

# Pathwork Lecture 101: The Defense

1996 Edition, Original Given April 13, 1962

This lecture is given in an **expanded poetic format**, what I call a **Devotional Format** of the lecture, and in that sense, this is **my interpretation** of the **intent** of the lecture. I may have interpreted portions differently from you, and I ask you to ponder the words for your own interpretation. I did this Devotional Format so I can take the words into my heart, phrase by phrase, much as I would in reading poetry – that is, **devotionally**.

The blessings to me in developing this format have been truly profound, and my wish is that this Devotional Format will be a blessing to others. **I invite you to slowly read and ponder this format of the text – with an open heart to experience the Guide’s Presence and Love emerging from among the words such that the wisdom comes to LIVE you.**

For clarity: The **original text** is in **bold and italicized**. [My adds of commentary/clarification/interpretation are in brackets, italicized, and not bolded.] To learn more of my Devotional Format and see the lectures I have done in this way, go to <https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/>

Gary Vollbracht

| ¶  | Content   |
|----|---|
| 03 | <p><b><i>Greetings,<br/>my dearest friends.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>God bless<br/>each one of you.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Blessed is<br/>your path.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Blessed are<br/>your efforts.</i></b></p>   |
| 04 | <p><b><i>We have discussed<br/>your defense mechanisms repeatedly.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>We have worked on this subject considerably,<br/>and you have learned,<br/>to a degree,<br/>to recognize their presence [i.e., learned to recognize the presence of<br/>your defense mechanisms].</i></b></p> |

by Eva Broch Pierrakos

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**However,**  
**you do not yet fully understand**  
**what happens to**  
**your entire system**  
**when you become defensive.**

**Such knowledge [i.e., Such knowledge of what happens to your**  
**ENTIRE SYSTEM when you become defensive]**  
**will be very useful for your**  
**• further work**  
**and**  
**• self-observation.**

**It will mean a great deal to you**  
**to understand**  
**• the processes of your**  
**• physical,**  
**• mental,**  
**• emotional,**  
**and**  
**• spiritual**  
**nature,**  
  
**and specifically**  
**• what happens**  
**on all these levels of your personality**  
**when you are**  
**defensive.**

**You have begun to observe a**  
**• hard knot,**  
**or**  
**• wall**  
**within,**  
**when you**  
**• withdraw in fear**  
**and**  
**• close yourself up,**  
**meaning to**  
**protect yourself.**

**However,**  
**this defensive reaction** [i.e., this defensive reaction of withdrawing in fear  
and closing yourself up in order to protect yourself]  
• is so imbedded in you,  
and  
• has become so much  
second nature,  
that most of the time  
you are unaware  
that you  
are  
on the defensive.

**Therefore** [i.e., Therefore, because your DEFENSIVE REACTION is so automatic  
and spontaneous that you are not even aware of it]  
you have to  
understand more about this subject.

• Be on the lookout,  
and  
• become  
more intensely aware of  
the defensive reaction  
so that you may  
get over it.

05

**When you are**  
**on the defensive,**  
you are  
• frightened;  
you feel  
• threatened  
and  
• endangered.

**There certainly are**  
**realistic dangers,**  
and  
**the human system**  
**is equipped to deal with them.**

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <p><i>If an actual attack is made on you,<br/>all your faculties<br/>will withdraw from<br/>their usual preoccupations<br/>and<br/>will be</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• directed to</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• concentrated on<br/>this one danger.</i></li></ul> <p><i>In order to deal with<br/>an urgent issue at the moment,<br/>you need<br/>all your faculties<br/>to focus on that one point.</i></p>  |
| 06 | <p><i>Then<br/>your entire system<br/>goes through a change<br/>for the single purpose<br/>of dealing with<br/>the emergency.</i></p> <p><i>In such a moment,<br/>your glandular system<br/>releases a certain substance<br/>that shoots through<br/>your entire nervous system,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• speeding up your blood pressure</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• accelerating your pulse beat.</i></li></ul> <p><i>All this happens<br/>for the purpose<br/>of focusing your faculties<br/>on the danger point,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• to heighten the speed<br/>of the appropriate reaction,</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• to quicken the power<br/>of your perception.</i></li></ul> |

*When you are in  
real danger,  
this is*

- good*

*and*

- important,*

*for otherwise,  
with only your  
normal*

- reactions and*
- perceptions*

*at your disposal,  
you could  
not muster the energy  
that is necessary  
to protect yourself.*

*With the  
glandular reaction, however,  
you will develop  
more strength –*

- physical or*
- mental –*

*than you  
normally have  
in order to defend yourself.*

*Or you will  
quickly*

- judge*

*and*

- decide*

*whether*

- defense by counterattack*

*or*

- flight*

*is the better way to deal with  
the particular danger.*

07

*In an average life,  
such actual dangers  
occur only every once in a while.*

*The substance  
released from your glandular system  
contains a certain poison  
which will  
not damage you  
if your defense mechanism  
works  
only  
in those rare instances.*

*After  
the danger is over  
and your system goes back to  
normal functioning,  
the poison is*

- absorbed*
- and*
- dissolved.*

*This poison  
is a necessary stimulant  
for the moment,*

*but  
if the stimulation is  
permanent,  
damage to your system  
is unavoidable.*

*It is the same with  
certain medicines  
that are important for a cure,*

*but  
if you form a habit of  
taking them,  
you will be  
damaged in the long run.*

08

*When you are on  
the defensive  
in psychological conflicts,  
for*

- irrational,*
- unrealistic*

*reasons,  
your glandular system  
does not question  
the validity of the reason [i.e., does not question the validity of  
the reason you feel the need to defend yourself].*

*The poisonous substance  
is released  
the moment you are frightened,  
and  
every time  
you are on the defensive,  
you are frightened.*

*Therefore [i.e., Because the poisonous substance is released when you are  
frightened, and every time you are on the defensive you are frightened],  
it is important that*

- unrealistic fears should  
cease,*

*and*

- being on the defensive for no valid reason [should]  
be ruled out of your life,  
otherwise*

- the poisonous substance  
will affect your*

- bloodstream*

*and*

- nervous system,*

*and*

- physical damage will accrue  
in one way or another.*

|    |  |
|----|--|
|    | <p><i>According to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>individual makeup</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the physical resistance of the various organs,</i></li></ul> <p><i>damage will appear sooner or later,</i><br/><i>more or less noticeably,</i><br/><i>in this or that part of the body.</i></p> <p><i>This is the</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>physical side.</i></li></ul>   |
| 09 | <p><i>As to the</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>mental side of your nature,</i><br/><i>when you are in</i><br/><i>actual realistic danger,</i><br/><i>all your mental faculties</i><br/><i>will automatically concentrate –</i><br/><i>with the help of the poisonous stimulant –</i><br/><i>on the issue at hand.</i></li></ul> <p><i>You cannot concentrate on</i><br/><i>anything else.</i></p> <p><i>You will not be capable of</i><br/><i>harboring thoughts of</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>truth</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>wisdom,</i></li></ul> <p><i>except</i><br/><i>those that deal</i><br/><i>with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the danger of the moment,</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i><br/><i>with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>protecting yourself.</i></li></ul> <p><i>All other considerations,</i><br/><i>which are otherwise important for a</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>harmonious and</i></li><li>• <i>meaningful</i></li></ul> <p><i>life,</i><br/><i>will be excluded.</i></p> |

*If this reaction happens  
in isolated moments  
of actual danger,*

*it is*

- good*
- and*
- purposeful.*

*When the*

- actual,*
  - realistic*
- danger  
is over,*

*you can*

*return to normal,  
and your thought processes  
can again concentrate  
on*

- the many aspects of life,*

*on*

- others*

*and*

*on*

- yourself,*

*all of which have nothing to do with  
protecting yourself from danger.*

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 10 | <p><i>However,</i><br/><i>if you are</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>constantly,</i></li></ul> <p><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>often,</i></li></ul> <p><i>in a</i><br/><i>psychological state</i><br/><i>of warding off</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>danger</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>attack</i></li></ul> <p><i>at a time when there is actually</i><br/><i>no danger of attack,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the development of</i><br/><i>your mental faculties</i><br/><i>is bound to suffer.</i></li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Your concepts</i><br/><i>will remain</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>immature and</i></li><li>• <i>limited,</i></li></ul><i>even if you happen to have</i><br/><i>a good brain.</i></li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Your outlook</i><br/><i>will be much too limited</i><br/><i>to deal with life adequately.</i></li></ul> |
| 11 | <p><i>All this happens</i><br/><i>in such a</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>subtle</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>insidious</i></li></ul> <p><i>way</i><br/><i>that you are</i><br/><i>utterly unaware of it.</i></p>  |

*You cannot tell the difference  
between*

- *actual*

*and*

- *unreal*

*threats,*  
*because*  
*the state of*  
*being on the defensive*  
*has become second nature.*

*This [i.e., This state of always being on the defensive in life]*  
*hinders your*  
*vision of truth*  
*about*

- *others,*

*about*

- *life,*

*and*  
*about*

- *yourself.*

*It [i.e., This state of always being on the defensive in life]*  
*prohibits you*  
*from seeing your*

- *possibilities*

*and*

- *potentials*

*in making proper choices.*

*All this comes about*  
*because*  
*your entire mental system*  
*is geared*

- *to ward off*

*an imaginary danger*  
*and*

- *to defend yourself from it [i.e., from the imaginary danger].*

*Thus*  
*the same processes are operative*  
*when the danger is*

- *imaginary*

*as*  
*when you are in*

- *actual danger.*

*In actual danger,  
your heightened perception  
makes you  
decide  
whether to*

- launch a counterattack,*

*or, if this is hopelessly dangerous and futile, to*

- run away*

*and*

- protect yourself by hiding.*

*There is  
no room for consideration of  
anything else.*

*A similar procedure occurs  
when your defense mechanism  
functions in a*

- neurotic,*
- unreal*

*situation.*

*You choose  
either*

- the pseudo-solution of aggressiveness,*

*or*

- withdrawal from life,*

*or*

- appeasement,*

*which robs you of your integrity.*

*All these defenses  
stem from your  
fright of  
being exposed to  
the possibility of danger.*

*You live in a  
constant state of war,  
with most of your mental faculties  
focused on  
defending yourself,  
which  
does not leave you sufficient room  
to deal with life  
adequately.*

*You can easily see  
that such powerfully one-pointed concentration  
is*

- only necessary  
in the rare instances of  
actual danger,*

*but*

- extremely*
- damaging*

*and*

- limiting  
when there is  
no such danger.*

12

*The emotional side of your nature,  
when faced with  
actual danger,  
feels only*

- fright*
- and*
- anger.*

*In the rare instances of  
real danger,  
it is good that this is so,  
because  
these two emotions [i.e., because the emotions of fright and anger]  
produce  
the necessary*

- impetus*

*and*

- strength  
to defend yourself.*

*All other emotions [i.e., All emotions other than fright and anger]  
are withdrawn  
at that moment.*

*If you were  
at such moments [i.e., at moments of actual danger]  
capable of having  
all sorts of  
other feelings,  
the necessary strength  
to defend yourself  
would be absent.*

*However,  
when the danger is over,  
the*

- normal and*
- integrated*

*person  
can quickly return to  
a state wherein  
many other emotions  
can be felt,  
apart from*

- fear*
- and*
- anger.*

13

*If you are  
constantly  
on the defensive, however,  
the predominant feelings  
are*

- fright*
- and*
- anger.*

*I hardly need to discuss  
how damaging this is  
for*

- you and*
- for*
- your surroundings.*

*Whenever you are  
hurt,  
you erroneously  
believe yourself  
to be under attack.*

*You think there is a  
danger  
to your safety.*

*Thus you  
immediately  
repress the*

- hurt –*  
*your primary reaction –*

*and you  
substitute*

- anger*
- and*
- hostility*

*for it [i.e., for the hurt, the hurt which is your primary reaction].*

*You begin to  
allow  
your defense mechanism,  
whatever your individual pseudo-solutions are,  
to go to war.*

*Needless to say,  
you are no longer  
in truth.*

*The hurt you experienced,  
unpleasant as it may have been,*

- is*  
*no*
- real danger*

*and*

- does*  
*not call for*
- elaborate defenses,  
infinitely more damaging than  
the original hurt  
could ever be.*

|    |  |
|----|--|
|    | <p><i>Also</i><br/><i>you are no longer aware of</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the original hurt,</i></li></ul><i>but only of</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the secondary reaction –</i><br/><i>the anger.</i></li></ul></p> <p><i>Repressing</i><br/><i>the truth</i><br/><i>institutes a process</i><br/><i>of</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>self-alienation,</i></li></ul><i>of</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>psychological self-estrangement.</i></li></ul></p>  |
| 14 | <p><i>You can all begin to see</i><br/><i>how predominant</i><br/><i>this defensiveness is.</i></p> <p><i>It [i.e., This defensiveness]</i><br/><i>may be</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>subtle</i></li></ul><i>and</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>not easy to detect,</i></li></ul><i>but once you are on the right track,</i><br/><i>you become</i><br/><i>more acutely aware of</i><br/><i>its permanent existence.</i></p> <p><i>You not only defend</i><br/><i>against</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>hurt</i></li></ul><i>as a supposed mortal danger,</i><br/><i>but also</i><br/><i>against</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>frustration of your will,</i></li></ul><i>and thus</i><br/><i>against</i><br/><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>anything</i></li></ul><i>that does not go</i><br/><i>according to your wishes.</i></p> |

*All this [i.e., All this hurt, frustration, and anything else  
that does not go according to your wishes]  
represents,  
unconsciously,  
a threat to your safety,  
which in reality  
is null [i.e., a threat, which in reality is insignificant].*

*Frustrations  
may be undesirable,  
but not necessarily  
dangerous.*

*Yet a defense mechanism,  
by its very nature,  
is a process of  
warding off danger.*

*When the process  
is used for  
actual danger,  
it is meaningful;  
when it is not [i.e., when this defense mechanism is used for warding off  
experiences that may be uncomfortable but are NOT actually dangerous],  
your entire system  
is put out of balance.*

*Your faculties  
are limited  
to a degree you cannot fully comprehend as yet.*

*In other words,  
your instinct of  
self-preservation  
is at work  
when not required.*

*Whenever instincts which were  
originally destined to meet a specific danger  
are used in other situations,  
the human psyche is*

- distorted*
- and*
- put out of balance.*

15

*Looking now at  
the spiritual side of your nature  
as you face actual danger,  
it again is necessary  
that your capacity of  
feeling  
be limited to  
the moment.*

*Remember that  
the whole range  
of your feelings  
is reduced to*

- fright*
- and*
- anger*

*precisely because  
this enables you to protect  
your physical safety.*

*Such concentration [i.e., Such concentration of your feelings to fright and anger]  
does not leave room for  
feelings of*

- love,*
- warmth,*
- affection,*
- understanding,*

*and*

- compassion.*

*Therefore  
in moments of danger  
you withdraw into yourself,  
gathering your forces for*

- counterattack or*
- flight.*

*You no longer*

- reach out into the world;*

*you no longer*

- try to bridge the gap  
between*
  - yourself*
- and*
- others.*

*[In moments of danger]*

- *Eliminating the separation between*
  - *yourself*
- and*
- *others,*

*or*

- *communication*
- and*
- *union*
- are*
- not*
- your immediate concerns.*

*In moments of actual danger such positive feelings would be detrimental.*

*When the danger is over you go back to feeling all the*

- *warm,*
- *good,*
- *outgoing,*

*and*

- *outreaching feelings.*

*The same is true about your creativity, another side of your spiritual nature.*

*No matter how creative a person may ordinarily be, in moments of acute danger the creativity*

- *is temporarily suspended*

*and*

- *returns only after the danger is over.*

16

*When you are  
more or less  
permanently defensive  
because  
you believe,  
erroneously,  
that  
any*

- hurt or*
- frustration,*

*any*

- criticism or*
- rejection*

*is a danger  
you must guard against,*

*you limit  
the range  
of your feelings.*

*You also limit  
the potentials of  
your*

- creativity,*

*your*

- ability*

*to*

- reach out into life*

*and*

- communicate with others,*

*to*

- love*

*and*  
*to*

- understand,*

*and*  
*to*

- feel*

*and*

- express yourself.*

*In short,  
[when you are more or less permanently defensive]  
your spiritual life  
is gravely impaired.*

*By such self-imposed limitation [i.e., By such limitation, self-imposed by your being more or less permanently defensive]*

*you*

- isolate yourself  
more and more,*

*and*

- institute the very patterns  
which cause  
others to*

- hurt  
and*

- frustrate  
you*

*again and again  
because*

*you*

*unknowingly  
reject them.*

*Therefore [i.e., Therefore, because you institute the patterns  
that cause others to hurt and frustrate you again and again,]*

*you need to defend yourself*

*more,*

*and*

*two full-fledged vicious circles  
are set into motion.*

*One is a*

*vicious circle  
within yourself,*

*and*

*the other a  
vicious circle  
between*

- yourself*

*and*

- others,  
which*

*• triggers your defense-mechanism  
and*

- causes both parties  
to mutually  
reject*

*each other.*

17

*While you defend yourself  
unnecessarily  
because no actual danger exists,  
you are releasing  
poisonous substances  
into your physical body.*

*You*  

- *are limiting*

*your range of*  

- *thought*

*and*  

- *feeling*

*and*  
*you*  

- *short circuit*

*your creative processes.*

*You do*  
*not see*  
*the manifold possibilities*  
*of*  

- *life*

*and*  
*of*  

- *communication*

*with people.*

*Instead*  
*you isolate yourself*  
*with your busy defense*  
*against*  
*an unreal danger.*

*Actual dangers*  
*in which you*  
*need*  
*all your defensive equipment*  
*are encountered*  
*very rarely.*

*You do  
not  
have to  
learn  
how to use your defenses.*

*They [i.e., Your defenses]  
are  
automatic processes  
in every human being.*

*Even a child  
will have  
automatic reactions  
without having been taught.*

18

*I wish to make one more important point:*

*the more you use the  
instinctual faculties  
for  
• unreal  
danger*

*the less  
they will work  
• effectively  
and  
• spontaneously  
when required for  
• real  
protection.*

*Therefore,  
a person whose inner system  
is constantly geared for  
defense against  
• unreal dangers  
is often incapable  
of coping with  
• real  
• attack and  
• threat.*

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <p><i>He or she [i.e. A person whose inner system is<br/>CONSTANTLY geared for defense against UNREAL dangers]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>is</i></li><li>• <i>paralyzed,</i></li><li>• <i>helpless,</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>actually becomes</i><br/><i>a prey,</i><br/><i>behaving like a</i><br/><i>victim</i><br/><i>when he actually</i><br/><i>is not.</i></li></ul> <p><i>This condition</i><br/><i>can never be remedied</i><br/><i>by bolstering the defenses</i><br/><i>for real danger.</i></p> <p><i>That will</i><br/><i>not work.</i></p> <p><i>However,</i><br/><i>your defenses will be</i><br/><i>automatically</i><br/><i>reactivated</i><br/><i>if and when</i><br/><i>you learn to</i><br/><i>stop defending</i><br/><i>when there is no need to do so.</i></p> |
| 19 | <p><i>This is why we have to</i><br/><i>eliminate</i><br/><i>the unreal defense</i><br/><i>against an</i><br/><i>unreal danger.</i></p> <p><i>Such "dangers" [i.e., Such UNREAL dangers]</i><br/><i>are</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>emotional hurt,</i></li><li>• <i>rejection,</i></li><li>• <i>frustration of your will,</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>criticism.</i></li></ul>   |

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <p><i>When you<br/>feel accused<br/>of something</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>true,</i></li><li>• <i>half-true, or</i></li><li>• <i>untrue,</i></li></ul> <p><i>you feel<br/>in mortal danger.</i></p> <p><i>If you translate<br/>your emotional reactions to<br/>such criticism,<br/>you will readily see<br/>that your feelings say,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"I am in danger."</i></p>  |
| 20 | <p><i>Now, let us examine<br/>the truth of the matter.</i></p> <p><i>Are you really</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>endangered or</i></li><li>• <i>threatened</i></li></ul> <p><i>because of</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>hurt,</i></li><li>• <i>frustration,</i></li></ul> <p><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>criticism?</i></li></ul> <p><i>You,<br/>yourself,<br/>will have to verify<br/>that this [i.e., that the statement, "You are endangered or<br/>threatened by hurt, frustration, or criticism"]<br/>is<br/>not<br/>so.</i></p> |

*Even  
unjustified criticism  
cannot endanger you,  
provided  
your attitude toward it  
is*

- mature*
- and*
- realistic.*

*Is it not true  
that  
the criticism,  
against which  
you so strenuously defend yourself,  
often threatens to expose  
something you do not wish to face?*

*Perhaps*

- it is  
uncomfortable  
for you to consider  
changing,*

*or*

- you believe that,  
if the truth came out,  
you would  
not be*
- loved*
- and*
- worthy of respect,*

*and  
you defend yourself  
against  
what is true,  
even though  
the truth may come from  
people who are,  
in their own way,  
as imperfect as you.*

21

*The supposed mortal danger  
you are compelled to ward off  
is often  
truth itself, my friends.*

*And you defend against it [i.e., you defend against the truth itself]  
by pointing out  
the truth  
in the other person,  
which that other  
also does not want to see.*

*Maybe*

- *one is stronger*

*and*

- *the other weaker,*  
*but what difference does that make,*  
*since everyone*  
*has their own*
  - *rhythm**and*
  - *value system.*

*No one  
can be compared with  
another.*

*Evaluation  
on that basis [i.e., Evaluation on the basis of  
comparison with another person]  
is never valid.*

*Thus two parties  
point out truths  
about each other,  
and each  
may be correct  
to a degree,  
while  
not wanting to see  
the full truth  
about their own side.*

22

*You erroneously believe that  
if your*

- *weaknesses,*

*or at least*

- *certain specific weaknesses,*

*were exposed,*  
*others*  
*would have a right to*

- *reject you*

*and*

- *not love you.*

*And this [i.e., And rejection and not being loved]  
you cannot bear.*

*So,*  
*to ward off the*  
*imaginary danger [i.e., imaginary danger of rejection and not being loved],*  
*you use all your defense mechanisms*  
*to preserve*  
*your status as a*  
*lovable human being.*

*You use*  
*such heavy fighting equipment*  
*only to your own detriment,*  
*for it is*  
*never true*  
*that people reject a person*  
*due to a*

- *fault*

*or*

- *weakness*

*alone.*

23

*If you observe life around you closely,*  
*you will find out*  
*without a doubt*  
*that*  
*hiding the truth*  
*is*  
*what causes*  
*rejection.*

*This [i.e., This fact that HIDING the TRUTH causes REJECTION]*

*is why a*

- *free admission of  
the worst*

- *fault*

*or*

- *distortion*

*will bring forth  
acceptance,*

*while a*

- *defense against  
exposure*

- *brings forth*

- *contempt,*

- *dislike,*

- *rejection, and*

- *fear,*

*and*

- *is bound to make the other person*

- *defensive.*

*If free admission*

*is not yet possible,*

*perhaps because*

*the truth*

*is not yet*

*fully seen,*

*then*

*the willingness*

*to see,*

*which can only come*

*when one*

*does not go on the defensive,*

*will have a similarly favorable effect.*

*Only after*

*you have tried this new reaction [i.e., tried this new non-defensive,  
truth-seeking reaction to criticism]*

*will you see*

*how much more*

- *constructive*

*and*

- *advantageous*

*honesty is.*

24

*Whenever you are  
on the defensive,  
your primary aim  
cannot be  
truth.*

*When it comes to  
real dangers,  
the real danger  
is  
the truth of the moment,*

*but when it comes to  
unreal dangers,  
the truth  
lies somewhere else.*

*[With unreal "dangers"]  
You do  
not ask yourself at such moments,*

*"Is it right?*

*Is there a grain of truth in it?"*

*Your concern at the moment is,*

*"Am*

*• I*

*right,*

*or*

*is*

*• the other person  
right?"*

*It is this limited concept of*

*"I-versus-the-other-person"*

*that befogs the issue of  
what is*

*• right*

*or*

*• true.*

25

*Your defense may often be  
a basic way of life  
of*

- *not involving yourself,*
- and*
- *only when you are called upon  
will you choose  
a more direct defense.*

*Then [i.e., Then when you feel called upon or pressured  
to choose a more direct defense]*

*you*

*either*

- *try to run away,*

*or*

- *hedge the issue*

*and*

- *put it on another level,  
where you can prove yourself right.*

*Your third option is a*

- *counterattack,  
pointing out  
the other person's shortcomings.*

*There is a great difference  
between*

*doing this [i.e., between pointing out the other person's shortcomings]  
as a defense of  
one's own undesirable traits,*

*or*

*doing it [i.e., or pointing out the other person's shortcomings]*

- *in truth*

*and*

- *for the sake of truth.*

26

*It should be easily understood  
that  
defensiveness  
is  
not  
truth-producing.*

*It [i.e., Defensiveness]  
does not give*

- *truth*

*and*

- *reality*

*any breathing space.*

*Wherever  
a defensive wall is put up,  
your concern at that moment  
is to ward off  
an accusation  
which you believe  
might bring*

- *rejection,*
- *frustration, and*
- *hurt.*

*At that moment,  
it becomes more important for you  
to prove  
that the accusation is  
unjustified,  
even if it contains  
elements of truth,  
rather than  
to find the elements of  
truth  
the accusation contains.*

*Thus you  
run away  
from*

- *truth,*

*and therefore from*

- *yourself*

*and from*

- *life.*

- *Pretense*

*and*

- *self-deception,*
- *self-alienation*

*and*

- *isolation*

*must be the result.*

27

***Defensiveness***

***not only***

- ***damages your physical body,***

***but***

- ***limits***

***your***

- ***thoughts,***

***your***

- ***range of emotions,***

***your***

- ***concepts***

***and***

***your***

- ***creativity,***

***your***

- ***spiritual life,***

***your ability to***

- ***relate to others,***

***your***

- ***inner freedom,***

***your***

- ***concern with truth,***

***and therefore also***

***your ability to***

- ***love***

***and***

- ***respect***

- ***yourself***

***and***

- ***others.***

***All this is***

***due to a***

***completely erroneous concept of  
perfectionism,***

***in which you believe***

***that your***

- ***value***

***and***

- ***acceptability***

***are at stake***

***because***

***you have***

***imperfections.***

28

*If people would learn to  
deeply probe within  
to*

- find*

*and*

- eliminate*

*this defensive wall,  
so much hardship  
could be avoided  
in day-to-day communications.*

*People would  
not*

- dislike each other so easily.*

*They would  
not*

- fear each other.*

*The erroneous feeling  
that you are  
the target of an attack  
against which  
you have to defend,  
often makes you*

- fear*

*and*

- dislike*

*others.*

*So does the  
erroneous hurt you suffer  
when something is brought out  
which you feel  
diminishes your value.*

*Another cause of*  
• *fear and*  
• *dislike*  
*of others*  
*is the*  
*erroneous feeling of*  
*inadequacy*  
*when*  
• *life*  
*and*  
• *others*  
• *do not respond to your wishes*  
*and*  
• *frustrate you.*

*Such unfulfillment*  
*is not half as painful as*  
*the error*  
*of believing yourself to be*  
*inadequate.*

*The criticism*  
*would not damage you at all*  
*if you were aware*  
*that others*  
*will not like you*  
*less*  
*because*  
• *you have this fault,*  
*and that*  
• *you are willing to face it.*

29

*In a state of*  
*defensiveness*  
*you do*  
*not*  
• *perceive,*  
• *experience,*  
*or*  
• *think*  
• *truthfully*  
*or*  
• *reasonably.*

*[In a state of defensiveness]*

**You do  
not feel feelings of**

- **warmth,**
- **affection,**

**and**

- **understanding.**

**Therefore,  
you are**

- **not in reality,**

**and**  
**you**

- **cannot really communicate.**

**Your system  
is focused on  
one small point  
as you defend yourself against  
an imaginary danger.**

**In this state [i.e., In this state of defensiveness]  
a vital part of**

- **life**

**and**

- **reality**

**is left out of consideration.**

30

**Defensiveness  
can take many forms, as you know,  
in ways that are  
so subtle**  
**as to make them [i.e., to make these subtle forms of defensiveness]  
unnoticeable  
to others  
until  
a direct "attack" is launched.**

*The defensiveness  
may be  
much stronger in  
• calm,  
• reticent  
people  
who quietly go their own ways  
than in some people  
whose defenses  
are more obvious.*

*For them [i.e., For calm, reticent people]  
• the fear of attack  
is so great  
and  
• the confidence in themselves to handle it  
is so small  
that they are  
constantly  
in flight  
from  
• life  
and  
from  
• other people.*

*But whether  
the defense  
is  
• outer aggressiveness*

*or  
• withdrawal  
and  
• flight,*

*both [i.e., BOTH aggressiveness AND withdrawal and flight]  
• are equally damaging  
and  
• have the same negative results.*

***Both alternatives [i.e., BOTH outer aggressiveness AND withdrawal and flight] make reaching out toward***

- the other person,***
- toward***
- truth,***
  - involvement,***
- and***
- life itself***
- impossible.***

***These alternatives [i.e., outer aggressiveness AND withdrawal and flight] force you to***

- stay on your guard***
- and***
- be blind to***
- life,***
  - other people,***
- and***
- yourself.***

***Thus the harm you inflict***

- on***
- yourself***
- and***
- on***
- those around you,***
- creating***
- disharmony***
- and***
- separation,***
- is impossible to describe fully.***

31

***When you are on the defensive you cannot fulfill the needs of***

- others,***
- not to speak of***
- your own [i.e., not to speak of fulfilling your own needs].***

**When you**  
• *discover that*  
*the need to defend yourself*  
*is an illusion*

**and**  
• *stop defending,*  
*the sense of liberation you experience*  
*is impossible to convey.*

**You simply have to**  
• *live it [i.e., LIVE the undefended life]*  
*to know the*  
• *joy of it [i.e., to know the JOY of the undefended life].*

• *Let go [i.e., Let go of your defenses]*  
**and**  
• *receive*  
*whatever come to you.*

**Look at it [i.e., Look at whatever comes to you after you let go of your defenses]**  
**quietly**  
**with the intention**  
• *not to ward it off [i.e., not to ward off whatever comes to you*  
*after you let go of your defenses],*  
• *but to*  
*see*  
*the truth.*

**This attitude [i.e., this attitude of letting go of your defenses and seeing the truth]**  
**will change your reactions.**

**Your emanations**  
**will have a different quality.**

**Your whole life**  
**will become different.**

32

*If you can learn to*  
• *detect,*  
• *observe,*  
*and*  
• *understand –*  
    *and therefore*  
    *eventually*  
    *eliminate –*  
    *your defensiveness,*

*you will be freed*  
*of an illusion.*

*There is*  
    *no greater*  
    • *hardship,*  
    *no greater*  
    • *prison*  
    *than*  
    *illusion.*

*There is nothing*  
    *more destructive on this earth*  
    *than people*  
    *unnecessarily*  
    *defending themselves.*

*There is nothing*  
    *that creates*  
    *more*  
    • *disharmony,*  
    *more*  
    • *untruth,*  
    *more*  
    • *hostility,*  
*and*  
    *more*  
    • *friction,*  
    *in personal*  
    *as well as*  
    *in public*  
    *life,*  
    *than defensiveness.*

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 33 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>You say that the body<br/>releases poisons<br/>which damage<br/>the physical system.</i></p> <p><i>On this path,<br/>is it possible to heal such damage?</i></p>  |
| 34 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>Of course it is possible.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>If</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>when<br/>the defensiveness<br/>is eliminated,<br/>further poisons<br/>will cease to contaminate the system.</i></li></ul> <p><i>This in itself<br/>will bring relief.</i></p> <p><i>However, it is possible that<br/>the damage is already so considerable<br/>that<br/>the results of the past<br/>cannot be entirely eliminated from the body.</i></p> <p><i>Whether this [i.e., Whether the damage from past defensiveness can be<br/>eliminated from the body]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>is</i></li></ul> <p><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>is not<br/>the case<br/>depends on many variables<br/>impossible to enumerate now.</i></li></ul> <p><i>But, in principle,<br/>it is possible.</i></p> |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 35 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>Do you mean that we should<br/>just listen to someone<br/>who criticizes?</i></p>  |
| 36 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>Calmly listen<br/>and evaluate:</i></p> <p><i>Could there be some truth<br/>in the criticism?</i></p> <p><i>Observe your<br/>inner reaction of<br/>fright.</i></p> <p><i>You will soon discover<br/>that your fright [i.e., that your fright of another's criticism]<br/>is unjustified,<br/>even if<br/>the criticism is wrong.</i></p> <p><i>Nothing<br/>can happen to you;</i></p> <p><i>you are not in danger [i.e., you are NOT in danger when another criticizes you].</i></p> |
| 37 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>But what if we<br/>get annoyed<br/>at being unjustly criticized?</i></p>   |
| 38 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>The very feeling of annoyance<br/>is the proof of<br/>your defensiveness.</i></p> <p><i>Without defense,<br/>you would not be annoyed.</i></p> <p><i>How could you be?</i></p>   |

*[Without defensiveness against the criticism of another]*

**You would simply**

- **evaluate the criticism**

**and**

- **decide whether there may be**

- **some truth,**
- **a little truth,**

**or**

- **no truth in it at all.**

**All too often,**

**you are convinced**

**that it [i.e., that the criticism]**

**is**

**unjustified**

**before you even give yourself the chance**

**to find the possible**

**grain of truth in it.**

**If there is**

**no trace of truth in it,**

**why would you have to get annoyed?**

**What can this criticism do to you**

**that causes annoyance?**

**Have you ever analyzed it [i.e., analyzed your annoyance at being criticized]  
from this point of view?**

- **Justified**

**or**

- **unjustified  
criticism**

**cannot really harm you,**

**unless**

**you think you**

**cannot be**

- **loved**

**and**

- **respected**

**if something to be criticized**

**is found in you.**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 39 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>What if it is a lie [What if the criticism is a lie]?</i></p> <p><i>If it is untrue?</i></p>  |
| 40 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>I said that before.</i></p> <p><i>It [i.e., Criticism]</i><br/><i>cannot harm you</i><br/><i>if you look at it calmly.</i></p> <p><i>Your defense against it [i.e., Your DEFENSE against criticism, even if</i><br/><i>the criticism is a lie,]</i><br/><i>does the harm.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>The lie itself,</i></li></ul> <p><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the erroneous judgment [i.e., the erroneous judgment of you by the other],</i><br/><i>could never harm you.</i></li></ul> <p><i>The less</i><br/><i>defensive you are,</i><br/><i>the more</i><br/><i>adequate you will be</i><br/><i>to straighten out an</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>outright lie</i></li></ul><p><i>or</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>misunderstanding.</i></li></ul><p><i>I do</i><br/><i>not mean to imply</i><br/><i>that you must</i><br/><i>never</i><br/><i>defend yourself against a</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>flagrant lie,</i></li></ul><p><i>or</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>harmful rumor.</i></li></ul></p></p> |

|    |  |
|----|--|
|    | <p><i>This [i.e., This defense against a flagrant lie, or harmful rumor] falls under the category of</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• realistic defense,</i></li></ul> <p><i>which can be adequately handled only to the degree that</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• unrealistic defensiveness is absent.</i></li></ul>   |
| 41 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b></p> <p><i>If</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• the accusation covers a betrayal</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• you have a natural anger about it,</i></li></ul> <p><i>your anger may cover self-defense,</i></p> <p><i>but it is also a natural reaction against</i></p> <p><i>someone who has made promises to you who have fulfilled your part only to find that you are betrayed.</i></p> <p><i>What you</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• were promised</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• have hoped for does not come true.</i></li></ul> <p><i>Is this not a cause for natural anger?</i></p> |

42

**ANSWER:**

**Before we deal with the term of  
what is**

- "natural"

**and**

- "unnatural,"

**I would like to say again  
that I did**

**not imply**

**that people should take any**

- **injustice**

**or**

- **betrayal**

**without doing whatever is**

- **necessary,**
- **constructive,**

**and**

- **productive**
- to ward it off.**

**There are many instances  
when it is**

**wrong to**

- **sit back**

**and**

- **do nothing.**

**This [i.e., Sitting back and doing nothing constructive to ward of an injustice]  
would be  
sick;**

**it [i.e., sitting back and doing nothing constructive to ward of an injustice]  
would be**

- **playing the  
martyr,**
- **making a  
mockery of justice.**

43

*It is interesting to note that  
the more  
defensive a person is,  
the less  
equipped he is  
to employ  
constructive*

- *defense or*
- *attack,*

*and  
the more he will tend to*

- *victimize himself*

*and*

- *become a martyr.*

*There exists a*

- *proper*

*and*

- *healthy*
- *aggressiveness*

*and*

- *assertiveness.*

*When aggressiveness*

- *is healthy*

*and*

*when*

- *not [i.e. and when aggressiveness is NOT healthy]  
cannot be determined by  
a general rule.*

*The difference [i.e., The difference between healthy and unhealthy assertiveness]  
is too subtle*

*and*

*can only be found  
in truthful self-examination.*

*Actual dangers  
are not only*

- *physical in nature;*

*they*

*also occur on*

- *other levels.*

*I can only emphasize again  
that  
the freer you are of  
unrealistic defensiveness,  
the better you will be able  
to cope with a danger  
through  
healthy defense.*

*Often  
when the two defenses [i.e., when the HEALTHY and UNHEALTHY defenses]  
intermingle,  
the unhealthy*

- weakens*

*and*

- undermines*

*the healthy one  
and diminishes  
its [i.e., diminishes the healthy defense's]  
positive effect.*

44

*Now as to  
what is  
"natural."*

*It is certainly  
"natural"  
to have*

- immature,*
- unproductive*

*reactions,  
because  
everyone else has them too.*

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <p><i>But that [i.e., But just because everyone else has<br/>immature, unproductive reactions]<br/>does not mean<br/>they [i.e., does not mean that immature, unproductive reactions]<br/>are really healthy,<br/>or that<br/>it is not possible to grow out of them –<br/>not forcefully, by</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• superimposition,</i></li></ul> <p><i>not by</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• feeling guilty<br/>that childish reactions still exist within,</i></li></ul> <p><i>but</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• in the way that I always advocate.</i></li></ul> <p><i>Is that clear?</i></p> |
| 45 | <p><b>QUESTIONER:</b><br/><i>Yes.</i></p> <p><i>First<br/>you must clear up<br/>your emotional entanglement in the relationship,<br/>and then<br/>you will deal with it [i.e., deal with your defensive reaction to criticism,<br/>even when the criticism is a lie,]<br/>realistically.</i></p>  |
| 46 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>Yes, that is right.</i></p> <p><i>You see,<br/>your unhealthy emotional involvement<br/>makes it impossible<br/>for you to rightly evaluate the situation,<br/>and therefore<br/>you cannot deal with it [i.e., you cannot deal with your defensive reaction<br/>to criticism, even when the criticism is a lie,]<br/>as you would otherwise.</i></p>  |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 47 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>I think what our friend said about the lie [i.e., about criticism when it is a lie] is also a realistic danger?</i></p>  |
| 48 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>Yes, it could be.</i></p> <p><i>I said that.</i></p> <p><i>It all depends on whether we deal with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• facts</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• actions,</i></li></ul> <p><i>or with</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• the more subtle</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• trends,</i></li><li><i>• attitudes,</i></li></ul></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• qualities.</i></li></ul> <p><i>But when it comes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• to this work,</i></li><li><i>• to voicing one's</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• impressions</i></li></ul></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• feelings</i><br/><i>about others,</i></li></ul> <p><i>the truth of the matter cannot necessarily be established at once.</i></p> |

*It [i.e., Establishing the truth of the matter]  
requires probing  
to see whether or not  
there is  
some grain of truth  
in what the other person says,  
even if it [i.e., even if this grain of truth]  
is brought out  
in a distorted way,  
perhaps due to*

- his or her own problems,*
- or merely to*
  - human limitations.*

*In such cases,  
it cannot easily be stated that*

*"this is a lie [i.e., this criticism is a lie],"*

*because  
these things are very subtle.*

49

**QUESTION:**  
*You were talking about situations  
in which our emotions flare up.*

*How about human beings  
whose emotions are*

- dulled and*
- curbed,*

*and  
who have*

- no reactions?*

50

**ANSWER:**

**When a human being  
gets into that state [i.e., that state of having NO VISIBLE defensive reactions  
arise, say no anger or no hate when one faces inner emotions of fear or pain],  
it is a result of being  
overdefensive.**

- **Outwardly**
- and**
- **consciously,**  
**emotions may be dulled**  
**to a considerable degree,**
- but**
- **inwardly**  
**they still exist.**

**They**

- **smolder underground**

**and**

- **do their damage.**

**That is why**  
**it is so important in this work**  
**to bring the emotions to the surface.**

**Only then**  
**can they be dealt with properly.**

51

**As long as**  
**you do not feel your hate, for example,**  
**you cannot rid yourself of it.**

**It [i.e., Your hate]**  
**has to**

- **come out of repression**

**and**

- **reach surface awareness**  
**in order for you**
  - **to understand its**  
**origin**

**and then**

- **to free yourself from it.**

*It is the same with  
the defensive wall [i.e., as it is with HATE, so it is with  
the DEFENSIVE WALL].*

*As long as you are  
unaware of it [i.e., unaware of the defensive wall]  
you can do  
nothing.*

*Therefore,  
the first consideration  
is to use the methods of this work  
to bring into*

- awareness  
what was hitherto*
- submerged.*

*However, there is  
no person  
entirely  
devoid of emotions.*

*They [i.e., Emotions]  
are on the surface,  
but never named,  
and  
their significance  
is never questioned.*

*These few surface emotions  
will furnish sufficient material  
with which to work first.*

*Even people  
whose approach is predominantly*

- intellectual*

*and  
who*

- deliberately dull their feelings,  
still  
have  
certain feelings.*

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <p><i>The more defensive<br/>human beings are,<br/>the more limited<br/>the scope of emotions<br/>they can feel.</i></p> <p><i>But they<br/>can make an effort<br/>to pinpoint them.</i></p> <p><i>In such cases [i.e., In cases where people are very defensive and hence<br/>have a very limited scope of emotions they can feel]<br/>the predominant emotions<br/>will be</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• fright</i></li><li><i>and</i></li><li><i>• anger.</i></li></ul> <p><i>The people may be<br/>unaware<br/>that these [i.e., unaware that FRIGHT and ANGER]<br/>are<br/>emotions<br/>because<br/>they are so used to<br/>explaining them away.</i></p> |
| 52 | <p><b>QUESTIONER:</b><br/><i>Yes, but the person<br/>whose emotions<br/>are above board<br/>has an easier time<br/>to observe them.</i></p>   |
| 53 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>Yes, certainly.</i></p>  |

|    |   |
|----|---|
|    | <p><i>This [i.e., Because a person whose emotions are above board<br/>has an easier time to observe them]</i></p> <p><i>is why it is of<br/>primary importance<br/>to become<br/>aware of<br/>all<br/>the emotions<br/>you were not conscious of.</i></p> <p><i>Only then [i.e., Only then when you are AWARE of ALL the emotions<br/>you were not conscious of]</i></p> <p><i>can we go into<br/>the kind of problems<br/>we are dealing with now.</i></p>   |
| 54 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>In my private work,<br/>my helper and I found that<br/>I have an<br/>inadequate concept of<br/>a human being.</i></p> <p><i>What<br/>is<br/>a human being?</i></p>   |
| 55 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>If I were to answer that,<br/>it would probably take me<br/>at least a month of<br/>continuous talking.</i></p> <p><i>This, I think,<br/>may be the best answer<br/>for you to<br/>adjust</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• your concept [i.e., to adjust YOUR concept of a human being]</i></li></ul> <p><i>to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• a more truthful one [i.e., to a more TRUTHFUL<br/>concept of a human being].</i></li></ul> |

**Compare**

- *this statement*
- with*
- *the limited concept you have*  
*when you say,*

*"he is*  
*this or that,"*

*or*

*"she is*  
*thus and thus."*

**Realize**

*the*

- *infinite variety,*

*the*

- *manifoldness,*

*the*

- *contradictoriness,*

*the*

- *unlimited*

- *possibilities*

*and*

- *potentials*

*of thought,*

*and*

*the*

- *range of feelings*

*in every human being.*

**Every**

*human being*

*has,*

*in both a*

- *positive*

*and a*

- *negative*

*aspect,*

*every*

- *emotion,*

- *trend,*

*or*

- *characteristic*

*you can name.*

*The reasons why  
the same quality  
displays its*

- *positive facet  
at one time*

*and its*

- *negative [i.e., the quality's negative facet]  
at other times*

*are among  
the difficult intricacies  
of the human psyche.*

*The more you  
understand  
the limitless*

- *possibilities*

*and*

- *potentials*

*of*

- *any  
human being,*

*the further do you come  
in understanding*

- *a particular  
human being.*

*On the other hand,  
the more you believe,  
either*

- *consciously*

*or*

- *unconsciously,*

*that a human being is  
only*

- *this*

*or*

- *that,*

*in other words,  
the more limited  
your concept is,  
  
the less will you  
understand  
about others.*

56

*In a strange way,  
the unconscious aim of human beings  
is to  
limit  
the human personality,  
because they  
believe that  
if there is*

- *less to a human being,*

*it is*

- *easier to know one another.*

*This is not true.*

*The more you realize  
the infinite*

- *possibilities*

*and*

- *aspects,*

*the more*

- *understanding*

*and*

- *insight*

*you will have.*

*This is the best answer I can give you.*

*Any description [i.e., ANY description of a HUMAN BEING],  
no matter how detailed,  
would not do it justice.*

*It [i.e., ANY description of a HUMAN BEING]  
would be*

- *limited,*

*and*  
*it [i.e., and ANY description of a HUMAN BEING]  
would be*

- *an oversimplification.*

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 57 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>After a person has become greatly aware of his hidden currents – let's say, he has become aware of seventy-five percent of them and can see how they work – what can he do to train the subconscious mind?</i></p> <p><i>Or is it necessary?</i></p>   |
| 58 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>I will repeat what I have said many times.</i></p> <p><i>Merely observe the</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• wrong,</i></li><li><i>• childish,</i></li><li><i>• untrue,</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• distorted</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• reactions</i></li></ul></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• concepts.</i></li></ul> <p><i>The more you observe them [i.e., The more you OBSERVE your wrong, childish, untrue and distorted reactions and concepts], the better you will be able to learn why your emotions are not functioning according to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• reality</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• truth.</i></li></ul> |

**Get a clear understanding of  
how they [i.e., of HOW your emotional reactions]  
are**

- *erroneous,*
  - *inadequate,*
  - *destructive,*
  - *disadvantageous,*
- and**
- *unrealistic.*

**Compare**

• *these reactions [i.e., these emotional reactions you currently actually have]*  
**with**

- *your knowledge –  
as yet only theoretical –*

**of the**

- *realistic,*
- *truthful,*

**and**

- *productive  
reactions,*

**without**

**trying to force yourself**

**to feel the latter [i.e., without FORCING yourself to  
FEEL the realistic, truthful, and productive  
emotional reactions].**

**Merely**

- *compare*

**and**

- *understand why  
one way of reacting is*

- *unproductive*

**and**

- *unrealistic,*

**while**

- *the other is  
productive*

**and**

- *realistic.*

• *Fully acknowledge  
that you are  
not yet capable of*  
• *feeling*  
*and*  
• *reacting*  
*in the desired way;*

*and*

*without*  
• *guilt,*  
*without*  
• *any forcing current,*

• *fully accept yourself  
as you are,*

*but*

• *recognize  
the immaturity.*

*If you do this,*  
*without being*  
• *angry*  
*and*  
• *impatient*  
*with yourself,*

*your*

• *emotions*  
*will eventually begin to  
absorb*  
*the knowledge of your*  
• *brain*  
*that heretofore  
could not penetrate into  
your emotions.*

|    |  |
|----|--|
|    | <p><i>It will give you<br/>peace<br/>simply to<br/>observe<br/>the childish emotions in action,<br/>while</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• knowing,</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• getting to understand<br/>more<br/>and more fully,</i></li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• why</i></li></ul> <p><i>and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• how</i></li></ul> <p><i>they [i.e., why and how<br/>these childish emotions]<br/>are<br/>unproductive.</i></p> |
| 59 | <p><b>QUESTION:</b><br/><i>You wanted to talk about<br/>the background of<br/>the seven deadly sins.</i></p>   |
| 60 | <p><b>ANSWER:</b><br/><i>I would suggest<br/>that you prepare a list of them.</i></p> <p><i>I said last time<br/>that this topic<br/>cannot just be added on to a lecture<br/>because it would take too long.</i></p> <p><i>Put down each of them<br/>and ask about each separately,<br/>and then I will answer.</i></p> <p><i>That will form a lecture in itself.</i></p>   |

61

**QUESTION:**

*In the traditional Scriptures of*

- *Judaism*
- and*

- *Islam,*

*the texts are specific  
regarding the consumption of*

- *fish,*
- *flesh, and*
- *fowl.*

*It is commanded that*

*"of their flesh shall we not eat."*

*Christianity*

*has no ban against pork.*

*In the fifteenth verse of Matthew [i.e., Matthew 15:17-18],  
Jesus said,*

*"Not that which  
goeth into the mouth  
defileth the man,  
but that which  
cometh out of the mouth."*

*However, during Lent,  
dietary restrictions are observed by Christians.*

*My two questions are:*

*Are the dietary laws  
based on*

*that which is*

- *unclean,*

*or on*

*that which is*

- *holy;*

*and*

*what is the meaning of*

- *Lent*

*and of*

- *the counting of the days?*

62

**ANSWER:**

**To your first question:**

**The dietary laws**

**were given at a time**

**when human beings'**

**• scientific**

**and**

**• hygienic**

**knowledge**

**was so insufficient**

**that such information**

**was connected with religion.**

**Merely**

**• sanitary,**

**or**

**• health**

**reasons**

**dictated them.**

**In certain periods of history,**

**under different circumstances,**

**the laws were changed.**

**Nowadays,**

**it is unnecessary for**

**religion**

**to set up such rules.**

**At no time**

**did these laws**

**have anything to do with**

**spiritual life.**

**They were merely**

**safeguards**

**to protect health.**

*If humanity  
at this time  
still clings to them  
as a spiritual necessity,  
it shows a  
gross misunderstanding of  
what true spirituality is.  
It shows  
the superficial approach of humanity:  
people's  
disinclination  
to think.  
Your science today  
may find certain conditions  
that make it necessary  
to observe certain laws  
as long as the specific conditions prevail.*

*When the conditions  
change,  
the laws  
will be eliminated.*

*To persist in keeping them  
without any*

- purpose or*
- reason*

*would be senseless.*

63

*As to your second question:  
The original symbolic meaning  
of the time of Lent  
was to give people  
a period  
of*

- going into themselves,*

*of*

- purifying their systems,  
not only*
  - physically,*

*but on*

- all levels.*

*Again,*  
• *the outer*  
*is merely a symbol of*  
• *the inner.*

*A combined purification of*  
• *body*  
*and*  
• *soul*  
*is often healthy,*  
*provided it is done*  
• *in an individual way*  
*and not merely by*  
• *adhering to dogma.*

*Under whatever guise*  
*dogma appears,*  
*it shows*  
• *rigidity*  
*and*  
• *lack of self-responsibility*  
*in thinking for oneself.*

*Thus it [i.e., Thus dogma]*  
*becomes*  
*something dead.*

*The living spirit*  
*has gone out of it [i.e., has gone out of dogma].*

*The original symbolic meaning*  
*was that of*  
• *purification,*  
• *contemplation,*  
• *a time of*  
• *looking within the self*  
*and*  
• *preparing for*  
• *a new influx,*  
• *a new strength*  
*with which*  
*to reach out.*

64

*May you all become  
more  
and more aware of  
your defenses.*

*May you understand  
what they do  
to your*

- *entire system,*

*to your*

- *thinking process,*

*to your*

- *faculty of feeling,*

*to your*

- *physical system,*

*and*  
*to your*

- *spiritual life.*

*May you thus become capable  
of*

- *letting go,*

*of*

- *receiving,*
- *examining,*
- *discriminating,*

*and*

- *objectively looking at an issue  
without  
defending yourselves.*

*May you  
no longer*

- *think*

*and*

- *feel*

*in terms of  
"right versus wrong"  
and become thereby [i.e., and, by not thinking and feeling in  
in terms of "right versus wrong," become]*  
*capable of*

- *experiencing others*

*and*

- *reaching out to them.*

*The defense  
makes you*

- *withdraw from others*

*and*

- *no longer reach out.*

*May the blessing  
that is extended to you again this evening  
help you*

*particularly in this respect [i.e., particularly in respect to  
taking down your defenses]*

*for your further work*

*and*

*help you to*

*free yourselves of*

*the most damaging obstructions within.*

*Be blessed,  
each one of you.*

*Receive our*

- *warmth*

*and our*

- *love,*

*each one of you.*

*Be in peace.*

*Be in God.*

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