

Pathwork™ Steps

SELF-IDENTIFICATION DETERMINED THROUGH STAGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture 189

Full text all lectures may be downloaded from www.pathwork.org

It is perhaps difficult for human beings to understand that consciousness permeates the entire universe and creation. ... Consciousness gains increasing awareness; energy has increasingly greater creative power to move, build, make form.

It is the task of each human being in each incarnation to synthesize, unify, and assimilate various such aspects of consciousness. If you truly try to comprehend what I say here you may find that this is a novel way of explaining human existence. Naturally this does not only apply to the level of human consciousness, but also to higher developed states of consciousness. Only then, the struggle is no longer as severe or as painful. The increased awareness of the higher states facilitates the synthesizing process immeasurably. The human predicament is the nonunderstanding of what is going on, the blindness with which the individual is involved in the struggle, and his deliberate attempt to perpetuate this blindness. ... To the degree there exists struggle and tension in a "personification," to that degree the various aspects of consciousness are at odds with one another. The entity is unaware of the meaning of the struggle and is trying to identify with one or several of these aspects without knowing which or what is the true self.

Before the universal self can fully manifest in you, there is already one aspect of it which is available right now, which can be immediately realized. This is your conscious self at its best, as it is now. It is a limited present manifestation of your spiritual being, but it is truly yourself. It is the "I" you need so as to make order in all your confusion.

The "I" that is able to make a decision, for instance, to truly face this conflict, to observe its various expressions -- this is the self with which you may safely identify. To the degree the personality awakens and self-consciousness is gained, such decisions, choices, and determinations are possible. Conversely, to the degree such decisions, choices of attitudes, and determinations are made, the consciousness awakens and expands. To the extent the conscious self uses its already existing knowledge of truth, its already existing power to execute its good will, its already existing capacity to be positive, committed, truthful, courageous, and persevering in the struggle in question, its already existing ability to choose the attitude to the problem, to exactly that degree the consciousness expands and becomes increasingly more infiltrated by the spiritual consciousness. The spiritual consciousness cannot manifest when the already existing consciousness is not fully put to use in the conduct of one's life.

When you identify with one or even a cluster of aspects and believe that these aspects are you, you become submerged in them. ... If you believe you are your demon, you seem to have no other choice but to annihilate yourself, yet you dread annihilation and thus hold on to the demon. But if you observe the demon, you can begin to identify with that which observes.

Every one of my friends on the path, who have worked diligently and conscientiously to shed the mask, to give up defenses, to overcome the resistance to expose the apparently shameful liabilities have experienced how the acknowledgment of the negative traits creates a new freedom. The moment you identify them, you cease being identified with them.

How different your attitude to yourself must be when you realize that it is the task of human entities to carry negative aspects with them for the purpose of integrating and synthesizing them! This affords truthfulness without hopelessness. What a dignity it lends to you when you consider that you undertake an important task for the sake of evolution. When you come into this life, you bring negative aspects with you for the purpose mentioned. Every human being fulfills an immense task in the universal scale of evolution. This gives you a great dignity. ... Only when you first take responsibility for them can you come to the wonderful realization that you are not them, but you carry something with you for which you have taken responsibility for a certain purpose. Only then can come the next step: integration.

To recapitulate, we have the following steps or stages or states: (1) the half-asleep climate of not knowing who you are and blindly battling against that which you hate in yourself -- consciously, semiconsciously, or unconsciously; (2) the first state of awakening when you can acknowledge, name, articulate, observe that which you do not like; when you feel that this is an aspect of you rather than the secret, ultimate truth about you; (3) the awareness that the "I" is that which observes, confronts, etc. This same "I" can make new dispositions, decisions, and choices. It can look for new, hitherto undreamed of options and possibilities -- not by magic, but by "trying out" attitudes that were totally negated and ignored before. ... That leads to (4) the eventual comprehension, connection with, and understanding of those previously negated and hated aspects, which means their dissolution and integration. This merger occurs simultaneously with the ever expanding consciousness that takes in more of the spiritual reality, which can now unfold to ever greater degrees. This means purification.

The capacity to observe and adjudge, to note and evaluate, and, last but not least, to choose the best possible attitudes as to what to do with the observed -- that is the true power of our real self as it already exists right now. Freedom, liberation, the knowledge of self, the finding of self are the first steps toward realizing the greater consciousness, the universal, divine consciousness in you.

When you begin to pose the question to yourself, "What attitude do I choose toward what I now observe in me and what I do not like?" you have made one of the most significant discoveries in this present phase of your evolution. This does not need a subliminal breakthrough of the profounder spiritual self. It simply means using what you already have made available in the course of centuries and millennia of evolution.

The Observer Self

Quotes From Chapter 3 of The Undefended Self by Susan Thesenga

Developing the Observer Self

We each exist simultaneously at many levels of consciousness.

Our many inner selves contradict our limited idea of who we are, and the different levels often contradict each other.

This inner complexity can be likened to having a ‘cast of characters’ within us, each with its own beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. Each character lives in a separate room of our psychic house, inhabiting a different reality. Or we might say that each of these levels of consciousness exists at a different frequency, available as different channels on a radio dial. When we are tuned into one station we may be unaware that an entirely different frequency is available with a brief switch of the inner dial.

The Observer Self

Which self works on the other selves?

The mature parts of ourselves become the ‘helpers’ to the undeveloped parts.

The goal is to awaken the inner teacher/healer who is ever-present and ready to guide us.

Observer self has the tools of objectivity and detachment with love and compassion.

The ability to observe ourselves objectively and compassionately is the single most important skill to develop in walking the spiritual path.

We can learn to shift our identity away from all the floating fragments of consciousness and toward the one who observes them all. This is comparable to identifying with being in the audience as we watch the whole cast of characters come onto our inner stage.

Distortions in Self-Observation

If we find ourselves becoming hopeless about what we observe, then we ‘step back’ and observe the hopelessness.

We cannot change behavior stemming from our undeveloped selves until the behavior and the underlying attitudes are brought into consciousness. Self-condemnation throws us back into denial of our negativity where it can never be transformed.

Source of Our Distortions in Self-Observation

Judgments are not the true self-observer, but come from the Idealized Self Image (ISI) that has embodied unrealistic standards of perfectionism against which we constantly measure ourselves. The first step in true self-observation is, therefore, to observe this perfectionism in ourselves.

We need to be able to identify the negative self-critical voices, but learn not to identify with them; they are merely part of our inner landscape, no more ‘true’ than any other part of ourselves.

Radical Self-Acceptance

We can safely learn to allow awareness of the negative and evil aspects of ourselves with dignified self-acceptance.

Pgl 189: “It is the task of human entities to carry negative aspects with them for the purpose of integrating and dsynthesizing them! When you come into this life, you specifically bring negative aspects with you for the purpose of transformation.”

Two Aspects of the Observer Self: Truth and Love

The practice of honest self-observation will teach us about truth and love; we learn honesty with the self combined with total acceptance of the self.

Learning to accept ourselves, to forgive and have compassion for every hidden thought and feeling, and every action, no matter how apparently unacceptable, is the same as learning to live in love.

Truth: Constructive Attitudes

Being truthful with the self means welcoming unconscious material into consciousness even if this material comes in the form of frightening dreams, negative thoughts, or unpleasant feelings.

At first this may seem scary. The uncovering of previously unacknowledged negative thoughts and feelings, and the awareness that this negativity does indeed produce our undesreable life experience, often creates an initial recoiling from the process and a desire to repress the material. However, repression makes impossible the connection of cause and effect.

Love: Constructive Attitudes

Self-induence, denial, or rationalization are not real love; they only keep us from unpleasant truths.

The way out of our fear of ourselves is the gradual recognition that we are not any of our inner ‘characters’, including the mask and the lower self. We become the mapper, not the mapped.

Our negative aspects can be seen as immature children within us that need our attention and love in order to ‘grow up’ into mature self-expression.

The objective observer starts out as an ego function, as we discipline a part of ourselves to stand outside and watch ourselves.

Self Identification

Pgl 189: “The moment you identify them, you cease being identified with them.”

Daily Review

The practice of self-observation will collapse quickly if it is forced and unpleasant.

The Observer Self US Chapter 3 Teleconference Outline by Jan Rigsby

Feedback; Group versus Teleconference

- Like typing without enough light to see the keys; even 5% feedback allows confidence, grace. Zero feedback = hesitation, doubt, cascade of errors
- Driving or other task learned; memory of the instructor's voice as external, then gradually integrated into an internalized voice that holds the values that we decide to keep
- Parents voices; became internalized before we had developed values of our own

Self-led group project with the Observer Self

- At least one focal point for sharing in each meeting that does not require homework or prior process = -- allows spontaneity, does not create guilt, being in the moment
- Can be as simple as reading a paragraph from a lecture or one of the Spiritual Principles
- Expressions of understanding or lack of understanding, with the intention to be in the now with that (instead of making excuses)

Preliminary 3 qualities:

- Feeling is not acting out / seeing is not being
- Attitude is everything
- The "I"

1. **Susan's book;** a workbook with modern examples, exercises, questions

2. **Observer Self** as a concept expressed in multiple lectures, phrase was constructed. Pgl 189 is best reference.
Analogy; voices as a cast of characters, OS as the audience
All mature aspects of ourselves can be Helpers to the less developed aspects

3. Development of Observer Self

Parental voices: Absorbed before we had developed values of our own, active in our unconscious, may still contain all the distortions of our parents

Authority voices: Extended family members, teachers, instructors, people we admire, literature and art. Repeated first as memory, then integrated into our own value systems and converted to inner voices. I.e., driving instructor; a) we pay close attention to what they say 2) we remember what they said, selecting what we agree with or need 3) develop our own script

Spiritual Guidance: Same mechanism as above, with more discernment because we are working at a higher frequency

Inner guidance: We take over the process of our own spiritual process. Developing the Observer Self is one of many aspects of this.

4. Qualities of the Observer Self:

- a. Neutral
- b. Non-judgmental
Judgement is a quality of the Idealized Self Image
- c. Able to adjust organically to what is real, including stepping back
- d. Able to identify rather than identify with
- e. Real about the greater task = having negative aspects is part of the plan of salvation
- f. Truthful with self, even if this involves unpleasant feelings
- g. Open to real love, rather than justification, rationalization or denial
- h. Supportive of the process of development
- i. Able to individuate from the Ego / I voice

5. **Groups need Observer Selves as well, specifically self-led groups**