

Pathwork on
Facing Character Defects

Because people tend to moralize and “awfulize” their own faults and shortcomings, and thus invite out the harsh inner critic, the Pathwork Lectures do not often speak of sin and evil. Yet our shortcomings and faults do indeed need to be faced and healed. Pathwork Lecture 94 *Sin and Neurosis – Unifying the Inner Split* points to the importance of courageously and honestly looking at ourselves to see how our faults and shortcomings – OK, our “sins” – do not serve us but rather harm us and others and need to be faced in a spirit of genuine repentance. These character defects are not part of our Divine Essence but nevertheless part of what we have brought with us to heal.

22	<p>There comes a time in your work, however, when it is necessary that you approach the afflicted areas in yourself without kid gloves, so to speak, and that you see yourself in stark reality without any dilution; without shying away from the full impact of what is there. Wherever your distortions, images, repressions, immaturities -- in short, your neuroses -- exist, there is also sin and evil, for neurosis always means a character defect. You have found, and are bound to see even more clearly, how distortions not only damage you and obstruct your own happiness, but are bound to affect others who are near you. The so-called neurosis always contains selfishness, greed, pride, cowardice, egocentricity, and ruthlessness in one form or another.</p>
23	<p>If you view your actions, reactions, and attitudes as emanating not from your true self, but from the afflicted area, and consider their effect on others, you will truly gain a new perspective and see that it is possible to accept and forgive yourself, while still knowing the intrinsic "sinfulness" within you. You will no longer be torn between the alternatives of either self-acceptance and self-indulgence, or repentance and self-hate. On one level of your being this is your dilemma. This, incidentally, is a typical example of one of those conflicts described before. You see two alternatives and neither is constructive. This conflict may not be conscious at all, but it accounts for much resistance. Inwardly, you are confused and fluctuate between these two alternatives. Again and again you hear that you should learn to accept, to forgive, and to like yourself, in spite of your imperfections. But simultaneously you hear of the necessity of seeing yourself "realistically," so that your desire to change will grow. The desire to change can arise only out of true and genuine repentance. With strength and courage, you must, as a first step, accept the blindness, ignorance, and imperfection that still exist in you, realizing that all these are, in essence, character defects.</p>