

Pathwork Steps

DECISIONS AND TESTS

Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture #002

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Most human beings, as a matter of fact, do not understand life on earth. They cannot comprehend its meaning and purpose because **they can only see what they can behold with their physical eyes** and cannot yet bring their spiritual eye into focus. Therefore all seems to be meaningless -- their sorrows, their trials, the loneliness, and many other things. Only he who understands that this earth life is one of many learning periods, one link of a long chain, will, in the beginning, only be able to surmise the coherence, but gradually he will understand life's full meaning so that his goal will no longer be immediate happiness over the fulfillment of his desires, but his goal will be directed towards the totality. Thus it will be easier to carry eventual burdens of this life, thereby passing tests and conditions which enable him to enter a higher existence and continuous happiness which cannot be taken away by outside sources.

In my last lecture, I briefly touched the subject that man has to make decisions during his life. I was asked how man will possibly know what the right action is. I would like to discuss this now. Among other things, it is just that which man has to learn in life even if it sometimes appears to be difficult. Many human beings are able to make a decision outwardly. Some cannot even do this, but a great number of human beings cannot do it inwardly. They are absolutely unable in their emotional currents, in their inner, emotional reactions, to make a decision. They are not even aware of it because all is covered up. Only after they begin to search for their innermost motivations and emotions will they have to realize what their inner attitude had been up to that point, then they can start making decisions from within. This lack of inner decisiveness does not only express itself at all times in problems apparently involving other people, but sometimes just *per se*, in inner attitude, feelings, and reactions.

Sometimes, especially a human being who is striving his best trying to be just, hesitates to do something that might not please God for fear it could be a wrong decision, and thus he does not decide at all. It is obvious that he does not understand that **not deciding is a decision in itself** because somehow this attitude will be of some effect since the world and that which you call time does not stand still. Everything moves on in this flux of life, and **whatever you do, even your not doing, is consequential**. And if man shies away from deciding, it means that in his own soul he has not found as yet a certain key. He lives, maybe not always conscious of it, in a fear. He does not steer the ship of life and believes, hopes -- again not conscious of it -- that God or fate will make the decision for him. Once in a while this may be the case, but in general, God's world is not permitted to interfere then because man must learn especially this, among other things. **He must learn to bear the consequences of his decisions**. He must learn to make the effort of breaking through such a dark, confusing, truth covering cloud by his personal spiritual endeavors, by increasing self-recognition and discipline, which alone strengthen his spiritual sight. Only then can he uncover what is buried in his own soul as he will also be able to see what is going on outside himself. It is essential for him to learn to look over the whole, be it the most complicated situation, including all that which is at stake for him or others. **He must learn to extract the maximum of spiritual development and purification from solving such pending problems**.

All this requires a tackle-the-problem-with-courage attitude, not one that is evasive, postponing, stick-the-head-in-the-sand. If after careful contemplation, man finds that he is not yet able to make a decision because the right direction is not yet quite clear, it is something quite different. Then he should continue to ask God for more recognition and be willing to accept it and then act accordingly when recognition has been granted through personal effort.

It is one thing to shy away from a decision, cover up all which is connected with it, and then turn away from the problem altogether, and another thing to reach out for the truth, contemplate it, and then fully aware, as an act of will, to decide not to make a decision as yet until, after more personal effort, recognition of the right decision is granted, which is truly the right decision, leaving no doubt whatsoever within, thus increasing inner peace and happiness of the soul. **Man is able to find the pure truth of a situation, the right decision resulting from it but only if he removes all self-flattering cloaks as well as everything that nurtures his indolence, the path of least resistance**. Only he who has liberated himself in such a way has removed the obstacles blocking the truth. It is especially this that is expected of man. He is able, of course, but not without effort, not without the sincere willingness and stamina.

If man goes through life avoiding certain decisions, it creates reactions and chain reactions, resulting in a new form, a mark, and in his next life it will be more difficult yet to solve this knot and to learn making decisions. Contemplate these words! **Even from your shortsighted human viewpoint, not deciding is of greatest detriment**, not only spiritually but also plain earthly speaking, yes, even from your purely selfish viewpoint if you try not to be quite as shortsighted. **You have to build your happiness yourself in that you learn to be fully obedient to the spiritual laws**. Without that, there is no gain.

...each human being has his own individual currents. You also call this planetary constellations or the horoscope. It is a certain rhythm which, as it may seem to you, could be interrupted once in a while. **However, since your view behind the veil is limited, you cannot see that this rhythm is not at all broken but continues in its own way, according to a system, if I may say so, which you cannot yet see in its totality.** Man, according to his horoscope, experiences favorable as well as difficult periods, both of which have their special meanings. When you feel the less favorable planetary currents, it is the period of trial, which for the spiritually developing human being is the most important period of learning. **Without these difficult periods, no progress could be made.**

When you go through a trial, you must learn to attain with the protection that which you are aiming at. Then the protection steps a little aside, and you are left to yourself, standing, so to speak, with equal distance between the divine forces and the dark forces, and you have to stand the test in such a way that you act right by will. Then when this is learned, the dark forces will at times get close (but divine protection is always near to see that no harm is done!) so that you will prove, by withstanding, your advancement. **Only then you are strong enough that God can depend on you; only then you can be sure that you have mastered self in those weaknesses which needed such testing.** This is the procedure, and in periods where you seem left to yourself, where the dark currents touch you, you feel the "low tide." The so-called favorable periods serve to replenish your inner strength for the next trial and to enjoy the results of spiritual acquisitions, to get stabilized in them. I want to say here that when dark forces touch you, they know "how to play the violin" of your faults and weakness because they are specialized in the particular field. The dark world, as the divine world, has experts in all areas. **A dark current can never get hold of you in an area which is not in your emotional make-up, nor if you resist strongly enough its evil influence.**

Q: Even cancer and other incurable diseases have spiritual causes? A: Of course. **Do you think that man would have such destiny if he would not have to learn something from it? Is there any effect without cause?** How could it be accidental that man is stricken in such a way when not even the minutest details are left to accident?! But it is a just and kindly destiny because the human being concerned may not be able otherwise but through long suffering, where sorrow may not come at once but slowly, to attain permanent happiness and liberation. He needs something that pulls him through or else he would fall back again and again. **But frequently it may be the case that a being chooses, before incarnation, such a heavy lot, realizing that thus his spiritual rise is quickened.**

For this reason, learning all about the spiritual laws is so very important, to absorb them, understand them, and let them penetrate through the deeper layers of your consciousness so that you are able to apply this knowledge in the most difficult times and to walk through life with more ease. **For instance, if one family member has a trying period, all other members of the family will have to learn something from it, according to his personality and his weaknesses.** Naturally, these times are difficult, but nobody needs to carry more than he is capable of. And if a human being has reached a certain level, he then also has more obligations than his weaker brothers and sisters. **He will gain most comprehending the meaning of these tests, while his weaker brothers and sisters will never really understand the meaning of life's difficult times.** ... You human beings always believe pain is the worst of all suffering. But there is worse suffering, i.e., before a soul is able to feel pain. Experiencing pain is already coming one step closer to God.

I have to emphasize again and again that God does never burden a human being with more than he can carry and fulfill, or could fulfill if he would be willing. It is impossible for you human beings to judge the capacity of someone else because you do not know the other one's strength reserve which is latent in him or which he has to rechannel from former wrong directions. Furthermore, you make the mistake to think that pain and physical death are the worst that can happen to you. I mean physical death, which really should not be considered a punishment. Spiritual death is the worst and is ultimately the result of the path of least resistance.

Two different people will not have to carry the same lot. For instance, you may have to suffer less than one human being, but more than another one. **Your cupful will be yours and yours alone, infallibly, at the perfect ratio.**

Q: ...you said before that there are times when God does not help. A: Oh, these times need the fully surrendered will of man which empowers him to help himself without assistance. **Man's will-force is of great importance, but he will never be tried beyond capacity.**

Pathwork Steps

THE SPIRIT WORLD -- YOU CHOOSE YOUR DESTINY

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture #3

Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded at www.pathwork.org

Before man incarnates into another earth life, he brings along the tasks he has to fulfill. The plan is outlined. In many cases, the spirit is entitled to discuss the future earth life with the responsible spirit being. Thus he can fixate -- to a certain extent, according to the state of development and power of judgment in this matter -- how his earth life will be. **The spirit to be incarnated has a better view than when housed in the human body.** He understands that the meaning of earth life is not to have a life as comfortable as possible, but that the purpose of life is to develop his understanding in order to acquire, more rapidly, the perfect bliss which cannot be had on earth. And as a spirit, he knows that only through spiritual efforts can the knowledge of the spirit penetrate his intellect. But as a spirit, he also knows that this cannot easily be achieved and that he will encounter difficulties, tests, and that he will have to bear suffering to lead him eventually to the right path and the right attitude. The memory of spirit disappears automatically when matter (of body) embraces the spirit.

However, he who is too overwhelmingly impressed by the assets of the world loses the deeper meaning of life and sometimes lives through one incarnation after the other without making progress, always for the same purpose, having to walk through earth life time after time again. The spirit knows that these are the dangers of earth life. But he also knows that, when, from a spiritual viewpoint, he lives the right human life, he can unfold spiritually in a relatively shorter period of time than it would be possible in the spirit world because of the absence of major frictions there.

Thus, my dear ones, it is important for you to recognize that much of your repetitious events in life have been chosen and fixated by your spirit before incarnation when you still had the foresight, before matter encompassed the spirit. It will be a help for you to know this. Sometimes a spirit assiduously striving for progress chooses a particularly trying destiny, even fervently asking for it, knowing -- while free of material density -- that this sorrow is little and will not last long compared to the gains he will derive from it.

When the earth life is finished and the spirit discards matter, and he then realizes that he did not accomplish everything he intended, it will be handled sometimes in such a way that, as a spirit, he is granted the possibility to completely fulfill the past earth life, to finish some tasks or dissolve some burdens. Then he will be able to exert influence on his own earth-living family or surroundings in order to fulfill what he had intended to. Only, such influence is much more difficult, although easier for him as a spirit being because his clear sight is restored. The lost memory is regained, and he understands what it is all about. The difficulty lies in his lack of penetrability and influence upon the human being. For example, one man can influence another one, and especially by self-discipline. An indirect influence is always more effective and lasts longer. Thus, setting an example is more convincing than words, persuasion, or forcing one's will upon the other one even though it might be right or serve for the best. ... But a spirit cannot do this because most human beings do not hear the inspiring words of spirit. And if they perceive them, they are frequently misinterpreted or shaken off, and it is very, very difficult for this spirit and he needs much more time if he will at all be able to finish a task as a spirit which he started as a human being. He may need another earth life for that purpose.

And thus a human being and a spirit builds exactly the world in which he lives. He builds a home in the spirit world congruent to the earth life, and he also builds his future earth life. All deeds, thoughts, and feelings are forms of which then the spirit home consists (although not permanently) and from which, in turn, the fated events in a future earth life will be deduced. ... If you understand this, you will realize that destiny and free will are not two factors excluding each other, but are interwoven and interconnected. **And you will also recognize that the "fated events" in your life are already spirit forms which manifest then in a concrete way.**

Will power is a direct result of recognition, of the knowing and the corresponding decision. Every human being possesses a certain amount of strength, and it depends on his emphasis into which channel he directs his strength -- using it for unnecessary efforts which lead to nothing that is spiritually valuable, or wasting it on sick, impure emotional currents to which they give over entirely, which requires much strength. Now, **it is a spiritual law that strength consumed will be replenished when it is used for spiritually constructive purposes.** However, if your strength currents circle in negative rotation or in spiritually nonproductive currents, they are wearing you down and are waste because strength is not sufficiently renewable when used negatively and nonproductively.

You human beings do not need to start with the most difficult; you don't start with the roof when you build a house, but with the foundation. And actually, what is required at first is only a rechanneling of the strength currents and the thought momentum, if I may say so. If man makes and keeps such a decision, which is not too difficult or too much for anybody, then the spirit forces will help that the will power is fortified so that further and more effective steps in the development process seem to be much easier.

Summarizing, I will say that in order to obtain will power, (1) it must be derived from recognition, (2) it requires a corresponding decision.

If you feel you don't have enough will power, the basic recognition is missing as to what is at stake. You may understand it vaguely, but your soul is not yet fully absorbed in it. Maybe there is some resistance within you, tempting you to cling to the way of lassitude and nondiscipline. This human being is then in an inner discrepancy. One part within him has the spiritual knowledge, but the other part of his personality does not draw the necessary consequences of what he knows "somehow" and of what he even does not want to be aware. Thus the first step is to deepen this knowledge, get away from superficiality. On that, you have to work first so that recognition penetrates the whole personality. Only when you work on this, and you can do it, then with just a bit of effort and time, you will quite certainly make the decision and will to direct your life and your inner forces towards the spiritual, realizing and fully aware that only then can the earthly material problems be solved, and only then.

Oh, how often do we observe that a human being, thinking he has no will power, would have far more than sufficient strength if he would only channel it into the right path, if he would only "throw the switch." ... On the other hand, you may also say that that which is hidden creates more trouble to man than when it is brought to the surface, consciously recognized, and digested.

After these initial difficulties are overcome and you have gained a little power over self, at least in this respect, the world of spirit will show you the next step on your path, what to be exploited and battled next. Life will present it, and when you have learned right meditation you will be able to judge, with open eyes, these daily events and recognize the signs.

Your meditation and prayers must vary because you should feel the specific requirement of the moment, and if you sometimes are not aware of it, recognition will be given when you really search and direct your full attention to what should be realized, learned, overcome, and accepted. ... **Listen, think, feel in which direction your thoughts are led.** Then you will slowly become aware of the interconnections, their origin, why you react as you do, and this growing understanding of your inner reactions and currents will push you into progress. Increase your courage to face your inner truths without fear. Make firm resolutions. **Contemplate these truths about yourself with care by independently reaching more depth of thought.** Thus your spiritual life will become more productive because it is animated, continuously changing, not sinking to a fixed formula that is repeated daily. In this way, your relationship to God will grow into a harmonious one.

Whether truth is perceived by inspired human beings or by mediumistic human beings is actually immaterial; the source is the same. As a matter of fact, the more the human consciousness can be put aside, the purer the truth can break through. And the more man is aware that certain things do not come from self, the easier it is for him to prove the source. You are justified to say that no spirit, only God, is all-knowing. But the difference between a spirit of divine order level and one not belonging to such a sphere is that divine spirit will not discuss anything of which he knows nothing or of which he is not sure. It is no longer important for such high spirit force to "impress." He is sufficiently purified to say, "This I don't understand, it is not my field." If he is chosen for a task, he is carefully instructed and has to attend special "schools."

Pathwork™ Steps

Excerpts from ***In Heaven as on Earth A Vision of the Afterlife***

By M. Scott Peck © 1996

I knew the moment it happened. I'd been in coma for two days. Now, instantly, I was somewhere near the ceiling of my bedroom. A body of an old man was lying in my bed. ... The body was waxy gray, and obviously dead. I knew it was mine but emotionally, as far as I was concerned, it was an it; it had no connection to me nor I any attachment to it.

The light, almost as if it were a movie projector, now exposed my past to me. Exposed the hidden parts. ... The experience was profoundly paradoxical. On the one hand, I was horrified by what a careless and often callous human being I'd been. On the other, the sense of acceptance went on unabated, and I knew I was somehow respected despite it all.

When I came to I was lying on a sort of bed in a small green room. ... Curious, I pushed my hand against the wall to ascertain what kind of substance it was made of. I felt nothing. For a moment, I thought my hand had gone right through the wall. Expecting to see that this was the case, I looked down and saw nothing except the wall. No hand. No shoulder. I glanced down at my feet. No feet either. And no legs, thighs, or torso. It dawned on me then that I had no body.

Mentally I kicked myself for being so slow for coming to the realization. Naturally I had no body. I was dead, wasn't I? I'd left my body back on my bed being wept over by our children. ... Mentally I'd kicked myself. What a metaphor! I wouldn't be kicking myself any longer, would I? I had no foot to kick myself with. ... How many of our mental metaphors presuppose the condition of having a body? Or proverbs? A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush...only now I didn't have a hand. All that glitters is not gold. But I no longer had eyes to see anything glitter.

I looked at the room more closely, and all I observed was what wasn't there. There was no toilet, no bathroom. ... It brilliantly occurred to me that I might not need a toilet at all since I wouldn't need to go to the bathroom if I had no body. What would life be like without having to go to the bathroom? Again I laughed, but again it was hollow. I was beginning to panic.

"Oh, God," I prayed. "Please help me. Please let there be someone. Please send me somebody." Immediately there was a knock on the door. Not stopping to think that there was no door, I cried out, "Come in." Before I could metaphorically blink, a man and a woman materialized, sitting on the "chairs" that faced my bed.

"Let me try to explain," Sam said. "Although you've left your actual body behind, your soul and your personality – if you will – are here intact. You're accustomed to project your personality into your body. We can't see the actual body, the dead thing that's probably buried by now, but you're so accustomed to projecting your spirit into your body, like when you smile, you know, or when you frown – you do it unconsciously – that we can see your projection."

"But it's much bigger than just that," Norma continued. "The body is matter, and there's no matter here; there's no space. And because there's no space, there's no time. Remember how much adjusting the astronauts had to do to get used to weightlessness in outer space? Some of that was physical. They still had bodies, and those bodies had to adjust. But much of it was the psychological, and they still had their bodies and the material of their spaceships and their clocks ticking away. If it took some adjusting just to get used to weightlessness, think of what it takes to get used to bodylessness, spacelessness, and timelessness!"

I was aghast. "There's no time here?" Norma smiled at me. "There is some kind of time here. We refer to it as God's time. And immediately you're going to ask us, 'How does God's time work?' and we're going to tell you again that we don't know. It's God's time, not ours."

"What about this room?" I asked. "You say there's no space, yet here we're sitting in this little green room. It's a space. I'm sitting on a bed. You're sitting on something like chairs. There are walls. Aren't they all of some material or another?"

Sam grinned. "Nope." I bit my metaphorical tongue. "Go on," I urged.

“They do it because you need a place. I mean, you’ve got enough trouble adjusting without a place. We all do. Everyone’s given a place for the duration of the Adjustment.”

“The bigger adjustment comes more gradually. It’s the adjustment to freedom. You’re not bound by your body anymore, so you can go wherever you want whenever you want. But it goes much deeper. Remember when you asked whether this was hell, heaven or purgatory, Norma and I told you could take your pick and how souls are free to choose either way. That kind of freedom can be frightening.”

It made perfect sense. I understood it on an intellectual level, but I was starting to feel dazed. At that point I, or my projected body, did something I hadn’t anticipated. I yawned. ... “Why should I need to sleep when I don’t have a body?”

“Sleep’s not primarily a matter of the body,” Sam explained. “It’s mostly a matter of the soul. Souls get tired, you know. Think about when you were back on earth, about some time when you were terribly fatigued. Was it really your body that was so fatigued, or was it your soul?”

“You’re correct. Usually my bones weren’t actually aching; it was just someplace deep inside of me. I guess it was my soul.”

Excerpts from In Heaven as on Earth © 1996 M. Scott Peck

Secret Holidays

How to have a day off from your normal life anytime you want!

1. Media news input holiday: Take a break from global gossip: newspapers, internet news, radio, television
2. Television and computer holiday: Take a break from staring at the box and escaping from yourself and your life.
3. Celebrate Amnesty: Forgive someone wholeheartedly (yourself included!) who has offended you or what you love. Forgiveness is about absolution, to no longer blame – especially if they are ‘guilty’. Release your inner tyranny against imperfection and your disappointment in the human condition.
4. Donate compliments: offer as many heart-felt compliments as possible, disperse them like bouquets of roses. Refrain from criticism of any kind of any person, object or activity.
5. Activity #1: Live a conscious day. Notice life rather than just living it.
6. Holiday extension: Wake up 1 hour earlier than you normally do.
7. Kitchen and shopping holiday: Have only one major meal each day.
8. Activity #2: Meditate everyday for minimum of 20 minutes between dawn and dusk. No rules, no procedures, no restrictions; explore what meditation is for you! Take a walk, focus upon something you love, watch the clouds, listen to a ticking clock.
9. Spiritual Yoga: Stretch yourself emotionally and spiritually by doing something that you have been avoiding, don’t want to do, and is not essential.
10. Activity #3: Practice Random Acts of Kindness (best done without anyone having any knowledge of the source).
11. Daily review: At some point in your day, review your day entire either backwards or forwards or both. Pay special attention to emotional situations and decisions you made. Where you would have done things differently had you applied your higher self with more energy or enthusiasm?

Worksheet by Jan Rigsby 2008