Pathwork Lecture 139: Deadening of the Live Center Through Misinterpretation of Reality

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/

<table>
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| 03 | Greetings,  
  my dearest,  
  dearest friends.  

Blessings  
for every one of you.  

Blessed  
be this evening [i.e., blessed be this time we now spend together in this lecture].  

May your understanding of this lecture open  
* your mind and  
* your vision  
so that  
you all advance a further step in your self-realization.  

Gary Vollbracht
One of the
most difficult accomplishments
is to
fully understand
• the present situation,
• how it is
  a direct creation
  of the individual.

Just because
this understanding [of the present situation and of how it is a
direct creation of the individual]
could be
• immediate and
• near,
it seems distant.

Just because
the connection [between the present situation
and the individual’s role in its creation]
is so easily available,
it seems that
to obtain it [i.e., to obtain the connection]
would require
much
• effort and
• struggle.

Once one
discovers the knack of it,
it becomes
• easy and
• natural, and
it is
• obvious
that the connection [between the present situation
and the individual’s role in its creation]
has been there
all along.
Even those of my friends who have been involved in the pathwork for a considerable time, still
• overlook what is most significant and
• fail to see themselves as they are.
They do not understand their present situation, what it means in terms of their own innermost being, because
the mechanism of escape [from their own innermost being] is often so deeply entrenched.

This lecture, once again, is destined
• to shake you up,
• to make you more aware,
• to awaken you to
  • yourself and
  • your immediate outer situation.

Whenever you find yourself in a situation [in life or in your self] that is not desirable, that leaves you unfulfilled in any way, your usually vague discontent causes you to strive for another situation.
A clear-cut goal-directedness and precise concept of a better way of life can succeed only when the present situation, with its lack, is totally understood.

Striving toward a different situation when the present situation is not fully understood must result in failure and frustration.

How can the present situation be fully understood, my friends?

That can only happen by becoming fully aware of what you really miss.

You must put into words precisely what you would want to be different in your life.

This must be the first awareness.
The second awareness must be
the extent to which you suffer from what you miss.

For that [i.e., For the extent to which your suffer from what you miss], too, is often
• pushed aside and
• not acknowledged.

How much do you really miss what you miss?

Do not glibly content yourself with a
• vague,
• general
  acknowledgement.

The full intensity of partly-repressed
• longings and
• frustrations must be aired out.

The third awareness, in this respect, must be
a total comprehension of your present situation.

And that, of course, means – after the above acknowledgements – to ascertain why you endure your present situation.
It is essential that you profoundly understand how the present situation is a direct outcome of who you are.

I have discussed this many times in the past. I repeat it now not only to connect it with the lecture to follow, but also because I see among you, my friends – despite your good progress – that this is still vastly overlooked.

Therefore, I invite all of you to
• follow this simple formula [i.e., the simple formula that your present situation is a direct outcome of who you are] and
• give your total attention to
  • what you feel and experience right now, and
  • why this is so.

How is your outer situation a symbolic representation of your inner state of being?
When you finally connect with the fact that your outer state — no matter how undesirable it may be — is exactly a result of what you are, think, feel, and want, you will immediately understand that your outer situation cannot be any different [from what it is right now].

When you deeply know that it [i.e., that your current outer situation] cannot be any different, then you have totally exploited, assimilated and comprehended your present Now, your total situation.

• This comprehension, • this analyzing in depth results in knowing that • any present situation must be a direct link to • the inner being.
You will find that the present situation is an exact result of the sum total of your personality.

This includes, of course, [not only the unfavorable circumstances in your life but also] the favorable circumstances.

When you • overlook and • neglect the enjoyment of all the good circumstances in your life, you must be commensurately unaware of your values.

As you learn in each moment to • value, • appreciate and • enjoy what life offers you, you must simultaneously become aware of • the good in you, your • values and • assets.
This [awareness of the good in you, your values and assets] will give you greater strength to come out of • vicious circles and • self-generating negative attitudes and will make the understanding of the undesirable situation more realistic [and balanced, not one-sidedly negative] as it relates to your inner personality.

You will gain a more rounded picture • of your total person and • of your life.

As long as you are • vague and • hazy about what you miss, and as long as you • deny what you miss, you cannot possibly understand your life.

Understanding one's life in this fashion [i.e., by knowing precisely what you miss and the extent to which you miss it] is the key to changing it [i.e., changing your life] into a more • desirable and • fulfilling manifestation.
Most of you, my friends on this path, have occasionally understood your lives and yourselves as one unit, in the way mentioned here. These [occasional] moments [of understanding your lives and yourselves as one unit, i.e., understanding that your outer situations reflect your innermost selves] are always deep experiences of the reality of being, of vibrant aliveness, light and truth.

To achieve this seems so difficult just because it is so immediate and near.

It seems so much easier to wish for something vaguely different [from your current situation], or even precisely different [from your current situation] – in an attitude of discontent and tense struggle, in a mood of complaining, resentment, and self-pity.
Meanwhile,
you ignore:
a) the intensity
   of the real longing;
b) the presence of
   reservations to
   this real longing;
c) their "reasons" [i.e., the “reasons” for
   the reservations to this real longing];
d) the consequent
   • thoughts,
   • feelings,
   • emanations,
   • attitudes
   in
   • inner and
   • outer
   behavior; and
e) how these [thoughts, feelings, emanations, attitudes, and behaviors] must
   • affect others,
   and thereby
   • create
   the present situation.

You often
overlook
that
the present situation
is a result of
many years of
deeply entrenched patterns
of
• thinking,
• acting and
• feeling
and [hence the present situation] cannot change
instantly
after some recognitions [of some of the long-ago causes behind
your present situation]
have been made.
### The effect

of these recognitions [of long-ago causes behind your present situation] is diluted
when they do not bring an immediate result.

### To expect

instant results is

- a childish demand from life,
- an angry refusal to cooperate with life's laws, which are
  - most certainly contained in the reasons for the unfulfillment itself.

### This

[childish demand for instant results and angry refusal to cooperate with life's laws]

also causes you to overlook the good

- that is in your life and
- that you fail to
  - enjoy and
  - appreciate.

### When you ignore

the oneness between your

- innermost self
  and your
  - outer situation

it is always because you run away from yourself.
You do not
• really and
• totally
  want
to see yourself
  as you are,
but [rather]
look at yourself
only
• in a limited way and
• with reservations.

Ask yourself,
all of you,
• do you truly
  wish to see yourself
  totally,
  as you are?

• Do you
cultivate such an aim
  by expressing this desire [to truly see yourself totally as you are],
  particularly
  in moments of
  • discontent and
  • disharmony?

• Or [instead] are you
  quick
to glibly furnish rationalizations
  for your disharmony?

• Or do you
  actually admit
  that it [i.e. that the cause of your disharmony] must be in you –
  because you know enough about
  the truth of these matters –
  but [then] let it go at that,
  without
  the willingness
  to really look?
The simple formula of expressing the
• deep and
• full
  • intention and
  • desire
to see the
  full truth
  about oneself
  at all times

is still
not sufficiently used.

So much greater liberation could exist
if this [intention to see the full truth about oneself at all times]
were followed through
• in more detail and
• with more attention of the self
to the
  immediate
  situation.

The reasons for the strong tendency
to escape from
  • the self –
and therefore inevitably [escape]
from
  • life,
    with all its
good possibilities –
  are manifold.

In the course of these lectures
we have discussed
many of the possible
• motives and
• reasons
  for escape [from the self and therefore from life].
Let us now pay specific attention to one aspect [of the motives and reasons to escape from the self and life] that I have only

• generally and
• vaguely
touched upon,

[i.e., not touched upon specifically and more fully]

for the simple reason

that none of my friends were quite ready
to face this aspect in themselves.

It [i.e., this aspect of the motives and reasons to escape from the self and life I now want to discuss] could only be

• discussed and
• contemplated

in very general terms.

The last few months have brought considerable progress for a number of my friends, and therefore many of you can now accept what I have to say.

The aspect [of the motives and reasons to escape from the self and life] that I want to discuss is not mere hostility [that exists in you and in most human beings].

Hostility has become too vague a term, almost meaningless in its repeated use.
Let us deliberately be as crass as possible.

In most human beings – in some more and in some less – there exist elements of cruelty.

This cruelty is hard to face [in oneself].

But when you do face it, • relief and • liberation must follow, because nothing further bars the way to being totally in truth with yourself.

As long as the cruelty within yourself is not fully faced, as long as you run away [and try to escape] from it, you cannot be • clear and • comfortable, • unafraid and • relaxed about yourself.

You cannot be • good friends with yourself.
You can be good friends with yourself [however] when you
• accept,
• acknowledge,
• understand and
• work
  • openly and
  • candidly
  on the cruel aspects,
  even before
  you can
  totally
  eliminate them.

But as long as you still struggle against cruelty in the
• wrong,
• self-defeating way –
  namely by
  • denial and
  • hiding –
you must be in constant friction
• with yourself,
  and therefore, inevitably,
  • with life and
  • with others.

Since you cannot be comfortable in your own skin,
• your life and
• living with yourself will feel wrong;
• problems will appear without solutions.
**Solutions**

*can appear on the horizon*
*only in exact proportion to*
*your facing*
*in yourself*
*what you fear most –*
*and that is*
*usually*
*cruelty [that exists within you].*

*You cannot think of*
*• anything worse,*
*[and can think of] nothing*
*• more frightening*
*than this aspect of yourself.*

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**A reliable gauge**

to determine
*whether there is still*
*unrecognized cruelty within*
*is the amount of fear*
*you have left.*

**Consider your**
*fear of*
*• other people –*
*• generally or*
*• specifically –*
*fear of*
*• life,*
*fear of*
*• death,*
*fear of*
*• the unknown.*
The more you are afraid –
of
  • ruthlessness and
  • separateness,
of
  • rejection and
  • humiliation,
of
  • physical and
  • mental
cruelty –
the more must these exact same aspects [of cruelty] slumber within yourself, as yet not fully acknowledged.

As long as this [unrecognized and unacknowledged cruelty within] is the case – regardless of how large or small the unrecognized aspects are –
you will be in conflict.

You will run from those areas in your life which appear
  • difficult and
  • uncomfortable.

That they are unpleasant for you now is a sign that they contain the very key you need.
If only you
• stopped running and
• really looked at yourself,
you would see
• that
  you are avoiding
certain
• outer and
• inner
  situations and
• why
  you do so.

These instances [where you are avoiding certain outer and inner situations]
harbor
  the secret
  you are still
  unwilling to unveil,
in spite of
  all your good efforts.

Yet,
  as long as
  you cannot
  meet
    • yourself and
    • others
      without reservations,
you cannot possibly
      fulfill yourself.

It [i.e., not being able to meet yourself and others without reservations]
means
  that you want to
  continue deceiving yourself
  by avoiding these aspects [of cruelty within yourself].

You may
  vaguely
  feel something like this [i.e., vaguely feel that you are avoiding something],
but
  there is a great difference
  between
    • that [i.e., between vaguely feeling that you are avoiding something]
  and
    • really looking into yourself.
Those who have begun to do so [i.e., Those who have begun to look deeply into themselves and face their aspects of cruelty] must already have overcome the worst.

This [i.e., this discernment as to whether or not people have begun to look deeply into themselves and face their aspects of cruelty] is not necessarily a question of time, of how long one has been in the pathwork – not by any means.

Let us now discuss why cruelty exists.

After having acknowledged its [i.e., cruelty’s] existence, what then?

Before answering this question, I shall remind you of that innermost center of every human being which activates all of you with all you need to live productively.

This live center furnishes you with

- energy,
- life force,
- wisdom,
- vision,
- solutions,
- love and
- harmony.
It [i.e., this live center] exists deep within every individual.

In
• a young person,
• a child,
it [i.e., the live center] manifests as a very vulnerable spot.

Its very aliveness comes forth from a
• tender and
• soft center.

When children are
• hurt and
• puzzled – when they misunderstand the events around them –
they proceed to toughen this vulnerable spot to defend themselves against its soft openness.

By these various defense mechanisms, the live center becomes more and more
• overlaid,
• hidden and
• covered by tough substances.
Without an
  • adult and
  • realistic
    understanding –
    that is, [without]
    • a mature ego –
the child
cannot handle this
  • soft,
  • malleable
  live center
  in which
  the most
  • powerful,
  • creative and
  • intelligent
  forces
  are contained.

For its own protection,
it [i.e., the child]
must separate
  • the live center
  from
  • its consciousness.

However,
  • when the child grows
    into an adult,
  • when the ego
    becomes mature,
    the separation [of the live center from the individual’s consciousness]
    becomes
    an unfortunate handicap.

The individual
lives in a
crippled way,
  leaving out the
  • best and
  • most reliable
  aspect
  of his or her
  whole being [i.e., leaves out the live center].
Only when he or she proceeds to
• uncover it [i.e., proceeds to uncover the live center] again and
• integrate it with the adult ego
does the personality become
• whole and
• equipped to handle life.

The existence of this bare, vulnerable live center can be determined not only by
• remembering your childhood with its
  • strong emotions and
  • deep experiencing, both
    • positive
    and
    • negative,
but by
• truly observing yourself [in your current life as an adult].

You cannot fail to become conscious of moments when this vulnerable spot [i.e., your live center] is present.

You can further observe how you then proceed to make it [i.e., make your vulnerable spot, your live center] invulnerable.
In other words, you continue to use the process that was instituted in childhood [to make your vulnerable spot, your live center, invulnerable], but which now operates greatly to your detriment, for it [i.e., for the process you used in childhood to make your vulnerable live center invulnerable] is the wrong way [for you as an adult]
\[\text{• to protect yourself and}
\text{• to cope best with life.}\]

The means to inactivate the live center are various:
\[\text{• separating and withdrawing,}
\text{• toughening yourself,}
\text{• numbing your feelings,}
\text{• denying your real feelings and substituting counterfeit feelings,}
\text{and also}
\text{• becoming cruel.}\]

All these measures serve to make the vulnerable spot [i.e., the live center] within you invulnerable, because this seems the only "safe" way [to protect yourself and cope with life].
You
• overlook and
• ignore
  the fact
  that the vulnerability
is the very material, as it were,
with which
  to govern your life
  in the most
  • dynamic and
  • fruitful
  way.

For this
• vulnerable spot
is the
• live center
  out of which
  all
  • energy and
  • wisdom
  is derived.

It [i.e., the vulnerable spot, the live center]
is that in you
which makes it possible
to fully
  • experience and
  • enjoy,
to
  • have and
  • give
  pleasure.

The potent energy,
deriving from this live center,
can be utilized in a most
• constructive and
• meaningful
way
  in the realization
  that this live center
must become a conscious aspect
  [if it is] to be integrated with
  the ego.
If this integration [of the live center with the ego] is hindered due to
• misunderstanding and
• ignorance,
  • the [potent] energy [deriving from the live center]
    will turn destructive,
• the power inverted, and
• the result must be
  • chaos,
  • separation,
  • disintegration,
  • confusion,
  • suffering, and
  • an inner
    • division and
    • numbness
      that makes life appear
        • difficult,
        • ugly,
        • removed and
        • senseless.

The activation of
• your real self, or
• the divine center,
  is not something that you gain
    • from the outside –
  or even
    • from within yourself,
      as something faraway
        you have not yet experienced.
There are many occasions when you
  • vaguely and
  • hazily
  experience
  the real self,
  such as in
  • natural,
  • unexaggerated
  sadness.

But
  you make sure
to deny the experience,
because
  you do not know
  • how to cope with it,
  • how to handle it.

You
  flatten the experience,
  prohibiting the
  • deeper,
  • richer
  dimensions
  that come from
  your innermost center.

As long as
  the inner center
  is still in the condition
  it was
  when you were a child,
  it is not yet
  in a position
  to handle life.

The inner wisdom
  contained in the live center
  begins to manifest
  only after
  integration with the ego.
In the child state, the inner center is just alive [but not yet engaged], full of • feeling, • energy, and • capacity for • experience, for • pleasure, as well as for • yet unutilized potentials of • creativity and • intelligence.

What you must learn to do now is:

1) observe the existence of the live center,  
2) observe the mechanics by which you • discourage its manifestations and • toughen the vulnerable spot;  
3) deliberately • stop the mechanics of disengagement [of the live center from the ego] and • allow the live center’s unfoldment.
Through appropriate meditations, integration between
- the live center
and
- the ego
will take place,
so that its [i.e., so that the live center’s]
substance will become
- strong and
- resilient
without losing
its soft aliveness.

You find yourself in the predicament of
- possessing an adult ego with all its faculties intact,
- yet separated from that vulnerable live center.

- The vulnerable live center is separated from
  - your wakeful consciousness – that is your problem.
The more
the live center is
• unrealistically and
• inadequately
  • "defended" and
  • blocked,
  • denied and
  • covered up,
the more
do some aspects of the self
come into being
of which
one will feel
• ashamed and
• guilty.

One of the severest forms
is that of
cruel impulses.

Cruelty
will truly
cease to exist
in the depth of the human soul –
not only in
• action and
• conscious thoughts,
but in the
• unconscious emotions –

when
the live center
is not
• denied and
• hindered,
but
• recognized,
• observed, and
• allowed to function.

The intense feelings
of the live center
can then be compared to
reality,
as it [i.e., as the live center] unfolds.
The ego-faculties
will help in the process [of comparing the feelings in the live center to reality];
• reason and
• intelligence
  will adjust
    • imbalances and
    • deviation from reality.

But
when reason [instead]
is used
to deny the
• depth,
• scope and
• richness
  of feelings
    as they manifest
      from the
        live center,
the human personality
• cripples itself and
• puts itself
  out of balance.

Bring together
• the manifestation of the live center,
  with
    • its vulnerability and
    • its strength of feelings,
with
• your adult
  • understanding and
  • ego-faculties.

Cruelty
can exist
only as a result of
a separation
between
• the live center
  and
• the ego.
To put it in more practical terms,
cruelty exists
because
reality
is misinterpreted,
which causes the individual
to further inactivate
the live center.

It is
not only the child
who misinterprets
what happens around it.

Where
the child
has done that [i.e., where the child has misinterpreted reality]
is precisely where
the adult
continues to do so,
right now –
• unless and
• until
    all this [misinterpretation of reality]
has been
    • found and
    • corrected.

All of you,
in the areas of your difficulties,
go on
misinterpreting reality.

You do not perceive
what goes on around you.

You do not see things
the way they
really are,
but
misunderstand them.
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How can you discover such misunderstanding?

Only by first acknowledging to yourself what it is that you • actually believe, then • interpreting what that means.

This applies to anything that makes you feel disharmonious.

Ask yourself how you interpret what others • feel and • think about you.

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Let us take a practical example to make this more understandable.

You feel • slighted, • discriminated against, • rejected.

As a rule you admit this only vaguely.
You may say the words [admitting to feeling slighted, discriminated against and rejected], but you do not fully acknowledge:

- to what extent you feel this [i.e., to what extent you feel you are being slighted, discriminated against, and rejected], nor
- why you feel this, or
- what makes you believe that your feelings are
  - justified and
  - appropriate.

You can go to the next step and ask yourself:

"Is this real [that I am being slighted, discriminated against and rejected], or do I just believe it? Could it be otherwise?"

Even when you do admit to feeling rejected, you usually let it go at that and you live in

- a fog,
- a haze,

in which you do not fully examine whether or not it [i.e., your being rejected] is real.
You may verbally acknowledge that perhaps it is not real, but then there is another level on which you do believe it is real.

This [other] level [where you do believe that you are being rejected] is not totally
• faced and
• examined.

Cruelty is the greatest stumbling block
• to self-facing,
• to living in the
  • dynamic,
  • adventurous beauty
  of each Now.

It [i.e., cruelty] is also
• the greatest factor in running away from yourself, and
• is ultimately a result of misinterpreting reality.
You cannot interpret reality accurately as long as you do not clearly and precisely formulate what it is that you believe — how you interpret events which seem to call for the hurt and defenses [against the hurt] — and as long as you do not consider the possibility that the reality could be different.

I have discussed here several points which must be combined in your work:

Point 1:
An undesirable situation — a lack of fulfillment, an emptiness — cannot be eliminated and changed into a more desirable condition unless you understand that the present situation cannot be different.

You fully recognize that the cause is in yourself.
Point 2:
Let us separate
- the admission
  of the lack,
  which is the first point,
from the second point –
- the recognition of
  what
  in you
  caused the lack,
so that
  you deeply
  experience
  the oneness
  between
  - your self
  and
  - your life situation.

Point 3:
The cruel aspects
  in you
represent
  the main reasons
  for all
  - resistance and
  - fear
  of self-facing.

Often,
  these cruel aspects [in one]
  can be found
  only when
  one acknowledges
  one's fear [of seeing and facing these cruel aspects within one].
Do not forget
the important correlation
between
fear of
• others, or
• any outer facet of life,
and
the fear of
• your unrecognized cruelty [within].

If you are
free from
cruelty,
you
cannot
ever
fear others.

Point 4:
Establish
in what moments
the live center
is bare –
as in the
vulnerable state of a child,
who has not yet
integrated
• these
• energies and
• feelings
with
• the ego-faculties.
When this integration [between the live center and the ego-faculties]
takes place,
the
vulnerable
live center
is no longer
vulnerable
in a
• negative,
• dangerous or
• debilitating
way,
but
[is vulnerable]
in a
• positive,
• wonderful
way.

It [i.e., the live center]
is
• flexible,
• alive,
• vibrant and
• full of
the strong feelings
without which
• pleasure,
• joy, and
• happiness
cannot exist.

The tremendous
• strength and
• intelligence
contained in
this vulnerable spot [i.e., this vulnerable live center]
will govern
all your
• actions and
• attitudes.
It [i.e., the vulnerable live center with its strength and intelligence] will cause
• thoughts and
• emotions
which must bear fruit all around you.

It [i.e., the vulnerable live center with its strength and intelligence] will induce you to be
totally constructive in all you do.

You will want to give your
• best and
• total attention to everything you experience,
• to all your undertakings.

Nothing will be done
• half-heartedly,
• with half-attention or divided motives.

Therefore, the outcome will be more and more
• desirable and fulfilling.
There is no strain in this attention [to everything you experience and to all your undertakings].

You will be carried by a
  • sweeping,
  • marvelous strength.

Instead of covering up the vulnerable spot, you will bring it out.

Instead of shying away from the feelings in this vulnerable spot, you will widen the area of aliveness.

You will strengthen it [i.e., strengthen this vulnerable spot, this live center] with a new resiliency, which comes from
  • understanding reality and
  • correctly interpreting what goes on
    • in you, and
    • in others.
As you begin to integrate
• the vulnerable spot
with
• the ego,
you are accomplishing the goal of your evolutionary process in this particular respect.

You have to go through the four points I indicated in order to connect
• your fears
with
• your unacknowledged cruelty.

Discover how the cruelty is a result of misinterpretation.

Question closely why you have these cruel impulses.

As you do so, acknowledge
• what hurts you;
• what you would want to be different;
• what you believe others do to you,
• what life does to you.

After putting this into precise words, take the next step: ask yourself
• whether you are in reality,
• whether what you believe is true or not.
Now, my friends,
this lecture
must not remain
a theoretical study.

To the extent
you use it for yourself,
you will make what I say
a reality.

Some of you
have begun to do so
in your personal pathwork.

Others
have not yet begun
this particular phase.

I do expect –
if not tonight,
then in the next question and answer period –
that you will present me
with such problems.

You may begin
by expressing exactly
• what hurts you and
• why.

You will come
to certain recognitions.

Then
ask your questions,
and I will help you further.

Let us consider together
whether or not
the hurt is justified.

Is it
really
the way
you feel it to be?
The moment you can question the reality of your experiencing
  • slight and
  • hurt,
you have
  a firm foundation from which to proceed.

As long as you cannot ask yourself this question [i.e., the question whether or not the hurt is justified and really the way you feel it to be] because you do not yet know that you feel it [i.e., not yet know that you feel the hurt],
you have to seek the proper way [to feel this hurt or slight and discern its reality] in your momentary phase of the pathwork.

Some of you may be aware of the cruelty, even if only vaguely.

You can proceed from there.

Some may be very much aware of their fears [per se], but are separated from the other side of the coin [of their fears] – namely, the cruel impulses in themselves [which are causing the fears].
Others may be acutely aware of their unfulfillment—
which can be any type of undesirable present situation—
but have not yet connected this lack with their own innermost causes.

Still others may have accomplished this [i.e., have connected their lack with their own causes] to some degree,
but overlook the rare instances when their true vulnerable spot comes to the fore.

They have not yet observed
• how they manage to get away from it [i.e., get away from their vulnerable spot, their live center],
• how they
• cover it up,
• harden or
• numb it
• in one fashion or another.

All these possibilities exist now for your further work.

Some of you are aware of one or another of these aspects, but not of the others;
none of you are aware of all these aspects.
May all of you  
bring these points together,  
not just intellectually,  
but as  
deeply felt  
experience.

This, indeed,  
will give you  
• courage and  
• liberation.

None of these aspects  
are equally strong  
in everyone.

For example,  
with some of my friends  
the area of their  
• illusion and  
• misinterpretation of reality  
is relatively small.

They  
• are rational and  
• see reality in many areas.

Their misinterpretation of reality  
applies  
only to certain areas,  
which may be  
so  
• hidden and  
• vague, so  
• subtle and  
• elusive,  
that it [i.e., their misinterpretation of reality]  
is difficult to ascertain.

Just because they are  
apparently  
so much in reality,  
it is easy to overlook  
• where they are not and  
• to what extent they are not.
In a certain way, these friends [who are rational and see reality in many areas] have a more difficult time resolving this problem [of ascertaining where they are still in illusion] than those who [in contrast to these who see reality in many areas, instead]
• overtly and
• obviously demonstrate that they are, even on the intellectual level, in
• illusion or
• delusion.

The latter [i.e., those who overtly and obviously demonstrate that they are in illusion even on the intellectual level] may suffer more acutely until they reach the point of questioning their interpretation of
• events and
• other people's reactions.

Then [finally] there are those who believe that they are
• reasonable,
• rational and
• realistic,
yet are deluded even about that.

The material I have given you can indeed be a major tool for all of you.
Now, do you have any questions regarding this topic?

**QUESTION:**
I have found this cruelty in me in connection with revenge.

I also feel my cruelty when I
  • withdraw and
  • punish others with
    my isolation.

Now, in spite of having found this, I feel that I cannot give it up.

I must hang on to it.

Can you help me to go on from here?

**ANSWER:**
Actually, what I said in this lecture is an answer.
Your particular key now is to ask yourself

• why you feel cruel.

• What do you believe is done to you?

• What do you expect might be done to you?

• What do you expect of the other person?

• Why do you believe the other person
  • is acting – or
  • has acted, or
  • might act – in the way that induces cruel impulses in you?

• Acknowledge precisely what it is that you believe.

Then the next step must be to ask:

• Is it real, or do I only believe it to be so?

QUESTIONER:
To me it seems real....

ANSWER:
Of course.

That is exactly what I mean.
Because it does seem real, you seem to need cruelty. You have always assumed that it is real. Now you must open yourself to the possibility that it might not be as you believe. That must be your next step in this respect.

As long as you let it go at that,
* in a vague attitude of "perhaps it is not so, but to me it seems real,"
* without considering the consequences, you will remain stuck.

When you want to see the truth above all and reach for it [i.e., reach for the truth], it will come to you.
As long as you remain in a hazy climate, you must hold on to the cruelty.

The cruelty will be your precarious pleasure.

The pleasure [you experience from being cruel] will cease when you understand the true facts.

The understanding can only happen when you • want it [i.e., when you want the understanding] and • are ready to consider new • horizons and • possibilities that you had never thought of.

Specifically, ask yourself the question: "Do • the circumstances, • the desires of the other person and • the facts bear out what I feel, or might I be mistaken?

If the reality is different from the way I think and feel it, I would like to see that reality.
I open myself up to that reality.

I do not
• commit or
• obligate myself
to anything except that I want to see the truth."

Then truth must come, and truth must remove
• conflict and
• suffering.

That is the way.

QUESTION:
I am extremely aware of
• cruelty and
• vulnerability in myself.

My feelings are so strong when I feel slighted that I feel the desire to kill those who seem to slight me.

Yet, I also sense that my reactions may be exaggerated.

What should I do about this now that I have become aware of it?
ANSWER:
Again,
an exact answer
can be found in this lecture.

But I also wish to answer you personally.

I said before that
with some people
the area of
their unrealistic understanding is
• relatively small,
while with others it is
• much more obvious.

You belong undoubtedly
to the latter category.

This is a two-edged thing
because –

due
• to this unreality,
• to your unreal perceptions –

you
suffer more
while you are in it.

On the other hand,
it [i.e., your vulnerability and cruelty]
is so crass
that you will have an easier time
• discovering the unreality and
• finding your way out of the illusion.

Here you have
an exact example
of what I demonstrated in this lecture.

It is wonderful
• that it [i.e., that your vulnerability and cruelty]
is so open and
• that, in the short time of your work,
it has come out so strongly.
Your vulnerability
is also still
relatively accessible.

You think you defend it
by
• separating it [i.e., by separating your vulnerability]
  from your ego and
• trying to numb it [i.e., numb your vulnerability]
  by cruelty.

On the other hand, [in addition to using cruelty to numb your vulnerability]
cruelty
is also generated
by your misinterpretation of reality.

This [misunderstanding of reality]
is extremely
• strong and
• obvious,
therefore rather easy
to determine
once you begin to
• question it [i.e., question your understanding of reality] and
• consider the possibility [that your understanding is, in truth, a misunderstanding instead]
in a serious way.

What you
• believe
  people
  • feel and
  • think
and what they
• actually
  • feel and
  • think,
what you
• believe
  they are and
what they
• actually are,
is
very,
very different.
Think
every day,
my friend,
about where
you feel you were
• insulted,
• slighted,
• rejected, or
• discriminated against.

Put it down
in writing,
every single instance.

I want you to do this
every day.

After
a few weeks,
or even a few days,
you will see
to what extent –
actually
almost all the time
you are in contact with people –
you
at least
anticipate
• rejection and
• discrimination,
• slight and
• disapproval.

Very often
you think it [i.e., you think the rejection, discrimination, slight, and disapproval] already has happened,
while
in reality
nothing could be further from the truth.
When you begin to ask yourself whether your feelings are 
• true and 
  • commensurate with what actually takes place – and 
when you want to see what is 
• true, 
  as possibly opposed to what you heretofore believed [to be true] – 
you must begin to experience 
• genuine and 
  • lasting relief.

I want you to work along these lines 
• by yourself 
  and also 
  • in your group.

Ask yourself what you believe 
the other group members feel about you.

When you bring it out, compare it with their actual reactions to you.

Then also learn 
• what is behind their reactions and 
  • why they feel what they feel.
Your entire aim
must now be
to discover
  • what actually is [true]
  and
  • how it differs from
     what you think is true.

Then
you will not need to
toughen
the vulnerable spot,
     which is
     the essence of
     the real live center,
     without which
     you cannot successfully live.

When you formulate
precisely
what you
think
others feel about you – and
when you then,
with equal precision,
• formulate the possibility
  that you might be mistaken and
• contemplate
  other alternatives –
a new world
will open for you.

It [i.e., this new world]
will be
• a free world
  in which
     you can live
     without fear,
• a world of light
  in which
     you need not be
     isolated.
Now you feel
the whole world
is against you.

Since you feel
the whole world
is
• against you,
• out to
  • harm and
  • slight
    you,
• to
  • reject and
  • humiliate
    you,
you must
toughen yourself.

Cruelty
is almost the only weapon
with which to defend yourself
against such a world.

Therefore
you must hang on to it [i.e., hang on to cruelty].

But
when you begin to see
that this is not so [i.e., see that the world is not against you],
you will
not need
the cruelty,
you will be
• relaxed and
• light,
because
• the world
  will no longer
    be your enemy.

• Other people
  will no longer
    be your enemies.
For instance, when you pass people in the street, observe
• the subtle, and
• yet distinct,
feeling of
• how you perceive
  the strangers around you,
• how you perceive
  that they are all your enemies.

Then ask yourself,
• "Is this true?
• Are they really my enemies,
  or might it be different?
• Might they feel similar to
  the way I feel –
  • frightened and
  • lost?
• And when they are angry,
  maybe they hit out
  as I do
    at the idea
      that
        everyone else
          is their enemy?"

Millions of people
  pass each other by,
    day in and day out,
each feeling they are being singled out
to be persecuted.

This is often a
• subtle,
• not even detectable,
  feeling,
    which, nevertheless, is there.

Once this feeling
  is brought into awareness,
you can begin to question
  the accuracy
    of your perception.
You can thus find the way back to
• reality,
  hence to
• truth and
• light,
into a world which is
• wonderful,
• not frightening.

My dearest friends,
may this lecture bring forth in you all that is
• healthy,
• creative,
• constructive and
• real.

You will find it [i.e., you will find all that is healthy, creative, constructive and real] immediately "behind" that vulnerable live center, once you allow the first manifestations of its [i.e., allow the first manifestations of the vulnerable live center’s] initially disquieting emotions to reach your surface awareness.

Go through this and see what will then manifest [after the initially disquieting emotions manifest], especially when your consciousness reaches for this possibility.
The constant blessings given to you combine with this power within you and fill you from within yourself.

Be in peace.

Be in God!

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