

Pathwork on
Being a Lawyer for the Opposite Viewpoint

There are two quotes here, the first from Pathwork Lecture 48 – *The Life Force in the Universe* and second from Pathwork Lecture 54 – *Questions and Answers*. These quotes suggest an interesting way of dealing with conflict in community. The idea is for you to become the lawyer of the view that is opposite your own view and for you to be evaluated by the community on the effectiveness of your arguments as a lawyer for the other side. Are you really being a great lawyer for the opposite view, or are you holding back? The second quote simply follows up the first, pointing out that despite all the opportunities in the community to use this powerful technique, only a few had tried it. “Why?” The Lecture invites the reader to inquire.

From Pathwork Lecture 48

24	Now let me make a new suggestion which should work out very well, <u>if</u> you use it. You all know that lawyers can defend a case from two entirely different sides. They can first represent the case from one viewpoint and be utterly convincing. They can then take the opposite side and be equally convincing. Any lawyer will confirm this to you. Many practice it as part of their training.
25	If there is friction between you and one of your brothers or sisters, my advice is that you become an advocate in his or her defense. Take the case and try to see how the other one sees it and present the case first to yourself. That will be the easiest. Then go to an objective third person, detached from the conflict, perhaps the person you work with, and repeat this process in her presence. This would be the second step. And if you really want to reach the highest step in this particular regard, go to the person with whom you have the conflict and be the advocate in his or her defense. Perhaps he or she will do the same. It takes courage and humility, the two attributes so inevitable to reach any success on this path. But if you cannot bring yourself to take the third and highest step, try the first and perhaps then the second.
26	Take up this task in seriousness; do not make a half-hearted attempt. Try to forget yourself. Try to act on your adversary's behalf as though you actually were a lawyer and your reputation were at stake. By defending badly, because in a corner of your being you still want to prove how right you are, you have not fulfilled your job at all. Play a game, imagine your life depends on presenting a convincing case for the other person. The better you represent him, the better it is for you; and not, as you may continue to believe, the better you defend him, the worse you come out. After the other has heard you first, as your "client" he will give you additional material, so that you can succeed better. Listen to it so as to extend and strengthen the case for your "client."

27	<p>Do you know what this will do for you, my dear ones? It will open new vistas of understanding. You are so used to representing only your own case. There you are perfect. There you do not need further improvement and practice. Learn now to see the other side. Be the lawyer for the other one, instead of for yourself. That is my advice. It will be a very good exercise, the surest and fastest way to eliminate friction or to reduce it to a minimum, provided you follow it through. It may also be a good idea for group work. First state briefly your own case and then become the lawyer for the other. Let the others judge whether you are a better lawyer in your own behalf than in behalf of the other person.</p>
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From Pathwork Lecture 54 (actually given only two weeks later)

46	<p>My dear friends, before I go I would like to remind you of my recent suggestion that when you have any friction, try to be the lawyer for the other person. Unfortunately, I have not seen very much of this. Yet there was a great deal of opportunity for it. Why don't you try it? It would be so beneficial for you if you heeded my words. You cannot lose anything by trying. There is no risk involved, except, perhaps, your little ego and your little vanity. But only by losing these can you become free! If, after all, you still cannot do it, take it into consideration in your personal work. Why do you resist? It should be interesting to find out. What is the resistance based on? Ask yourself these questions. It may bring very fruitful results. It may show you that you actually do not like to see the other person's point of view. It may show you that it gives you a certain satisfaction to be in your disharmony. It may show you how much you are involved in your pride and ego and therefore not half as objective as you would like to think of yourself. All this will open further vistas. So, at least, examine yourself as to why you do not want to see the other's point. There is certainly enough friction in your life.</p>
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