 'super-parent' who will serve your interests exclusively. Or, notice where you want to make all the decisions so that you will always get your way.

Then ask yourself -- are you really still in such an undeveloped, immature inner state that you require others to lead you? Or are you perhaps much more ready to be a leader in your own right? Can you perhaps now make a different choice whenever the old negative reactions still recur?

Leadership as Giving

A leader, in the best sense of the word, has to, above anything else, want to give unselfishly -- not just theoretically and in principle while in practical life pettiness, ungenerosity, and selfishness are expressed and even all too often denied and projected, but unselfish giving must exist really and truly in the smallest acts.

If you do not want to give unselfishly, you cannot assert your own leadership. If you give grudgingly and unwilling because you pretend it is demanded of you, it cannot be called giving.

In another sense, true giving is demanded of you, for if you want the privileges of leadership -- and there are many -- that is the price: giving. The laws of life and creation always "demand," if you will, that they be obeyed because they have been created in perfection.

Yet you act as if this were an unfair price, and you are full of outraged rebellion and resentments for which you often manage to find justification. You give only with second

thoughts, ulterior motives, calculating inner bargains, open little back doors, and a great deal of begrudging, so that it is no longer giving. Your giving is no longer giving, and therefore it leaves others and you empty.

When you take the next step and say, "*You see, I gave, and what do I get from it?*" you negate the fact that your giving was never giving in the first place. **Thus you cunningly reinforce your resistance to giving.**

PL 237

Exercise 2b: For one week, focus your Daily Review on noticing where you want to 'get' instead of 'give'. Notice where you feel or think "*You see, I gave, and what do I get from it?*"

Giving is a very simple act that includes also the thought and the intentionality behind the act. In true giving, you state this: "*I want to be an instrument of divine reality to enrich the world outside through the divinity that wants to express itself through me. I want to do this not for my ego aggrandizement nor for any other ulterior motive or advantage.*"

That thought, that attitude, will actually bring you many advantages. It will give you the self-esteem and also the feeling of deserving and claiming the abundance you desperately grope for in faulty ways.

That attitude must prevail as an underlying, overall, and all-permeating inner climate. When that attitude exists, jealousy cannot possibly exist any longer. The other person's giving and values can never detract from your own; you will know this and experience it.

If your giving is faked, neither anyone else's giving nor life's abundance can be received by you. At the same time, other people's true giving and the appreciation, the abundance in material and emotional goods they receive for it, will fill you with envy. That in itself can be a measurement for you where you are in regard to true giving. True giving is an act of love, of course. And if you do not love and if you do not wish to learn to love, you cannot fulfill your deepest yearning.

You may pray for being able to give and love, but you may be blind to the little areas where you demonstrate the opposite in subtle little ways in your reactions toward your fellow creatures. So leadership in its real sense is built on the love of true giving and on the true giving of love.

Nothing can go wrong when that attitude exists. Perfect balance will be attained in all the many dichotomies and conflicts, in all the apparent difficulties of decisions your dualistic life seems to consist of.

PL 237

Week 3: Abilities Needed for Inner Leadership

A. Willingness to be impartial and objective

All too often you refuse to see your personal stake and desires in an issue, and you build justifications around your personal, tainted desires. You claim objectivity and impartiality when nothing could be further from the truth.

If you lack this ability, the next best step that will bring you toward the more advanced state of objective detachment ... is the awareness of this partiality, the admitting of it, and thus disqualifying yourself from arguing the case in question.

Admit how you bend reality according to your own emotional desires and colorations. By now, as a result of your practice in self-honesty, this should be possible for most of you. Your Pathwork trains you for this highly advanced state of honesty and fairness.

It is truly a sign of greatness to know that you are, in this or that area, full of disturbing, turbulent emotions, full of conflict, and cannot therefore form an opinion. A leader must have this greatness. But your stake in explaining and fashioning distorted reality is a tremendous hurdle that will make you very vulnerable. And if you have already attained in some manner a position of leadership, you can be toppled by the lack of this impartiality. Not admitting it, and claiming that you are free from personal stakes in proclaiming your opinions makes you very vulnerable. You must then guard your position because you then claim an unrightful position of leadership.

The ability to know your coloration of reality (as I implied in connection with some previous issues) and then to voluntarily disqualify yourself is a sign of maturity and greatness that will indeed bring you to an ever growing capacity to perceive reality as it really is, and know it and state it without fear, and be true to it even if it may expose you to criticism. Strength, self-trust, and security come as a result of the honesty to know and admit when you are not impartial and do not wish to be. We may state it thus: You can have the objectivity of knowing that you are not objective.

Where you are blinded by self-interest and self-righteousness, by resentments and demands, by fear and guilt, by coveting and jealousy, by all sorts of negative feelings and thoughts. In these moments, your assessments are not and cannot be objective.

PL 237

B. Willingness to risk exposure and criticism

If you fear this and guard against it and yet grab for leadership because you like the advantage of it, the power and prestige, then again you defeat the purpose. You create a painful conflict in yourself, and you create frustration.

True leadership cannot exist under these circumstances for which you may then again blame the outer world and those who, at least in some respects, have rightfully attained leadership, whether you want to admit and see this or not.

So if you cannot bear the momentary pain of being misunderstood, criticized -- rightly or wrongly -- then you do not have the firm foundation necessary for a true leader. Leadership means constant risk. If you do not wish to take this risk, how can you claim a case for yourself in your jealousies, in your resentments, in your rebellion toward those who assume the responsibilities of leadership with all that this implies?

PL 237

C. Learning to tolerate frustration

Still another absolutely essential quality of leadership that the infant or the infantile personality lacks and is unwilling to even consider is the attitude toward frustration. Of course we have discussed this before in previous lectures, but again and again I see so many of you being blind to what is going on because you do not acknowledge your anger and fury when something does not go your way.

True unification and wholeness of the personality can only come when the dichotomy of frustration versus fulfillment has been conciliated. Now how can it be conciliated when one of the dualities is being fought against and the other grabbed at?

If you have a very strong "*I must have it*," on the one hand, and an equally strong "*I must not have it*" for the opposite of what is desired, on the other, you are in a state of painful duality. You erroneously attempt to reduce the tension of this painful state by pressuring life into giving you the fulfillment of the desire by eliminating all frustration. Thus you never learn how to really transcend frustration so that it will no longer occur. Of course you never succeed in this attempt and only become more frustrated. You can be sure that as long as you experience frustration, you have to learn from it. Generally speaking, this is your position in regard to frustration.

PL 237

Personal note: For more than a dozen years, I referred to this lecture as "Leadership – the Art of Frustration" because I focused on trying to reduce, manage, or overcome my frustrations. I got stuck in the duality of wanting to get rid of something, instead of allowing the process to be "highly alive, conscious, and dynamic, full of feelings that flow harmoniously with the stream of life." (see Week 4). jr

Exercise 3: For a week, focus your Daily Review upon any feelings of frustration.

Any time we invite ourselves to become aware of suppressed feelings, they may temporarily overwhelm us. You may not be able to limit the number of entries to 10 per day!

At the end of the week, notice any common denominators in your frustrations.

Feelings of frustration are a message; they tell you where you believe there is no hope for fulfillment. This can seem like a form of spiritual death. In dualistic thinking (PL 143) all forms of death must be avoided, i.e., something '*we must not have*'. Life then becomes a solution to death, something '*we must have*'. Clinging to life in order to avoid death interferes with the harmonious flow of the stream of life.

Week 4: The Art of Transcending Frustration

When I speak of transcendence, I do not mean a false transcendence of making yourself so disconnected from your feelings that you simply do not know how tense, anxious, and desirous you are. I mean a very genuine transcendence that is highly alive, conscious, and dynamic, full of feelings that flow harmoniously with the stream of life. There are some steps in the attainment of this state.

Step 1: Express willingness. "If it is painful or undesirable, I will trust it anyway. I will trust my faculties to bear it, to relax into it, to learn from it, to handle it and make the best of it. I will learn a lesson from this particular frustration and will not act as if it were a catastrophe. Perhaps it is not a catastrophe, perhaps something good can come from it."

That very open attitude is the first step that will bring you almost at once into a new state of highly reduced anxiety and highly increased security.

For your anxiety is fostered by your dependence on something that cannot be

- your assumption that you have to manipulate reality around you to suit the most infantile misconceptions and unreal needs for instant gratification;
- your assumption that everything has to be exactly according to your momentary, very limited vision that is totally cut off from the sequence of cause and effect in your life and in universal life.

So the first step is to make room for relaxing your reaction of utter disgust and outrage about frustration, your fear and anger about it; to challenge and question this reaction; and to consider it as being possibly faulty and erroneous.

Thereby you make room for new faculties in you:

- the faculty that you can perhaps allow things to happen;
- the faculty that you find a new strength and wisdom to deal with something that does not bend according to your self-will.
- This gives immense self-confidence and self-reliance that constant obedience to your self-will could never confer on you. This is a very important first step, my dearest ones. It is the first step that leads to a much more beautiful one.

Step 2: The active, deliberate, and renewed search for the meaning of that particular frustration. What does the particular frustration you are dealing with at this time have to teach you? Most of the time you are completely unwilling to consider such a possibility.

You are so bent on battling the occurrence of frustration that the lesson gets lost and you pass by a valuable mark on your path, a high mark, an opportunity. The more you battle against them, the more rigid you will become, the worse the frustration will appear, the more the frustrations will grow in size, intensity, and significance until they overwhelm you.

Frustration is a friend, my friends. You can make it a friend by courageously and intelligently wishing to explore its meaning and allowing it to be your teacher and your therapist, as it were.

Step 3: The discovery of the meaning. He who knocks shall be opened, he who searches must find. The answer, the meaning, will always astound you. When another such lesson comes you will be much less afraid of it, much more confident of its meaningfulness for you, **and much less resistant to repeat those steps.**

It will give you a new trust in life and a new vision of the consciousness behind all things, even behind the frustration you have battled against. This is obviously a substantial step toward conciliating the dichotomy of frustration versus fulfillment.

Step 4: You will discover in its deepest one-pointedness the divinity of life, the divinity of a particular frustration. And it will no longer be a frustration. It will become the highest fulfillment imaginable, much more so than the fulfillment you craved for, away from the frustration.

That, of course, my beloved friends, is the point where you have overcome frustration, where you have mastered and truly transcended it -- not transcended in the false way of denying your frustrated feelings, and pretending that you do not mind it on the mask-self level, but truly overcome it.

Not only will you no longer fear frustration, not only do you now know that you can deal with it, that you have the equipment and the capacities and the resources and the creativity to deal with it; you also have utilized it as a beautiful lesson and consequently coming to the divinity of it, where it is all one, where there is God and fulfillment within the frustration.

To the degree true leadership exists, the attitude toward frustration is in most instances a fairly mature and realistic one, and there is no longer an attitude of outraged insult when frustration is felt. Leadership does not always take the form of visible outer manifestation. It almost always begins in more subtle, unnoticeable ways. But you will be an authority in your own right in the best sense of the word. You cannot be that unless you reconsider the attitudes I have mentioned, and your jealousies and envies appear as the painful illusions they really are.

Happiness means many things. When you have come to your own resources, to your own inner greatness because these lessons are being learned, you must be in one way or another a leader.

Shed these unnecessary attitudes. You have nothing but joy and gain to expect from doing so. Your good will, your serious attempt to become who you are already in this respect is now truly possible. You think that the person you can be has not been born yet, but he or she is already waiting to be released when you let go and open yourself up to what wants to emerge from within you. It is only the outer, separated, obsolete part of the self that still takes such dominance because your willful personality allies itself with this, rather than with what is so much stronger and so much more real and ready to emerge into manifestation.

PL 237

Study Guide © Jan Rigsby: 2018
Guide Quotes © The Pathwork Foundation 1999
Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org