

Pathwork on
Filling in the Framework of Higher Self, Lower Self, Mask Self

This quote from Pathwork Lecture 78 *Question and Answers* deals with a participant's confusion about "all the selves" that the Pathwork lectures have introduced. The quote suggests that the Higher Self, Lower Self, and Mask Self was a simple early framework that now gets filled in and refined in our deeper knowing, and that these terms can be dropped as labels as we grow in self-understanding.

44	QUESTION: I am very confused about all the selves. The lower self, higher self, inner self, mask self, psyche and all. Could you straighten me out?
45	ANSWER: Well, my dearest friends, you see, the higher self and the inner self, are of course the same. If I now tend to use the latter more often than the former, I have a good reason for that. When I first discussed the higher, lower and mask selves, it was a considerable time ago. It was long before we went into the depths of your being, in this phase of self-search. Then I tried to show you a general, overall division of the human being in an abbreviated form, so to speak. But as you gain deeper insight into yourself, you begin to see that this threefold division is not always strictly separated. The borderline is a thin one. And often, one interacts with the other. Each of these three divisions contains a number of layers. For instance, an original tendency, coming from the higher self, can be distorted by your inner deviations and conflicts and therefore be abused by negative motivations. Hence, it would lead to oversimplification to stick to the terms higher self, lower self and mask self. The term inner self will now make you more aware of this innermost core of your being, without hindering you by ever so slight an implication of moral judgement.
46	There is also another reason why I sometimes consider it useful to change an expression or terminology. When it is too often repeated, you cease to feel the real meaning. It becomes a label and that is bad. It is always necessary to approach this work with a freshness in feeling and outlook. This may be helped along by a new term or word. It helps you to avoid stagnation in your concepts. It avoids clinging to ready-made words which have by repetition lost their inner meaning for you. That is the trouble with all truth teachings.
47	The lower self has, of course, nothing to do with the inner self, although it is not always on the surface. But you no longer need these terms now that you have progressed from there. And now you can also see that it is not as simple as all that. At the time we discussed this topic, this threefold division served as a plan, an outline, so to speak. Now that you analyze and learn to understand your inner reactions and attitudes, you no longer need to think in terms of such limiting divisions. What served once as a mere sketch is now being filled in with details. Do not forget, these lectures are something alive. They are adapted to your progress, to the need of the present in your individual work.
48	The psyche indicates your inner world of feeling and reacting, generally speaking. ...

