

Pathwork Steps

Introductory Lecture Study

Explore central concepts in Pathwork, uncover unconscious prejudices, and explore unexamined childhood-based beliefs. Pathwork lectures (PL) may be downloaded at no charge from www.pathwork.org. Worksheets and summaries are available from www.janrigsby.org or www.janrigsby.com.

1. Introduction: An overview - What are we trying to do? What is the Path?

PL 3 Choosing Your Destiny- The Will to Change

PL 193 Resume of the Basic Principles of the Pathwork

When I first started reading Pathwork lectures, I deeply appreciated the validation that reaching out and taking charge of my life *was* the answer, it was just the way I had been doing it that was off. Others may need some reassurance that pain and struggle is not all life was meant to be about. It feels important to spend some time looking at the larger picture of who we are and why we are here. PL193 is a good summary of what working with the Pathwork process might involve. Another overview can be found in PL 204, What is the Path?.

2. What is the territory? Who are we? Where do we start?

PL 14 Higher Self, Lower Self and Mask

PL 28 Daily Review

The study of lower self distinguishes Pathwork from many other spiritual disciplines, and has two levels of focus. The first is of child consciousness, the ‘little ego’ that wants everything its way and is afraid to share or be vulnerable. Here, we presume that we should be the center of the universe. The second level usually takes a while to access, because it is where we actually *want* to be the center of the universe, and since admitting this might affect our achieving that exalted status, we hide it with great amounts of effort! Since this negativity blocks our divine light, Pathwork teaches that it is important to see and to claim our selfishness, to transform rather than try to eradicate or expel. This is a good place to introduce daily review, to track lower self thoughts. Using a small pocket sized date book is a quick and easy way for people to start this process, because unlike a blank journal you can tell if you missed a day’s entries.

3. How do I find out what I want? How do I know what's right?

PL 44 The Forces of Love, Eros and Sexuality

PL 31 Shame

People are both attracted and repelled by this topic. We all feel conflict between what we want, and what we think we’ should’ want. My Core Energetics© training gave me a completely new and healthy perspective on my Eros for all kinds of things, and a deep understanding and reverence for the power and creativity of the sexual force. I use PL 31 to acknowledge the reluctance to truly engage with the power of the life force.

4. What holds me back?

PL 100 Meeting the Pain of Destructive Patterns

PL 101 The Defense

PL 77 Self Confidence

This feels like one of the more ‘mainstream’ concepts, as it doesn’t usually violate current cultural mores. Associates the knowledge of the lower self with the tools it uses, and introduces the concept of the forcing current. Most importantly, the Guide honors our process rather than belittling us. He invites us to recognize why and how we developed our defenses while still deep in child consciousness, and to learn to distinguish between our defences and our real selves.

5. Personality types and patterns of behavior

PL 43 Reason, Will and Emotion Personality Types

PL 50 The Vicious Circle

This is a lecture that can really bring Pathwork into people’s everyday thoughts. It’s a great tool to understand blocks in communication, and offers a whole new way of perceiving conflicts between personality types. Using the concept of the vicious circle helps see the patterns of each primary type. While none of us perfectly match a model or type or pattern, these divisions are useful in delineating specific preferences, showing both the positive and the negative aspects of each.

There are dozens of lectures that work with the distortions and defenses of these personality types, such as PL 30, Self-Will, Pride and Fear; PL 84, Love, Power and Serenity as Divine Attributes and as Distortions and PL 248, Three Principles of the Forces of Evil.

6. Frozen patterns: the Mask / Idealized Self Image

PL 83 The Idealized Self Image

PL 93 Main Image - Repressed Needs and Defences

PC 7 Image Summary

Images are a central concept in Pathwork, and there are a dozen lectures that focus upon different aspects. The Idealized Self Image (lecture PL83) becomes the Mask we hide behind. This lecture focuses more upon the cost of having an illusory version of who we are. The Image summary is very useful to pull together all the concepts about images. PL 71, Reality and Illusion, may be a good reference for this as well.

7. What, then, is God? And what happens if I give up my defences?

PL 52 The God Image

PL 213 Let Go, Let God

PL 130 Abundance

Once we are willing to look at our lower selves, our defences, and our images, it is useful to look at how we project our illusions onto God as the ultimate authority, the perfect parent. The lecture on Abundance is included here because it encourages people to imagine what might happen if they released some of their defences and dared to trust in God as a benign and loving authority. For those who wish to go further, PL46 Authority, and PL 118, Duality through Illusion - Transference, address the idea of how we project the imprints that we receive from our parents onto others.

8. Breaking out, breaking up, and breaking free

PL 183 The Spiritual Meaning of Crisis

PL 143 Unity and Duality

The idea that we live in Duality and strive to attain a Unity that may not be fully possible while on this planet - these are fighting words to some people. The Guide presents the concept that crisis is a positive event, an organic response to being stuck or in a state of stasis rather than the natural dynamic flow between expansion and contraction (see PL 235, the Anatomy of Contraction).

9. Eddies and currents that suck us back into old stuff

PL 73 The Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts

PL 66 Shame of the Higher Self

This lecture needs a lot of grounding to really get inside people, if taught too early I think it stays superficial. You need a strong sense of self and faith in your spiritual path to truly accept that you may have made decisions as a child that are still running your life.

Understanding this lecture also requires that you be able to see a larger picture, which was simply not possible when you were a helpless child. PL66 expands on some of the paradoxes of emotional logic, using the scenario of where we sometimes choose to side with the stronger parent even if we don't agree with them. Such conflicting choices create strong forcing currents that we may still be trying to untangle the rest of our lives.

10. Self-Responsibility: Who is in charge here? What are the rules?

PL 211 Outer Events Reflect Self-Creation

PC 10 Spiritual Laws

PL 233 Power of the Word

This really circles back to the first session with PL 3. I like to complete a series of classes with a sense of our own self-responsibility and some structure - the spiritual laws. The 'real world' always presents us with seemingly illogical and irrational sequences of events. The Guide's message is that there is always a connection between cause and effect (PL 245, Cause and Effect on Different Levels of Consciousness). Our task is to uncover our unconscious behaviors and patterns so that we can find the real cause of our unhappiness and the blockage of our life force, to free ourselves to be who we were always meant to be -

"And to the degree you can understand your life experience as an expression of that part of yourself you are not familiar with yet, you will truly overcome the obstruction to your happiness. You all need help to do this. The victory, the liberation, the surge of joy and peace that comes from that is incomparable. No good that comes to you from the outside because others happen to act according to your will could ever be as peace giving and joy bringing as the realization and understanding of your difficulties. That is indeed the transcendence and evolution of your personal being. Then the joy will expand furthermore, and life will become more and more as it is meant to be, as it already is, as a potential existing in this other dimension from which you are still separated in your consciousness." PL 172.