

# Pathwork® Steps

## Grace, Faith, and Deficit

### The Meaning of Grace; Releasing Faith; Living on Deficit

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 250 Part 1 of 2

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

#### **Part 1:**

**Week 1: The Meaning of Grace**

**Week 2: Awareness, Understanding, Knowing**

**Week 3: Connection Between Inner and Outer Abundance**

**Week 4: Spiral of Development – Vicious and Benign Circles**

#### *Part 2 (subject to change)*

Week 1: Exposing the Deficit

Week 2: Using Feedback in Decision Making

Week 3: Risking to Have Faith

Week 4: Surrendering to the Gift of Life

#### **Week 1: The Meaning of Grace**

In former times grace was much more acceptable, in that it was understood as a special dispensation from God that was given -- or not given -- for His own reasons. The individual had little to do with it. At a time when self-responsibility was little developed, this was easier to accept. In today's time at the present general state of mankind's development, self-responsibility is much more developed. You understand that you create your reality and your experiences -- good or bad.

How then does grace come in? Is it totally eliminated from the scope of man's vision of life and reality? No, it is not. Grace is as much a reality as self-creation and self-responsibility.

PL 250

Definitions of Grace from [www.ahdictionary.com](http://www.ahdictionary.com)

1. Seemingly effortless beauty or charm of movement, form, or proportion.
2. A characteristic or quality pleasing for its charm or refinement.
3. A sense of fitness or propriety.
4. a.) A disposition to be generous or helpful; goodwill. b.) Mercy; clemency.
5. A favor rendered by one who need not do so; indulgence.
6. A temporary immunity or exemption; a reprieve.

**Exercise 1a:** Consider your current understandings and beliefs are about grace before you read any further. Write down: 1) what grace is / looks like / manifests as 2) what being in grace / being given grace would look like 2) who / what gives or extends grace 3) what price do you pay / what expectations come with accepting grace?

#### **The Grace of God is**

It exists at all times, penetrating all that is. It exists in the very nature of ultimate reality, which is thoroughly benign. Grace lies in the fact that all must work for the best, no matter how evil, how painful, how tragic it may appear at the moment.

In the end, when these negative experiences are fully assimilated and lived through, they come around full circle to the light of love, truth, joy, peace, pleasure supreme, eternal life, well-being in all respects. This must always be the ultimate reality - and therein lies the grace.

PL 250

## Grace Transcends Time

**Man's existence on earth is bound by time.** Time is a result of the three-dimensional nature of this sphere of consciousness. This is indicated by three segments: past, present and future. This dimension is a result of the overall state of consciousness of mankind as a whole.

**Without mind, time does not exist.** Time, space and movement point again to the three-dimensional nature of this state of consciousness. The higher the state of consciousness, the more do time, space and movement unify

[\*Man's Relationship to Time\*](#) PL 112 / Path to the Real Self Chapter 28 PRS28

**Exercise 1b:** It is difficult to think through or imagine being outside time, since we use our minds for these processes. Instead, recall an experience where you have sensed something greater than what is happening in the moment.

The mind (and/or Ego and self-will) may suggest starting points or candidates; counteract these influences (and any offer of 'expertise' in making 'best' choices) by allowing your senses to guide you. Intellect *can* assist here by recalling details, 'setting the stage' for a memory to unfold, but it may also bring pre-determined opinions and judgments about what the moment means today.

Allow yourself to re-experience several such moments, one at a time, allowing your senses to guide you. Focus on what you are seeing, touching, smelling, tasting now, as you recall the memory. Notice your feelings, vs wanting to organize or understand them. Relax and allow your senses to guide you. This is likely to only take a few moments of your time.

After each experience you may wish to write down words or phrases that will help you recall what you experienced, rather than a narrative, justification, or conclusion. Think in terms of souvenirs or mementos; a single flower petal can be enough to recall a week's camping trip.

## You cannot help *but* to live in the grace of God

The very air you breathe is permeated with it. Every substance of life, on all levels from the finest vibrations and radiations to the crudest of matter is permeated with it. The very world you live in, the universe, all of creation, the way divine law is constructed, all are an expression of divine grace. You live and move and have your being in a universe that consists of such tenderness, such love, such personal care of the living God, the all eternal presence in all that is, that it simply defies description. You are surrounded by a universe in which there is simply nothing ever to fear -- no matter what momentary appearances may be!

PL 250

**Exercise 1c:** How does the lecture's description of grace differ from what you wrote in Exercise 1a?. Notice if PL 250 differs from religious teachings, such as "*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin*" (Luke 12:22) and "*My mercy encompasses all things*" (Holy Quran, 7:157). In Buddhism, grace is drawn from the Sanskrit word *adhithana*, which means "blessings" or "spiritual power". [PL 52](#) suggests that we project experiences of imperfect authority onto God. [PL 146](#) invites us to explore how attitudes to human authority reveal our spiritual relationship with the ultimate authority – spiritual law.

## Week 2: Awareness, Understanding, Knowing

The problem is not that you need to draw the grace of God to you. For it is already there, filling every pore of your being. The problem is your lack of vision, your limited view, your distorted interpretations, your faulty outlook, your personal blocks.

These seem iron walls that enclose you and prevent you from perceiving and experiencing grace. In reality they are just a vapor, that must immediately dissolve once you rearrange your field of vision, and therefore begin to dissolve your personality defects and blocks.

As always, this process begins with the small everyday events and happenings. PL 250

**Exercise 2a:** Explore your feelings about already being in the grace of God. Fear and resistance will create barriers to becoming aware of what is true, while not changing truth itself. For example, believing that the earth is flat or that it is the center of our galaxy have no effect on reality.

### The Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution

#### 1. Automatism / blind reflex

- Responses based upon deeply imprinted wrong conclusions and generalizations
- Blind reflexes rationalized and explained to prove they are based on choice vs. compulsion
- Cannot surrender or trust, because we are disconnected from our own inner knowing

#### 2. Awareness

*"The transition from automatism to awareness is one of the most difficult that man passes through." PL 127*

- Starts with becoming aware of the blind reflex mechanism
- Becoming conscious of error, deviation from truth
- Realization that we are / have been driven by false ideas

#### 3. Understanding

- Seeing the cause and effect of negative, destructive emotions, false ideas
- Requires deep experience of the spiritual reality (felt, rather than learning a lesson by heart)

#### 4. Knowing

- Experiencing the truth
- Knowing right conclusions from wrong ones, intuitively and instinctively
- Connects us with a greater spiritual principle *Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution* PL 127

**Exercise 2b:** The process above is not linear. As awareness increases, there is more interest in both understanding and in uncovering what was previously masked by blind reflex.

Recall aspects of your life where this progression was not slowed down by fear or false beliefs, such as any learning experience that moved smoothly from a state of ignorance into a sense of knowing: riding a bike, learning to swim to drive a car, operating a computer or smartphone.

### Feelings of Harmony and Disharmony can Guide You

The gauge is right at your disposal. As I so often said to you, you can easily tell whether you are in truth or not by the way you feel. If you are in harmony with life, if you are joyous and hopeful, you can be certain that you partake of God's grace that surrounds and infills you -- in short, certain that you are in truth, at least in the limited way of your present state of consciousness as regards your immediate experiences and reactions to the world around you.

But when the opposite occurs, when you are in a state of disturbance, fear, and disharmony with yourself, others, and life in general, you forget this key I have given so often. When you are

unhappy, fearful, discouraged, in darkness, know at least that you are not in truth. This will make a lot of difference. Know that your blocks, your faulty vision, have separated you from the grace of God in which you swim, even now, although you do not know it. PL 250

It is often forgotten that the unconscious does not only harbor petrified wrong conclusions, destructive behavior patterns resulting from images, and negative emotions due to unresolved problems, but it also contains utter wisdom, divine truth, and the most constructive elements in the universe, constantly building up in unending creativity and love.

*The Language of the Unconscious* PL 124

**Exercise 2c:** Explore your beliefs about the unconscious. Fear and resistance will create barriers to awareness and block your ability to address false beliefs.

### **Learning the Language of the Unconscious**

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

**Exercise 2d:** One way to use the technique of Daily Review is to gather message fragments that may not make sense individually, but together they may indicate patterns of behavior that can reveal the existence of deep emotional currents that have managed to stay hidden.

#### **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.

### **Find Your Own Rhythm**

When you make an effort to go forward, to use your energy, to search for truth, that is expansion. And when the necessary time comes to assimilate what you have learned, and to apply it to yourself, when you search within yourself, that is restriction. You cannot develop without both outgoing and ingoing movement, and assimilating the two. But this cannot happen by forceful means and special exercises. It is the product of the labor of development.

*Three Cosmic Principles; Expansion, Restriction, Stasis* PL 55

Contraction in its positive form has a beautiful, beautiful meaning. It is an in-gathering of all the forces. What has occurred in the expanded state is being gathered back into the self. It is being digested, assimilated. It means reaching into the depths of your infinite divine reality in order to bring out the treasures of the deepest aspects of the self.

Expanding means letting this flow out into the world, but in order to do so, positive contraction must occur first. Expansion means gathering the riches of divine creation in the inner universe and then bringing them into the outer universe. Contraction means gathering the riches of the outer universe and then bringing them into the inner.

*The Anatomy of Contraction* PL 235

## Suggestions for Finding Unconscious Beliefs

From *The Language of the Unconscious* Chapter 8 of The Path to the Real Self / PRS8

When a vague restlessness and lack of peace, a gnawing depression, exist, and the rational explanations you find do not relieve you or bring substantial clarification, do not say "*I am simply in a bad mood,*" as though this explains everything. **There is always a reason.** Such a mood is the very message your unconscious sends you, so that you find out what goes on in you. The fact that you do not know it, means that a part in you resists facing whatever it is, in the erroneous idea that facing it would make it worse. Let your reason instruct your unwilling unconscious that not knowing it is infinitely worse and that you want to know what really disturbs you.

**Example 1:** When very angry and irritated about traits or trends in others, it might be a good indication that the same traits exist in the self, but are covered up. You may feel so angry and irritated with yourself that these feelings merely surface in a round-about way -- concerning other people. In psychology this process is called "projection."

**Example 2:** When you observe yourself, you may note that, sometimes, worse traits have no effect on you whatever, while a minor fault may irritate you to distraction. When you are personally disturbed, it is always a sign to look deep inside, whether the same, or something similar, exists. The message of your unconscious, in this case, was your personal disturbance and overly strong reaction to a fault of others.

**Example 3:** When you have very strong, rigid opinions you feel compelled to defend in a militant, unrelaxed way and you register anxiety and anger when someone expresses different views, this reaction certainly reveals a message from the unconscious. It is so easy to disregard such reactions, to take them for granted, to consider them "natural," to explain them away and find justification. If honestly investigated, one always finds a personal distortion, destructive defense, problematic attitude, behind.

**Example 4:** A good way to judge whether one's reaction is disproportionate is to observe the existence of an inner anxiety. Whenever this is the case, it is an indication that something more is at stake than the obvious issue.

**Example 5:** As to your day dream fantasies, you may certainly begin by making notes of their most recurrent versions. What wishes do they express? What frustrations do these wishes indicate?

**Example 6:** Projection also occurs in shifting the hidden opinion of the self onto an outer authority, for instance God. Hence, the fear of punishment, and even actual self-punishment, are thought (often unconsciously) to come from outside. An obscure authority is supposed to judge all reactions. Even the professed atheist often feels this, if he examines his reactions closely. In reality, he judges himself.

**Example 7:** Compulsive actions always reveal messages from the unconscious. Most people never tackle their compulsions with a fresh spirit and an open mind. They do not even want to admit that certain actions or habits are compulsive. Needless to say, this must be done first. The next step is to ask oneself the most simple and primitive seeming questions, and seriously answering them. That this has been started may already give a certain relief. The more serious the attempt and desire to understand the nature of the compulsions, the more it will reveal what lies underneath.

*The Language of the Unconscious* Chapter 8 of The Path to the Real Self / PRS8

The most powerful aspect in man's life is his unconscious. The unconscious is so much stronger than the conscious mind, because conscious misconceptions and unrealistic outlooks are more easily detectable in their unrealism and can therefore be corrected. That which is hidden from awareness continues to govern you without your being able through your reason to change the unconscious outlook.

Hence it is of utmost importance to detect such hindering outlooks hidden within. These wells can be tapped to the degree that the obstructions are let out of their hiding place - the unconscious. Then and then only will all the productive elements, which, too, are still hidden, rise to the surface.

*The Language of the Unconscious* PL 124

### Week 3: Connection between Inner and Outer Abundance

Every attitude, every mental and emotional condition creates chain reactions and circles -- either benign or vicious ones, according to whether the belief, attitude, and behavior pattern is according to truth or error.

When the illusion exists that the outer and inner universe is empty and impoverished, you automatically create a vicious circle. This belief must make you hoard yourself, your innate riches, talents, everything you possess spiritually or materially or both.

Hence you separate yourself from the riches that surround and penetrate you. This inner mechanism makes your receiving impossible, which then increases and finally seems to confirm the vision of poverty of life and self. PL 250

**Exercise 3a:** Explore your beliefs, values, and attitudes about abundance. On a practical level, how do they manifest? Where / with whom do you give and receive freely? Where / with whom do you keep score, making sure to get what you deserve / are treated fairly?

**Benign Circles** (see diagram of Benign Circle at the end of Week 4).

In contrast, the benign circle can be established by risking to give out in the conscious expectation that possibly the fear of suspecting poverty and deprivation may be illusions, and that abundance will grow.

The more you thus start giving to God in trust and with love, the more you release further faith, and the more you liberate your bound vision. You will not only see the abundance flooding through you and surrounding you, you will also lift the lever that locked the mechanism. You will reach out into this rich world, and allow it to bestow upon you all that it contains in such overpowering abundance, with such overpowering love of the Creator for you that words can never describe this magnificence. You enter more and more into a benign circle in which you can release more of your inner and outer riches because you know they are eternally and inexorably replaced as a never ending stream.

So the more you receive, the more you can give, and the more you give, the more are you capable of receiving. It is then that giving and receiving become one. PL 250

**Exercise 3b:** Is there an area in your life that feels like a benign circle of ever-expanding abundance? Visualize those feelings flowing like water. Notice if / when the flow slows down or speeds up, or if it feels turbulent vs. smooth. If the flow stops abruptly, notice what changed.

See diagram of Benign Circle at the end of Week 4.

### Creating Abundance

The first step must be to risk giving out -- to contemplate that your fear that makes you hold and hoard is erroneous.

You test once again a new ground rule of life, and begin gradually to discard an old one that has proven detrimental because it is false, because it paints a false picture of life. False pictures

are as reinforced by believing in them as true pictures are. That is the trouble with them. Only when they are being challenged will they lose their energy.

This process can be likened to pulling out poisonous weeds and planting new beautiful seeds. Giving in faith, love, and trust in God, even before you are being convinced of its truth and reality, is planting your new, abundant, rich, beautiful spiritual garden. And when I say spiritual, I do not mean something far away, vague, and realizable in an afterlife. I mean something tangible that must sooner or later manifest in your material life here and now, with inner and outer riches.

PL 250

**Exercise 3c:** Where and how do you not risk 'giving out'? Explore your fears about poverty and deprivation, being taken advantage of, or any demand that others give equally before you will participate.

### **The great enemy is fear.**

A vicious circle exists in that fear prohibits the faculties to get to know. It dulls the senses. Fear is the great locked door which prohibits man from entering -- right here and right now -- into all that which is immediately available the moment fear is uprooted from his heart and soul. The more known an event is, the less is it feared.

The best way to meet and conquer this enemy is first to ascertain, admit, and pronounce it. This will diminish it to a considerable degree and open the way to further measures of ousting it. Of course, this desire must, as always, be clearly expressed in one's thinking and intentions.

However, if fear is worked against due to **fear of fear**, it will be difficult. Therefore the calm admission of it, the momentary acceptance of it will do more toward eliminating it than fighting against it.

Where there is an uncertainty what the future will bring, there is fear. Nothing one truly knows, even the greatest difficulties, are really feared. In order to make the unknown known, the feared unknown must often be entered into -- just like the experience of dying. But this must, by no means, be construed to mean the looking for negative, painful experience.

When you meet your fears and squarely acknowledge them, it is important to understand and specifically ascertain the unknown element about it. Then you have a chance of making the unknown element a little less unknown, until perhaps completely eliminating the unknown character of it in certain instances. While, in others, consciously accepting the fact that some element must remain unknown for the time being, and simultaneously accepting the fear.

When you open your whole psyche for positive experience without a trace of fear of the negative, then the unknown must become more and more known; life becomes more and more of a fulfillment on all levels

*Abundance* PL 130

**Exercise 3d:** How do you handle fears about uncertainty? Notice if you tend to over- or underestimate how frequently there is / will be some uncertainty.

## Advice to the Pathwork Community in Phonecia NY

Balances constantly change, from one side that overweighs, to the other. In the development of an individual, as well as that of a collective organism, balances need to be constantly reexamined and changed in order to establish inner and outer harmony, health and honestly acquired wealth -- that is, divine abundance.

You need to examine when the individual needs to give more to the collective entity and when the process can be reversed, and the collective entity can give more to the individual.

You must never live above your means, so that you function out of fullness, and do not run on deficit. This should not be done in a spirit of anxiety and lack of trust. It is possible to have faith, and yet not use misapplied faith in order to justify the current tendency in your world to function on deficit.

In order to do so it may be necessary to keep your budget smaller than you may wish; it may mean that you, your family, or your community, may have to do temporarily without something you may like to think of as essential -- until you can truly afford it. You may have to reconsider what is and what is not essential, and look at it from the point of view of the work that is being done, and with a view of the task that is being fulfilled on a larger scale.

Temporarily, you may have to pitch in and give more to your larger community. When more people adopt this spirit, more abundance will be created for individuals and for the collective entity until the latter will be sufficiently healthy on all levels, including the material one, that it can give more and more to the individuals in question.

At the same time, you need to establish priorities in a deep way. There may be temporary occasions when a deficit on the material level may be unavoidable, until a sound basis of fullness and functioning on assets is being established. If you keep this goal in mind, you will attain it.

You need to deepen your inner work on the spiritual and psychological level and purify all that which runs on deficit. At the same time, you need to also realize a similar process in your financial affairs personally. And, last but not least, the same principles need to be established for the material affairs of the collective entity.

You need to recognize and deeply understand a divine law and principle. You need to recognize all obstructions that prevent you from perceiving and partaking of the ever present divine grace, so that you can release the faith that is realistic and more an experience of what is, rather than a belief in and a hope for what one might wish to believe. Often this latter attitude is assumed to be faith and actually shunned because of the fear of being unrealistic and then disappointed.

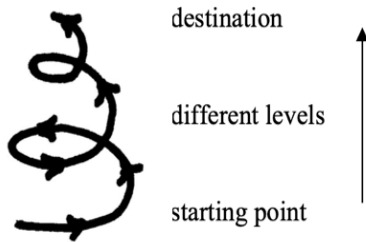
PL 250

**Exercise 3e:** Consider how you might apply some of these principles to your family, friendships, work, and community. How comfortable are you re: putting group needs before your own? Giving up what you feel is essential? Where do you feel the need for clear, firm boundaries vs. being able to have faith that others will do their share?

**Week 4: Spiral of Development – Vicious and Benign Circles**

Excerpted from [Worksheet by Dottie Titus](#)

**The Basic Spiral Shape**



The path is a spiral movement. 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. There is a specific spiral configuration that applies to the development of your soul in this respect. *The Anatomy of Contraction* PL 235

If they cannot bring together the cause and the effect, they will go around in a circle, and not in a spiral, which is the true movement of the path. [Commitment - Cause and Effect](#) PL 196

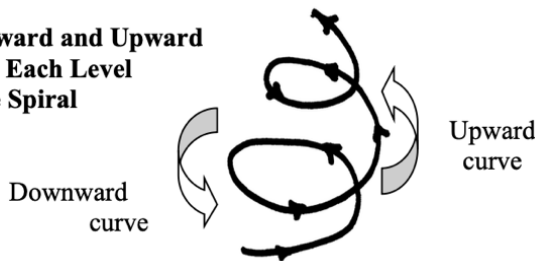
**The Circular Nature of the Spiral (viewed from the top)**



“I just keep going in circles!”  
Not this again!”

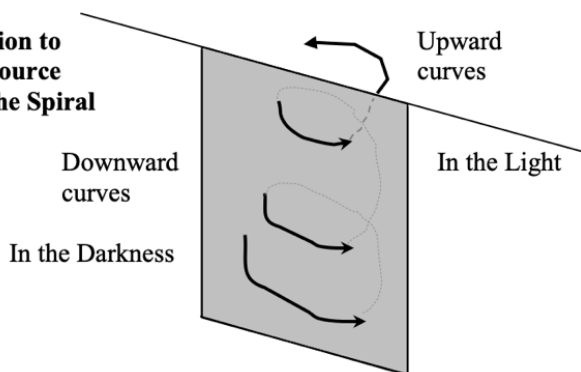
**Development does not proceed upward or downward along a steady line.**

**There are Downward and Upward Curves on Each Level Of the Spiral**



It fluctuates, going up and down in spirals. And sometimes, while you are on a downward curve, you do not realize you are a step higher than the last upward curve you were on. Although the last upward curve was, on the whole, lower than the present downward curve, every upward curve feels better. [Image-Finding](#) PL 39

**Connection to Divine Source while on the Spiral**



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.

*The Birthing Process*  
*The Cosmic Pulse* PL 255

The same spiral movement exists, of course, in the development of humanity as a whole.

*Evolutionary Stages of Individual and Group Consciousness* PL 225



In the overall development the phases are never that clearly defined. They overlap and there are many spirals within the spiral. Yet the movement is not haphazard, but an expression of such profound harmony and lawfulness in a larger scheme that the human consciousness can sense it only vaguely, at best.

*Evolutionary Stages of Individual and Group Consciousness* PL 225

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

As they become smaller and gradually converge into one point, the way becomes increasingly simple. The simplicity at the final turn of the spiral is love.

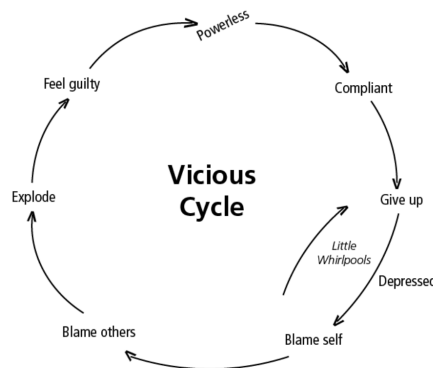
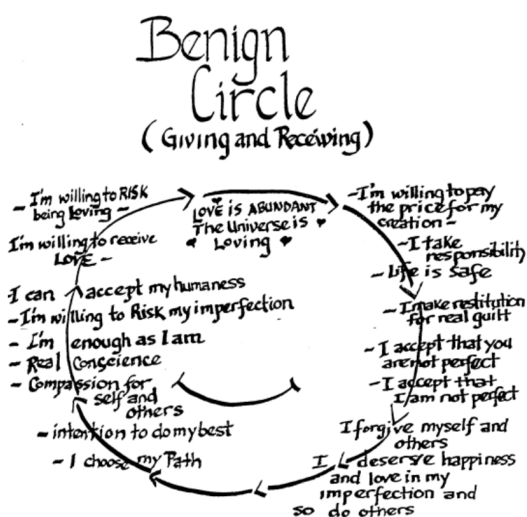
[Claiming the Total Capacity for Greatness](#) PL 212

Spiral of Development: Worksheet and Diagrams by [Dottie Titus](#)

**Exercise 4a:** Identify an event or pattern of behavior that feels repetitive but unproductive, where you feel you are 'stuck in a loop', reenacting the same events like the protagonist in the 1993 movie 'Groundhog Day'. Draw the emotional sequence as a *Vicious Circle* PL 50 (see [online worksheets with sample drawings](#)).

**Exercise 4b:** There are usually 3 easy 'exit' points; 1) when things start to feel familiar. 2) after 'the dust has settled' from our emotional reactions (like the figure in the hamster wheel below, when we are running hard both our emotional 'feet' may be 'off the ground'!). And last, when we feel a pull to re-engage / start the process all over again. Label exit points in your vicious circle.

**Exercise 4c:** Consider how you might exit your vicious circle at each of these 3 points. Practice what you would need to say in order to calmly leave the room, stop the conversation, or change your attitude. Keep it simple! Express the need for a drink of water or a trip to the toilet. Declare something was forgotten that will take a few moments to retrieve. If you are alone, do some jumping jacks or pushups, or just raise both heels and tap the floor 10x in order to ground yourself and take your focus off the matter at hand. Notice what, if anything, changes.



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