

Study Guide for Parents – Images

Chapter 11 of The Path to the Real Self

Week 1: Becoming aware of emotional reactions: Awareness of what was in automatic reflex, understanding based upon new perspectives, allowing our inner knowing to guide us. Ref: PL127 and An Autobiography in Five Verses (5 pages)

Week 2: Becoming aware of unconscious compulsions, conclusions, and images. and how they may be operating in our current lives: Ref PL 73 and worksheet on Feelings vs Emotional Reactions (4 pages)

Week 3: Understanding Soul Splits: Our parents represent opposing 'sides' of an issue:

What was your soul's contract with your parents? What distortions were reinforced? What was learned? Ref PL 66, 160 (6 pages!)

Week 4: Images and the Damage They Do: Ref PL 41, 83 (4 pages)

Week 5: Transference: Ref PL118 (3 pages)

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Quotes from PRS11

We are now ready to delve deeper into the recesses of your inner life. Some aspects of them have become conscious in the process of your past endeavors, provided your efforts were sincere, but important areas of your unconscious mind still have to be explored, interpreted, understood. If seeing, possibly for the first time, that a difficult outer situation is, indeed, a reflection of an equally difficult inner confusion and conflict, good progress was made.

Continued questioning of the significance of emotional reactions and responses, observed in the daily review, is bound to produce more comprehensive answers as you proceed.

It is quite frequent, and to be expected, that, at first, one experiences a complete blank when investigating his relationship to parents and early family life. Memories are vague, unrevealing and the picture in the mind seems very uncomplicated. Feelings are flat and can easily be dispensed with a liking or not liking -- and this seems all there is to it. It is necessary to be consistent and probe seriously if insight into fundamental questions is desired. The less one can come up with at the beginning, the more likely that early memories were too painful or confusing to face. Such pain may have existed in spite of outer harmony and happiness. Do not necessarily expect specific, dramatic hurts. It is more frequent that it was a general condition, the atmosphere as such, which left a void and insecurity. Once one begins to unplug the clogged up memory-channel, one may come up with little incidents which may, at the moment, not seem particularly significant. Let yourself go, follow their tracks -- they are bound to lead to what you are searching for, what you really felt for and experienced with both parents, and what marks these reactions left in you.

Before starting to find the personal images, it is necessary to have a fairly good understanding about emotional reactions to the parents. The work on images represents the most significant phase on this path, leading directly to life's unfulfillments.

It is a good beginning, in this new phase of the path, to think about your parents, your relationship to both. What did you really feel for both? Ask yourself in what conceivable way could you harbor contradictory feelings, one part being hidden from awareness. Bring out what hurt you, what you resented -- whether or not you now think that this reaction on your part was justified. Do not immediately evaluate the validity of your reactions. First, simply face them. By really taking stock of your actual feelings, with their intricate contradictions, you will discover a great deal, shedding light on recurrent problems.

The mature adult, apart from healthy interdependence of all human life, is self-reliant on all realms of being. He can earn his livelihood through his own endeavors. He can stretch his mind, seek answers, form his own opinions and values; he discriminates and selects, using his reason. And he will not lack love, companionship and affection, because he is fully equipped to give it. He does not have to wait helplessly to receive, as a child does. Nevertheless, many an adult human being finds himself in just such a state of helplessness -- often on all levels of his existence, although most frequently on the emotional level, where it passes by least noticed, for it is easiest to rationalize.

Organic growth of the entire organism is hindered if such dependency persists. Dependency always indicates, and is connected with, identification. It means that an umbilical cord has not been cut during the growing process. The umbilical cord, connecting the mother with the baby on the physical plane, is the visible symbol of the identical tie, existing on the emotional, mental and spiritual plane.

Fear of dependency and, therefore, withdrawal from an intense involvement and deep relationship, is not in the least a sign of the inner freedom, resulting from identification with one's own innermost, real self. On the contrary it reveals, in this fear, a tendency to be dependent. The personality fights in the wrong way against what he suspects exists. As always, such wrong fighting causes further imbalance, rather than a straightening out of the undesirable condition. When the cord has been cut on all levels and, therefore, true independence exists, the individual has a deeper, more human and warm relationship to parents, wherever this is possible. And, such an individual will not be in the least afraid of deep involvement. The soul possesses itself so fully that it can allow itself the luxury to give itself out; to squander itself as generously as nature does. The self can only become stronger and richer in the process. The freer man is, the more he can give himself in a real relationship, and thus become even freer.

Perhaps this will make it clearer that positive identification, though favorable for a child, is a detriment for the adult. In such an identification, the person is (of course, only to a degree) the specific parent he identifies with. Simultaneously, he seeks in the partner, at times, the same parent, whom he needs; at other times, the opposite parent, so as to re-enact the drama of once upon a time -- always in the hope that now the outcome will be different. Man is not himself to the degree either positive or negative identification exists. The real self is pushed further out of reach, regardless of how worthy the character and conduct of the parents one identifies with may be. It is a detriment, because life's meaning and significance is the becoming of the real self. The role of the parents is destined to help bring the child to this state. The role of each individual is to help himself to reach this state.

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Autobiography in Five Chapters

By Portia Nelson

I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I am lost... I am helpless.
I fall in.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in this same place,
But - it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in... it's a habit... but
my eyes are open.
I know where I am.
I get out immediately.

IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.

Automatic Reflex, Awareness, Understanding, Knowing

Notes on Four Stages of Evolution PL127

by Jan Rigsby

1. Automism / blind reflex

- Lowest phase of consciousness
- Responses based upon deeply imprinted wrong conclusions and generalizations
- Becomes stronger as parts of personality are liberated (less development = self deception is not needed)
- Blind reflexes are rationalized and explained in order to prove they are based on freedom of choice rather than compulsion

2. Awareness

- Starts with becoming aware of the blind reflex mechanism
- Awareness = > acknowledgement (=admitting or owning to something) such as limitations, facing wrong conclusions, destructive emotions, self-defeating devices, lack of integrity in the widest possible sense
- Becoming conscious of error, deviation from truth
- The Aha! moment is knowing that we are / have been driven by false ideas

3. Understanding

- Seeing the cause and effect of negative, destructive emotions, false ideas
- Comes after a degree of awareness has been gained and (proportionately) blind reflexes have ceased
- Requires deep experience of the answers to all these questions (deeply felt as a reality rather than learning a lesson by heart)

4. Knowing

- Knowing the truth
- Greater than understanding cause and effect
- Knowing what the right conclusions are behind the wrong ones
- Experiencing the truth
- Connects us with a greater spiritual principle
- Opens up the world

EVOLUTION'S FOUR STAGES:
AUTOMATIC REFLEXES, AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING, KNOWING
Quotes from Pathwork Guide Lecture 127

The lowest phase of human consciousness is automation. Man responds according to automatic reflexes -- emotional reactions which are based on deeply imprinted wrong conclusions and generalizations. Blind automatism is always the result of material that man is unwilling to face.

The next phase on this scale of evolution is awareness. The curve of development proceeds from automatism to awareness. When this takes place, he is aware of the automatism -- hence the automatism no longer exists. Needless to say, man succeeds first in specific areas to pass from automatism to awareness, while he retains blind automatism in others until much later phases of his personal development. But this stage does not yet mean that he understands it. He now knows that he has it. He even sees what it makes him do, how he reacts on account of it.

After a certain degree of awareness has been gained and, proportionately, blind reflexes have ceased, **the next stage is understanding.** Understanding the hostility means understanding why it exists, what first brought it on in a person's life, what conditions existed that created it, and what conditions exist now whenever a new flare of hostility is generated. What is the apparent and real similarity between the original and the present situation? How are they related in the person's psyche? How, if at all, are they related in reality? Why is the hostility based on a false assumption? In what respect? Understanding what one has become aware of previously means deeply experiencing the answers to all these questions.

The highest phase of this particular scale is knowing. There is a great difference between understanding and knowing. It is not knowledge I am talking about. I am talking about knowing the truth. When you know the truth, you more than understand cause and effect of images and misconceptions. You know what the right conclusions are behind the wrong ones. And it is always and exclusively the misconceptions which create havoc, disharmony, unhappiness. Nothing else can ever do that.

When you deeply know the truthful concept, the particular truth behind the particular error that you begin to understand, something begins to happen within and around the sphere of your being. **Knowing is not theoretical understanding. It is experiencing the truth.** Knowing the truth behind the untruth must connect the knower with a great spiritual principle, or several such laws and principles. Knowing them opens up the world. ... The only way that knowing divine principles can come about is through a highly personal experience of the untruth that blurred the way, so far, to that particular truth. By studying theories, by reading even the greatest literature on earth -- even spiritual literature -- you cannot possibly know the truth. Knowing the truth means following through these stages of evolution I have just discussed.

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Study Guide for Parents – Images

Chapter 11 of The Path to the Real Self

Week 2: Becoming aware of our reactions to parental conflicts. Noticing how childhood images and projections affect our lives today. PL73, worksheet on Feelings vs Emotional Reactions.

Quotes from PRS11:

Attitudes can be changed, once they are fully understood. Thus, the damaging occurrence in childhood need not destroy a person's happiness. Actual conditions in the past cannot be changed, but need not be harmful if coped with in a constructive manner.

When I speak of influences, I do not merely mean concepts, ideas, attitudes, which parents transmit to their children, but the emotional climate in which the child grows up. The latter is much more subtle than the former and therefore more difficult to ascertain. This emotional climate is all the child knows, at first, and takes for granted. Its entire psyche is filled with this climate, out of which automatic reflexes later develop. These reflexes are as subtle as the emotional climate itself. If the child lacks something in this climate, it may not be aware of this in its intellect, for it may never have heard of the existence, of a clear-cut concept, of what it lacks, nevertheless it may hunger for this something, without quite knowing what it is. The child, and later the adult, cannot formulate what is lacking, it deals with something vague. But the emotional deficiency, being unconscious, impels the person to be driven by instincts he does not comprehend and, therefore, also avoids facing.

It is this emotional climate, and its consequences, which molds a person's inner life. When a child enters this earth life, its soul stuff is very malleable, very soft. Underneath this soul stuff lie all potentials -- talents, qualities, tendencies, personal characteristics, as well as unresolved problems and misconceptions. In order to resolve the latter, they have to be fully conscious. This occurs when outer circumstances challenge them. Crisis always brings out what is hidden. It cannot bring out what does not exist in the first place. In other words, imperfect outer conditions bring them to the fore. Perfect conditions would cause them to remain smoldering underground.

An entity is drawn, by the law of attraction and repulsion, into an environment which is most compatible with psychic conditions -- favorable as well as unfavorable ones. This offers the entity a chance to experience the problems. It is then up to him whether or not he wishes to understand and resolve them.

The result of parental imperfection may be painful, but, by itself, it can never induce inner conflict, problems or unhappiness, if the personality does not have a problem within its own psyche, to begin with. Lack of affection, hurts, indifference, cruelty, will surely be felt by the person who does not have strong inner lesions when he is born, but they cannot leave a scar in the "soul tissue." Of course, to an extent, every human being is born with lesions, misconceptions, distortions, in his psychic make-up, but his parents will negatively affect him only in those areas

where this is the case, not in others. Also, the affect cannot be stronger than the intensity of the problem the entity is already born with. The malleable soul substance of an infant has a different texture where the soul is free from underlying problems than in afflicted parts. Its quality is resilient. Impressions are formed, but their assimilation will proceed organically. That which is false, without value, not according to reality, will intuitively be felt and shed, while the true value of each experience will be retained. The individual will be open for truth and reality, coming from other outside influences than the first, while the entity, in his afflicted areas, is incapable of doing so.

The soul substance of problematic areas is too impressionable. An unpleasant experience is so deeply indented that it cannot be appropriately dealt with. This means that the experience will be unrealistically evaluated. For example: a cruel father will leave the impression that all men, all authority figures are cruel, and elaborate defenses against this danger are built for life. Such a generalization is not according to reality for, although this particular man may have been cruel and it may have been appropriate to use a certain defense dealing with him, to use the same defense against someone who really is not cruel, will produce problems which need not exist. We shall go into this later in greater detail. For now, it is important to remember that the unconscious assumption of all men being cruel causes the person to automatically, not volitionally, respond in a way which is not only unrealistic, but very damaging.

The primary experience, in this life, impresses the soul substance with a certain idea, which governs the person to react accordingly, whether or not this be appropriate. The destructive defense hardens the soul stuff, so that no further impressions, correcting or modifying the original impression, can be made. It becomes rigid.

The foregoing may offer a deeper understanding of the psychic processes of childhood. It will explain why, in some cases, extremely unfavorable conditions during childhood have less affect on a person than, with another individual, whose circumstances are incomparably better, the slightest imperfections in environment and conditions have a deep affect on his psyche.

To recapitulate: it is not the actual original hurts which create the deep psychic imprints, later producing unfulfillment and conflict, but the solutions the child has adopted to make itself immune. These solutions, or defenses, might have worked in a particular instance, as long as the child was dealing with the adult who could exert power over him. But when these same defenses are used with different people, who neither have the intention of acting like the childhood authority, nor the power, nor is the individual a helpless child any longer, these pseudo-solutions or defense mechanisms bring the very result the person wishes to avoid. Without them, the recurrence of the painful childhood situation would not happen with such unfailing regularity. The patterns you probably observed in the preliminary steps of our work are an indication of this.

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Compulsion to Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts

The Guide's suggestions for working with Pathwork Lecture 75

1. 'Take a current problem. Strip it of all superimposed layers of your reactions. The first and most handy layer is that of rationalisation, that of "proving" that others or situations are at fault and not your innermost conflicts which make you adopt the wrong attitude to the actual problem that confronts you. The next layer might be anger, resentment, anxiety, frustration. Behind all these reactions, you will find the hurt of not being loved. ... When you experience the hurt of not being loved in your current problem, it will serve to reawaken the childhood hurt.'
2. 'With the present hurt, think back, try to re-evaluate the situation as to your parents -- what they gave you, how you really felt about them. You will become aware that in many ways you lacked something you never clearly saw before -- you did not want to see it. You will find that this must have hurt you when you were a child, but you may consciously have forgotten this hurt. Yet, it is not forgotten at all. The hurt of your current problem is the very same hurt.'
3. 'Now re-evaluate your present hurt, comparing it with the childhood hurt. Finally, you will clearly see how it is one and the same. No matter how true and understandable your present pain is, it is nevertheless the same childhood pain. A little later, you will see how you contributed in bringing about the present pain because of your desire to correct the childhood hurt. But at first, you only have to feel the similarity of the pain.'
4. Once you can synchronise these two pains and realise that they are one and the same, the next step will be much easier. Then, by overlooking the repetitious pattern in your various problems, you will learn to recognise where the similarities exist in your parents and in the people who have caused you hurt or are causing you pain now. When you experience these similarities emotionally, it will carry you further on the particular road of dissolving this basic problem. Mere intellectual evaluation will not yield any benefit. When you feel the similarities while at the same time experiencing the pain of now and the pain of then, you will slowly come to understand how you thought you had to choose the current situation because deep inside you could not possibly admit "defeat." '
5. 'Only after experiencing all these emotions and synchronising the "now" and the "then" will you become aware of how you tried to correct the situation. You will see further the folly of this unconscious desire, the frustrating uselessness of it. You will survey all your actions and reactions with this new understanding and insight -- whereupon, you will release your parents, you will leave your childhood truly behind and start a new inner behaviour pattern that will be infinitely more constructive and rewarding for yourself and for others. You will no longer seek to master the situation that you could not master as a child. You will go on from where you are, forgetting and forgiving, truly inside of you, without thinking that you have done so. You will no longer need to be loved as you needed to be loved when you were a child. First, you become aware that this is what you still wish, and then you no longer seek this type of love. Since you are no longer a child, you will seek love in a different way, by giving it, instead of by expecting it.
6. 'To be fruitful and bring real results, it must go beyond mere intellectual knowledge. You have to allow yourself to feel the pain of certain unfulfilments now and also the pain of the unfulfilment of your childhood. Then compare the two until, like two separate picture slides, they gradually move into focus and become one. Once this happens, the insight that you gain, the experience that you feel exactly as I say here, will enable you to take the further steps indicated.'

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The Difference Between Feelings and Emotions

Emotional Reactions

1. Come from misconceptions
reactions to 100/100 (illusion) life or death reactions
2. Have to do with thoughts (wrong thinking)
coming from images
Guide: "unthought thoughts"
3. Are from the past
are history
are transference reactions
4. Are charged, stuck
-even when expressed don't change, comeback again and again
5. Have unhealthy desire within them
(to get rid of one side of duality)
6. Are not based on reality, subjective
7. Are destructive
8. Are personal
9. When in emotional reaction we are defended
10. Need to be experienced and expressed but not to others (acting out)
11. Rage at somebody
12. Are pleasure or unpleasure
13. We think emotional reactions are about others (blame)
14. Create hard pain
15. Are superficial
conditions in soul: reactions
16. Are distorted

Feelings

1. Are in reality 50/50
accepting human condition
2. Are not about thoughts
they are experiences
they are spontaneous
158 "feelings are soul movements"
3. Relate to the present
are in the immediate now
4. Are flowing, relaxed
pass through us
change from one moment to the next
5. Come from healthy desire to accept 50/50 responses to the human condition
(50/50 plus memory of perfection)
6. Are based on reality, objective
healthy detachment
7. Are constructive
8. Are impersonal
When in real feelings we are undefended
9. When in real feelings we are undefended
10. Are real responses to life and need to be experienced and expressed
11. Rage at the Human Condition
12. Are pleasure and unpleasure
13. We are our own real responses to life, to both the negative and positive
(law of personal responsibility)
14. Allow soft pain
15. Are permanent in essence
from real self
part of eternal spirit
16. Are in truth

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Study Guide for Parents – Images
Chapter 11 of The Path to the Real Self

Week 3: Understanding our choices from the Soul's perspective and our Soul Split. PL 66,160

Quotes form PRS11:

You are not to accept my words of any of the factors I discuss at face value. Only the discovery of their truth, your personal experience of them, will give you a profound understanding of this process. But, in order to acquire this understanding and personal experience, you will have to explore certain facets of your life with a new outlook.

Let me give a simple example of this process. Returning to the example of the cruel father, let us assume the pseudo solution or defense against all the dreaded aspects of father's cruelty, such as rejection and criticism, are mistrust, defiance, withdrawal from people, from friendships, from close relationships. Is it not natural that such an attitude brings forth rejection from and criticism by others? This, then, gives the impression that they are cruel, confirming the conviction of the generalization -- all authority people or men, are cruel and one has to defend against them.

Underneath, he has a gnawing sense of being unlovable; that, perhaps, father was right in being cruel and rejecting. If only he knew all the facts and factors involved, he could convince himself that he is not rejected because he has no worth as a human being, but because of his ill-chosen defense against what he fears will hurt him again.

The insidious fact is that the original misconception -- all men being cruel because father was cruel -- SEEMS to be correct, because the person's behavior pattern cannot bring any other reaction from people but what must appear as cruelty.

If a child is not born with this particular problem, the cruel father will certainly cause some pain. But the growing child will be capable of absorbing life in a more realistic manner. As the mind and the emotions grow, the fact that not all men are cruel will not only be absorbed by the intellect, but inner, emotional responses and automatic reflexes will adjust to reality, namely that some people are like father, but certainly not all. Therefore, reactions to others will be attuned to them, not to father. The person will observe them and react to them, according to their personality and character, instead of with blind, automatic reflexes, having nothing to do with the person or situation he actually deals with.

This entire process -- the original painful experience, the imprint made on the malleable soul substance, the misjudgment through generalization, the pseudo-defense against re-occurrence of the original experience, the apparent re-experience through the pseudo-defense -- sets up an elaborate negative chain reaction. These are: a number of wrong conclusions, derivatives of the principal misconception; vicious circles; unjustified fears; negative experience; lack of fulfillment; limitation. For simplicity's sake, we call this entire process an Image. An image is simultaneously a wrong evaluation of a past situation, and a protection against its re-occurrence, which is taken for granted for all situations.

The work of this path must extensively deal with finding these images, by using the method described previously. I shall also give further, more specific instructions in this regard in a following lecture. Personal observations are used as guideposts to lead to the various sores in the soul, in order to give them a chance to heal by removing the virulants, which are the images. The purpose of this is twofold: a) to enable the individual to lead a more productive, healthy, happy life, and b) to remove the obstacles to the real self, which induces genuine, cosmic and God experiences. In fact, the one is inseparable from the other.

No human being is free from images, since no one is perfect or free from disturbances, inner conflicts, problems, misconceptions. Images are not only formed due to actual imperfection, shortcomings and lack of love on the part of parents. If the soul is born with deep imprints of previous wrong conclusions and unresolved images, the child will experience any frustration of his over-demanding will as lack of love, rejection, pain. It will grow up (consciously or unconsciously) with an idea of its parents which is not concomitant with the true facts. Destructive defense mechanisms and pseudo-solutions will be built against imagined, rather than real, rejection and other painful experience. Such a person may then interpret a happening as though its significance were his personal rejection, while the actual facts were based on entirely different reasons. Again, the fact that all these "reasoning processes" are unconscious, makes it impossible to correct them.

Thus it happens that parental authority creates the first outer conflict in the child's life, for it must deny many a wish fulfillment. Therefore, authority seems hostile, no matter how necessary some prohibitions may be, no matter how much love and warmth accompany them. Of course, the conflict is heightened if love does not come forth to a sufficient degree, or is lacking.

The child needs and longs for love of his parents, but it also experiences parental authority as an enemy force, a power against which it feels helpless and therefore rebels. The child grows, in the hope that when it is an adult, it can be "free" to do exactly as it pleases, only to find that life itself acts often as a restricting authority. So, man often unconsciously harbors his rebellion against the parental authority throughout life -- against every restriction life imposes upon primitive childish instincts.

The fact that the child needs the parents' love, while it hates their restricting power, creates a conflict in the soul. It feels guilty for hating those whom it loves and whose love it needs. Therefore, one side of the conflict is often pushed out of awareness -- not necessarily always the hate, sometimes it may be the love -- because in the child's concept contradictory feelings do not exist. Hence, one side is believed, the other doubted, confusion and fluctuation set in, the self is distrusted. In order to avoid this, one side is not "admitted."

The adult often retains this conflict he cannot come to terms with, as long as he keeps one side of the picture hidden from view. He continues to feel ambivalently, not only towards the parents, but towards all those who are emotionally important to him. Finding such ambivalent feelings, unearthing your reactions to authority, and its consequences, is very important.

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SHAME OF THE HIGHER SELF

Excerpts from Pathwork Lecture 66

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

When a child feels rejected, in most instances the child feels more rejected by one particular parent. Again I say that it need not be so in reality. In reality, the very parent who appears so may have more real love for the child than the other parent. But the way the child feels it is what counts in the accumulation of inner depressions which form the images -- the petrified wrong conclusions and the patterns of his subsequent emotional life.

The child would like to be loved and approved of to a much greater extent than is possible, particularly by this one parent who seems to reject the child. When this exclusive tenderness and affection is not forthcoming, the child feels it as a rejection which is followed by a confusion arising in the soul. In vaguely felt emotions, love and acceptance from this particular parent becomes the most desirable aim, all the more desirable because it seems unattainable to the degree that the child wishes. The desirable aim -- exclusive love and acceptance -- is confused with the parent withholding it. Hence, in the confused, immature mind of the child, the rejector becomes desirable, taking the place of that which was originally desirable -- all-exclusive love, approval, and acceptance. A further result of this confusion is that the rejector seems unloving. He is desirable also because that which is wanted from him is desirable. Therefore, to be unloving is a desirable state. The psyche says: "If I am unloving, I will be desirable. My love will be sought. Just as I do not reject my rejector, so will I no longer be rejected." In a certain way, the rejector seems cold, aloof, free of emotions. Therefore this behavior pattern -- imagined or real -- becomes desirable and something to emulate.

If the situation is such that the rejector is outwardly the "superior" one, always the winner, while the loving parent is subdued, apparently weaker and under the domination of the rejecting parent, and perhaps even a little bit despised -- whether this is actually so or not makes no difference as long as the child feels it to be so -- this conflict becomes even stronger within the soul. Then, in addition to one's own experience of rejection, the child witnesses the apparent or actual rejection of the loving parent. This creates the impression that the loving parent is weak, while the rejector is strong. Therefore love becomes weakness, and aloofness from love a sign of strength, at least unconsciously. The child's desire is to be as strong as the desirable parent and certainly not as weak as the undesirable one.

A further complication is that often the outward appearance does not correspond to the inner situation. In other words, outwardly one parent may be much more domineering than the other. But inwardly it may be just the opposite. Thus, you ally yourself in an ever so subtle way with the rejector, and together with him (or her), you reject the weak parent. The mere inclination is sufficient for you to feel this act as betrayal, and in a sense, it is, of course. The betrayal is aggravated because you abandon the very thing that you yearn for.

Thus you betray the best in you because you prohibit the unfoldment of your love capacity. At the same time, you betray the parent who has actually given you what you

desired to receive from the other parent. That very act of giving, you now (unconsciously) consider as a weakness that deserves contempt.

This betrayal is subtle, but it is at the same time the most dominant conflict in your soul. It is necessary in the course of your work that you find in you that part wherein you betray not only the best, the highest, and the noblest in you, but also the one parent who was the weaker one to begin with and who might have loved and cherished you in a much more satisfying way.

This betrayal weighs you down with guilt. It is the deepest of your guilts. It eliminates your self-assurance, your self-confidence, your self-respect. This betrayal is responsible for the deepest roots of your inferiority feelings. You do not trust yourself with this betrayal locked in your soul. If you do not trust people, you are bound to attract those who will constantly confirm to you that you have no reason to trust them. But if you genuinely trust others, you will have the proper discrimination and judgment, and you will attract a good many who will warrant your trust in mankind. But this can only happen if you first establish the reason for trusting yourself. And this, in turn, can only happen if you find and eliminate the basic betrayal I have indicated.

Follow it through even if you no longer have the opportunity with your parents. You may be transferring these same feelings to other people who in some remote way replace them psychologically. Whenever you find yourself in a situation in which you reject a person who is ready to offer you genuine love and affection or friendship or help in some way, and for one reason or another you feel (it need not actually be so) that this person is helpless or weak or dependent in some way, he or she takes on the role of the "weak" parent. On the other hand, there may be a person who is not so ready to give you what you wish. It need not be love; it may be respect, admiration, acceptance. Then this person takes on the role of the rejecting parent.

To present the problem in its simplest terms, we may say that it is based on the following wrong conclusion. Love is weakness; withholding love and affection is strength. Since you do not wish to be weak and needy, you not only emulate the person who corresponds to your wrong concept of strength, but you also betray the one who seems weak to you. Find the part in your emotions wherein you ascribe actual or imagined weakness to love and humility that is tendered in the healthy and real sense. Find in you the part which believes that strength is aloofness or a kind of coldness. When you find that, you will find your self-betrayal.

Your true self is very often hidden behind a wall of stone. The main components of this wall behind which you hide the real you is the shame of imagined weakness, of being yourself with all the tenderness and understanding, with all the sympathy and vulnerability of your loving heart.

You have no idea what a tremendous relief it is to remove this phantom world and live in reality. You will live in freedom, you will find it no longer necessary to betray the best in you or in another.

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CONCILIATION OF INNER SPLIT

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture No. 160

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A very deliberate and yet relaxed attempt must be made to feel the underlying causes of the outer results in your life. All sorrow and unhappiness, all emptiness and unfulfillment, all frustration and suffering are caused by being disconnected from the causes within yourself.

Whenever you get closer to the fulfillment of your conscious wish, your unconscious shrinks away from it in terror. The soul movements of two opposite directions make you feel like being literally torn apart. This division is the real pain.... He who is aware of this division and experiences it consciously is blessed indeed, for in that moment a great deal of tension disappears. It is absolutely impossible for man to find home within himself, to feel at home in his life if he does not perceive that layer within that says no to what he most strenuously says yes to on the surface.

When [we] are unhappy, [we] automatically, at least emotionally, blame this on someone or something else. It brings in its wake other destructive attitudes: stubbornness, blind resistance, the desire to punish those who one thinks are responsible for the unhappiness and, as a way of punishing them, deliberate self-destruction in one form or another. This is a prevalent pattern that to some degree exists in everyone. Look at your emotions where you make a case against someone or something -- against life at large, perhaps. ...no matter how wrong others may be, they can never be responsible for your suffering, no matter what the appearances are.

Denying the truth of your saying no and then blaming others, and denying this blame as well, is a violation of the laws of life. For the laws of life are not only truth, but they also mean seeking all causes in the self, where they really are.

The next step in this connection is the detached observation of the movements of the soul... When you become very quiet and listen into yourself, you will feel it, you will know what it is that moves and motivates you, no matter how subtle it may be.

When man is in harmony with life because he is connected with his own causes and effects, his position toward the forces of life can be compared to a swimmer. The swimmer floats on the water. The water carries him. And yet he moves, he is not passive. A very secure and pleasurable relationship exists between the water and the body. This means that in spite of the justified trust that the water carries the body, the person does not deny his responsibility, his participation in the act of swimming or even of floating. This is a very apt analogy to man's position in the universe and relation to the universal forces. This is a wonderful way of being. It is the way of being.

This step is not easily taken. ... he who is at the beginning clings to the unconscious hope of finding the causes of his suffering outside of himself. He does not realize that nothing would be gained by this even if it were possible. For he would then not be able to

change his fate since he cannot change others. But the blind fear of imperfection and the concomitant pride overlook this fact. Thus the struggle goes on and on to pin the fault outside the self. It is the greatest step a human being can undertake when he can say to himself, **"With all my heart and all my might, I wish to recognize the cause within."**

Fear is a fault because it implies distrust; it arises out of hate. ... [fears] are all illusion. You cannot overcome a fear unless you go through it.

Man cramps up against that which he fears. ... Imagine a swimmer in such a physical state of constriction and contraction. He must sink, and so it is with man in life. ... How can an illusion be exposed as such if it is not ever gone through? -- never by hearsay, no matter how much you trust those who tell you so. You can only find out the truth when you go into it. ... the only genuine reassurance is knowing your capacity to meet and deal with what you fear, intelligently and realistically. This can only be done by fully going into it, not by evasion.

Look at your fears. To what extent are they caused by pride? To what extent are they a result of a rigid self-will, unwilling to bend, change, flow with the stream of ever changing life? Fears must be met. In order to be met, they must be ascertained. They must truly be faced up to, painstakingly and specifically, not glossed over in a general way. That will never do. It is essential that you name the fear concisely and think it through. ...face your pride squarely which makes you so perfectionistic that you must fear to fall off the self-appointed pedestal. Many of the fears will dissolve when you are willing to give up your pride. ...When you deny the cause of your suffering within and place it outside yourself, you always commit an unfairness, you are never in truth. It is always pride that makes facing the fear impossible.

When you reverse the old habit pattern of blaming others and circumventing what you fear, something quite extraordinary will begin to happen, little by little and, as always, first with relapses. Your soul substance begins to change.

First it will occur only occasionally; later it will become more frequent. ... The feeling is of an immense safety and well-being, of vibrancy, peace, and aliveness, of a flowing feeling of utter confidence. It is this feeling of utter confidence. It is this feeling of being carried and yet of deeply knowing that the power exists within to govern life in the best possible way. ... In this state, all intensity vanishes. ... The peaceful, secure state I mentioned -- the only state in which total pleasure exists -- is completely free from this cramped intensity in either grasping for or avoiding. ... It requires an unexaggerated honesty to face up to what is within. This begins to take the hard edge off emotions and makes them bearable. It is the beginning of unification.

... in your approach to yourself, through meditation, make up your mind again and again, **"I want to face the cause of the evil in my life, that which causes my suffering. I truly want to look, with courage and honesty, at all the truth in me and around me."**

Study Guide for Parents – Images

Chapter 11 of The Path to the Real Self

Week 4: What was your soul's contract with your parents? What distortions were reinforced? What was learned? PL83

It is a good beginning, in this new phase of the path, to think about your parents, your relationship to both. What did you really feel for both? It is more than possible that you never confronted yourself in this particular respect; that you never deeply questioned your true reactions to both your parents; that you content yourself with a glib, superficial attitude you think tells the whole story -- either loving or resenting them. Try to bring this out in the open, as much as this is possible at this time. Bring out what hurt you, what you resented -- whether or not you now think that this reaction on your part was justified. Do not immediately evaluate the validity of your reactions. First, simply face them. By really taking stock of your actual feelings, with their intricate contradictions, you will discover a great deal, shedding light on recurrent problems.

Further, ask yourself, after having established some of your real emotional reactions to them, in what situations and relationships you later registered similar emotional reactions.

Take all important relationships of your life and question yourself about them in the same way as you did about your parents. You will be amazed how many parallels you are going to find.

Also, look at your parents' relationship to one another. How did you perceive it? How do you see it now? What was your reaction to their relationship -- whatever you thought it was? You might have a negative reaction towards a favorable aspect in their marriage. One may feel excluded, lonely, not enough in the foreground. Do not be ashamed of it. All children are greedy for exclusive love. One does not only resent siblings, but often also one parent who seems to be a hopeless competition for the love of the other parent. Is it surprising that one later transfers one's feelings for a parent to one's mate? Both are the most important persons in the world on whom everything depends. If the relationship with one or both parents is "unfinished business," as it were, you are bound to carry it over into your important relationships.

Maybe you will discover that you were jealous of one parent, or of siblings. This may have caused you painful guilt and subsequent repression of this knowledge. By now, you know how harmful such repression is. Take it out of hiding and look at it without moralizing. Simply face it and learn to understand in what way it has influenced your personality, and your life.

Was one parent inaccessible and very awesome? Did you wish to emulate him or her? Was it of particular importance to please him or her? What did you do in order to accomplish this? Perhaps you subtly sold your integrity, in that you eagerly parroted his or her opinions and views, never stopping to think whether they corresponded to your own thinking. Perhaps you betrayed the other parent, whose love you felt certain of, because you thought this would please the more desirable parent. The latter may have exuded a subtle contempt for the former. All this may have happened on a very subtle level of your emotions and need hardly have manifested in actions or words, although this may be quite possible without your noticing it. At any rate, it is important to find and face such factors because the burden of hidden guilt and shame devitalizes your very life.

force. Bringing it in the open will not seem such a crime any longer, because you will understand, now, that, as a child, you could hardly help yourself. Awareness of such attitudes will prevent similar subtle betrayal in the present and future. You will discover a whole elaborate structure of, possibly one parent representing a "desirable world," with the other standing for an "undesirable world." This may not always appear in such extreme division, because certain characteristics of each parent might reach into the opposite "world," but when going deeply enough, this division is often quite crass. Emotionally, the personality's goal is to be completely accepted by, and belong with the present version of such a "desirable world" -- a wishful re-enactment of the past as it should have been. Such goals are not at all commensurate with real values, conducive for actual happiness, fulfillment, self-respect.

If parents do not fulfill their children's needs, if these needs remain frustrated, the person is later driven to hunt for the fulfillment, to overcome the original hurt, to master the situation he felt helpless in during childhood. Such blind drives are then directed towards others, mostly mates. They are intended to remedy the situation. In your investigation, try to see what aspects in your mate represent both parents. Chances are that you will find both parents represented in the mate, although one will surely predominate. This might first sound preposterous and contrived, but it is true. Where there are problems, unfulfillment, frustration, regardless of how this seems to be "just one of those things," the parental situation is, in some subtle fashion, reenacted and your mate represents, to some degree, on certain hidden levels, both your parents, as you undoubtedly do to him or her.

Do not look for outer resemblances, neither physical, nor traits the mate might have in common with the parents. This is of lesser importance. What is important is the resemblance between your reactions to the mate and your parents, as well as the mate's reactions to you. Does the mate treat you in certain respects as you felt treated by a parent? Do you emotionally respond in a similar way? Do you react with fear and uncertainty to a mate who gives you as much insecurity as one parent? Do you, perhaps, also become untrue to yourself in these instances? Is the acceptance by that parent, represented in the partner, so important that you give up your integrity? Inability to relinquish the childish need for absolute approval creates self-contempt. No matter how much you try to cover it up, you are bound to emanate a subtle climate of insecurity, which is picked up by others, who will automatically treat you accordingly.

Do you harbor similar hidden feelings of hostility and resentment against this "beloved" mate, as you did for the awesome, unattainable parent? These negative emotions for the partner would be just as hidden as they were for the parent who was so much admired and whose love was craved for. Or does your partner fill you with a similar unspoken, and not necessarily overt, contempt as the parent who over-indulged you? Does this mate create boredom and induce you, possibly, to similar hidden betrayal? Establish such parallels. It will prove invaluable to you. Try to synchronize the "now" and the "then."

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Parents – Images

Q&As from Chapter 11 of The Path to the Real Self

QUESTION from PL10: Why do you choose the word "image" to describe a negative condition within man, when we read in Scripture that we were created in the image of God?

ANSWER: No, this is not so. It is, rather, a question of terminology. The human language is often too limited to adequately express the subtle factors of the spiritual, inner life. The word image is also frequently used, nowadays, in the sense of an idea, an example, a prototype -- or even as an ideal.

I chose the word "image" because it connotes that an impression is held tightly, is put down in static, petrified form. I could as well have chosen the word "picture." Both imitate life, hold it fast in dead, rigid, imitative fashion -- no matter how artistically it may be done.

Inner images are also static and unreal, inflexible, unchangeable (until the images themselves are dissolved) as long as they exist. By their very nature, they are out of tune with the ever changing, flowing rhythm of life, which is in constant movement.

Also, image refers to imagination -- an imagined, not a realistic, perception of life circumstances.

QUESTION: If images are a product of childhood environment, how does this tie in with karmic conditions?

ANSWER: The childhood environment is the effect and expression of inner conditions. If aspects of environment are negative and, therefore, cause trouble and problems, they are an outpicturing of inner problems the entity has not previously resolved. These laws are immutable, working in immeasurable exactitude, to the minutest detail. There is nothing which does not add up, nothing arbitrary or coincidental. According to this wise and perfect law, conditions and environment are not only a consequence of the totality of the personality, but conspire to afford a maximum possibility to unfold, express the self, and correct unresolved problems and false conclusions, imprinted in the soul. The particular combination of favorable, positive, pleasant conditions, and apparently unfavorable, difficult, negative or painful ones, is exactly what the entity needs for his personal maturation. All this is built into this same law of cause and effect. Karmic laws are concomitant and dovetail with the existence of images. The latter can come to the surface only when they are challenged by outer occurrences and conditions. Otherwise they would remain dormant and the soul would never free itself of its obstructions. Consciousness of the problem is necessary in order to eliminate it.

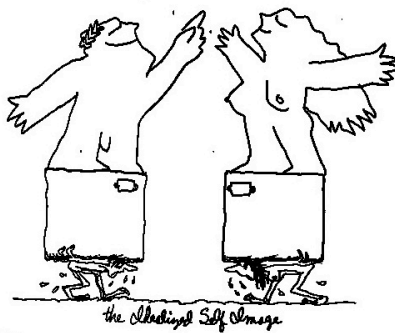
Environment, as well as hereditary factors, are both "visible" manifestations of karmic law. It is striking that mankind, in the last decades, has debated whether the one or the other is the determining factor in the formation of the character. Man still sees these two aspects as two entirely different, almost opposed approaches to the understanding and concept of the human personality. If the law of cause and effect would be followed through to its natural end, rather than arbitrarily breaking it off where direct vision happens to end, both these angles would be seen as two aspects of one whole. There is no either/or about environment versus heredity, or about karmic law versus formation of images. The unbroken law of cause and effect makes one comprehensive whole.

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The Idealized Self Image PL83

Worksheet by Gene Humphrey

1. If you were to dress up as your idealized self image, what would you look like?
2. What is the price you pay for being in this image?
3. What are the problems this image was designed to solve? Does it?
4. Trace the development of your idealized self image (ISI) from childhood to the present.
5. What demands and standards does your ISI place on you? On others? How do others hook into your ISI? Describe your experience of it's tyranny in your life.
6. Specifically, how does your ISI differ from your Real Self?
7. Do you have a negative idealized self — an attachment to seeing yourself as BAD in some way? If you do not, do you know of someone who does? Discuss.
8. Choose a specific area in your life where your ISI manifests strongly. Visualize how different it would be to come from your Real Self in this area.
9. Explore your reactions to and attitudes toward criticism. Look for their relationship to your ISI.
10. Comment on how guilt and shame relate to your ISI.
11. Describe how the vicious circle created by your ISI works in your life, e.g., “I feel unloving, so I *act* loving, but I turn people off because they sense I am phony, so I try harder, and it still doesn't make me feel loving, so I try harder still” etc., etc.
12. Describe your own experience of “coming home” as The Guide describes it.



Pathwork™ Steps

Study Guide for Parents – Images

Chapter 11 of The Path to the Real Self

Week 5: Transference, projecting our needs onto others. Ref PL118

Parents (or their substitutes) are the first and foremost influence in a child's life. They are the universe -- good or bad, favorable or unfavorable; usually both. The child knows nothing else for, it is dependent on them in every conceivable respect. Siblings, friends, teachers, other relatives, have their influence and importance, too, of course, but always relative to, in connection with, dependent on, the relationship to the parents. A person's conscious and unconscious attitude, response and approach to life, is always an exact replica of the child's attitude, response and approach to the parents. The relationship to them, in all the manifold, intricate possibilities and variations, determines a person's later years. Emotional problems in the relationship to them, unassimilated hurts, faulty perception of experience, cannot help create (actually the same old) problems, over and over again, in a psyche that is infinitely more impressionable and vulnerable than the adult's psyche.

When people diminish the importance of childhood influences, they ignore how sensitive, helpless and impressionable a child is, and how these first impressions literally "stick," influencing, in a subtle but definite way, the adult's behavior. Where problems with parents are not resolved, experience with them not properly come to terms with, the inner, invisible ties to them cannot be severed. This may not be apparent at all, on the surface. Only very close observation of emotional responses and close contact with one's psychic reflexes, can give you the truth about yourself, in this respect, as well as in many others. Such ties can be of love and dependency, or they can be ties of hate and resentment -- or of a mixture of both. Both of them create feelings of guilt, shame, fear, repression, pretence to feel the opposite.

These ties prohibit genuine, dynamic relationships, free experience, true joyfulness, later in life, because the actuality of the new person, or situation, can only be perceived and related to, if the new relationship or situation are not confused with the old one -- the parents. Unconsciously, one responds to new people, new situations, as though they were still the parents. Apprehension of the already existing conflict, of the undigested past, color outlook and perception, thus eventually spoiling the new relationship or situation. If a love tie to the parents is not severed (which does not mean one should cease loving the parents, it merely means ceasing to need them as the child does), the love bestowed on a new person is really, at least in part, directed to the parent. This is bound to create problems, disappointments on all sides, friction, unfulfillable expectations. No one can fulfill the silent demands of a child. The unconscious of others always picks up such undercurrents, as you do from others. This creates a special interaction.

Next, find how, deep within yourself, you represent both parents, as well. You carry your father and your mother in you. Without being in the least aware of it, you not only emulate the desirable one, but also the undesirable parent. Where you secretly disapprove of yourself, feel ashamed and contemptuous, it probably concerns traits of the parent you felt ashamed of and contempt for. The more you struggle away from being like this "undesirable" parent, the more certain you may be that you have somehow identified with that same parent -- and you fight against it. The "undesirable" parent was probably looked down upon by the "strong, superior" partner. Hence, your own insecurity puts you in the same boat with this parent. Such negative identification causes great strain in your psychic life. It has to be unearthed if you want to find peace and a productive mode of living and relating.

These conditions not only influence your behavior and attract partners with equally unresolved problems, equally incapable of having a satisfying relationship, but they also hinder the strength of your feelings of pleasure and joy. Hence, you are imprisoned in more ways than one. We shall discuss this topic later in more detail.

Positive identification may appear desirable, but it is not, at least not for an adult person. Identification means emotional bondage. When the infant is born and grows into a little child, the ego is still too weak to sustain itself. The child is dependent on the more powerful adult world. This does not only apply to the physical manifestation of life, which is obvious. The child is dependent on adults for nourishment, shelter, protection from danger. It also applies to the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of the personality. The child has to be supplied with ideas, concepts, education, knowledge, for its intellectual growth, so that the mind learns to think for itself. It has to receive love, affection, tenderness, understanding, for its emotional and spiritual maturation, so that, one day, it will be emotionally strong and healthy enough to give love, affection, tenderness, understanding. This is as important a nourishment as the proper food for healthy physical growth. A child is incapable of obtaining either physical sustenance, or intellectual, or emotional sustenance through its own efforts and ingenuity. During this time of helplessness and dependency, positive identification is natural and desirable. To withhold from the child food, so as to make it independent, would be preposterous. To withhold proper influence, principles, ideas, information, which serve as guide-posts for the growing process of the intellect, would not make the child better equipped to form its own independent ideas and views in later life. By the same token, the child who receives an adequate amount of affection and understanding of its unique individuality is later better equipped to form fruitful relationships.

However, if a person continues to depend on parents, or parent substitutes, for nourishment of either body, mind or emotions, he has not severed the ties that should now be severed. What was right once, is no longer so in an adult individual. If the adult lives as though he were a helpless and dependent child, he is crippled. The wonderful thing is, though, that this kind of crippling can be corrected the moment honest self-facing, without reservation, to the deepest possible layer, takes place.

Just as identification with parents prevents identification with the real self, so does it prevent perceiving the real individuality of the partner.

DUALITY THROUGH ILLUSION; TRANSFERENCE

Quotes from Pathwork Lecture 118

The karmic relationships that are most intense and dramatic are those between parents and children. The unresolved confusions, conflicts, and subsequent basic split must be challenged most dramatically in this relationship. This double relationship from the child to both father and mother is another of the symbols of splits which marks this earth sphere. To have a set of parents is an asset to the degree that the relationship is healthy because of a relatively free psyche. But when the negative involvement is still strong, this double relationship to two parents symbolizes the inner split.

If you regard your particular main problems and conflicts, the images, the defense mechanisms, pseudosolutions, wrong conclusions that you have found so far, they will eventually reveal a basic inner attitude by which you are governed. This basic attitude is always split in half, which means that your fundamental attitude in your negative involvement fluctuates between two ways of reacting. ... When this realization begins to take shape, you will come to see that these two fundamental attitudes constituting your split represent your basic attitude to your parents.

Through the influence exerted upon you by one parent, and your emotional response to it, one conflicting and distorted attitude exists. And an entirely different influence by, and emotional response to, the other parent reproduces the other side of your conflict. This twofold split is a conflict that you could not resolve before you entered this life. Your parents or, rather, certain of their aspects and your subsequent response to them personify this unmended split within your psyche. Hence, it is not your parents who are responsible for your problems, and yet their faulty behavior toward you has to be faced and understood, for it will seem during some time on your path that they induced your particular way of reacting. And this is true, too, but only because you already came with your duality, born out of illusion.

When you perceive how you represent your parents within your psyche, when you sense the subtle interaction between identification, rebellion, and various other responses and reactions to them, you must come to experience your basic twofold split by which you are governed throughout your life. The important thing is the discovery of your parents expressing and personifying, for you, your duality, your illusory way of life.

When you discover how you relive your father and mother within yourself, as well as continue to respond to them, you experience your basic split, your very own brand of duality -- for duality is not always the same. You ever react to your father and your mother in the "way of life" you have adopted to deal with, and you respond to them and to life in consequence of their impact on you. Response to one parent may be reaction to, and correction of, an unwanted situation with the other parent -- a compensation. But the two sets of basic attitudes together form your basic split, your "way of life," and you are, at the same time, a result of this. A new experience of life's manifold manifestations is possible only after having broken the repetitive chain from the duality to parents, to others. Then life becomes vibrant in joy, peace, and meaningfulness, in newness and richness.

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