

Pathwork on
Facing and Working Out Guilt

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 65 *Question and Answers*, gives a comprehensive process for facing and working out guilt.

29	<p>QUESTION: I would like to know how to handle a guilt feeling -- and also how does one make amends?</p> <p>ANSWER: As long as an attitude, an emotion, an action or a thought causes guilt, one has not found the roots of it. Therefore, the gnawing guilt persists. It is as if the psyche says: "You have not come to the roots of it yet," and, therefore, it is an indication to go on searching about the very thing you are consciously guilty about. Examine it, and you will find that it often is a camouflage of a real guilt. It is as though the psyche says: "I produce this guilt so that I do not have to face the real guilt." Do not be misled by such discoveries. Go on from there.</p>
30	<p>You will also find that quite often one feels guilty about a common human failure or fault. Upon further analysis you will find that there is something in you that is not ready to give up this fault or weakness, for reasons still hidden. Therefore you feel guilty. That means you have to find out why you do not want to let go of the failing. You will inevitably find that the failing is thought to be a defense against your uncertainties, your fears, your vulnerabilities. Only when you find that this is so can you examine why you think it will protect you and whether or not this assumption is correct. Of course, you will find it is a wrong conclusion, a misconception.</p>
31	<p>Only when you realize fully that it is a misconception will you let go of it. Your inner will will function. You will let go without effort. You will find that the defense mechanism, the pseudo-protective armor of this fault, is useless, senseless. It does not work. When you clearly see that, you will be willing to give it up -- and then, when you are willing to give it up, you will no longer feel guilty. You continue to feel guilty only if you try to give up the fault compulsively, while inwardly you cling to it for the reason I have stated.</p>
32	<p>Therefore, I say, do not force it, for forcing cannot succeed. Rather try to find out whether you really want to give up what makes you feel guilty? Or isn't there some hidden recess of your soul that says, "I must have that fault because otherwise I would expose myself and be hurt." When you find that, you approach the core of the problem.</p>
33	<p>Then there is another alternative regarding guilt feelings: One often feels guilty when that feeling is unjustified, as I said before. As I also said, these unjustified guilts are a camouflage for the real reason about which one feels guilty. As I said some time ago, often the imagined guilt is actually graver than the real hidden guilt. But just because the real guilt is more difficult to face, emotionally it seems harder to bear than the unjustified, imagined guilt. The real</p>

	<p>guilt may be that you deny yourself in some way, you betray yourself by a weakness that is the result of a wrong conclusion. By betraying yourself -- the best part of yourself, that which yearns to love and give, to feel and to sympathize, to be generous, to be humble -- you are bound to betray also those you love best. When you find this indirect betrayal toward others because of direct betrayal toward yourself, you have another clue to your guilt.</p>
34	<p>By finding all this, you make amends. To find these answers by the piecemeal work, the patience, the perseverance and the relaxed, continued effort in this direction, you do the only thing that is constructive and valuable. Therefore you make amends not to a higher power, but to yourself. God's ways, the ways of truth, bring happiness and liberation. If only humanity could feel that, so much sorrow and hardship could be avoided! For many of you feel that although God's ways are wonderful, they are a hardship on you, demanding a saintly life that is not to your advantage. That is so untrue, so very untrue! Only when you experience a few major liberations in this work that I show you, will you discover that this concept, often unconscious, is a wrong one. God's way works to your immediate, direct advantage and is not something "goody-goody" and saintly that is beyond you. With that knowledge, all your doubts and guilts must disappear, because you can be at peace with yourself and at peace with that which is the best in you, knowing it will not bring you any disadvantage.</p>