

Pathwork on
**Personal and Spiritual Growth In a World of False
 Teachings**

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 61 *Questions and Answers*, addresses growing up in a world of less-than-perfect teachings, authorities, religions, and self-help programs. How can we, in our immaturity or childhood even, be safe when we seemingly have to depend on external sources, parents and other teachers and authorities for understanding when those external sources are imperfect and might be misleading, very misleading in fact? How do we find true Truth to live by? How do we obtain healthy independence and take self-responsibility for our own values and life when there are so many untruths around us in our world?

29	<p>QUESTION: In the last lecture you stated that the imperfections of another person cannot harm us. How about the imperfections of a teaching, a doctrine, a wrong method being practiced by, let us say, a physician or an analyst? If we are not intellectually so developed or so learned as to judge rightly, we seek an authority because we are weak and in need of help. And the wrong help can make us mentally or physically even more distorted.</p>
30	<p>ANSWER: No outer influence can ever make you more distorted. This is one of the most flagrant illusions on the earth plane. Distortions can only be brought to the fore from within. With a good method, a teaching of truth, they are brought to the fore with a direct view as to what is distortion and what is truth. With a teaching or method of half-truth, this often happens in a more roundabout way. An outer influence may temporarily fortify a wrong concept, just as other influences in life constantly seem to do. But this lasts only as long as the person desires to run away from himself. Whenever people decide to face themselves in truth and honesty, no teaching, method or influence can encourage wrong inner concepts any longer. In other words, the more people tend to run away from themselves, the more will they be drawn to influences which apparently foster tendencies of escape. Or they will pick out especially those aspects of the influence which encourage turning away from the root of the problems, while other parts of the very same teaching, which may help them to turn into the right direction, will be overlooked.</p>
31	<p>If it were true that any outer influence can really harm you, life would be impossible. That would be such a hazard, so arbitrary and such an injustice that you would consequently have to believe in a chaotic and godless world. You would be constantly prone to injuries you cannot do anything about. If you think things through to the very end, it is inconceivable to believe in a Creator of love and justice and at the same time assume that ignorance and imperfection on the part of other people can harm you. I know that it is not easy for most of you to truly understand how you are not harmed by the influence of others. But if your spirit and your soul are to become really healthy and free, the understanding of</p>

	<p>this truth is essential for you. Without this understanding you stand nowhere, and God will never be a reality for you.</p>
32	<p>This principle applies also to the physical aspect of your question, although you may find my answer even more difficult to understand. Let me say only this: if you truly want to get well, to recuperate from an illness, you will find the physician who can help you, or you will choose to accept part of the advice of one physician and reject another part. You will interpret the advice in the right way. Lack of intellectual understanding and inability to weigh, judge and discriminate are the very result of a desire to escape from and to deceive oneself.</p>
33	<p>As to philosophies, religions, teachings and methods of self-development, there are none on this earth which are one hundred percent truth, perfection, and without error, since you are living on this imperfect earth plane and dealing at all times with the imperfections of people. By the same token, you will hardly ever find a philosophy which contains no truth whatsoever. It is possible that a person remains with a teaching of relatively little truth, yet will get the maximum of truth out of it because he or she will assimilate what he receives in the right manner. On the other hand, people may follow a teaching of relatively more truth than many another, but they will get a minimum out of it because their inner self does not want to accept it. In such a case, they will constantly misinterpret truth; and when life and their own disinclination to face themselves catch up with them, they may then blame the actual deviation from truth on that particular philosophy and hold it responsible for their failure and unhappiness. At first such a person embraces this authority unquestioningly. Then he or she goes to the other extreme.</p>
34	<p>If a consciously chosen teacher or philosophy or physician could harm you as an adult person, how much more could a parent or a teacher harm you in your youth! A child is hardly able to discriminate, yet it is subject to influences which may be quite far removed from truth. The impressionability of a child is infinitely greater than that of any adult, and therefore the child is greatly influenced for his or her whole life by certain occurrences and conditions in childhood and youth. Hence, it certainly appears as though the parents had harmed the child, nevertheless, in reality it is not so. The universe would be supremely unjust if this were so. In any successful self-search, the personality will have to recognize that he has blamed one or both parents for his unhappiness, even though this blame may have been unconscious. The next step must inevitably be to gain the insight of no longer putting the blame where it does not belong, no matter how much the parents were actually at fault. I might say that this is one of the most important criteria in growth, health and freedom. When this has been accomplished, the constant repetition of this unhappy pattern will cease and the proper proportion will prevail in judging other people, principles or whatever.</p>
35	<p>The solution must always lie with the individual. Whenever an entity is</p>

	<p>ready to face himself, thereby assuming true self-responsibility, he or she will increasingly be drawn into spheres where one is enabled to do just that, in spite of the inevitable flaws in perfection and truth that exist anywhere on earth. As long as an entity is not ready to do this, or only partly ready -- which also happens quite often -- he or she will constantly encounter damaging influences. These damaging influences have no effect on the person who is ready to grow up inwardly. The very reluctance to assume adulthood and self-responsibility makes a person prey to the fear of harmful influences from outside.</p>
36	<p>Once people are well established on the road to maturity and self-responsibility in the inner and deeper sense -- which might come long after a person is actually on this path -- they will learn gradually to discriminate without exaggeration. They will cease going from one extreme to another. They will cease fearing forces, influences, people and happenings outside themselves, in the belief that they can harm them. They will be open to the good and the true from wherever it may come, even from a person who may in other respects be more ignorant, and, similarly, may reject certain things coming from people who represent authority. It will no longer matter <u>who</u> said it, the criterion will be <u>what</u> was said. Subjective coloring, due to positive or negative emotions, will cease; in its stead you will possess real objectivity that never permits viewing anything as black or white. True self-responsibility is the only safeguard and can come only from yourself, from your inner desire to forfeit dependency. Dependency often manifests in rebellion and complete rejection of that which also contains much benefit. You know that. A really independent person need not be afraid of bad influences. The independent person cannot be influenced. Your security will lie in the calm, serene deliberation, be it accepting or rejecting. You may not wish to reject the whole because you reject a part; and you may not wish to accept all of it, because you accept a good part of it.</p>
37	<p>Let me stress that this state of maturity does not have to be fully reached in order to be "safe." It is sufficient that you are on the road toward it and understand the principle. If safety could only be found in a teaching, or method, or influence that you know can never err, you could never attain true independence. You would always remain a cripple in the pseudo-safety of utter reliance upon another authority. This is why you cannot find an unblurred manifestation of truth on this earth. Your choice lies only in finding it to a greater or lesser extent. The sooner you realize the inevitability of deviation from truth anywhere on earth, and that this fact can never harm you in the deepest and widest and most real sense, the sooner you will find freedom, independence, and the real and healthy relationship to the eternal Creator of love and justice.</p>