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/](https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/)

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- **Greetings,**  
- **blessings and**  
- **welcome**  
  to all of my friends here.

First of all,  

*I would like to say to this group of people,*  
what an extremely wonderful thing it is you are doing.

- **The**  
  - **long**  
  - **arduous**  
  years  
  that many of you have spent, and

- **the hard work**  
  in overcoming  
  the ever-present  
  - **fear of**  
  - **resistance to**  
  meeting the self  
  have brought so many fruits.
This [i.e., This hard work over these long arduous years] has created
   a strong center of light
   in the universal scheme of things.

It [i.e., This hard work over these long arduous years] has ongoing effects
   all around.

The invisible effects already existed long before you were able to detect them.

But now, effects become realities in your lives.

Many of you begin to
   • notice and
   • feel
     a change within yourselves that seemed impossible even to visualize not so long ago.

• Your lives are fuller,
• pleasure is greater,
• fear is lessening,
• security grows.

• You become more firmly rooted in the reality within yourself – the divine reality.
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<td><strong>The effects</strong> [i.e., The effects of this hard work over these long arduous years] are also manifest in what is beginning to happen to this group as a whole.</td>
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<td><strong>The new gift</strong> I brought [see Pathwork Lecture 186: Venture In Mutuality: Healing Force To Change Inner Negative Will – on the gift of the Force] was made possible by this [i.e., was made possible by the effects on this group as a whole of your hard work over these long arduous years].</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The strength, • the healing blessing that can unite with • your self-generated new energy, is one such manifestation that will • continue to grow and • spread its light further and further.</td>
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<tr>
<td>An increasing benign circle is beginning to establish itself: • the effectiveness of your work on the path • generates new energy which, in turn, • makes it possible for me • to bring to you a greater influx of energy • to • facilitate your efforts and • make them [i.e., make your efforts] increasingly more effective.</td>
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The new energy also showed in the very wonderful experience you had when all small working groups met together.

This unification [of all the small working groups when you met together] meant more than you can realize at the moment.

You truly witnessed what it means to transform the energy of negative feelings – because they [i.e., because negative feelings] are
• met
and
• not denied – into love.

You have
• witnessed and
• been part of the process of transformation [i.e., the transformation of negative feelings into love].

In your individual pathwork you experienced this [i.e., experienced this transformation of negative feelings into love] more and more frequently in recent months.
But

in the combined group experience
you became part
of the flow
of self-perpetuating forces,
without
losing identity.

You were
moved
by
• a vast force,
by
• an inner volition
that was
not
ego-directed.

You were
• purified,
• uplifted and
• strengthened
by this process [i.e., by this process of being in this group experience].

It [i.e., this process of being in this group experience]
has to deepen
your
• faith,
your
• knowledge,
• of the reality of
the inner good life,
• of the spiritual realities
I am striving to convey to you.

The love
in this group
is a tangible reality.

Cultivate it [i.e., cultivate the love in this group],
my friends.
Realize how
the law of brotherhood
unites
all of you.

It [i.e., the love in this group]
will wither
if you do not cultivate it.

But it [i.e., But the love in this group]
will
• grow and
• become
forever more effective
if you
treasure
the newly developed state
of your unity.

• The bond
  is as yet
tenuous,

• the strings
  that hold you together
  with love
  are still
  • tender and
  • new.

But they [i.e., But the strings that hold you together with love]
will strengthen
as you
• pay conscious attention to
  this new process [i.e., this new process that has led
  you to experience love within the group] and
• nurse it [nurse this experience of love within the group]
  • with your
    appreciation of
    one another and
  • by expressing
    your innermost needs to one another,
    as true brothers and sisters should do.
The help that you can give to one another will also heal your own selves because of your growing awareness of what you have to give and how you can help.

You can truly sustain and give to each other, as you have spontaneously done during this significant group experience two weeks ago.

Repeat such experiences at intervals.

This is my advice.

And now we shall start with tonight's lecture.

In this lecture I would like to give more tangible help in meeting the changing movements of growth and life.

You remember that the movement of life is the alternation of expansion and contraction.
You also know, to some extent, the meaning of these movements [i.e., the meaning of these alternating movements of expansion and contraction].

But I would like to go deeper into this topic, for it is now very necessary for many of my friends whose phase of work on the path requires deeper understanding of this process [i.e., this process of working with the alternating movements of expansion and contraction].

Let us briefly recapitulate the meaning of the movements of • expansion and • contraction.

Expansion takes place when a • positive, • open, • committed, • honest, • loving, • giving attitude exists.
When
the good
• feelings and
• thoughts
create
a corresponding
attitude in life,
they [i.e., these good feelings and thoughts]
influence
• actions,
• behavior,
• responses,
• reactions,
• emanation and
• deeds.

Such an attitude [i.e., an attitude created by good feelings and thoughts]
brings forth
• desirable experience,
• fulfillment,
• pleasure,
• bliss and
• abundance
  in all respects of life
  wherever
    this attitude holds true.
• Blissful,
• joyful
life experience
automatically
creates
• open and
• expanding
  soul movements,
  which are the basis for a
  • positive,
  • affirmative
    attitude
toward life –
    and on
    and on
  goes
  a benign circle.
Contraction takes place when
  • a negative attitude toward life exists –
when
  • fear,
  • hate,
  • spite,
  • distrust,
  • negation
    • of self and
    • of the truth
      of the momentary state,
  • pretense,
  • dishonesty,
  • self-deception,
  • false ideas,
  • negation of
    the beauty of the universe,
  • secret cheating and
  • self-rejection
    exist.

Within the larger vicious circle, a smaller ingrown one is then
  • at work and
  • at cross-purposes with the
    • affirmative,
    • conscious striving
      of the personality.

  • The negative attitudes create
    • self-hate,
    • the self-hate increases
      • hate for and
      • distrust of others.

And on and on it goes.
These inner impurities [e.g., fear, hate, spite, distrust, pretense, self-rejection, ...] have no adverse effect on you

- if you are truly conscious of them [i.e., if you are truly conscious of these inner impurities],
- if you understand them [i.e., if you understand these inner impurities] in proper proportion to the reality of the vaster scheme of your inner life and of universal life.

In other words, if you perceive them [i.e., if you perceive these inner impurities] correctly, their effect is not negative, but [the effect of these inner impurities] turns into a positive one [i.e., turns into a positive effect].

The energy of these [negative] attitudes begins to transform itself automatically as a result of
- awareness and
- proper perception.
But

• if the self
  • is too
    • vain and
    • frightened
      to see itself
        as it is [i.e., to see itself with these inner negative impurities]
          at the moment,

• if it [i.e., if the self]
  • either
    • denies
  or
    • exaggerates
      the implications [i.e., either denies or exaggerates the effects and
          implications of having these inner negative impurities] –
            again out of vanity and fear –

then

the alternation
  of life movements [i.e., alternations between movements of expansion
      and movements of contraction]

will bring
  those hidden [negative] impurities
    to the surface.

It is up to

the conscious personality
  to make the best
    of these periods [i.e., these periods of alternation between
        expansion and contraction].
The automatic procedure is the following:

those
• negative attitudes and
• destructive
  • thoughts and
  • feelings
    that
    always
    negate
    the truth of life

are bound to create a contraction
  of
  • consciousness,
  of
  • soul movement, and
  even [contraction] of
  • the outer body.

*In this state* [i.e., In this state of contraction],
the personality is unable
to receive
the abundance
of universal life.

*Then* [i.e., In this state of contraction where you are unable to receive the abundance of universal life]
you
• are closed in
and
  • must therefore
    remain poor.

You cannot receive
and are therefore deprived.
The impoverishment of your own good feelings –
and therefore [the impoverishment] of desirable life experience –
furthers bitterness, self-pity, accusation, spite.

The negative attitudes [i.e., bitterness, self-pity, accusation, spite] bring more and more undesirable, painful life experience, against which the personality defends itself by closing up, by building a protective armor – which is the closed, contracted state.

Thus a larger vicious circle becomes a self-perpetuating [negative and destructive] force in your life.
The creation of negative life experience, with its contracting movement, is supposed to ward off negative life experience.

People make themselves more
• brittle and
• stiff; thus
• pushing away life itself and
• instituting a state of constantly unfulfilled longing.

This is why it says in Scripture that
• the poor will become poorer and
• the rich richer.

This is one of the laws of life the individual must discover to make the alternation of life movements [i.e., alternation between movements of expansion and movements of contraction]
a
• productive,
• growing process toward increasing transcendence of the opposites.
All this, broadly speaking, is a recapitulation, in a concise way, of many of the past lectures for the purpose of introducing the theme of today's lecture.

In this world, in this sphere of consciousness [in which you now live], expansion and contraction create opposite experiences [namely]: pleasure and pain.

Only when you transcend this sphere of being [i.e., this sphere where you now live], when you transcend the level of duality, do expansion and contraction both become blissful experiences of different sorts.

But this [i.e., But transcending this world’s sphere of consciousness, that is, transcending the level of duality] can only happen when you have mastered the negative experience.
Or, to put it differently, [i.e., Transcending this world’s sphere of consciousness, i.e., transcending the level of duality, can happen only] when you acquire

- reaction and
- approach
to both

*life movements* [i.e., to both life movements of expansion and contraction].

**Contrary to what you may believe** [not only does the negative experience require a new attitude],

the positive experience also requires a new attitude.

We shall discuss both [expansion and contraction movements] tonight.

The new approach to both [i.e., to both expansion and contraction, or to both positive and negative experiences]

is to be learned

on this

*level of duality* [i.e. on this sphere of being where you now live].

This [i.e., This learning of the new approach to both expansion and contraction, or to both positive and negative experiences, on this level of duality]

is the task

the soul has to master

at this particular stage of its evolution.

Let us begin with the contracting state, due to negation, which causes more contraction – and so on.
As I mentioned, the usual, automatic reflex reaction to negative experience is blind contraction with its accompanying destructive emotions and thoughts.

More specifically, the personality invariably feels unjustly victimized, blames others or life, is resentful, withdraws good feelings in revenge and spite.

The person is also fearful of what life brings, for how could it be otherwise [i.e., how could the person not be fearful of what life brings]?

One can never trust somebody whom one blames and spites, whether this be another person, life as a whole, or God.
To find the key
to breaking
this vicious circle,
the
• conscious
• volitional
self
must make
a deliberate effort
to remove the blindness
that makes you believe
the negative experience
is coming to you
without
your having produced it.

As long as you believe this [i.e., As long as you believe you have not produced the negative experiences in your life],
there is
no way out.

As long as
you are unaware of
the connection
between
• the event
and
• your own attitude that causes it,
you must remain trapped
in the vicious circle I described.

Thus,
the first step out [of the vicious circle in which you find yourself]
is
a willingness
to search for
your own contribution
to the undesirable event,
no matter
what the appearances to the contrary may indicate.
The moment you 
- can truly accept this [i.e., The moment you can truly accept the fact that you were in some way the cause of the undesirable event in your life] and
- can proceed from that premise,

you create
a different pattern of
- energy and
- consciousness
within your psyche.

The next step you must learn in order to break the vicious circle is to observe your own contracting movement when the
- negative,
- undesirable experience comes to you.

Become keenly aware of
- your state of contraction,
of
- hardening and
- numbing yourself,
of
- warding off experience from
  - within and
  - without.
Observe
• all the feelings involved,
  with their meaning –
  • rage,
  • hate,
  • fear,
  • guilt,
  • blame –
and
• all the tightnesses
in
• body,
• soul and
• spirit.

Only then –
in this
  observance [i.e., in this observance of all the feelings involved in the
  negative experience in your life, with these feelings’ meaning],
in this
  acceptance of
    the tight contraction
      that is still automatic –

can you proceed
to acquire
  a different reaction.

Begin
to first
want
• to
  not contract,
but [rather than contract, want]
• to remain pulsatingly open,
even to
  the negative
    • experience and
  the negative
    • feeling.
You will soon see
that this [i.e., that this not contracting but rather remaining
pulsatingly open even to the negative experience and feeling]
is far from dangerous.

Being open
does not make you
more helpless;
it [i.e., being open]
makes you
less so [i.e., makes you less helpless].

It [i.e., Being open]
makes you
more feeling.

• A plasticity of
  soul substance,
• a state of
  open vulnerability
  is required
to let
  • feelings and
  • experiences
    be in you.

First this [i.e., First this open vulnerability]
must,
by necessity,
apply to
painful
  • experiences and
  • feelings.

If you cannot
bear
  • them [i.e., If you cannot bear the painful experiences and feelings of life],
you are not equipped
to experience
  • joyful life.
The idea that
they [i.e., The idea that the painful experiences and feelings of life]
are unbearable
is a concoction of
the
• limited,
• fragmented
mind.

It is not true [i.e., It is not true that the painful experiences
and feelings of life are unbearable].

• If you do not
"make" something of it [i.e., if you do not “make” something of the
painful experiences and feelings of life],
• if you do not
project untruthful interpretations
into the cause of
• the undesirable experiences and
• the feelings they [i.e., the feelings the undesirable experiences]
evoke in you,
you can
• bear them [i.e., you can bear the undesirable experiences] easily,
• sustain them [i.e., you can sustain the undesirable experiences],
• accept them [i.e., you can accept the undesirable experiences],
• experience them fully [i.e., you can experience
the undesirable experiences fully].

Allow
the painful
• experiences and
• feelings
to be in you.

Go with them.

Do not fight them –
accept them
in the realization that
somehow
you
must have created this condition.
Thus [i.e., By accepting negative experiences and realizing that somehow you must have created this negative condition]

the
  • anger and
  • resentment
you feel against life
will decrease.

• Anger,
• fear,
• resentment and
• self-pity
create
  • tightness and
  • brittleness.

They [i.e., Anger, fear, resentment, and self-pity]
numb you
  • to all life experience,
  • to the truth
    of your momentary state.

Only
when you
truly encounter
the negative experience,
without
  • aggrandizing or
  • diminishing
    it [i.e., without aggrandizing or diminishing the negative experience],
without
  • any manipulation [of the negative experience],
do you really
master it [i.e., do you really master the negative experience].
Only

• when you thus
  master the negative experience –
• when you no longer
  • fear and
  • flee from
  it –

have you
truly
• overcome or
• transcended
the negative side
of duality.

And only then
are you
indeed
 capable of
  accepting its
    positive
      counterpart.

Initially
all human beings
 try to avoid
  undesirable experience.

They defend
 against it [i.e., defend against the undesirable experience]
and thus
 make themselves
  more prone
 to it [i.e., more prone to the undesirable experience].

This [i.e., This defending against undesirable experience]
 puts them
deeper
 into the painful duality
 that is so hard to overcome
 until
 this key [i.e., this key to how to master negative experiences] is discovered.
Of course
   it takes considerable work on the path
   before you are
   really conscious
   of your
   • fear [i.e., your fear of negative experiences] and
   of your
   • running away [i.e., your running away from
       negative experiences].

For,
   to begin with,
   you are hardly aware
   • that this is the case [i.e., that you fear and run away
       from negative experiences],
   or
   • how you
     really
     • hate,
     • spite and
     • pity
     yourself;
   • reject
     • life and
     • yourself.

Often
   many years of
   attentive self-search
   are necessary
   to obtain
   this self-awareness.

But when you do [i.e., when you do have this self-awareness that you fear and run
   away from negative experiences and see how your really hate, spite and pity yourself and reject both life and yourself],

then
   you can truly enter the phase
   I am discussing here.
This [self awareness] requires paying attention to your innermost soul reflexes.

When you do so [i.e., when you pay attention to your innermost soul reflexes], the negativities that create contraction will gradually diminish.

Sustain the painful feelings – not

- masochistically,

not

- self-rejectingly,

not in the spirit

- that this [i.e., that enduring these painful feelings] is what you deserve because you are such a miserable creature –

but rather in the attitude of

"I am indeed capable of enduring a little pain.

Somehow, inadvertently, I must have created it.

Therefore I will not create a new negative condition by denying what I have created."
In this way,
you initiate
true transformation.

It [i.e., true transformation] 
first manifests 
when you discover 
that you no longer find the pain 
so unendurable.

You will ride 
with it [i.e., ride with the pain], as it were,
you will let yourself 
be carried 
by it [i.e., let yourself be carried by the pain] 
without ever losing 
a realistic sense of proportion 
about it [i.e., without losing a realistic sense of proportion about 
the pain in the larger framework of your life].

No hopeless depression 
can ever get hold of you 
in this spirit [i.e., in this spirit of riding with and being carried by the pain 
without ever losing a realistic sense of proportion about the pain].

This [i.e., This attitude toward pain, including accepting that one causes pain 
in one’s own life and taking self-responsibility for exploring how] 
built great self-respect, 
my friends.

The ability to handle 
your self-produced pain 
gives 
• self-confidence and 
• strength.

How can you 
not respect yourself 
in this spirit of 
• courage and 
• truthfulness?
While you are
in the painful feeling
in a
fully accepting spirit,
slowly –
and often
even quite fast –
the feeling of
• pain
  transforms itself into
  • pleasure,
the feelings of
• hate and
• fear
  become
  • love,
the feeling of
• distrust
  turns into
  • confidence
  and even into
  • the knowledge
    that life
    is as good as
    you
    choose
    to make it.
The self-respect
thus gained
will then make you
want
  to make the best of your life.
Thus
you meet negative experience
without
  a negative attitude
    that reproduces
      negative experience
      endlessly.
When you meet negative experience
  • with a positive attitude,
  instead of
    • contracting against it,

you remain
  • open,
  • flexible,
  • pulsating,
  • alive –
    even though
      at first
      this means
        enduring
          • a pain or
          • some other unpleasant emotion.

This [i.e., This approach to pain or some other unpleasant or negative emotion] is truly
  one of the
  most important keys [i.e., one of the most important keys to dealing with pain or some other unpleasant or negative emotion in a mature and healthy way].

But that key [i.e., that key to working with pain or some other unpleasant or negative emotion in a healthy way] is unavailable
  as long as
  you are unaware of
    • the disturbances within yourself,
    • the destructive
      • thoughts and
      • feelings.
In this new way the negative feeling will become a tremendously • positive, • creative force, which is the same [force] as that [force] which you have experienced here together.

You did not plan to create the sweeping love that moved you toward each other, • opening up for each other and • giving to each other, thus • receiving.

It [i.e., this sweeping love among you all] happened as a • natural, • spontaneous, • unplanned event, as an • inevitable result of • opening yourself and • encountering first the negative emotions honestly.

You did not hide from them [i.e., You did not hide from the negative emotions].
You did away with your
• pretenses and
• masks.

You did not defend yourself against unpleasant feelings by being
• critical and
• judgmental with each other.

You thereby opened new doors.

The fact that this experience was possible is a result of true growth.

But this [i.e., But this group experience of love] is only a beginning.

The same must happen individually with increased frequency in order to transcend
• the cycle of suffering,
so that you can enter into
• a new cycle of joy and peace.
Every day you can come a step further on this juncture of your path.

You can look at your negations without hiding.

You can acknowledge them [i.e., You can acknowledge your negations and negativities].

You can
• observe your negative attitudes and
• see their • deeper meaning,
  their • significance.

You can also
• observe the cramping contraction and
• become intensely aware of this [contracted] state of your being, which you • still take for granted

and thus • do not even notice as an • unnatural, • painful and • unnecessary state.
When you
listen into
your unfeeling numbness,
you will detect
• painful longing and
• other undesirable feelings.

As you allow them [i.e., As you allow this painful longing
and other undesirable feelings]
to simmer
on the surface,
you institute
the process
I just described.

Welcome
the painful feeling
that awakens in you.

It [i.e., The painful feeling that awakens in you]
is your
• life,

it [i.e., the painful feeling that awakens in you]
is your
• energy,

it [i.e., the painful feeling that awakens in you]
is your
• creative substance.

When this occurs [i.e., When you welcome the painful feeling that awakens in you],
a
• positive,
• benign
circle
will
very
• definitely and
• solidly
build itself.
Now, let us talk for a moment about
the positive
• circle or
• sequence.

Offhand, it may appear as though there is nothing else needed for a good experience:

all you do is enjoy it [i.e., enjoy the good experience whenever it comes].

But this [i.e., But your thought that simply enjoying the good experience whenever it comes is all that is needed to experience the positive or benign circle] is not true.

There is much more to it [i.e., There is much more to fully feeling the good experience and building it into a positive benign circle or sequence] than that [i.e., than simply passively enjoying the good experience whenever it comes].

The more you handle the negative cycles in the above-mentioned way, the more frequent positive experience will become.

It will also become increasingly obvious that positive experience does not befall you by accident either [i.e., any more than negative experience befalls you by accident].

You will sense that it [i.e., You will sense that a positive experience] is a lawful result [in the same way a negative experience is a lawful result].
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However,

unless you become attentive to
  • the positive
  as much as to
  • the negative
    • experiences and
    • feelings,
you will
  • lag behind and
  • obstruct
    a greater expansion
    that is intrinsically possible
    at this stage.

Pleasure, too,
requires
  • attention and
  • understanding
so that
  you can deal with it \[i.e., \text{so that you can deal with pleasure}\]
  in the best possible way.

The habitual reaction
of the average human being
to pleasurable experience
  is a
  momentary rejoicing.

But,
at the same time,
there exist
  a number of other emotional reactions \[to pleasurable experience\]
  that you
  overlook
  and thereby
  you lose out.
So, my friends,
begin to be
as attentive to
• pleasurable and
• fulfilling
experience
as you have learned to be with
• difficult and
• painful
ones [i.e., as you have learned to be
with difficult and painful experiences].

You will soon note that,
in addition to
the
• welcoming
• joyful
reaction [to pleasurable and fulfilling experience],
there are
others [i.e., there are other reactions to pleasurable and fulfilling experience]
present,
for instance a
• vague,
• half-aware
  • anxiety and
  • apprehension.

On one level
it [i.e., On one level a vague, half-aware anxiety and apprehension]
is due to
the fear of
losing the good state again.

On a deeper level
it [i.e., On a deeper level a vague, half-aware anxiety and apprehension]
is due to
the inability
of enduring
a greater expansion
of positive experience.
This [i.e., This inability of enduring a greater expansion of positive experience] exists in exact proportion to your inability of enduring unwelcome feelings.

You deny

• the fear of not being able to endure good feelings

just as much as you deny

• negative feelings.

You simply look away from that part in you in which you react negatively to happiness – and this is very regrettable because it causes you more unnecessary hardship.

As I said, becoming aware of this reaction [i.e., this negative reaction to pleasure and happiness] should make you look at the opposite picture: your reaction to pain.
As you
• react,
• are frightened of and
• angry about
  painful
• experiences and
• feelings,
you are also
unable
to live in the higher climate of
• pleasure,
• joy,
• bliss,
and finally even
• ecstasy.

You can attain
• the higher vibration,
• the raised level of functioning
  of the higher realms
  of life experience,
only when
you go through
the self-produced
• negation and
• negativity.

Otherwise
• the climate is
too heady,
• the altitude
too high,
so that,
instead of
• security,
it [i.e., the higher climate of pleasure, joy, bliss, and ecstasy] must bring
• anguish.
To repeat:
the same approach
is necessary
toward
both
• pleasure
and
• pain.

First,
simply observe
the previously hidden
reactions [to happiness and fulfillment].

The more
you encounter
your negation of
the good life,
the more
you can understand
why
you do not live in a
• happier and
• more fulfilled
state.

This [i.e., This understanding of how you negate and resist happiness and fulfillment]
will have
the great benefit
of making you
less
• angry at life,
less
• resentful of others,
less
• blaming,
less
• vindictive and
• spiteful,
less
• self-pitying.
Hence you will 
increase 
your capacity 
of dealing with 
the negative experience 
which, in turn, 
must increase 
your capacity 
of having 
a good experience.

As you 
let the negative emotion be, 
you are 
carried by it [i.e., carried by the negative emotion] 
without 
fighting it [i.e., without fighting the negative emotion], 
and you become capable 
of the identical attitude 
toward bliss [i.e., you become capable of the attitude to let the positive emotion be, to let yourself be carried by the positive emotion, without fighting it].

As you become aware of 
your negative emotions 
toward pleasure, 
you can endure it [i.e., you can endure pleasure] 
with 
less 
and less 
• anguish, 
• apprehension and 
• anxiety.

Sensitive listening 
into 
your most subtle reactions [to pleasure and fulfillment] 
will reveal to you 
that you 
rarely 
welcome good experience 
with all of yourself.
You do so [i.e., you do welcome good experience into your life]
  • as a matter of principle, and
  • because you
    fear pain,
and also, of course,
  • because the longing [i.e., the longing for good experience]
    can never be entirely stilled.

But
  there is a large part
  in all of you
  that still
  denies good experience,
  while you are
  entirely unaware of
  this fact [i.e., unaware of this fact that a part of your still
  denies good experience].

If you
  desire positive experience
  out of a negative reason –
  out of fear of pain –
you still
  bar the ability
  to live in
  a higher state of functioning.

Again
  there is a correlation:

  • to the degree you
    • avoid
    and
    • deny
      pain,
    • refute it
    and
    • rebel against it,
    • repress
    and
    • project it onto outer circumstances,

  • [to that degree] you cannot
    want pleasure
    for its own sake,
    but only to avoid pain.
In that way [i.e., by not wanting pleasure for its own sake, but wanting pleasure only to avoid pain]

it is impossible
to come out of
the wheel
• of suffering and
• of painful struggle with the opposites [i.e., painful struggle with the opposites of pain and pleasure].

As
• your whole system,
• your whole organization
  of the human apparatus
grows,
you become
more acclimatized
to
• happiness,
to
• fulfillment,
to
• bliss,
to
• pleasure,
to
• abundance,
to
• true expansion,
to
• the joyousness
  of the living energy and
to
• the divine consciousness
  that dwells within you.

Only then [i.e., Only when you are acclimatized to all those things] are you
in harmony with
the nature of creation,
which is
all those things.
Only then [i.e., Only when you are acclimatized to all those things] can you
• awaken to the harmony [i.e., awaken to your inner harmony with the nature of creation]
  that has always been there, and

• recognize
  • that it [i.e., recognize that this harmony with the nature of creation] always
    • instructs and
    • guides you,
  • that it [i.e., recognize that this harmony with the nature of creation] is an ongoing process in you
    that never dies.

Usually you are dead to it [i.e., dead this fact that this harmony with the nature of creation is an ongoing process in you that never dies] because your busy outer mind is so accustomed
• to its [i.e., to your busy outer mind’s] own noise –

that is,
• to its [i.e., to your busy outer mind’s]
  • self-revolving,
  • erroneous thought processes.
If you are not aware of negating the movement toward the expanding experience, you lose it [i.e., you lose the movement toward the expanding experience] ever so quickly again, without understanding why.

And this breeds hopelessness.

Hence, there is always so much disappointment – and then [with so much disappointment emerging when you lose the movement toward the expanding experience without understanding why] the fear of the disappointment [you anticipate because you expect you will lose the movement toward an expanding good experience but not know why] mars the good experience, so that the disappointment becomes inevitable.
Whenever you
  • are in a blissful state and
  • count on
    never losing it again [i.e., never losing your blissful state again] –
    which is your way of
denying the reality
    of your present state,
    [your new present state now being] your fear of pain –
the loss [of bliss]
becomes
  • a tragedy
  and
  • not a predictable stage
    you can learn from
    because
    it [i.e., because this predictable stage]
    brings forth
    unpurified soul stuff.

It is therefore my suggestion
  that
  whenever you find yourself
  in a joyful state,
  let your
  • concentration and
  • meditation
    be particularly concerned with
    observing your
    • vague and
    • hidden
    reactions.

Do you fear
  • losing this state?

And do you also fear
  • remaining in this state?

Admit these reactions
  with the same candor
  you already use
  toward your
  negative feelings.
Observe your automatic soul movement when you encounter:
- pleasure and
- joy.

Does it [i.e., Does your automatic soul movement when encountering pleasure] respond with:
- involuntary
- contraction,

notwithstanding your conscious desires and aims [i.e., notwithstanding your conscious desires and aims for expansion into evermore pleasure and joy]?

This observation [i.e., This observation of your response of involuntary contraction when you encounter pleasure and joy] will allow you once again to become attuned to what is really going on [namely, your involuntary contraction in response to pleasure and joy].

You will see the finely and easily glossed-over reactions, which sorely need your conscious awareness.
As you are aware of this absolute key [to healthily work with positive and negative experiences], you can begin a new process.

[However,]

Do not push yourself into a state in which you are not yet capable of functioning.

Rather admit this [i.e., admit that you are not yet in a state where you would be capable of functioning in this new process] — it [i.e., such an admission] will automatically increase your ability to live in this state [i.e., increase your ability to live in this new state where you would be capable of functioning in this new process].

As you observe yourself, you can prepare for the negative phase, so that you will no longer contract against it [i.e., contract against the negative phase] quite so much.
You can let your soul movement be, rather than manipulate it [i.e., rather than manipulate your soul movement].

In that way, you will increase your capacity to endure all life, first
  • the pain
and then
  • the pleasure.

Only as you observe your inability to do so [i.e., your current inability to endure either the pain or the pleasure in all life], do you come closer to enduring both [i.e., enduring both the pain and the pleasure in all life].

That [i.e., That state where you can endure both the pain and the pleasure in all life] is
  • the unification and
  • the transcendence.

A willing attitude toward observing yourself makes you more
  • real

and
  more
  • alive.
Each time you come through a negative period of contraction in this self-observing way, your ability to endure pleasure grows.

You become acclimatized to functioning on a higher level of being.

This is a very important concept to comprehend, my friends.

Your reaction to pain –

• the denial of it and
• the refusal to ride with it – is the reason for its [i.e., the reason for and meaning of the pain’s] existence.

It [i.e., Your reaction to pain – your denial of it and your refusal to ride with it] is intimately connected with your incapacity to live in bliss.

Only as you see the meaning [i.e., Only as you see the meaning of pain – the meaning being to make you aware of the causes of your pain, including your denial of pain and your refusal to ride with the pain] can

• the meaning [of pain]
and thus
• the manifestation [of pain] change.
And only as this happens [i.e., only as you become aware of the meaning of pain and allow the meaning and manifestation of pain to change]

can the dialogue between

• your conscious mind

and

• the involuntary responses of your soul movements go on.

This dialogue [between your conscious mind and the involuntary responses of your soul movements to pain]

is an essential prerequisite to change.

The dialogue should consist of

• stating and

• acknowledging in clear-cut words

your contracting reaction [to pain],

with all that this implies.

Indicate the momentary situation of

how you

• make yourself brittle,

how you

• deny what is,

how you

• prefer to be numb.

As you state it [i.e., as you state the momentary situation in this way, stating clearly how you make yourself brittle, deny what is, and prefer to be numb], you awaken this part of your soul substance [i.e., you awaken the part of your soul substance that, in an involuntary response to pain, automatically makes you brittle, denies what is, and prefers to be numb].
As you do so [i.e., as you awaken this part of your soul substance that, in its involuntary response to pain, automatically makes you brittle, denies what is, and prefers to be numb],

the pain will no longer appear
so
  • frightening or
so
  • deep or
so
  • unacceptable.

You will endure it [i.e., you will endure the pain] without
  the terrible cramp [and contraction]
  you inflict upon yourself.

Then the second aspect of the dialogue [i.e., the dialog between your conscious mind and the involuntary responses of your soul movements to pain] can begin, in which your conscious self also speaks, but this time in response to the previously • stated and • admitted negation [i.e., the negation of pain in responses of brittleness, denial, and numbness].
You state [from your conscious mind]

• that you wish
to experience
what is [i.e., you wish to experience the pain that is],

• that you have
• the strength and
• the honesty
to do so [i.e., you have the strength and honesty to experience the pain],

• that you
no longer
wish to deny life,

• that
by feeling pain
you prepare yourself
to sustain pleasure, and

• that you wish to increase
• your aliveness and
• the courageous meeting
• of your own feelings –
thus [the courageous meeting]
• of universal bliss.

Such statements to yourself
produce
an ever-increasing affirmation
of
• life and
• feelings.

Even you, my friends,
who have accomplished so much,
are still unaware
that in some respects
you still
• blame and
• accuse,
• feel sorry for yourself and
• hide from life.
As you
  • look at those reactions [i.e., the involuntary automatic reactions of blaming, accusing, feeling sorry for yourself, and hiding from life]

and
  • encounter them
    in the way I have suggested,
the change in you
will become
  • complete and
  • grounded
    in the reality
    of your divine existence.

Focus on
  your actual reactions to
  • pain and
  • pleasure –

and as you do so,
your capacity
  to endure them [i.e., to endure pain and pleasure]
will make
  the former [i.e., will make pain] obsolete.

Lo and behold,
  the endured pain
will transform itself,
  • naturally
  and
  • as if by itself.
I would now like to mention
three different states
of human consciousness.

These states
are very specific
grades of development
which
I have not discussed before,
but which
become relevant
in connection with
the present phase of our work.

In the scale of development,
the least developed state
is that in which
people live in fantasy.

They may
appear
to live in reality.

They may
• hold jobs,
• have families and friends and
• go through
  all sorts of activities,
but
their real pleasure in life
lies in
fantasy.

I mentioned this last time
in a different context.

This [i.e., This least developed state, the state in which people live in fantasy]
is more prevalent
than you realize –
even among you, my friends,
at least in some respect.
For instance,
the preoccupation of the mind
with
would-be situations
belongs to this category.

So do
• day-dreaming,
• playful thoughts of conversations
  as they
  • should or
  • might
    have been,
• living through
  fulfillment
    in a concocted series of mind pictures.
All this
  belongs to
  the fantasy state.

All of it
  uses up
  valuable life energy
    that cannot be regenerated,
for if energy is misused
  it does not renew itself.

Thus
  the energy
  is unavailable
    for real living.

Subsequently
  real living
  becomes
    more
    and more
      fraught with
        apparent danger,
so that
  taking refuge in fantasy life
  is the
    only
      avenue of fulfillment.
Vicarious living can also take place by over-identification with figures in books and plays.

Escape into them [i.e., Escape into the lives of figures in books and plays] is often due to fantasy living, rather than real living from the self.

The second grade on this scale is to live for the sake of impressing others.

We discussed this often and found repeatedly that this aspect exists in all of you.

Different forms of this manifestation exist.

You may do what you are doing – either quite overtly and deliberately, or in a more subtle and hidden way – for the sake of gaining approval from others.
You may express

this state of consciousness [i.e., this state of consciousness on the second level of the development scale where one lives for the sake of impressing others]

by echoing

• opinions and
• values
  • you have never truly examined and
  • that are therefore
    not your own.

You may put yourself

into a tight little box

of prescribed

• behavior and
• values
  • that is
    not
    the true expression of yourself and
  • that does not further
    your
    • real self,
    your
    • pleasure,
    your
    • innermost
      individual
      • qualities,
      • potentials and
      • talents.

You must

• recognize the
  • distorted and
  • neurotic
    reasons
    that may keep you
    hooked on
    this appearance level

and

• abandon it [i.e., abandon this second level of development of living for the sake of appearance],

just as you needed to

• abandon

the fantasy level [i.e., abandon the first level of development].
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Such attitudes [i.e., such attitudes of living at the level of fantasy or at the level of living for the sake of appearance]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>may still exist in you on more subtle levels in spite of your having recognized them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Envisage this possibility [i.e., the possibility that in some subtle ways you may be living at the level of fantasy or at the level of living for the sake of appearance] and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• observe yourself from this point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living for impressing others permeates you more than you know.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The most • developed and • real state [of consciousness] in this particular triad [i.e., this triad of states of consciousness for these three specific grades of development] is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• when you truly live for your own sake,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when you • do and • want things for their own sake.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most individuals live on all three levels [i.e., the three levels of living in fantasy, living for the sake of impressing others, and living for one’s own sake or for the sake of the thing itself].

These [three] aspects
• interact and
• overlap.

There may be
• some areas of health where you are on the third level [i.e., living for one’s own sake or for the sake of the thing itself],
• others where you are on the second [i.e., living for the sake of impressing others], and
• still others where you are on the lowest first [i.e., living in fantasy].

The degree varies with people.

Some
• are much more developed and
• live predominantly on the third, and only minor aspects of their personality remain undeveloped.

With most people it is the other way around.

How is it with you?

Are you truly able to
• see and
• acknowledge where you are in this respect?
To the extent that you live in either of the first two spheres of consciousness [i.e., live in fantasy or live for the sake of impressing others], to that extent you foster your ongoing frustration.

You perpetuate
• negation of
  • life and
• negativity of
  • feelings,
  • thoughts and
  • attitudes.

You create the vicious circle we are discussing.

A dearth of good experiences may then impel you to seek substitute fulfillment
• in fantasy – or
  • in obtaining approval and envy from others.

In both instances [i.e., in seeking substitute fulfillment both in fantasy and in obtaining approval and envy from others], it is a
• would-be, or
• "as if"
  life.
In the "as if" life, you lose
• yourself.

You lose
• the sense
  of
  • hope,
  of real
  • fulfillment and
  • experience.

The latter [i.e., real experience] can come only if
  you first
  • live through what is in you now
  and
  • invest all your energies into the reality of
    • the moment,
    • what and • where
    you are now.

Observe well what is going on and accept the momentary state, without fighting yourself.

For the more you
• fight,
  even for the good,
the more you
• contract.
And
the more you
• contract,
the more you
• perpetuate the negative cycle.

But
not fighting
must never mean
giving in to
• resistance and
• fear.

It [i.e., “Not fighting”]
cannot mean
looking away from yourself.

This lecture, my friends,
will prove to
• be of tremendous help and
• provide rich material,
if you
• truly work with it,
• really use it, and
• do not just gloss over it.

And now, my friends,
before we go to the questions,
we will turn to the "mutual enterprise"
we have started last time [See Pathwork Lecture 186], whereby
• a power and
• a new influx of energy can help you to
• overcome stagnation and
• transform a negative condition.
Let those come forth
who are
• ready and
• willing
to commit themselves
to wanting
• to overcome
  their present stagnation,
to wanting
• additional help.

Four people came forth,
one at a time,
to receive
the force.

Each
• made a personal statement and
• received,
either with
  some accompanying words
  or without [accompanying words],
a very strong current
• of energy,
• of a force of light
that
• a few could see
  and
• all could feel.

It is unfortunately
not possible
  to convey this experience in words.

Perhaps the readers
  can use their inner sense to
• tune in intuitively and
• participate in spirit
  and also
• benefit from
    the force
    that came through so strongly.
Not only
\[\text{those who came forward personally benefited from this force,}\]
but to a degree
\[\text{all who were present did [i.e., all who were present benefited from this force].}\]

Afterward some questions were asked and answered,
\[\text{but these were not recorded because the tape ran out.}\]