

Pathwork on
Ambition and Productivity

As an Enneagram THREE type, I take in these words (in both their positive and negative sense) from Pathwork Lecture 32 Decision-Making:

20	<p>QUESTION: What about the ambivalence of overambition and lack of ambition in life? In other words, where does it come from, apart from laziness, if for instance there is no pronounced talent, or let us say, a glandular disturbance?</p>
21	<p>ANSWER: A glandular disturbance is only an effect, as you know. Now let us discuss first a lack of ambition. As I promised you, I will analyze faults and lead you back to their original good quality. I will do it here with both extremes. I will then show you the harm the distortion does, what is connected with it, and what it means in the light of spiritual law.</p>
22	<p>The good quality that was once the underlying factor of a lack of ambition was benevolence, harmony, a certain type of tolerance, of humility. This meant that such a person does not have to stand out and shine and be better or higher than others, for it does not add to peace if one strives too hard to triumph over others. Now I want it well understood that if you have the shortcoming of lack of ambition, this very fault can tempt you to hold on to the positive side of this trait when hearing these words, and to forget the wrong extreme with its harmfulness. However, you should remember that your fault has a positive side or background, so to say. Build on that, so as to give you strength in your work to overcome this fault, so as to prevent you from feeling guilty. For no fault has been added on to you; all faults are but distortions or extreme manifestations of a once good quality. Furthermore, remember that it is possible to have a fault in one area of your personality, but in another you do not have it at all. Often you are only aware of the positive side of a particular trend, while you ignore its existence on the negative side. But the people around you often know. When they voice this, however, you feel unjustly accused, because for you only the unconscious, unaware positive side appears to exist. The human being is ambivalent; there are many contradictory currents in you.</p>
23	<p>The harm of lack of ambition is a very grave one. Of course it is self-evident that it is neither desirable nor necessary to have ambition in all respects of life, for this would mean a waste of strength. But when ambitiousness is cultivated, it should be kept in mind that one must choose properly for what purpose one trains himself in this direction. It should be something that is worthwhile. The subject discussed in this lecture, concerning the proper decisions, will shed a light on this too.</p>
24	<p>Ambition is often a price for what you desire. If you give in to your lack of ambition and then seem to be left wanting in one or more ways in life, you should realize you were not ready to pay a price that could perhaps only be paid</p>

	<p>by efforts that needed ambition. Spiritually, a lack of ambition is a very great hindrance. This sluggishness will prevent you from accomplishing your development which alone can bring you true happiness and security. If you lack happiness and you possess this trait, you should not bear a grudge because your needs were unfulfilled; instead, realize clearly what your decision has been in this case. On the one side, to give in to the immediate comforts is choosing the line of least resistance. The disadvantage here is that your conflicts, hungers, needs, and insecurities will persist as long as you do not fight the temptation of taking the line of least resistance, which shows lack of ambition. On the other side, the price is the hard work of overcoming a very deep-rooted laziness, which means constant fight, constant trying. The gain is that you come out of the webs of darkness, loneliness, unhappiness, but not until after you have shown ample proof that you have really and wholeheartedly fought and succeeded in some measure. Make your choice, for even making a negative choice is healthier than not seeing the issues clearly, hoping to relinquish only a tiny bit of your weakness, while expecting results that you would only be entitled to if you were to take yourself in hand completely.</p>
25	<p>If you emotionally and unconsciously hope to attain spiritual development and thus peace of mind without making serious efforts to overcome this basic hindrance, you are actually attempting spiritual theft in some way. It means that you want to gain the harmony that can only be reached by paying the price, namely hard spiritual work. The necessary spiritual work here involves the overcoming of your greatest faults without exception. To understand lack of ambition from this point of view will, perhaps, make it easier for you to overcome it. You have not truly overcome this fault as long as you still have to force yourself to do the work. This means that your emotions still resist, that you are still not one with yourself. Simply recognize this fact and go on working if you have decided to do so. One day God's grace and help will affect you so that what was once an effort will cease to be one. This will be a sign to you that your emotions have followed suit to your outer good will and that in this respect you have become one with yourself. Incidentally, I am not speaking personally to anyone in particular now. As in all my answers to questions, my words are addressed to many.</p>
26	<p>So my friends, meditate upon this weakness from this angle: "If I have no ambition, if it is so difficult for me that whatever I do goes against the grain and I must force myself to do it; if I cannot do it with enthusiasm and real willpower; and if I still desire that which is rightfully mine if I were not to feel that way, my emotions want to steal something. I desire to steal happiness -- or any other result." Realize, please, that when I say that emotionally you want to steal something, I know that you do not want to do so consciously. That is always where the misunderstandings arise.</p>
27	<p>I often speak of the desires of your emotions by translating them into concise language, for otherwise they could not be interpreted for your intellectual</p>

	<p>understanding. These emotions are often unconscious. And then, my friends, you take my translation of your emotions as an injustice because consciously, of course, you do not think that way. You overlook the fact that there is every so often a great chasm between what you consciously think and even truly desire, and what is in your unconscious, undermining that good and true desire by a contrary emotional current which you ignore. But, of course, you are not aware of that so far. It will be very important for you to become aware of it and that is why I occasionally point out this discrepancy. Be careful to understand that I do so to avoid completely unnecessary hurt feelings. In learning to become aware of these currents, you must first get to understand and interpret the symptoms which this unconscious current quite clearly sends forth all the time. Then you will see the symptoms all around you. So far, you have only chosen to overlook them.</p>
28	<p>Returning to your question: Meditate upon this trend from the point of view shown you here. Realize that you must put effort into anything when you want to reap the fruits, which of course you do. You should not muster this effort because you are being told to do so, because you want to be a "good child," still doing it against your will. You must reach the state when you do it independently, responsibly and maturely, because you realize yourself that everything has a price. To fight inwardly against this fact is not only disrespectful of God's wisdom and justice, but also foolish.</p>
29	<p>As far as the opposite extreme is concerned -- overambitiousness -- the original good quality is a strong willpower, a readiness to pay the price in effort, a desire to work, to serve in the higher realms for others. In lower realms the goal becomes the self. Use the positive aspects to cleanse this current of its exaggerated, distorted, and negative aspects which are: a certain type of selfishness; a power drive; self-righteousness; a certain greediness to <u>have</u> more, to <u>be</u> more. Often, overambitious people have such a strong desire current that they become ruthless in attaining their goal at the expense of others. Again I say, it is not necessary that your acts be that way, but it is sufficient that you are that way in your emotions. You should understand that overambitiousness creates an unhealthy desire current that runs in a wrong way and robs you of peace. Here desirelessness has to be achieved in a certain measure. Not completely, because then it would again become the opposite extreme of no ambition, and imbalance would result. The spiritual person in particular has to decide for what purpose and where to have ambition; on the other hand, the ambitiousness should cease when it is time for desirelessness to set in.</p>