Pathwork Lecture 174: Self-Esteem

1996 Edition, Original Given May 23, 1969

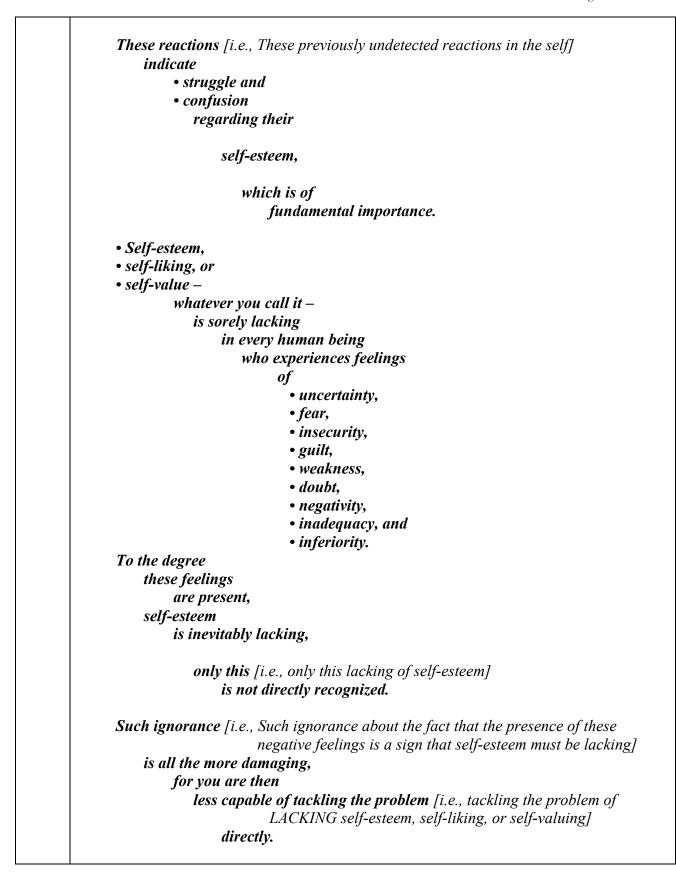
This lecture is given in an **expanded poetic format**, what I call a *Devotional Format* of the lecture, and in that sense, this is **my interpretation** of the **intent** of the lecture. I may have interpreted portions differently from you, and I ask you to ponder the words for your own interpretation. 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.*

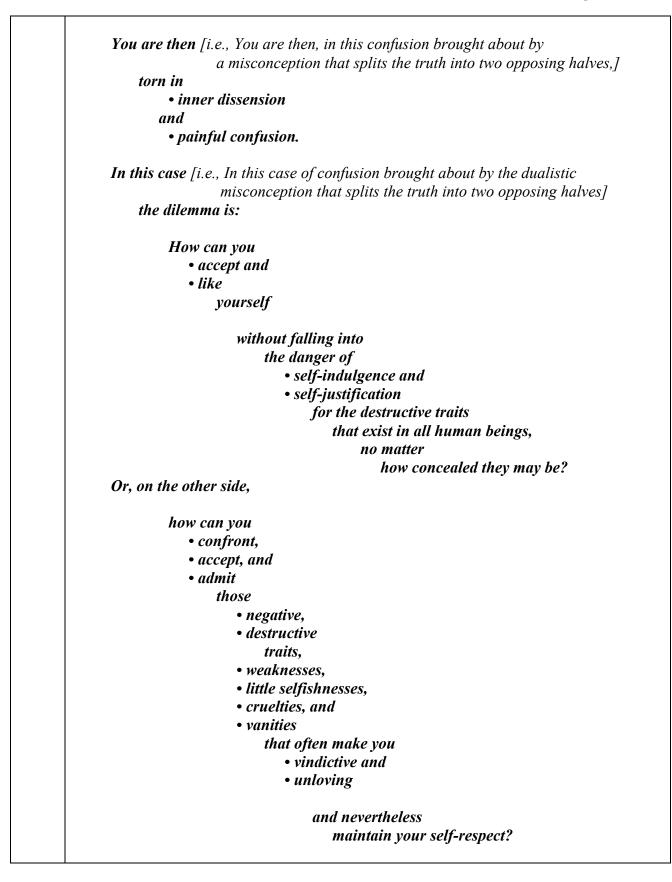
For clarity: The **original text** is in **bold and** *italicized*. *[My adds of commentary/clarification/interpretation are in brackets, italicized, and <u>not</u> <i>bolded.]* To learn more of my Devotional Format and see the lectures I have done in this way, go to <u>https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/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

Gary Vollbracht

¶	Content
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.



	Only
	considerable insight into the self,
	as a result of
	hard work,
	brings the
	direct
	awareness of
	"I do not
	• like and
	• respect
	myself."
05	
	People are constantly confronted with an
	• inner,
	and
	• rarely conscious,
	conflict
	<i>about this recognition</i> [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.



-

	[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?
06	
	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 solf accontance
	• self-acceptance into
	mutually exclusive opposites.
07	Put hofono I will
	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.

Г

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 vet 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 vour • 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.
08	
	All these manifestations
	indicate
	• self-rejection,
	• self-dislike.

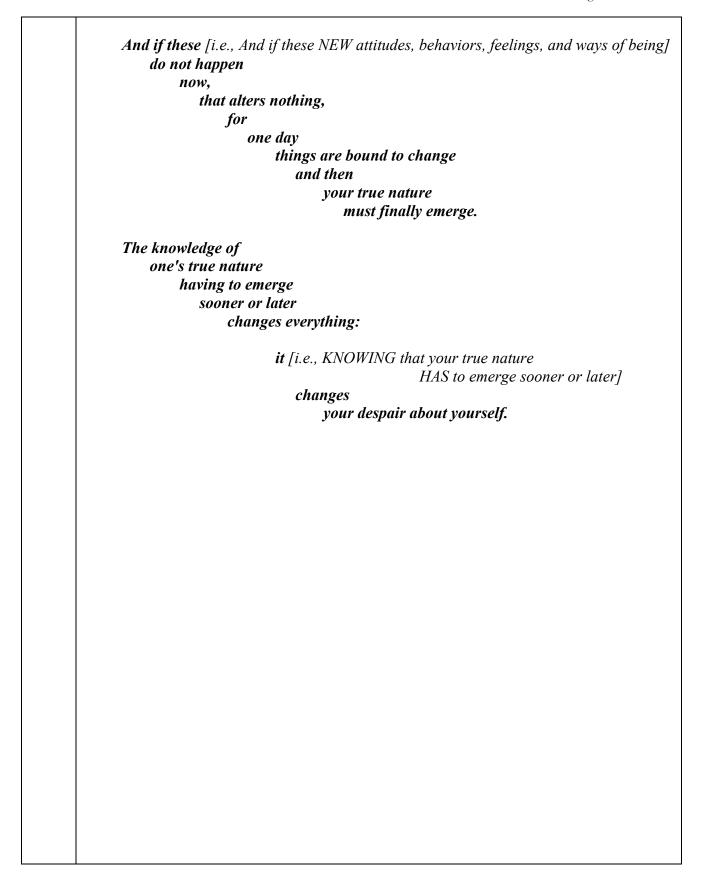
to bridge the gap in consciousness between any of these manifestations [i.e., any of these manifestations of 1) not being open to the untold possibilities of blissful fulfillment in life, 2) making do with much less than you could experience, 3) standing back in life, or 4) feeling vaguely undeserving] 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
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self-disdain, without being able to pinpoint
without being able to pinpoint
pinpoint
1 1
the specific traits you dislike in yourself.
ine specifie in ans you assure in yoursey.
09
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
	<i>want to find it</i> [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.
	<i>This</i> [i.e., <i>This indirect way</i>]
	is the way the path often works.
10	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.
	• 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.
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.

Ι

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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.
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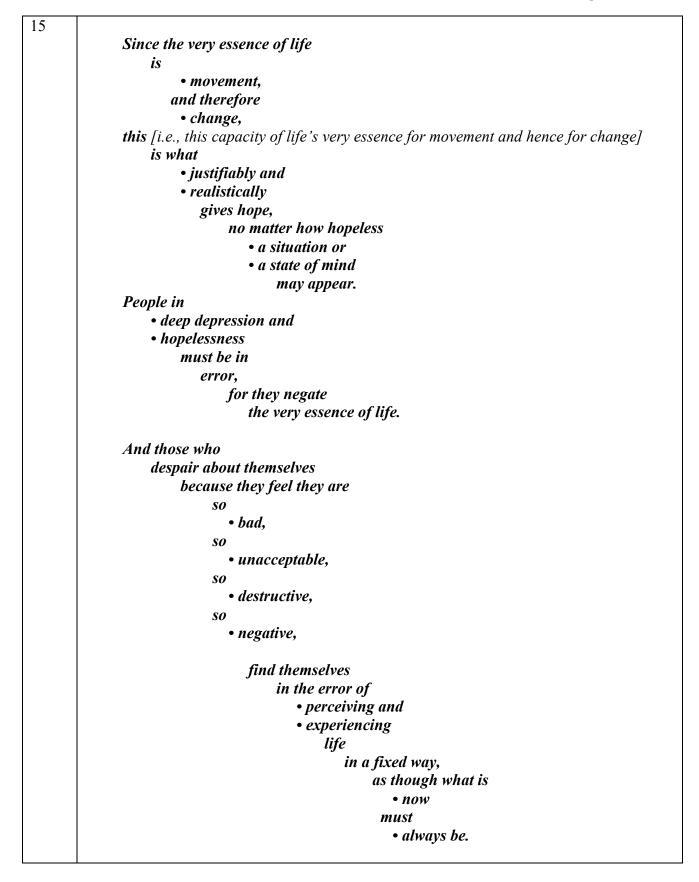
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It [i.e., KNOWING that your true nature
                      HAS to emerge sooner or later]
    opens the door to knowing
        your potential
           for
                • goodness,
                  regardless of
                       how malicious you now may be;
           for
                • generosity,
                  regardless of
                      how mean you may now be;
           for
                • loving,
                  regardless of
                      how selfish you now may be;
           for
               • strength and
               • integrity,
                  regardless of
                      how weak you may now be
                     and
                       how tempted to betray your best self;
           for
                • greatness,
                  regardless of
                       how petty you may now be.
```

12 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.
	CARS 6
13	
	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
	• 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.
	× ×

Ι

	Why do you blindly assume
	that the power of
	• inanimate things
	is greater than the power of
	• the mind?
14	
	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
	the life that issues from the
	momentary destruction ass
	destructiveness
	holds all the potential for
	turning into
	• constructive channels,
	for life's source
	is truly inexhaustible.

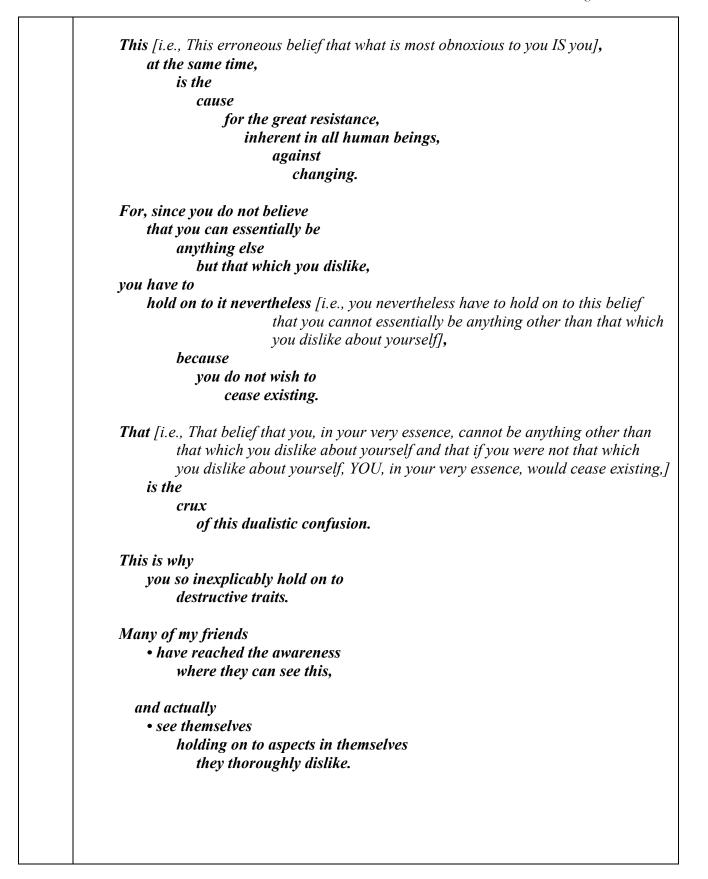


	This is the error of deadness:
	"This is so, and that is all there is to it."
	Such thinking • ignores and • negates the flux of true life. Since
	you are alive,
	this fluidity is yours;
	in reality you are fluid.
16	The only thing that keeps you from • being fluid, and therefore [i.e., and therefore 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.
17	
	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?

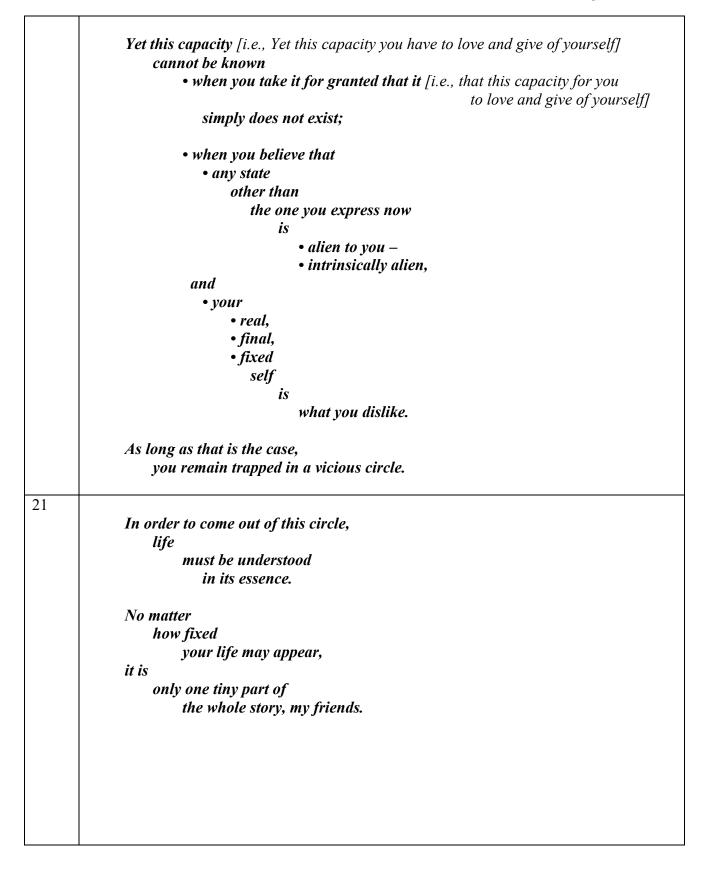
Т

	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.
18	
	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.



	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.
19	
	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.
	exisi in you.

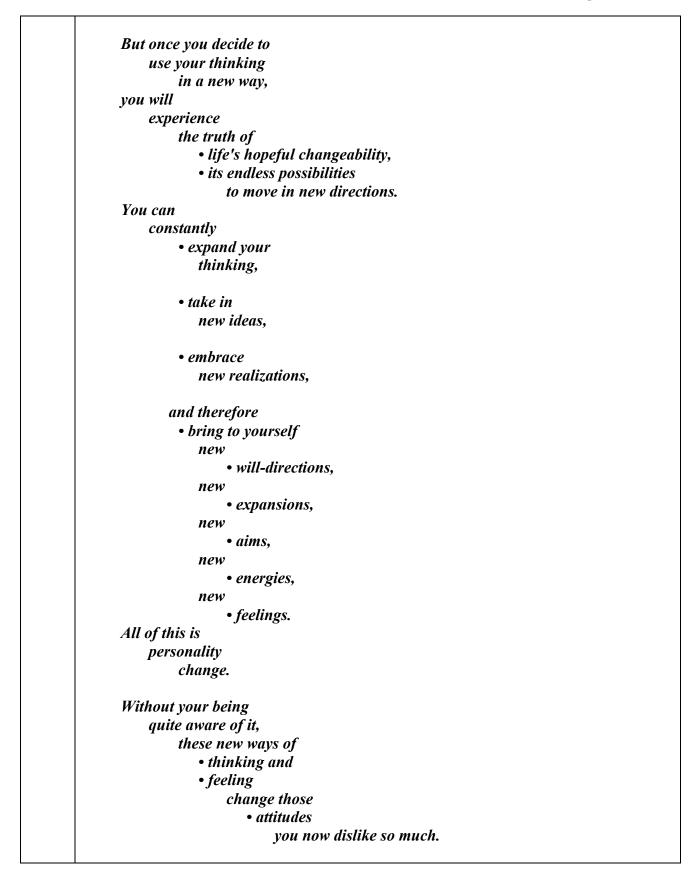
	You
	are
	already
	what you think you would
	have to produce
	• artificially,
	 laboriously, and
	• through
	forcibly contorting
	your very nature.
	But since you
	will not believe this [i.e., since you refuse to believe that you ARE ALREADY
	what you so desperately TRY TO BE by artificially, laboriously, 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.
20	
20	This is indeed a
	vicious circle,
	for
	true self-esteem
	ti de seij-esteem
	can, of course, come
	only by your
	sensing your capacity
	40
	to
	• love,
	to IC
	• give of yourself.



Underneath all these personality traits vou 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.
22	
	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.

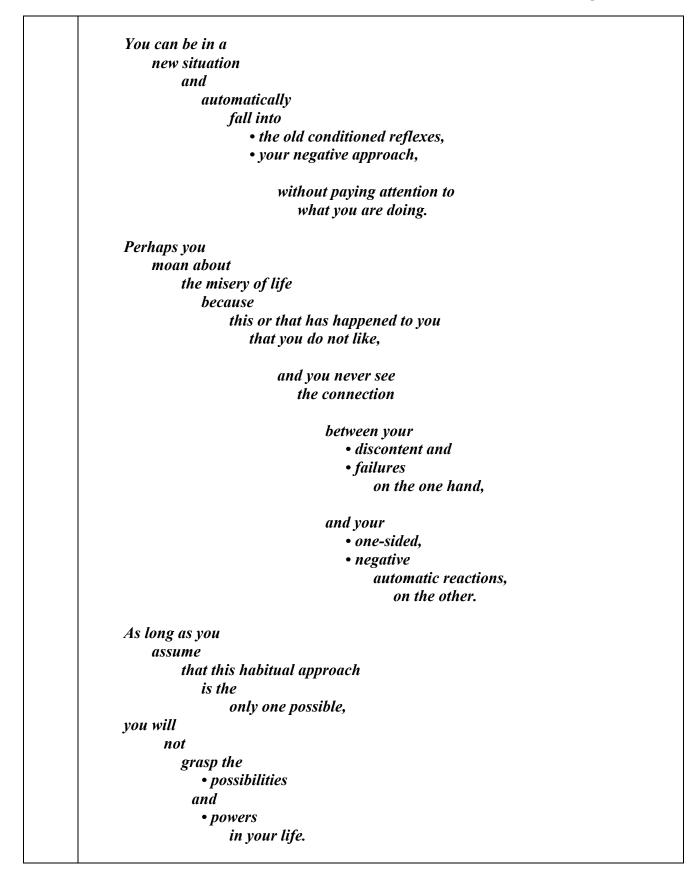
	Think about this, my friends.
	Even an
	apparently
	dead object
	is
	not dead;
	it contains
	• life,
	• movement,
	and
	• utter change.
	Think of the
	• movement,
	• life,
	and
	• change
	in every atom
	of the deadest-seeming matter.
23	
	So, nothing in the universe
	actually exists
	that is
	lifeless.
	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.



```
24
              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.
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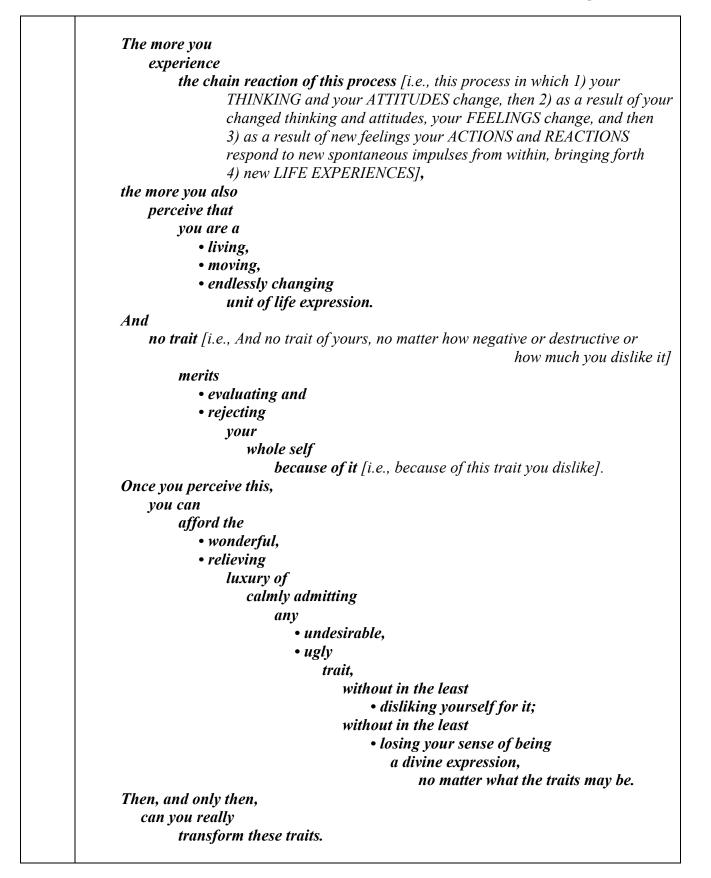
	The potentials
	seethe in it [i.e., seethe in the fertile soil],
	whether or not
	the seeds are actually put in.
	Your entire
	• consciousness and
	• aliveness
	is the most fertile soil imaginable.
	The fertile soil
	is constantly there
	with incredible power
	to bring forth
	new expressions of
	life
	in
	your
	• thinking,
	your
	• feeling,
	your
	• willing,
	your .
	• energies,
	your
	• possibilities of • action and
	• action and • reaction.
	- reaction.
25	Each situation you and in
	Each situation you are in contains
	new possibilities
	for reaction.
	jor reaction.
	You have
	choices
	all the time.

Τ



26 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.
27	
	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.

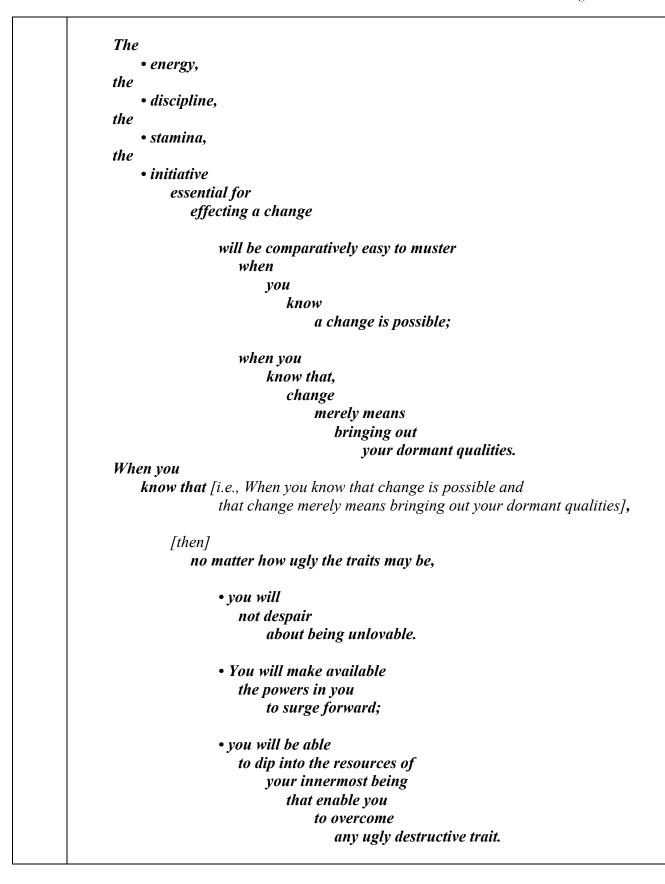


28	
	Paradoxical as this may seem,
	the total
	• self-rejection,
	the destructive kind of
	• guilt
	under discussion
	is incapable of
	overcoming
	anything.
	You will not understand why [i.e., NOT understand WHY total self-rejection or
	destructive guilt is INCAPABLE of overcoming anything at all],
	my friends,
	unless you see
	that it is
	impossible
	<i>to overcome</i>
	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].

I

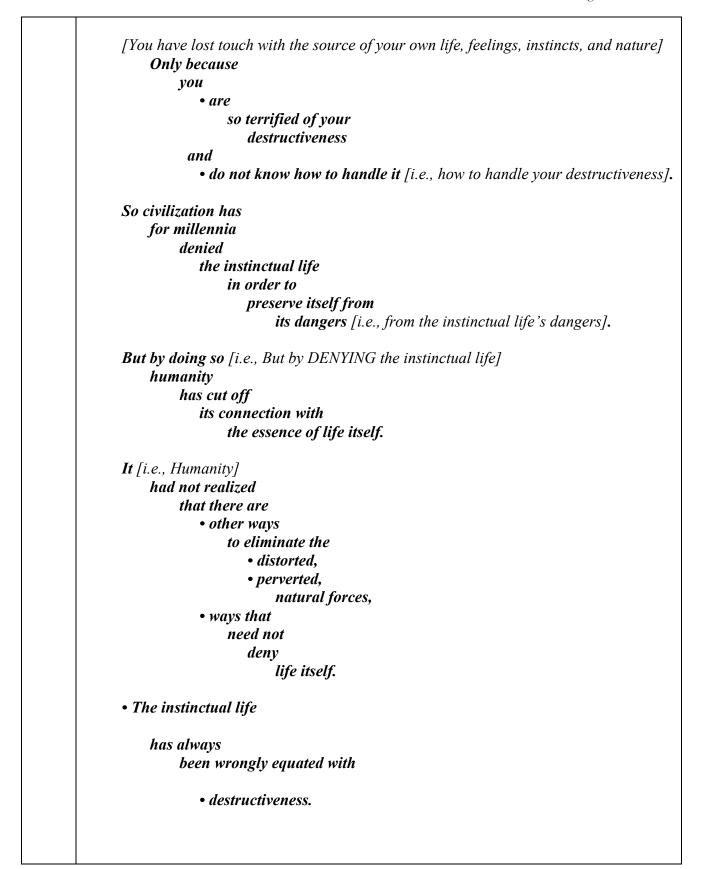
	Your actions then
	are determined by
	your beliefs [i.e., by your beliefs that you are a fixed unchangeable blob]
	and must thus provide
	proof of their veracity, no matter
	• how mistaken those beliefs are
	and
	how many other alternatives exist
	in reality.
29	
	Thus,
	if you are convinced
	that you
	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., The negative conviction that change is impossible]
	makes it also
	impossible
	to summon the necessary effort
	for bringing change about.

Ι



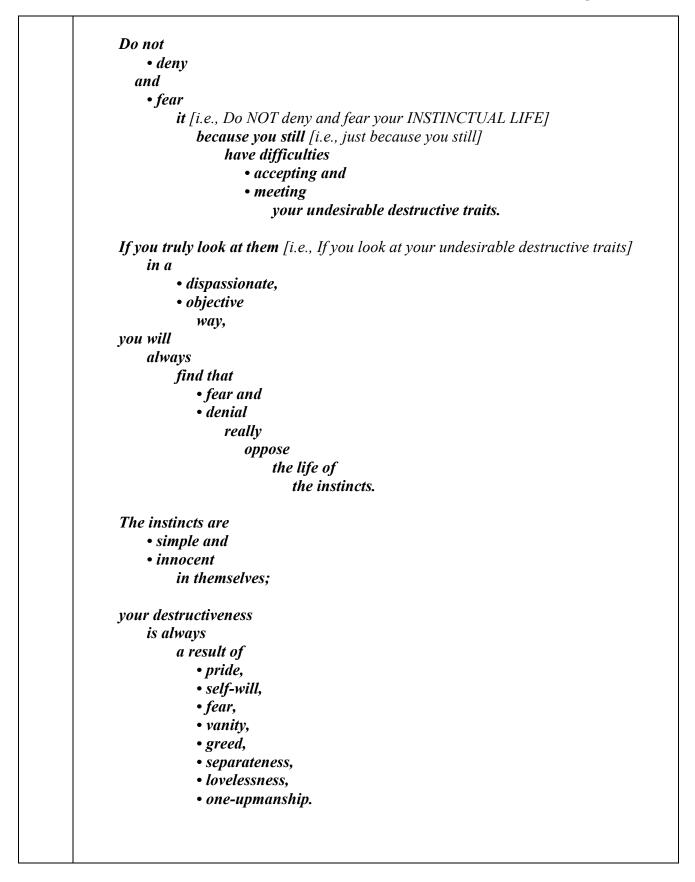
30	
	The power
	that created the universe,
	with everything in it,
	including
	all that you are,
	possesses the strength
	to change anything.
	For even the things
	that
	should
	be changed
	• were created by
	that same power
	and
	• must,
	in essence,
	be something
	other than
	they appear now.
	This power
	• is also
	you
	and
	• is manifest
	once you contact it deliberately.
	<i>This</i> [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.
	win infinite possibilities.

31 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?



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.

32 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].



33	In this way (i.e. By looking at your underivable destructive twents in a dimension of
	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.
	your own esteem.
	This inner state
	will be the springboard
	from which
	change
	<u> </u>
	becomes possible.
	It [i.e., Change]
	will not only be
	• a possibility in the abstract,
	but
	• an effective way of
	living,
	• •
	a constantly growing movement.
	tiving, day in and day out, a constantly growing movement.

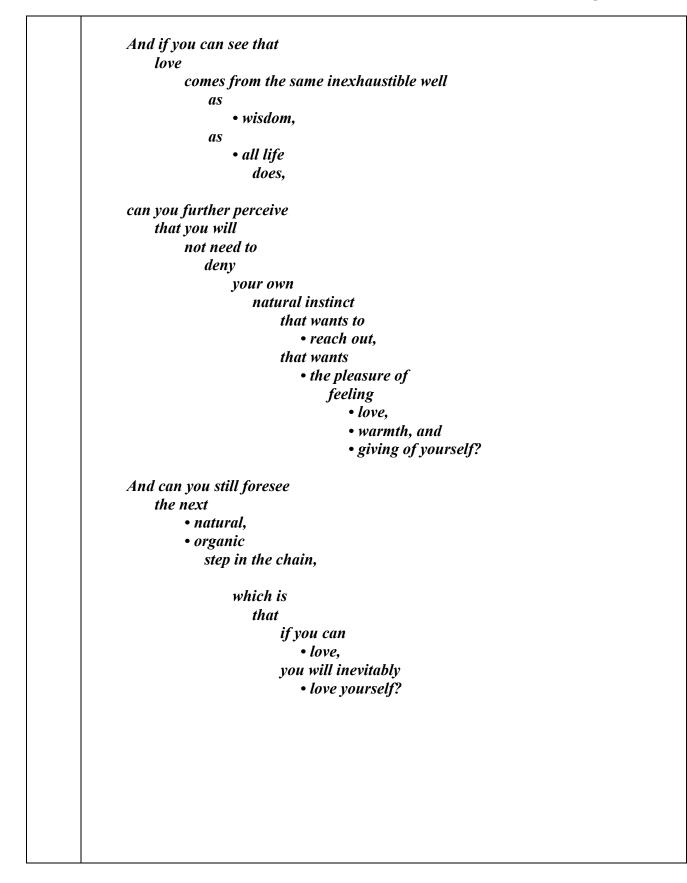
34	
	Any one of you
	who can truly bring this important topic [i.e., this important topic of self-esteem]
	to bear upon
	whatever state you are
	at this moment
	will
	• fulfill the next step on this path and
	• overcome an important hurdle.
	Many of you may
	• be stuck
	<i>just in this painful inner confusion</i> [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.
35	
	Now, are there any questions?
	OUESTION.
	QUESTION:
	I feel a terrific battle going on right now in relation to my self-esteem.
	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.

36	
	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.
37	
	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.

38	
	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?

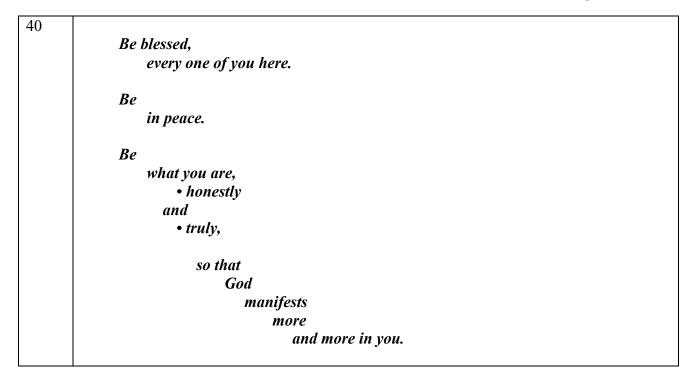


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This [i.e., This NOT loving yourself]
    is the reason why
        you fear pleasure.
For
    pleasure
        not only
            seems entirely undeserved,
but
    • love
 and
    • pleasure
        are interchangeable [i.e., and since love and 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.

	The
	• giving
	and
	• receiving
	[i.e., The giving and receiving of love]
	become so interchangeable
	that it can often no longer be discerned
	which is which.
	Both [i.e., Both the giving and the receiving of love]
	become indistinguishable
	in one movement.
39	
	But if your nature
	is as yet
	incapable of
	allowing
	the feeling of love,
	you must foar
	fear bliss,
	since
	• bliss
	and
	• loving
	are the same thing.
	The misconception
	that
	giving
	is
	losing
	causes you to
	• close up and
	• contract
	in all situations
	that might bring forth
	your natural instincts.
	naturat instincts.

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].



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