

Pathwork on
Provoking Negativity To Re-Create Childhood Pain

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 73 *Compulsion To Recreate and Overcome Childhood Hurts*, explores how we find friends and especially mates that exhibit negative behaviors that one or both of our parents had toward us, behaviors that hurt us deeply. This especially relates to **how we experienced (or didn't experience) love from our parents, especially from the parent who seemed to us to love us least**. The following paragraphs explore how unconsciously we provoke these negative behaviors toward us even when they are not there in the other to the degree we experience. The Lecture says we unconsciously **want to recreate that painful situation so that we can overcome it**.

29	<p>QUESTION: It is very difficult for me to understand that one continually chooses a love object who has exactly the same negative trends that one or the other parent had. Is it reality that this particular person has these trends? Or is it projection and response?</p>
30	<p>ANSWER: It can be both and it can be either. In fact, most of the time it is a combination. Certain aspects are unconsciously looked for and found and they are actually similar. But the existing similarities are enhanced by the person who is doing the recreation.</p> <p>They are not only projected qualities, "seen" while they are not really there, but are latent in some degree without being manifested. These are encouraged and strongly brought to the fore by the attitude of the person with the unrecognized inner problem. He or she fosters something in the other person by provoking the reaction that is similar to the parent's. The provocation, which of course is entirely unconscious, is a very strong factor here.</p>
31	<p>The sum total of a human personality consists of many aspects. Out of these, let us say three or four may be actually similar to some traits in the recreator's parent.</p> <p>The most outstanding would be a similar kind of immaturity and incapacity to love. That alone is sufficient and potent enough in essence to reproduce the same situation.</p>
32	<p>The same person would not react to others as he or she reacts to you because it is you who constantly does the provoking, thereby reproducing conditions similar to your childhood for you to correct.</p> <p>Your fear, your self-punishment, your frustration, your anger, your hostility,</p>

your **withdrawal from giving out love and affection**,
all these trends of the child in you **constantly provoke the other person**
and **enhance a response coming from that part which is weak and immature.**

However, a **more mature person** will affect others differently and **will bring out that in them which is mature and whole**,
for there is **no person who does not have some mature aspects.**

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QUESTION: How can I make the distinction as to whether the other person provoked me or I the other person?

ANSWER: It is **not necessary to find who started it**, for this is a chain reaction, a **vicious circle.**

It is useful to **start by finding your own provocation**, perhaps in response to an open or hidden provocation of the other person. Thus you will realize that because you were provoked, you provoke the other person. And because you do so, the other again responds in kind.

But **as you examine your real reason**, not the superficial one, the reason why you were hurt in the first place and therefore provoked, according to tonight's lecture you will **no longer regard this hurt as disastrous. You will have a different reaction to the hurt, and, as a consequence, the hurt will diminish automatically.**

Therefore, you will **no longer feel the need to provoke the other person.**

Also, as the need to reproduce the childhood situation decreases, you will become **less withdrawn** and you will **hurt others less and less** so that **they will not have to provoke you.**

If they do, you will now also understand that they reacted out of the same childish blind needs as you did.

Now you can see how you ascribe different motivations to the other person's provocation than to your own, even if and when you actually realize that you initiated the provocation.

As you gain a different view on your own hurt, understanding its real origin, you will gain the same detachment from the reaction of the other person. You will find exactly the same reactions in yourself and in the other.

As long as the child's conflict remains unresolved in you, the difference seems enormous, but **when you perceive reality**, you begin to **break the repetitive vicious circle.**

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As you truly perceive such a mutual interplay, it will **relieve the feeling of isolation and guilt** you all are burdened with.

You are **constantly fluctuating between your guilt and your accusation of injustice you direct at those around you.**

The **child in you feels** itself entirely different from others, **in a world of its own.** It lives in such a **damaging illusion.**

As you solve this conflict, **your awareness of other people will increase.**

As yet, you are **so unaware of the reality of other people.**

On the one hand you **accuse them and are inordinately hurt by them** because you do not understand yourself and therefore do not understand the other person.

On the other hand, and at the same time, **you refuse to become aware when you are hurt.**

This seems paradoxical yet is not. As you experience for yourself the interactions set forth tonight, you will find this to be true.

While **sometimes you may exaggerate a hurt,**
at **other times you do not allow yourself to know that it happened at all,** because it

may not fit the picture you have of the situation.

It may **spoil your self-constructed idea,** or

it may **not correspond to your desire** at the time.

If the situation seems otherwise favorable and fits into your preconceived idea, you leave out all that jars you, allowing it to fester underneath and create unconscious hostility.

This entire reaction **inhibits your intuitive faculties,** at least in this particular respect.

47	<p>The constant provocation that goes on among human beings, while it is hidden from your awareness now, is a reality you will come to perceive very clearly.</p> <p>This will have a very liberating effect on you and your surroundings.</p> <p>But you cannot perceive it unless you understand the patterns in yourself which I discussed tonight.</p>
48	<p>QUESTION: Is it possible in some way to make a truce, for even two or three minutes, between one's own subconscious and the subconscious of the other person? Sometimes you see the reality intellectually, but by the time you order your subconscious to do something, it is already in revolt and has made the other person unhappy and then you are unhappy too. It might all have been avoided if there had been a few minutes of truce.</p>
49	<p>ANSWER: You see my dear, in the first place it is not a question of ordering your subconscious. You cannot order it. That is impossible.</p> <p>As long as you attempt such commands, it will be very resistant. Or it may deceive you, so that you deceive yourself.</p> <p>The subconscious can only be reeducated by the slow and gradual process pursued in our work.</p> <p>Most important is that you become fully aware of what you really feel. Actually, you are only half aware of it most of the time and resort to superimposing another set of feelings upon your real reactions.</p> <p>These may be other negative emotions; if they are positive, you are deceiving yourself even more.</p> <p>Only by stripping away all these superimpositions can you understand the reason why your subconscious is often so stubborn.</p> <p>If it continues to resist your good efforts, there must be something present that you have not understood and not connected with. Then it is a question of finding the block that causes this particular obstruction.</p> <p>When this happens, you will not need a short truce. You will have real peace with yourself and therefore with others.</p> <p>While you may command a truce in your outer actions, in your words, and even in your thoughts, the subconscious does not respond to such discipline. Truce, as you see it, cannot really work. It is as unreal as the effect of attempting to command it would be.</p>

50	<p>QUESTION: Suppose we are able to put our own house in order. Will we then eliminate provocations in the other person?</p> <p>ANSWER: You do not even have to put your house in order to the extent that you are fully mature and more or less perfect. This perfection hardly ever exists in the human sphere.</p> <p>But the awareness of your immaturity, a real insight into and understanding of your reactions and feelings that cause provocation will weaken the habit of provocation sufficiently until you finally will cease bringing on provocations and will in turn not be provoked by others.</p> <p>As you gain a certain detachment from yourself in a very healthy way, the smoldering, unhealthy drive and force will be taken out of your emotional reactions.</p> <p>In fact, I would even say that this is the only kind of valid truce that can be accomplished.</p>
51	<p>Allow yourself to see what you <u>really feel</u> and <u>why</u>.</p> <p>And when you have an overall view, without any further subterfuge and self-deception, such knowledge will no longer disquiet you.</p> <p>It will have a very calming effect.</p> <p>You will have made peace with yourself by accepting your still existing imperfections and</p> <p>will no longer harrow yourself trying for a perfection that you cannot possibly attain at the moment.</p> <p>Once you accept the reality of your imperfect self, the resulting hurts will no longer be so serious and tragic.</p> <p>You will accept them as a consequence of your accepted imperfections which you can now observe calmly, while gaining more understanding about them and thus nearing perfection and maturity.</p> <p>In this way, your hostility will vanish and your provocations will too.</p> <p>Relapses will surely occur, but you will accept them with a realistic outlook. You will gain further insight from them, knowing that they are possible because something has not penetrated deeply enough and has to be found anew so as to be assimilated on deeper levels of your being.</p>

52	<p>Hostility exists in you because you are unaware that you are hurt and why you are hurt.</p> <p>Just think of times when you are really aware of a hurt without anger and without feeling hostile. You may feel sad, but feeling sad seems to many people so humiliating that they prefer to be angry and therefore hostile. That is a particular kind of childishness existing in everyone.</p> <p>You think it is superior to be angry and hostile than to be sad, so you suppress the real hurt.</p> <p>But the hostility has to be hidden, too, because it makes you feel guilty for other reasons, so it comes out in a devious, hidden way, which in turn brings on further provocation.</p> <p>Provocation is a result of unconscious and suppressed hostility, and the hostility results from unconscious and suppressed hurt.</p>
53	<p>Go your way, my dearest ones, and may the blessings we bring to all of you envelop and penetrate your body, soul, and spirit, so that you open up your soul and become your real self, your own real self.</p> <p>Be blessed, my friends, be in peace, be in God.</p>