Pathwork Lecture 106: Sadness Versus Depression – Relationship


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

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| 03 | Greetings,  
my dearest friends.  

I welcome you  
and  
I bless you. |
| 04 | In this new working year  
that promises to be  
as productive as each former year,  
you may surely  
expect  

further  
• growth and  
• liberation.  

This [i.e., This further growth and liberation]  
applies to all  
who truly desire  
to face themselves. |
Many of you, my friends, have progressed greatly, even if you do not feel happy at the moment. The summer was a time of fruition.

Some of you feel discouraged. Your question is:

"Where does this path get me when I am as
  • unhappy and
  • confused now
    as before?"

I want to remind you of two things.

One is that those who
  • feel liberated and
  • are aware of their growth
have also gone through phases when they felt just as you feel now.

Yet, they
  • persevered and now they
  • begin to feel very definite results.
The second point is that when one experiences stagnation, this is always due to an
• inner,
• perhaps hidden, unwillingness to face some area of one's being.

This resistance [i.e., This resistance to facing some particular area of one’s being] always applies to the area that would be most important to tackle at that very moment.

That [i.e., because you resist what most needs to be faced and tackled at that very moment] is why you feel stuck [in this very moment].

Therefore, I say to those friends who feel
• discouraged and
• stagnating
to ask themselves very truthfully:

"Is there not a wall in me that prevents insight?

Am I, perhaps,
• guarding against recognizing something, and
• using
  • justification,
  • self-pity,
  • hopelessness, or
  • a superficial rationalization,
• blaming outer circumstances?"
Test yourself very carefully and you will see that your stagnation is bound to be an avoidance of inner truth.

Once you recognize it [i.e., recognize the inner truth you avoid], you will be so much farther toward
• liberation and
• growth.

It is easy to focus on
• superficial actions
and
• complete inner will to face everything within.

To stress the outer actions may so easily lead to self-deception.

Evasion [of facing everything within yourself] can take many forms.

I repeat, wherever there is
• stagnation,
• discouragement, and
• depression about the validity of your work,
in some corner of your being you are evading yourself.
All those who overcome this universal resistance step by step [i.e. all who, step by step, overcome this universal resistance against facing everything within oneself]

- feel
  - their own growing,

- feel
  - liberated from their shackles.

Tonight I should like to discuss, first of all, the difference between
  - sadness
  and
  - depression.

It is important, at this time, to get a fuller comprehension about the decided difference between these two emotions.

If the case is crass, the difference between
  - sadness
  and
  - depression
is very distinct,
and I believe you can all remember instances when you experienced
  - the one
  or
  - the other,
knowing how different they are.
However, sometimes the differentiation [between sadness and depression] is not easy because both
• sadness
and
• depression exist simultaneously.

They [i.e., sadness and depression]
• intermingle and
• overlap.

Your sadness may make you believe that depression is absent.

You may believe that your feelings of
• sadness and
• pain are purely
• normal and
• healthy and do not contain any
• negative,
• destructive elements [that are associated with depression].

You need more
• insight and
• comprehension to find in yourself the unproductive depression with its underlying cause, in spite of the rational sadness.
Let us first define the difference [between sadness and depression].

In sadness you accept without self-pity a painful fact of life as something beyond your power to change.

When you are
• truly sad,
• without depression,
you not only feel it [i.e., feel your sadness] as
• a healthy growing pain
• free of hopelessness,
but you are sad
• due to an outer circumstance,
• knowing it [i.e., knowing that the outer circumstance giving rise to your sadness] is going to pass.

There is no
• superimposition,
no
• hiding,
no
• shifting of emotions.

In depression the outer circumstance may be the same, but your feelings of pain are, to quite an extent, due to
• other reasons than
• the outer occurrence [i.e., other than the reason for sadness].
Although you cannot change
the outer circumstance,
you can change
something within yourself,
if you but see
the real reasons
why you suffer
from certain emotions
you do not wish to face –
be they [i.e. be the emotions you do not wish to face be]
• hurts,
• resentments,
• envies, or
• wrongs committed
by
• you or
• someone else.

You are powerless
to make yourself
feel differently
only as long as
you do not
fully comprehend
what is going on in you.

That [i.e., because you do not fully comprehend what is going on in you and hence are powerless to make yourself feel differently]
is why depression
is always
linked with
• frustration and
• helplessness.
For, strangely enough,
you do not feel helpless
toward an outer event
that you cannot change,
if you have a healthy attitude
toward it.

You feel depressed
only when you are unable
to change it [i.e., unable to change your attitude toward an outer event]
• now,
• immediately.

But you could change something
• in your life,
• in your own attitude,
if you took the trouble
to look inside yourself.

When you cannot accept something with the simple feeling of sadness it is because the outer circumstance is not the
• real or
• entire reason
that underlies your pain.

This is very important, my friends, and I wish you would think about it.
Let us take the example
of the loss of a beloved person
through death.

If you are
truly sad –
and nothing else –
your feeling
is due
purely
to this loss.

Here is something
you cannot change;

* you know it [i.e., you know you cannot change this outer situation, the death of a beloved person],

and in spite of the sorrow
* you know that
  you will accept it [i.e., you know you will accept this outer situation, the death of a beloved person]
eventually.

Even while
you are still in
the worst stage of your pain,
you
* know and
* believe,
  deep inside,
    * that your life
      will go on,
    * that it [i.e., that your life]
does not even have to be poorer
for the bereavement,
no matter
how genuine
your
* love and
* affection
is
  for the departed.
This pain [brought on by the death of a beloved person] will not leave a scar, because any • healthy, • genuine, • unshifted, • direct emotion is an enriching experience for your whole being.

[Conversely,]
When you are depressed [rather than just sad] due to the loss of a beloved person, there are in you • confused, • ambiguous, as well as • ambivalent emotions you are unaware of.

They [i.e., these confused, ambiguous, and ambivalent emotions of which you are unaware] vaguely disturb you and you attribute that [i.e., you attribute that vague disturbance in you] to the legitimate pain of loss.
Thus you have
shifted
your [unconscious inner negative] emotions
and used an
• actual,
• valid
occurrence [i.e., the loss through death of a beloved person]
to cover up something
you are
unwilling to
• face and
• come to terms with.

Whether
• that something [i.e., Whether what you are covering up and unwilling to face]
is directly connected with
the departed one –
• guilt,
• resentment,
• or what have you –
or whether
• the loss
has merely triggered off some
• unresolved,
• festering
inner conflict in you [that is unrelated to the departed one per se],
does not matter.

It may be
both [i.e., It may be both something connected with the departed one as well as
an inner conflict triggered off by the death but not
connected directly with the beloved person per se].

It [i.e., that vague disturbance brought on by the death of a beloved person]
may be
your identification with that person.

You may experience
your own
• fear of death and
your
• fear of the passing of life
which you
do not permit yourself
to become aware of.
Since you are not aware [of your fear of death or your fear of the passing of life], you cannot cope with it [i.e., you cannot cope with your fear of death or the passing of life that the death of a beloved person triggered].

This [i.e., This unconscious inability to cope with the fear of death triggered by the death of a beloved person], then, causes depression [rather than just sadness that would pass in time], and

* depression,
as opposed to
* sadness,
is a very
  * stifling,
  * frustrating,
  * unhealthy
  feeling.

Let us clearly see exactly what is unhealthy [i.e., what is unhealthy about depression as opposed to sadness, which, when pure, is healthy].

Take self-pity, which is always a byproduct of depression.

It [i.e., self-pity] is unhealthy because it [i.e., self-pity] is unfounded.
There is always a way out [i.e., a way out of depression] if you are willing to see it [i.e., if you are willing see and address the currently unconscious inner underlying causes of depression].

In self-pity you are unwilling to see the way out [i.e., unwilling to see and address the currently unconscious inner underlying causes of depression manifesting as self-pity]; instead [i.e., in self-pity, instead of being willing to see and face the underlying inner causes of depression], [you believe] the world around you should
• change,
• sympathize with you, and
• make allowances for you.

Moreover, in depression, as I just explained, you deceive yourself about the real reason for your unhappiness.

You use
• a false reason you call
  • "legitimate"
  • to justify running away from yourself and
  • to strengthen your self-pity.

Thus you subtly exert a forcing current upon the world [i.e., you are wanting the world around you to change].
Furthermore, 
  depression 
    is unhealthy 
  because 
    you 
      passively remain unchanged, 
        falsely accepting 
          what need not be accepted [i.e., you accept inner unconscious 
            causes of your depression, causes that need not be accepted] 
  because 
    you could change it [i.e., you could change the inner currently unconscious 
                      causes of your depression], 
    if you faced yourself [i.e., if you faced yourself by making your 
                      currently unconscious causes of depression conscious and facing them]. 

At the same time [i.e., at the same time as you refuse to change what could be 
                changed – the inner causes of your depression] 

  you battle against 
    that which truly cannot be changed [i.e., you battle against external 
                              circumstances in the world around you that you cannot change]. 

All these [i.e., all of these unconscious attitudes and behaviors] 
  characterize 
    the unhealthy state of depression.

The example of 
  loss through death 
    is purposely 
      a crass one. 

There are so many instances 
  when one is depressed 
    with 
      • less valid outer reason, 
        and sometimes with 
          • no reason. 

One simply 
  does not know 
    why [i.e., One simply does not know why one is depressed].
One may try to find legitimate
• excuses and
• reasons
  [for being depressed],
but in one's heart of hearts one knows very well that the real explanation for one's feelings is other than those [reasons and explanations] of which one arduously tries
to convince oneself.

It is of great importance, my friends, to understand this [i.e., to understand that you may not know why you are depressed or that you may try to find excuses and reasons that are not the real underlying causes for your depressions and that you know in your heart that your depression is not caused by what you think] whenever you feel depressed.

When you believe you are sad due to a good outer reason, test your emotion in the sense in which I have discussed it.

Is it really just sadness?

Do you not feel
• hopeless and
• frustrated?

Are you free of self-pity?
Do you feel
• strong and
• secure
  enough
to know
  your life
  cannot be harmed
  by circumstances
  outside yourself,
  no matter
  how painful
  a situation might be?

If you cannot answer these questions
  in the affirmative,
you need to use
  healthy introspection
  to find
  the gnawing undercurrents
  that cause the depression.

Only then [i.e., only when you find and dissolve the cause of the depression]
can you free yourself
forever
  of the cause [of the depression you feel]
  that will come up
  again and again in your life
  until
  you bring about
  its [i.e., the depression's cause’s]
  dissolution:

  not by
  forcing away
  what you feel [i.e., not by forcing away the
  feelings of depression],
  but by
  first calmly looking at it [i.e., looking at the
  depression you feel]
  with the aim
  of understanding it [i.e., understanding
  the underlying cause of your
  feelings of depression].
The dissolution
of the cause of depression
not only
• serves the purpose of
  freeing you of
  very unpleasant feelings [i.e., the feelings of depression],
  but above all it [i.e., above all, the dissolution of the cause of depression]
• liberates faculties
  which will work
  • for you
  rather than
  • against you.

Depression
makes you feel as though
life slipped by
without your fully utilizing it.

Life then [i.e., With depression, life]
cannot be
the dynamic experience
it otherwise is.

Depression
is
self-generating.

Since depression
is
the effect,
it is its [i.e., it is depression’s] cause
that prevents you
from really
• living and
• fulfilling
yourself.
What is so easily forgotten is that depression needs to be considered • a problem in itself rather than [considered] • something that happens and will eventually go away [seemingly of its own accord].

A particular depression may indeed do just that [i.e., may go away seemingly of its own accord] after a while, but [since you have not found and dissolved the depression’s inner cause] • you have not • protected yourself against its [i.e., against the depression’s] recurrence when life provokes you again.

• Nor have you protected yourself against the [other] destructive effects of the inner cause [of depression].

Therefore please take up depression as a problem [i.e., as a problem to be addressed in its own right] in your work.

Every affliction of the psyche hinders living.

It does so because it [i.e., because the affliction of the psyche] prevents you from relating to others.
We began
  • discussing,
  • working on, and
  • understanding
    the importance of
    relationship.

You have learned that
fruitful relation-ships
can exist
  only to the degree
    your soul is
    • healthy and
    • free.

But we have to
understand more profoundly
what
  • relationship and
  • relating
    are.

Life
  is
    relationship,
      my friends.

"What is life?"
  is a question
    asked by many.

Many answers
  can be given,
  they may
    all
      be truthful.

But
  above all else,
    life
      is
        relationship!
If you
do not
  • relate at all,
you
do not
  • live.

• Life, or
• relationship,
is
  relative –
  relative to
  your attitude.

You may relate
• positively
or
• negatively.

But
  the moment
  you relate [either positively or negatively],
  you live.

That is why
  the person
  who relates
  • negatively
lives more than
  the person
  who relates
  • little.

I cannot say [that such a person who relates little relates]
  not at all,
  for then that person
  would not live.
Destructive relationships lead to a climax that is ultimately bound to dissolve the destructiveness, while non-relating, even under the guise of false serenity, is further down the scale [i.e., the scale of development and growth needed for full living].

You are used to associating the word "relationship" with ["relating to"] human beings around you. But in truth, this word [i.e., this word “relationship” or “relating”] applies to
• everything,
even to
• inanimate objects,
to
• concepts and ideas.

It [i.e., this word “relationship” or “relating”] applies to
• the circumstances of living,
to
• the world,
to
• yourself,
to
• your thoughts and attitudes.
To the degree you relate,
you will
no longer experience frustration
but [rather, you will] have
a sense of fulfillment.

The scale of
the possibilities of relationship
is enormous.

Let us begin with
the lowest form on earth,
which is
mineral.

Since a mineral
is without consciousness
you may believe
that it does not relate.

That [a mineral does not relate]
is untrue.

Since it [i.e., Since a mineral]
• lives,
it
• relates,

but its
degree of relating
is limited to
its degree of life –

or more correctly put,
it is a mineral
because it is
incapable
of relating more.
The mineral relates by the fact that it lets itself be

- perceived and
- used.

Thus it [i.e., Thus a mineral] relates in a completely passive way.

The relating capacity of an animal is already more dynamic [than the relating capacity of a mineral, which is only passive].

It [i.e., an animal, rather than being passive like a mineral,] actively responds to

- other animals,
- nature,
- and to human beings.

The scale of the capacity to relate is much wider among human beings than you remotely realize at the moment.

Let us begin with those on the lowest scale among human beings.

That would be

- the completely insane person, the one who has to be put into solitary confinement, or
- the criminal – who is not so different from the former [i.e., not so different from the completely insane person].
They

• are both [i.e., both the insane person and the criminal are]
  completely withdrawn,
• live in
  • outer and
  • inner
    isolation.

They can hardly relate
to other human beings.

But

since they are
still alive,
they must
continue to relate
somehow.

They [i.e., the insane person and the criminal]
relate to
• other aspects of life:
  to
  • things,
  to
  • their environment,
    even if it is in
      the most negative way,
  to
  • food,
  to
  • certain bodily functions,
    perhaps even to
    • some ideas, or
    • art, or
    • nature.

It will be very useful, my friends,
to begin to think about
• life and
• people
  from this point of view.
If you meditate on this subject [i.e., the subject of human beings relating in many ways, even at the lowest level], it
- will help you greatly and
- will increase your understanding
  - about many things,
    - not the least
  - about your own life.

Now, by contrast [to human beings relating at the lowest level of relating], let me immediately go to the highest form of human beings.

These are people who
- relate beautifully;
  - are deeply involved with others;
  - are unafraid of involvement;
  - have no protective covering against
    - experience and
    - feeling.

Therefore they love.

They permit themselves to love.

In the last analysis, the ability to love always involves the inner
- willingness and
- readiness to do so.
People belonging in this category [i.e. People belonging in this category of the highest form of human beings]

love
not only
• abstractly and
• generally,
but they love
• personally and
• concretely,
    regardless of risk.
Such people
are not necessarily
• saints, or
• holy, or
• anywhere near perfect.

They may
• have their faults.

They may
• be wrong at times.

They
• have negative emotions too.

But, on the whole,
they
• love,
• relate, and
• do not fear involvement.

They have
freed themselves
from defense.

Such people,
in spite of occasional
• disappointments or
• setbacks,
have a life
full of
• fruitful,
• meaningful
    relationships.
What is this life [of relating] for the so-called average person?

It is

a combination of

the two extremes.

The possibilities are manifold.

A person may

• be relatively free and
  • relate well
    in certain areas of life

and

• be very much obstructed
  in others.

Only

• deep
  • personal
    insight
will enable you to find the truth in this respect [i.e., in this respect of relating to other human beings, to nature, to ideas, and so on] about yourself.

Most deceptive, however, are the cases in which

• apparently good relation-ships exist on the surface,

• but they are devoid of
  • depth and
  • inner meaning.
Then [i.e., when good relationships exist on the surface but are devoid of depth and inner meaning]

it is so easy to
• deceive oneself and
• say,

"Look how many good friends I have!

There is nothing wrong with my relationships,
and yet I am
• unhappy,
• lonely, and
• unfulfilled."

If this is the case
with you, my friends,
it cannot be true
• that your relationships are good or
• that you are truly willing to relate.

You cannot be
• lonely and
• unhappy
if
your relationships are genuine.

The way in which you relate may fulfill a superficial function.

It [i.e., The way in which you relate] may be
• pleasant and
• distracting,
but somehow
• shallow.
[In the way in which you may relate when you find yourself lonely and unhappy]
Your true self
is never revealed,
and therefore
you are
unfulfilled.
Thus
you also
• prevent
  others
  from relating [to you] and
• do not give
  what they search for,
  whether or not
  they know it.

This [i.e., not revealing your true self and not giving others what they search for]
is due
to your
• unconscious fear of exposure,
to your
• various inner conflicts.
As long as
you are not willing
to resolve them [i.e., not willing to resolve your inner conflicts],
  • you cannot have
    meaningful relationships –
    and
  • you therefore must be
    unfulfilled.

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The average person
has
• some
  • capacity and
  • willingness
  for
    • involvement and
    • relationship,
but
• not enough.
[For the average person]

The drama of
• mutual exchange and
• communication
takes place
on a superficial level.

Hence
unconscious
• tendencies and
• currents
• affect
  the involved parties
  and sooner or later
• cause a disturbance
  if
  the shallow relationship
  is a close one.

If the shallow relationship
never becomes close,
nothing will happen,
but neither
can one
deceive oneself,
in that case,
that it [i.e., deceive oneself that the relationship]
is a real tie [i.e., is a real connection].

Unconscious
destructive tendencies
can only be dissolved
if one
• faces and
• understands
  them [i.e., faces and understands the destructive tendencies].

This [i.e., facing and understanding unconscious destructive tendencies]
will not harm the relationship,
because
through the mutual exchange
the communication
automatically takes place
on a more profound level.
It is often not clear to you what constitutes a profound and meaningful relationship.

At times you think that mutual exchange of ideas is the criterion [for a profound and meaningful relationship], while at other times, it is the mutual exchange of sexual pleasure [that you think is the criterion for a profound and meaningful relationship].

Both [i.e., the mutual exchange of both ideas and sexual pleasure] may indeed be present, yet their presence will not necessarily make the communication very deep.

The only true criterion [for the depth of your communication with another] is

- how genuine you are,
- how open and undefensive.

- How willing are you to feel, to involve and expose yourself and all that really matters to you?
• How many people do you know to whom you can express your real 
  • sorrows, 
  • needs, 
  • worries, 
  • longings, 
  • wishes?

  Very few, if any.

To the degree you permit yourself to become aware of these feelings, to that degree will you find a few others • with whom you can share and • whose life you are capable of truly understanding.

If you shy away from yourself, how can you be willing to relate to others what you do not dare to acknowledge to yourself?

Thus you live in • isolation and • unfulfillment.

You fear death because you let life pass by • in the pseudo-safety of solitary confinement.
This is why we are so very much concerned in this work with your admitting the truth [about yourself] to yourself; for only then [i.e., only when you are admitting the truth about yourself to yourself] can you begin to have real relationships instead of false ones and lead a meaningful life.

Even your relationship to other aspects of life, such as the arts, nature, ideas, will take on a new form that is very much alive, whereas before [i.e., before you had real relationships with yourself and others] you used them [i.e., you used the arts, nature, and the world of ideas] as substitutes [i.e., as substitutes for the real relationships with others that you longed to have].

Often, real
relating and communication is confused with the childish compulsion to tell everyone everything.
Thus [i.e., by the childish compulsion to tell everyone everything] you may
• share your feelings indiscriminately
and [thereby]
• jeopardize yourself, in the misunderstood idea that
• foolish candor, or
• unwise exposure, or
• cruel "honesty" [about negative aspects of yourself] are proof of your
  • openness and
  • willingness to relate.

In reality this [i.e., this childish compulsion to tell everyone everything] merely covers up your withdrawal, which exists
• on a much more hidden level and
• in a more subtle manifestation.

Thus [i.e., by deliberately jeopardizing yourself through cruel “honesty” about negative aspects of yourself or in unwise self-exposure] you provoke the "proof" [i.e., you provoke rejection by others and thereby prove] that it does not pay to involve yourself [with others since it brings nothing but painful judgment, criticism, and rejection by others].

With
• true self-understanding,
and the consequent
• liberation from your self-inflicted prison [in which you hide your real self from others and even from yourself], there will be nothing strained in
• your self-revelation and
• your relation-ships.
You will intuitively choose the right people [with whom to communicate] and the right opportunities [to communicate] and the right manner. [in which to communicate]

Occasional misjudgments [in matters of communicating and sharing too much] will never • crush you or • put you back into hiding.

But this • freedom, this • organic growing process, happens • only gradually, and • only after you have started to pursue this path of self-knowledge.

Psychiatrists often diagnose people according to their [i.e., according to the client’s or patient’s] • ability to relate, and the • depth and • meaningfulness of their [i.e., the client’s or patient’s] relationships.
It is also true that
• some of the
  • more severely disturbed people
    can receive help more easily
than
• those whose disturbance
  is less obvious,
because
  the latter [i.e., because those whose disturbance is less obvious]
    can
    • more easily deceive themselves and
    • pretend that things are not so bad,
    and thus can
    • continue to hide from the truth within.

This subterfuge [i.e., This self-deception, hiding from the truth within,
  pretending that things are not really so bad]
  is not available
  to those
  • who are more disturbed.

They [i.e., Those who are more disturbed emotionally and psychologically]
  therefore come to a point
  where they have to make a choice:
    • they can look at their inner life
      • squarely,
      • without self-deception,
    or
    • they may have
      a severe breakdown
      which will postpone
      self-confrontation.

In any case,
  they [i.e., those who are more disturbed emotionally and psychologically]
  are nearer that point of decision –
  which they may reach
  only in the following life –

than
  the milder neurotic person
  who continues to evade.
As long as you cannot admit that you are human and that you need help in exposing your vulnerabilities, you cannot • be helped in your problems, nor can you • form real relation-ships.

Thus your life will always remain empty, at least in some important areas.

For the moment, most of you, my friends, do not even have a clear concept of what it is to really • relate or • love.

Your concern is still mainly centered around yourself.
If you are outgoing to others, it is not a
• natural,
• spontaneous process,
but
• artificial and
• compulsive.

But this natural
• concern and
• warmth for others will come [gradually and eventually]
  if you persevere on this road [of self honesty and self-facing].

In the past we have discussed the wall that you keep around your heart.

We will investigate it [i.e., investigate this wall around your heart] further, so as to gain more comprehension about it [i.e., more comprehension about this wall around your heart].

This [i.e., This comprehension of this wall around your heart] is
• very important and
• necessary.

Without
• comprehension and
• awareness of this wall in you, you cannot understand your loneliness.
[Without comprehension and awareness of this wall around your heart]
You cannot understand
how you affect others.

Often
you do not even understand
how others
really affect
you,
because [with the wall around your heart]
you do not permit yourself
to feel
the real effect [that others have on you],
due to reasons we have discussed in the past.

Thus
you color
your real
• impressions and
• experiences,
and [because you color your real impressions and experiences]
you are
no longer
in truth.

You have to become
much more acutely aware of
• what you experience and
• how others affect you

in truth.

Your continuous work along this path
in
• private sessions
in addition to
• the group work
is most important.

This [work along this pathwork in private sessions and in group work]
will help you greatly
toward
self-awareness
in understanding
your relationships.
And now to your questions.

**QUESTION:**
What about

- a relationship
  - that changes?

Also, what about

- seeking
  - variety and
  - flow?

Is it a manifestation of

- healthy relating
  - if a relationship changes

and

- if a person wishes [variety through]
  - many relationships?

**ANSWER:**
This is again one of those questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no."

Both

- a changing relationship

and

- the desire for variety [through having many relationships] may indicate
  - healthy
  - or
  - unhealthy motives.

Often it is a combination of both [healthy and unhealthy motives], though one side [i.e., either the healthy or unhealthy side] may be predominant.

One must beware of oversimplification [i.e., beware of the “either/or” oversimplification].
The fact that
a relationship changes
for the worse
does not necessarily
indicate
• relapse or
• stagnation.

It [i.e., a relationship changing for the worse] may be a
• necessary,
• temporary
reaction
to an
• unhealthy submissiveness,
to the
• craving for affection,
or to
• any other
  • one-sided
  • neurotic
  bondage.

Before
a healthy relationship
can come into being
between two people
who have been tied together
by a variety of mutual distortions,
such a
temporary
• outer or
• inner
storm [i.e., the storm of a relationship changing for the worse]
may fulfill
the same balancing function
that an
• electric storm or
• earthquake
  fulfills in nature.
Whether or not a relationship can become predominantly free and healthy depends on both parties involved.

By the same token, a smooth outer relationship, apparently devoid of friction, is not necessarily an indication of its [i.e., the relationship’s inner] health and meaningfulness.

Close examination of the ties [with other persons] and their significance is the only answer.

One can never generalize.

If two people grow together in any kind of relationship – be it partnership, love, friendship, whatever – they have to go through various phases.
If they [i.e., If two people growing together in any kind of relationship] muster sufficient insight about
• themselves,
and not only [insight] about
• the other,
such relationship will become
• more securely rooted and
• ever more fruitful.

As far as seeking variety [by having many relationships] is concerned, that too depends on the real motivation.

If variety [by having many relationships] is sought
• hastily,
• compulsively,
• due predominantly to reasons of
  • fear,
  • greed, and
  • grasping;
• due to being unable to genuinely relate to any one person [in real depth, honesty, and truthful intimacy], and therefore supplementing this lack [of relating with any one person] with a lot of superficial ties;
[or] if others are constantly sought as a safeguard against not being • dependent on and • deserted by those few with whom a deeper relationship exists,

then [i.e., with either of these two situations of seeking variety through multiple relationships], needless to say, it indicates unhealthy trends.

But if variety [by having many relationships] is sought because of the richness of • different human beings and of • one's relationship to them • in a free spirit, and • not in order to use • one relationship against • the other, then it [i.e., then variety by having many relationships] is healthy.

Often, both motivations [i.e., both unhealthy and healthy motivations for seeking variety by having many relationships] exist.
But even in the former case [i.e., the case of unhealthy motivations for seeking variety by having many relationships],

there may be a temporary necessity because of a reaction to previous withdrawal, and, as such, the seeking of variety may be a step toward health.

A negative manifestation is often an indication that a positive transitory phase is occurring.

QUESTION:
How does that tie in with a person manipulating his reactions to other people?

ANSWER:
Actually, this question is already answered.

Manipulation happens out of • defensiveness and • pseudo-needs.
The one

that is manipulated [by another person],
whether or not he or she is aware of it,

will

either

• react by
giving in [to the manipulations of other persons]
due to
• fears,
• needs, and
• dependency,

and [thereby]

lose integrity,

or will

• rebel [against the persons who are trying to manipulate him or her].

Then it [i.e., Then the rebelling]

will be out of
wanting affection
without being a slave,
yet the person
does not yet know
that there is
no need to rebel
if one can relinquish [i.e., relinquish the relationship].

If a person

is free enough
not to need another
so desperately
as if it were a matter of
life and death,

he or she

would not need to
resent the condition
which the other's domination
unconsciously
imposes.

They [i.e., persons who are free enough not to need another so desperately]

will

• let go [of the relationship with the person who is unconsciously trying to
dominate through manipulation]

and

• quietly preserve their integrity.
Only when both are fighting as to who is the stronger one – and this fight usually happens in a hidden way – does their relationship fluctuate between • domination, • rebellion, • submission, • appeasement and • resentments.

Both want something from each other that neither is willing to give.

Both claims [i.e., Both wants from the other] are • distorted and • unrealistic.

Thus a battle evolves that overshadows the potential for a real relationship which is always free.
QUESTION:
Between two human beings who want to relate,
but
• both, for various reasons manipulate,
or
• one manipulates,
where does the element of real love come in?

Does this [i.e., Does real love] not
• dissolve or
• alleviate the manipulation?

ANSWER:
To the degree a person feels the need for manipulation – which is an unconscious protective measure – to that degree real love cannot exist.

These two elements [i.e., real love and manipulation] are mutually exclusive.
The pseudo-need
for manipulation [of another person],
if you examine it,
stems from
• egocentric fear and
• an over-cautiousness
  about letting go
to
• feeling and
to
• being.

Therefore
manipulation [of another person]
prohibits love,
even though
some measure
of real love
may also exist,
but is hindered by
the aspect in question [i.e., hindered by manipulation].

If
real love
is greater than
the distortion,
it [i.e., real love]
will
not
dissolve the distortion,
but [nevertheless]
the weight of love
will be greater,
and thus
the relationship
will be less problematic.

Dissolution
of problematic areas [however]
can only happen
through
understanding [and does not happen automatically with love].
Then [i.e., with understanding of the problem areas in a relationship]
love
can blossom.

But
where
- darkness and
- confusion
  exist,
and
- the partners
do not face reality,
love
cannot
come into being.

The fact that
you
do love
does not simply
dissolve
all the
- negative currents and
- distortions,
- conflicts and
- fears,
- unconscious
  - defensive measures and
  - manipulations.

It [i.e., dissolving all the negativities and distortions in a relationship]
is not as easy as
all that [i.e., is not as easy as declaring, “But I do love the other!”].

Your ability to relate
is actually
simple to measure:
your outer life
furnishes you with many clues [about your ability to relate]
if you but understand them.
To the degree
that a relationship
has problems,
[to that degree]
unconscious
distortions
exist
in both parties.

One
alternately
blames
• the other,
or
assumes
• self-blame.

It takes
• time and
• understanding,
as well as
• some experience on this path,
to recognize
• that
  • one wrong
does not eliminate
  • another [wrong];

• that
  • all involved [in a relationship]
are responsible for
  • all the problems
  of a relationship.

Such insight [i.e., the insight that one wrong does not eliminate another
wrong, or that all involved in a relationship are responsible for all
the problems of a relationship]
always
has a very liberating effect,
simply because
it is
the truth.
This truth [i.e., This truth that one wrong does not eliminate another wrong, or that all involved in a relationship are responsible for all the problems of a relationship] will free you of • guilt and of • the necessity to • accuse, to • blame, and to • judge.

QUESTION:
Isn't it sometimes much easier to relate to somebody one is not too close to?
One is less critical ...

ANSWER:
Why, of course.

This [i.e., that it is easier to relate to somebody one is not too close to] is just the proof that it [i.e., the proof that the “easy” relationship to which you refer here] is not • a real relationship, but • a superficial one.

A real relationship means involvement.
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<th>That [i.e., involvement in a relationship]</th>
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<td>one's whole being [on the relationship with another].</td>
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<td>can become</td>
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<td>it [i.e., if each friction in a relationship]</td>
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<td>is approached</td>
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<td>I do not mean</td>
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<td>that you should have</td>
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But there must be quite a few [such deep relationships], all different, if you are to feel that your life is • dynamic and • fruitful.

To be more specific, I may add that unconscious • expectations, • claims and • demands cause havoc in relationships. This is not because all expectations are necessarily "wrong," but because they [i.e., because these expectations] • smolder underground and • cause a mutual strain as they clash with the demands of the other person.
Apart from the fact that
• some demands
  are really
  • unjustified and
  • unreasonable,
and
• they [i.e., and these unjustified and unreasonable demands]
  can only be recognized as such [i.e., recognized as unjustified
  and unreasonable]
  if they come to
  your surface awareness,
even
justified expectations
will cause problems for you
because of
  your unawareness of them [i.e., because of your unawareness of
  your justified expectations].

QUESTION:
In the same connection,
  when a person thinks that
  he relates
  instantaneously
  to other people
is that not
a projection of a kind of
"black magic,"
due to
  the childish belief
  in one's omnipotence?

ANSWER:
Yes, of course.

The child who wants to be infallible
exists
  in every human being.
It may often be true that a person has an intuitive understanding of others.

The danger then is that he or she develops a tendency to believe to be always right [about others].

It takes quite a bit of
• growth,
• maturity, and
• wisdom
to realize that
one may be right [about others]
• sometimes,
but certainly [one is]
• not always [right about others].

Once
• this is recognized and
• one's own limitations [as a human being]
are accepted,
it is no longer a crushing shame to be wrong.

Growth,
in this respect [i.e., Growth in respect to the fact that, as a human being, one has limitations and can be wrong about things sometimes, and that being limited and wrong sometimes is not shameful],
often proceeds in stages.
At first, people may be so completely unsure of themselves that they may not put any value on
• themselves and
• their [own] perceptions.

They may be feeling so inferior that they do not trust
• their intuition at all –
or even
• their reason.

They may always believe that only others are right,
• whether or not this [i.e., whether or not this belief that only others are right] is true,
• whether or not they are aware of this hidden conviction [i.e., this hidden conviction that only others are right] [a conviction] against which they may erroneously battle with an over-assertiveness – [an over-assertiveness] which, of course, is the worst way to remedy the situation [i.e., the situation of battling against believing only others are right], because no ill can disappear before its existence is acknowledged.
Then such people [i.e., people who believe at first that only others are right] would
• go through
  a certain process of
  growing and
• experience
  that their [own] perceptions
  are often valid.

This [i.e., this experiencing that their perceptions are often valid] is a
  great
  • relief and
  • joy.

Self-confidence
  begins to blossom.

But this [initial blossoming of self-confidence] is only
  a tiny step on the ladder and
they are
  not yet
  quite sure of the reality of
  this phenomenon [i.e., this phenomenon of “self-confidence” brought
  about by realizing they are sometimes right in their perceptions].

Since they are
  so unsure [of the reality of this phenomenon of “self-confidence”
  brought about by their own perceptions being right sometimes],
they are frightened to find out
  that they have
  only imagined it all [i.e., frightened that they have only imagined that they
  were right some of the time],
and so they
  guard against
  the dreaded disappointment [i.e., the disappointment that while they may
  have been right some of the time they are not right all of the time]
  by summoning
  their inherently childish claim for
  omnipotence
  as a counter-measure.
If they remain at that stage [i.e., the stage of holding onto their childish claim for omnipotence], without recognizing this factor [i.e., without recognizing that by claiming omnipotence they have overcompensated for not wanting ever to be wrong], they will never completely grow out of their inferiority feelings.

But by recognizing this [i.e., But by recognizing that by claiming omnipotence they have overcompensated for not wanting ever to be wrong], they will learn that they are not without • worth or • value just because they are not always right.

They • will no longer fear being wrong, and • will therefore enter into a more realistic relationship with themselves.

All • growing and • learning is determined by • curves and • cycles.
If the cycle is stopped, growth is stopped and the person eventually reverts to the old state where he or she had begun to take the first tentative steps [i.e., the first steps of recognizing that not only others are right, but sometime they themselves are right].

When the temporary improvement [of recognizing that sometimes one is right rather than believing that only others are right] is not followed through, the person • is blinded by some actual success [in having right perceptions some of the time], but • is not yet secure enough not to fear that the experience [i.e., not to fear that the experience of being right some of the time] may turn out to have been an illusion.

Therefore nothing is really resolved yet.

The immature psyche always fluctuates between • underestimation and • overestimation.
Neither [i.e., neither underestimation nor overestimation of one being right] is in reality.

Only by continuing on this curve [and cycle] can one attain true perspective, and then [i.e., then with the true perspective that one is sometimes right and sometimes wrong and that one is not without worth or without value because one is not always right]

self-assurance will be gained in a genuine way.

If the frequent wrong conclusion, "If I admit I am not always right, then I fall back into my inferior state," is recognized,

then

• all is well, and
• the fear of being wrong will vanish.

You will realize that the more you can allow for not having to be right, the more your intuition will grow;

the validity of your judgment will increase – but by no means will it [i.e., will your judgment] always be accurate.
Of crucial importance at this stage of the curve [or cycle] is the awareness of the fear of being wrong, [the fear that is] due to the unfounded danger that the growth experienced was illusory.

I close with very special blessings for every one of • you,
for everyone who • reads these words,
for everyone • entering this work now, or • being in it already, or • entering it in the future.

I bless this entire working year and I leave you • with my • love and • warmth for all of you,
• and with the promise of active help that can come to you to the degree that you • recognize and • humor your own resistance to self-awareness.
Find
  your willingness
to recognize
  your rationalizations
  • that keep you from
    • truth and
    • reality
      within yourself,
  • that keep you from
growing into a
  • meaningful,
  • full
    life.

May this blessing
that is
  • going into you and
  • enveloping you
help each and every one,
wherever you stand.

And may you
come to know
  • that life
    is benign and
  • that your depressions
    are unreal.

The flow of living
is continuous
and only in your limited view
is there any need to fear.

The more you
remove the shackles
of your
  • unconscious,
  • voluntary
    blindness,
the more will you
experience
  the truth
  of these words.

Be blessed
  in God!
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