

Pathwork on
Identification

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 195 – *Identification and Intentionality: Identification with the Spiritual Self to Overcome Negative Intentionality* -- deals with how we identify with different parts of ourselves: Ego, Higher Self, Lower Self, Mask Self. In the end it is critical that we identify with our Higher Self – our Spiritual or Divine Self, but at the same time identify our Ego, Lower Self, and Mask Self. With whom in ourselves we identify leads us to make life choices that are in accordance with the intention of that aspect.

21	It may seem almost inconceivable to those of you who have not yet made the self-discovery that one can admit to a downright senseless, wasteful attitude that does nothing but bring undesirable results, and yet insist on maintaining it. Why does this apparently senseless refusal exist, even though you know it only causes you and others pain? It makes you miss out on living fully and joyfully and it causes you severe guilt and self-punishment. There must be a powerful reason that obviously goes beyond any of the aforementioned causes -- true as they are in themselves. Many of you are stuck at this particular point and need help to get beyond it.
22	What truly prevents you from saying, "I do not want to hate, I want to love. I do not want to withhold any longer, but want to give the best of myself to life. I do not need my spitefulness and truly desire to give it up. I want to reach out and give to life and receive equally the best life has to offer?" This lecture hopefully will help you further to understand this resistance.
23	In order to deal with this bottleneck, the question of identification has to be focused on. What part of yourself do you identify with? Such identification is not something the conscious ego chooses. Once again, it is something that must be discovered by your observing mind. In what way are you identified with the different parts of your being?
24	For example, if you exclusively identify with the ego -- that conscious, willing, acting part of you -- it is automatically impossible to bring a change that lies beyond the province of the ego. Inner change of the deepest attitudes and feelings of an individual cannot be brought about by the very limited functions of the ego. One must be identified with a deeper, broader, and more effective aspect of the self in order to even believe in the possibility of such a change. Any profound change comes about by the ego committing itself to wanting the change, and trusting in the processes of the involuntary spiritual self to bring it about. If there is no identification with the spiritual self, such trust and the necessary climate of unpressured positive expectation cannot exist. And if it does not exist, the person cannot even want it, for the conviction of failure would drive home the powerlessness of the ego in too unpleasant a way. Thus it is preferable for the limited ego to say, "I do not want" than to say, "I cannot."

25	<p>On a superficial level, the exact opposite situation exists: "I won't" is denied with "I can't." On a deeper and more subtle level it is reversed, simply because the ego does not want to admit its limitations, and yet the self has not found the way to identify with the spirit.</p>
26	<p>Identification can exist in a most positive and constructive way or in a most negative, obstructive and destructive way. The difference is not determined by your identification with one or the other of the various personality aspects -- as if one would be good, the other bad. Identification with any aspect of yourself can be either desirable, healthy and fruitful, or the opposite. For example, you might think, "How can it be destructive to identify with the higher self?" Or, conversely, "How could it be desirable to identify with the lower self?" I say it can be either.</p>
27	<p>If you identify with the higher self or your spirit, without truly being aware of your lower self, mask self, your defenses, your dishonest devices, and your negative intentionality, then your identification with the higher self becomes an escape and an illusion. Under these circumstances it is not at all a truthful or a real experience. It is much more like paying lip service to a philosophy you believe in on the purely intellectual level. It is all very well to know that you are a divine manifestation with potentially limitless power to change yourself and your life, that you are the very spirit of the universe in manifest form. This is true. And yet it is a half-truth when this kind of identification overlooks the part of you which needs your scrutiny and candid attention.</p>
28	<p>By the same token, identification with your lower self can be desirable or undesirable. Perhaps we can best put it this way: It is one thing to identify with your lower self or your mask self, but to observe and identify it, is another. When you are identified with the lower self, you believe that this is all there is to you. When you identify it, observe, admit, and tackle it, you do not believe that this is all there is to you. If it were, you could not identify, observe, evaluate, analyze and change it. For that part of you which is doing all this watching is certainly more in charge, has more power, and is more active and real than the part that is being observed, evaluated, or changed. The moment you identify something, good, bad or indifferent, the identifying part is more you than whatever is being identified. In other words the observer is more real and in charge than the observed. This is the vast difference between identifying something and being identified with it.</p>
29	<p>When the mask and lower self, or the negative intentionality and dishonest games are being identified, there is room for real feelings, including pain, to be honestly experienced, and the pain no longer needs to be denied. This is so because the energy no longer invested in denial will bring you to the truth. And when you can truly feel your feelings, you can then identify with the spiritual self.</p>

30	<p>The lower self should be identified; the spiritual self identified with. The ego makes the identification, but gives itself up voluntarily so that it is integrated into the spiritual self.</p>
31	<p>When giving up negative intentionality, you already experience yourself as something more than the lower self whose energies should be dissolved in their present form, and be reconverted and channeled in a new and better way. But when you reaffirm the senseless refusal to give up negative will, it is because you are totally identified with this aspect of the self. This must be so regardless of the developed aspects of yourself where this may not hold true at all. In other words, this is not a total condition: It is not true that either a person is entirely identified with the lower self or no longer at all. You are all invariably a combination. Some aspects of the self are free and there a deep spiritual identification may be sensed; at the same time, the as yet unidentified lower self aspects and unfelt feelings partially create a climate of submersion into the lower self and the self fears this to be its only reality. A third identification can also exist this time with the ego believed to be the only valid, reliable function. This is the way people are split in regard to identification.</p>
32	<p>When a secret, albeit partial, identification with the lower self exists, giving it up appears as self-annihilation to that part of the self which is destructive, cruel, hateful, spiteful, and soon, this seems the real self. The other seems unreal -- perhaps even phony. This seems true especially when an actual phony veneer is used to cover up the reality of the lower self. Giving up hate, spite, and negative intention seems like giving up one's very being. Such apparent self-annihilation cannot be risked, even for the beckoning promise of accruing joy and fulfillment from this sacrifice. At best, whatever joy there is appears to exist only for someone other than the familiar you. What good do joy, fulfillment, pleasure, self-respect, and abundance accomplish if they can only be experienced by someone other than you? This inarticulate feeling or climate existing within you is the most difficult part to overcome -- or rather perhaps, the second most difficult part.</p>
33	<p>The first difficult part is to make the initial commitment to find out the truth about yourself. This includes mentally observing and admitting your real thoughts and feelings, experiencing all your feelings, owning up to them on all levels. Then you need to answer the question, "How am I going to extricate myself from my identification with my lower self?"</p>
34	<p>When you experience yourself as real exclusively in the lower self, to whatever degree this may hold true, you cannot give up the lower self. The refusal to do so is the misplaced will to live. You live in the illusion that beyond your most negative aspects nothing of you exists. You feel real and energized only when negativity and destructiveness manifest, no matter how much the environment curtails it and forces you to experience this energy as existing only</p>

	inside of yourself. The outer deadness and numbness seem the result of having "given up" evil; but it has not been given up at all; nor do you have to. The same energy can be reconverted once you have stopped denying it.
35	My friends, let this sink in: Your resistance to giving up what you hate most in yourself is due to a false identification. At this point many of you are puzzled about yourselves. You do not understand why you do not want to budge from this extremely uncomfortable and undesirable inner position. You know that there is a beautiful world waiting outside. And if you deny this fact, you do so to justify your position: if all is dismal anyway, then there is nothing so strange about your state. So you often make yourself believe in a terrible, senseless universe. Or, if this is not the case, you cannot bring your belief in the good and beautiful universe to bear on the negative intentionality.