

Pathwork on
Joy Without Harmony – When Pleasant Times Trouble Us

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 87 *The Next Phase on the Path; Questions and Answers*, explores why pleasant times of joy are accompanied by levels of anxiety, restlessness, and impatience – having joy without a ground of harmony beneath it.

30	<p>QUESTION: Why is it that one is often more restless when pleasant things occur? In depressions one may be calm. In happy incidents, one becomes overstimulated, and, in a way, disharmonious.</p>
31	<p>ANSWER: The obvious answer would be self-punishment, guilt feelings, fear of success. But such answers will not bring you further understanding. Although some of these factors may contribute to the complex, in themselves they do not clear up anything for you. You will understand their origin and their erroneous purpose only if you become aware of the more basic reason. I am quite sure that each one of you is experiencing such emotions; if you question yourself truly, you will ultimately find that if a happy incident makes you feel restless, overstimulated and, in a way, disharmonious, it is because the goal you attained, whether in a little or in a big way, represents a false value. That does not mean that the goal is wicked or wrong in itself. But it must be somehow connected with your search for glory, with your idealized self-image, no matter how subtly or unobtrusively it may mix with true aims.</p>
32	<p>When your false aims and values are gratified you are bound to be left feeling empty. False aims are illusions, and even if, at times, they materialize, they will not really satisfy you. These aims and values are resorted to as pseudo-solutions. When such an aim is actually realized, it becomes obvious that the solution was misguided -- and the soul is stunned and confused even more. If you pursue a goal, believing that its attainment will solve your problems, in a sense it feels better to believe the goal itself is still valid, but for one reason or another, you were prevented from attaining it. On the other hand, if you actually do succeed and then the victory turns sour on you by its failure to solve your problems, by leaving you still insecure, frightened, and restless, you are at a loss. You feel worse because now you do not know what to do, where to turn.</p>
33	<p>Since this entire process is vague, and utterly unconscious, you are unaware of its implications. You are even unaware of the acute disappointment of now having attained a partial goal. You still feel not so different than before when you thought that attaining the goal would make all the difference in the world.</p>
34	<p>Even small gratifications of this sort -- let us say a success in social life -- will generate this reaction in your unconscious. Only close analysis of the</p>

	incident and your reaction to it will reveal the truth of the matter and prove of utmost importance for your further development because it will bring into clear focus the false value and pseudo-solution and show how illusory both are.
35	Depression sets in because the pseudo-solution and the goal seem difficult to attain. You believe you have an aim, even though it may be wrong. But when your aim is proven wrong, whether or not you consciously realize it, you become more frustrated, and an inner haste and pressure is generated. It seems more pressing than ever to find a solution, only now you do not know where or how.
36	Let us suppose the false goal of the pseudo-solution that you attempt is to be approved of, admired, envied, and feel powerful. Now an incident occurs where you receive this gratification. People do act according to this desire of yours. Consciously you may feel you had a very pleasant time. But if you analyze your feelings, you will find that the goal of your idealized self was actually partly gratified in this "pleasant situation." This may very well happen along with the real values that are being attained and lived up to. But it is enough that the gratification of a false value occurs to make you restless and disharmonious. Now the psyche feels, "I have received what I thought I needed and I am still unhappy, alone, and insecure. I still lack something, I still have nothing secure to hold on to. Where do I have to go now in order to alleviate this condition? What should I do now?" So insecurity and inner haste increase just because the false value and desire has been gratified. Outwardly you may be quite content, but the inner restlessness is a sign of the process I just described.
37	These are subtle processes and when explained in crude language they appear exaggerated. You have to uncover, feel, and experience the truth of these words. When you really question yourself honestly, you are bound to find the answer in the form of an inner truth.
38	<p>QUESTION: Is this something similar to what is called "Weltschmerz"??*</p> <p>ANSWER: Not necessarily. Usually in "Weltschmerz" self-pity predominates, while the emotion we just discussed is joy without harmony. It applies to happy incidents, not causing sadness, but rather the opposite, while still being in a state of restlessness, inner haste, impatience, and a kind of nervousness.</p>

* World-weariness