

**02** Pathwork Lecture #236 –1996 Edition  
December 3, 1975.....

### **THE SUPERSTITION OF PESSIMISM**

**03** Greetings and blessings, my very beloved friends. You are bathed in the love of God, in the Christ force that awakens in your innermost being. This love and strength reaches into your very being. You can feel it if you open your inner gaze and your inner hearing to the sound and the beauty and the aliveness of this new force that is awakening all over the universe.

**04** You have journeyed into your inner being on this path. You have become aware of many obstructions and negativities that you did not know existed. Only as you know them do you also make the connection that it is with those negative attitudes that you create negative experience. Tonight I wish to give you a new realization about a special kind of attitude that I will call the superstition of pessimism. Once it is conscious, it will aid you tremendously in eliminating further obstructions to realizing your divine being.

**05** When you reach a certain level of awareness you will come across an attitude that says, "If I believe in the positive, I will be disappointed, and I may chase it away by my very belief in it. It may be smarter to believe that nothing good can happen to me, that I cannot ever change, that I cannot ever grow out of my obstructions." This is a game, a kind of deliberate but destructive playfulness, which is based on nothing but superstition.

**06** The obvious kind of superstitiousness is on a much more primitive level and most of you do not adhere to such beliefs. But a much subtler superstitiousness does exist in all of you. Find within you the voice that says, "I dare not believe in the good. It may not happen." It is sufficient to ascertain no more than this voice, this "word" you speak into yourself.

**07** The superstition of pessimism begins as a superstitious destructive playfulness, but then you get lost in its very painful effects. You may really believe in what you first assumed as a safety measure. However, denying the positive and believing in the worst to appease the gods, as it were, is destructive. You do not know the power of such thoughts. There is no playing with such power without grave consequences. There is no such game that does not have a grave effect.

**08** The power of this game needs to be made conscious. It can apply to many things in your life. When you have an illness, it may apply to the healing. When you find

yourself alone and unloved, you may playfully -- safely, as you think -- express the belief that it will always be that way. When you lack funds or a fulfilling profession you say into yourself, "I had better believe it must be that way, so maybe then it can come to me unexpectedly." It is as though you hoped for some idealized parental figure to assuage your doubts, to come forth and tell you, "No, no, my child, it is not that bad, it is all going to be wonderful."

- 09** Without knowing it, you dictate into your soul a belief creating circumstances that prove it. You then "forget" that you had started this game in a spirit of superstition or perhaps in a spirit of emotional manipulation. You become so involved in what you have unwittingly created that you really begin to believe that the negative is the reality. What started out as a superstitious safety measure gradually becomes belief on another level of your consciousness. The belief creates the reality and you stay in exactly that position.
- 10** This, my friends, is a subtle attitude that you previously could not see in yourself. However, the work you are doing and the progress you are experiencing have made many of you capable of pinpointing this particular kind of superstition. All such trickery of the mind is very dangerous. The danger lies in the misuse of the power of the word, the power of your thinking, the power of your self-indoctrination.
- 11** When you encounter this self-deception in you, my dearest friends, halt and question yourself about its effects upon your life. Distance yourself from your life and observe what you are doing. Connect with the level of intentionality behind it.
- 12** The next step will be: "I want to stop this kind of self-trickery. I cannot trick life. I choose to be honest. What I say to myself must be what I really mean on the deepest level of my being. It must correspond to the truth of life." As you thus counter the habitual trickery of the superstition of pessimism, where it may exist in you, you challenge it with your decision to find a new pathway to your mind's activity.
- 13** The next step is the most crucial one. It may sound very simple and it actually is very simple, however, it may seem to require a tremendous amount of courage -- the courage to believe in the good. This is truly one of the abysses of illusion. Without assurances of the outcome you will have to venture into an unknown land where you believe in the positive. Assert your faith in the ever-benign universe. Express the truth that all possibilities exist.
- 14** It is your choice which one of the many roads you wish to travel, the road of defeatism, denial, negative expectation, or the road of faith in the beautiful unfoldment of limitless possibilities that is the innate nature of life. These possibilities are anchored in your own soul.
- 15** There is nothing that you cannot realize. There is nothing you cannot experience if you truly give yourself to it. Remove the anchor that holds you back from this flowing expansion. Allow the involuntary processes with their limitless creative

possibilities to carry you and bring you to ever new shores of fulfillment. Assert your courageous faith in the best of your inner spirit. The courage lies in bridging the gap between the assertion of the faith until it bears fruit and is realized.

- 16** The temptation to lean on the old superstitious negative beliefs is that you need not invest in a waiting period of uncertainty. You speak the negative belief and it occurs. You have the questionable certainty of immediate results that you are so keen on. On the other hand, the journey to faith in the possibilities of positive unfoldment requires a growing period, a ripening. This is necessary simply because your mental processes, which have been so accustomed to negative beliefs, they have to readjust themselves, so they can take root in the new land of beauty and abundance.
- 17** You are changing from one land of inner being into another, establishing new roots and new growth. A period of gestation is necessary that requires the same kind of faith inexperienced gardeners possess, sowing seeds and waiting for plants to sprout, without ever having seen the process work. It is the same with you. Your courage lies in believing in the best your innermost being has to offer and in what life has to offer. That assertion of faith is a substantial step that needs to be reinforced.
- 18** Now, my friends, here is a pitfall I wish to warn against. The courage to believe in positive life unfoldment can very easily be confused with wishful thinking. There is a subtle and yet very distinct difference between wishful thinking and a virile faith in the positive. You all indulge very easily in wishful thinking. Then, to be "realistic" -- because you already know the disappointing results of wishful thinking -- you revert into the superstition of pessimism.
- 19** Let us be very clear about the difference between wishful thinking and the realism of positive belief. There is one very distinct, clear, simple, and important factor that will simplify matters for you in order to distinguish between them.
- 20** Wishful thinking is spinning dreams of fulfillment without having to pay a price: without any change of personality or attitude or approach or thinking or feeling or acting or being. You daydream that this or that desirable fulfillment will magically and gratuitously come your way without any investment in life and the process of creation, without contributing to the evolutionary process by committing to your purification. Wishful thinking is a passive dreaming in which you hope against hope that something will happen to you that is desirable and that does not require you to remove the very block that prevents the desirable event or state.
- 21** The less you invest in the effort that could make desirable events or states a reality, the less you believe in their actual manifestation. The more you justify the superstition of pessimism, the less desirable your life becomes. Increasingly you wish to escape from it by spinning daydreams that substitute for reality. This consumes a lot of creative energy that could be invested in real living and fulfillment. Daydreams are just the other side of the superstition of pessimism.

- 22** So you see, my friends, the superstition of pessimism and the daydreaming are very closely interrelated and not at all mutually exclusive. You may on the same day or even within one hour indulge in daydreams and then perhaps in a matter of minutes indulge in the superstition of negativity.
- 23** You could accomplish the very thing you daydream about -- consuming a tremendous amount of energy and mischannelled creativity -- if only you made a total commitment to life and self, giving your best to both, which are one. When you fail to realize the daydream, your disappointment reinforces the superstition of pessimism.
- 24** What was begun as a game then reinforces the negative belief. The vicious circle accelerates, and you find it ever more difficult to extricate yourself. You swing back and forth from the superstition of negativity to the wishful daydream. The more you indulge in the wishful daydream to escape from the negativity, the less you can truly experience beauty, fulfillment, abundance, love, joy, peace and excitement.
- 25** Wishful daydreams are often spun by a diminished ego rather than by the desire that comes from your higher self, your inner spirit. In these dreams a diminished ego seeks a false medicine against its own underdevelopment. For example, rather than visualizing yourself in a productive vocation, joyfully and meaningfully contributing to life, or visualizing your success and abundance for the sheer enjoyment of the fruits of your labor as a valid expression of life, you dream of yourself as a great person in order to impress others, perhaps your family or those who have slighted you.
- 26** Even in these ego gratifications, however, the original facets of true value are contained. Your dignity is a reality that you look for and often displace, confusing it with the petty pride of the limited ego. The true value of your inner spirit aims for rich fulfillment of love, abundance, friendship, communication, even for recognition and respect. But in a daydream it all comes in a fairy tale manner that does not really convince you, so of course you cannot believe in it.
- 27** Many of you may have observed in the course of your pathwork that at the beginning of your path you still had the habit of indulging considerably in daydreaming. Perhaps even without really noticing it or intentionally trying to stop it, you lost the desire for it. The more you deal with the reality of your being, the more real life becomes. The temptation to manufacture wish-fulfilling daydreams diminishes.
- 28** Yet many of you still indulge in it, at least in certain areas of your life. Where this is the case, look deeper. Find the level where you also still indulge in the superstition of your negative beliefs. You can pursue this thought and discover yourself hoping, in a very subtle way, that someone will come along and give you fulfillment gratuitously, without any effort on your part, without your removing the obstructions to the fulfillment or even attempting to see that they lie within yourself. You hope that a super-authority will reassure you that it will happen just like in your daydreams, you don't have to earn or acquire it, it will be given to you.

- 29** Just ascertaining these random fleeting thoughts and making them concise will allow you to see their absurdity and help you to give them up. You will realize that abundance is available only to the degree you wish to squander yourself into life, giving as generously of your inner riches to this whole process as you wish to receive from life's abundance.
- 30** You encounter the difficulty of sustaining happiness and pleasure so many times. You have begun to open the road to it through working on your purification. As the results begin to stream into your being -- both outwardly and inwardly -- you shrink back. This is not simply an old habit. It is the result of still being committed to the imaginary safety measure of the superstition of pessimism and, simultaneously, to wishful daydreaming.
- 31** The very thing that is your inner richness can create myriad kinds of fulfillment. You withhold your inner richness and yet strive for results through the superstition of pessimism and wishful daydreaming. You ignore the inexhaustible wells of yourself which could enrich every minute of your life.
- 32** The enormous change and growth that has already occurred in so many of you has brought results that you still dare not believe. Much more fulfillment, happiness, pleasure and abundance exist in your lives. But in those areas which are still blocked you reject pleasure because it feels uncomfortable. At least you are now fully aware of this, which is obviously immeasurably important.
- 33** This message may help you to make further connections, so that you will eliminate all further obstructions to real happiness rather than dream about gratifications. If you use the material in this lecture, observing it in you and applying what I have said, it will make a difference in your transformational work. You will truly become capable of transforming a negative belief because you can see it as a trick on a very subtle level. Give up that trick. Have the courage of positive belief in your own richness and of the positive intentionality to give of this richness to the best of your ability. You will create the courage necessary to have faith in the best that life can ever be.
- 34** My dearest friends, you in this community of human beings are fulfilling an all-important noble task. The creative processes of the universe depend on every individualized entity. Every tiniest step of goodwill within you, every intent to be in truth, to face the truth, to confront the worst in you and to transform it into its original best adds to the great reservoir of creative forces that flow and push themselves forever more as manifestations into all of life. Each step in your growth aids not only your own happiness and fulfillment, important as this is, but is also a powerful force akin to nuclear energy, generated by your community and other such nuclei, that spreads and multiplies, so that the Christ force gains an ever-greater impetus.
- 35** QUESTION: This lecture seems to apply to my life very much now. It seems almost miraculous. The business venture I've started looks as if it's going to be a

success. I have blocked so much of the positive, yet something very good is happening. Now that it's happening, I feel that I'm going a lot into my ego. I find myself thinking that I'm better than others. I would like you to comment on this.

- 36**           ANSWER: That is of course how you destroy. What you can do when you discover yourself in that way of thinking is to very simply and firmly -- yet without pushing effort -- formulate another thought. The thought might be: "I do not wish to set myself above others. If a part of me desires this, I do not want it. I pray to the divine forces within me to help me create another kind of attitude and therefore another reality. If I want to be better than others, I must also feel undeserving to get the slightest fulfillment. I am not better than others and I am not worse than others."
- 37**           All human beings are wonderful manifestations of divinity. One flower is not better than another flower. One bird is not better than another bird. The mountain is not better than the sea. The pine tree is not better than the oak. Think of yourself and other people in those terms and assert your goodwill to let others be their best. Then you can let yourself be your best so you can truly enjoy the fruits of your efforts and feel deserving of them.
- 38**           QUESTION: All my life, it seems I have done exactly what the lecture was all about because I didn't want to deal with disappointments. But I also felt that I must have it, I can't bear not having it. I was afraid not only of failure, but the meaning of failure. Is it something that I was not meant to have, or what? I found this superstition safe but I see how it has limited me.
- 39**           ANSWER: It has. The most productive attitude about the possibility of not getting the wish fulfilled in this particular form would be somewhat like the following: "If such and such a desire is not fulfilled now, I have the courage to confront myself and find out the meaning." The meaning is not something bad nor does it imply that you are undeserving or that there is something terrible that you need to fear.
- 40**           It may mean many different things. It may mean that there are certain obstructions within you that you need to know about, not just for the sake of this particular fulfillment, but even more importantly for the sake of your total unfoldment as an entity, so as to become fully unified and whole. You have intelligence, openness and goodwill within you to learn. This can be a glorious experience. If what you desire does not happen now in this particular way, what will make you happy and whole will happen in another way that may possibly turn out better. Pursue the truth of your potential and state, "I can take a momentary disappointment and make it a stepping stone. I need not fear that it may not be now, in this particular way. There are many ways."
- 41**           With this attitude you will create a relaxed inner climate so that attaining the result will not be a question of do or die. Such a demand creates an unbearable tension that is often a direct block to the fulfillment of the desire. A relaxed and growth-producing attitude would let you off the hook and make it possible for you to believe in the best.

You will open the doors to finding out a great deal about yourself. This will be infinitely richer than the mere fulfillment of your wish could ever have been.

**42** QUESTION: In reference to one word you used that I'm struggling with -- can you amplify what the elements of courage are and where courage might be felt represented in the body?

**43** ANSWER: Yes. The elements of courage are the ability and willingness to experience pain or disappointment and learn from it and use it as a threshold. That is courage. It is courage to risk all that rather than stand still and have the safety of a little back door open, never venturing forth completely into a new situation. That is courage. To love is courage because the loved one may not always respond according to your desires and selfwill. To give is courage because the petty heart in its negativity still believes that when you give you will lose and no one will give you anything in return. It is courage to risk finding out that your negative beliefs may not be true. It takes even more courage to not be discouraged.

**44** You feel courage in all of your body, as you feel love in all of your body, for courage is an essential part of love. Every cell and every pore vibrates and resonates with every divine attitude that you can possibly allow to express itself through your mind, your will, your soul, and so through your entire body.

**45** I will close this meeting with a prayer that the God in you expresses. As I have done once before, I ask you to listen to your inner God and hear the words that resonate within you. As I say the words pick up the echo within. This will help you to attune your listening inner ear to the voice of God, filling you with messages such as these:

**46** I am working through you.  
I am in all your thoughts, if you wish to hear Me.  
I am in all you see, if you wish to see Me.  
I am in all the words you speak, if you wish Me to express through you.  
I am in all your actions, if that be your commitment.  
And as I am and as I manifest through you, you rediscover life in new terms.  
You will see that life is a glorious oneness in which there is nothing to fear.  
What need you fear if you discover Me?  
What need you fear if you identify with Me?  
Know that you are God.  
As such you can never die.  
Give that which is you now, in your thinking, in your being, in your perceptions to Me.  
As you give yourself to Me, so must you be eternal.

**47** Listen for a minute into yourselves while I stay with you. You are richly blessed, my beloved friends.

For information to find and participate in Pathwork activities world wide, please write:

The Pathwork® Foundation  
PO Box 6010  
Charlottesville, VA 22906-6010, USA  
Call: 1-800-PATHWORK, or  
Visit: [www.pathwork.org](http://www.pathwork.org)

The following notices are for your guidance in the use of the Pathwork® name and this lecture material.

#### Trademark/Service Mark

Pathwork® is a registered service mark owned by The Pathwork Foundation, and may not be used without the express written permission of the Foundation. The Foundation may, in its sole discretion, authorize use of the Pathwork® mark by other organizations or persons, such as affiliate organizations and chapters.

#### Copyright

The copyright of the Pathwork Guide material is the sole property of The Pathwork Foundation. This lecture may be reproduced, in compliance with the Foundation Trademark, Service Mark and Copyright Policy, but the text may not be altered or abbreviated in any way, nor may the copyright, trademark, service mark, or any other notices be removed. Recipients may be charged the cost of reproduction and distribution only.

Any person or organization using The Pathwork Foundation service mark or copyrighted material is deemed to have agreed to comply with the Foundation Trademark, Service Mark and Copyright Policy. To obtain information or a copy of this policy, please contact the Foundation.