Pathwork Lecture 174: Self-Esteem

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. |
|   | Blessings  
     for every one of you here. |
|   | May your  
     • heart  
     be open,  
     may your  
     • attention  
     be focused,  
     so that you can absorb  
     as much as possible in this hour [i.e., in this time we now spend together in this lecture]. |
| 04 | I should like to discuss  
     a problem of great importance,  
     especially for all those  
     whose pathwork has brought them  
     awareness of  
     previously undetected  
     reactions in the self. |
These reactions [i.e., These previously undetected reactions in the self] indicate

- struggle and
- confusion

regarding their

self-esteem,

which is of

fundamental importance.

Self-esteem,
self-liking, or
self-value –

whatever you call it –

is sorely lacking

in every human being

who experiences feelings

of

- uncertainty,
- fear,
- insecurity,
- guilt,
- weakness,
- doubt,
- negativity,
- inadequacy, and
- inferiority.

To the degree

these feelings

are present,

self-esteem

is inevitably lacking,

only this [i.e., only this lacking of self-esteem]

is not directly recognized.

Such ignorance [i.e., Such ignorance about the fact that the presence of these negative feelings is a sign that self-esteem must be lacking] is all the more damaging,

for you are then

less capable of tackling the problem [i.e., tackling the problem of LACKING self-esteem, self-liking, or self-valuing]

directly.
Only considerable insight into the self, as a result of hard work, brings the direct awareness of "I do not like and respect myself."

People are constantly confronted with an inner, and rarely conscious, conflict about this recognition [i.e., confronted with inner conflict that arises in this recognition that, “I do not like and respect myself”].

The conflict [i.e., The conflict that comes up in recognizing that, “I do not like and respect myself”] arises out of the dualistic perception characteristic of humanity.

I have often shown how a misconception splits the truth into two opposing halves that confuse you and make it impossible for you to make satisfying choices.
You are then [i.e., You are then, in this confusion brought about by a misconception that splits the truth into two opposing halves,]

torn in
• inner dissension
and
• painful confusion.

In this case [i.e., In this case of confusion brought about by the dualistic misconception that splits the truth into two opposing halves]

the dilemma is:

How can you
• accept and
• like
yourself

without falling into
the danger of
• self-indulgence and
• self-justification
for the destructive traits
that exist in all human beings,
no matter
how concealed they may be?

Or, on the other side,

how can you
• confront,
• accept, and
• admit
those
• negative,
• destructive traits,
• weaknesses,
• little selfishnesses,
• cruelties, and
• vanities
that often make you
• vindictive and
• unloving

and nevertheless
maintain your self-respect?
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| When you admit and accept these negative traits in you,]
| How can you avoid falling into the danger of destructive • guilt, • self-rejection, and • self-contempt? |

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| This [i.e., This conflict where you see, admit and accept negative traits in you but struggle not to fall into destructive guilt, self-contempt, and self-disliking] is a deep-rooted conflict, and most human beings, whether or not they know it, battle with it.

It is a typical dualistic confusion that apparently makes • admitting an unpleasant truth and • self-acceptance into mutually exclusive opposites.

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| But before I will • discuss this in greater detail and • offer you a key that will make it possible to unify this split, let me discuss the conflict itself a little more.
Those of you who have recently found this raging battle within yourselves [i.e., found this raging battle within where you see, admit and accept negative traits in you but battle against falling into destructive guilt, self-contempt and self-disliking] will know exactly what I am talking about.

Others, who have not yet recognized their self-rejection, will have to come to this awareness gradually.

Perhaps [i.e., Perhaps for those who have not yet recognized your self-rejection] the only way you can now recognize your
- self-dislike and your
- undervaluation of yourself will be an indirect one.

You can certainly sense
- shyness,
- uncertainty,
- insecurity,
- apprehension about being rejected or criticized,
as well as
- feelings of
- inferiority and inadequacy.

Perhaps you may perceive here or there a peculiar guilt feeling that makes no sense to you.
Although this guilt [i.e., this peculiar guilt feeling that makes no sense to you] usually hides behind other attitudes, it is rarely so remote that it cannot be clearly perceived at times, once you set out to detect such things.

Perhaps you are aware that you are not open to the untold possibilities of blissful fulfillment in life; that you make do with much less than you could experience.

Perhaps you can discern that you stand back in life and feel vaguely undeserving and perceive your own possibilities negatively.

Perhaps this perception exists only in certain areas of your life, but it still indicates self-rejection.

All these manifestations indicate self-rejection, self-dislike.
It should not be too difficult
to bridge the gap in consciousness
between
any of these manifestations [i.e., any of these manifestations of 1) not
being open to the untold possibilities of blissful fulfillment in life,
2) making do with much less than you could experience,
3) standing back in life, or 4) feeling vaguely undeserving] with
• the more profound root,
  namely
  that you
do not think much of yourself.

You may dislike yourself
for some
• traits and
• attitudes,
but
this specificity [i.e., this specificity of which traits and attitudes you dislike] may be
even more hidden
  from your awareness.

It is quite possible
that you can
first ascertain
only the vague general feelings of
  self-disdain,
  without being able to
  pinpoint
  the specific traits you dislike in yourself.

Once you feel,
however vaguely,
that you
• do not respect yourself and
• lack
  • esteem and
  • appreciation
  for yourself as a human being,
the next step must be
to make this attitude
  more specific.
If you really want to find it [i.e., to find the trait or attitude for which you dislike yourself], you will do so, although the recognition of exactly what this attitude is may come quite indirectly.

This [i.e., This indirect way] is the way the path often works.

On the other hand, you may see something quite clearly in yourself that is truly
  • regrettable and
  • undesirable.

Then you may fall into the erroneous attitude of
  • defiance and
  • self-justification, because you believe that admitting your undesirable traits means that you must
    • dislike and
    • reject your entire self.

You fail to differentiate between rejecting
  • a trait

and rejecting
  • the person, whether
    • yourself
    or
    • others.
Therefore [i.e., Therefore, because you believe that admitting your undesirable traits means that you must dislike and reject your ENTIRE self,]
you fall into the error of
• justifying,
• denying,
• falsifying, and
• rationalizing –
and often even
• beautifying –
a very
• undesirable and
• destructive
trait.

Here you have
the full-fledged confusion!

Here is how to find
the key
that will enable you
to squarely confront
the undesirable attitudes,
without in the least
losing
• respect for yourself or
losing
• the sense that you are
  a valuable human being.

First,
you have to
• perceive and
• experience
  life
  in a new way.

Your life –
and you
• are life
because you
• are alive –
represents
• all life,
• all nature.
One of the earmarks of life is its untold potentiality for • change
and • expansion.

To be more specific:

Once you perceive life as it is, you will sense that even the lowliest of all destructive creatures has every possibility for • change
and for • goodness,
for • greatness and for • growth.

At any moment, the thinking may change and create new • attitudes and • behavior, new • feelings, new • ways of being.
And if these [i.e., And if these NEW attitudes, behaviors, feelings, and ways of being] do not happen now, that alters nothing, for one day things are bound to change and then your true nature must finally emerge.

The knowledge of one's true nature having to emerge sooner or later changes everything:

it [i.e., KNOWING that your true nature HAS to emerge sooner or later] changes your despair about yourself.
It [i.e., KNOWING that your true nature HAS to emerge sooner or later] opens the door to knowing your potential for:

- goodness, regardless of how malicious you now may be;
- generosity, regardless of how mean you may now be;
- loving, regardless of how selfish you now may be;
- strength and integrity, regardless of how weak you may now be and how tempted to betray your best self;
- greatness, regardless of how petty you may now be.
Look at:
• nature,
at
• any manifestation of life,

and [i.e., and see that]
it is forever
• changing;

it is forever
• dying
and
• being reborn;

it is forever
• expanding
and
• contracting
and
• pulsating.

It is always
• moving
and
• branching out.

This applies particularly
to life that is
• conscious,
and even more so
to life that is
• self-conscious.

The power of
• thought,
of
• will,
of
• emotions
is infinitely greater than
any inanimate power.
And yet, the inanimate power of, say, electricity, and even more of atomic energy, is so great that you have barely begun to gain an inkling of its possibilities both for good and constructive, as well as for destructive, ends.

Wherever there is life and consciousness, both these possibilities [i.e., possibilities for BOTH good and constructive ends AND destructive ends] exist.

Now, if in the smallest atom – so small that it cannot even be perceived with the naked eye – a power exists to release untold energies for building or destroying,

how infinitely more is this the case with the power of the mind: the power of thinking, feeling, and willing.

Just dwell on this significant fact, my friends, and it will open new vistas to you.
Why do you blindly assume 
that the power of 
• inanimate things 
is greater than the power of 
• the mind?

The powers to 
• think, 
• will, 
• feel, 
• express, 
• act, and 
• decide 
are the earmarks of 
consciousness. 
They are 
vastly underrated 
by humanity. 

Living consciousness 
therefore deserves 
a respect 
that can hardly be put into words. 

It does not matter 
how it [i.e., how this living consciousness] 
manifests; 

no matter how 
• undesirable and 
• destructive 
the present manifestation [i.e., the PRESENT manifestation of this 
living consciousness] 

may be, 
the life that issues from the 
momentary 
• destructiveness 
holds all the potential for 
turning into 
• constructive channels, 
for life's source 
is truly inexhaustible.
Since the very essence of life is

• movement,
  and therefore
• change,

this [i.e., this capacity of life’s very essence for movement and hence for change] is what

• justifiably and
• realistically
gives hope,

no matter how hopeless

• a situation or
• a state of mind
  may appear.

People in

• deep depression and
• hopelessness
  must be in
  error,

  for they negate
  the very essence of life.

And those who

despair about themselves
  because they feel they are
  so

• bad,
  so

• unacceptable,
  so

• destructive,
  so

• negative,

find themselves
  in the error of
  • perceiving and
  • experiencing
  life
  in a fixed way,
  as though what is
  • now
  must
  • always be.
This is the error of deadness:

"This is so, and that is all there is to it."

Such thinking
• ignores and
• negates
  the flux of true life.

Since
  you
  are alive,

this fluidity
  is yours;

in reality
  you
  are
  fluid.

The only thing
  that keeps you from
  • being fluid,
  and therefore [i.e., and therefore keeps you from]
  • changing
    into a state of
      • realistic hopefulness and
      • light,
    into the
      • essence of life itself,
  is
    your
    • own enclosure,
    your
    • ignorance of this truth [i.e., ignorance of this truth that, since you are alive and are fluid, you CAN change] –
    your
    • momentary [i.e., momentary or temporary current] state of consciousness.
This state of consciousness [i.e., this momentary and temporary current state of consciousness that you are now in]

is now fixed
  in the conviction that
  • life and
  • your personality traits
    • are static
    and
    • must remain that way.

Your state of consciousness
remains
fixed
in this dark imprisonment
as long as
you know nothing else.

By merely
  • being here and
  • hearing these words
  you have the possibility of
  applying them
to your personal situation.

Where
  are you hopeless?

Why
  are you hopeless?

Do you feel hopeless
because of
  • life itself?

Because you
  believe the possibilities for
  • expansion and
  • happiness
    are too limited
    to give you sufficient scope?
Are you hopeless because you feel you do not deserve and cannot have a more meaningful, fulfilled experience of life?

The latter thought [i.e., This thought that you do not deserve and hence cannot have a more meaningful and more fulfilled experience of life] may smolder secretly beneath your perception of life's limitations.

If you can bring these fleeting impressions into more concise awareness, you can ask yourself:

"Am I hopeless about deserving happiness because I, possibly quite justifiably, dislike certain traits in me?"

But don't you then also believe that these traits mark and define your person?

That is the great struggle, my friends:

you erroneously believe that what is most obnoxious to you is you.
This [i.e., This erroneous belief that what is most obnoxious to you IS you], at the same time,
is the cause
   for the great resistance,
inherent in all human beings,
gainst changing.

For, since you do not believe
   that you can essentially be
   anything else
   but that which you dislike,
you have to
   hold on to it nevertheless [i.e., you nevertheless have to hold on to this belief that you cannot essentially be anything other than that which you dislike about yourself],
   because
   you do not wish to
   cease existing.

That [i.e., That belief that you, in your very essence, cannot be anything other than that which you dislike about yourself and that if you were not that which you dislike about yourself, YOU, in your very essence, would cease existing,] is the
   crux
   of this dualistic confusion.

This is why
   you so inexplicably hold on to
destructive traits.

Many of my friends
   • have reached the awareness
     where they can see this,

   and actually
   • see themselves
     holding on to aspects in themselves
     they thoroughly dislike.
They
• seem unable to help it [i.e., They SEEM unable to help that they truly have unchangeable aspects in their very essence that they thoroughly dislike]

and thus
• despair even more.

They cannot even understand
what power
propels them
to hold on,
almost deliberately,
to what they
hate in themselves.

Here, my friends, is the answer:

You hold on to it [i.e., You hold on to what you HATE in yourself]
because
you genuinely believe
• this [i.e., this trait that you HATE in yourself] is you;

[because
you genuinely believe that]
• you are in a fixed state,
• you are a fixed unit,

and
• any change is impossible

because
you do not realize that

all possibilities exist in you.
You are already what you think you would have to produce
• artificially,
• laboriously, and
• through forcibly contorting your very nature.

But since you will not believe this [i.e., since you refuse to believe that you ARE ALREADY what you so desperately TRY TO BE by artificially, laboriously, and through forcibly contorting your very nature, believing you, in your very nature, are not this but rather are what you most HATE in yourself], you cannot give up holding on to the very facets you do dislike, for they seem to represent your essence.

This is indeed a vicious circle,

for true self-esteem can, of course, come only by your sensing your capacity to
• love,
• give of yourself.
Yet this capacity [i.e., Yet this capacity you have to love and give of yourself] cannot be known
  • when you take it for granted that it [i.e., that this capacity for you to love and give of yourself] simply does not exist;
  • when you believe that
    • any state other than the one you express now is
      • alien to you – intrinsically alien,
    and
    • your
      • real, final, fixed self
        is what you dislike.

As long as that is the case, you remain trapped in a vicious circle.

In order to come out of this circle, life must be understood in its essence.

No matter how fixed your life may appear, it is only one tiny part of the whole story, my friends.
Underneath all these personality traits you believe are
• fixed,
• final things,

the fluid life [i.e., this capacity you have to love and give of yourself]
exists like a winter stream under the snow.

It [i.e., This capacity you have to love and give of yourself, this fluid life that exists like a winter stream under the snow] is constant;

feelings branch out of it [i.e., FEELINGS branch out of this capacity you have to love and give of yourself, out of this fluid life that exists like a winter stream under the snow] in all directions,
• spontaneously and
• wondrously forever self-renewing.

Its life [i.e., The life of these feelings that branch out of this capacity you have to love and give of yourself, the life of these feelings that branch out of the fluid life that exists like a winter stream under the snow] pulsates vibrantly;

it [i.e., The life of these feelings that branch out of this capacity you have to love and give of yourself, the life of these feelings that branch out of the fluid life that exists like a winter stream under the snow] is movement itself.
Above all, it [i.e., Above all, the LIFE of this capacity you have to love and give of yourself]

is a life in which
you are free at any moment
to think
• new and
• different
thoughts
that create a
• new and
• different
• life expression and
• personality.

You see,
as long as you ignore
• the true state of life,
  hence
• your own true state,
you cannot give yourself
the fundamental respect
that you deserve
as a human creature.

As long as you confuse
life
with
• death,
with
• inanimate matter,
you will despair.

And even
inanimate matter,
as you now know from present-day science,
has an
• intrinsic life and
• incredible movement,
  once this life
  is released.
Think about this, my friends.

Even an apparently dead object is not dead; it contains
• life,
• movement,
and
• utter change.

Think of the
• movement,
• life,
and
• change
  in every atom
  of the deadest-seeming matter.

So, nothing in the universe actually exists that is lifeless.

How much less so with consciousness!

Your thinking is a constant movement.

The only trouble is that you have conditioned yourself to let it ruminate in habitual
• negativity,
• self-rejection,
and
• needless limitation.
But once you decide to use your thinking in a new way, you will experience the truth of:
- life's hopeful changeability,
- its endless possibilities to move in new directions.

You can constantly:
- expand your thinking,
- take in new ideas,
- embrace new realizations,

and therefore:
- bring to yourself new will-directions,
- new expansions,
- new aims,
- new energies,
- new feelings.

All of this is personality change.

Without your being quite aware of it, these new ways of thinking and feeling change those attitudes you now dislike so much.
When I talk about new ways of being, I want to make it quite clear that this does not mean they [i.e., does NOT mean that these new ways of being] have not existed in you as a dormant essence.

They are only new as far as your awareness is concerned, for they [i.e., for these new ways of being] are all there, constantly ready to be used for the asking.

But as long as you enclose yourself within the narrow framework of your limited perceptions of • yourself and of • life, you cannot use what is already there.

Perceive yourself as fertile soil before the seeds are planted.

Fertile soil contains incredible power to bring about new expressions of life.
The potentials

seethe in it [i.e., seethe in the fertile soil],
whether or not
the seeds are actually put in.

Your entire
  • consciousness and
  • aliveness
    is the most fertile soil imaginable.

The fertile soil

is constantly there
  with incredible power
    to bring forth
      new expressions of
        life
          in
            your
              • thinking,
              your
              • feeling,
              your
              • willing,
              your
              • energies,
              your
              • possibilities of
                • action and
                • reaction.

Each situation you are in
  contains
    new possibilities
      for reaction.

You have
  choices
    all the time.
You can be in a new situation and automatically fall into:
- the old conditioned reflexes,
- your negative approach,

without paying attention to what you are doing.

Perhaps you moan about the misery of life because this or that has happened to you that you do not like, and you never see the connection between your
- discontent and
- failures on the one hand,

and your
- one-sided,
- negative automatic reactions, on the other.

As long as you assume that this habitual approach is the only one possible, you will not grasp the
- possibilities and
- powers in your life.
Thus, when you feel
• unhappy or
• hopeless,

question yourself:

"Do I not have another way to react to this situation
• that seems to befall me out of nowhere
and
• to which I choose to react
  • negatively,
  • destructively,

• making myself hopeless,
• complaining and
• feeling angry about it?"

This choice is yours.

Your
• anger
and
• complaints against the world

are wasted,

for all that energy could do so much to build new life for you

if it [i.e., if all that energy] were used properly.
You
cannot change
others,
but you
can certainly change
your own
• attitudes
and
your
• thinking.

Then life offers
its limitless possibilities
to you.

First,
your
• thinking
and
your
• attitudes
change;
then
• the feelings follow suit;
then your
• actions and
• reactions
begin to respond to
new
spontaneous
impulses.

And these [i.e., And these actions and reactions, responding to new spontaneous impulses],
in turn,
bring forth
new life experiences.
The more you experience
the chain reaction of this process [i.e., this process in which 1) your
THINKING and your ATTITUDES change, then 2) as a result of your
changed thinking and attitudes, your FEELINGS change, and then
3) as a result of new feelings your ACTIONS and REACTIONS
respond to new spontaneous impulses from within, bringing forth
4) new LIFE EXPERIENCES],
the more you also perceive that
you are a
• living,
• moving,
• endlessly changing
  unit of life expression.
And
no trait [i.e., And no trait of yours, no matter how negative or destructive or
how much you dislike it]
merits
• evaluating and
• rejecting
  your
  whole self
  because of it [i.e., because of this trait you dislike].
Once you perceive this,
you can afford the
• wonderful,
• relieving
  luxury of
  calmly admitting
  any
  • undesirable,
  • ugly
  trait,
  without in the least
  • disliking yourself for it;
  without in the least
  • losing your sense of being
    a divine expression,
    no matter what the traits may be.
Then, and only then,
can you really
transform these traits.
Paradoxical as this may seem, the total
• self-rejection, the destructive kind of
• guilt
under discussion

is incapable of overcoming

anything.

You will not understand why [i.e., NOT understand WHY total self-rejection or destructive guilt is INCAPABLE of overcoming anything at all], my friends,

unless you see that it is impossible to overcome anything when you believe you are a
• fixed, • unchangeable blob.

You know that, according to your belief [i.e., according to your belief that you are a fixed unchangeable blob],

you must experience as long as you thus believe [i.e., as long as you believe that you are a fixed unchangeable blob],
because you cannot see beyond the form you have built according to your belief [i.e., cannot see beyond the form you have built based on your belief that you are a fixed unchangeable blob].
Your actions then are determined by your beliefs \[i.e.,\text{ by your beliefs that you are a fixed unchangeable blob}\] and must thus provide proof of their veracity, no matter • how mistaken those beliefs are and • how many other alternatives exist in reality.

Thus, if you are convinced that you cannot change, you cannot even take a meaningful step in the direction of change.

Therefore, you cannot experience change and must be convinced that change is impossible.

The negative conviction \[i.e.,\text{ The negative conviction that change is impossible}\] makes it also impossible to summon the necessary effort for bringing change about.
The
  • energy,
the
  • discipline,
the
  • stamina,
the
  • initiative
    essential for
effecting a change

will be comparatively easy to muster
when
you
  know
a change is possible;

when you
know that,
change
merely means
  bringing out
your dormant qualities.

When you
know that [i.e., When you know that change is possible and
that change merely means bringing out your dormant qualities],

[then]
no matter how ugly the traits may be,

• you will
  not despair
  about being unlovable.

• You will make available
  the powers in you
  to surge forward;

• you will be able
  to dip into the resources of
  your innermost being
  that enable you
  to overcome
  any ugly destructive trait.
The power
that created the universe,
with everything in it,
including
all that you are,
possesses the strength
to change anything.

For even the things
that
should
be changed
• were created by
  that same power
and
• must,
in essence,
  be something
  other than
  they appear now.

This power
• is also
  you
and
• is manifest
  once you contact it deliberately.

This [i.e., Contacting this power deliberately]
can be done
only when you
know of

the source within you,
which is
forever
• changing,
• moving,
  and
• expanding
  with infinite possibilities.
You see, my friends,
the life
that is
inherent
in nature
is
also
in you.

Bare
• will and
• intellect
  is sterile,
    as you well know.

Only the
• feeling of
• life,
• the natural life,
  can indeed
    bring you the fulfillment
      without which
        life
          is a sorry affair indeed.

This [i.e., This FEELING of life, the natural life, that brings you FULFILLMENT] is what we have been
• talking about and
• aiming for
  on this path.

Now
why
has humanity
lost touch with
the source of its
• own life,
the source of its
• feelings,
the source of its
• instincts,
the source of its
• own nature,
  deep inside the self?
[You have lost touch with the source of your own life, feelings, instincts, and nature]

Only because you
  • are so terrified of your destructiveness
and
  • do not know how to handle it [i.e., how to handle your destructiveness].

So civilization has for millennia denied the instinctual life in order to preserve itself from its dangers [i.e., from the instinctual life's dangers].

But by doing so [i.e., But by DENYING the instinctual life] humanity has cut off its connection with the essence of life itself.

It [i.e., Humanity] had not realized that there are
  • other ways to eliminate the • distorted, • perverted, natural forces,
  • ways that need not deny life itself.

• The instinctual life has always been wrongly equated with
  • destructiveness.
Only as humanity matures is it capable of learning that the instinctual life does not need to be denied in order to avoid evil.

Indeed, • it [i.e., the instinctual life] should not be denied, for doing so defeats life every bit as much as • the feared evil itself.

Only within the deep core of the instincts can God be found because only there [i.e., only within the deep core of the instincts] can true aliveness be found.

Thus humanity must find another means to handle its destructive instincts if it is not to annihilate itself by • different • but just as fatal ways as giving vent to those negative instincts.
This lecture will give you an additional tool to meet your destructive side.

You will learn to

• value and
• nurture

the deep instincts

you have always

so distrusted

and

to

• find

the truth of

the living creative spirit

in and

through them [i.e., find the truth of the living spirit in and through the deep instincts you have always so distrusted].

You will then [i.e., will then, when you have found the truth of the LIVING SPIRIT in and through the deep INSTINCTS you have always so distrusted]

joyfully

• further

your instinctual life,

• unfold and

• integrate it.

You will

• believe

and

• trust

in it [i.e., believe and trust in your instinctual life].
Do not
• deny
and
• fear
it [i.e., Do NOT deny and fear your INSTINCTUAL LIFE]
because you still [i.e., just because you still]
have difficulties
• accepting and
• meeting
your undesirable destructive traits.

If you truly look at them [i.e., If you look at your undesirable destructive traits]
in a
• dispassionate,
• objective
way,
you will
always
find that
• fear and
• denial
really
oppose
the life of
the instincts.

The instincts are
• simple and
• innocent
in themselves;
your destructiveness
is always
a result of
• pride,
• self-will,
• fear,
• vanity,
• greed,
• separateness,
• lovelessness,
• one-upmanship.
In this way [i.e., By looking at your undesirable destructive traits in a dispassionate, objective way and discovering that they are simple and innocent in themselves and not something to be feared],

you will
• find it
  more
  and more possible to
  • meet,
  • acknowledge,
  • admit, and
  • accept
  anything in you,
    no matter how ugly,

and
• never lose for one second
  the sense
    • of your
      intrinsic beautiful aliveness,
      and
    • of deserving
      your own esteem.

This inner state
  will be the springboard
    from which
      change
        becomes possible.

It [i.e., Change]
  will not only be
    • a possibility in the abstract,
  but
    • an effective way of
      living,
        day in and day out,
          a constantly growing movement.
Any one of you who can truly bring this important topic [i.e., this important topic of self-esteem] to bear upon whatever state you are at this moment will
• fulfill the next step on this path and
• overcome an important hurdle.

Many of you may
• be stuck
  just in this painful inner confusion [i.e., stuck in this painful dualistic confusion where you see, admit and accept negative traits in you but struggle not to fall into destructive guilt, self-contempt, and self-disliking].

Some of you may
• not know this consciously;

others may
• feel it vaguely;

still others may
• be quite aware of this struggle.

Most human beings are totally oblivious of the fact
• that this very same battle rages in them;
• that this battle has created the
  • instinctual restrictions and
  • fear, the
  • self-alienation, the
  • aridness and
  • impoverishment of the souls who cannot thrive in a climate of self-rejection.
People also ignore that all the religious commands to love cannot be fulfilled until:

- this dualistic split is healed and
- unification found, so that
  - self-liking
  - is no longer confused with
  - self-indulgence,

and

- honest self-confrontation
- need not bring
  - self-loathing.

You can find peace only when you can:

- truly accept the ugliest in you
  and
- never lose sight of your intrinsic beauty.

Now, are there any questions?

QUESTION:
I feel a terrific battle going on right now in relation to my self-esteem.

It feels like an atomic explosion.

I realize I'm stuck in my own limitations.

I realize that I can't stand pleasure.

Coming from my habitual state of unpleasure, pleasure almost seems unnatural.
ANSWER:
If you can conceive of yourself as the essence of life, with all its incredible powers, possibilities, and inherent potentials, you will indeed know that you are deserving of your own esteem and acceptance.

You will be able to see the traits you hate and still not lose sight of who you essentially are.

I also suggest a specific exercise you might find quite helpful.

Put down in writing everything that you dislike about yourself.

Have it down in black and white.

Look at those traits when they are written down.
Then
feel into yourself
and ask:

"Do I really believe
that this is all there is to me?

Do I really believe
that I must be these traits
all my life?

Do I believe I have
the possibility to love?

Do I hold forces locked up in me
that contain
all the good imaginable?"

By raising these questions
seriously,
you will get an answer
on a deeply feeling level,
a level where
the answer
is more than a
theoretical concept.

You will
experience
• a new power in you
  that you
do not need to fear,

and
• a new
  • gentleness and
  • softness
  that does not need
  • hostility or
  • other defenses.

Then you will know
how much there is in you to
• love and
• respect.
You have recently come across, in your personal pathwork, a very specific misconception that makes loving impossible as long as you harbor it.

Since [i.e., Since in this very specific misconception] loving is equated with the terrible danger of being:
- totally impoverished,
- even
- robbed of your very life,

how can you want to love?

How can you let yourself love?

According to this false idea, giving of yourself means losing what you give without ever being replenished.

If this were true,
- love would indeed be impossible and
- giving a folly.

Is it now conceivable for you to see
- that this [i.e., that the belief that love IS the terrible danger of being totally impoverished and robbed of your very life]
  is not so;
- that reality is different?
And if you can see that love comes from the same inexhaustible well as
• wisdom,
as • all life
does,

can you further perceive that you will not need to deny your own
natural instinct that wants to
• reach out,
that wants • the pleasure of feeling
• love,
• warmth, and
• giving of yourself?

And can you still foresee the next
• natural,
• organic step in the chain,

which is that
if you can
• love,
you will inevitably • love yourself?
This [i.e., This NOT loving yourself] is the reason why you fear pleasure.

For pleasure not only seems entirely undeserved, but • love and • pleasure are interchangeable [i.e., and since love and pleasure are interchangeable, your fear of love means you also fear pleasure].

True pleasure is loving, and without loving pleasure just does not exist.

This [i.e., Pleasure from loving] is not a reward [i.e., is not a reward FOR loving] from • outside, or even from • your own self; love is pleasure, and pleasure is love.

The two are interchangeable.
If you harbor love feelings your whole body is in a blissful vibration, with:
  • certainty, with:
    • security, with:
      • peace, with:
        • stimulation, with:
          • excitement in the most relaxed, pleasurable way.

That [i.e., All that – blissful vibration with certainty, security, peace, stimulation, and excitement in the most relaxed, pleasurable way] cannot come through anything that is given to you when you are merely a recipient.

It [i.e., All this – blissful vibration with certainty, security, peace, stimulation, and excitement in the most relaxed, pleasurable way] comes when you vibrate with this feeling [i.e., with this feeling of LOVE].

Nor does this mean that you do not also receive love.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The giving and receiving</th>
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<tr>
<td>[i.e., The giving and receiving of love]</td>
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<tr>
<td>become so interchangeable</td>
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<tr>
<td>that it can often no longer be discerned</td>
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<td>which is which.</td>
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<th>Both</th>
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<td>[i.e., Both the giving and the receiving of love]</td>
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<tr>
<td>become indistinguishable</td>
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<td>in one movement.</td>
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<th>But if your nature is as yet incapable of allowing the feeling of love, you must fear bliss, since</th>
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<tr>
<td>• bliss</td>
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<tr>
<td>and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• loving</td>
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<td>are the same thing.</td>
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<th>The misconception that giving is losing causes you to</th>
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<td>• close up and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• contract in all situations that might bring forth your</td>
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<tr>
<td>natural instincts.</td>
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When you deny
  • love
  and
  • pleasure,
you must inevitably
  also deny
  • your self-esteem.

Your key must lie in seeing that your inability to love is not an inborn aspect that you alone harbor forever.

It [i.e., Rather, your inability to love] is a temporary block to loving, based on some false premises, which exist on a deeper level of your emotional experience.

You can change this misconception [i.e., change this misconception based on some false premises which exist on a deeper level of your emotional experience] any moment you • truly and • fully look at it [i.e., any moment you truly and fully look at this misconception].
Be blessed, every one of you here.

Be in peace.

Be what you are,
  • honestly
  and
  • truly,

so that God manifests more and more in you.

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