

**02** Pathwork Lecture #168 –1996 Edition  
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**TWO BASIC WAYS OF LIFE: TOWARD AND AWAY FROM THE CENTER**

**03** Greetings, all my dearest friends. I should like to start this lecture with a special blessing whose deeper meaning you can feel if you are open to it. Otherwise the words will be just words. This blessing is the simple statement: truth brings love and love brings truth. No matter from which end of this statement you start, one end must lead to the other end, so that both become one. In this pathwork you tentatively grope in both directions.

**04** In the very center of the human personality exists a potent, white-glowing mass of energy. It is a constant fire that continually bubbles and explodes within itself. Each tiny explosion multiplies the mass expelling kernels of the same substance and energy. When this fundamental creative process is unobstructed and harmonious, the endless continuum of energy spreads and floods over with joy and well-being. The constant flow spreads and spreads and yet is contained within itself. There is no chaos in this process.

**05** Wherever this creative energy-mass appears, it brings into the organism the very essence and nature of the creative substance. As I said, it is pure joy and well-being. But this is not all. Since it is the divine mass, it must contain consciousness of the highest order. Each bubbling, spreading kernel is a nucleus of consciousness with infinite potentials of wisdom, talent, creativity -- resources of every conceivable possibility. In this consciousness, infinite modes of self-expression, bliss, pleasure supreme, and stimulating new ventures exist in the most peaceful and secure state. No words can remotely do it justice. Each kernel contains everything that ever was and ever can be. If these words are truly understood in their far-reaching significance and are taken literally, as they are meant to be, nothing can ever appear hopeless to an unhappy human being.

**06** The combination of consciousness and energy is truly all-powerful. It is the omnipotence correctly ascribed to God and misinterpreted by the child who has an inner knowledge of his or her inherent omnipotence and abuses it. The abuse occurs when the omnipotence is put into the service of the self-willed little ego. The latter must be overcome to find the human being's own divine nucleus, where real omnipotence reigns supreme.

- 07** Human beings are vastly ignorant of the fact that they express part of this ever-exploding, ever-increasing energy-mass of consciousness and power. They may know certain philosophies that postulate these truths, but they are not deeply aware of being a part, an expression of, this powerhouse of strength and wisdom. The meaning of all life is concerned with attaining the state in which the organic process of the energy-mass takes place without obstruction. The human state of consciousness has, however, obstructed to a considerable degree this creatively unfolding process. An individual's development can be gauged by the extent to which he or she is conscious that this process is taking place and makes forever more room for it.
- 08** These are facts, my friends, that you already know in principle. However, they must be brought to your attention again and again in new terms, with a new light and a different angle, so that finally an inroad can be made that leads to an emotional experience of these truths. First a vivid new experience has to take place in the mind, which gives the necessary stimulation and perhaps a new feeling of comprehension, so that the obstructing mechanism weakens and the creative expansion process becomes stronger.
- 09** The human consciousness is a state in which the individual can take either of two basic directions of life. One is directed toward unfoldment and the elimination of obstructions. The other trend is away from it. The human condition can be adequately explained as a struggle to give up the latter and find a way into the former. Most human beings today are still oblivious of this choice and still move away from the center. They strive to find a happiness that can be found only in the opposite direction. Since they are ignorant that they contain within themselves all they could ever need, they try to grasp whatever they need from others, from substitutes, from illusions.
- 10** As I stated, the movement toward the center is an infinite process. There is no stopping, no end result. It is forever new -- expanding vistas and possibilities of blissful being and self-expression. Within this multitude of creative possibilities boredom is impossible, as is fatigue, since fatigue is merely a result of the forces set in motion by striving away from the center. The incredibly beautiful state of being cannot possibly be conveyed in words. You must also imagine that this state knows no fear whatsoever, since one knows absolutely that there is never an end to blissful life -- only more and better choices. This is truly no illusion, my friends. It is the stark reality of the inner life of creative being. When the individual knows that all good can be had and need never end, as long as it is chosen, fearlessness comes about.
- 11** The other direction, away from the center, is finite. The more the individual moves in this direction, the more he or she despairs -- not only because it is the wrong way, the way that leads to destructiveness and unhappiness, but also because an end is feared. The end is feared only when one goes the wrong way. When humans go the wrong way, they believe that existence and all hope of bliss end forever. All human beings long for the fulfillment of their inherent nature, which is this bliss. When the fulfillment seems to move further and further away, they believe that there is no other hope or solution in sight. In that sense the perception of an end is incorrect; but the

perception that there is a limit in the direction away from the center is correct. One must come to a breaking point, a collapse, because this direction leads to an entrapment from which there is no way out. Seen in this light, it is actually a blessing to arrive at the breaking point. Only when the breaking point has been reached can the other direction be found. Only when the entity recognizes, "I am in a state from which there is no way out; the old way is wrong," can the other way be found, and not otherwise.

**12** I would like to point out here that everyone for whom life is a fruitful and constructive experience has reached this breaking point at a previous period of his or her spiritual history. Such a person has also reached the "point of no return" where absolute despair reigned and there seemed no way out. This motivated the person to move in a different direction. Thus it is often folly to assume that it is tragic when a person obviously moves quite rapidly into the point of collapse. This is necessary when an entity is still completely blind and entrapped in error and destruction. The breaking point has then the healing power, the only possibility from which the good way can be looked for, seen, and undertaken. The marvel of the universe, of Creation is that the more rapidly destruction approaches, the nearer salvation must be. Hence, reaching the breaking point at which there is no further way out but salvation has deep importance for the development of each entity. It then leads directly to the bliss of finding the explosive power of the spiritual force within -- the ongoing process of positive unfoldment, of unlimited possibilities for pleasurable and meaningful existence, of real selfhood, of the dignity of being a creator of one's own life in the universe and expressing God within oneself.

**13** I venture to say that every one of you has experienced this change of direction innumerable times. You have come to desperation, finding no way out. Then something in you changed. You became conscious of a tense insistence in one direction. As long as the situation was not desperate, you had hoped that going in this direction would lead to a desired result. Only when it became clear that this would not happen did you give up your tense insistence. Something in you relaxed -- you let go of the old direction -- and, lo and behold, the desperation vanished. Completely unexpected solutions appeared. Only by having reached the very limits of the old direction, when you were desperate, could you give up your stubborn insistence, old beliefs, and destructive patterns and find the way that leads to all you could ever want. In small ways you have experienced this many times. But there is one particularly significant point when this happens on an overall plane.

**14** Look at the people in your environment and see how many are still on the road toward the breaking point where the limit is reached. See how they fear this limit and yet how stubbornly they refuse to look for another way. And then you see a few individuals unfolding on the upper way toward their inner center, who have obviously put the major breaking point behind them. When you evaluate human existence from this point of view, you will see that the latter are indeed a very small minority. You who are on this path are therefore a very small minority. And even you who are here, groping to solve your inner problems and struggles, are still often caught unconsciously in the old automatism. In many cases you have followed this direction for centuries.

Only as you become more and more aware of yourself do you eventually see the destructive process that leads to the limit beyond which you cannot continue in the same direction. At least now you are meaningfully engaged in ascertaining this fact about yourself.

**15** The human personality is an integral part of the great power and creative substance I mentioned. When I say, "the human personality," I actually mean everything about it: the conscious intelligence, the will, all the capacities and feelings, which may already be unfolding or slumbering as potentials. Since destructive tendencies and evil are not verities in themselves but only distortions, they, too, are included. So is the conscious ego, which is not a separated, different thing -- it is of the same creative substance and contains all the elements to be found in the nucleus of being. Therefore it would be an error to approach your self-realization as though your ego-personality were basically and intrinsically different from the inner power you want to activate.

**16** Nevertheless, as you know, the ego in its present development is very limited in power and intelligence compared with the vastly larger part you wish to activate through the pathwork. It is therefore necessary to comprehend that the conscious personality, although relatively limited, contains everything you need to activate and become one with the explosive, ever-unfolding power of love and truth, consciousness and strength, and creative living that is the God-consciousness. Although the ego-consciousness is ill equipped to handle life by itself, it is nevertheless perfectly endowed with everything you need in every situation to assume the attitude that brings you into union with the greater power. This is tremendously important knowledge for you to have. Without this knowledge you despair, you think you are powerless; but with this comprehension you can grope in a hopeful and meaningful way. If at each difficulty, at each bend in the road around which you cannot see, you could say, "Yes, I have right now at my disposal everything I need to find the attitude compatible with the greater power," then this power could make itself known to you.

**17** What is the attitude you have toward the present difficulty? This is what counts. This is where you have a choice to assume a constructive or destructive attitude, a truthful or self-deceptive attitude. You have the power to find out what you really feel and why you feel it. You have the power to request guidance from the greatest wisdom conceivable, which is within yourself. You have the possibility to want to be on the constructive road that leads to creating and unfolding rather than giving up, as is done so often in a difficulty. You also have the power to let go of stubborn insistence and rigid upholding of unconscious attitudes whose nature is as yet unexplored. You have the power to overcome the temptation to indulge in resignation and self-pity. Therefore I say to you: Realize that you have everything you need to assume the attitude to activate the greatest power in the universe. Each and every living instant -- I do not care whether it is beautiful or ugly, easy and lighthearted or difficult and heavy -- contains the potential to be in bliss, provided you penetrate the Now to its deepest level. Each instant contains ultimate truth, if you want only to turn in the right direction.

- 18** These words may be difficult to accept, and perhaps even more difficult to feel. But if at any given moment of your road toward light, truth, love and fulfillment you take this sentence very seriously and contemplate its meaning, where there is darkness light will come. Each second of your life contains the All and the Ultimate. This is not a mere phrase, it is absolute reality, forever realizable. Even if you move, still in your error, toward the limit where the turnabout must come, that is good if you honestly grope and pray for understanding. These words will suddenly assume a new meaning. Where hopelessness seems a fact of life, ever-increasing possibilities of new expansion will dawn upon you as the starkest reality you ever experienced.
- 19** To make all this a little easier to realize, let us look at a very important obstruction. We have talked about many obstructions, such as your misconceptions and destructive attitudes, in many ways and from many approaches. At this time, I would like to simplify matters. I would like to discuss these obstructions in terms of the soul movements, which reflect the personality's attitudes. If you become more finely attuned to your soul movements, you will easily perceive that each attitude you assume results in a certain movement. If you are in an attitude of love, say, the soul movement is very different from one that reflects an attitude of fear and hate.
- 20** The greatest obstruction is fear, especially unconscious unrecognized fear. You must clearly understand that these words apply after repressed material has been made conscious, for not knowing what goes on in the self is obviously the greatest obstruction there is. Ignorance is a greater cause of fear than any other single factor. Every destructiveness is connected with fear -- either comes from it, and/or leads to it and perpetuates it. Fear is a tremendously important element. The soul movement of fear is tension, cramp, and stopping of the flow from the inner energy center that enlivens you. Fear blocks the opening through which self-renewing life flows into the outer organism. As I explained in the last lecture, fear freezes, paralyzes, stops movement. It is thus accurate to state that the soul movement of fear is no movement. Thus it is of great importance to understand fear in terms of the dynamics of the soul movements.
- 21** We have discussed many elements of fear in this work. You have found what some of your fears are, why you are afraid, what misconceptions exist that create fear, and so on. I do not wish to examine fear again in these contexts. Rather, I say to those of you who are unaware of your fears when you are unhappy that you must have fear if there is anything that burdens or frustrates you. If you feel that your self-expression is hindered, if you feel that there is more to life than you experience, then you must have fears you do not know about. This fear must eventually be experienced for you to overcome it.
- 22** As I said, the dynamics of fear are tension, cramp, paralysis. Such a cramp prohibits the creative flow. If you go deep enough and truly confront the fear dispassionately, you must always recognize that it comes from a very strong, cramped, stubborn desire for something. Some philosophies even advocate desirelessness because they have recognized this fact, although the concept of desirelessness can easily be misunderstood. Desirelessness must not be confused with indifference, resignation,

escape from the conflicts that one's undeveloped desires may bring. Healthy desires are relaxed. They are in rhythm with the unfolding, inwardly imploding life energy. The cramped desire is the one that says, "I must or else. I will not take no for an answer." This kind of desire breeds fear, for it comes from distrust and thus actually from fear. "I must have it, I will not give up," denies the ever-unfolding life-possibilities. It insists on one specific thing at one specific moment in one specific way. Therefore it reveals distrust, ignorance of the universe, fear that one may not get one's own -- and it comes out of the darkness that does not see other ways and possibilities but the one insisted on. Therefore it cramps up within itself.

**23** A strong desire of this nature is always behind fear. And when you experience, acknowledge, and examine such desire, you will always see distrustful elements behind it. So I say to you, my friends, look at your fears from this point of view, for the greatest inner pain is the cramped soul movement. Only as you give up the specific desires behind the fear will the fear vanish and the soul movement relax. Thus you will make room for the endless possibilities within your inner universe for new unfoldment.

**24** Sometimes this may mean entirely abandoning a desire because you find that it is destructive in itself. At other times, the desire itself is perfectly valid, but the way you insist on its fulfillment is unrealistic and leads to pain and disappointment. At still other times, the desire may again be valid in itself, but the motivation behind it may come from dependent, self-alienating trends. Try to ascertain the desires behind each fear. This is my message to you tonight. If you truly pray for the inner understanding and inner action, something will very drastically change in you.

**25** Now, are there any questions in connection with this lecture?

QUESTION: Yes. Letting go of these desires is an act of will?

**26** ANSWER: Yes, of the inner will. Often the desire itself may be legitimate and even healthy, as I implied before. But the insistence that "I must have this now" or "I must not have that now" is so harmful. What I advise is not necessarily giving up the desire per se. It is giving up the cramped soul movement that is connected with having the desire. It is a conscious decision directed toward the inner feeling self, in which you feel yourself letting go of something, giving up a certain attitude.

**27** Let us take a simple universal example: The fear of death contains the desire to live. There is nothing at all wrong with this desire, for it is creation's fact that life is unending. But the fear of death contains every false attitude I discussed in this lecture. Physical death is, on a certain level, the final breaking point on the road away from the center. Since every human being is moving away from the center to a greater or lesser degree, everyone must experience death. Therefore, you fear and cramp up against this limit. But denying the result of your own action is an unreasonable inner act. It implies a refusal to assume the responsibility and consequences for your actions and choices. If you go east and wish to come out west, you will be in grave conflict with yourself and life. Accepting death in the right way merely means assuming the consequences

of one's past direction. It need not mean to abandon one's desire to live. In fact, the desire to be dead is far from healthy. It stems from morbid fears and from the desire to escape. Thus I do not say that to overcome death and the fear of death you must abandon the desire for life.

**28** What I do say is that the healthy attitude leading toward life would be an attitude somewhat like this: "Here is death coming. I do not know whether I will continue in life. I would like to continue living. My outer intellect knows only the philosophies of life as a continuum, but I do not as yet know and feel the truth of this continuum. I would like the eternal life, if it exists. I will not deceive myself, though, by pretending that I feel the truth of life as a continuum. I let go of the fear that I will not live and accept what comes, in the trust that the universe is benign, even if I cannot at this time know, see, and experience the continuum I would really like." This is the attitude that will eventually bring one the inner experience of truth that life is unending. How soon this will come depends on how genuine your attitude is and how deeply it is experienced. How trustingly you let go and let yourself be carried, while being honest at the same time determines how soon experience will prove to you that there is nothing to fear. For life, indeed, is an unending process.

**29** QUESTION: How can you get fear out of your system?

**30** ANSWER: You get fear out of your system by recognizing what is behind it and where you hold on in a cramped state, and by letting go of the cramp. Meet the fear head on instead of evading it. Fear is maintained when it is not faced. When you face fear, you can recognize, experience, and alter it according to reality and a more constructive pattern of life. Then the hard cramp relaxes. You will feel it. This action always implies a generous attitude of trust toward the universe. I said in this lecture that every single instant of living contains the possibility of choosing the attitudes that will bring you into contact with the eternal life within you. Actually, contact is not the right word: The eternal life will completely permeate you with its reality. If you are in fear, therefore cramped, therefore alienated from the life force within you, you must really face the fear on the deepest level -- find the cramped desire behind your fear, and then see the meaning of the cramped desire. It spells out, "I do not trust the universe. I want it my way. I do not give myself over to the universe." This is ungenerous and untrusting. This attitude is incompatible with the nature of the divine center, so that the experience of it is blocked. When this attitude is exchanged for generous trust, you will experience the truth of the benign universe in which nothing need be feared.

**31** QUESTION: How can I synchronize feeling and movement?

**32** ANSWER: The inability to do this reveals a tremendous frozenness that also comes from fear. You fear that if you express your feelings, you must move out into the world. You fear that by doing so, certain unwelcome results will occur. Here, too, you must ask yourself precisely what you fear if you move with your feelings. Perhaps you fear rejection, ridicule, hurt, but whatever your fears may be, you must state them concisely. Only then can the courage and generosity come that make you take the risk.

There must be risk. Apart from all the other things I said about fear, it is a refusal to risk anything. It is impossible to lose fear without the willingness to lose. This means risking. Not wanting to risk is ungenerous. And anything ungenerous is incompatible with the nature of the power you wish to activate. To be enlivened by the inner reality of being, become one with it and express it, the outer personality must be compatible with its attitudes, its laws, its very way of being. These are natural and logical laws. If your character and attitudes are incompatible with the laws of the greater power deep within your center, you cannot possibly express this greater power. Not trusting the universe, not ever wanting to risk, is a pettiness in the spirit. Wherever human conflicts and problems reside in the soul, this pettiness also exists.

**33** Thus, the only way is to face exactly what you fear, what you want, and where you ungenerously withhold from trusting and risking. That is the only way out of fear. There is no other. Fear is totally the result of duality. You see, if you want so strongly, you must fear as strongly not getting what you want. Conversely, if you fear so strongly, you must unconsciously also want what you do not wish to experience. This excessive wanting and not wanting creates not only a cramp, but contains also the duality -- yes versus no, good versus bad. Duality ends in conflict, comes out of conflict, and therefore leads to the breaking point of no return. The limit finally offers no alternative but to turn around; then the unitive principle will reveal itself in its fearless, conflict-free state. Then a harmonious soul movement comes about where neither the yes nor the no is overly strong; not because one has no desire to expand in bliss, for this is the natural desire, but because one trusts the universe and its laws.

**34** Be blessed, be in peace.

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