

Pathwork on
Strange Shame of Being One's Naked Real Self

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 152 *Connection Between the Ego and the Universal Power*, speaks to our shame of being real, of being nakedly real. The Lecture says this is a strange shame, a shame that comes with our human dualistic consciousness. It is a more profound and deeper shame than our shame of our Higher Selves (see Pathwork Lecture 66 – *Shame of the Higher Self*).

33	<p>All human beings have a similar reaction to their real self. This does not apply only to their actual goodness and loving generosity, but also to all other real feelings and ways of being. This strange shame manifests as embarrassment and a sense of exposure about the way one really is. It makes one feel as though one were naked and exposed. This experience can be registered by everyone -- and it is not the shame of one's deceits and destructiveness, nor of one's compliance. This shame is on an entirely different level, and of a different quality. The only way I can describe it is to say that what one really is feels shamefully naked -- regardless of your good or bad thoughts, feelings, or behavior. This is extremely important to comprehend, for it explains how artificial levels are created. These artificial levels do not exclusively result from misconceptions in the usual sense. When the naked core of oneself, as one is now, is exposed, the personality is less frightened of annihilation or danger, but more ashamed. The element of danger comes in when the ego yields to the involuntary processes. The shame is felt most acutely when it comes to being what one is in the moment.</p>
34	<p>Because of this feeling, people pretend. This is a different kind of pretense than the one that covers up lack of integrity, destructiveness, and cruelty. This different kind of pretense is deeper, more subtle. You may pretend things you actually feel. You may really feel love, but to show this real love feels naked, so you create a false love. You may really feel anger, as you are now. But this real anger feels naked, so you create false anger. You may really feel sadness, but you feel mortified to acknowledge this sadness, even to yourself, so you create false sadness, which you can easily display to others. You may really experience pleasure, but this, too, is humiliating to expose, so you create false pleasure. This even applies to elements like confusion and puzzlement. You intensify and dramatize your emotions, as I explained in the last lecture, and so you falsify them.</p>
35	<p>Because the real feeling seems so naked and exposed, so you create a false one. This falsification functions like a protective garment which no one but one's deepest, usually unconscious self knows of. This "protective garment" anesthetizes one to the vibrancy and buoyancy of life. All such imitations build a screen between you and your life center. This, too, separates you from reality, for it is the reality of your own being that you cannot stand and feel compelled to imitate, thereby counterfeiting your very existence. The moving stream of life seems dangerous, not only as far as your safety is concerned, but also as it affects</p>

	<p>your pride and dignity. But all this is stark and tragic illusion. As you can only find true safety when you unite with the source of all life within you, so you can find true dignity only when you overcome the shame of being real -- whatever this may mean at the moment.</p>
36	<p>Sometimes annihilation seems a lesser evil than the strange sense of shame and the exposure of one's real being. When you recognize this shame and do not push it away as inconsequential, you take a tremendous step, my friends. Feeling this shame is the key to finding a numbness that causes despair and frustration, because it leads to self-alienation and disconnectedness of a particular kind. It is not translatable into rational language because there is nothing you can possibly say in mere words that distinguishes the real from the false -- only the flavor of experience and the quality of being are different. The imitation feelings are often subtle and so deeply ingrained that they have become second nature. Therefore it takes a deeply sensitive letting go, letting yourself be, and letting yourself feel, as well as wanting to be discerning about your discoveries. All this is necessary before you become acutely aware of the apparent exposure and nakedness the real feelings cause in you. The subtle imitation not only reproduces other, or opposite feelings from those you register, but also, and just as frequently, the identical ones. Their intensification then serves to make the false appear real.</p>
37	<p>You first come in contact with the center of the universal life that you are only when you are real -- whatever this may mean now. But before this experience is possible, you need to encounter the phenomenon of shame and nakedness. When you meet this momentary real self, it is far from "perfect." This is not a dramatic experience -- yet it is crucial. For what you are now contains all the seeds you will ever need in order to live deeply and vibrantly.</p>
38	<p>You are already this universal life power. Every conceivable possibility is contained in it. What you are now is not shameful because of your faults; it is much more shameful, as it seems to you, because of its immediate, existential reality that seems so naked. When you have the courage to be your real self, a new approach to your own inner life can begin, after which all pretenses fall by the wayside.</p>
39	<p>This applies to the obvious and crude pretenses that can usually be seen by all but oneself, as well as to the subtle pretenses I just described. These stand between the ego and the universal self. They form a thin but firm screen that blocks out the life-giving force. They are responsible for your alienation from the universal life principle. They create the apparently dangerous and unbridgeable chasm between the ego and the universal power. They are responsible for your illusory fear and shame. This shame is just as basic as all the fears responsible for the misconceptions and the splitting of the individual. It originates from some fears and creates others, but it is not exactly the same as the fears themselves.</p>
40	<p>The shame of one's own nakedness in showing one's self, as it is in the now, is explained by the deep symbolism of the story of Adam and Eve. The</p>

<p>nakedness of reality is paradise. For when that nakedness is no longer denied, a new blissful existence can begin -- right here and now, not in another life in the beyond. But it takes some acclimatizing after one has become aware of the shame. It takes a path within the path to become more conscious of the ingrained but subtle habits with which one covers up one's inner nakedness. How easy it is to revert back to the shame out of long-standing habit! But once you pay attention to it and elicit the powers available in you, again and again, so that you notice your shame and your hiding and learn to uncover yourself, you will finally step out of your protective shell and become more real. You will be the naked you, as you are now -- not better than you are, not worse than you are, and also not different from the way you are. You will stop the imitation, the counterfeit feelings and ways of being, and venture out into the world the way you happen to be.</p>
